

# CONCORDIA

The Windsor Schools, Hamm, 1953–83



Stephen Green

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**The Windsor Schools  
Hamm 1953–1983**

**Stephen Green**

2023

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# Introduction

This is a history of the Windsor Schools in Hamm, West Germany, run by the British Families Education Service. The school started in 1953 as a mixed secondary boarding school; in 1959 the school divided into boys' and girls' schools. In 1981 they remerged and closed in 1983. They were schools of the Cold War.

The emphasis in that opening sentence is “a history.” Around 16,000 pupils, over 900 teachers and several thousand administrative and ancillary workers engaged with the schools. For some it was only a few weeks; for others over 20 years, for a few nearly 30 years. Most pupils and teachers were British. Americans, Maltese, Canadians, Indians, Jamaicans, Pakistanis, and many other nationalities played a part. Most of the administration and ancillary employees were German. Every one of the 20,000+ people will have their own memories and view of their time at Hamm. A single volume cannot hope to capture all their moments, all their memories and emotions or all their views. At best it can try to record and analyse key events, activities, and people.

The story of the schools covers a wide spectrum. The internal life of a boarding school, with a close relationship both with the British military in West Germany and the city of Hamm, dominates. The schools were not immune from the fluctuating Anglo-German relations during the post-war Allied occupation and then NATO partnership. Britain's wavering economic fortunes and military strategies played their part. At their core the schools, along with the other BFES schools, were an element of the Armed Forces recruit and retain policy during the Cold War.

The period from the early 1950s to the early 1980s saw considerable changes in society and its culture. It might be a time worn expression but L. P. Hartley's well-known sentence is apt nonetheless: “*The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.*” Historians of the period, Peter

Hennessey, David Kynaston, Andy Beckett, and Dominic Sandbrook highlight the changes in British society from a time of deference through the “Swinging Sixties” up to the more individualistic 1980s. The schools reflected these changes.

Boarding schools hold a special place, not always positive, in the British way of life. Books, television series and films have given readers and audiences a multiplicity of views. “*Tom Brown’s Schooldays*” (1857) introduced the basic building blocks of being away from home and parents; the rough and tumble of life (Flashman the bully) and the sporting prowess to success. Above all the Rugby School of the time brought out the development of a true Victorian Muscular Christian gentleman. “*Goodbye Mr Chips*” looks at a school over time, before, during and after the First World War, through the eyes of a teacher from his naïve inexperienced start to the fondly remembered mentor of many pupils over the years. The exploits of “*Billy Bunter*” highlight the humour and comradeship inherent in boarding. “*If...*”, the Lindsay Anderson film, takes a decidedly negative stance with its anarchic and subversive approach to hierarchy, discipline, petty rules, and resistance to change. It is noticeable that all of these were boy’s schools. Girl’s boarding schools were less common but as the “*St Trinians*” books and films show girls could be just as naughty, imaginative, subversive, and bold as any boy’s school. Life in girl’s boarding schools, especially in “prep” schools, was recently covered in “*Terms and Conditions. Life in Girls ‘Boarding Schools 1939–79’*” by Ysenda Maxtone Graham. In the last twenty years or so books have featured what might be termed the “dark side” of boarding schools. The issue of “boarding school syndrome” has been put forward, reflecting the long term psychological effects of boarding. More books have covered sexual abuse, others the influence Public Schools have on public life and politics.

The global phenomenon of J K Rowling’s *Harry Potter* saga has brought the British boarding school to a whole new audience. Hogwarts with its benevolent but firm Headmaster, the friendly, and sometimes not so friendly, teachers, the rivalry between the houses (and indeed the concept of houses) and the importance of sporting success at Quidditch brings together in a magical setting many of the inherent aspects of boarding schools. It was not just for jumping on a bandwagon that academics contributed to “*Harry Potter and International Relations*,” using the stories to explore identity,



international sport, educational theories and many other topics.

The literary world exaggerates, dramatizes, and invents for its effect. But throughout the wide range of novels, plays and films, elements of reality can be discerned. The 20,000 plus people associated with the Windsor Schools can see through the literary conceits. Many pupils became grateful for the inspirational teacher who steered them towards their career, their personal development, and their outlook on life. Others, a minority, can recall the over-strict teacher, petty regulations, or the bullies. Teachers who overlapped for only a few years of their careers hold reunions decades later. Alumni societies have existed in the UK, Australia, Canada, and USA. Even today, four decades since the school closed, *Facebook* hosts six, closed, groups with well over a thousand active members.

The literary world of boarding schools provides a guide to the concept and structure of a boarding school. They differ in many respects from the normal “day” school. Boarding schools are a closed community, physically and often emotionally. The buildings are almost always old. “Exeats”, permission to leave the school premises, are tightly controlled. Pupils, in our case from 11 to 18, are away from home and their parents. Teachers, and matrons, have a pastoral as well as academic function. They operate on a 24-hour cycle: classes may end around 4 in the afternoon but the school life continues; there is no respite nor privacy. A school’s ethical and moral culture is given high importance; religion (or at least the chapels) plays a more visible role than in day schools. Sporting prowess is admired, at times even more than academic success. Pupils live in “houses”: defined physical areas under the leadership of a housemistress/housemaster (a senior teacher) with a matron in charge of housekeeping. Houses compete incessantly, at sports and at various competitions invented for the purpose. Loyalty is often stronger to the house than to the school, certainly within the school itself. Inside the house pupils live in the “dorm”: dormitories. From eight to ten sharing in the junior year and gradually becoming less crowded as the pupil moves through the ages until at the senior levels often a dorm of just two and in rarer cases a single room. Washing facilities are shared. Discipline and rules are mostly unwritten but defined and controlled. There is a hierarchy of punishments, and an associated hierarchy of who can administer them. Senior pupils are given responsibility, again in a hierarchy. There are two grades, monitor (or assistant) and prefect again at two levels, house and school. Above them

with varying responsibilities are the Head Girls and Head Boys of houses and of the school.

The schools functioned in four areas. The *academic* covered subjects to be taught, their levels and examinations. The senior mistress/master or the deputy headmistress/master took the lead role with the heads of subject departments. The *pastoral* function was led by the house mistresses/masters, supported by assigned duty teaching staff, with the matron as the housekeeping lead. Chaplains played their part. The *social* side of the school was covered by sports and by a wide range of groups and societies turning hobbies into formalised activity. The *administrative* function of the school is often overlooked despite it employing the most people. Led by the bursar, the administrative and ancillary staff covered a wide range of tasks from the offices, supplies, catering, cleaning, the sick bays, the upkeep of the sports fields and buildings, and the tuck shop.

The idea of boarding schools and school education in general were, during the lifetime of the Windsor Schools, a subject of intense debate. Overwhelmingly boarding schools were outside the state education system. They were private, parents paying an often very high fee, and in a term often misleading for many, called “Public Schools”. Their alumni occupied a disproportionate ratio of senior roles in politics, in the civil and diplomatic services, the judiciary and the media. (Even in the 2020s they still maintain this position). Pupils were at the schools for the status they bestowed, for the contacts and the “attitude.” It was a “career choice” made for them by their parents.

The Windsor Schools were different. Pupils were there simply as a side-effect of their fathers’ (rarely their mothers’) occupation. Attendance became compulsory if there was no suitable day school close enough to their father’s military base in West Germany and some neighbouring countries (and for most it was prohibitively expensive to send children to UK Public Schools)

In the mid-1960s boarding schools were intensively reviewed by Royston Lambert of Kings College, Cambridge. His most famous and influential study, “*The Hothouse Society*”, was the first to look at schools from the pupils’ perspective. He and his team visited 66 boarding schools in the UK, listening to pupils not staff. He later visited the Hamm schools. Regrettably he did not include his evidence from Hamm in the book. His sociological approach to boarding education throws a sharp light on many aspects; it has been influential

in the writing of this book, notably by using pupils' own words.

Royal Commissions, considerable review literature and political arguments ranged over the public school arena. In parallel the education sector was wrestling with the ground-breaking 1944 Education Act. It did not specify a particular form of secondary school but local authorities introduced a three-tier system of secondary education from age 11 to, initially, 15 (Grammar, Modern and Technical). Educationalists and politicians were proposing (and opposing) a new system before this structure had settled down. In practice it became a two tier system as relatively few technical schools were built. The 1960s saw a move towards the "comprehensive" system with all three streams in one, larger, school with the famous Department of Education Circular 10/65. The Windsor Schools (along with the two other BFES boarding schools, Prince Rupert in Wilhelmshaven and King Alfred in Plön) found themselves early pioneers in this comprehensive format.

The schools had external and interlocking factors to contend with. The high level geo-political context impacted on the schools in various ways. When the school opened in 1953 the UK was still an occupation power over Germany, with extensive authority. The British Families Education Service, formed in 1946 and responsible for the schooling of children of Service personnel in West Germany, and already running two secondary boarding schools in West Germany, was expanding. Its expenditure in Deutsche Marks was paid from "occupation funds" from the German government. From 1955 the British military role changed to being an invited member of a NATO partner. A consequence was the slow phasing out of the occupation funds giving a financial headache to the British government, the military in Germany and to the BFES schools.

The UK itself, despite a growing economy from the mid-1950s, (although nowhere near as fast as the German economy) was in serious economic trouble for most of the period of the school's history. There was a chronic shortage of foreign exchange. Successive reviews of the military, as the Cold War developed and military strategy and tactics evolved, resulted in a common thread: a reduction and rationalisation of troops and airfields. These strategic decisions wound their way to impact on the schools. In the end they contributed (but were not the final reason) to the closure of the schools.

Most of the primary records of the schools have disappeared. No daily log books at school or house level (just a single one for the primary school) and

only a couple of BFES annual reports. Two long out of print books cover the organisational history: Lt Col St John Williams, a former senior officer in the Army Education Service, in *Tommy Atkins' Children (1971)*, covers worldwide schooling for army children from 1675 to 1870. More recently in 2008, Paul Macardle wrote *The History of Service Children's Education in Germany 1947–2007*. Both are very useful for the administrative background and context to BFES. The online availability of Cabinet papers and Mrs Thatcher's papers enables an updating of both books. The alumni association of Prince Rupert School published an excellent history of their school, mostly though the recollections of alumni. Now also unavailable. Most of the books on BAOR focus on the military and geo-political aspects. The best coverage of the life of troops, families and children in BAOR is in Roy Bainton's *The Long Patrol (2003)* which includes a chapter on children, including memories of one former Windsor pupil in the 1950s.

I have made extensive use of the school magazines, *Concordia* and *Ambassador*, various school pamphlets and recollections from former pupils and staff. There is a guide to the main sources at the end. I dislike footnotes in non-academic books!

This book is in two parts. Part A is a narrative story of the schools. The opening chapter poses the core question: why did British children in West Germany need schools? The following chapter looks at the formation of the British Families Education Service, the opening of the first two boarding schools and the decision to open Windsor School. Chapter 3 covers the preparations prior to the opening of the school in November 1953 and takes us back to the 1930s German re-armament. Subsequent chapters take roughly a decade each and are marked by the changing headmistresses and headmasters who had a considerable degree of autonomy within the schools. In Chapters 4 to 6 we see the operation of the school, which served as a template for the remainder of the schools' history. Chapter 7 looks at the division into two schools in 1959, Windsor Boys' School and Windsor Girls' School. Chapters 7 to 11 continue the story of the two schools though the 1960s and 1970s to their remerger in 1981 and closure in 1983.

Part B takes a different approach. It is a series of self-contained thematic chapters and does not need to be read sequentially. It is more granular, exploring themes in detail. The final chapter offers some reflections.

A note on style and language; both have changed since the school closed in

1983, let alone from its opening in 1953. I have used the styles of the period: headmistress and headmaster not head teacher (and certainly not the terrible CEO now in vogue in schools), pupils not students. Teachers are Miss, Mrs and Mr.

I have been helped in writing this history by many former pupils and teachers. I list them in the acknowledgements; I hope I have not omitted or misrepresented anyone in error. To all of them I record my thanks.

# **Time Line**

- 1935/36 Construction of Dannevoux Kaserne, Hamm
- 1937/38 Construction of Argonner Kaserne, Hamm
- 1944 US Air Force drops bombs on Argonner Kaserne
- 1945 End of Second World War
- 1946 Operation Union: Wives and children of British military allowed to join fathers in Germany. British Families Education Service (BFES) formed.
- 1947 70 primary schools opened in British Zone of Germany including one in Hamm. Prince Rupert School, Wilhelmshaven opens
- 1948 King Alfred School, Plön, opens
- 1953 Decision to open Windsor School in Hamm in former Argonner Barracks (lately Brixton Camp)  
July: Mr Aspinall, headmaster arrives  
November 17. Windsor School opens. First 90 pupils arrive. School birthday
- 1958 December: Mr Aspinall leaves
- 1959 January: Mr Benyon as Headmaster  
King Alfred School closes  
Windsor Girls' School opens in Plön. Miss Willson as Headmistress  
Windsor Boys' School opens on former Windsor School site. Mr Benyon Headmaster
- 1960 January: Windsor Girls' School moves to former Dannevoux Barracks (lately Newcastle Barracks)
- 1963 Miss Feerick acting headmistress WGS until arrival of Miss Evans
- 1964 January. Mr Wylie Headmaster WBS
- 1965 First American pupils from parents at Du Pont factory
- 1968 December Mr Wylie leaves
- 1969 January Mr Worrall acting headmaster WBS  
July: Miss Evans leaves WGS  
September Mr Lester Headmaster WBS; Miss Feerick Headmistress WGS
- 1971 Start of large intake of day pupils from Soest and Werl
- 1973 Mr Worrall promoted from deputy head to headmaster WBS  
Miss Brown as Headmistress WGS
- 1976 Mr Worrall leaves; Mr Gysin takes over
- 1980 Decision to merge schools
- 1981 Last intake of 1st years  
Schools merge on Windsor Boys' site: WGS closes, Mr Gysin as headmaster
- 1982 Decision to close in July 1983. Mr Gysin leaves and deputy headmaster Mr Leighton takes over  
September: Final school year starts
- 1983 July Windsor School closes, 81 pupils at closing service
- 1990/91 Primary School closes

**BFES** British Families Education Service  
**BAOR** British Army of the Rhine  
**SCS** Service Children's Schools  
**WGS** Windsor Girls' School  
**WBS** Windsor Boys' School  
**PRS** Prince Rupert School  
**KAS** King Alfred School



# A Visual Record

I've put together an online collection photographs and videos. Links are correct at August 2023.

The starting point is Andrew Gillat's exceptional 3D tour of the Windsor School/Windsor Boys' School. The virtual tour recreates the site and buildings (with several hundred embedded photographs and a recording of the 1969 performance of *Pirates of Penzance*). For those who do not remember or know the schools I recommend looking at this reconstruction to understand the former Argonner Barracks and Windsor School/Windsor Boys' School. Andrew is producing additional 3D tours.

<https://cicadastudio.com/wbshamm>

There is an aerial view of the current state of the former Windsor Girl's School on this stock photo site. Some buildings have gone, the tank garages in the foreground were not part of the school but the blocks for houses, teaching and the gym are visible.

<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-cde-cde-headquarters-accommodation-facility-at-the-old-uentroper-way-92229656.html>

I have made a collection of photographs at <https://prasino.eu/concordia-the-windsor-schools/>

## Videos on YouTube.

The 1960 flood (mislabelled as 1957):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EULN\\_Ij7o9c&t=56s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EULN_Ij7o9c&t=56s)

Extracts of Mr Howard's 1960 film [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcmimXvnt\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcmimXvnt_8)

WBS Fete 1962 (Shaun O'Meara) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

[v=\\_vpMqmPfS04](#)

The Army Educational Corps produced a film in 1965 for teacher recruitment in the worldwide Service Children's Schools. A fascinating social commentary. Miss Evans of WGS seen briefly at 3.00 in the second film and WBS follows at 4.34. WBS science classroom at 9.08, football at 9.37.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDOQHKODNCU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=montSOGMECY&t=2s>

The empty WGS site in 1994 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EGnfar4y9E>

The demolition of the dining hall at Windsor School in 2018:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Js377C0T18>

The WGS school song *Concordia*. Words in chapter 8.

<https://soundcloud.com/user-256214062/concordia-the-song>

# **PART A**

# Operation Union

One of the most pressing questions confronting a writer of a historical topic is when to start. Where, and when, does the story of the Windsor Schools begin? A film script may start at the closing ceremony in July 1983 with an image of the last pupil leaving the chapel. A 3rd or 4th year, the last of the 81 pupils left in the school; he (someone who was there recalls it was a boy) looks back. Wistfully? Cheerfully? Simply glad it's all over? Or perhaps remembering the final school outing the previous day to the Phantasia theme park? We will never know.

A more conventional start would be 30 years earlier on a grey November day when Edda Haick became the first pupil to arrive at the as yet unfinished Windsor School. Slowly that day a further 89 pupils arrive to join the few teachers, matrons, administrative staff and builders. Did they, in the words of a later young arrival, find that first impression of the imposing barrack buildings, built less than 20 years earlier for soldiers, “a little scary”? The first scenario calls for flashbacks, the second a series of forward scenes.

Both approaches could work but they suffer from one weakness. They do not explain why over a 30-year period, from 1953 to 1983, around 16,000 pupils, mostly British but including Americans, Canadians, Maltese and many other nationalities, over 900 teachers and several thousand administrative and ancillary staff (mostly German), needed to attend or work at a British boarding school in West Germany. To find the answer we need to go back a few years, to early 1946.

## **Operation Union: the decision**

Histories of this period say that in 1946 the British Cabinet authorised the families of soldiers to accompany them on their postings to Germany:

Operation Union.

The war in Germany ended in May 1945. Germany was occupied by the four Allied Powers. There was no time limit to the occupation. No peace treaty was in immediate sight. After the First World War the Versailles Treaty of 1919 had authorised British troops to stay in Germany until 1933. The British were allocated Cologne and the surrounding area. They left Cologne in 1926 and Wiesbaden in 1929. The Army had been running schools for the children of servicemen since 1675 and opened 20 small schools in Germany. They catered for children up to 14, the school leaving age.

Germany in 1945 was ruled by the four Powers. Field Marshal Montgomery commanded far more than an army. As Commander-in-Chief of the British zone of occupied Germany, he, along with his counterparts from USA, USSR and France, was both the military and civilian governor. There was no German civilian administration at any level until in late 1945 Montgomery authorised the formation of political parties in the British zone as a first step in restoring local government. The British civilian administration, the Control Commission, was running the British zone of the country alongside the army. The Commission, staffed mainly by British civil servants and local government officials, was to grow to 16,000.

Germany in early 1946 was unrecognisable. Of the 5,250,000 residential properties in the British zone only 3,500,000 were habitable. In Hamm, the 66 Allied air-raids had left 66% of houses destroyed or damaged. The most pressing problem was the severe shortage of food. A paper from Montgomery's command went to the British cabinet, under Prime Minister Clement Atlee, in December 1945. It pointed out that the average food intake in the British zone was barely 1,000 calories a day; *"no-one can live on this, it is a starvation level"*. Oxfam, now a well-known international aid agency, and other famine relief groups, lobbied the British government to allow, despite the rationing in place in the UK, food parcels to be sent to Germany.

As well as the German population the occupying powers were also responsible for two categories of refugees. The largest group were the several million (upwards of 9 million) Germans where were fleeing from the former German territories in the east in what was now Poland, USSR or evicted from Yugoslavia. The second category were "displaced persons." In March 1946 there were 326,000 Poles and 119,000 other non-German

displaced persons in the British Zone.

On the military front Montgomery's army was faced with an awkward problem. Soldiers were unaccompanied by their families, unlike in other postings around the world. At Montgomery's urging, in February 1946, the War Office started to investigate the problem. The issue of morale was a strong factor. Brigadier Prior-Palmer MP visited troops in Germany in early 1946. He reported to the House of Commons:

*I went round the whole of the British Army in Germany, and in eight cases out of ten the question put to me was, "When can we have our wives out here? Our lives would be reasonably tolerable if we could have them out here." A very large number of the men have been separated from their families for six years, and they could see no reason why they should not have their families with them.*

Housing costs could be offset by rents but there were doubts over the education of children. In March the War Office sent Lt Col Downs of the Army Education Corps, and Mr WA Hamilton from the Department of Education to see the situation in Germany. They reported to the three ministers for the military (Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force) who together with Mr John Hynd (the minister responsible for the administration of Germany) took a paper to Cabinet. It posed the problem:

*As the run-down of the Army proceeds, the numbers serving in the United Kingdom will dwindle rapidly. Apart from men awaiting their release, the only troops at home will shortly be those under training and those serving in base installations. Men returning under the Python scheme after long service away cannot, therefore, all be absorbed in the home establishment and increasing numbers will have to be posted to Germany which, for this purpose, will become a "home station".*

*In normal peace conditions there is provision for the families of officers and men to be accommodated in married quarters in home stations and, if these quarters are insufficient to accommodate all the families, it is open to officers and men to house their families in the vicinity. It is, however, for obvious reasons impossible for them to do*

*so on the Continent.*

*For the other two Services and for the staffs of the Control Commission, many of whom are serving on overseas engagements of up to 7 years duration, it is also desirable on general grounds that the men should not be denied a privilege open to those serving in other theatres. It is, of course, important, for reasons of morale and recruitment, that there should be equal treatment between the Services and the civil and military staff of the Control Commission.*

(The “Python” scheme was the demobilisation process for the wartime forces. Over 4.5 million people left the forces in two years). The solution was clear:

*We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that officers and men of the three Services and members of the Control staff serving in North-West Europe who have more than one year’s service there in front of them should, in principle, be allowed to have their wives and families with them if they so wish.*

The estimated net cost (after rents) was £70,000 plus German Reichsmarks (RM) 23,970,000. The local currency element was to become a major issue in years to come. The report forecast 10,000 wives and 12,500 children would take up the offer. Of critical importance to the history of the Windsor Schools was this commitment:

*Free education in Germany of children age 5 to 15 to a standard equivalent to that obtaining in the United Kingdom: the Ministry of Education are assisting in the necessary arrangements.*

At the time the school leaving age was 14. The Education Act of 1944 proposed raising it to 15 but implementation was deferred to April 1947. The cabinet paper did not expect the education system for military family’s children in Germany to start until 1947.

The Cabinet discussed the matter in May. They were not convinced. Atlee had no objection to wives but he did object to children: “*should we send children to a country where there may be disorder, disease, famine?*” It was noted that the Americans and Russians already allowed families to their

zones and that British soldiers in Italy and Austria were now accompanied. The Cabinet sent the paper back for further thought on three issues:

*Give soldiers more leave to return to UK and their families more frequently; or by allowing families short visits to Germany*

*Consider the effect on UK housing if families moved to Germany and lost their house*

*Whether the teacher shortage in UK would be made worse by taking teachers to Germany.*

A revised paper went back to Cabinet in June. It tackled the objections, found them not strong and re-proposed the original scheme. This time the Prime Minister was more concerned that news of the scheme had been widely reported in the press. Both national and, more relevantly as it had a much wider readership, the extensive provincial press, had reported the proposals in very specific terms, for example, two ships a week for families. The results of a survey of troops in Germany and the timing were also now in the public domain. All before the cabinet had approved the scheme. A marginal note shows Atlee was not amused. During the discussion the Education Minister, Ellen Wilkinson said:

*... that she doubted whether it would be expedient to send children of school age to Germany; but, if the scheme were to go forward, it was essential that the children should receive proper education. This would be costly in money and would call for the transfer of a considerable number of teachers from the United Kingdom.*

At the time it was estimated England needed 70,000 more teachers to enable the post 1944 schools to operate. Wilkinson was acutely aware of this teacher shortage. Her concerns were undermined when it transpired that her ministry officials had already been consulted and had agreed to the recommendations. Miss Wilkinson stood her ground. She said that, even so, it was her personal view that the advantages to be secured by this scheme would not be worth the expenditure which it would involve.

Atlee remained cautious. The notes of the meeting record him saying: *“Folly to begin at once. Plan and prepare. Be careful and go slowly,*



*nothing until August.*” At this time Atlee was secretly considering withdrawing British troops from Germany as an economy measure if the UK could not obtain a financial loan from USA.

The matter was referred for implementation to the Overseas Reconstruction Committee, responsible for the management of the occupation. On 20 June the Minister for War announced in the House of Commons that the scheme would proceed. MPs frustration at the delay in implementing the scheme was clear. In answer to an MP the Minister explained the operational issues being considered and said:

*There is the educational aspect, for example, which is very serious; if children go over there, we cannot allow them, as it were, to run wild. They must have their education continued if they are going out for any length of time, and matters like that add up to make this a very difficult problem.*

The controversy continued after the decision:

*“Following the decision to allow wives to join their husbands in Germany, a letter signed by several women, some of whom were public figures, appeared in “The Times” condemning the actions of British wives whom they felt to be placing a greater burden on German families by joining their husbands in Germany. A few days later Clementine Churchill wrote to the newspaper supporting this view. In response, a couple of BAOR (British Army on the Rhine) wives defended their position, but notably one wife wrote in to argue that even wives had to make sacrifices in the face of German hardships”.*

Similar complaints were made in the provincial press but generally the scheme was welcomed. Ironically this opposition echoed a similar complaint made six years earlier by the wives of senior Nazi leaders, including Frau Himmler, about the requisitioning of houses in the German occupation of Rotterdam.

Operation Union started. The first families, (500 women and children), sailed into Cuxhaven harbour on 1 September 1946. By October applications had been accepted from 468 wives and 514 children from military families and even more, 771 wives and 848 children, from the civilian Control

Commission. Of these, 728 wives and 790 children had already travelled to Germany. The focus now turns to their schooling.

## **British Families Education Service starts work**

The British Families Education Service (BFES) set up its headquarters in Herford on 26 September 1946, just a few weeks after the first families arrived in Germany. Herford, along with Bad Oeyenhausen, was one of the main administrative centres of the new British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). The intention was to replicate as far as possible a local education authority (LEA) in the British Zone. There was one major difference: the Zone, at 20,000 square miles (52,000 square hectares) was considerably larger than a typical LEA. The troops, and the children, were scattered across the Zone, often in small units. (As an aside, BFES is often mistakenly called British *Forces* Education Service.)

John Trevelyan, the director of education in Westmoreland, was appointed Director. His experience of schools over a large rural area was to be valuable as would be his determination. He later wrote:

*In August 1946 I became its first Director, and for a short time the only member of staff. I reported for duty at a house in Princes Gardens, Kensington, which has since been demolished. I had been told that I would be provided with adequate office accommodation and a temporary office staff. I found two empty rooms, in one of which there was a telephone on the floor. I telephoned to the person who had given me these assurances and was told in reply that I was lucky to have a telephone. I was sent office furniture and a temporary clerk; within a few days between us we had organised an office and that was the start of it all.*

*'I ... visited Germany in order to see what kind of problems I was likely to have. I was conducted round the British Zone by Lieutenant-Colonel F. J. Downs, Chief Inspector of Army Education (at the age of 31). In the course of our tour he told me that when he was able to leave the Army he would take up an appointment as H.M.I. for the Ministry of Education, but said that he would like to join my staff in Germany. I negotiated his release from the Army and a postponement of his work for the Ministry, and he joined me. In retrospect, I cannot imagine what I would have done without him.'*

Trevelyan was to remain in post until January 1949 and was awarded an OBE for his BFES work. His name, or at least his signature, later became well known between 1958 and 1971 on those certificates, (U, 14, X) shown before films in cinemas when he was Director of the British Board of Film Classification.

By mid-November a system of four regional directorates (Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover and Dusseldorf) was in place and the first two teachers arrived.

## **Recruiting of teachers**

One of Trevelyan's first successes was to have a long lasting impact:

*'Before moving to Germany I had battles to fight. Perhaps my most important victory was when I obtained agreement to our teachers having officer status; in the Army Schools teachers were graded as Warrant Officers.'*

BFES issued a recruitment call for teachers. Miss Wilkinson had set two criteria: a limit of 200 and no teacher should be away from the UK for more than three years. In her view both were designed not to restrict the development of post war schooling in England and Wales. In late 1947, the period was extended to include the possibility of a 4th year. Teachers were offered a 25% premium on the normal salary and married teachers had free accommodation. There was one special clause in the contracts:

*To counter these threats (black market related) to the recovery of the fragile German economy, British personnel (including teachers) were*

*paid part of their salary in British Armed Forces Special Vouchers, commonly known as BAFSV which, could then only be spent in army locations such as the NAAFI canteens and Messes.*

There were 2,001 applications. Selection was in London. The successful teachers took part in a short familiarisation course at Bletchley Park which had already been stripped of its wartime codebreaking machines and history.

## **Finding the buildings**

Soon after the end of the war Montgomery issued an order: neither the Army nor the Control Commission could requisition any German civilian school. It was estimated that in 1945 nearly half the schools in Germany were damaged. In Hamm, for example, 10 of the 22 schools were severely damaged by Allied air raids.

This restriction posed problems for BFES as it started searching for school premises in 1947. Most of the early primary schools were small, with fewer than 50 pupils and just a couple of teachers. They required not just classroom space but also outdoor area, dining rooms, teacher's rooms etc. As part of the occupying power, BFES could requisition property (except schools). These powers were intensely unpopular and were to lead to significant unrest from the German population. There was intense competition between the army, the RAF and the Control Commission; BFES management had to lobby hard to obtain suitable buildings. These ranged from palatial estate homes to hotels, to private homes and barracks. It was estimated that a budget of DM10,000 would be adequate to convert part of a barrack building for a small primary school. Once a building was identified it was administered for BFES by an army or RAF unit depending on which service provided the majority of children. This led in the early days to awkward management issues; the military not being used to the logistical demands of a school but eventually a system of Regulations and procedures overseen by Quartermasters was set up.

## **The start**

The first BFES primary schools opened in January 1947, often with one teacher covering all ages. By the end of the summer term in 1947, a mere 9

months after BFES's start, there were 220 teachers (the majority single women) with around 4,000 children in 70 locations across the British zone providing for nursery, infant and junior groups. Hamm was one of those locations. A small primary school opened for the children of the British troops. It was housed in Newcastle barracks (the former Dannevoix Kaserne) and had one teacher and 15 pupils (*see Chapter 26*).

Mr Frank Buckley was one of those early teachers and later a Regional Director (based in Hamm and with three boys at WBS). His view of the surroundings at his school in Düsseldorf was bleak:

*Their (teachers, parents and pupils) first impression must have been one of appalling destruction. Whole towns were ruins, supplies of gas and electricity were limited and water had to be boiled before use. The only transport on the roads belonged to the Control Commission or the Military Government. The German population was apathetic and bordering on starvation. There were few shops and those which remained had nothing to sell. Money had no value, barter replaced currency and the black market was everywhere. Although the opening of German schools had been given high priority, the majority had either been destroyed or damaged and such few children as could attend school worked a shift system.*

The British families lived in requisitioned houses among neighbours who were sometimes hostile and very rarely friendly but life for them, after the austerity of wartime Britain exceeded belief. They were provided with domestic help – cook, housekeeper, boilerman – and drink and petrol were cheap.

Classrooms were small and schools lacked the amenities of hall and workroom. Nevertheless they had the atmosphere of a small village school. The staffing scale was generous by UK standards and designed to cover small groups with a wide age and ability range. Mr Buckley later recalled how much he enjoyed teaching in those early years. The shortage of formal resources encouraged teachers to devise their own materials and projects. Progressive methods and ahead of their time.

Writing in August 1947, Mr James Downs, having had his wish to leave the army and now deputy director of BFES, gave an insightful view of the

attitudes and concerns of the time:

*It is far too early to estimate the psychological effect of residence in Germany on the British children. It is unhappily true that values are awry here to-day and the British child may well get a sense of power which he is ill-adapted to assume. His few sweets, for example, have appreciable 'black market' purchasing power; the eagerness to do his bidding on the part of servants at home and in the families' clubs may breed in him as unnecessary arrogance; he may find it expediency being what it is that a German boy may be cuffed by him without hitting back. Alternatively he may find his outlook distorted by the many sights that can and have done both to adults working in Germany today.*

## **Secondary Schools**

With the expansion of primary schools underway BFES turned to the secondary school problem. In several primary schools there were “senior tops” to cater for younger secondary age pupils. There were “top up” classes for older secondary age pupils in Berlin and Hamburg.

Mr Smitherman, the first headmaster of Prince Rupert School, later wrote up his memories of the opening years of the school. He wrote of the challenges of starting the school from scratch with little guidance. He commented on the main problem:

*By far the most difficult side of this (creating a school system in Germany) concerned the older children. What a problem he (Trevelyan) had! The British Zone in Germany was larger than Wales; it would have an unknown child population scattered in pockets of unknown size all over the place. He decided there and then that boarding schools were the only answer. The problem was complicated by the fact that girls as well as boys would be coming out. Would the girls – and the boys for that matter – take kindly to boarding school life? How would people react to such schools? Complicated though the problem was, one fact was obvious – the first school had to be co-educational. Otherwise there would be bitter resentment from those left out and it soon became evident that everybody expected their*

*children to be admitted. It was an expectation rather than a hope!*

Prince Rupert School, the first boarding school, had a rapid development phase; a feature of BFES schools including the Windsor Schools. Mr Smitherman continues:

*In February 1947, I first saw my school buildings. Overlooking a great harbour was a barracks completed in about 1942. The British Navy were in occupation, shortly to move to smaller accommodation as their job got less. The barracks – unbelievably – were almost undamaged. Flowerbeds had been planted, a fine concert hall built for the ratings' entertainment and a big range of Nissen huts put up for the Naafi canteen. Could we put a school in it? We said: "Yes, for 400 children." We then measured it all up carefully and said: "Well, for 300." When the necessary alterations were made, the figure fell to 247 and we could not find room for even three more beds! These figures amazed us – we were shocked to find how much room a boarding school actually required and soon hit on a formula: a barracks for 600 men will hold a boarding school of about 300 – just.*

*In March, the decision was made to take the barracks over. We planned to open the School sometime during the summer term with some older boys and girls, and then to take in the full range in September. All we had was a barracks occupied by the Navy, lots of goodwill and ideas and, as it turned out, lots of ignorance. We called in the Royal Engineers, made hasty plans for adaptations, started indenting for books and looked through lots of files of men and women offering themselves for service as teachers.*

*Thus, what is believed to be the first boarding school, under the terms of the 1944 Education Act, came into being and Prince Rupert School opened in Wilhelmshaven on 1st July 1947.*

Some of the first of 70 pupils arrived on the 1st. The main group actually arrived, after a frantic search, around 4am the following morning. Their truck had broken down on the outskirts of Wilhelmshaven. Mr Smitherman's recollections (available online) are very informative those early years of PRS.



Mr Downs was still not fully satisfied that the secondary issue had been solved. Writing in 1947 after the opening of PRS:

*It is calculated that at least two further boarding schools will be needed to provide education for those children of secondary age who can only be offered appropriate education in boarding schools. The demand undoubtedly exists among parents; more than four hundred having applied within a week of the first announcement about Wilhelmshaven; and further secondary schools will be established immediately BFES is offered suitable buildings. It now seems likely that it may be possible to open a second large boarding school by Christmas.*

Mr Downs was optimistic. A second secondary boarding school did open but in 1948. The lack of suitable premises caused the delay. A former German naval training base, in the north German city of Plön was underused by a Guards Division. BFES requested the site for its second school but it took the intervention of the British Military Governor to secure it for BFES. The first editorial in *Red Dragon*, the magazine of King Alfred School described the planning:

*When the Director B.F.E.S. and the newly appointed Headmaster visited Connaught Barracks – as the School then was – in February, 1948, we worked out roughly how the school could best be fitted in to the existing buildings. With an expected maximum total of 500 children, we planned to have four houses each of 50 boys and 50 girls and two junior houses for the 11 and 12 year olds. The buildings earmarked for the junior houses were what are now Curie and the girls' half of Fleming House, the boys' part being then a hospital. But two factors upset our calculations – one that we found 140 new children were coming in the Autumn Term thus bringing our number up to six hundred, and the other that we would have no less than 300 boys and girls aged 11 or 12.*

A specially chartered train meandered through the British Zone picking up pupils; 350 arrived on the first day, 7 May. A few days later the Minister of Education, Mr George Tomlinson MP, formally opened both PRS and KAS.

At the start of the autumn term 1948, King Alfred School had a school roll of over 640, with 300 aged 11 and 12.

By 1948, in less than two years, BFES had created two secondary co-educational comprehensive boarding schools with nearly 900 pupils. The two schools were pioneers: the first co-educational, comprehensive, boarding schools operating under the 1944 Education Act.

Local education authorities, implementing the Act, divided secondary schooling, covering ages 11 to 15, into three. The grammar stream was for those destined for university or the professions; it catered for around 10–15% of the age group. Entrance to the grammar schools was through an examination taken in the final year of primary, ages 10/11; called, unsurprisingly, the 11+ examination. The modern stream, soon called the secondary modern, was for the general intake and the relatively few technical schools covered vocational courses. The schools were separate and operated independently under the auspices of the local education authority. BFES had decided in 1947 that it could not follow this pattern. It did not have the resources to build and run three separate parallel secondary schools. It also felt it could not run an entrance examination as pupils were in Germany simply because of their fathers' employment.

## **More secondary places needed**

Any satisfaction that the secondary problem had been solved was short-lived. Prince Rupert School continued to expand. In 1951 approval was given to expand, in stages, both the capacity and the facilities. In September 1952 the school roll reached 400 and in 1953, 650, slightly below the 670 capacity of King Alfred School. The small day secondary school in Berlin was closed in 1950 and secondary age pupils from Berlin went to the two boarding schools. It was planned to close the small school (130 pupils) in Hamburg.

In early 1952 responsibility for BFES moved from the Foreign Office to the War Office (not without some fairly intense interdepartmental arguments). In autumn 1952 the Zonal Board for BFES (the executive committee now chaired by the War Office with representatives from the Foreign Office, Ministry of Education, BAOR, RAF, Department of Army Education and BFES) faced urgent challenges.

The first was the implication of a significant change in the occupation. Seven years after the wars' end, occupation was increasingly unacceptable to the German authorities. At the international level political level steps were being taken to enable West Germany to become a fully sovereign country. These were tortuous as USA, France and UK sought to find a compromise. The end stage would include Germany's membership of NATO. The role of BAOR, and the RAF, would change from occupiers to invited partners within NATO. A major potential consequence of this change could mean the end of the payment for local DM occupation costs. In 1953 Germany was paying £130 million every year in occupation costs.

Concurrently the British government was seeking ways to reduce the cost of BAOR (a frequent policy headache). At this time the UK was spending over 10% of its GDP on defence (to compare, in 2023, it is slightly over 2%). One major change was the consolidation in BAOR with the creation of a new headquarters in Rheindahlen (replacing Herford and Bad Oeyenhausen), a major rationalisation of bases and withdrawal from northern Germany. The Rheindahlen complex was budgeted at £12.5 million, a charge to occupation costs.

Another challenge was demographic. More children were requiring secondary schooling. BFES's own analysis showed that there were likely to be more children in Germany than the official average used for planning by BAOR. The absolute number of troops was not the main issue. BFES based its forecasts on the number of married quarters (including requisitioned houses) and the number of children per quarter. The Army maintained a ratio of 1.2; BFES claimed 1.5 to 1.7. Experience was to show the BFES the more accurate.

The BFES report to the Zonal Board meeting in September 1952 set out their forecasts and implications:

*Whereas the primary field as far ahead as September 1953, is likely to be adequately covered by expected and planned increases of accommodation, the secondary school accommodation is already seriously deficient and the deficiency will greatly increase. Taking the estimated figure of 2,200 children by September 1953, and deducting say 300 children whose parents may not want secondary boarding facilities for their children, the residual figure is 1,900. Against this*

*there is existing accommodation for a little over 1,300, viz*

*King Alfred School                      600*

*Prince Rupert School                      600*

*British School Hamburg                      130*

*The deficiency of places, therefore, is some 600, and would be worsened by any run down in the British School in Hamburg*

Projections indicated that only 1 out of 11 applicants for secondary places could be accepted in September 1953. Upwards of 800 children over 11 would be held in primary schools. Although a few more places could be created in PRS and KAS these only compensated for the gradual run down of the Hamburg school in Altona.

The Board put forward three developments.

- Build a new purpose built day secondary school in Rheindahlen to cater for the new BAOR headquarters. During 1953 the plan was developed, initially for 250, later for 350 pupils, In December 1953 BFES sought authority from the War Office for the new school, with a budget of DM2.5m. The intention was to open in 1954; the core group of teachers, including George Wright from PRS as headmaster and Mr Tom Benyon as deputy headmaster started work in January 1955. Queens School took in its first pupils in September 1955 although many of the buildings would take several years to be completed.
- Open a new boarding school in Hamm. The rapid growth of the secondary school population in BFES required a new school well before Queen's would be ready. It sought authority in late 1952 to open a new secondary coeducational boarding school.
- Open a new boarding school in Gütersloh by converting the soon to be released Sundern Barracks. BFES felt that a new boarding school would solve their secondary boarding needs for a further 5 years. This proposal however was not accepted.

The BFES Annual Report noted the financial urgency:

*It was apparent that the main problem confronting educational planning, consequent on the rise in the numbers of school children, would be to build up the physical accommodation of the schools while, in the absence of the Contractual Agreement (the new post occupation agreement between Germany and the Allies), school building could still be backed by capital expenditure in DMs. Following on from the large building programme completed in 1952–53, comparably heavy expenditure was incurred in the year 1953–54, with a similar commitment likely to fall in the coming financial year.*

An indication of the discussions within the War Office comes from a speech in the House of Commons in 1955 by Labour MP Arthur Blenkinsop. He noted that he had raised the topic of the education of service children in 1953 and the Minister had replied saying three options were being considered:

*First, the possibility was that it might continue the present policy towards full and effective provision for secondary education overseas in day and boarding schools according to need and facilities available locally. The second possibility was to make partial provision overseas and set up Service schools in U.K. for selected children. The third was to set up Service schools in U.K. for all children of secondary school age.*

In the spring of 1953 the War Office gave its approval: a budget of DM 2,085,000 was set aside for the new school in Hamm and a small primary school in Goslar. In sterling this equates to around £180,000; around £5.6m in 2023 terms. The German government, through the occupation costs, picked up the bill. No rent was chargeable. When the school closed it would revert back to the German authorities.

The story of the Windsor Schools in Hamm starts.

## From Argonner to Windsor

BFES had experience, from PRS and KAS, of converting former barracks to coeducational secondary boarding schools. The conversion of Brixton Camp in Hamm was to follow a similar path: quick and not completed when the school started. The period from War Office approval in Spring 1953 to the arrival of the first pupils in November was one of intense activity. As we saw in the previous chapter BFES had an urgent need to provide both secondary boarding places and get the DM costs covered by the German government; time was of the essence.

In many ways military barracks provided a sound foundation for a boarding school despite their austere appearance. For an explanation of this we need to go back 1919. The Treaty of Versailles, winding up the First World War, was imposed upon Germany by the four victorious powers, USA, France, Italy and the UK. There was no negotiation. It was, even at the time, a controversial Treaty, especially where its provisions concerned Germany. John Maynard Keynes, the eminent economist, (a member of the British delegation), wrote a polemic, *“The Economic Consequences of the Peace”* immediately after the Treaty. He saw the imposition of heavy reparations, and the dismantling of German industry, as shoring up problems for the future. The feeling of betrayal by the ruling classes was a potent and attractive factor in the rise of Nazism in the early 1920s and 1930s. Although the net eventual effect of the reparations was far less than forecast (most was written off in the early 1930s) it added a strain on a weak economy.

Whilst the political developments of Germany were influenced by the Treaty it was the military aspects which concern us more directly. The German military machine was to be dismantled and severely restricted. France in particular was in no mood after the wars of 1870–71 and 1914–18 to tolerate an aggressive threat on its eastern border. The German army was

to be limited to 100,000 troops (only 4,000 officers and the total included non-combatants). There was to be no air force and a very small navy (especially no submarines). As a further “safety measure” the area between the Rhine and the French border was to be occupied for 15 years, (later reduced to 1930), and a 50kms zone on the east bank of the Rhine was to be “de-militarised”.

During the 1920s and early 1930s Germany progressively and secretly undermined these restrictions. The military prepared for a future free of restrictions. At the heart of army thinking was a larger army, which would need more barracks; architects worked on improving the 19<sup>th</sup> century design. Templates emerged for barracks to house infantry, artillery and motorized units; each with its own special requirements.

Hitler, in government after winning 37% of the vote in the 1932 elections, assumed full powers with the Enabling Act of March 1933. He was cautious in challenging the Great Powers (in reality Britain and France; USA was isolationist and Italy was under Mussolini) over Versailles. He had used its “unjust” provisions as an election gambit but did not want to immediately test the strength of Britain and France. Accordingly in December 1933 he gave a secret go-ahead to the army to build toward an army of 300,000 in four years. He maintained this secrecy for two years and stepped up diplomatic pressure (for example, by withdrawing from the Geneva Disarmament conference in 1934).

In March 1935 he went public with the new military policy. He disclosed Germany already had an army of 300,000, was building towards 550,000 and then over 800,000. Compulsory conscription, for one year (later extended to two), for all men aged 18–45 was introduced. His next step was in 1936: 32,000 German troops tentatively crossed the Rhine into the demilitarized buffer region. They were under orders to retreat if French troops came to stop them. They didn't.

Each step was still limited to testing the waters with French and British reaction. On each occasion it was muted and limited to diplomatic notes of protest. Many in both countries already saw Nazi Germany as a buffer against a communist threat from Soviet Russia; others saw the military build-up as a natural pathway for a sovereign state. The French were concentrating on building the defensive Maginot Line. None wanted a war. Only a few, and most prominently in Britain, Winston Churchill, saw any longer term risk.

The German army target was increased to 1,000,000 by 1940. There were parallel increases in the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine.

The building of new barracks took initial priority. The new design templates were rolled out. An incredible 532 barracks (with over 2,500 residential blocks) were built between 1934 and 1938, (around 140 a year) and a further 241 were under construction. It took until 1936 for expenditure on armaments to match that on buildings. By 1938 military infrastructure and construction costs were absorbing 80% of German national investment.

## **Barracks in Hamm**

Four barracks were built around Hamm (and one in nearby Hessen): The city was just outside that 50km demilitarized zone on the east bank of the Rhine. The railway and canal links made it an enviable communications hub. The barracks were built in sequence with one opening every year: Beisenkamp (later Cromwell Barracks) was the first. Construction started in 1934 and the barracks opened in early 1935. As well as the barracks officer's houses and flats were built nearby. The Linden Barracks (later called Paracelsus) came in 1935/36. The Dannevoux Kaserne (later Newcastle Barracks and then Windsor Girls' School) followed in 1936/37. The Argonner Kaserne, later the Windsor School, had its plans approved in October 1937 and the first troops moved in October 1938. The land had been confiscated secretly in October 1934.

Although the military budget was considerable, the barracks building programme had a keen eye on costs. The templates for each type of barracks and a limited range of "extras" kept architects' fees down. The number and size of buildings was standard: external facades may differ depending on local matters (for example Dannevoux buildings were finished in plaster; those in Argonner remained in brick). Agricultural land was used: only the first, Beisenkamp, were close to the town; the other three some way out in what was then Mark in Unna municipality. The ruralness of Dannevoux, Paracelsus and Argonner Barracks is clear from contemporary photographs and maps. The Argonner Barracks had, unusually, a high water table, as the school was to discover much later (as did the commercial development in the 2010s). They were designed for a horse-drawn artillery unit with a riding hall, stables and a veterinary hospital.



It is difficult to find exact costs of the elements of the rearmament programme. A larger barracks than those in Hamm cost approximately Reichsmarks 3,000,000 (about £250,000 and around £17,000,000 in 2021 prices). Construction was rapid. Round the clock working enabled each barracks to be completed on site in roughly 100 days. Not surprisingly the barracks building programme was a major national employer and helped Germany out of the depression. Although the availability of work was welcome it was hard; as the programme built up, longer hours for no pay was the norm.

The four barracks in Hamm, and the one in Hessen, were fully operational by 1939. The main units assigned to them were elements of the 16th Artillery Regiment. This was spread across the area between Münster and Dortmund. The regiment was virtually wiped out in the battle of Stalingrad in 1942.

## **The bombing of Hamm**

The marshalling yards made Hamm one of the prime targets for British and later American bombing. Raids started in 1940 with the Royal Air Force flying at night. Between May and December 1940, whilst the Battle of Britain was taking place over British skies, RAF Bomber Command frequently bombed Hamm. One raid in 1940 gave Goebbels a propaganda opportunity when the Liebfrauen church was badly damaged, the first church in Germany to be damaged in an air raid. Regardless of the effectiveness of bombing (a review showed that accuracy was less than 45%) it provided a rare instance of Britain on the offensive after the defeats at Dunkirk and Norway. In December 1940 the *Listener*, the newspaper of the BBC, commented:

*One German place-name has recently become very well known to all of us; Hamm. To the R.A.F, Hamm is the nerve-centre of German rail transport, and consequently one of the most important targets in Nazi Germany.*

The attacks on Hamm continued. There 81 air-raid warnings in 1941, 10 in 1942. A sea-change came in 1943. In January 1943, at Casablanca, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to a round the clock bombing strategy over Germany: the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) would focus on precision bombing during the day; the RAF, under Air Marshall “Bomber” Harris on,

in his words, “terror bombing” at night.

The first key raid came on 4 March 1943 when 71 B-17 planes in four “waves” (groups of 16 to 17 planes) of the USAAF set out to bomb Hamm. Bad weather prevented three of the four waves making it to Hamm (one wave bombed Rotterdam, two turned back to England). One wave reached Hamm: it dropped 70 500kg bombs. Significant damage was done; 158 people were killed. Four planes were brought down; all the others suffered damage but the mission was deemed a success. It proved to a sceptical USAAF High Command that daylight raids were feasible. Months later the surviving crews were decorated.

In the next two years there were 24 raids on Hamm (USAAF 21, RAF 3). In 2018 the Hamm StadtArchiv published a detailed survey of these raids combining the daily damage reports in Hamm and the USAAF/RAF logbooks. Those 24 raids involved over 4,000 aircraft dropping more than 70,000 tons of bombs plus thousands of incendiaries. Compared to the earlier RAF raids far more aircraft were involved. The largest raid took place on 22 April 1944 when over 650 aircraft took part in a single raid. Hamm was the second most bombed city, after Dortmund, in the Ruhr region.

The devastation of the city was intense; over 60% of houses were destroyed or damaged. Photographs and survey maps of Hamm in 1945 show whole areas out of commission. Over 1,300 people were killed (from a 1939 population of 50,000) including over 200 prisoners of war and forced labourers.

The two barracks later to house the Windsor Schools escaped serious damage. Military barracks were not priorities as bombing targets (oil installations, aircraft factories, transportation, were among the higher priorities). The four barracks were well to the east of the city and five kilometres from the marshalling yards. Detailed bomb damage maps show very few damaged houses in Mark near the two eventual schools. Even with the inaccuracy of the bombers relatively few bombs came their way. A wartime photograph shows a B17 Flying Fortress over Hamm in April 1944 with the Dannevoux and Argonner Barracks clearly visible.

An excerpt from the history of the bombing of Hamm:

*At the Argonner barracks in Mark/Ostwennemar there was an 8.8 cm army anti-aircraft battery, which was only ready for action at night*

*and was therefore used as a training unit during the day. That's why it didn't fire a single shot.*

On 26 September 1944 Dannevoix Barracks was hit by incendiary bombs in the raid, by 276 planes, which destroyed the Pauluskirche. A month later, on 26 November, a block in the Argonner Barracks was hit during a raid of 268 B-17 Flying Fortresses. The central section was destroyed, the two wings remaining habitable. This was the origin of the "bombed" block at Windsor School and the source of "Peg Leg". Countless future pupils were to be scared by strange tapping in the corridors as the ghost of a pilot assumed to have crashed into the bombed block came back to visit. The last air raid was by the RAF on 27 March 1945.

## **After the war**

Eva Giesfeld, later a long-serving matron, recalled the immediate post war period:

*For the inhabitants of Hamm, the war ended at Easter time of 1945 and the Americans moved in, staying a short time until the British army arrived. The administration of the town was taken over by the first town commander, Major Riley. Major Irving followed in August 1945 but the most important person for the town during those years was Lt. Col. Haig who took the office in 1947 and stayed until 1951. The Dannevoix Kaserne was renamed Newcastle Barracks and the 46 Anti-Tank regiment (Territorial Army) moved in. I worked for one of their officers, Major Harris, for two years as an interpreter. After they went home I continued with the Durham Light Infantry.*

*The Argonner Barracks, later WBS, was turned into Brixton Camp for numerous Austrian and German soldiers as a prisoner of war camp.*

Karl Wolter takes up the story. He arrived at Brixton Camp in March 1946 as one of 370 "surrendered enemy personnel" as the prisoners were labelled by the British. This avoided the "prisoner of war" definition which would have invoked the requirements of the Geneva Convention:

*I think it must have been for our own personal safety that the whole*

*camp was fenced in with a double row of barbed wire and there were high watch towers on all four corners with soldiers and machine guns.*

And the name “Brixton Camp”? The troops guarding the prisoners was the 62<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery, originally formed in Brixton, south London.

The future assembly hall area was a large pile of rubbish: it had been an ammunition dump. Wolter’s quarters were in what became the main teaching block. The camp band played at dances in the future dining block (women brought in for the dances). Herr Wolter recalls *many sad and some pleasant hours* at the camp. Not least when prisoners stripped the electric motors from the pumps in the boiler house to sell on the black market. The first of many floods followed. The prison camp was disbanded in 1948, the 61<sup>st</sup> Tank Transporter Unit composed mainly of Poles in the Mixed Service Order (MSO) moved in.

## **Conversion to Windsor School**

BFES would have put pressure on BAOR to acquire Brixton Camp. The Tank Transporter Unit consolidated its use of the Cromwell Barracks (the former Beisenkamp Kaserne). The builders moved in; the conversion to Windsor School started.

The basic layout of the Argonner Kaserne/Brixton Camp lent itself to many of the needs of a boarding school. The 11 hectare site was large enough for buildings, open spaces and sporting facilities. The residential blocks built for soldiers were easily adaptable for the “Houses”. Each block had been built for a company of 150 men: 450 in total in the three blocks. Quite easy to stretch this to the 525 forecast maximum for the school (once the “bombed block” came into service).

Rooms designed for 6–8 soldiers became dorms for pupils. The officer flats at the ends of the corridors became flats for the housemasters; the smaller rooms at the other end, once for Sergeants, now for live-in matrons and senior pupils. The extra wide corridor (2.5m) and the two staircases eased circulation. The live-in teaching staff had the privacy of that second staircase (out of bounds for pupils). The Mess Building was converted to kitchens and dining halls; the administration building continued to house

administration with added classrooms. Rather more adaptation work was needed to bring garages into classrooms. The riding hall would become a very large gym. The cobblestone roads needed tarmac and the parade ground converted to a sports field. The former hospital for horses and the stables were not used for the school and mostly remained out of bounds.

There was a relatively small need for new buildings. An assembly hall, two religious places (the Roman Catholic chapel ingeniously placed in the roof space of the classroom block and a new Church of England building). The central section of the “bombed block” needed rebuilding. The initial objective was to have one of the residential blocks ready to receive pupils in November 1953, split into two houses, one boys and one girls. It would take two years to complete the redevelopment.

## **Staff arrivals**

In July 1953 Mr Briant Aspinall, the newly appointed headmaster, arrived on site. The following year he recalled his first impressions:

*As I look from my study across the playing fields towards the new chapel, it seems a long time since I first saw what was to be Windsor School in July 1953. The fields then looked like a range of mountains (they have been to look like a lake since). The buildings were thronging with workmen (they are still with us but not to the same extent). The grounds surrounding the houses looked like builder's yards. The constant flow of trucks, tar machines, bulldozers and concrete mixers has given way to a steady traffic of buses and Volkswagens.*

Mr George Steventon and Frau Leni Steventon, the head of stores and head matron, arrived in mid-October. They were the first staff after Mr Aspinall. Mr Steventon's account of the preparations is illuminating:

*The sight that greeted us on our arrival one fine day was not singularly attractive. Workmen—hundreds of workmen—were milling around inside and outside the buildings to the accompaniment of shouting, noise, bricks and rubble.*

*Outside the bulldozers were putting the finishing touches to the cricket ground, while the trees which are now in leaf along its edge had just been dug up from somewhere else and were looking extremely dejected each in its own straight jacket to keep it upright and each stayed with white supports like the masts of a ship in case a gust of wind might blow it over.*

*In those days the centre of activity – the HQ so to speak – was situated in Sandringham Girls Day Rooms. Here was the only telephone; here were the plans and the only chairs in the school.*

*For those of us who slept here the nights were not without their hazard, for the beds with which we were issued had an unfortunate tendency to break their backs at some unearthly hour of the night and deposit their weary occupant on the floor. Three beds in a week were the fate of one of us.*

*Two thoughts were always dominant in our minds – the opening of the school which was scheduled for so few days ahead, and security. There was nothing in the school whatsoever, no beds, no sheets or pillows, no desks, not even a cooking pot or a plate, literally nothing. We were determined to keep whatever we received.*

*And here a tribute should be paid to the German staff, all of whom were new and none had the faintest idea of what a school should look like. From early morning till late at night everyone worked at whatever he was asked to do, cheerfully and without demur. It was a gladsome sight to see our Asst teacher festooned with a motley selection of hammers, nails and saws prowling around in search of wood with which to prop up the previous night's casualties among the beds, or screwing up wardrobes, or a very portly gentleman who was destined to work in the kitchen struggling to carry a chest of drawers.*

*There was no canteen in the School in those days and many of the Staff had to come long distances to their work and exist till late at night on the sandwiches they carried with them. The school owes much to all of them.*

*Yet day by day the school began to take shape and the two houses in which we were concentrating began to look like something like you know them to be now, while the remaining houses were being turned into gigantic store rooms into which all out temporary surplus was being pushed and locked up.*

*The final date for us was 17 November and on this date (with less than three weeks to do it in) the headmaster could inspect two houses, the classrooms, the admin block complete with telephones, the mess, the kitchen and dining halls and accommodation for the staff. Everything was in order including the curtains.*

After 15 tumultuous years from its original opening as a Wehrmacht Kaserne the site on Soester Strasse was ready to reopen as a coeducational secondary boarding school for British children.

## Foundation: The Early Years

Windsor School opened on 17 November 1953. For many years to come the date was celebrated as the school's birthday. Headmaster Aspinall had arrived in July; Mr and Mrs Steventon (Stores Supervisor and Head Matron) and the Bursar, Mr Harvey-Jones, in October. The Rev Dosseter, the first Chaplain arrived next, and was sent to Münster to collect the office stationery.

The first five teachers, Mrs Muir, Mr Tovey, Miss Corlett (escorted by military police as the headmaster noted), Mr Murphy and Miss Ellis arrived on 2 November. In the next few days Mr Kelly and Miss Jeens (who had been teaching biology at KAS for three years and now arrived as the Senior Mistress) completed the teaching staff. Mr Kelly and Mrs Muir had spent part of the autumn term in KAS to familiarise themselves with a BFES boarding school (Mr Aspinall and Miss Jeens already had that experience, also at KAS). The first staff meeting was on 6 November.

Three of that original cohort of pupils recall their arrival:

*The earliest memory is of an intrepid band of children and the odd member of staff with a pile of suitcases as we stood on a railway platform one chilly October or November day in 1953. The bus took us over a small bridge, one that I would cross many times in the next seven years! Through the gates of the disused barracks that were to become all too familiar to many hundreds of children, staff and parents; I can still recall the feelings of fear and excitement as the bus pulled up outside our new "home" for the next four weeks till the release of the Christmas holidays. Michael Barnacoat*

*I can remember my first term very well, especially the very first day,*



*November 17 1953. Early that day the news came that our party from Wuppertal would not be able to get to Hamm because the military boat and train had been delayed by fog. Naturally we were all delighted by the reprieve but the next day passed all too quickly and it seemed a very short time before we were getting out of the train at Hamm station, never an architect's dream at the best of times, but even worse in the fog and drizzle. Our faces behind the fixed smiles became a trifle wan and we were glad to scramble into the darkness of a bus and bumped over what seemed miles of cart track until someone said with decidedly misplaced enthusiasm "There you are, that's the school."*  
Barbara Smith

*I was 12 years old and the others must have been about the same age looking at the faces in my two photos of the December 53 Christmas Party. We were all in Sandringham.* Geoff McPate

Headmaster Aspinall recorded in the headmaster's diary:

*Our first pupil arrived at 1030. Her name was Edda Haick. By lunchtime about ten had arrived. The main party arrived at Hamm shortly after 3 pm. We toured the houses during the course of the evening. Most of the children had settled down happily at once but one or two were very homesick.*

The following day he continued:

*By 9am all the children were present in the dining hall which we are using for assembly until the new hall is ready. After the short service was over I addressed the school telling them, amongst other things, that they must do their best to make the most of their opportunities and take pride in their new school.*

There were ninety "originals", all between 11 and 13. They came from all over the British Zone including Paderborn, Hameln, Lippstadt, Berlin, Bad Oeyenhausen, Hannover, Göttingen, Brunswick, Detmold, Celle, Lüneburg, Bückeburg, Rinteln, Minden, Lübbecke, Herford, Bielefeld, Gütersloh, Verden, Delmenhorst, Oldenburg, Osnabrück, Münster. They entered an unfinished site and faced a short four week term before the Christmas break.

The eight teachers had to cover all subjects. Mr Benfield recalled that the teachers were: *on duty every third day from 8.00 am to 10.00 pm with one weekend in three off*

The urgency to start the school meant that the site was unfinished. One of the “original” pupils writing in the final *Concordia* of Windsor School in 1959 remembered the partially completed site:

*For those who have been members of Windsor School from the beginning this account of the first term might recall long forgotten scenes and events; for the others it might be interesting to know how it all started.*

*Those who now complain that our present acreage hardly gives them legroom would have suffered even more acute fencinitis then, for not only was the area not half of today, but a stark wooden fence surmounted by barbed wire met the eye wherever it looked. This fence bisected the space between the boy's block and Balmoral House and cut across the road to join onto the wall of what is now the Light Crafts block. It began again from the end of the metalwork room, fringed the front field and continued for the whole length of the tennis courts.*

*From this it will be seen that several buildings now part of the school had not yet been included. Balmoral House and the Staff Mess, was then known as the “bombed block”. This was inhabited by “displaced persons”, and founder members of Sandringham Boys will probably remember the accordion music and “lieder” that drifted over the fence at bedtime and competed all too successfully with the frantic lullabies of the duty-master. The current Light Crafts rooms then passed for a gymnasium. The present gymnasium was then a deserted and crumbling riding-school, the music blocks were disused garages and a German firm “Ford Kleine” occupied the present transport building. What is now intimately known as “the back-field” had not been reclaimed from the waste, enclosed and put to the hoof.*

*The assembly hall was slowly taking shape during the first term but the school chapel was still merely the headmaster's dream. His*

*original intention was to have it built on the front field so it would dominate the view from the main gate, but according to sportsman's gossip he abandoned the idea when he remembers the dangerous implications of his on-drive. The chapel now stands in the relative safety of deep fine leg. That strip of Elysium, the dutch-wicket, was of course created at the very beginning in the middle of what once had been a barrack-square. The swimming pool was then, and we understand still is officially, a static water tank.*

*The cobbled road within the school had not yet been given its smooth surface but it did produce the only blades of grass visible in the school. With crumbling buildings outside, half-completed buildings inside it and the only colour a uniform dull red the original Windsor School was indeed rather drab.*

The local Hamm newspaper, *Westfälischer Anzeiger*, welcomed the new arrivals:

*Today, for the first time in Hamm, they are wearing their knapsacks to make their way to the newly polished buildings of the former Argonner barracks in Mark. But surely it will not be long before they really feel at home in the Windsor School. They came from all parts of the British occupation zone, even from Berlin, to be educated here by experienced teachers.*

Those four weeks became a test of procedure and plans. It was not all serious. A heavy snowfall in November brought about a half day holiday and a major snowball fight on the front field for both pupils and teachers. Michael Barnacoat recalled that PE lessons often involved picking stones off the parade ground as it was converted to a playing field. Nigel Firth remembered the first Christmas Carol Service in the small village church in Mark:

*The English service in the Lutheran church of St Pankratius in December 1953 had a flavour that haunts me still. For the handful of staff and pupils who got through the autumn in Windsor School Hamm, the German pastor and English prayers in the candle-lit church rounded off a term with a magical blessing.*

*The fifty or so children had settled into a shell-scared barracks and seen the autumn fade and the sky-reflecting puddles of the parade ground ice over. The barrack rooms had echoed to the lessons of Mr Kelly and to Mr Aspinall's morning assemblies with their hymns from the English hymnal. Now, the term done, we were in a German church, and its grave and homely holiness united the two nations.*

The first Christmas Party brought the end of the term and the dispersal transport arrangements were tested, successfully, on 18 December.

The new term in January 1954 saw considerable changes: the school roll increased to over 230 pupils and eleven more teachers. A pupil recalls:

*We all had to sit some sort of entrance exam/test and were then placed in the appropriate form graded from A to F as I recall. I took my exam/test in the Library along with others.*

This second term saw the inauguration of the new assembly hall. The first film was "*Pickwick Papers*" and the first visiting artist, FrL Brockmans, gave a piano recital. There was still no gym or playing fields so the headmaster arranged with the army to use the facilities at Newcastle Barracks.

In March, Karl Wolter returned to the place of his imprisonment, now as Quartermaster's Clerk: *It is much better to see the children playing where beforehand rough commands were shouted.*

In April 1954 Mr Tom Riley arrived to become the head of Woodwork/Metalwork and Technical Drawing. Freda, his wife, recalls that he preferred this role to that of a housemaster. She continues:

*As accommodation was scarce, we were given a ground floor flat in the bombed block which was barricaded off from the rest of the school whilst repairs were carried out. Equipment in the flat was adequate but for one thing – no curtains! Quite early on the first morning we were awakened by a fair number of workmen who, (we learned later), lived in the cellar whilst carrying out the repairs, and who continued working outside the bedroom regardless of the occupants.*

Their temporary accommodation was short-lived; in December they moved

into a house in Am Huckenholz as Padre Dosseter left.

## Expansion

The opening of the school reduced, but did not eliminate, the shortage of places in BFES. By the end of the spring term 1954, BFES put in a request for expansion. The War Office approved a further 120 places and work started on the former “bombed block”.

By October 1954 the school roll reached 360 (the term’s start was delayed to enable works on the dining halls to finish). In the spring term, 1955, it topped the planned maximum of 525. The headmaster was already hinting it could eventually rise to 600. The increase in numbers led to a progressive increase in houses. From the original Sandringham House in November 1953, Caernarvon and Marlborough Houses opened followed by Hillsborough and then finally Balmoral in the rebuilt “bombed block”. Each house had its girls and boys sections, with their own housemistress/housemaster and duty staff (four in the boys and three in the girls).

In that Spring term of 1955, 16 months after the first pupils arrived, the headmaster could report:

*The notorious bombed block, which was originally outside the school perimeter, has been rebuilt and included into the fold, to house Balmoral House, the Sick Bay and the Staff Mess. The new house dining halls have proved a great success. Across the far side of the playing field, the former garage buildings have been converted into classrooms; between the two blocks stands the chapel, which as I write is practically completed and will be ready for dedication by the Bishop of Fulham on March 27 1955. Behind the chapel, the new playing fields have been levelled and sown. In the attic of the main classroom block, the Roman Catholic chapel is already in use – a beautiful small chapel with excellent woodwork. The former indoor riding school now comprises two good gymnasia, though the equipment is at present somewhat temperamental.*

The construction of the chapel did cause some disruption as Mr Loft Simpson was to point out:

*In 1954 music was much in evidence, for instead of competing with high jumping, tennis and the tractor in one corner of the school, much singing and playing entertained and disturbed every class in the main block. German was then our first language, which every form in the school learnt, and in music periods, German folksongs were the basic fare.*

*Then in October 1954, the music block was opened and for two terms few sounds could be heard coming from it through the barrier of pneumatic drills, cement mixers and lorries loading and unloading which worked to dig up much of the nearby road, and build the school chapel.*

The new houses started to adapt to their new surroundings:

*On January 11th 1955 thirty-one girls with mixed feelings climbed the seventy stairs to the top of Block IV. The first page in the history of Marlborough Girls had been written when we assembled for our first roll-call that evening, although it seemed then that we should never be able to remember everything we were told or even find our way about.*

*We soon found that Marlborough House was worth the climb one had to take to reach it. Our day room with its several sections is completely different from the dayrooms of other houses and we have good view from all our windows.*

Sandringham Girls took an unusual approach to decorating the austere walls of their house:

*Amongst the changes that have taken place since the house was opened has been the decoration of the corridor walls with murals, all painted by girls in the house. We are indeed lucky to have so much artistic talent, and under the direction of Miss Oversby, we now have a hunting scene, a village green, a mountain scene and an ice-skating brightening the corridor.*

In Hillsborough Boys:

*we are fortunate in so far we have been given a term in which to put*

*down our roots before blossoming into a full-sized house. For this term our numbers have been kept down to thirty although our capacity is fifty. This has enabled us to weld ourselves into a united family which bids fare to form a very good nucleus around which the house will be moulded next term.*

There were two major formal events. In July 1954 the official opening of the school took place with a full day of speeches and activities. It rained most of the day. The Guest of Honour was Sir Richard Gale, the Commander in Chief of BAOR. In March 1955 the Bishop of Fulham led the dedication of the newly built St Boniface Chapel. The service was broadcast live on BFN (British Forces Network radio).

## **Building a community**

Organisations seek to develop a community, a sense of togetherness. The military with its regiments and squadrons, badges, uniforms, medals and rituals is an example. Schools are no exception and boarding schools make considerable efforts to create and maintain this value. There are two avenues: the passive and the active. The passive elements cover names, badges and uniforms and the active are events and programmes. Concurrent with these formal aspects of community building are the unofficial actions of pupils which we will explore later.

The school's name itself, Windsor, is the starting point. I can find no documentary evidence on when and why BFES named the school "Windsor". The precedents were not helpful. The two secondary schools, Prince Rupert School and King Alfred School, had both been named after Royal Navy units which had occupied the respective sites at various times between the end of the war and the schools opening. Perhaps "Brixton School" was a possible name.

A circumstantial, but strong, clue comes with a small booklet of black and white photographs sent to all children in Service Schools worldwide in June 1953. Simply titled "*Our Queen*" the photographs showed the life of the young princess up to and including her coronation as Queen Elizabeth II of the House of Windsor in June 1953. Its publication reflected the considerable enthusiasm in the country over the accession of the young Queen. Is it too

much to presume that the War Office and BFES in their discussions in 1952–53 over the new schools in Germany decided to call the two new secondary schools “Queens” and “Windsor”?

The origin of other emblems of community is much easier to explain. It was a logical step from “Windsor” that the houses would also be named after royal residences. Early school magazines, carried articles about each royal residence. The badge and motto came together as Mr Aspinall explained:

*At a staff meeting in the very early days of the School's existence, before any of our first boarders arrived, suggested designs for the school badge were being discussed; at last our present badge, sketched on a back of an envelope, was decided upon, with its significant features of Windsor, Hamm and the Northern Army Group. Now a motto was needed. Suggestions did not flow very fast to start with, and those that did come up were either too long, too complicated, too ambiguous, or just not right. At length our first housemistress (who still holds sway over her house (Mrs Muir) produced “Concordia”. She had it on a brooch and the idea of using it as the school motto came as an inspiration. We turned the idea over this way and that way, saying the word out loud, asking ourselves just what it meant, and finally coming to the conclusion that we would have to search a long while before we found a better. “Concordia” has the virtue of being concise and international in meaning, but above all it postulates a state of affairs indispensable to any organisation – ship, regiment, squadron or school –which sets out to be efficiently happy and happily efficient.*

A year later the badge found its way, thanks to an enterprising pupil, to the front page of the *Rover* comic which regularly showed school badges. The badge featured several more times on the *Rover* until the early 1960s.

*Concordia* become the title of the school magazine. In its first edition, in March 1954, Mr Aspinall was able to record his pleasure that more pupils had the school uniform: maroon blazers and grey flannel skirts or trousers. PRS's blazers were navy blue, KAS green and Queens, gold. In 1962/63 BFES standardised the blazers: black became the norm in all BFES schools. It reduced the costs for parents when children moved between schools.



In July 1955 forty one pupils left Hamm and restarted their schooling in September at the newly opened Queens School in Rheindahlen. By the start of the autumn term the Windsor School was up and fully running. Its first two years had seen considerable change. All the buildings were complete; the school roll was at its planned level of 520 spread over five houses (each with a boys and girls section). Many activities and sports were underway. It was fully staffed. The foundations of the School were in place.

## Educational Marshalling Yards

On 8 March 1955 Mr Nigel Nicholson, the Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East and Christchurch, accompanied by the Director of BFES, Mr Harold Priestley, visited the school. Their visit was probably overshadowed by the arrival of football, hockey and netball teams from PRS for a weekend of matches.

Four days later Mr Nicholson reported on his visit to the House of Commons. The occasion was the annual debate on the Army Estimates (the budget). Three MPs spoke about the education of service children: two Conservatives, Mr Nicholson and Brigadier Prior-Palmer and one Labour, Mr Arthur Blenkinsop. All three had been to public schools. Blenkinsop had seen Windsor School in 1953 when the conversion works were underway.

It is clear that turbulence gave them considerable concern. Mr Nicholson:

*...there are two major ones (difficulties), the thin dispersal of our troops on the ground and what the Army calls "disturbance" and the Royal Air Force calls "turbulence," which means the constant moving of men, and their families with them, from one place to another.*

*The result is that in Germany, where we have the very best conditions, less than 7 per cent. of the children have spent more than two years in the same school; the average length of time spent by a child in a primary school is three terms, and in a secondary school five terms. This means that the child is moving constantly from school to school and from teacher to teacher. He is taught in one school to learn his lessons in a certain way and in another school, to which he may be moved within a few weeks, he may be taught in quite another way.*

*When I was in Germany last week-end, I talked to a child of 13 who*

*had been to 14 schools. These children arrive in the middle of a term, they leave in the middle of a term, and they have very little opportunity to finish courses which they have begun. This has a bad effect, not only upon the children who move, but also upon those who remain, for they lose their companions and are subject to constant disturbance. The teachers themselves naturally feel thwarted through the disappointment of losing bright children whom they have trained during the year or two, at the most, since their arrival at the school.*

Blenkinsop raised a variation on the turbulence problem: that of the turnover of teachers.

*The point has been put on many occasions, and probably put as well as anybody by the director of the British Families Education Service in magazines produced by the Service. He rightly points out that not only is there a continuous change in the children attending the schools but there is almost inevitably a pretty continuous change amongst the teaching staff.*

Nicholson and Blenkinsop had different views on the nature of the secondary schools in BFES. For the former (a conventional upper class CV of Eton, Oxford, and Grenadier Guards) there was at best a backhanded compliment. The two views reflected the developing debate over the introduction of comprehensive schools:

*Even where there is a sufficient concentration of children, the secondary boarding schools, such as we now have in Germany, are inevitably co-educational, comprehensive, all-denominational, and inter-Service. I am not saying that any of these things is bad, but it indicates how we can never set up abroad, under any circumstances whatever, even the best, the same pattern of education as that to which we are accustomed in this country. (Nicholson)*

Nicholson's use of "inevitably", "all-denominational" and "never set up abroad" let slip his own perception of what "the pattern of education" he is "accustomed." Later in his speech Nicholson gave an indication of what he did see as a good education in the UK when he explicitly referred to public schools:

*Circumstances have greatly changed since the early years of the century, when a serving soldier could take his family out to India, stay there for many years, and give his children an education as good as they could obtain in an English public school.*

Blenkinsop on the other hand saw a more positive picture and recognised the pioneering approach of BFES:

*I should be very sorry to see schools like Plön disappear. That is a very imaginative venture, a comprehensive co-educational school. There are not many like it, certainly not in this country.*

*Those of my honourable friends who are particularly interested in the provision of comprehensive schools might well go out to Germany and see something of what is being done under Army auspices. It is a very interesting experiment and considerable development is taking place.*

Much of Nicholson's speech was devoted to his visit to Hamm. (He had also seen a primary school in Dusseldorf):

*I went on Saturday to the big new boarding secondary school at Hamm. I can only say that, in spite of all its other virtues and qualities, it had the characteristics of an educational marshalling yard. The children were being shunted in and shunted out, and the teachers, who were of the highest quality, were sometimes in despair about the abilities which they saw going to waste.*

*I do not want to draw too gloomy a picture. There are many compensations even for this constant travel. There are better premises in schools in many parts of the world than we find in England. In Germany, there are much smaller classes, and there are excellent teachers who are hand-picked from volunteers from our own schools here. The very fact that the children travel so much broadens their minds. They have an astonishing maturity and elasticity. They learn languages with remarkable facility. To them, geography is not a matter of books; it is a matter of places which they have actually visited. The teachers of languages and geography sometimes find themselves embarrassed by the knowledge possessed by their pupils.*

*These children know the world, but they do not know its sorry politics. To them the Möhne Dam is a place where one can sail on a Saturday afternoon, and Belsen is the name of a primary school. There is no snobbishness in these schools, and it struck me very forcibly that a silent social revolution is taking place. A colonel or brigadier will not for one moment think it strange or unusual if his child is sitting in class next to the child of his own corporal. The children have no sense of rank. We might have expected them to have adopted among their schoolmates the ranks of their fathers in the unit, but they never do so, and the rivalry, such as it is, is healthy inter-unit rivalry and never inter-rank rivalry. The children have the advantages of being in the Army. They have the transport, the stores and the entertainment facilities which the Army can provide; and they are growing up within the traditions of some of our finest regiments.*

Blenkinsop also commented on his visit to Windsor:

*I was in Germany, looking incidentally at some of these provisions, about 18 months ago. I saw the alterations which were then being made in the barracks at Hamm to provide for this new boarding school for secondary children on a comprehensive basis—a school which, alas, has now been classified by the hon. Member for Bournemouth, East and Christchurch as providing for a shunting operation. I could see the great expense of the alterations which were being made for this new school, but I can well believe that the hon. Gentleman is right in saying that the bulk of the time of the staff must be occupied with providing for new pupils coming in and other pupils going out, for that is an almost continuous process.*

Nicholson went on to make an acute forecast when he turned to a wider view of schools and the advantage (to British eyes) of the occupation costs. The Paris Agreement was the 1954 agreement which paved the way for Germany to join NATO:

*In Germany, which is the only area I have been able to visit before this debate, there is an excellent educational system, but we must realise that it is unique. I was seeing the very best that there is. There is a*

*concentration of troops which permits the setting up of permanent, large schools. We now know that British troops will be there perhaps for 50 years. A second advantage not enjoyed by any other theatre is that the Germans themselves have had to pay for the capital costs of the premises which we occupy, and, in many cases, the equipment within them.*

*The expenditure, had we had to pay the whole cost, would have been appalling. The Army statisticians in the Northern Army Group Headquarters have worked out the real cost of keeping a child at King William's School, (sic) Wilhelmshaven, at £562 per child per year, and, for the whole of the Zone, at £499 per child per year in the secondary schools. That figure is a lesson for us. When the Paris Agreements come into force we shall probably lose that advantage and have to pay.*

Mr Nicholson put forward several suggestions to ameliorate the problems he found: a common curriculum, more boarding places in the UK, supported by grants.

The next speaker in the debate was Brigadier O.L. Prior-Palmer. He had also taken an interest in service children's education. In a debate in July 1953 he had said:

*One other point on the question of manpower concerns education. I would emphasise strongly that most married personnel today, unlike the days before the war, demand—and intend to see that they get—a really first-class education for their children, and if they find that they cannot get it in the Army they will quit at the earliest moment. There is a good deal of inevitable disturbance of families in the Army today, and I ask the Secretary of State urgently to consider this matter, in consultation with local authorities at home and authorities abroad, in order to see that the children of the married personnel get the finest education that it is possible to give them, and that they have every assistance in getting it.*

*I wondered whether it was possible for the War Office, now that there appear to be slightly more settled conditions so far as the maintenance of troops in Germany is concerned, to give rather more settled*

*conditions, at any rate for a limited number of pupils, in places like Plön, Wilhelmshaven and Hamm. Unless some sort of general undertaking can be given that the children will be able to enjoy the teaching facilities there for a longer period than is possible today, I very much doubt whether the expenditure at these centres, much as I like them in many ways, is justified.*

After the three backbenchers had spoken it fell to Fitzroy MacLean, the Under Secretary of State for War, to reply on behalf of the government. His wartime career was both impressive (from private to brigadier) and unorthodox in Persia and Yugoslavia where he liaised with Tito's partisans. Elected as an MP during the war he became a junior minister in 1954. In his speech he covered some of the issues raised in the debate, without conceding any point from the status quo. He praised teachers and BFES management, noting the large recent increase in children in Germany:

*In Germany the three boarding schools at Hamm, Plön and Wilhelmshaven are really very luxuriously established in naval or army barracks, and we are fortunate in having good accommodation at little or no cost to the taxpayers.*

Not surprisingly, the Opposition speaker, Mr Michael Stewart, did not hold back:

*The hon. Gentleman said, "It would be wrong for me to say more than that." It would certainly have been impossible for him to have said less. He has not answered the debate at all. He has read us his prepared piece, with, I am bound to say, a monotony which did nothing to relieve either the pedestrian quality of his style or the prosaic nature of the matter he was putting forward. He simply described the situation as it is at present.*

He supported the views of the three backbenchers and added "turbulence":

*One child will triumph miraculously over being moved from school to school, provided that it has the emotional security of being with its parents all the time. Parents who feel that their child will react in that way ought to have the opportunity of sending it to an Army school.*

*Other children are able to go to boarding schools and be away from their parents often for long periods, but they apparently require having a very solid and good basis for their schooling if they are to get on. Children vary unpredictably in this way, and we need both types of provision. It is a more serious problem than the hon. Gentleman seems to have grasped.*

The pedestrian approach of Mr MacLean illustrated a point the Prime Minister Harold MacMillan made two years later: *I regretted losing him, "but he is really so hopeless in the house that he is a passenger in office ... a great pity, since he is so able."*

The debate ended. What had been achieved? Issues around the schooling of service children has been raised and referred to the Ministry for an inter-departmental review.

How was the debate received at Windsor School? The following issue of *Concordia* carried extracts from Mr Nicholson's speech, but nothing from the other speakers. I wonder if they saw them; there were certainly positive comments by Blenkinsop which could have been picked up. The Editor sought opinions. The next edition's editorial (presumably written by Mr G Thomas, the senior Master and *Concordia* Editor) responded to Mr Nicholson. He gives a clear insight to attitudes and behaviour in the mid-1950s. The opening remarks naturally sought out praise (and possibly a subtle hint to pupils and parents):

*It was of considerable interest to us as Mr Nicholson had previously paid us a flying visit and had spent 24 hours with us. It says much for the study he has given his subject that he was able to absorb so rapidly the atmosphere of the school, laying his finger accurately upon its pulse when he declared that the children – whatever their fathers – had between themselves no sense of rank. "A silent social revolution is taking place" he declared.*

The obvious quip (as Mr Aspinall called it) "*educational marshalling yards*" was taken in its stride:

*it was inevitable that any reference to Hamm should include the term.... (it) contained more than a grain of truth in so far as too many*



*children arriving at the school may be uprooted in less than a year or even a term when their fathers receive a posting. This happens particularly to children in the 11–12 group who have already spent many years in Germany attending primary schools and have only just reached the age for admission. Nevertheless there are many children in the Middle and Upper School who have been at the school since its foundation or expect to stay for a further 2 or 3 years.*

Mr Thomas starts to become more critical:

*His comment of teachers in despair about abilities going to waste was a trifle ambiguous. No teacher at the school feels that the children's abilities are wasted although it is sometimes a sad thought that a particular child or group may have left the school before one can guide them through the General Certificate or along Scholarship channels.*

Perhaps there was a degree of defensiveness bearing in mind parents might have read the comments in the previous edition. There follow two straight and blunt criticisms. The first prompted by this comment by Nicholson:

*To sum up, the average child drops below the average as a result of this constant movement, and the bright child manages to keep just level with the average child in this country. However, it is the bright children that we want to encourage; their parents have every right to look forward to a university education for them, but there are very few Service children who are approaching anywhere near that standard.*

This forthright statement triggered this response:

*Mr Nicholson's assertion that the bright child only manages to keep level with the average child in the UK is patently incorrect for there are many children who on returning to England would find no difficulty in taking their place in the top form of their age group in a Grammar School.*

Interestingly Mr Thomas maintains his focus on the upper ability levels: Grammar school to go along with the previous comment about General

Certificate and Scholarship. As we shall see in the next chapter there was a clear preference in the school for the more academic stream. A preference often noticed by pupils. The Windsor School, at this time, had a relatively small sixth form; it was not until a few years later that a pupil went directly from school to university.

The second forthright criticism is important in terms of Anglo-German relations:

*His claim that they learn languages with facility is unfortunately also incorrect. With few exceptions the only children who speak German naturally are those who have been to German schools or are of German parentage. This is largely due to the successful transfer of a British way of life by the Services into a foreign country so that the horizons of most children are bounded by their school, the NAAFI, the A.K.C. cinema and their English friends. Similarly the Geography staff is not often embarrassed by the world-wide knowledge of their pupils. Rather are they left wondering that it is possible for children to spend years in the Far East or in Africa and yet know no more about them than a well-read child in England.*

What happened to that inter-departmental review of secondary education which had started in 1954? It reported in 1955. It covered the facts on numbers and highlighted again the turbulence of frequent moves affecting children. Its main concern was the effect on military recruitment and retention as its conclusion was that the military could not guarantee the same standard of education that existed in the UK. Only one of its recommendations affected Hamm. It considered that secondary age children in France and Belgium should go to one of the secondary schools in Germany. Windsor School started taking pupils whose fathers were stationed, for example, in SHAPE HQ outside Paris and at NATO HQ in Brussels.

## Full Flow

By 1955 Windsor School was up and running. The summer term saw pupil numbers top 500 for the first time. They were to creep up to slightly under 550. It was a truly mixed school with an equal number of boys and girls. Peter Porter was only at the school for one year but his recollections give a comprehensive overview:

*Our whole family went to Germany with my father. I attended Windsor School in the Ruhr at Bad Hamm, one of three BFES boarding schools located throughout the BAOR. I have many pleasant memories of that time. The school was converted from a German army barracks complex and I remember that one of the buildings still had a mural of the German Eagle painted on the outside. One of the nice things about the school was that it was co-educational although, of course, the living quarters were segregated! The student body was divided into five groups named after English royal residences and four of these were housed, one per floor including my house (Hillsborough), in two of the main buildings (one for boys and one for girls). The fifth one (Balmoral) was located on the middle two floors of a similar building, the boys and girls being separated by a central wall. The top floor was the infirmary and the bottom floor was the staff quarters and admin offices. For reasons best left to the imagination, the infirmary was also known as “the rabbit warren”, and many a young lad was apprehended trying to use it as a passageway into the forbidden zone. This was my last school year before going to work and, as one of the older boys, I was made a house prefect and had to police the conduct of the younger boys on my floor. The school was gated with a guard at the entrance and students were not allowed off the grounds except with*

*parents on the monthly visiting days, or during organised school outings – a bit like prison in a way! Occasionally one of the younger boys would attempt to get home (POW escape books were a great favourite at the time). One way I was able to leave the school grounds as a senior boy was to “train” with a group of friends for cross country running, and another was to go on manoeuvres as a member of the Combined Cadet Force. One of the more interesting school outings was to what was left of the three dams featured in “The Dam Busters” story. Even in 1956, the valley below the Möhne Dam was still flooded. Although it was somewhat restrictive, I have to admit that I enjoyed my stay there and it was also here that I eventually turned toward my career in engineering by studying Metalwork and Technical Drawing, even though these unfortunately had to be taken at the expense of the subjects of English Literature and History.*

Here we see the outlines of the school: the houses, the restricted scope of daily life, examinations and some of the breaches of discipline. The culture and ethos of the school was formed. Its rhythms, rituals and traditions were created, many of which lasted until the schools closed in 1983. In the previous chapter we saw how the more passive rituals were created; the school and house names, the badge and motto. By autumn 1955 the more active elements of traditions and rituals were being built. The main pillars of a boarding school: academic, pastoral, social and administrative were in place.

The dominant figure of the period was undoubtedly the Headmaster, William Briant Pryce Aspinall OBE MA. He was steeped in (public) boarding school experience. His father had been a music master at Wellington College, a public school close to the Sandhurst Military Academy. Not surprisingly the College had strong links to the military. “Pryce” was a family name deriving from his grandmother. School was the Royal Masonic School in Bushey. After Cambridge University (degree in modern languages at St John’s College), Mr Aspinall taught at the family-run preparatory school, Ravenswood, again close to Wellington College and Sandhurst, and later St Paul’s College. Commissioned in 1940 he served in the Intelligence Corps during the war reaching Lt Col rank. He worked in section MI14 dealing with German military strategy. In 1943 he edited a

book of articles (from German publications) on aspects of the German military. Its aim he wrote:

*is intended to help the reader to form a vocabulary of military terms and give him a picture of how certain sections of the German armed forces operate.*

My copy was owned by a 23 year old Welsh woman in the ATS, married to a Czech. She worked at the famous Bletchley Park codebreaking centre; one of Mr Aspinall's intended readers. His work during the war earned him an OBE in 1946. After the war he returned to teaching and was the first senior master at King Alfred School when it opened in 1947. In 1950 he moved, as headmaster, to Sutton Valence School, a boy's public school in Berkshire for three years before taking up the headship at Windsor School. He was 41.

## **The school takes shape**

The BFES style of comprehensive school emerged. This combined the three elements of grammar/modern/technical in one school but in parallel streams. Pupils were assigned after their arrival, through tests, into class levels (often A to F).

The school was not only young but youthful: in 1955 over three quarters of the pupils were under 15. At this time, and for several years after, the main demand for places in BFES secondary schools was in this younger age groups. Pupils were still being kept in primary schools as there were no places available in the four secondary schools. At times the entry age crept up to 12. A year later in 1956 the Headmaster bemoaned the lack of senior pupils:

*Moreover we have as never as yet in our brief history had more than 49 boys and girls in the school at any one time aged 16 or over and that is the total at present.*

This young age grouping had formal and informal aspects. It took until 1955/56 for Mr Aspinall to appoint the first Head Girl (Elizabeth Palmer) and Head Boy (Brian Terry) and nine other school prefects:

*The importance of the right lead at the top is immense, our school*

*prefects, although on the young side, have learnt well, and are learning. They will serve the school well.*

These appointments put into place the hierarchy of pupil officialdom: house officials with authority within a house; school prefects with a wider responsibility. The numbers of the latter slowly increased. By 1957 there were 11 girls as school prefects and 8 boys.

The youthfulness also affected the Dramatic Society. It wished to put on "Hamlet". Mr Aspinall again:

*To perform "Hamlet" with a cast whose average age was 14½ was, in the headmaster's humble opinion, asking for trouble. Six times did they badger him; six times did he say nay, but in the end he succumbed in this war of attrition and had the further pleasure of eating his words in public after the last performance.*

A youthful school suffered on the sports field. After a disappointing football season capped by a 9–1 defeat by PRS the sports master enjoined his team:

*The spirit of the team after this heavy defeat was the most gratifying feature of the term. It would be most rewarding to turn the tables next term but "Grow, boys, grow".*

## **Examinations, examinations, examinations**

The ambition to get ahead did mean some false steps were made. In November 1955 the first candidates were entered for the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O Level). 16 papers were taken with 12 passes. Mr Aspinall conceded that some of the candidates:

*could only be regarded as outsiders for the that particular race and the results on the whole showed that we had given too many doubtful starters a run for their money.*

In Summer 1956 there were 30 candidates taking an average of 5.5 papers of the 16 subjects. Looking at the examination passes in the 1955/56 academic year gives a good snapshot of the academic side of the school. One

girl, Mary Robinson, succeeded in four Advanced level subjects (Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry). An exceptional result for the 1950s. She was the only A level candidate from the school. At O Level 33 girls and 19 boys recorded passes. Maureen Bilham led the way with 8 passes and 8 other pupils gained 5 or more passes (including Peter Porter). The most popular subjects, at least in terms of passes, were History, English Language, Geography, French, English Literature and German (where all 13 candidates passed). In all of these subjects girls surpassed the boys in number of passes. The boys led the way with Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing, Physics with Chemistry and Handicrafts (woodwork and metalwork).

Windsor School entered a total of 173 candidates (i.e. number of papers taken) and achieved a pass rate of almost 72%. Prince Rupert School's performance was 395 candidates with a pass rate of 73%; King Alfred School's numbers were 234 candidates and a pass rate of 60%. In summer 1957 Windsor increased its number of candidates, as the school slowly "aged", with its 267 candidates achieving a slightly lower pass rate of 64%. Pupils also entered in the Royal Society of Arts examinations. In summer 1956 12 candidates (7 boys, 5 girls) achieved a pass in English Language and one girl in typing.

The success of girls in the examinations was not reflected in the pages of careers advice in *Concordia*. In 1956 careers advice was given for occupational therapists and various branches of nursing. The following year advice subtly changed:

*Banking offered plenty of openings for girls on accounting machine work or as shorthand typists.*

*For girls who GCE in a minimum of five subjects, one of these being English and at least two at Advanced level, the City of London College provides an intensive secretarial course lasting six months. Secretarial work is always a popular field for girls because openings are plentiful and there is a great variety in the types of work available.*

The same section offered for boys apprenticeships in craft and drawing office as well as a career in forestry. This approach to girls careers was still evident twenty years later. Mr Cole, head of English at WGS, recalls a

careers presentation by the RAF in the mid-1970s. After films of swooping aircraft the presenter outlined the possible roles for girls, as typists or cooks!

Careers in the military not surprisingly gained attention. *Concordia* in 1956 outlined the entry requirements for the officer academies of Sandhurst, Cranwell and Dartmouth. That year saw the first pupils gaining admission to Welbeck College, others passed the Army and RAF Apprentices examinations. Pride of place went to Head Boy Brian Terry who became the first pupil to gain admission to Sandhurst Military Academy. He was subsequently commissioned into the Intelligence Corps, Mr Aspinall's wartime Corps.

## **Money raises its head**

Not everything was provided free. The Summer/Whitsun Fete was the main fund raiser for houses and the Amenities Fund. Houses had their own priorities:

*Music has played a quantitative part in the house's social life. The house spent £7 on records of varied types: classical and light music for the increasingly popular record programmes, and dance music for house parties.*

*House efforts this term have been mainly directed towards raising money to buy our own record player. Much as we enjoy the company of Caernarvon Boys, we cannot always be borrowing theirs and some of us enjoy other types of music than traditional jazz.*

*...we are a house with a flair for individualism, on many occasions setting the pace for others as for example in forming the nucleus of what is now a flourishing skiffle group which we hope will mature into a school orchestra.*

Balmoral found a novel way of raising funds:

*For years master and boys have searched their minds for methods and for years the only source of income has been the regular £10 from the annual Whitsun Fete. But at last a successful way was found. The housemaster noticed that the boy's sole entertainment seemed to be*



*listening to “pop” records. This revelation led to a bidding contest to hear the latest records. Boys formed syndicates to increase their bids, the highest bid being not for a record but to hear the housemaster sing.*

Music was not the only target for fund raising:

*House funds are always a problem but since Balmoral Girls held their own private “auction sale” which was organised by Miss Ellis in the dayroom one evening, there seems to have been a little less difficulty in paying for such luxuries as their hair dryer which has served its purpose very well during this Spring Term.*

The Whitsun Fete moved from innovation to regular:

*The Whitsun fete has now become an annual event: that is to say it was held in 1955 and 1956 and certainly will be held again in 1957.*

*In addition a Centurion tank was available for inspection by small boys on the roadway and small girls clamoured for rides on one of the Saddle Club horses. The Headmaster was seen boating in the swimming pool.*

In 1955 £276 was raised for Chapel funds; in 1956 this was beaten with £321 for the School Amenities Fund. This Fund came to play an increasingly important role in the school finances. It funded items such as the school magazine and excursions.

The need for funding for sports visits became essential after a War Office decision in 1956 which limited funding for the use of army transport to 10/- per pupil per year. Previously it had been fully funded. The extra money from the Amenities Fund raised enabled sporting events between the BFES secondary schools to continue.

## **A never-ending series of visitors**

Visitors to the school ranged from a succession of senior military officers to cultural performers. Brigadier Hackett, of the 20th Armoured Brigade, gave a talk to the Windsor Society on his experiences of Arnhem in 1944 and his

subsequent escape. Hackett was to repeat the lecture in a visit to the schools in 1967 when he was Commander in Chief of BAOR. His commitment to BFES was strong: he sent his children to PRS.

Cultural events broke up the routine. Dame Harriet Cohen, a noted pianist, performed in 1956 although the music master was highly critical both of the piano brought in for the concert and the acoustics of the assembly hall. The Drama Societies of both Oxford (Keble College) and Cambridge Universities made several visits with their Shakespearean productions.

The rhythm of the school year was set by the three terms with their arrival and dispersals: pupils mostly arriving by trains, picked up by Army buses. Most pupils also went home for a few days at half term. Those remaining (mostly from West Berlin) had the school for themselves for this short holiday. Those coming from Berlin had the added adventure of riding on the “Berliner”: the British military train from West Berlin to Hannover, and later, Brunswick. Armed guards on the train, doors bolted from the inside. The Cold War was very visible as their passports were taken to the Soviet inspection point, the British military escort pointedly ignoring the East German guards. The UK did not recognise their jurisdiction.

## **Routines and rituals**

Events within the terms were driven by external and internal timetables. Bonfire Night, the Remembrance Day parade and examination dates were fixed externally. Internal timetables triggered house socials on their founding anniversary, confirmations by a visiting Bishop and Speech Day (held in the gym as the 1,000 guests could not fit into the assembly hall).

The mixed nature of the school was evident not only in the segregated houses but throughout the school. Photographs and films of the time show classrooms with boys and girls sitting apart. Ralph Czumaj vividly recalls the senior mistress keeping an eye out for any close behaviour during free time. How did the co-educational school actually manage the segregation? Some idea comes from a song written for a house magazine.

*Segregation, Segregation, everybody hates it,  
Segregation  
Segregation, Segregation*

*Even in the Windsor School, segregation  
You must not have a girlfriend by any means,  
This is the saying of our friend Miss.....  
Always keep your full mind on de work  
Thinking of the girls will make you shirk  
(chorus, even in the classrooms)  
You may not walk around the grounds  
Behind the chapel is out of bounds  
Don't get caught in the classroom alone,  
Or you will be quickly sent back home.  
(chorus, even in the chapel)  
You must not leave your Houses after dark  
You cannot go together to de lovely Kur Park  
On Saturday the girls may go into the Mark  
The boys on Sunday to stop al de lark.  
(chorus, even in the cinema)  
Standing on the corner is against the rule  
That's co-education in Windsor School  
And so my friends this is my advice to you  
Do your romancing like amoeba do.  
Segregation, Segregation  
Even in the Windsor School  
Segregation, Segregation,  
Everybody loves it  
Segregation.*

Several pupils indeed recall being caught too close to a partner by one of the teachers!

There were setbacks. Perhaps none more tragic than the death of Miss Joyce Stewart in 1956. She had only recently taken up her duties in the summer term, including as a duty teacher in Hillsborough House, when she died, aged 34. A memorial service was held in the chapel attended by her parents.

## Windsor School draws to a close

*Concordia* reported Speech Day in detail, when parents came to see their children, when prizes were awarded, the headmaster giving a review of the year followed by an uplifting speech by a VIP. This example is typical, almost:

*Speech Day was eagerly anticipated. For pupils, parents and visitors, the Day for annual prize giving was always special. This one in July 1957 was not expected to be any different. The hall platform was set up for the evening's performance of HMS Pinafore. The Guest of Honour was the British Ambassador to the Federal Republic, Sir Christopher Steel, KCMG MVO.*

*The routine was a full one, and succeeded as an essential part of its purpose in reflecting the tone, atmosphere, and work of the school. The weather was disappointing, with cloud and showers after weeks which had given no cause for complaint, but the programme was carried through without hindrance.*

*The Headmaster's speech followed the usual course, a report on the year. He recorded good examination results at all levels, a successful Christmas Fair, sporting achievements, a thriving Combined Cadet Force, the two Chapels leading a full spiritual life, deep relationships with local schools and communities.*

*Apart from specific instruction, however, he hoped to introduce children to a community which has a common purpose, a Christian way of life, and a sense of tolerance and humour.*

*To conclude he referred, with deep regret, to the impending closure of*

*the school.*

This is not *Concordia*. It is *Red Dragon* reporting at King Alfred School in Plön.

The shock was profound. Opened in 1947, King Alfred School was the second co-educational boarding school in BFES. It was successful. Yet it was due to close? The Chairman of the Governors, Major-General Craddock, attributed the closure to “heavy overheads”. The news of the closure had a significant effect not only on KAS but on Windsor School.

Summer 1957 was the end of the fourth year of Windsor School. Building work had long ago finished, the school was fully operational. The 39 strong teaching staff was relatively stable. Mr Aspinall was back after a term’s absence in the previous autumn term through illness. But tucked away in the final paragraph of his annual report in that summer of 1957, was an intimation of changes to come:

*Much hard work lies before us. The reshaping of the British forces in Western Germany and the Low Countries must inevitably lead to increased disturbance of the regular pattern of the school, but adaptability is a quality we have learned to develop and indeed, without it we would founder.*

In an almost Churchillian exhortation he concluded:

*If to the will to overcome the difficulties we add a firm resolve to tackle them concordially, in the spirit of harmony and union, we shall not only succeed but shall enjoy our striving and such success as we may achieve.*

We need some external context to understand that disruption about to descend on Windsor School. On 5 May 1955 the Federal Republic of Germany became a (almost) fully sovereign country; four days later it joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Allied occupation was over and their military forces changed roles: from occupiers, with considerable authority, to equal partners within NATO. West Berlin was different; the Soviet Union was not party to the discussions on Germany’s future (and had tried to disrupt them). Changes to the status of Berlin required a Four Power decision. That was not forthcoming. Legally Berlin was to

remain under occupation by the Four Powers until German reunification and the “Two Plus Four Agreement” of 1990.

These momentous changes had an immediate impact on BFES. We saw that the rush to open the Windsor School had been driven in part by the need to finance it from “occupation” funds; paid by the German government. The protracted negotiations over Germany’s future had started in earnest in 1952. But differences between, on the one hand UK and USA, and on the other France, over its future military forces and NATO membership meant that the occupation funding continued longer than was originally expected. Its continuance, or not, and in what form after 1955, was the topic of considerable and often bad tempered discussions between the German and Allied governments. The British government was resigned to picking up the sterling bill for stationing its (hopefully reduced) troops in Germany as part of NATO; this was standard NATO policy. Of more concern was the expenditure in Deutsches Marks. The UK economy in the 1950s was seriously short of foreign currency; it was the most important economic issue of the time. In its negotiations with the German government the UK government insisted that Germany continue to pay the DM expenditure. Finally, and without good grace on either side, a temporary compromise was agreed although arguments were to continue throughout the 1960s. The compromise (a reducing amount) immediately worked its way down to BFES as its Annual Report noted:

*Towards the end of 1955/56 financial year the allocation of Deutsches Marks, hitherto enjoyed from Occupation and Support costs was replaced by a more limited sterling allotment.*

The consequence was a change of many administrative functions. Buying British from the UK in sterling took precedence over value for money and local convenience. School stationery was no longer bought locally, but from HMSO in the UK, the number of German administrative staff was reduced, equipment and furniture were to be brought from the UK and administered centrally. Reporting on the 1956/57 financial year the BFES Director commented:

*The expenses of maintenance have tended to be high because of the desirability of putting buildings in order whilst German occupation*

*and support money is available. There will be a steady fall in this item from financial year 58/59 onwards.”*

BFES also had to contend with a major change in British military strategy. The Defence Review of 1957, called the Sandys review after the War Minister Duncan Sandys, was driven by several major concerns.

Firstly, and not surprisingly, there was money. The UK was spending nearly 10% of its GDP on defence (compared to just over 2% in 2023). The economy could not sustain such high levels.

Secondly, the military outlook in Europe was changing. The expectation was that Germany's admission to NATO would mean it would gradually add to western defences. This would enable the UK to reduce its forces in Germany.

And thirdly, there was a major strategic change. Instead of a reliance on a land defence of northern Germany from a Soviet attack, the new strategy placed greater reliance on battlefield tactical nuclear missiles. Together these meant a considerable reduction in troops in Germany and a geographic consolidation.

The opening of Windsor and Queens Schools had mitigated but not solved the pressures BFES faced at secondary level. Demand for places was still strong. BFES maintained a waiting list for boarding places in all three schools. Windsor (550) was the smallest: PRS varied from 620 to 650 and KAS was steady around 625. Queens School expanded to 389 in 1957 with further expansion planned. BFES planning was based on the average number of children per married quarter: this was more relevant than actual military numbers. It looked ahead to the end of national service in 1960 which would change the balance between single and married men in the Services.

The cost of the boarding schools was kept under review. In 1956/57 the Windsor School cost £482,794 meaning £918 per pupil: in 2023 terms around £13,000,000 and £24,600 respectively. These figures included a notional amount (estimated at £75 to £100 per pupil) for rent as the premises came free. BFES noted that the costs were higher than UK schools. Several reasons were advanced:

*A higher teacher/pupil ratio*

*Teacher costs are higher because of accommodation, food, travel etc*

*German labour is more expensive than British*

*The cost of special items like special trains, supply chains etc*

*Few parents were paying the full cost of 31/- per week for food etc.*

The last point was somewhat misleading: only senior officers were charged that “full cost”.

A frequent comment over the years was that a boarding place at Windsor (and PRS/KAS) was more expensive than a place at the leading public schools in the UK. At the time Eton, for example, was charging £413 per year and most other public schools between £300 and £380 per year. The War Office did offer a grant of £75 to parents in Germany to send their child to a UK school. BFES estimated that around 1,000 children were being educated in the UK with most staying with family or friends.

BFES was quite open about the benefit of having costs covered by occupation costs:

*Even by English standards, children at the boarding schools are enjoying facilities which could only be enjoyed in England if one could pay the fees required by the more prosperous independent schools.*

In the House of Commons in March 1955 the Minister had said there were proposals to open two more secondary schools. One was already underway, Queens, the other, a purpose built boarding school, was proposed for Gütersloh. A year later the War Office rejected the proposal. A second consideration was to move PRS from Wilhelmshaven to a new school near the Dutch border at Kleve. PRS and KAS were more expensive to run than Windsor, being larger: Queens, being purpose built and a day school, was the most cost effective. The Kleve option foundered on financial grounds. The uncertainty over PRS was to last longer: it was not until the late 1960s that the decision was made to move to a purpose built day school in Rinteln (with a boarding house incorporated). Kings Gütersloh was not to open as a day school until 1960.

In 1956/57 BFES decided to close KAS in 1958. It was isolated from the British troops, now being concentrated in North Rhine Westphalia. It was “*administratively out on a limb.*” The reduction in Forces numbers would,



it was expected, allow the loss of its 600 boarding places. At the same time the German navy sought the return of one of the barracks in PRS Wilhelmshaven. The BFES Director made a deal: instead of the German offer of building a new block on the main site (too disruptive) he successfully sought a financial package to enable an additional 200 places at Queens and 100 at Hamm. The PRS building, the “Bonteheim” in fact was not handed over for a few more years. BFES planned for 1,810 secondary places by autumn 1958; sufficient for the expected reduced BAOR/RAF presence in Germany.

The headmaster of KAS, Mr. Hugh Wallis-Hosken, left KAS at the end of the summer term 1957 to become the headmaster of PRS (whose headmaster, Mr Pacey became Director BFES).

The BFES plans did not go smoothly. It became clear during 1957/58 that the rundown in the military was not leading to a reduction in secondary school children. Conflicting messages abounded. When it became clear that KAS was not closing in summer 1958, and possibly reprieved, Mr. Hugh Wallis-Hosken felt it was his duty to return to KAS. The reprieve lasted only one year.

The change in strategy was heavily influenced by the request of the German Navy for the return of the Plön site. The Bundesmarine was building up to its full potential within NATO. It needed the Plön site to return to its pre-war function as a naval training school. In return it offered to finance the replacement of the school.

The new disposition of secondary schools was finalised over the summer of 1958. KAS would now close in the summer of 1959 and Windsor School was to be split into boys and girls schools. The Newcastle Barracks, the former Dannevoux Kaserne, was to be converted for the girls’ school. In November 1958, the housemaster of Hillsborough Boys, Mr Flower, in his regular letter to former pupils, announced that the school would be split the following September.

The decision to divide Windsor School was not universally popular. The Director of Army Education Corps (AEC) was unhappy. The AEC had long sought, unsuccessfully, to integrate BFES into its control (it ran Army schools in the rest of the world and did not see why it should not run the schools in Germany). It made clear its dislike of the decision in its submission to a 1958 review of the future of BFES. In its list of “Difficulties” created by

BFES being different to schools in the rest of the world (i.e. those under AEC management):

*The splitting of the Hamm school into separate boys and girls, a unique experiment in Service schools overseas, was not made known to the War Office till it was too late to consider the implications.*

The subsequent report, the Weaver Report, did not accept AEC's view that it should take over BFES. The commanding officers of BAOR and RAF Germany as well as the Ministry of Education all preferred the status quo.

In 1975, Mrs Steventon, the Domestic and later the Caernarvon Matron, recalled as she was leaving after 22 years, that Mr Aspinall was also not happy with the ending of the co-educational structure. In December 1958 his play "*The Judgement*" received its first performance and on December 14th he read the lesson in the school chapel. Term ended a few days later. Mr Aspinall, the founding inspiration of Windsor School, left for King Richard School in Dhekelia in Cyprus. Miss Jeens, the senior mistress and two housemasters, Mr Tovey and Mr White, followed him in 1959. It was from Cyprus that he wrote his valedictory report in the final *Concordia* of Windsor School:

*My five and a half years at Windsor School appear before me as I write, at a distance of some two thousand miles from Hamm, as a period for which my family and myself was in the main a period of blissful happiness. Of course it was not like that all the time.*

*There were plenty of infuriating moments and some infuriating people for that matter but the sweet and lasting taste of mutual trust and confidence is far stronger than the bitterness of the odd occasion.*

*To arrive at some sort of assessment, one asks,*

*Did the school fulfil a good purpose? The honest answer I believe is yes. The school generated a deep sense of real friendship in many hundreds of young people, it opened up opportunities for them which they would not otherwise have, it set high standards of thought, behaviour, worship and performance, it taught them the difference between genuine pride and boastfulness.*

*Was it worth all the effort that went into making it run as smoothly in difficult circumstances? The answer is a most definite yes. To me, the reward was and is the bond of friendship and the sense of achievement. Did the school play its proper part in representing the best ideals of our country in a foreign land? I believe it did, by exerting a quite powerful influence in the surrounding region not only through its British staff and children but through its German staff who served it with such loyalty.*

An idea of the impact Mr Aspinall made in those early years can be seen in an appreciation in the same *Concordia*. An anonymous member of staff recounted Mr Aspinall's role in those early years. After recalling the initial meeting in 1953 with Mr Aspinall of the newly appointed teachers (at the Oxford and Cambridge club in London) the member of staff continued:

*This spirit of friendliness, determination and pride, of being one of a team, persisted and grew even when we were faced with poor playing fields, building operations, DPs overlooking us from the bomb-damaged block, ill-equipped laboratories, scabies and a timetable which included teaching a number of subjects only dimly recollected from our own school days. We worked hard; the physical and educational amenities improved; the chapel of St Boniface and the Catholic Chapel were dedicated; the School grew in spirit and in stature until we could even hope to hold our own at sport, dramatics or Quizzes. Our first boy went to Welbeck, we produced our own first university entrant, we formed a Windsor Society, we raised £200 at the Whitsun Fete; and behind all this vast diversity of accomplishment, encouraging, guiding, getting the best out of his staff by a direct approach and a personal example was W.B.P.A.*

The preparations to divide into two schools took place concurrently with the final academic year. Mr Trevor (Tom) Benyon, arrived from BFES HQ as deputy headmaster in September 1958 and assumed the headship in January 1959. Miss Rosamund Willson arrived at Easter 1959 ready to lead the new Windsor Girls' School in September.

The final *Concordia* of Windsor School was published in the summer term. The editorial looked forward to the change:

*If in a moment of rare conceit, two hundred and fifty members of the fair sex pass through the gates of Windsor School on July 20th thinking the place will never be quite the same without them, two hundred and fifty members of the equally fair sex will gallantly agree. But what an exciting prospect to have more than eleven footballers to choose from, and even those dull souls who see no beauty in a round ball have the promise of close relations with the new girl's school to console them. All things considered perhaps we will, after all, brush away the tears and welcome the boys of King Alfred School in September.*

The report on the CCF let slip another view:

*Many of the pupils of Windsor School are not looking forward to it being transformed into an all-boys school.*

Two Originals gave contrasting views. Barbara Smith left a double edged comment as she looked back on her five and a half years:

*I have generally enjoyed life at Windsor School but despite the lie I shall tell if and when I am invited to present the prizes at a Speech Day, they have not been the happiest days of my life –I look for greater things in the future.*

Nigel Frith who had dominated the dramatic and literary scenes since his Herod in the first school play, and later *Hamlet* (“the producers were fortunate in having in Nigel Frith a boy who can speak verse, with an understanding beyond his years”) Shylock and many others, recalled:

*I have written about a million, I have read roughly four million, I have spoken approximately thirteen million, I have listened to somewhere around twenty-five million...words; which in their phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs have either come in or gone out of my mind during the one thousand and fifty days I have spent in this school.*

He concluded:

*Now again when I am leaving this school after my one thousand and fifty days are up, the impressions of the school I have are not of*

*clothes pegs and benches (they have been replaced) but prefects' duty, such as the roll call book, the end of the row in Assembly, and my untidy locker; the same school but viewed from higher up; the view is not that different, the whipped potatoes are still there (I do not mean this as any criticism of the kitchen administration). However although the school has not changed itself, it has changed my mind. I am grateful to the school for making this change and I only hope I can make the change worthwhile; if not the forty-three million words I mentioned at the start, and these words I am writing now, have been in vain.*

The new Headmaster, Mr Benyon, looked forward:

*As I go about my duties day by day, more and more combining the running of the school as is with the planning of the school as it will be, I find myself saying so often of the things I observe, "This is something we must not lose when next September brings its anticipated changes". It would take too long to catalogue all the things we must not lose and most of them are manifestations of the spirit and tone of the school.*

On July 20 1958 Windsor School closed 2,072 days (but only 1,050, as Nigel Frith reminded us, of actual term time) after its opening. Around 2,000 pupils and over 70 teachers had passed through its gates.

Edda Haick had left in the summer of 1956. Mr Kelly remained of the first 8 teachers. Six of the original 90 pupils were still at the school.

## New Foundations

The summer of 1959 was full of activity. The rapid decision to create two schools meant a tight schedule. Builders were at work in the former Windsor School converting it to a boys only school. The former Newcastle Barracks, built as Dannevoux Barracks, were losing the vestiges of the military, to become a girls school. Across West Germany, and a few neighbouring countries, over a thousand families awaited information about the new secondary schools for their children for the autumn term. Nearly 100 teachers and hundreds of ancillary staff were preparing for the new schools.

That summer BFES issued a revised edition of their regulations for secondary schools. They provide a fascinating insight. There was still a shortage of secondary places at the junior level. The earliest admission age was 11 years 4 months. Children could remain at schools until they were 16 (this was still later than the school leaving age in England and Wales and followed the BFES policy since 1947). To stay beyond 16 pupils needed to show they could benefit from more schooling, primarily measured by taking examination courses. Those over 16 on arrival in Germany would only be admitted if they were studying for an approved examination. A major concern was that the schools should not be used to “park” children who would have left school if their parents were in the UK. The regulations went into considerable detail to cover arrangements when the parent left Germany, or the pupil left mid-term.

Tuition itself (i.e. the costs of teaching, most but not all activities, sports etc) remained free. This matched the day school system in England and Wales. Parents had to pay for meals and boarding costs. The 1959 regulations:

*Rations, accommodation and laundry but do not include individual*

*items of expenditure such as hair-cutting, shoe repairs or pocket money.*

The War Office in London set the sliding scale of amounts payable depending on the father's income (it was almost always the father). The rates were weekly (and pre-decimal in pounds, shillings and pence). They were collected automatically from pay. Many children never realised their father was paying:

<i>Annual Income (£)</i>	<i>First Child</i>	<i>Second Child</i>
<i>Under 401</i>	<i>15/6</i>	<i>10/6</i>
<i>401 to 700</i>	<i>18/6</i>	<i>13/6</i>
<i>701 to 1000</i>	<i>21/6</i>	<i>16/6</i>
<i>1001 to 1300</i>	<i>25/0</i>	<i>20/0</i>
<i>1301 to 1600</i>	<i>28/0</i>	<i>23/0</i>
<i>Over 1600</i>	<i>31/0</i>	<i>26/0</i>

## **From Plön to Hamm**

The new Windsor Girls' School was the first to open but not at Hamm. 14 September 1959 saw the school buildings in Plön re-open after the summer holidays, as they had for the preceding 12 years. With a major difference: the 567 pupils were all girls. The coeducational King Alfred School was no more. Since its opening in 1947, 4,000 children had attended KAS with 192 British teachers and 34 administrative staff.

In its place rose, temporarily, Windsor Girls' School. The conversion of the Newcastle Barracks was behind schedule so the school opened in Plön for its first term. For those pupils and teachers who had been at Windsor School the change was marked; it would be difficult to imagine a more different setting. Many pupils, especially ex-Windsor, looked back on this time, recalling the openness, the lake, the scenery. Although a former military barracks they gave an utterly different impression to the austere barracks in Hamm. One glorious sunny Saturday afternoon most of the school went on a

trip across the famous Five Lakes of Plön in motor launches. It was a revelation to many to see the school buildings spread out along the lakeside, and to obtain a new view of the Plön schloss and town.

Ellen Brandon-Warnaby's recollection is typical:

*The thing I remember most about Plön is the unbelievable school grounds and the enormity of the place. Where Hamm was pretty much bricks and mortar – KAS was wooded, lots of tall trees, little bridges that ran over small brooks which separated the living accommodation from the school blocks, a very impressive entrance to the grounds known as the Quarter Deck and situated right on the edge of a huge lake – Die Grosser Plöner See and it was cold, well we weren't that far from the North and Baltic Sea.*

Former KAS pupils and teachers had a reverse impression when they arrived in Hamm in January and February 1960. Jenny Field recalls:

*I moved from Plön to WGS, an original KAS girl. Took a lot of getting used to, after Plön which was very scenic huge lake, our own farm, to the barracks of WGS you can imagine. Shock to the system. But still thoroughly enjoyed my time there.*

Five teachers came from Windsor School, including the headmistress Miss Rosamund Willson BSc (Econ) who had arrived at Easter 1959. Four teachers, including the senior mistress, Miss Delia Feerick (5 years at KAS) and the chaplain, the Rev Alec Tewkesbury moved from KAS. Several key non-teaching staff also moved from KAS to WGS including Mr Stirk the catering officer, Mr Coleman the stores supervisor, Herr Poppendick the librarian and matron Fräulein Sill.

The school was a pioneer: the first girls boarding school for Service families. There were relatively few boarding schools for girls in the UK. Miss Willson takes up the story:

*Very few of us had met before – either girls or staff – we were without much necessary equipment as it had gone ahead to Hamm. We gave ourselves a fortnight to become a school and then we had our opening party on Michaelmas Day. It was a term full of new experiences and preparations for our move.*



One pupil recalls a rough time at Plön (however she subsequently found her time at WGS Hamm a paradise!):

*One of my most vivid memories was my first term spent in Plön (as the new school in Hamm was not ready) – I was in an attic dormitory, I ‘think’ it was in a block formerly known as Nansen (from old KAS days) and it was in the former boy’s quarters. It was the winter term and was absolutely freezing and mice used to crawl over our beds at night!! I can remember contracting food poisoning and spending time in the sick bay and suffering from chapped knees, hands and face from the bitterly cold winds coming off the five lakes that surrounded the school, having communal showers and being extremely homesick!*

Small things mattered, at least at first. A former KAS pupil recalls:

*I can remember losing all the boys and all of a sudden it was a mass of girls, seeing all the maroon uniforms joining us that Autumn Term, us still in our green. Many an argument was had, but would you believe by the time our school was ready, Windsor Girls’ Hamm we were all one, including all the green uniforms had gone.*

Evelyn Potter, from KAS, was the first head girl. Indeed three of the first four head girls at WGS were former KAS pupils. Miss Potter being succeeded by the Yeadell sisters, Lorraine and Alex (with Elizabeth Wright between them). The Yeadell’ s father had been in the Control Commission in Germany since 1946.

The term proceeded as near normal as possible at the temporary site. Church services, Halloween party, visits almost every Wednesday afternoon including to Lübeck, Kiel and Hamburg Art Gallery. In December an advance party left for Hamm and camped in the newly converted buildings. The end of term coincided with the first snow and on a bitterly cold day at 7 in the morning the military train arrived to take pupils home.

The works in Hamm were still underway in January 1960. The changes to the former Dannevoux Kaserne were more extensive than those seven years previously in Argonner Kaserne. The site was larger than the Windsor School, with four, rather than three, residential blocks. Several functions had to move to new locations including the NAAFI shop, the primary and Sunday

schools. The Sergeant's Mess was converted into the dining hall. A tank depot (garage) was to become the assembly hall and chapel; the Roman Catholic chapel was built in a former paint shop. The parade ground became a hockey pitch and the former hockey pitch was grassed over. A rifle range became the open air theatre and the static water tank, as at Windsor School, became a swimming pool. Unlike the Windsor School, the WGS site was adjacent to an army unit.

The works would cost DM4.5m. This was around £385,000 at the time and equivalent to around £9m at 2023 prices. The German authorities funded the project in return for the Plön site. The Hamm newspaper reported on the opening. First the journalist had to get something off his chest:

*On Tuesday six hundred young English girls will come to Hamm. The change of use for the former Dannevoux Kaserne, later Newcastle Barracks, on Alten Untoper Weg, is something this writer wishes would happen to all the world's barracks... conversion into a girls' boarding school.*

*It is dearly wished that all the vast sums extorted from taxpayers by all former and present governments for death dealing weapons and soldiers uniforms could be used for the education and development of young people.*

Perhaps he was unaware that the 600 girls came from military families!

Pamela Ross recalls:

*When my sister Ginny and I started at Hamm in July 1963 our German mother was amazed to see her daughters were going to school in the Barracks where her cousin had been stationed during the war.*

Back to the newspaper report:

*The individual blocks have been repainted, the parade ground has become a playing field and there are hockey, tennis and netball playing areas together with a running track. High and long jump pits encourage participation in these sports and there are four dormitory blocks, a teaching block, science block, a gymnasium and a multipurpose hall which be used as an Anglican church and half a*

*Catholic chapel.*

*The whole project has been well organised by the Dortmund Finance Department under the local leader Martin Hotze.*

*In no way was this money to create a luxurious interior or provide extravagant school facilities. On the contrary, visitors from contemporary German schools are amazed at the difference in accommodation and facilities. The girls sleep in field beds, six to a room, even the furniture is very plain. Also the classrooms are anything but comfortable.*

*The English appear to have the greatest desire that their children learn intensively. In addition to having a well-stocked library, the girls have been provided with four chemistry and physics laboratories, three craft rooms, three instructional kitchens, two sewing rooms, a music room and a typing room. And there is also something special – the girls have a small apartment where they learn the duties of a housewife. They themselves must keep the apartment clean and in order.*

The journalist could not resist a dig at WBS:

*Antiquated fire escape stairs reached from the roof storey down to the ground however the builders rebuilt these so that the appearance was not destroyed as happened at the Windsor Boys' School at Hamm-Mark.*

The site works in those first months were compounded by biting cold weather:

*Staff arriving in January were greeted by a desolate scene – muddy tracks instead of roads, a scarcity of heating and hot water, lights which sometimes went off for a whole evening in the blocks and which did not exist at all in the grounds. This period of our life was strongly reminiscent of wartime blackout conditions.*

Matron Giesefeld recalled an amusing incident:

*I started my duty there on the 2/1/60. On a bitter cold night I walked from the Balmoral block to the gates and was able to help Miss Feerick out of a freshly dug hole in the ground. Needless to say we had no electricity yet.*

A teacher recalled:

*How we needed her (Miss Willson's) insistence on strict punctuality when there were no roads to hurry along and staff and girls alike squelched through the mud of the not-yet-made roads.*

Four dormitory blocks enabled WGS to have more houses than Windsor School. Along with the five house names, Sandringham, Marlborough, Hillsborough, Caernarvon and Balmoral, three new houses were created: Edinburgh, St. James and Kensington. The latter only lasted a few years until it was merged with Sandringham.

*In the week preceding the arrival of the girls positive miracles were worked by all concerned in preparing the school for habitation for over 600 people (not only the boarding pupils but also almost all the staff). The attractiveness of the new eight houses compensated for the many inconveniences suffered at first by all. Traffic in the school block, with only one staircase in use, was much like rush hour in the London underground station.*

The chapels were not yet completed so Sunday services were held at WBS with the school, as *Ambassador* put it, "crocodiled" as they walked there and back. Catholic services were held in the modern German church outside the school gates. School assemblies, and later the services, were held in the gym. The swimming pool was not finished in time for the summer term. The chapel held its first service on October 9th. The new school hall did not open until January 1961. The school became fully functional despite the works and the constant sound of drills and disruptions as builders completed their tasks. Lessons, examinations, activities (the first play, *The Merchant of Venice*), external visits, fell into their places. A day's holiday was announced for Princess Margaret's wedding to Anthony Armstrong Jones; TVs were hired for each block so everyone could watch the ceremony.

Another memory:

*I went to WGS in '61 from the UK, and there seemed to be a few from Plön. But I remember that our matron's favourite saying when exasperated by our behaviour was "This would never have happened at Plön!" in a heavy German accent!*

At the first Speech Day in July 1960 Miss Willson announced that there were over 570 girls at the school, the youngest 11½ and the oldest 19:

*one will have only been with us for 1 month before she moves on again.*

*44 girls have taken between them, 213 examination papers in 14 different subjects at the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education. 8 girls have taken between them 33 papers in 8 different subjects at the advanced Level.*

Her speech reflected the times:

*I must say here that it appears to me to be a contradiction in terms to describe a woman as Educated but Undomesticated – perhaps the fathers will agree with me! Each girl has a brain to be developed, and she should have opportunities too, to learn how to become a homemaker! The Homemaker should have interests outside her home. In our specialised world today, maybe we need a new emphasis here.*

That Speech Day saw the first performance of one of the most fondly remembered aspects of WGS life: the school song. Mr David Purvis, the head of music, had written the school song at Queens, his previous school. Miss Willson commissioned him to write a new song for the new school and as Mr Purvis later recalled *She told me the sentiments she wanted expressed in verse and song:*

*We carry as Ambassadors  
Proud banners of our land  
Which blazen wide our history  
"As one, four kingdoms stand"  
So here eight royal homes unite  
In Windsor's ancient name:*

*Their lives apart, their purpose one,  
To win, through concord, fame.*

*Concordia*

*When Edward Wales' first prince was born  
Within Caernarvon's might  
Still fought the Scots their English foe  
From Edinburgh's height.  
Now Hillsborough's walls in brotherhood  
On Ireland's shores are set  
And Marlborough, for the Commonwealth.  
Spreads concord wider yet*

*Concordia*

*The throne, the young Victoria  
At Kensington did gain:  
Proclaimed then heralds at St. James  
The sovereign's long reign  
For respite brief from cares of state  
The Consort built for his Queen  
Balmoral – lone, majestic, strong –  
And Sandringham, serene.*

*Concordia*

*Salute, respect each valiant name  
Wherein tradition stays,  
For on our past our future's built  
With wisdom for our ways.  
With strength in God, and learning, face  
The challenge of the world,  
By thinking, acting on the word  
Upon our flag, unfurled*

*Concordia*

Mr Purvis also wrote the school hymn for its first performance in December 1960 and in 1961 he added alto and descant parts for the song. Lorraine Yeadell takes up the story:

*Since then they have been a vital part of every school function. Every girl, within hours of her arrival, is given a copy of the words, so that we can always claim that every girl knows both hymn and song, a fact of which we can duly proud, considering our constantly changing population.*

The song was very successful. In September 1962 a record was made of the song, the hymn and the anthem “*I waited for the Lord*”. The whole school sang, including 100 new pupils who were only ten days into term, quick learners! The 600 copies quickly sold out. Years later former pupils found themselves singing the song at home. When a recording was posted on Facebook in 2018 it triggered an outpouring of memories and emotions.

In December 1961 the first combined WGS/WBS Carol Service took place in the Pauluskirche. It was a year late as we shall see in the next section. During 1962/63 the school blazers in both schools changed from maroon to black as BFES standardised and simplified school uniforms in the secondary schools. House photographs of the period reflect the slow changeover.

## **Same site, different school**

Windsor Boys’ School welcomed its first pupils, the seniors, a few weeks after WGS had opened in Plön, on 1 October 1959. The start of term was a few weeks later than planned: the conversion work was not finished in time. Two weeks later the juniors arrived. The 34 teachers (31 men and 3 wives of teachers) were ready as were the 550 boys. The school set out its stall clearly in its *Guide to Parents*:

*The school is comprehensive in the sense that it provides three main courses of study adapted to the ability and needs of the boys, Secondary Grammar, Secondary Technical and Secondary Modern. The Grammar course leads to the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary, Advanced and Scholarship levels, to university entrance, Sandhurst, Welbeck and the usual professional and business careers.*

*The Technical course leads to the Ordinary and Advanced levels of the General Certificate of Education in practical subjects and to the examinations of the Royal Society of Arts. The special requirements of*

*the Services Apprenticeship Examinations are well catered for.*

The use of the term “comprehensive in the sense” was subtle. WBS had three streams under one roof. It is clear from the description where the focus was: the emphasis on Scholarship level, “the usual” professional and business careers.

R Rymer of 4B had an entertaining journey from Cologne. A 90 minute train delay at Düsseldorf gave the opportunity for two glasses of beer which only partially offset the meagre tasteless meal on the train. Arriving at Soest his group transferred to buses “*for the long ride to school*”:

*We arrived just before 6.30 pm, dumped our cases and went to supper, which consisted of fried potatoes, which I now eat at every school meal except breakfast, break and tea. After having been at my new school for nine weeks now, I must admit I have not much to complain about; in fact, I like it, but cannot wait to get home again to tea which contains sugar.*

Rymer stuck it out and two years later became a school prefect in his final year. Another arrival recalls his journey to WBS in 1960. It was one recognised by many subsequent generations of new arrivals:

*I can still remember me alighting from the train at Hamm railway station, clutching my small suitcase and satchel, feeling quite bewildered, waiting to be “sorted” (into WBS and WGS groups), and the bus trip to the school.*

*We had already been allocated our house numbers, so we were directed to our respective dorms to unpack and rest, before being taken to the dining room for afternoon tea.*

*This was when we were shown to what would become our regular places, with me being seated to the left of a delightful German lady, who introduced herself by name (regrettably, I cannot recall her name), and the title of “Matron”.*

*The next stage of our induction, was to be taken on a tour of the school, with important places, such as the Tuck Shop, Swimming Pool,*



*and Sports Fields featuring heavily in my memories.*

*Finally, after ascending and descending what seemed to be endless staircases to and from various classrooms and laboratories, we were taken to the School Hall, where we were introduced to the Teaching and Admin Staff by the Headmaster.*

*Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, we were, once again, taken to the Dining Room, where we were required to use our memory in order to find our places for Dinner.*

*That day had such an impact on me that I can still remember it in great detail to this day, with, I must add, great affection.*

Form 4A at WBS, looked back to their first week in the new school with memories of the mixed Windsor School:

*About one year ago (i.e. Spring 1959), the love-birds of 3A were in the blues at the thought of the female members of the form leaving. They had put two and two together and prophesied that in the terms to follow they could do sport or work only. Gloomily they awaited the arrival of their rival school-fellows, the "Plön-ites".*

*However, one week after the beginning of their first term, the two sets of boys blended splendidly and produced one of the liveliest and most industrious forms in the school. The present 4A had begun.*

A gradual policy of integration of pupils, and staff, from the two schools was followed. Pupils from houses at KAS were kept together as they joined their new houses: for example Churchill House from KAS went into Caernarvon, Roosevelt merged with Balmoral and Temple House merged with Hillsborough. Two KAS pupils became head boys of their houses: Robin Oxland of Hillsborough and Roland Marshall of Balmoral. Mr Ronald moved from being a housemaster at Plön to one at Hamm. Mr Howard, deputy headmaster, looking back from Easter 1960 noted:

*When Windsor Boys' School assembled last October only a minority were returning to familiar surroundings and many of the others were quite new to boarding school life. Even for the "old hands" there were*

*changes: larger houses, extended workshops, new teachers and, of course, no girls. It was quite amazing to see how quickly a pattern of life was established and how many of the best traditions of both Windsor and King Alfred Schools were preserved within it.*

A similar story came from the Staff Mess where Mr Johnny Walker recorded:

*The altered pattern of our ways at Windsor Boys' School is now beginning to emerge. A little of the colour, we may even say glamour, has passed from among us, and one feels we often miss in staffroom and classroom, that different female approach to a problem which often helps to bring it into fuller perspective. Gallantry forbids that we should reflect here of any immediate advantages of our new condition.*

*More seriously, however, one would like to record here that the staffs of King Alfred and Windsor Schools now form, together with our new colleagues, a happy and co-operative entity, and it already requires some little thought to recall who came from where. This augurs well for the future, and we look forward with confidence to attaining an amalgam of the spirit and achievements of the old Schools, and establishing a tradition of our own.*

The 34 teaching staff broke down as 16 from Windsor School, 9 from KAS and 9 newcomers. These public comments on the merger of the schools necessarily glossed over teething problems. The teachers from Plön certainly had an unfavourable view of the new location compared to the lakes and fields of Plön. Another viewpoint came from Mr Flower, the Hillsborough housemaster. In his regular newsletter to former pupils of the house he wrote, after the first term of the new school:

*Since I last wrote in July many changes have taken place in converting this to a school for boys only. The house now numbers about 90 and includes the ground floor where Sandringham boys used to live. We have two matrons, five members of staff besides myself, and four prefects and five assistant prefects called monitors. This must all sound ghastly to you; but in fact life is not bad; we are now better off*

*for games equipment, pictures and library books than we have ever been.*

Not everyone was happy. A third year pupil, R J Bury, expressed his dissatisfaction in a letter to *Concordia*:

*I am strongly against the idea of separating schools for boys and girls. The idea of separating each sex from the two schools, King Alfred School, Plön and Windsor School, Hamm, was not taken into enough consideration. I should have thought it more sensible and reasonable if Windsor School had continued normally and if King Alfred School had moved to Newcastle Barracks.*

An interesting idea: I wonder if it was ever considered.

## **Under the Microscope**

WBS not only kept the buildings of the former Windsor School but also retained the title of the school magazine, *Concordia*. It seemingly took advantage of the WGS absence in Plön and its subsequent later arrival in Hamm to lay claim the title. Its inaugural edition, in spring 1960, covered the first two terms. It contains a fascinating insight into the make-up of the pupils in the school. Compiled by the all-teacher Editorial Board under editor Mr Kelly, it clearly had access to the school records and sets out a detailed analysis of the school. The article was aptly entitled “Under the Microscope”:

*There are 541 boys in the School. 62% are under fourteen years of age; another 28% are less than sixteen, and 10% are over sixteen years of age.*

The school was close to its planned capacity of 550. The age split indicates a relatively young intake, a point Mr Aspinall had raised several years earlier. This reinforces the BFES view that the pressure for places was at the junior levels.

*32% were formerly at King Alfred School; 31% were at Windsor School and 37% came from other schools.*

This puts into numbers Mr Howard's comment concerning the minority of "old hands", from the former Windsor School. Although the main attention was on the KAS/Windsor merger (a balanced intake) a higher proportion came from other schools (not just in Germany but from UK and the rest of the world):

*66% are sons of Army personnel; 26% of RAF personnel; 1% of Navy personnel and 7% are sons of Civilians.*

This is interesting. The Army/RAF balance appears on first glance out of line with the RAF number higher than expected. But many army soldiers in BAOR would have been national servicemen without accompanying children. The "civilians" would mainly be those working for BFES including teachers and British staff at both Windsor schools, the British troops at Cromwell Barracks, the BFES regional office and the primary school.

*10% are sons of senior officers; 12% sons of junior officers; 65 % sons of senior NCO's and 13% sons of other ranks.*

This is a less surprising distribution. Many officers sent their children to Public Schools in the UK (for many this was a family tradition) or lodged with family to attend day schools or Public Schools as a day pupil). The introduction of a £75 grant from the government was not enough to help those on lower salaries or with no private resources. At this time BFES estimated that there were 1,000 pupils in England who were children of service personnel in Germany. "Senior NCOs" stood out as they were of an age to have children of secondary school age. "Other ranks" would be low as their children were more likely to be at BFES primary schools.

The next section covered "turbulence":

*28% have been in more than ten schools, and 90% have been in more than five schools, since the age of five.*

*22% of boys in the school were born outside the United Kingdom.*

*58% have spent at least two years in five or more countries.*

A graphic confirmation of the impact of a military career on children at a time when the British military was stationed worldwide. In chapter 16 we

explore “turbulence” in more detail. Two more reflections:

*20% expect to complete a total of five years secondary education in a BFES school in Germany.*

*9% would prefer to be settled at school in England. 71% prefer boarding school to day school.*

More saliently 80% did not expect to spend their secondary education in Germany, let alone at Windsor. The military influence was visible in the next statement:

*15% intend to make a career in the Army; 22% in the RAF; 19 % in the Royal or Merchant Navy, and 44% will seek a civilian post; 9% of these hoping to go to university.*

Windsor School had been successful in sending pupils to Sandhurst, Cranwell and Welbeck College. Few Windsor School pupils had gone directly to university by this time although several had left to complete their A level courses at schools in the UK before going on to university.

*Of 396 boys for whom records are available 14 % have an Intelligence Quotient of less than 90; 53% have an IQ of 90 or above but less than 110; 20% have an IQ of 110 or above but less than 120, and 13% have an IQ of 120 and above.*

IQ tests were fashionable and had a degree of public acceptance. Later they were discredited by an overwhelming academic viewpoint and fell into general disrepute. There were many tests, all with slightly different scoring systems so it is not clear how to interpret the scores.

*43% are in A and B forms, following courses which lead to public examinations such as the General Certificate of Education and Royal Society of Arts Technical Certificate; there are 29% in upper secondary modern forms, that is C and D forms, and 28 % in E, F and G forms.*

A clear indication of the academic stratification. At this time around 20% of pupils in English secondary schools were in the grammar stream.

*18% are confirmed members of the Church of England; another 40% are members of the Church of England; 10% are Nonconformists; 20% are Catholics and 12% do not belong to any of these dominations.*

The 1944 Education Act required schools to have compulsory religious education. The numbers of confirmed Church of England members and of Roman Catholics are significantly higher than in the general population at the time. There is no breakdown of the 12% not belonging to Protestant or Roman Catholics. More in chapter 19.

## **Day by Day**

The *Guide for Parents* described the school day. It followed the Windsor School day and with only minor variations was to continue in both schools to 1983.

*The School working day starts with breakfast at 7.45 am. Four periods of 45 minutes are worked in the morning, with a break of 20 minutes. After lunch all boys rest for half an hour. Three periods of forty minutes are worked in the afternoon. After tea, games and activities continue until 5.45pm.*

*Supper is at 6.30pm and prep. is then done under house arrangements. There are two half-holidays in the week.*

*Sundays are mainly free from organised activities. Holy Communion is at 8am. Morning Service is held at 10.30am. The evening Service is voluntary. RC Mass is celebrated at 8am and benediction at 6.30pm.*

The school opened with the same five houses as Windsor School with between 75 and 95 boys in each house. There was a reorganisation of space. With no need to separate boys and girls each house now spread over two floors in two blocks (Sandringham/Marlborough in the block nearest the main entrance and Caernarvon/Hillsborough in the middle block) and, with initially, just one house, Balmoral, in the former bombed block. Each house was for 11 to 18 year olds. *Concordia* reported a major change in Spring 1961:

*Halfway through the term, a step was taken to weaken the force of Balmoral: a proposal that it should be split into two houses. At first this seemed unbelievable, yet after further thought, the idea became more understandable. The job of everyone in authority in the house would be considerably lessened and it would especially make the matrons' task easier. The house accepted the idea with little indignation and continued normally until further steps were taken.*

*After much guesswork, the housemaster of the new house was announced and it proved to be Mr Cutler. Myself (A Woods of Form 5B) and two other prefects with Mr Ronald and Mr Cutler went into conference one Sunday afternoon to decide how the house should be split. Two well-balanced lists of boys were produced and announced to the house. After a few changes the list became official and Balmoral will accompany "Edinburgh" in the same block from the beginning of the Spring Term.*

The reason? Balmoral had to accommodate fifty new boys as well as eighty "old" boys. A house of 130 was simply too large. Woods became the first head boy of Edinburgh House. In the Spring term the two still played as one in house sporting competitions. It is interesting to note the participation of boys, alongside members of staff, in the selection of boys to the two houses. The six "all-age" house structure of WBS was established; it was to remain the same, with a one-year radical change in 1968/69, until the remerger of the schools in 1981.

The headmaster was Mr Trevor G Benyon. A Cambridge degree in English Literature; a teacher and housemaster at an all-boys London grammar school led to the deputy headmastership at Queens School Rheindahlen when it opened in 1955. After the sudden early death of the headmaster he was acting headmaster for a short period. He moved on to BFES HQ. He had arrived at Windsor School in September 1958 for one term as deputy headmaster before taking over as headmaster in January 1959 for the final two terms. It's clear from his writings in *Concordia* that he was a gradualist and determined to oversee the integration of the schools:

*The changes which have been made in this issue of Concordia (Summer 1960) typify what we have been trying to do in many ways in*

*the School this year. They are an attempt to improve in detail on something which broadly speaking has been proved sound.*

*Less immediate in its impact (than the creation of Edinburgh House) but important for the beauty and amenity of the grounds in the months and years to come is the extensive planting of shrubs and trees which has been vigorously accomplished this winter.*

*Improvements in the appearance and functioning of the library are obvious. More pictures and better display facilities are brightening the corridors. New machinery in the workshops should help raise standards of craftsmanship even higher.*

Another venture which had a long term impact was the commissioning of the chapel silver from Gerald Benney. A gift from King Alfred School provided the funds. The set consisted of four pieces, a chalice, paten, a wafer box and a flagon. Benney was one of the foremost silver and goldsmiths of the 20th century. His work of commissioned pieces now attracts high sums at auction. The silver set was used in the chapel for years, its current (2023) whereabouts unknown.

In the first year of WBS there were several “firsts”. The first Speech Day, the guest of honour the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir James Cassells, the first play “*Seagulls over Sorrento*”, the foundation of an Old Pupil’s Association, the first school band (a skiffle group in Sandringham), and the first WBS/WGS parties. The Combined Cadet Force numbered over 140 boys at the years’ end. Another first was the almost predictable first night-time “raid” from WBS to WGS took place. This was to become a regular occurrence (increasingly both ways). More in chapter 24.

At the end of the first year, in summer 1960, Michael Barnacoat and Peter Buckley, the last of the “Originals” from 1953, featured before they left the school. (Peter was later to be best man at Michael’s wedding). Barnacoat was awarded a prize for “*the senior who has contributed most to the life of the school in the past year*”. It was awarded after a secret ballot amongst older pupils. At Speech Day, Head Boy Peter Buckley seconded the vote of thanks to the guests; it had been proposed by his father, BFES regional director, Mr Frank Buckley.

Autumn term 1960 saw a flurry of activity with over 200 new boys starting.



The opening of Kings School, Gütersloh, contributed to a major re-organisation within BFES secondary schools. Once again, as in September 1959, the School was faced of absorbing “*without indigestion*” as an Editorial in *Concordia* put it “*an abnormal quantity of new material*”. I’m not sure the new boys would have appreciated being described as “new material”!

## **Rain stops play**

The traditional Guy Fawkes bonfire night was delayed a week because of bad weather. But this was nothing compared to what was to come. In early December 1960 the school was preparing for the end of term parties, rehearsing “*Pirates of Penzance*”, the final sporting events and the first WGS/WBS carol service at the Pauluskirche. The church had been almost totally destroyed in the bombing raids of 1944.

After two days of gales and heavy rain, the land and roads surrounding the school were flooded: water burst into the main boiler-house completely overwhelming the furnaces. With water in the cellar, no central-heating, flooding in all the other cellars and the roads to the school impassable to all but 3-ton trucks there was little alternative to closing the school. Within 24 hours of the decision, the first party of boys was on its way home. The bursar, Mr Johns, was in charge. His diary entries tell the story:

*Sunday 4 December 1960*

*2230 Phone message from Mr Steventon (the Quartermaster) that water entering the boiler room in Block 1 at the rate of 6 inches an hour.*

*2330 Arrived at School by circuitous route due to extensive flooding of roads. Found 10 inches of water in boiler room and water pouring in steadily.*

*Monday 5 December*

*0700 Water around the School risen considerably. No heat of steam in kitchen. Agreed late breakfast-notified houses.*

*0850 Ordered regular ferry service between School and Hotel Bielefeld to bring in staff, pupils, workers and outside help. Buses no use due to water in brakes.*

*0900 Spoke to Headmaster. Consideration to evacuation of school will be given if boiler in Block 1 cannot be restarted.*

*1130 Pumping operations gained nothing in last 30 minutes.*

*1850 Water still rising.*

*2230 German Army now ferrying in 3 ton lorries. Lighted pathway through floods to show extent of width of roads and bends therein.*

*Tuesday 6 December*

*0925 Road now clear through Ostwennemarr.*

*2000 292 boys dispersed today.*

*Wednesday 7 December. Weather – below freezing*

*0930 Stadt Fire Brigade arrived. Hoses run out, linked up and pumping.*

*1410 Stadt pumping operations ceased. Water down to a mere 3 or 4 inches.*

*1600 190 Boys dispersed today.*

*Thursday 8 December*

*1430 School cleared of boys.*

Mr Howard took photographs and a film of the floods (*an extract is listed in the Visual Record*) The fields around the school were under water (there were far fewer houses than there are today). The water was halfway up the wheels of the 3-ton army trucks as they provided the sole link to dry land. Mr John's son recalls the flood and watching the dispersals:

*Meanwhile, myself and three or four other teenage boys who lived in Hamm and were about to take O-levels managed to get transferred to*

*the girl's school for a fortnight or so. Oh bliss!*

Another teacher's daughter had a difference experience:

*I remember this (the flood) very well because I lived in the Boys' school while attending the Girls' school. My sister Joanna was only 6 months old when the floods occurred and as the boiler room had to be shut down getting baby stuff dried was very hard. The boys were sent home early but their compatriots at the Girls' school were not. I was sent to school in one of the large trucks and had to negotiate the floods. Great fun. I don't remember my brother Paul coming with me to the Girls' school though. I think that we had a big freeze after the floods because I can remember getting a pair of ice skates and skating on the field outside the field behind the church.*

Another pupil:

*I recall the floods, as it was my first year at WBS, and was quite a significant event. I was in sick bay ... suffering with tonsillitis in early December, when I was ushered to prepare to go home early, so had to gather my things and get back to Marlborough post-haste in order to pack. I seem to remember that our transport was driving through, what appeared to me, to be a river. It was absolute chaos, with several vehicles pumping water out of basements.*

Over at WGS, which was not affected, it was drily noted:

*WBS departed after the flood, leaving our juniors envious and our seniors annoyed, since it meant the cancellation of the 5th and 6th form dance and the combined carol service.*

School returned in January 1961 and except for works around the boiler room there was little evidence of the flood. The inclement weather continued:

*When we returned in January, it was bitter cold, and I was freezing cups of coffee outside the dorm window overnight, and we went ice skating in our studded CCF boots on a patch of concrete near the swimming pool, which I believe was a car park, and had been flooded*

*for our benefit.*

Term began normally with the new Edinburgh House in operation. The highlight of the year was the first co-production with WGS, “*HMS Pinafore*”. A chorus of over 100 performers, with most leading roles taken by members of staff from the two schools, it was deemed a success despite some trenchant criticism in *Concordia*. (more in chapter 22).

## **An outsider looks in**

Speech Day in July 1961 was held for the first time in the Kurhaus. The prize-winners went by special bus, the rest of the school walked. The guest of honour, for once, had no direct connection with the British in Germany. Previous guests had been diplomats or military. Professor Dent had been very influential, as editor of the *Times Educational Supplement*, in the deliberations leading to the 1944 Education Act. Now a university professor he could see an example of that Act in action. His speech made some pointers to the future:

*He gave us a warning that we should not regard ourselves as God's chosen people when we went abroad but instead make the best of the wonderful opportunities given to us, He also said it was our duty to integrate with whichever community we were in, coloured or white.*

No doubt this sentiment chimed with those sixth formers who earlier in the term had listened to Mr Nuttall give a talk on “Racial Segregation”. It focussed on apartheid in South Africa and he presented the audience with some astonishing *facts concerning the restrictions imposed on the Africans*. Professor Dent was a strong supporter of comprehensive schools so it was not surprising he continued:

*He said he was impressed by our school and its many different academic levels and he urged us to strive to achieve the best results on whatever scholastic ladder we were following. He finished with what was then a tradition, but one which died out later, of calling on the Headmaster to award a half days holiday.*

Mr Benyon's speech: consolidation and change.

*...whereas the first year of the new Windsor Boys' School had been one of radical change, the year under consideration was one of consolidation and modification. The new school badge symbolized the progress made towards knitting the good qualities of the old school into a harmonious pattern with the new.*

The new badge, also adopted by WGS, was to last. The design remained essentially the same but was noticeably more professional and cleaner.

## **Comics or books?**

In the summer term 1961 the Librarian produced a survey of reading habits. Some of the findings were perhaps not that surprising. Comics led the way. The most popular was "*The New Hotspur*". 82% of seniors admitted to reading comics (and 43% of those were in the upper streams) and 10% read only comics in their leisure time. Comics at this time meant adventure comics for boys. The war comics, most famously the "*Commando*" series, only started publication that summer. At home the most popular newspaper was the *Daily Mirror*, the best-selling daily newspaper of the time. A third of pupils never read the newspapers provided in the house libraries, and of those that did 13% concentrated on the sports pages. The Caernarvon House Notes in *Concordia* 1961 give a clear summary not only of pride in the house but of the full functioning of the new school:

*Looking back over the past two terms I think it is fair to say that Caernarvon House has been successful in all walks of school life. We were well represented in HMS Pinafore, we have had members of the house in all school teams, we have five people in the Cadets with the rank of Sergeant or above, there are now five school prefects in the house and the Scouts have a good proportion of Caernarvon blood in their ranks.*

Sporting fixtures had their usual incidents, none more adventurous than the joint WGS/WBS visit to Queens School. The coach journey was badly disrupted by traffic accidents. The return was started in intense foggy conditions. The accompanying teacher, Mr Edmeades, turned to Plan B and arranged accommodation in nearby Army camp. The teams had drinks in the

Officers Mess, then to sleeping quarters and resumed the return to Hamm the following day.

Mr Johns, the Bursar who oversaw the evacuation caused by the flood, left in 1961.

## **And how did pupils find the schools?**

In Spring 1961 *Concordia* gave a glimpse into the more private views of pupils with a record of a “conversation” between a teacher and some junior and intermediate pupils in Marlborough House. It amplifies the “Under the Microscope” findings:

*On first coming here, did any of you feel homesick?*

*I felt very homesick through a feeling of not being liked here and sometimes I was taken advantage of being a newcomer.*

*I didn't. I felt excited. It was only at the end of term that I began to feel homesick because it had been such a long term.*

*One becomes reconciled to school because there is plenty here to occupy the mind whereas at home there is hardly anything to do during the Christmas and Easter holidays.*

*Do you feel members of staff are too impersonal or distant in their attitude to you?*

*No, definitely not. A lot of them are understanding and helpful, willing to stay and go over a difficult problem until you understand it. Some are disliked for an over exercise of authority, short temper or the setting of too much prep. Generally speaking they are a friendly bunch.*

*How do you regard the Seniors?*

*Partly with fear, but most of them we admire and respect. Some seniors are mean.*

*Is the part played by Matron an important one while you are juniors?*

*Yes, definitely. She is like another mother and does a lot for you. Some are very fair and prepared to talk a long time with the juniors.*

*What do you feel about slippering and corporal punishment generally?*

*It is definitely needed to quieten us down. Without it the place would be like Bedlam. Slippering makes you respect the master and not to lark about too much. One does feel resentful if one is punished for being a mere by-stander in an affray but that does not happen often.*

*Using a cane is being a bit too far – except in cases of wilful damage and major wrong doings.*

*Do you become very attached to your house?*

*Yes, definitely, we have many quarrels with boys from other houses about which is best.*

*Are you very aware of the restrictions about you not going into town unless accompanied?*

*I never go into town – would never think of it. It would be a good idea if Juniors were allowed out now and then, two or three to a Senior.*

There was an explanation for the popularity of comics noted by the Librarian's analysis with a very astute observation in the final sentence:

*Why is that so many comics are read in the school?*

*People read comics because they can read one in the course of an afternoon. There are too many interruptions here to permit us to read books. We read more books at home. We realize that some comics are bad because they stir up racial hatred but some are quite good and serious.*

The comments give a window into the pupils' world. The statement "too

*many interruptions*” reflects the loss of privacy, a perennial complaint. Of equal interest is what is not covered in the questions. In a magazine which could be read by parents a degree of omission and self-promotion (it is too harsh to call it censorship) is to be expected. The school could only take a limited amount of self-criticism and clearly some of the questions were phrased to elicit the “right” conformist, reply.

By 1962/63 both schools had settled in a steady annual rhythm. The divide into two schools had been safely and successfully navigated.



## The Swinging Sixties

Both schools had new head teachers by the Spring term of 1964. Miss Willson initially planned to leave in the summer term of 1962. On her birthday in June 1962 the school presented her with a combined birthday and leaving present of a writing case and carnations. The present was premature. Two weeks later the BFES director announced she would stay on for another term, to Christmas. She left to be headmistress of Casterton School, an independent boarding school in the Lake District. She was to stay there ten years. The editorial in *Ambassador* paid tribute to her:

*Those of us who were here in the very early days, in the biting cold of January and February 1960, have some ideas of the problems which then beset Miss Willson and her staff, and of the whole hearted dedication and endless hours of work demanded of her to bring order out of chaos and to build up a school from nothing.*

*Miss Willson and her close affinity to detail in every aspect of the school life, and her emphasis on femininity in our new school. The first girls school of its kind, were as apparent from the start as her breadth of outlook and administrative gifts.*

Miss Willson's own valedictory comment was:

*May we all learn, as we often prayed together in Assembly, with increasing sincerity and in deepening dependence on God "to meet all life's challenges with gallant and high hearted courage, giving thanks for all things.*

Pupils also recalled her black poodle, Tempest, which accompanied her everywhere.

With Miss Willson leaving in December, WGS was to have three headteachers in the 1962/63 academic year. Miss Delia Feerick, the senior mistress, took over as acting headmistress for one term. She had joined WGS in 1959, after five years as senior mistress at KAS. The new headmistress was Miss E.N. Evans JP BA. Her first teaching job had been before the war in her home city of Swansea. During the war she served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force for three years and then moved to a boys' secondary school as head of the English Department. From 1948 to 1949 she was principal of an evening institute and youth centre in Essex (with over 1,000 students aged 15 to 21). Her next job was a school inspector with the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (who were soon to come to WGS). Moving on she had been the Careers Adviser and Student Welfare Officer of the University College of Swansea for seven years before arriving in Hamm. In the immediate three months before taking up the WGS appointment she spent time at the University of Berkeley in California. It was the most varied career of any head teacher at the Windsor schools.

In the same year, WBS had two headmasters. Mr Benyon left after the Spring term 1963. Like Miss Willson, he also took up an appointment as a headmaster, of a school in Harlow, Essex. As at WGS, his successor was not immediately available. The deputy headmaster, Mr Glyn Williams, took up the reins for the summer term and, unexpectedly, also for the autumn term in 1963. Mr Williams recalled Mr Benyon:

*His contribution in effecting the transition from a mixed school to a boys' school and establishing it as such cannot be overemphasised. This was the work of a quiet and thoughtful educator and administrator who laid sound foundations on which his successors can build.*

As for his own short time at Hamm Mr Williams signed off with:

*My two term tenure of office "in the study" was certainly a very happy one. I shall always remember the highlights, the Whitsun Fete, Speech day and the examinations! Apart from these great events, there were other less spectacular "delights" among my memories – the new Saturday routine, which, alas, did not allow time for Teen Time and the unusual physical exertion of removing chapel furniture while the roof*

*smouldered.*

A fire in the chapel? The padre, Rev John J Fielding, takes up the story:

*...during the summer vacation work had been carried out on the electrical heating system in the apex of the chapel roof. When the first chill winds began to blow from the east, the good German cleaning lady who cared so efficiently for the chapel, threw all the switches to bring on the heating. Not long afterwards fire broke out in the roof. The first I knew of it was when someone rushed into the classroom where I was teaching shouting "the chapel's on fire". Dropping everything I rushed from the classroom, down the stairs, out of the teaching block and across the playing fields to the chapel. It was a scene of feverish activity, and in a disciplined, military-like manner artefacts were being carried to safety by staff and boys from the neighbouring teaching blocks. Don Theaker of the school fire brigade (soon to be joined by the local fire feuerwehr) was on top of a ladder with a hosepipe directing a jet of water at the seat of the fire which was soon extinguished. Deo gratias.*

The chapel fire was not the only incident in 1963. In April WBS was hit by a lightning strike. It took out the telephone system and 90 windows. No-one was hurt. There was a consequence: it prompted concerns in BFES about using barracks and added impetus to a programme of building new secondary schools.

The new WBS Headmaster was no stranger to either school. Mr Michael Wylie was the deputy director (secondary schools) of BFES. In a memoir in 1999 he recalled:

*Unlike so many of the staff freshly appointed from the UK, I knew quite a lot about the school before I became HM. After all, I had been responsible for its administration from HQ BFES in Rheindahlen, had been concerned as a member of the board of internal staff promotions and had recruited for the school from UK when the policy of the heads of the schools all going to recruit their own staff was changed.*

Unusually he hadn't attended university but taken an external degree through correspondence and external study from London University. War service was

in the Home Guard. Before joining BFES in 1961 he had taught in schools in southern England, including Varndean School, a girls' grammar school near Brighton. He was 38, the youngest headteacher at the schools. He joined WBS in January 1964.

Mr Williams moved to Assistant Director (Secondary) BFES. He signed off with a prophetic thought that was too prove optimistic:

*I should like to thank all, who so ably assisted and supported me, and to wish the school many happy and successful years under the guidance of the new "man at the top". May one hope that so strong a "wind of change" shall not blow again for a few years.*

## **WGS: an in-depth look**

There is an opportunity to gain a deep insight into WGS. In the summer of 1964 a team of Her Majesty's Inspectorate visited the school. The HMIs, as they were invariably known, were the forerunners of today's Ofsted school inspectors but with far different terms of reference and approach. They sought to maintain and increase standards in schools in England and Wales (Scotland had a parallel system) and headteachers saw them as critical friends. In the 1950s the HMIs had visited Windsor School, in the first years on a termly basis, to help it establish itself. By the 1960s the visits became less frequent. After the visit to WGS in 1964, and a visit to WBS two years later, the next inspections were in 1976.

The inspection of WGS came after a year of Miss Evans' headship. We will come to the inspectors' views after a look at some of the changes Miss Evans instituted.

In May 1963, in her first term, she delivered a speech to the school on human rights. She covered the Magna Carta and the United Nations. Then she set out almost a manifesto for her stewardship of the school:

*Through the United Nations the thinking world is trying to establish these (human rights) as the rights of all men everywhere. We are still a long way from achieving this, but in your lifetime much will be achieved. Certainly a vast amount will be achieved in the technical field, in man mastering the physical world in which he lives, but all will be in vain if he does not also develop his international*

*conscience, this can only come through thoughtful and constant intelligent good will such as we are all capable of when we are living to our best standards. This is the great challenge to us all but especially to people of your age – and especially to you girls who will be women and wives and mothers of future generations. It is by your standards that children will live; it is you who all over the world can do most to lead the world on to a full recognition of the brotherhood and sisterhood of man – of all of us – of these Human Rights of which we think today.*

She ended the speech with a long quotation from a 1928 speech by the pre-war Czechoslovak President, Tomáš Masaryk. It was a feature of Miss Evans tenure that she invoked major figures; Mrs Roosevelt was another favourite.

In September 1963, a school trip, of senior girls, to Arnhem for the commemoration of the British and Polish landings in the 1944 “Market Garden” operation. The school group became part of the formal ceremonies at the war cemetery. Gill Fletcher recalled the September 1968 visit:

*Poignant yet interesting the visit to Arnhem left me with a multitude of feelings, the most predominant one being that of immense sadness for the awful waste of war that can make a cemetery register read like a school roll-call, so often do the ages of eighteen and nineteen occur. Saturday morning in the Osterbeek cemetery brought to mind so completely the desolation of war. Previously heroic stories of war had seemed remote but standing quietly there amongst the plain but strangely beautiful headstones, it became possible to realise what had transpired there twenty-three years ago, brought all the more vividly to mind by the quietly weeping widows and relations of the dead.*

Hilary Strange recalled her visit, many girls have expressed similar emotions:

*I’ve never forgotten the experience and have often spoken to people about it since. It’s probably my most special memory of my school days at Hamm.*

The weekend also included trips to the Kröller-Müller Museum with its major collection of the works of Vincent Van Gogh and the open-air museum

in Arnhem. General Hackett, by now promoted to Commander-in-Chief of BAOR, made a return visit to both schools in 1967. He had been wounded and captured at Arnhem and now presented a painting of Arnhem to WGS.

The visits continued until the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1969. Mary Ann Eagles went and recalled this subsequent encounter:

*Many years later while stuck on a train between London & Crawley, the train had been stationary for at least one hour.....I engaged in a conversation with man sitting opposite me where he sat every day. He started telling me he had fought at the Battle of Arnhem and he had only returned there once that was in 1969. He remembered seeing some young girls in a uniform of sorts and wearing maroon berets (the same colour as the Airbourne Division) imagine my surprise, we talked for ages.*

On a lighter note Miss Evans commissioned Mr Wheatland (the head groundsman) to build a new structure in the grounds. A dovecot. The Spring term 1964 saw the introduction of the Spring Festival, originally named the “Eisteddfod”, no doubt reflecting Miss Evans’ Welsh cultural roots. It was an inter-house competition including piano performances, choirs, and various craftworks. In this first edition it was fitting Caernarvon House won the prize of a copper vase of daffodils.

## **The inspectors report on WGS**

The HMIs visited the school for a week in June 1964. Their report was in three broad sections, covering the physical premises and facilities, the people (staff and pupils), and the curriculum and teaching standards in each subject. Overall their conclusion was very positive:

*Like other Service schools, this school has considerable and peculiar problems and the headmistress and staff are to be congratulated on the success they have achieved in dealing with them. It is a comparatively young secondary school and yet it appears already as a well-ordered and well established community that offers an attractive, rich and secure environment to its pupils.*

They were especially impressed with:

*Premises are good in appearance and well maintained. In many respects they provide excellent amenities for the school.*

*The magnificent assembly hall and Anglican and Roman Catholic chapels have been imaginatively and graciously converted from workshops.*

*The dormitories vary in size, some with two or three beds, others with seven or eight and the senior girls have separate study bedrooms. The premises are well kept and fully equipped with adequate common rooms and good facilities for baths and washing.*

*The dormitories are pleasant places and the pictures, plants and curtains and the personal possessions of the girls give a pleasing touch of home to them. All this reflects great credit to the Senior Matron who supervises the boarding conditions carefully and shows a real regard for the welfare of the girls.*

Several weaknesses were explained by the increase in numbers:

*(the school) was originally planned for 450 boarders and 35 day pupils. The roll at present is 535 including 20 day girls and 36 in the Sixth Form.*

There were 108 pupils in each of the first two years, 104 in Year 3, falling to 89 in the fourth year, 85 in the fifth and 36 in the sixth year. The average class size in the first four years was around 20 pupils, reducing to 13 in the two senior years (well below English school standards).

*The increase in numbers, however, has brought some pressure on the accommodation, certain deficiencies were noticed and some improvements are required.*

These deficiencies included a too small library, (it is clear that inspectors thought highly of library provision and usage); arts and crafts needed a better space and equipment; the science laboratories were obsolete in design; the gym needed better showers. A works programme was needed (and was

partially delivered over the next few years).

The school had 39 teachers, plus the headmistress, including three men and two locally engaged:

*With 16 graduates, nine of them with honours degrees, it is a well-qualified staff and their previous experience is suitably varied to provide the flexibility required in a comprehensive school. Nineteen are in their first tour of duty and eleven will leave in July. In teaching ability they are particularly strong in some subjects and the general level is high. They work hard, both in the classroom and in their extraneous, but valuable duties, they have good personal standards and their morale appeared high.*

It was to be many years before the teaching profession became all graduate. Miss Evans, and Miss Feerick, came in for particular praise:

*Already (Miss Evans) knows the school well; she has made a clear assessment of the problems and in her plans for the school she has established the right order of priorities. She receives excellent support from her deputy, an able teacher who has helped to give some measure of stability and continuity to the school since its inception.*

Normally it is teachers who attract the most attention when staffing in boarding schools is considered. The next sentence from the report shows the hidden and often overlooked support:

*The school has an establishment of administrative, domestic and labouring staff totalling 133, of whom 6 are UK based.*

Over three times as many as the teaching staff! In chapters 13 and 14 we shall explore the roles these staff played in the schools. The report now turns to the pupils.

*The pupils are courteous, well-mannered, quietly spoken and responsive. Their life is fully organised and yet within this discipline they have a reasonable amount of freedom and their conduct about the school and at assembly and chapel is commendable. The school offers them an ordered life which they accept and appreciate so that they*



*settle down quickly and happily to what is for most of them a new experience. In this and in the way in which social difference are ironed out, the school is achieving appreciable success. H.M. Inspectors were impressed by the confidence and poise of the older girls and by the way they assume responsibility in the school and in the houses.*

This paragraph contains many of the issues facing a BFES boarding school. Whether the girls were advised, warned, to be on the best behaviour during the week long inspection is not material; any outside visitor would not necessarily see the minor rule transgressions, the day to day detail of life in a house. What they did comment on reflects the understanding of what a boarding school should provide in “character building”. BFES would have been pleased to see that the “officer/other ranks” distinction was not an issue in the school (harking back to the MPs concerns in the 1950s). The sense of order, of learning to be responsible, to follow the “well ordered” system permeates the report.

These comments on the pupils precede the analysis of the academic side of the school. This order demonstrates a further difference with day schools where even at that time (let alone the results focussed OFSTED of today) academic progress was the prime purpose.

The issue of grammar and secondary modern streams was dealt with first:

*The curriculum and organisation in the school are similar to what is found in many English secondary schools. On entry pupils are assigned to forms, according to their previous record and the school's assessment of their ability from the second year onwards, the girls are graded into grammar and modern forms. The school has done a great deal both in the classroom and in the houses to break down the distinction between the grammar and modern sides.*

*It should be possible to remove the distinction that survives in the nomenclature of the forms and to introduce a more flexible system of options for the senior girls, and this bring the school more into line with most comprehensive schools in England.*

The inspectors sounded a word of caution when it came to examinations. After praising the wide variety available the inspectors made two comments,

reflecting the early days of Windsor School:

*Many of the girls, however, appear to be attempting too much. Some find the GCE courses, at both O and A level, too exacting and some might be more successful if they concentrated on fewer subjects.*

*In the grammar forms the teaching is sound and competent, within the limits set by the examinations; in some subjects it is successful at O and A levels, but the performance of some girls in these examinations seems to indicate that the course is hardly the most suitable one for them.*

A suggestion was made:

*For the senior girls the school might plan a general course that would be a good preparation for adult life.*

There was no indication exactly what this “adult life” would entail or which subjects might be usefully covered in this general course. There is a further post school concern in the section on “Housecraft”:

*The three teachers in “Housecraft” follow the same syllabus, which is compiled term by term and does not take into account the purpose of including the subject in the curriculum, and the kind of life that the girls will live after leaving school. The work done in this department urgently needs re-thinking, particularly for the older girls.*

*The flat, little used for instructional purposes, needs a scheme for its full time use, which will provide opportunities for realistic practice in the arts and skills of home making, including the social life.*

The report then turns to the “Subjects of Teaching” and gives a few lines to fourteen subjects. A common theme running through many is whether the course is suitable for all. Some examples:

*The advanced work in the 6th form is well directed and successful, but a more rewarding course might be planned for the less academic girls.  
(English)*

*They work well but have not read widely and it is perhaps doubtful if*

*the A level course is appropriate for all of them. (Modern Languages)*

*It is open to question whether some girls in Forms 5G1 and 5G2 should follow the GCE course. (Mathematics)*

This concern on the suitability of some pupils for O and A level would have probably triggered a lively discussion with Miss Evans. In her report on the June 1963 examinations she had made a special feature of commenting on how girls (even if they are not academically outstanding) were given the opportunity of taking examinations a year earlier or at the rather higher standard of O level compared to the RSA examinations

The inspectors would have been aware of plans to introduce a new examination in England, at age 15, for the “less academically able” pupils in secondary schools. This examination, the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE), was to start in the following year. It would integrate course and project work into the examination. WGS started entering pupils into these new CSEs in 1965 although its first few years were difficult.

The subject reports are generally positive. As well as comments on the less academically able pupils mentioned above most subject reports contained a suggestion for improvement. The first subject covered is, perhaps surprisingly, Religious Instruction, with only one lesson a week:

*...the morning assembly, the services in the two chapels and the house prayers all contribute to the religious life of this community.*

Turning to the main examination subjects:

*A sound course is provided in English by a well-qualified and competent staff.*

*In history some lively teaching was observed, with good use being made of text books, source materials and library books and followed up by vivid imaginative and well-illustrated work by the pupils.*

*Satisfactory standards are reached in Geography.*

*The Modern Languages department, staffed by well qualified and able linguists, is making an important contribution to the school.*

*The work in Mathematics follows traditional practice, recent developments in the teaching of the subject are being watched and will be introduced when the time is opportune.*

*The Science staff, although fewer in number than one would expect in a school of this size, are well qualified to cover the various branches of the subject. The teaching is stimulating and the girls are interested in their work. Eight girls do science in the Sixth form and some exchange of teaching takes place with the Boys' school.*

*The mistresses concerned with needlework work hard. The scheme shows progression but more attention might be given to the selection of fabrics, to fashion in general and to decorative work, both traditional and modern.*

Two subject areas come in for special praise, the Art and Craft, and the Music departments:

*The Art and Craft department offers a commendable range of activities and the influence of the subject on the school is seen in the displays in the classroom and in the corridors. The master in charge, fully qualified in Art, provides a course to O and A level for those who can benefit from it; he succeeds in passing on his enthusiasm to his pupils, and the work of the senior girls some of whom go on to Art colleges, shows considerable talent in various media.*

*The school has built up a fine tradition in Music. Evidence of this is seen not only in the classroom but also in the part it plays in the assembly and in the chapel services and in the various musical activities, some in association with the Boys' school, that are organised throughout the year. The emphasis in the limited time available is on singing, with private tuition in piano playing for those girls who wish it.*

Physical Education receives a surprisingly short comment, given the importance (and time) spent on sports in the school:

*The mistresses in the Physical Education department are to be*

*commended for the range of activities effectively covered and their thorough and energetic teaching, to which the pupils readily respond.*

One subject did come in for some critical comment:

*In the circumstances it is difficult to justify a place for Latin in the curriculum. Latin is offered to the ablest pupils from the second year onwards but while the beginners work well and enthusiastically, they quickly lose interest and the majority give up the subject at the end of the third year. There are eight girls doing Latin in the fourth year, five in the fifth and one in the sixth.*

Changes came in the new academic year in September 1964. A reorganisation of the residential blocks to create more classrooms led to the end of Kensington House. It was merged with, or rather folded into, Sandringham House in the same block. Its name lived on as the Kensington Cup, an inter-house competition. The Sandringham block saw another change. The top floor was converted to an impressive arts and crafts room under Mr Barry Cummings.

Miss Evans expanded the visits programme. As well as the annual trip to Arnhem she arranged for the entire third year to spend eight days camping in the Möhne See area. Over 100 pupils were split into two groups. A group of senior girls went to Berlin to see the divided city, including a short visit behind the Wall to East Berlin. The same term also saw a second running of the exchange of 12 pupils with the Neues Gymnasium für Mädchen in Osnabruck. The British Council theatre in Cologne and Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon were destinations for joint WGS and WBS school trips. Amazingly, and as an example of the peripatetic nature of Service children the Stratford trip was:

*For many of us it was the first visit to England.*

In her Speech Day report, just after the HMIs had left, but before she would have seen the report, Miss Evans set out her philosophy for the school:

*I spoke previously of the variety of the school life; the official timetable just shows the classes and lessons, but I sometimes think that the real life of the school is like the submerged nine-tenths of the*

*iceberg, classes and lessons representing the part that stands above the water in clear view, and having a clear cut outline – with all the school’s activities and interests, and the life of the house, and dormitory, the friendships and the squabbles and the arguments and all the natural, lively exchange of a large group of people living and working together, not only girls, but staff also, these being the invisible and amorphous – but very solid submerged part of the berg.*

The highlight of the many formal visitors to the school occurred in November 1964 with the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, and his wife to the two schools.

Sharing activities, outside visits and classes with WBS gradually increased, beyond the popular joint house parties. Three indicators of the changing times are the entertainment being provided by “*Group 66*”, a band from WBS. It came fourth in a poll at WGS on favourite bands of the period; no disgrace, the poll was topped by the Beatles, Rolling Stones and the Kinks. A second activity dominated the 1965/66 academic year: the co-production of “*1066 and All That*”. More in chapter 22. The third picked up on a comment in the HMI report: the domestic science flat was brought into full operation with girls having the opportunity to entertain over a weekend. Later in the decade they could even invite boys for lunch. But we need to return to WBS first.

## **The Wylie Years**

*“We were told to expect a new broom. We didn’t expect a bloody vacuum cleaner”!!*

Mr Capey recalled Mr Kopcke’s explosion after one of the first staff meetings in January 1964. The staff had a forewarning that the new headmaster would end the Saturday morning prep; they were not ready for the avalanche of changes Mr Wylie introduced. A school council, a compulsory compline service on Wednesday afternoon, staff sitting at the back of the hall for assembly, prep taken in the houses rather than the teaching block, grade punishments, a Cock House Competition, a complex setting system for classes, a car for driving lessons, a new style *Concordia* (under pupil editorship); the list of changes goes on and was not to end until his departure

in December 1968.

There was a deliberate strategy as Mr Wylie explained, well after he left:

*Of course I wanted to make changes, the principal one being my wish for all concerned to “chill out” as I believe the current phrase has it. The best in anything is not achieved without a degree of productive tension and believed that I first needed to insert a little grit into those ball-bearings. I thought too, that it would be important for me to produce reactions which I could differentiate. I needed to find to who would wish to tell me what they thought they wanted me to hear and who would provide a genuine critique, whether con or destructive didn't matter.*

*A blitz of changes at the start of a term of office is not unusual; it is a common tactic used by new leaders, whether headteachers, chief executive officers of major companies or prime ministers.*

*I was accused of making wholesale changes and much too fast, and I believe that is still my reputation. Unless you make the changes quickly, you cannot make them at all and are reduced to tinkering at the edges, and spending time and effort on unworthy details. Most of all, the purpose of the change needs to be better understood. It is not the changes that matter but the attitudinal shift which they bring about.*

Those attitudinal changes were aimed at two communities in the school, the pupils and the staff. His prior knowledge of the school from his BFES role had given him an insight:

*There were at WBS two aspects where I was particularly anxious to produce this shift in attitude. The first was among the pupils, especially the seniors, who were elevating success at sport (preferably the most macho), as the ONLY criteria of worth, in much the same way as our most recent disaster (Margaret Thatcher) elevating getting money as the ONLY thing that mattered.*

The final little dig at the Conservative prime minister gives a clear view of Mr Wylie's political views! The emphasis on “ONLY” is important. It was

not competition or sports *per se* that he objected to, (he was a qualified Football Association referee and coached the school football team), but to the placing on a pedestal based on this single criteria. Two examples of how he tackled the problem. Boxing, ever present from the school's opening, was discontinued despite a request from the new school council.

Secondly a new inter-house competition was introduced under the perhaps unfortunate title "Cock House Competition". A glance at House Notes in *Concordia* shows that successes, and defeats, in a wide range of sports took a very high place in the self-esteem of a house. The intention was to broaden this inter-house rivalry beyond sports. The structure was to aggregate points won by houses in a wide variety of activities. The summer term 1965 *Concordia* lists thirty different competitions contributing to the overall title. All six houses managed to win at least one title. Sixteen of the competitions were sporting: rugby, soccer, cross country, basketball, table tennis and gymnastics, with age or junior/intermediate/senior categories. The others took a distinctly non sporting direction: orations, essay writing, verse, art, model making, chess and scouts, again often with age or year categories. Houses collected points for their placings in each category (and each category was awarded the same number of points). The final overall title included points for "effort" and "turnout".

This more holistic approach to inter-house rivalry was established at WGS at the same time. Grade and conduct cups had been in operation since 1959. As WBS was starting the Cock House Competition in autumn 1964, WGS introduced the Kensington Cup, (named after the now closed house), as an award summing up various other competitions, sporting and non-sporting. The Kensington Cup had a far longer life than the Cock House competition, still being awarded as WGS closed in 1980.

Two more innovations were designed to give boys greater responsibility, a feature of many of the reforms. Both were short lived. Sunday chapel was made optional; this only lasted less than a term as boys took advantage of the extra time available. Compulsory services on Sunday (as well as the Wednesday afternoon Compline) resumed quickly.

The school council also only lasted a few years. The intention was to give pupils a say in the running of the school. The structure was modelled on an English Borough Council: elections, a presiding mayor, standing orders, a formal agenda and minutes and committees. There were 18 boy members.



These in turn elected four staff members, one a housemaster, a head of department, a form master and a resident master. The headmaster was nominated as “Town Clerk”; the deputy head as treasurer and the head and deputy head boys were “ex officio”. The first meeting was in the summer term 1964.

Despite this heavy infrastructure and the active participation of the headmaster the Council was advisory only. Nonetheless it did succeed in its early years to achieve some relatively minor changes. Some of the topics where change was instituted included a car for driving lessons; a music trophy, more junior chemistry activity and bicycle races. Some topics proved controversial within the council and proposals were rejected. These included something which former pupils remember: the motion for paper towels in the toilets was dropped: unworkable on cost grounds. The extension of activities with WGS was a popular motion and it was left to WGS to consider their response.

The Council continued into spring 1965 but there were signs of disillusionment. The mayor (Councillor Lawes) wrote:

*Unfortunately many people, mostly pupils, have the mistaken view about the School Council. We are not a body that has absolute power at our finger tips; we are an advisory body with limited financial control over activities and entertainments. We have had our setbacks this term but there is much that the Council has achieved. In next terms Concordia we hope to publish another list of the Council's achievements.*

This sense of promise unfulfilled was echoed in that next edition, (summer 1965) of *Concordia*. It was not the mayor who reported on the Council's successes but the editor in his survey of changes in the first two years of Mr Wylie's tenure:

*An activity introduced in the summer of last year which was looked on with eager anticipation by many. Unfortunately, the excellent original idea has been spoiled by the inability of the council to perform actions of real importance or lasting significance during the last two terms. No doubt since at the moment it is in its infancy, it will become more useful as the Council members learn to use their powers fully, but at*

*the moment the almost unanimous feeling in the school, and indeed a feeling shared by many Councillors, past and present, is that the Council has not yet attained the position of authority which it could and ought.*

Whether the Council reached this level is unknown. It faded from the view of subsequent editions of *Concordia!*

*Concordia* itself was one of the innovations. We shall look at school magazines in more detail in chapter 22 but a few words now will place the change into the Wylie reforms. There was no issue in 1962/63, the first gap since 1954. The “New” *Concordia* launched briefly in autumn 1964. The design from spring 1965 was radically different, it became termly but the most radical change was that the Editor was a pupil and not a teacher. This opened up the magazine to a more eclectic contents and at times setting out a challenge to authority, both unheard of in the previous decade. The innovation of a pupil as editor was to last until 1970, when Mr Capey, the advisory editor, left and there was a reversion to teacher editorship. This author can confirm from personal experience that Mr Capey took a very hands off approach over content.

The list of changes aimed at pupils in 1964 and 1965 was long. Assemblies fluctuated between the chapel and the assembly hall, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon. Activities time was overhauled with a more restricted ability to choose from a wide selection. More external visits took place (matched at WGS): school monitors were created to bridge the gap between house officials and school prefects. Perhaps most noticeable development, and welcomed by many, was the increase in “exeats”.

The second of Mr Wylie’s strategic objectives was directed at the staff. He explained:

*The second (attitude shift) sprang from the very nature of the very distinguished teaching force and lay in persuading them that WBS was not a grammar school masquerading as a comprehensive.*

We have seen before how the school’s information leaflets for parents indicated the school was a “comprehensive”. Admission of pupils with a wide range of aptitude had been a tenet of BFES secondary schools since the outset. Within the school there was relatively strict streaming with grammar

and modern streams clearly defined. As external examinations approached the pupils in the former stream were lined up for GCE O level; the latter for the more technical subjects and the examinations of the Royal Society of Arts. The academic culture of the school reflected this divide. Mr Wylie sought to change this division. His method was to introduce a new timetable based on a system for grouping pupils called “setting”. In this he was in the vanguard of changes underway in English secondary schools. To “stream” or to “set”? The National Foundation for Educational Research defined streaming:

*“Streaming” derived from intelligence theories. That individuals have a fixed, general level of intelligence that they acquire genetically and which can be objectively measured with the use of standardised tests.*

Streaming was the principal method in most English schools. Many pupils recall taking a Moray House test on arrival at the school. They were then allocated to streams: grammar to modern. The aim of streaming was to enable teachers to work on a whole class basis as everyone was deemed to be of a similar standard. Pupils stayed together across subjects. Transfer between the streams was possible mainly at the end of year.

“Setting” differs from streaming in three distinct ways. Pupils are put into sets based on their academic performance in a particular subject rather than through an assessment of their general level of intelligence. Secondly, setting offers a greater degree of flexibility than streaming as pupils can be allocated to different sets according to their level of ability in different subjects. Finally, setting reduces the negative psychological effects on pupils that are often associated with streaming because in a setting system pupils are not in the same groups all of the time.

The changes to the timetable took two pages of *Concordia* to explain and are complex, more suited to a specialist educational analysis! Mr Wylie explained:

*The original concept sprang from my desire that more than lip service should be paid to the comprehensive principle. I have always been concerned on social as well as educational grounds about the award of labels and the assumption in them that the child very weak at say, English, is weak also in maths. Scorn has long been poured upon the*

*view that if a boy was poor at his academic subjects he would be good at crafts and vice versa. It was necessary too to pour a little scorn on “This is a ‘C’ child, therefore no modern languages” philosophy.*

*I wanted to ensure that every boy (a) took a science (b) took a ‘standing up’ (Woodwork, Metalwork, Technical Drawing, Art, Rural Science) subject (iii) took two others of reasonable variety.*

The changes were complex. An important development was the introduction of “Progress Forms” for weaker pupils (later called “remedial”). The system was complex. Theoretically there could be over 2,500 different timetables!

The reaction to the changes was mixed. Some teachers took to it, others were more reluctant (Mr Wylie was not too worried, he expected a varied uptake). The range of options put pressure on teachers as there were some subjects needing more teachers than available. Some were pressed into teaching subjects outside their main area (Miss Angela Forer, an English teacher, recalls being asked to take Business Studies).

The system provoked a long running standing joke along the lines of “*if its Tuesday it must be Thursday*” as the timetable rota adjusted days. The Editor of *Concordia* called the changes the most important changes of the year. Some sympathy was expressed by Mr Hodgson, the deputy headmaster, in the December 1965 edition of *Concordia*:

*My memories of last term must include thought of our new first formers who were drawn into our whirlpool of education – sets, groups, houses etc and who emerged relatively unscathed at the end of term. Their greatest moment was probably their house Xmas Dinner followed by the Beatles film “Help” – a perfect choice but perhaps it would have been an unfortunate film for the first Saturday of term!*

Pupils recall another of the Wylie reforms: the sudden fire alarms in the early hours for a full scale fire practice; Mr Wylie even sounding the alarm a few minutes before the pre-arranged time with the local fire brigade, just to keep them on their toes.

## **The HMIs return**

It was the turn, in October 1966, of WBS to undergo an HMI inspection. Their report was considerably shorter than the corresponding report of WGS two years earlier but still gives an outsiders' view of the school. Their summary was glowing in its praise for Mr Wylie:

*The headmaster, who took up his appointment in January 1964, after a period of service in the BFES administration in which he exercised responsibility for secondary education, brings to his task the gifts of a clear sighted administrator with an unusually penetrating understanding of boys. He knows his staff and school well, is himself an effective teacher, and his leadership is shrewd, strong and enthusiastic, yet wisely tempered with kindness and understanding.*

The school roll was 560 including just 20 day pupils. There were 120 in the first year and 105 in the second. The yearly numbers then fell away: 79 in year 3, up to 86 in year 4 and 82 and 71 in years 5 and 6. There were 42 members of the teaching staff, including the headmaster. The number of boys was above the official maximum and the inspectors reported two-tier bunk beds were in use. They did not appear overly impressed with the facilities in the houses. The school buildings, they wrote:

*Are spacious and light, although the boarding blocks, even after their conversion to their present use, have still a bare impersonal air. It has been possible to avoid over-large dormitories but the provision of some kind of carpeting would help to give some appearance of comfort.*

*On some floors there is a shortage of wash basins and recently only some of the showers have been functioning. The number and size of the wardrobes and cupboards for the boys clothing and other personal belongings appear somewhat inadequate.*

They also felt that some of the teaching facilities could be improved but were not hopeful, given the demands on BFES budgets for new works. As at WGS they considered the library was under used.

The extensive changes to the curriculum prompted several observations. Reporting that another change had recently been introduced (in September 1966) where the first year was no longer in sets but in mixed ability groups,

the inspectors became well aware of the pressure placed on teachers:

*The staff, both teaching and ancillary have established noticeably good relationships with the boys. The teachers are conscientious in carrying out the many and varied duties inherent in the running of a large boarding school but some of them seemed to have inadequate time and energy left over after meeting these demands to respond effectively to the new professional challenge in the classroom, arising from a much wider range of ability among the pupils than many of them had previously experienced.*

*Teachers are in the process of adapting themselves to this new arrangement but some are finding this difficult.*

The report gives the impression that the inspectors (there were five of them, each focussing on two or three subjects) were on the one hand appreciative of the changes, which they would have been aware of, at least in general, from educational debates in England and yet perhaps not fully convinced of them. Terms like “*considerable ingenuity*”, “*flexibility*”, “*especially interesting*” indicate a newness in the curriculum they were inspecting. The pressure on teachers, the over use of “minority subjects” leading to examinations and an uneven use of too short “double periods” were some of the critical comments.

In their review of the standards of work, the inspectors returned to their concerns over the setting system:

*In the main school (below the 6th form) the movement of boys to and from the school at various stages makes the organisation of sets into homogeneous groups a task which can never be entirely achieved.*

The subject review is almost cursory with single sentences per subject. The key words are “*competent*”, “*sound standards*” “*examination results present a reasonable picture*”. As with WGS they felt that some students were attempting “*more than their capabilities allow them to achieve successfully*” Their summary was nonetheless supportive of the changes:

*Nothing that has been said previously should obscure the fact that the work of the school has been planned with thoughtfulness, attention to*

*detail and far-sightedness. The clear aim of the headmaster is that each boy should progress at the speed most suited to his capabilities and that he should be given the opportunity to follow the subjects of his choice as he moves up the school.*

That such an ambition needed to be spelt out in the report gives an indication that in the mid-1960s the approach was indeed novel.

Another of Mr Wylie's introductions came under review. The previous year the editor of *Concordia* had pointed out that it seemed as though there was a cock-house competition every other day. The inspectors concurred:

*It appears that this aspect may have been over-emphasised and that there is a need for training in leisure interests in which the competitive element does not necessarily play a part.*

The report's conclusion to the report maintained the ambivalence evident in several sections:

*This is a school in which, through careful organisation, much has already been accomplished to provide appropriate courses and suitable working conditions for boys of widely varying intellectual capacity, although the actual content of some of the syllabuses could be more clearly adapted to their different needs and, in some instances, an unsuitable examination tends to prevent the work from developing in the most fruitful way. That the efforts of the staff are appreciated is evident in the cheerful good manners of the boys and their ready willingness to work. This is clearly a climate favourable to further experimentation in which more positive training for leisure might be confidently undertaken.*

“Experimentation”; an apt description of Mr Wylie's reforms.

## **The middle to late 1960s**

In spring 1967 WBS faced a pressing accommodation problem as the school roll increased to 609 pupils, with 53 teachers. It continued to wrestle with the new flexible timetable, which led one teacher to write after yet more changes:

*The timetable was naturally just a little more complex than its forerunner.*

At WGS, Miss Evans' principal academic issue was the introduction of the new Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE). The HMIs had pointed out the need to increase the options for senior girls especially those struggling with the more academic O levels. The CSE had been developed in England for just this purpose. Unlike O levels it was teacher marked and introduced project work to the grading. It was designed for the comprehensive school.

In 1965 the CSE was first taken in England and perhaps surprisingly also at WGS. The school adopted a three tier examination system, which affected girls in the fourth and fifth years, of GCE O Levels, CSEs and the RSA examinations for typing and shorthand:

*The Certificate of Secondary Education is an examination conceived and shaped by practising teachers with the intention of assessing at the end of five years of secondary education the attainment of students who, while they have learned and matured a great deal, have not the facility for expressing themselves in language and numerical and other conceptions;*

The following year Miss Evans was open about the examination:

*It would be dishonest not to admit that this new examination is still having many teething problems – but candidates and their parents can be quite sure that a close watch is being kept upon these – to ensure necessary adjustments and the establishment of good standards.*

In the summer 1968 examinations 37 girls passed O levels (several obtaining passes in 7 or 8 subjects); 59 took the new CSEs (11 of whom also took some O levels) and 16 took RSA examinations. Seventeen girls passed subjects at Advanced level. Compared to the 1964 examinations this showed a small increase in O level candidates (51 to 59) and a marked change in RSA which fell from 28 to 16, as more girls took the new CSE examinations. It would appear there was a move to “spread” the options as girls selected which of the two examinations to take (noticeably more took Mathematics at CSE level as recommended by the HMIs in 1964).

Along with the new examination and its demands on teachers, and pupils,



there were smaller changes at WGS. Improvements to the buildings (the gymnasium, dressing rooms for the assembly hall, new tennis and netball courts) gave the impression of change. Miss Evans was alert to the impact of one of them:

*In the last two years the newly provided prefects room, and this year the sixth form common room, have become very happy social centres, which I am pleased to see happening. The sound of manly voices seems to proceed from them most of the time – I am hesitant to suggest this – but I am sure I have the headmaster’s permission – possibly the senior boys regard these rooms as places of refuge – a point of stability as it were, from the demands of their masculine life. Whatever the reasons – which will be varied – we are pleased to have them use the rooms socially.*

For a year or two WGS was short of teachers. Recruitment was hampered by the uncertainty in BFES, following the devaluation of sterling in 1967 and the consequential cuts in government expenditure.

WGS and WGS drew closer. More lessons were shared in the 6th form. The highlight of the cooperation was the joint production of “*1066 and All That*”, produced by Mr Barry Cummings, head of art at WGS. Over 130 pupils from both schools were involved in the three-month long rehearsals and preparation, (more in chapter 22).

## **Mr Wylie’s’ final reform**

In July 1966 Royston Lambert of the Research Unit into Boarding Education, Kings College, Cambridge, visited the two schools. Lambert was the “go to expert” on boarding schools, advisor to the Ministry of Education and to the 1968 Public Schools Commission (known as the Newsom report). His book “*The Hothouse Society*” brings together comments from pupils in over 60 schools across England. He excluded comments from pupils in the Hamm schools as they had not been studied in the same depth as the schools in England. He visited Hamm without his team, only accompanied by the Director of BFES: he wanted to know the extent of the demand and necessity for service children to be educated in boarding schools, whether around the world or in UK boarding schools, for the Public Schools Commission. He

did refer to BFES schools in his evidence to the Public Schools Commission. His main conclusions were:

*Recognition of the significant effort BFES was making towards boarding education.*

*The schools were boarding schools in their own right and not schools with boarding.*

*The food was also superior "it had not been matched by anywhere else in his experience."*

He made one observation: that heads of departments were given a higher status than housemasters/mistresses. In his view this indicated a wrong emphasis.

Mr Wylie invited Lambert to return to WBS in 1968 to be the main speaker at Speech Day. Lambert was a noted "progressive" in boarding education so one can imagine he and Mr Wylie had a lot to talk about. One development in particular sowed a seed. Lambert had written in *The Hothouse Society* that there was a move away from the traditional 11 to 18 year old all-age houses to a separate house for sixth formers. Mr Wylie took over a year to develop the theme and in 1968/69 WBS moved to a new house structure; his last major reform. One house, Balmoral, was to be for first years; four houses for second to fifth years and Edinburgh for sixth formers only.

The new structure was slowly revealed during the previous year. Mr Chris Fulford was lined up to be the first housemaster of the Sixth Form house and Mr Brian Birkby as housemaster of the First Year house. Mr Birkby set out the aims of the First Year house, with the interesting attempt to join house and school (i.e. teaching) together:

*It is by way of being an experiment. Firstly, it is felt that the newcomers can be spared a great deal of perplexity and bewilderment if they are all housed in the same place. It is envisaged that the first-year bases, that is the classes in which they are taught, should be an extension of the house structure so that even in school the children will still feel they belong to the house.*

*Secondly, those bad influences which filter down through the years to*

*the bottom of the present houses ought to be missing although opportunities for using any good influences which could come from seniors will be exploited fully.*

The intentions behind the Sixth Form house were set out by its “champion”, Mr Wylie, in an interview in *Concordia* in the Spring of 1968:

*senior boys could benefit academically as well as socially from an ambience that treated them as “no longer schoolboys”. They would have a separate, yet representative function.*

He admitted that the new house needed physical changes to make it work, especially as many of the senior boys would face a lowering of their living conditions (many would have expected a one or two-person dorm in the existing houses and would be back to 5 or 6 in the new house):

*Until the improvements expected from the School’s major works programme (asked for, for the third time in 1964, scheduled to begin in April 1966, may start this July) there might be a loss of some physical amenities. There should be compensations, however in the form of other kinds of living and working space: a Sixth Form Club, a reference library, the equivalent of the lounge at home, a place where friends, including girlfriends, could be invited and entertained. Thus the dormitory would become just a place to sleep in, and active living would be centred elsewhere.*

In the same interview the limits of Mr Wylie’s progressiveness were explored:

*Question: Would it have been a good thing to have sounded boys’ opinions, especially senior boys before putting such a plan into operation?*

*Answer: Before Concordia bought it to his notice, the headmaster had not realised the interest and concern this question had aroused. He expressed a willingness to meet the fifth and sixth year if they wanted to discuss it.*

A second-year pupil, A Rawson, wrote his misgivings about the first year

house in *Concordia*:

*No! it will be an utter flop and the houses will be put back to how they were within the year. Can you imagine one hundred first years who think that fooling around is great fun, running loose in a house on their own? It will cause disruption.*

With those encouraging words the new house structure duly opened for the 1968/69 year.

The First Year house ran, contrary to expectations, smoothly: the children were all new to the school, few had been to a boarding school so the acclimatisation was shared. It soon started to falter: Mr Birkby moved after the first term to be housemaster in Caernarvon so was unable to build up the rapport he had intended. A future problem also emerged: the pupils would face a double change for their second year: a change both of house (to a four-year house) and a change of timetable as subject setting took over.

The four “middle” houses, with second to fifth years adapted well. As Mr Wylie hoped the senior boys (5<sup>th</sup> years) were able to gain some leadership experience as house monitors. Sports continued between the houses, but no senior sports as the sixth formers were not re-allocated back to their former houses. The strict age separation was not always followed, some first years moved to Caernarvon mid-year. In their house reports for the summer edition of *Concordia* two of the houses specifically looked forward to the “old style” house in the following year.

The “tripartite” house structure only lasted one year and it was in the Sixth Form house that most problems arose. Several of the benefits Mr Wylie had promised came into operation. A bar opened in the cellar, beer was available; pipes and cigars could be smoked; a Mess committee was formed to manage. The house had its own tie. Many of the petty restrictions and practices of former houses disappeared, some almost totally. No lights out, no early morning wake up, no roll calls, just the occasional “Mess Meeting.” Some pupils enjoyed it; others less. Two pupils recall that one of Mr Wylie’s aims worked for them (although the reduction from 21 to 18 did not come into force until 1970):

*was that everybody was of a similar age, you no longer had the junior years as a distraction to what went on. I was already 18 when it was*

*set up so technically an adult and it felt like I was being treated as such.*

Another has a similar recollection:

*I wasn't happy with how I was treated as a 5th former, particularly by the housemaster. I felt like a child. I enjoyed the 6th form house much more as we were treated as more responsible.*

Almost predictably the works programme on which so much depended failed to materialise. The sixth formers found themselves in larger dorms than they expected; a risk foreseen. One consequence is that the dorm remained the centre of pupil's life. Both social and academic work for *A levels* centred around it. Mr Fulford tried to stay positive in the face of opposition: a pupil recalls the pupils meeting in a "rebellious mood" and demanding to see the housemaster over a perceived injustice. The first term was indeed fractious. The house settled down in the second term, but probably for the wrong reasons. Mr Wylie, the change champion, left at Christmas 1968. It also became known that perhaps the only other champion, Mr Fulford, was also leaving. There was no new leader emerging from the staff; the school would revert to the traditional all-age houses in September 1969. Mr Fulford looked back regretfully:

*His (Mr Wylie) aims were quite clear; the creation of a more mature society in which people would have the opportunity for much more control over their destinies, much more opportunity for exchange of ideas between the whole range of their contemporaries and a chance to discover their role as potential adults away from the inevitably more juvenile society of an all-age house.*

*He had hoped that by the end of the first term the concept had started to germinate and progress continued after Christmas. Should the experiment have continued? He thought so and felt the teething problems would have disappeared in two more years: the fifth formers were looking forward to moving to the house.*

Views remained mixed over the tripartite structure:

*The 1st & 6th years were good ideas in my opinion. I was in the 5th year and had early responsibilities as a prefect. I guess it helped 1st formers. Reduced bullying.*

*I'd come from boarding school in the UK and liked the adult type ambiance.*

But with little support from teachers the experiment folded. It was to be many years in the UK before Sixth Form Colleges were introduced; in many ways the Sixth Form House set out to be one, although within a residential school.

Mr Wylie left to become an HMI where he was to spend the rest of his working career.

He is remembered as an innovator, perhaps too fast and with too many ideas for some. Teachers remember his long, (sometimes very long, over five hours), staff and housemaster meetings, his humorous approach to opposition. Pupils recall him referring football matches on his bicycle. He correctly forecast England winning the World Cup in 1966. His continual changes to the curriculum had at their centre a clear belief of the need for each pupil to be given the best opportunity. He set out his theory, with a characteristic twist:

*For years educationalists have been preaching the virtues of continuity. I think continuity for a pupil is excellent if that pupil is being taught by the best teacher of, say, maths for five or seven years; but what if the poor wretch who has the worst and most subject-alienating teacher for the same period of time? Remember too, that the education years from 5 to 16 are the only sentence for which there is no remission for good behaviour, on the contrary, the sentence is increased by two to six years for those who do best.*

Mr Jack Worrall, the deputy headmaster, took over as acting headmaster for the second and third terms of 1968/69 until the new headmaster arrived in September 1969.

At WGS Miss Evans left at the end of the summer term 1969 to return to Wales to open a bookshop. She was asked, in an interview with three senior girls in *Ambassador* 1969, whether she had any ambitions in becoming

headmistress:

*No – not really – not any ambition in the usual sense of the word. I thought it seemed interesting in many ways – I thought I had a background of experience which would help, and I knew that I would do as well as I possibly could in whatever the job presented me with. That is all one can do – you know – like you girls – to hope for a red grade for effort. I hope you all think that at least I've earned a red grade.*

Asked what had been her most rewarding experience, she replied:

*I have a very clear and simple answer to that – the rewarding experience as you put it has been working with you girls – and seeing you growing up – and doing what I could to help you do so. That has been the unfailing pleasure of the last six years.*

The 1960s drew to a close; both schools were entering the 1970s under new leadership.

## **The Seventies: the Soest and Werl Day Pupils arrive**

September 1969 saw both schools with new headteachers. They could not have had more contrasting backgrounds. At WBS, Mr Derek Lester took over from the acting headship of Mr Worrall. He had been headmaster of the Brooksbank School, Leeds, a large comprehensive secondary day school with a long history. It was his first post in BFES. He joined a newish senior team: Mr Worrall resumed as deputy headmaster, two new chaplains: Rev Stuart G Brindley and Father Freyne, and Mr Fulton as bursar. WGS was changing from a Welsh to an Irish headmistress. Miss Delia Feerick had spent fifteen years in BFES since her first appointment in 1954 as senior mistress at King Alfred School. (She succeeded Miss Jeens who moved to the new Windsor School) She had filled in as an acting headmistress between Misses Willson and Evans. Miss Feerick had studied English and subsidiary French at the National University of Ireland and had taught for six years at a convent day school in Ireland.

The first couple of years, 1969/70 and 1970/71, was a time of consolidation in both schools. There was a steady increase in the numbers of boarding pupils: both schools were over their formal limits and reaching their peaks.

At WBS the hectic pace of change under Mr Wylie slowed. The First Year and 6th Form houses ended in the summer of 1969; other innovations also faded away. Mr Hern recalls he had mixed feelings about the reforms.

*My reservations were mainly upon the speed with which they were done. Change was certainly needed but change by itself with little assessment as to the effectiveness is often counter-productive. Some*



*great successes – more freedom for example but some were, in my opinion, less successful – for example the 6th form house which removed the opportunity from many seniors to take on responsibility.*

He saw the early years of the 1970s expansion as:

*a period when the Wylie reforms were assessed in practice and either abandoned (e.g., 6th Form House) or developed. Not too many new ideas but we'd had a lot of those already and probably was what was wanted.*

In contrast Mr Capey, an enthusiast for the Wylie reforms, and in his final year at WBS, found that the school:

*became, well, just ordinary again. Always he (Wylie) wanted to experiment with new ideas. But his unique achievement was that he valued the individual above anything else and in doing so recognised that sometimes he could be wrong.*

Miss Feerick was interviewed in 1971 in *Concordia*. Her first, educational, love was teaching which she continued with the 6th form. Many pupils have recalled she was an inspirational teacher of English Literature and fondly remembered. As with many teachers, there were those who found her overly strict and less helpful (not least when she erred with the wrong books for A level, only spotted just before the examination). It was clear she enjoyed her time at Plön; its grounds and setting and their effect on the co-educational school:

*No boy or girl ever thought of going out the gate as there was nothing so beautiful outside. They grew up very naturally together. They held hands going to and from classes, to dinner, kissed each other goodnight and there didn't seem to be any problems.*

Her attitude at WGS was clear, talking about socials between the schools:

*I have no objection to that whatever, so long as at the end they go out and the girls return to their houses.*

She was asked whether the weekend exeat rules were adequate (two hours

on Saturday and Sunday for most girls):

*The girls having really complained about having longer hours out. They are happily engaged in the mornings inside the house. This may be because they are more conscious of their dress and appearance and are preparing to see their boyfriends in the afternoon.*

The keyword here is “really.” Girls had complained, quite forcefully, in September 1970 for a relaxation of the limited exeat time. There are slightly different versions of the event but they coalesce around this memoir:

*There had been a number of meetings between 5th and 6th year girls with Miss Feerick with regard to them being allowed greater freedom out with school. If my memory serves me well, Miss Feerick refused point blank to allow this to happen. A protest was arranged, and a date set and a plan of protest agreed. During assembly a girl stood up – or just shouted that we were all leaving the assembly hall, and everyone filed out very quietly, walked up the road to the front gates, and through them onto the road, and we just stood there until Miss Feerick and the deputy head – or maybe the head of Caernarvon – came to demand we all returned. When the bell sounded for lunch, everyone quietly went back in the gates and on to the dining hall.*

Another recalls:

*The funniest memory I have is of the school riot, when we all marched up to the main gate, chanting ‘We want our Freedom’ and poor ‘Willy’ the German guard was so scared he lifted the barrier and let us all out!*

Mr Lester set out his hopes in his first assembly with a pithy statement: “WBS” he said, stands for “Work, Behaviour, Sports.” An interesting perception of WBS comes from Barbara Smith, one of the “originals” of 1953. She returned in 1970 returned to WBS where her son was a pupil. That “her” school was now boys only was the first observation. Some things had not changed: the day ordered by bells, limited free time and a weekly letter home (supervised). A major change was the freedom to leave the school. In the 1950s this was strictly limited but her son could leave the school far

more easily (having informed a member of staff) but there were fewer, if any, organised coach trips. Discipline was still high but with a more “softly softly” approach.

In *Ambassador* 1971 Miss Feerick set down her thoughts. Previous headmistresses had used the magazine to send messages to parents as well as pupils. This time staff, as well as pupils, were the target of the view from the top. The theme was change:

*Changes are inevitable and we must change as too. There are new trends in society as there are in school and unfortunately, at present at least, not of the most salutary nature. We have been lucky in being sheltered from them until comparatively recently – perhaps because we are a boarding school, without the “opportunities” of television, salacious films, books, or plays.*

This is quite an impression of discomfort with the social changes of the 1960s. She continued:

*To maintain our high standards in a school of over 500 adolescent girls or even of 700 or more of a turnover in one year, the good, the indifferent and the difficult, is no easy task but it makes us always aim at the good and the healthy. Staff must themselves become more enlightened, more alert and possess qualities of tolerance, patience, endurance and many others on order to train our girls to discern right from wrong, to choose the right path when they leave us, so that they may in turn may be able to overcome obstacles, and be ready to face all the challenges of a new world.*

Her article finished with a rather worrying paragraph looking towards the future:

*What of the future? At the moment it looks bleak, shortage of staff, our best pupils leaving, especially the 6th form.*

Not quite a ringing call for the future. Did she know of the impending radical change about to descend on both schools only a few months later?

One external change did affect the schools in the 1970s. The Troubles in Northern Ireland and the rotation of army units from BAOR had a knock-on

effect. Armed guards appeared at the gates of both schools. There were periodic emergency alerts, including over suspicious parcels. A pupil recalls the stressful time:

*We did however worry about our father's and brother's and uncles and friends who served in Northern Ireland when they got posted there.*

## **The daily buses from Soest and Werl**

In the summer of 1971 Ruth Blake, the American counsellor, put forward a home truth:

*I think the main difficulty is more socially in that the American pupils attend as day pupils and this school is essentially a boarding school.*

Two years later Mr Tarling wrote:

*we are now a school where a quarter of the population are day-girls.*

The change in September 1971 was as momentous as the split into two schools twelve years earlier. As in 1959 the change fundamentally altered the schools. For once the origins did not lie with BFES, or even the British government.

There is a well-known trope used in explaining chaos theory: a butterfly flaps its wings in the rainforest and changes the weather halfway round the world. The election in 1968 of Pierre Trudeau as prime minister of Canada probably passed unnoticed in the schools (except perhaps for the few Canadian students). It was to have a significant effect.

Trudeau, seen then as his son is now, as a dashing “new broom,” immediately called for a review of Canada’s military. He was no supporter of the country’s existing foreign and military policy. A long and tortuous series of reports led, in 1969, to a new policy towards NATO. Canada was to reduce its army in Germany by 50% to 5,000 troops. It also moved them from being part of the UK forward zone within BAOR to Lahr in the USA zone.

The Canadian Department of National Defence managed the schooling of the children of the Canadian Forces in Germany; the counterpart to BFES. In Soest and Werl (and Hemer) they had their own primary and secondary

schools. The Windsor schools knew them well. Sports teams frequently played against them, including at basketball, volleyball, badminton, athletics, and cross country. Canadian pupils had taken part in visits to Stratford upon Avon and Canadian teachers had spoken at 6th form societies. In June 1970 the Canadian schools closed when the Canadian Forces moved south.

The British army, moved into the vacated bases. A quote from a military forum paints a poor picture awaiting new the British occupants:

*New arrivals found TVs, washing machines etc thrown out of the windows of the married quarters as the Canadians both registered disgust at the move and the lack of funding!*

BFES decided against starting a new secondary school in the former schools. They were busy moving the boarding school at PRS in Wilhelmshaven to a purpose-built day school in Rinteln. BFES policy had been for many years to send pupils to day schools if they were within one hour's bus travel. The Hamm schools were a 45–60-minute drive away from Soest and Werl.

Since 1953 the schools had a few day pupils, around 10 to 20 at any one time in each school. From 1965, the numbers increased as Du Pont opened their nearby plant (chapter 17) but as Ruth Blake pointed out by 1971 the number of Americans was already declining.

Andrew Pitt recalls being a “local” day pupil:

*There were maybe 20 or so girls and boys who lived in married quarters, some were children of army personnel, and others, children of teachers at WBS & WGS, or whose parents worked for the BFES administration.*

*I had been assigned to Hillsborough, but I must confess to not having very much to do with house life as a day boy. We had a separate social life going which centred around a park between Am Huckenholtz and Fasanenstrasse and at parties thrown in our homes, and we had regular unsupervised contact with the opposite sex.*

*One of the highlights of our existence was the Hamm garrison social club which was annexed on the side of WGS camp. It had a bar/shop and a cinema. The cinema had about ten rows of seats, and the rear of*

*these were salvaged bus seats from old Bedfords, on raised flooring. Saturday morning, (every two weeks or so), was matinee for the kids. Armed with bottles of Coke or Fanta Orange, Paprika crisps, or Plain crisps, with the little twisted blue paper bags of salt, we would jostle for the best view and comfiest bus seats, and watch, who knows? But we always had advertisements and the Pathé News to give us some indication of life in the UK, and the rest of the world. I remember that when the films got boring, we started using our sweets as ammo on the front row kids.*

*In our world we lived amongst the teachers who were married and who had families. These relationships were mostly short-lived, such is the way of living in service life, as we all know. However, it did mean that some of us got to see our teachers in a different light.*

As they lived near the schools, they could take part in evening and weekend activities and sports. They could go home for lunch. Their numbers were not large enough to affect the running of the schools. Miss Blake added:

*Another difficulty is being a day student in a boarding school. This poses problems since the school is simply not geared for a day student so there are more adjustments to make although it is very fine for them to go home and be with their families and they appreciate that.*

## **From around 20 to over 250**

From 1971/72 the balance altered. WGS peaked in September 1971 with 552 boarders and 142 day pupils. Through the 1970s the numbers of day pupils fluctuated reaching a height of 160. WBS was smaller, with around 450 boarders and up to 150 day pupils.

The schools had a new dynamic. They were slow to react. Marion Patterson, a new pupil from Soest (and a future head girl) looked back in 1973 after two years:

*In September 1971 the school was suddenly faced with over a hundred day-girls from Soest and Werl. It was a difficult and unusual situation for the school to come to terms with and indeed, it is only this year*

*(1972/73) that we have been made to feel a real part of it.*

*We used to eat our meals on our own after the boarders had eaten theirs and then we would all go to our respective common rooms where until we would sit until it was time to go back to school block. Now we eat along with our houses and afterwards go back to our house where we may go to a friend's dorm or even work in the house library.*

*Each house now has a mistress in charge of day-girls within that house so that any problems or queries can be properly dealt with. We have always been welcome to go to socials or other school functions which means we get to see more than just the academic side of the school.*

*Until last term, we had to content ourselves with just hearing about the house games competitions but since then we have joined in and our day-girls' teams have played hockey and netball against the other houses on Wednesday lunchtime.*

*Our reputation at first was not one to be proud of but thanks to the schools admirable efforts to include us in as many ways as possible in the school's life we have proved ourselves to be an important and willing part of it.*

There was a similar reaction at WBS The day pupils posed a considerable administrative headache. Six busses arrived in the mornings from Soest and Werl, three for each school. Classrooms big enough? Dining Halls big enough? Where to put the day pupils during assembly, roll calls, lunch breaks? And to make sure they caught the busses after the last afternoon class to return home:

*I started in 1971 when the huge influx of Soest and Werl pupils started. I don't think school really knew how to deal with us to be honest!*

*We were not encouraged in the early days. We used to have our packed lunches in a room in the cellar then be left to wander round school.*

The first two years were full of missteps. Mr Tarling wrote in *Ambassador*

in 1973:

*We are now a school where a quarter of the population are day-girls. The birth pains of such a development have made themselves felt but the (BFES) Directors' baby now appears to be thriving.*

Schools have a deep culture. Boarder's lives were, during the 36 weeks of a school year, immersed in the school. The very essence of a boarding school is that it takes over every aspect of a boarder's life from getting up in the morning through to night-time. Boarders have very little time when they can be alone; their lives are organised. They live in the school.

In contrast the day pupils attended a day school. The discipline of catching the early morning bus and not missing it in the afternoons top and tail their relationship with the school. In lessons they are on an equal footing with boarders but that, in the early years, was the limit of interaction or cohesion. It is noticeable that the school magazines in the early 1970s hardly mention the pupils from Soest and Werl (especially compared to the day pupils from closer to the school). A day-pupil summed it up:

*Daybugs had our own sub culture.*

This included sticking together when eating, standing together against the bullying, and most importantly having a separate life in the evenings and weekend with their families and own social groups. Several more recollections:

*I guess there was always a feeling of being a bit of an outsider and not fully integrated at school. Some of us went to end of year socials and the like but boarders had a bond that we would never be able to fully feel, or be part of (completely understandable too). Never felt bitter about it as we had our own bond, the one created on the bus going to and from school and back in Soest/Werl with the other day boys.*

*we lived in two different worlds when it came to after school activities.*

*I lived in Soest so was a day bug, I remember we were treated differently, we had to earn our place amongst boarders which I did through sport, some struggles.*



*A massive division between the two. I was also a day boy from Soest and can hardly remember names of any boarders.*

*But I didn't really have many boarder friends at all.*

And perhaps the clearest statement, although probably in a small minority:

*Was a day-bug from Soest. Hated the bus trip, hated the school, hated the dinners, and hated being a non-boarder. We were second class citizens but apart from that it was okay.*

Slowly a new rhythm emerged; giving an assistant housemistress/master responsibility for day pupils was a leap forward; allowing them into the day rooms in houses another. At WBS the introduction of house ties and badges was to an attempt to create a house community; buses were timed to enable day pupils to take part in some afternoon activities. Parents could pay an overnight boarding fee to enable their child to stay over for an evening or weekend activity. For the showing of "Grease" at WGS buses were laid on so that day pupils could watch the film. Changes emerged later in the 1970s, and with the more senior day pupils:

*being a day bug had its draw backs-it took a long time for us to be integrated into all of school life – we were not invited to Christmas dinners etc, until I was in 6th form, but on the other hand I realise I was very lucky to be able to go home every day.*

The separation between the two groups is shown in this memory:

*I was a boarder, then day bug, then back to boarder, yep totally agree both boarders and day bugs did not mix, lost friends and made friends each time I changed from one to another.*

Boarders in turn could see day pupils through different eyes. A typical comment:

*I had friends who were day bugs and used to look forward to them getting off the bus in the morning. I used to feel jealous of them if the truth be known!*

This feeling of envy reflects one of the core but often suppressed aspects of

boarding “I will put up with it but I wish I could be at home.” Its counterpart is “I am glad I am away from a restrictive home life.”

The boarder/day divide crops up from time to time during the 1970s. In the 1975 *Concordia* the Edinburgh House notes make a rare reference to their day pupils:

*The dayboys have once again made a colourful contribution to the life of the house, and although not outright winners, we were well represented in the “Lurking around Soest and Werl NAAFI’s during school hours” competition for the “Stamps and Discounts trophy.”*

*There have also been a number of long-service awards from the Royal Society for Sick-Bay Resting and the British Bad Leg Association – estimates free – in the comfort of your own home. The new “Lessons Avoidance Scheme” -option 5- has also been a widespread success.*

Not a very flattering comment even taking into account the light-hearted nature of house notes. Discipline and conforming to the rules of the (boarding) school clearly became a sore point later in the 1970s. In 1979, the WBS Head Boy, reflecting on his year, wrote:

*Undoubtedly the biggest headache has been caused by the dayboys. They are, sadly, exempt from the sanctions which can be imposed on the inmates, sorry boarders, and hence revel in getting away with as much as they can; the attitude of some of them means we have to bear a lot of cheek. As you can gather, it is not easy to keep the dayboys in check, particularly when certain parents seem unwilling to co-operate.*

A particular cause was that parents were sending their children to school in trainers or the wrong type of trousers; seemingly minor transgressions but an illustration of the different culture between that instilled in boarders. The issue of school uniform compliance was illustrated by Mr Ken Leighton, the deputy headmaster:

*We insist upon the boys wearing a school uniform. Undoubtedly at a superficial level this helps to create a good public image; the serried ranks of pupils in the assembly hall look very smart; and most parents seem very ready to support the retention of a school uniform. This (the*

*uniform) also means that the pupils are readily identifiable in the streets of Hamm, and in the self-service department stores when the occasional boy may succumb to temptation.*

Leighton continued with how a “diversity of opinion” was reflected in the next “dilemma”: the length of hair:

*We insist that the hairstyle should be such that the hair be off the jacket collar and that the face be visible at least most of the time.*

And then comes the penalty but not one which would have much effect on dayboys:

*If a boy does not conform he loses the privilege of “exeat” until he does conform. As it follows that such restrictions also preclude attendance at interschool social and hamper the opportunities to meet one’s girlfriend, most boys are willing to sacrifice the longer hairstyles.*

It seems little progress was made in the following year as the next Head Boy reported:

*The problem of the day boys will still produce a headache for my successor.*

The significant point is that the day pupils were seen as the problem; the dominant culture remained that of the boarders; it was the responsibility of the day pupils to fit in rather than to find a changed consensus. We will find a similar attitude when we come to look at the merger of the two schools in the 1980s.

## **All change again**

Both schools changed their headteachers. Miss Feerick left in December 1973; during much of her last year she had sadly been absent through ill-health. She was succeeded in January 1974 by the recently arrived deputy headmistress Miss Pauline Brown who was to be the last of the four headmistresses of WGS.

Mr Lester left after three years after overseeing the calming period after Mr

Wylie's hectic change period and then the arrival of the 100+ day pupils. He returned to the UK to a headmastership at Baines Grammar School in Lancashire. The new headmaster in September 1972 was no stranger to WBS or indeed BFES: Mr Jack Worrall. After a languages degree at Bristol University and national service he had been housemaster and languages teacher at Bisley Boys' School, a Shaftesbury Society school. He moved to PRS Wilhelmshaven in 1960 and then Kent School in Hostert as departmental head of languages. He arrived at WBS as deputy headmaster in April 1968. He became acting headmaster for two terms in 1969 after Mr Wylie. He resumed his deputy role under Mr Lester. He was renowned for running the stamp collecting club and his cricketing skills. He had little time in Germany for his main interest of bell-ringing.

November 1974 saw a remarkable meeting in London as 153 former staff of the schools celebrated the 21st anniversary of the opening of Windsor School. There was an impressive attendance by headteachers: Aspinall, Benyon, Willson, Evans, Wylie, Lester, and Worrall. Particular mention was made of three colleagues who had worked since 1953: Herr Berndt, Herr Sperling and Mr Theaker. Mrs Leni Steventon, another of the original staff members, as Head Matron, and now matron in WBS Caernarvon, also attended.

At WGS, Miss Brown progressively relaxed some of the restrictions. Her deputy, Mr Sarney, later recalled:

*She transformed the school, changing the less agreeable aspects and persuading staff that what was good for the girls was good for all. Girls were given more responsibility, staff felt more involved, although there was never any doubt who was boss!*

By 1977 many of the restrictions on, for example, exeats, ("privs" for privileges), were revised. During the week first- and second-year girls were still only allowed out of school if accompanied by a prefect, member of staff, matron or a sister. Third years could leave on one day a week between 4pm and 530pm; the fourth to sixth years could do this on two days a week. On weekend afternoons between 2pm and 4pm third years and upwards may leave the school (first and second still accompanied). School prefects had a much more lenient regime, including going out in civvies rather than school

uniform and even allowed to WBS, on weekend afternoons. There were strict rules about where pupils could go: mostly around the school, never into gaststätte and only prefects into Hamm itself. In the Kurpark pupils were required to be in groups of three and upwards and the canal bank was strictly out of bounds (but this was little regarded or enforced).

Miss Wild recalled, as she was leaving in 1976, on the changes over the eight years of her stay:

*Obviously in eight years there have been a lot of physical changes in the school. For instance, Block 47 (Art Rooms and Library) just didn't exist; the Guardroom was where our post office is (the little wooden hut was just for telephoning and keeping dry!); the dovecot has disappeared; Room 207 in School Block is half the classroom I had in my first year; Room 208 was part of the Art department; the covered ways weren't there of course; Room 104 was a classroom and the typing pool was in 104. Room 113 used to be the Prefects Room and the Library was at the end of the bottom corridor. The Art Rooms were in the top of Sandringham and the music room was 309.*

The mid to late 1970s seem on the surface (excluding the day pupil integration) to be a period of calm and normal operations in the schools. At WGS Miss Brown continued relaxing the restrictions (boys were allowed into the school on weekend afternoons, rotating with WBS the following weekend); at both schools more outside trips took place (skiing, to London to see Anthony and Cleopatra, to rock concerts in neighbouring cities).

Two significant incidents occurred, one in each school. A major fire broke out in the buildings next to WBS at the start of the September 1975 term; a firefighter lost his life. At WGS a serious outbreak of meningitis led to many pupils being quarantined for a period.

The school year had settled down. This general pattern at WGS was similar at WBS.

## **Autumn Term**

Marlborough House Party

Sandringham House Party

Hockey Festival

School Birthday Party  
Bonfire Night Fireworks  
Remembrance Day parade  
University and Higher Education Applications  
Inter House Quiz  
Christmas Fair WGS  
Christmas Carol Service Pauluskirche (with WBS)

## **Spring Term**

CSE, O and A level mock examinations  
Careers Advice  
School Play (often with WBS)  
Pancake Races  
Hillsborough House Party  
Caernarvon House Party  
Hockey Mixed Sixes  
WGS *Ambassador* Sevens (hockey)  
WBS *Concordia* Sevens (rugby)  
BFES Cross Country

## **Summer Term**

Consultation with 3rd year parents on options choice  
Balmoral House Party  
Edinburgh House Party  
St James House Party  
WBS Whitsun Fete  
School Sports  
O and A level examinations  
Duke of Edinburgh's camp  
BFES Athletics  
Speech Day  
Open Day  
*Ambassador* and *Concordia* published  
Liaison visits to feeder primary schools

Many of these events would be familiar throughout the history of the school. Two items do mark out the mid-1970s: the consultations with parents over choices for the 3rd years and the liaison visits to feeder primary schools. It had been frequent wish of many headteachers that parents take an active interest in the schools, but the far-flung nature of the school's catchment area had militated against an active engagement. Attempts were made now to take a lead before pupils decided on which subjects to take leading to examinations.

The liaison visits to feeder primary schools were one of several changes prompted by the Plowden Report of 1967. This had looked at the primary/secondary divide and the issues facing less able pupils. Plowden had suggested a change in the age grouping of schools, introducing a Middle School for 9 to 13-year-olds. This was adopted by BFES for several reasons. It released some of the pressure on the boarding schools (day schools were a far cheaper option). It meant many pupils entered boarding slightly older at 13/14 when they would be better prepared. Middle Schools were created in 1974 in Berlin, Osnabruck and Laarbruch. The Windsor schools developed a closer relationship with both the primary and Middle schools.

Mr Worrall left in 1976. It was not his choice as he made clear in his final article in *Concordia*. BFES had a mandatory retirement age of 50; it was later lifted but too late for Mr Worrall. He signed off:

*The calendar tells me it was eight years ago although it does not seem like it. I know I have seen countless boys come and go, six nursing sisters. Four deputy bursars, three Bursars and excluding present teachers, seventy-five teachers.*

*For me, the end now in sight is not only of more than eight years' service in Windsor Boys' School but also of nearly seventeen years in BFES. No other educational organisation, to my knowledge, uses the word SERVICE in the sense it appears in the title BFES. It has been my privilege to see the real sense of the work exemplified in three schools, but nowhere more so than in the unique atmosphere of Windsor Boys' School.*

Mr Worrall left to take up the headmastership of Hautlieu School in Jersey

in the Channel Islands. A few years later he was to be joined by Mr Mike Capey who became headmaster of another school on the island. That same summer saw the largest turnover of staff at WGS for many years.

After a one term acting headship of Mr Ken Leighton, Mr Paul Gysin took over in January 1977. A BSc in Chemistry from Nottingham University and an MA from Leeds University he had been vice principal of Tynemouth Sixth Form College before Hamm.

He came at a time of change. As well as the integration with the Middle Schools and a larger annual intake of 13-year-olds there was talk of spending cuts. Mr GE (Pop) Farrar, the head of PE at WBS described one aspect of the cuts, in 1977:

*There has been much talk and comment regarding public expenditure cuts during the last two years and one may well ask how this affects the PE Department in WBS. The one word answer to this question is ... drastically! In former years the many teams representing WBS have enjoyed a comprehensive fixture list in all major sports, the culmination being a festival organised on either a regional or all BFES basis. During the last year, as the cuts have taken their full toll in terms of transport availability or should I say non-availability, we have been unable to undertake any fixtures apart from senior rugby, basketball, and soccer, attending only the various years groups festivals.*

*This, I feel, is a deplorable situation and will in time, if allowed to continue lead to a drastic drop in sporting standards throughout all BFES schools.*

It was a heartfelt cry by a departmental head only alleviated by the purchase of a 17-seat minibus (a similar purchase took place at WGS for the same reasons).

A far-sighted comment by Karl Spencer from *Concordia* 1978 stands out, “*Fate without Forests*”. Noting that:

*“the energy production of fossil fuels, such as gas, oil, and coal means that a large amount of carbon dioxide is produced and released into the atmosphere.” He went to raise the alarm: “The world’s climate*



*could be destroyed because of the carbon dioxide's "greenhouse effect."*

## **Another snapshot in time: HMIs return**

In October 1978 the HMI inspectors returned: their first visit since the 1960s. This time their reports are far longer, over 20 pages, more analytical and, crucially, with many comparisons with best practice in both boarding and day schools in England. The inspectors set their aims:

*In order to assess the concern of the school for the personal development of all pupils, HM Inspectors felt it to be appropriate to look at the opportunities and experiences provided within the total life of the school for pupils to develop those skills, competencies and attitudes that they will use in the next stage of their lives.*

The conclusions for WGS were clear:

*The outstanding quality of the school is its humane and caring attitude towards all its pupils. The staff are unsparing in the time and energy that they devote to activities during and after school hours.*

However: *The academic organisation is relatively weak.* This was not a comment on teaching of specific subjects but led to a recommendation that there was more overall coordination of the curriculum for all pupils to aim for a balanced programme, ending unnecessary duplication:

*One of the inhibitors of development is the fact that all the staff feel under constant pressure. There can be little doubt that the responsibility of boarding adolescent girls places a great strain on senior staff and the large number of teachers involved in pastoral care.*

At WBS the report concluded:

*The school is fortunate in its resources, both human and material. Despite the apparently inhospitable appearance of barrack blocks, they have converted quite successfully into residential and teaching accommodation.*

HM Inspectors were impressed by the encouragement given to members of staff to initiate new projects and try out new ideas, with shades of the Wylie arrival:

*During the relatively short period of his leadership, the headmaster has introduced a number of important and substantial changes, sometimes in the face of entrenched attitudes.*

WBS was now the larger school, with 650 pupils, WGS with 550, both including up to 150 or so day pupils. In WBS this represented a significant reduction, over 140, in boarders since the 1960s and only a smaller drop of 40 at WGS. The age balance had changed from the 1960s: the introduction of Middle Schools had reduced the intake in the first and second year. In both schools there were around 60 pupils in each, compared to over 120 in the 1960s. The third year became a main entry point with over 120 pupils in each school. There were just over 70 pupils in the sixth forms, a doubling in WGS from 1964.

There were more teachers in both schools, 48 at WGS with an average age of 34. The report highlighted that 7 of the 12 departments were headed by men who were only 25% of the total. At WBS there were 51, average age 34 (9 more than in 1966 and same average age). All were qualified; half of the teachers had degrees.

There were difficulties in recruiting housemistresses at WGS. The inspectors were not impressed that only three of the seven were over 28 when appointed and only three had been in post for more than three years. Matron recruitment was also causing problems at both schools. The inspectors recommended adopting a common feature in England of only one matron in each house (not adopted). Class sizes were considered good, with both schools the average, from first to fifth year, being around 16 to 18.

Both reports naturally commented on the lack of appeal of the former barracks but at WGS the HMIs made an important point: the single staircase in the house blocks meant no privacy for the staff who lived in the blocks. This, very decidedly, was no longer the practice in England. The dorms also came under scrutiny. In neither school did they meet current standards in English boarding schools of being bed-sitting rooms rather than rooms with beds. The most stinging comment came over the changing rooms at the gym at

WBS: they were found in an extremely poor state of repair and a potential danger to health.

The reports covered the subject areas at length with a mix of praise, concern and suggestions. Unlike the 1960s the subject reports became a detailed conversation of contemporary professional matters. The introduction of new syllabuses and methodologies was the cause for most concern especially with the rapid staff turnover. Some subjects were felt to be well taught; others could be improved. In many cases they found the materials, ranging from textbooks, supporting books, the libraries (and the teaching aids on the classroom walls) to need improvement. Most of the stock at the library at WBS was seen to be old or unsuitable or both. There was less comment on examinations, except in mathematics at WGS where they approved of a change in the type of examination for the less able pupils.

There was special attention paid to two areas: remedial teaching groups and a new course “Design for Living” which started in 1978. The former, in both schools, was well regarded and the advice was geared to the nature of the schools, with the high turnover of pupils. The “Design for Living” incorporated social and modern studies, religious education, sex education, human biology, PE, and careers education. The inspectors found this an imaginative and innovative development, although felt the views of parents might be sought given the teaching of sex education. There was a positive note on the increasing use of the youth officer, probation officers, psychologists and social workers: all introduced during the 1970s.

One area of rivalry between the schools was well illustrated by the comments on food! Their view at WGS:

*The quality, preparation and presentation of the food is outstanding*

meanwhile at WBS:

*At the present time the school meals provision appears to be a matter of concern to both pupils and staff. The situation has arisen as pupils have become increasingly aware during exchange visiting of the contrast between the exceptionally high standard of provision and presentation of the meals at the girl's school and the indifferent standard at the boys' school.*

## Reluctant boarders

A feature in both reports was “*reluctant boarders.*” Miss Brown had used the term in *Ambassador* in the previous year, when addressing parents:

*The difficult position of those families with daughters who have become reluctant boarders increases the importance of close confident links between us.*

The idea goes back to the heart of the boarding schools in BFES. As the 1978 *WGS School Rules and Procedures* (a 16-page booklet for both parents and pupils) puts it:

*This school is a community whose members are day pupils, weekly boarders, full boarders and staff. The boarding pupils predominate and they have special needs which the school recognises and for which the school tries adequately to cater.*

*Analysis of the boarding school community must not be confused with boarding schools in the United Kingdom. The boarding pupils are on the whole pupils whose parents have not opted to send them to boarding schools. They become Hamm pupils when their parents move into an area in BAOR which is not served by a secondary day school.*

A few years later the head of a house in the combined school put it in blunter terms:

*Although no-one particularly likes being forced to come to Hamm.*

The HMI reports:

*Service parents (like other parents) expect boarding schools to exercise a higher standard of supervision over their daughters than over their sons: and this presents an extra problem when the boys and girls are in adjacent schools. The head and her staff were naturally concerned about some situations which have occurred. HM Inspectors consider that the staff have established a genuinely caring community in which they rightly exercise a control more firm than would be exercised in the average home, but they do this in such a way that*

*good relationships prevail. They have been anxious about what they call “reluctant boarders”, but while it true that most of the girls would prefer to attend day schools nearer their home if these existed, it is also true that like their parents they accept the fact that one must make the best one can of an undesired posting and the great majority show every sign of happily making good use of the opportunities offered by boarding school.*

At WBS the inspectors reported:

*A boarding school makes great demands on staff. A boarding school in Germany accepting a high proportion of “reluctant boarders” requires even greater professional commitment and dedication. Windsor Boys’ school has been fortunate in attracting a large proportion of staff willing to bring these qualities to the service of the school and its pupils.*

Mr Ritchie, at WGS, commented:

*I found it quite a change from Malta, as the girls were classified as ‘reluctant boarders.’ We had some very nice girls, but also some who seemed to constantly be a problem.*

One contributing factor to the “reluctant boarder” issue was switch in BFES from boarding to day schools. Mr Worrall had alluded to this in his farewell message in 1976:

*BFES has changed. When I joined, in January 1960, the staff of PRS Wilhelmshaven, three of the four secondary schools were boarding schools. Now fewer than 12% of secondary pupils are boarders.*

The closure of PRS as a boarding school in 1972, the opening of middle schools and the decline in troop numbers had changed the secondary landscape. With the main entry in WGS and WBS now at 13 pupils had already started their secondary education in a day school and were now moved compulsorily to a boarding school; a possible unintended consequence of the middle school system. One pupil, from Berlin recalls:

*Now prior to our visit (prior to going to Hamm) rumour control had it*

*that WBS was the roughest School in the BFES community, so we were all quite nervous.*

And when going to Hamm on the Berlin military train:

*We remained in our groups which were Kladows, Gatows, Spandau's and the Charlottenburg's, obviously until we arrived at the schools.*

The recollections from former pupils do appear to raise the issue of bullying (at both schools) in the 1970s more than in previous periods; not a scientific analysis but informative. The “reluctant boarders” remained a minority; many pupils recalled the late 1970s as pleasant and worthwhile periods of their secondary schooling.

One quite remarkable observation in the HMI reports stands out:

*HM Inspectors share the assumption of the school that the function of boarding here is to be educational and not merely custodial.*

That they felt it necessary to say it raises more questions than it answers. Certainly, it implies the schools in the late 1970s had changed significantly from their earlier periods.

## All change: from merger to close

On his first day in the headmaster's office at WBS, in January 1977, Mr Gysin recalls he was alerted to the possibility that the school might close. This was to be the overarching issue for the next six and a half years until the schools did close in July 1983. It was a period of uncertainty, of considerable change and not always of clarity of direction. From two schools running "business as usual" to a full dissolution meant the final years were full of anxiety and sometimes confusion. From 1977 with nearly 900 boarders, around 300 day pupils, 100+ teachers and several hundred ancillary staff to a 1983 with nobody would present a major challenge. And yet, despite the final journey, there was progress in many areas.

Changes and reviews within BFES were nothing new. The fluctuating government policy on British Forces in Germany, their numbers and locations let alone the budgets, frequently impinged on the schools. Even before the school opened in 1953 the War Office was considering three options for the education of service children. The division into two schools in 1959 and the intake of a significant number of day pupils from 1971 changed the schools fundamentally. Budgetary reductions and restrictions, as well as changes in administrative procedures, were almost an annual event. A new review by BFES of secondary schooling was not new or even unexpected. As Mr Worrall had pointed out in 1976 the number of boarding pupils in BFES was declining; their cost compared to day pupils well recognised. BAOR was expected to be reduced (of the 55,000 troops around 28,000 were married with children). Further consolidation around Rheindahlen was expected.

A BFES review during 1977–78 looked at the schools. The first indication of a "problem" on the horizon was unofficially but vividly covered in the house notes of Edinburgh House in the 1978 *Concordia*:

*Who will ever forget that February day when the news broke that the school might have to close down for good? (or as was generally felt – for bad!). At first there was widespread delight among the pupils who had visions of endless sunny days of football, resting and hanging about WGS or the Naafi. Then when it dawned that they would have to continue at school elsewhere there was violent opposition to the idea. “Keep WBS open” they said “it’s a great place.”*

Characteristically there was a jibe at the day pupils:

*To their great credit, a number of dayboys kept their cool. When the news reached them in Soest and Werl they were unmoved. They thought the school had already been closed for some time.*

Miss Brown was more reflective in *Ambassador*:

*Windsor Girls’ School opened in Plön, Schleswig Holstein on September 14th 1959. A little over eighteen years later the school was surprised to hear of feasibility studies investigating the possibility of bringing about the end of the single sex Windsor Schools and the forming of a single co-educational boarding school on one of their sites.*

She continued with a spirited defence of single sex schools and of the success of WGS. A few months later, after the summer holidays and the start of the new academic year in October, it was the turn of the HMIs to comment:

*There are feasibility plans to explore the practicability of bussing some of the pupils longer distances from their homes to other secondary schools. From September 1979 Berlin pupils will be retained in the secondary annex which is being developed in Berlin Middle School. The effects of falling rolls in primary and secondary schools will not only affect the overall need for places in BFES but will almost certainly involve major adjustments between one area and another and one school and another. This will be of particular significance in the secondary field and is likely, among other restructurings, to lead to the establishment of one mixed co-educational comprehensive boarding school in Hamm rather than two*



*schools as at present.*

The reference to a new secondary facility in Berlin gave an indication of the thinking. To reduce the pupil numbers was a major task. Natural changes (postings outside BAOR or closer to a day school) would not be enough. Expanding the Middle School in Berlin was a win-win. It would reduce the boarding numbers in Hamm (existing pupils from Berlin continued at Hamm). The funding arrangements for the British military in Berlin meant that the costs would still be borne by the Berlin authorities (under the Four Power Agreement of 1945 which remained in force until 1990).

The feasibility studies continued until, in the summer of 1979, the way forward was clear. *Concordia* noted:

*This Concordia is one of the last in an era that is fast coming to a close. With educational rationalisation the two schools, WGS/WBS, are destined to merge in the early 1980s.*

That the schools might merge was not new. In her interview in *Concordia* in 1971 Miss Feerick was asked about a rumour that the two schools might merge. She replied:

*There was a rumour certainly, but it would appear in the more distant future.*

That distant future had now arrived. Plans were set in place for a progressive reduction in pupils, teachers, and ancillary staff, with the aim of closing WGS in the summer of 1981 and a co-educational school starting on the WBS site in the autumn of 1981.

## **And then came Mrs Thatcher**

The plans did not take into account the election of Mrs Thatcher in May 1979. Within days of her election, she appointed Sir Derek Rayner, the chief executive of Marks and Spencer as her part-time unpaid adviser to *assist departments in promoting efficiency and eliminating waste*. Mrs Thatcher announced a series of reviews (soon to be called “Rayner Scrutiny”). Every minister was required to put forward an area for review and a suitably qualified “high flyer” member of their staff at Principal level (in military

terms a Colonel/Group Captain,) to undertake the review. The purpose of the Rayner Scrutinies was straightforward:

*To examine a specific policy, activity, or function with a view to savings or increased effectiveness and to questioning all aspects of the work normally taken for granted.*

Each review was to be quick. The reviewer was to report directly to a minister and not through the normal line of management. The underlying objectives were to encourage radical thinking in delivery of policy and to make ministers and senior officials more interested in operations (as against policy). Ministers put forward 29 areas for scrutiny.

The Ministry of Defence selected 33 year old Clive Ponting to do a review of food purchasing and management in the whole MOD. He found significant duplication and wasteful practices. His recommendations would save £3.5m annually. Rayner arranged for Ponting to make a presentation to the Prime Minister. (Five years later Ponting was the whistle-blower in the MOD over the sinking of the Belgrano during the Falklands War). The scrutiny scheme was considered promising enough to expand. In October the Prime Minister requested ministers to propose, within a few weeks, areas for further reviews in 1980. The MOD selected five new areas for scrutiny. One was to change the story of the Windsor Schools. The terms of reference were:

*The study is to consider the present arrangements for the provision of secondary education for the children of Service and Ministry of Defence personnel overseas and the advantages and disadvantages of these and alternatives. It should not concern itself with the scheme for providing Education Allowances which is at present being examined by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body.*

Mrs Mary Williams was to lead the scrutiny, to take place January to April 1980 and to report to Lord Strathcona, the MOD minister in the House of Lords. The total budget for secondary schooling was £8.5m and involved 920 staff. It was a global review not just of BFES but the largest element of secondary boarding was in Germany. The rationale for the scrutiny, set out in a paper sent to the Prime Minister, was the:

*Need to compare relative merits of providing secondary schools*

*overseas and sending children to United Kingdom schools.*

There was, in the 14 page guidance to reviewers, an emphasis on “Action” to be taken; the final report was to be the Action Plan agreed by Ministers (and Sir Derek Rayner).

Just as the schools were starting to come to terms with the merger this more radical review was being hatched in London. The scrutiny was planned for January to April 1980; it had a 90 day window to complete.

In December 1980 Sir Derek Rayner reported directly to Mrs Thatcher on the scrutinies of the year with short precis of each. Four of the five MOD scrutinies, including the secondary schools, were behind schedule. The Action Plan still required both the financial and staffing implications and the timetable for implementation; it was due in early 1981. The main conclusion was clear: the two Windsor Schools were to be closed and pupils dispersed to day schools or boarding annexes at day schools.

It was not a surprising or unexpected conclusion. Mr Gysin thought that some staff felt that a decision to close had already been taken or was the most likely outcome. In none of the 39 scrutinies in 1980 did the reviewer recommend a status quo. That was not the aim of the programme. The review could not have said “a recent review has resulted in changes and reductions in staffing and budgets so nothing new needs to happen”. From the precis of the report it is possible to see the thought process as options were explored and discounted.

The number of children in BFES schools, primary and secondary, was falling. From 28,563 in 1980–81 it was to fall by over 2,000 by 1983 to 26,376 and in 1984, after Windsor closed, to 24,845.

The option of ending secondary schooling (boarding and day) and sending children to UK schools, with an expansion of the Education Allowance, would be ruled out. It would be both expensive and politically unwise: yet more tax-payer subsidy of the public schools. In 1978 the world-wide allowance scheme cost £34m for 17,000 children (from around 30% of married officers and 3% of married other ranks). An additional problem was that public school fees were rising faster than the Allowance.

Already by 1976 Mr Ken Leighton was writing:

*In the last few years an increasing number of officer's sons have been*

*sent to the school owing in many cases, to the increasingly prohibitive costs to parents of independent boarding schools in UK.*

If sending children to schools in the UK was not an option then perhaps sending them to local schools could be considered? It worked in Gibraltar for example. It was not a starter in Germany. It may be the cheapest option but for clear reasons it could only apply in English language countries. Whether German schools would accept it (complete with turbulence) was another matter! This option prompted hilarity in the staff room.

With a merger already on the cards the remaining option was to go the extra mile and close both and disperse pupils to day schools and boarding annexes. Several other scrutinies also took an existing change programme and extended it.

The two reasons given for the recommendation are both obvious and less obvious. Boarding at Hamm was costed at £3,666 per pupil and day schools in BFES at £1,400 (compared to £1,000 in UK). These figures appear far higher than BFES's own costings; the Rayner scrutineers were given a very comprehensive guide to what constituted "full cost." The second reason was:

*They are an unpopular and a mostly forced option.*

This would not have been a surprise; the 1978 HMI reports, published in April 1979, noted the clear concern over the "reluctant boarder" and the compulsory nature of boarding. A concern as we have seen also echoed in the school magazines. The reviewer would have certainly picked up on this problem.

In the final report to Mrs Thatcher the net annual savings were put at £2.73m with a reduction of 228 posts. The closure of the Hamm schools was not the only contributor to these savings; there were several other recommendations, including changing the structure of the BFES HQ. There were cost increases: the building of weekly boarding annexes including at PRS Rinteln and Cornwall School Dortmund and expanding the secondary provision at the Gatow/ Havel School in Berlin. Of the 39 scrutinies the secondary schools overseas scrutiny produced the 6th highest financial savings and post reductions. Rayner's unit commented later in the year that the MOD had only offered up "meagre" savings and post reductions!

The 1981 *Concordia* articles could look forward to the merger but at WGS,

Miss Brown was to write:

*Our last issue of Ambassador brings with it many memories. Life at Windsor has always been lived fully, and it has been and still is impossible for those not part of it to wholly appreciate its demands and its charm.*

## **Meanwhile**

“*Everything stays the same, everything changes*” could well be the theme for the final years of the Windsor Schools. Whilst the two strategic reviews were underway normal changes continued and then slowly at first and then at an increasing pace the run-down of the schools to their closure in July 1983 became the overarching priority.

The late 1970s saw new developments. On the academic side BFES worked towards a common curriculum across its schools. Work was done to match the curriculums at the Middle Schools and the 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Hamm. An attempt was made to make it easier for pupils going to UK schools. Mr Gysin put the problem clearly, noting the short stay most pupils had in a BFES school:

*We are all probably only too well acquainted with the boy or girl who, having been in a school which follows Modern maths, Nuffield physics Traditional Chemistry and has French as its Foreign Language, then transfers to another school which teaches Traditional Maths, Traditional physics, Nuffield Chemistry and has German as its Foreign Language.*

Other developments in the period indicated just how schooling was changing. The HMIs complimented both schools on their increased pastoral work with their engaging with educational psychologists, probation officers, youth tutor and the welfare agencies in the parent’s garrisons. The psychologist (Mr Woods) visited the school regularly; in any year he would see 20–30 at each school for confidential counselling. A Careers Officer, seconded from Hampshire Careers Office, visited one day a week to interview pupils in years 3,4,5, and 6 to complement the long standing visits of the military careers officers.

Additional facilities came on stream. A Social Centre at WGS, a remedial class space at WBS (the former staff mess). Matron Coffey started a shop at WGS selling a selection of jewellery items, little statues saying World's Best Mum or Dad, trinkets, stuffed toys, and a wide selection of Gordon Fraser cards. The shop was used by pupils and staff alike. At WBS in 1977 Mr Hanslip re-opened the small bookshop with a loan of DM5,000 from the School Amenity Fund. It sold more than books: cards, stationery, blazers, T shirts and ties. In its first three years it sold nearly 15,000 books with a turnover of DM70,000 and had almost paid back the loan.

At WBS in 1978 an idea of Mr Wylie's of the mid-1960s came back into fashion. A School Committee was formed:

*The object of this committee is to give the boys a "voice" if they wish to make constructive comments about school organisation*

Two branches were formed senior and junior (years 1,2 and 3). Both had a representative from each tutor group, with three members of staff attached to each. (Messrs Newbury, Riddle and Marsden to the junior and Messrs Leighton, Hern and Father Kinrade to the senior). A note on the initial years' work concluded:

*The Junior Section appears to be offering more suggestions for improvements around the school whilst the Seniors seem to be assuming a rather more critical and non-positive attitude.*

Things were not much better in the following year as the 1960s repeated themselves:

*Yet again the failure of the School Committees to produce any solid scheme for the benefit of the school has not gone unnoticed by both staff and boys, and a lot of people are asking the question: is it really worth carrying on?*

The journey to the merger and then the final closure was progressive. An early decision was needed on which site to create the merged school. The HMI report issued in April 1979 had indicated several reasons why the mixed school should be at the original Windsor school site. At that time a merged school was seen as the eventual outcome:

*Of the two sites occupied by the girls' school and the boys' school, it is the boys' school which offers the better facilities. The disposition of the barrack blocks in the boys' school makes the site appear more spacious and open. The central playing fields are larger in the boys' school and it also possesses an additional and attractive small field surrounded by trees and shrubs behind the chapel. In the boys' school the barrack blocks themselves are faced with brick rather than stucco which gives them a warmer texture. Of much more importance these blocks include self-contained flats for residential staff with private access, the absence of which in the girls' school is a very serious defect. The cellars in the blocks in the boys' school are more suitable for development than those in the girls' school.*

The inspectors are advisory but it would seem clear that their views were taken into account in the decision to choose the boys' school.

A key part in the merger process was the most obvious: how to reduce the combined school rolls from around 900 boarders to around 450 boarders. The changes started in the 1979/80 year. Since the school opened, many 5th and 6th formers had stayed, after their examinations, to the end of the summer term. Teachers had organised lecture series or a programme of external visits to fill in the time before dispersal. That changed; pupils were asked to leave immediately after their examinations. The summer term saw a reducing school roll (and a budgetary saving to the schools). It also severely reduced senior school cricket.

The small first year intake took their lessons at both schools, the race to the bus became a new tradition in both schools. It was a gradual foretaste of one of the problems of the new single school as reported in *Concordia* 1980:

*As the date for the amalgamation of the two schools gets nearer there has been an increase in inter-actions between the two schools, e.g., first year boys going down to the Girls' School for some of their lessons. However, this does have its disadvantages such as what to do with breakers of School Rules from the opposite school (as this problem is common in both schools). A solution to this problem is yet to be found, although I think one is needed.*

In September 1979 the secondary annex opened in Berlin. Pupils currently

at Hamm remained but no new ones came on the famous “Berliner” military train. The Gatow Middle School in Berlin, renamed the Havel School, added a school year every year. Some siblings were split as an older child stayed to Hamm and the younger remained in Berlin.

By 1980/81 change was well underway. School numbers, boarders and day, continued to fall. New pupils from Soest and Werl now went to Cornwall School, Dortmund; existing pupils continued at Hamm until they left or fathers were posted. At WGS, St James merged with Caernarvon. At WBS Balmoral ceased to exist for one year. The boys were “seconded” to the other houses whilst their floor was renovated. Around 12 boys went to each house; a weekly roll-call became a reunion. It was an opportunity for friendly banter as the host houses adopted the “waifs”, “nomads”, “lodgers”: *we hope they have enjoyed the experience of being honorary members of the ruling elite.*

First year boys had their lessons at WGS whose second years went to WBS. Edinburgh House commented on the new arrangements:

*In addition to the Balmoral contingent we now have some second year girls for our edification. They have a short term lunch time lease on the old Balmoral day room, except on Tuesday. Alas, having gained daughters, we now lose sons, as the first year boys disport themselves down at WGS, only returning like prodigals in the evening.*

*Now for a somewhat melancholy note. This year saw the last Hillsborough House birthday party, as the house ceases to exist after the summer term.*

The year was one of change, not always clear-cut, as the WGS Head Girl, Fiona Sheridan, commented towards the end of the year:

*It is strange to think that this final year of Windsor Girls’ School is almost over. For the better part of the period no-one knew exactly what was going to happen after the closure of WGS and this caused a generally restless atmosphere. On the whole both staff and pupils have coped well with the changing situation. The new Windsor school opening on the Boys’ School site will hopefully amalgamate the best traditions of both schools. In order the changeover be as smooth as*



*possible, almost all lessons are now mixed, with much “bussing” between both schools. Numbers within the School have noticeably declined, and for this reason St James and Caernarvon became one.*

It was not only the pupils who were leaving. At WBS Mr Leighton in the usual “Last Word” column from the deputy headmaster reflected:

*Staff turbulence this year is considerable, in part as a consequence of the policy to amalgamate Windsor Boys’ School and Windsor Girls’ School in September. With the run down in pupil numbers has been a comitant reduction in staff here and at Windsor Girls’ School to other schools. The transition was fraught with potential difficulties but, in practice, it seems that it will go very smoothly with most staff leaving for posts of interest to them.*

The period saw the departure of some long serving members of staff. Mr Geoff Hern left WBS in 1980 after 21 years of mathematics, duty officer in Marlborough and running the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (just a few of his activities). In 1981 Mr Peter Kitchen, the last remaining teacher from Windsor School, housemaster of Marlborough, stalwart of the RAF section of the CCF, left. A year later fellow long time housemaster, of Hillsborough, Mr Haydn Jones, left. Both came up against the BFES 50 year old age limit, although Mr Kitchen (more commonly known as PMK) managed to gain a year extension. The children of the Kitchens (Virginia and Lindsay) and Jones (David) were among the few who had spent their entire school career at Hamm, from primary to secondary.

Mr Gysin sounded a cautionary note in the final *Concordia* of WBS. In “*a sobering article*” he remarked upon the high level of unemployment in the UK:

*In some part of the country only one in seven school leavers will find a job this summer*

*The problem (youth unemployment) is then one of the greatest social and economic ills of our country at this present time. Collectively, schools can do nothing other than make the country more aware of the unfairness of the problem for the sixteen year old, and the fact that they carry a far greater proportion of the recession than does the*

*twenty-six, thirty-six or forty-six year old. Collectively and through presentation of the situation in school social studies programmes, they can aim to produce a generation that thinks more in terms of Community Spirit as well as Community Service.*

WGS closed on Saturday 14 July 1981 after 22 years. Miss Brown wrote a moving valedictory for the formal lunch (with music from the band of the Black Watch and the final singing of the School Song):

*Catering for the needs of half a thousand (!) boarding teenagers was never easy. There have been pupils who have sadly missed their homes and have never really settled to life away from home. With a catchment area which included five Middle Schools and eleven Primary Schools, covering at one time an area including Berlin, Hannover, Goch, Norway, the Harz Mountains, Osnabruck, Wulfen, Wolfenbüttel, Nienburg, Bünde, Lübbecke, Hameln and Mulheim it would be very surprising indeed if that had not been the case. What has been true also is no surprise, that the school has been lively and vigorous. It has provided a stable environment for many young people. It has provided a challenging and rewarding professional task for many a teacher. It has provided too something reminiscent of the past – a style of life tinged with a certain quality which in these days of financial constraints will never again be able to be repeated. We are all very sad to see it go. The wheel has however come full circle and we are happy to see the Combined Windsor School of the future take the place of the Combined Windsor School of the past.*

## **Windsor School returns**

Windsor School emerged in September 1981 for the first time since the summer of 1959. As the HMIs had suggested, it was on the former WBS site. Well not quite. School numbers were still too high to fit into a single site so one block in WGS, now called “Windsor Annex”, was still used as a house. Some classes were also held there, maintaining the bussing activity.

The central residential block on the Windsor site became the home for Balmoral and Edinburgh Houses for girls. Balmoral and Edinburgh Boys resumed their places in block 5b. Block 4, next to the entrance, held

Hillsborough (now incorporating Sandringham) and Marlborough (now including Caernarvon). Even if pupils were relatively new to the school, house loyalty was strong:

*With the departure of many of the old hands at the end of the last school year (1980/81), having been moved to new, not necessarily greener pastures, there came about a great reduction in numbers. Rumour had it that as a result of this our house (then Sandringham) was to have its name changed to Hillsborough at the beginning of the new school year. These rumours were met with cries of "treason" and "alas" when a party of patriots converged upon Mr Scott and demanded to know the truth; they proved to be correct. Worse was to come! Those boys left from the closure of Hillsborough would accompany their name and descend upon us to share our sacred dwellings.*

*Inevitably then, the Autumn term saw Sandringham and Hillsborough unite, along with a few new lads, under one roof. After an uneasy settling in period, during which all became accustomed to the new Hillsborough regime, new friends were made, though perhaps with some degree of reservation. At first the lads from the two different houses went around, quite naturally, with former colleagues. Gradually this habit was worn out and everybody now mingles with the opposition to such an extent they cannot be told apart.*

Getting used to new house colleagues was not the only integration issue:

*Primarily there was a feeling of resentment on the girls' side, as I think that they felt that "our" school had closed, and that we had joined "them" rather than a fusion of the two schools.*

*The new school rules are predominately still those of the old Windsor Boys' School, placing the girls at an initial disadvantage, and also causing the rise of discontent within individuals having to adapt to new ways.*

It was not just the location and rules which appeared one sided. From the boys' side, the discipline problem previously associated with day pupils

changed its object:

*Indeed the presence of the girls has caused many problems within the system, in terms of discipline, dress and manners. After all, you can't exercise the same method of discipline of authority with girls as you can with boys.*

*This has been very apparent during prefects detention, when the boys are made to exert themselves physically whilst the girls, considered incapable of this, are confined to the relative comforts of supervised prep.*

Mr Mike Sarney transferred from deputy headmaster of WGS to the same post at the merged school. He said, when asked whether discipline had dropped since the merger:

*There are certainly different approaches required if discipline is to be administered fairly. Some sections of the existing WBS found, I think, that girls need differing approaches and react in quite different ways to boys in certain circumstances. I do feel that the boys took the change more calmly than the girls and were surprised at the apparent lack of respect for established order by some of the girls. I also feel that these problems have to a large extent disappeared.*

The year, once it was underway, had, unlike the previous two years, a new focus. Merger was not the end result; the school was going to close in July 1983. It was the final year for a first year intake. Somewhat ironic; the shortage of first year places in 1953 was a major factor in the creation of Windsor School.

A full programme of events, sports, visits and examinations took place. Diminished numbers and a single site interfered with the normal rhythm of the school. Some long standing traditions did start to fall away. December 1981 saw the last Christmas Carol Service in the Pauluskirche. The swimming pool was taken out of use: the Property Services Agency finally decided that enough was enough with running repairs. Swimming transferred to the Hamm Freibad.

July 1982 saw over 200 pupils leaving, almost half the school. Seventeen teachers left, most to other BFES schools; PRS, Queens, Kent, Cornwall, and

Havel in Berlin. Mr Gysin recalls that SCEA and BFES worked hard to place all the teachers. Mr Gysin himself left to the headship of William School, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Mr Ken Leighton took over.

The final year of Windsor School started in September 1982. All boarders were now on one site but with fewer than 300 pupils the houses were merged again. There were just two houses for boys and two for girls. Edinburgh and Hillsborough Girls houses merged, with the usual rivalry in the early days, and Marlborough carried on. The boys houses came down to two. The Marlborough/Hillsborough House (also incorporating Sandringham and Caernarvon); and a merged Balmoral and Edinburgh. The latter noted (and the final comment will bring gasps from pupils of earlier years):

*With all this newly acquired space in the block and only seventy boys to fill it, old tales of eight-man dorms were no more (certain people even had a dorm to themselves). With all the spare furniture most people managed to obtain at least one "comfy chair" each.*

The lack of numbers brought its own challenges as almost the full range of sporting activity was maintained. The Balmoral/Edinburgh junior football team showed the way forward:

*Having a catchment of only 14 2nd and 3rd years from which to choose 11 players the Block 5A juniors were not expected to perform miracles yet still they played their games with courage, determination and it was their team spirit that kept them going throughout the competition.*

The school numbers drifted down during the year. School teams in football had a struggle forming teams: only 20 boys in the 2nd year; 15 in the 3rd year. Of the 150 girls at the start of the year, only 60 remained for the summer term. Sixth formers taking City and Guilds examinations left at Christmas to go to Kent School. Mr Sarney left after the autumn term.

Some traditions continued. Two groups of German schoolchildren from Unna visited in February. The annual interhouse steeplechase (both girls and boys teams) took place in freezing conditions. The girls won the final *Ambassador* Sevens hockey competition against six other BFES teams. A new shield was presented for the first time.

The 19th edition of the *Concordia* Sevens was played in March. Following

recent practice the invited teams came from other BFES schools. Windsor B retained the Plate they had won the previous year. The A team lost to Queens in the semi-final. The trophies were presented by Brigadier Mundell, the Hamm garrison commander. It was a full circle: in 1965 at the first *Concordia* Sevens, as Captain Mundell, he had led the 1st Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment to victory. The interhouse sports day took place in the Jahn Stadion, as it had in the 1950s. In the non-sporting arena, the school entered the BFES Drama competition and recorded a play written by the 4th year CSE group.

Mr Leighton wrote, as the school was winding down:

*The gradual dissipation of an organisation's manpower and resources is a traumatic experience and the run-down of Windsor School to its closure in July is no exception. There have been worries and despondency but alleviated by pleasant interludes of success. Transcending all has been a stoicism by pupils and staff to attain the aims for which the school has always striven despite the increasing difficulties.*

He paid particular tribute to several of the ancillary staff (Mr and Mrs Theaker, Mr Brochwicz, Herr Sperling and Herr Mendrina).

The final assembly and service took place on Friday July 22. The previous day there had been an outing to the "Phantasia" amusement park (pupils given 5DM spending money). A lapel badge was struck with "1953-1983" over the school badge. Over 300 guests attended the day's proceedings. Four previous headteachers joined Mr Leighton (Miss Brown, now headmistress of PRS, and Messrs Benyon, Wylie, and Worrall) and former WBS housemasters Flowers and Birkby. There was a sprinkling of senior military officers and senior officials from the city. A service in the chapel, an eight course lunch in the assembly hall with speeches. The staff and former staff had a farewell dinner in the Officers Mess.

There were just 81 pupils (third and fourth years) left at the school (so similar to the 90 on the opening day nearly 30 years previously). Mr Birkby remembered it was a fourth year boy who was the last to leave the chapel.

# **PART B**

## The teachers' lot was (mostly) a happy one

In the summer of 1969 Mr Henry Robertson (WBS 1959–65) made a detour from his continental holiday to go to WBS. It had been four years since he had left. Seeing the buildings and dropping into the Staff Mess, left him “dazed, shaken and delighted”:

*Why all this emotional fuss, one might ask? I think the answer is that, as I have felt for some time now, no future working experience of mine will ever be as total as my six years in Hamm. Nowhere else will I live, work and play in so limited a space for so long as I did there, I don't think. Never will I ever get to know so many friends, colleagues and pupils so well as I did there.*

Mr Robertson's thoughts reflect many other teachers' recollections of their time at Hamm. Teachers have fond memories of at least some of the schools where they taught; the Hamm schools seem to score very highly. The 21st anniversary reunion in 1974 attracted over 150 former teachers. Many kept in contact after they left; went to the Windsor Society reunions and more recently, contribute on Facebook.

Over 900 people taught at the schools. For some it was a significant part of their teaching career. Messrs Peter Kitchen, Haydn Jones, Geoff Hern, Johnnie Walker and Ken Thompson all spent over 15 years at WBS (Kitchen and Walker also managed time at Windsor School in 1958/59). There were fewer long stayers at WGS but Miss Delia Feerick, Miss Pearl Waldron, Mr John Bartlett and Miss Jill Emms all spent more than 10 years. For others the stay was short, perhaps one or two years.



In Part A we met the 11 headmistresses/masters. We saw the views of the school inspectors of the classroom teaching. In the chapter on houses we will come across the housemistresses/masters (around 90) and in the chapter on the chapels we meet the chaplains. Now we look at some aspects of the life of a teacher.

## **Two views from outside**

In 1965 the Army Educational Corps produced a recruitment film “*School is Everywhere*”. This “instructional film” is an appeal for teachers for Service Children’s schools worldwide. There are brief glimpses of the Hamm schools (*YouTube link in the Visual Record list*). The tone and style of the film gives a fascinating glimpse of the culture, and attitudes, of the time. A focus is on how children of the military have “a broader perspective, a more open disposition, easier relationships, a greater maturity and independence of approach”.

Another external view of BFES schools comes in an 1968 article in the *Times Educational Supplement*. Walter James, its influential editor visited WBS, Queen’s School and BFES primary schools in the Rheindahlen area. Writing as “a special correspondent” he remarked on “turbulence” and noted the small class sizes, compared to English schools, as one of the ways of mitigating the problem:

*Teachers are the other compensating factor for the disturbed years of schooling. They are above average teachers. This is brought about quite simply by their terms of service. Teachers who want to serve in the BFES are selected in London. They are engaged for three years. At the end of that time some are re-engaged, but only some. There is no shortage of willing starters, so those who are engaged for a second term are chosen on merit – particularly on their willingness to enter into the extra-curricular life of the school beyond the allotted span of hours.*

*The system of taking teachers initially for three years, and then keeping only the best, stiffens the quality of the whole teaching corps. When it comes to choosing heads and deputy heads, it means there is a lot of expertise around. For the younger, mobile, adventurous teacher,*

*there are many inducements. He will have a free house, a living allowance, and in the holidays, he can travel to the ends of Europe and beyond.*

In this short extract he covers many facets of the teachers lives at Windsor (whilst failing to note that there were women teachers). At the time he was lobbying for limited contracts for teachers in England so his enthusiasm for the BFES system was understandable.

## **Why Windsor?**

Based on over 30 interviews in *Ambassador* or *Concordia*, private correspondence and on social media reasons include an international outlook, better pay and willingness to try out new teaching opportunities.

For some Germany was the attraction. Mr Geoff Hern (WBS 1960–80) had been to Germany a few times and felt an affinity with the country. He applied for the newly opened Kings School in Gütersloh and was assigned Windsor. Mr Johnnie Walker (WBS 1959–75) had served in the army in Germany just after the war (he met his wife whilst posted to Hamm). Mr Lewis (WBS 1974–82) had been to Bonn and Cologne on his honeymoon. The longest serving teacher, Mr Peter Kitchen (1958–82), recalled:

*Why had I come to Germany? Well, as a student I had spent, as part of my course, some six months in Hannover on a student exchange and later had served out here in the Education Branch of the Royal Air Force. I had enjoyed both of these experiences. immensely and had found them professionally rewarding too. Therefore, it seemed a good idea to try and spend a little more time in BAOR.*

The lure of “abroad” was appealing:

*my wife saw the advertisement and we thought it would be a great opportunity to get some experience of living abroad.* Mr Chris Fulford (WBS 1964–69)

*It's attractive and the salary is good. I'd like to learn the German language as well. I have an urge to travel and if I had not come here, I would probably gone to Australia or Canada.* Mr Lewis (WBS 1974–

82)

Miss Vera Mallon (WGS 1967–71) was not the only one whose preference was not taken up by the BFES recruitment system:

*I saw an advert in the Times Education Supplement for a post as Housemistress and to teach Domestic Science at PRS Wilhelmshaven – decided that sounded inviting, and that my then role as Senior Mistress in a Secondary School might be useful. At interview in London, was asked if I would like to work in an all-girls’ school. I said no. I preferred mixed schools. The offer of appointment was to Windsor Girls’ School in Hamm – I had never heard of it.*

In his history of BFES Paul Macardle points out that Germany was not always the first choice for applicants for postings in Service Schools; most preferred to go further afield. Mr Hawthorne, (WGS 1974–79) was asked if he applied to a school in Germany:

*No. I originally applied for Hong Kong, but when the letters came through they were for Germany.*

Mr Peter Ellis (WBS 1974–80) replied to an advertisement in the *Times Educational Supplement*. The application form asked for regional preferences: he put down Hong Kong and Cyprus; offered a post at WBS, he accepted at once. Mr Hugh Ritchie recalls his “recruitment” for WGS:

*The schools in Malta closed in July 1978, and I was transferred to Windsor Girls’ School as Head of Chemistry. That is where the vacancy was, so that is where I ended up! No choice!*

One of the more roundabout routes was Mr John Rhodes (WBS 1970–75). He applied to teach classics in Singapore, ended up teaching remedial in Kings, Gütersloh, and then to WBS. Many others had similar roundabout routes before coming to Windsor!

## **Advertising the posts**

Until the early 1960s headteachers had a role in recruiting their own staff. Mr Wylie, as Deputy Director BFES in the early 1960s, standardised the

process. The terms and conditions of service also varied over time (mostly adversely) but we can gain a snapshot from the advertisement placed in the *Times Educational Supplement* in January 1969.

The full page advertisement was placed by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of the Service Children's Education Authority (which brought together all service schools worldwide). The advert announced vacancies for September 1969:

*progressive and enthusiastic qualified men and single women who have had recent teaching experience in the UK are invited to apply for the following posts.*

The emphasis on “*single women*” is in the original; married women clearly need not apply. This was the period when women civil servants and diplomats had to resign when they married or in the case of BFES teachers when they gave birth.

The advertisement listed the available posts in primary and secondary schools. The secondary posts included schools in Cyprus, Malta, Hong Kong, and Singapore as well as BFES day schools (Kings, Cornwall, Edinburgh, and Kent). The WGS posts were:

*Needlework/Cookery,*

*Mathematics (preferably a graduate);*

*Chemistry or Biology (a graduate to teach to A level)*

*General Subjects.*

The WBS posts were:

*Commerce/Economics with Geography (or vice versa, graduate preferred);*

*Chemistry preferably with Physics, Biology not required;*

*General Subjects (RE, Music, Art (pottery especially) and History).*

*Modern Languages (German with French).*

There were two riders to the WBS posts:

*Ability to play the piano an added recommendation.*

*Interest in CCF and Scouts are a particular need in this school.*

It is noteworthy that only one of the eight posts required a degree, with two others “preferable”. The HMIs in 1964 considered that, at WGS, 16 teachers out of 39 with degrees was a “well-qualified staff” and placed a positive emphasis on their varied experience. At WBS, in 1968/69, of the 39 on the full time teaching staff just over half had degrees. The staff listings in *Concordia* and *Ambassador* did not identify those with a teaching qualification from a teacher training college but from interviews it is clear that many teachers had followed a training course. There is no reference in the advertisement to how much prior teaching experience is needed. In the 1950s and early 1960s a minimum of two years was required, although Mr Hern recalls this was overlooked in his case. It was not until 1974 that it was mandatory for new secondary school teachers to have a degree and teacher training qualification.

The advertisement now turned to that important element: salary and “extras”. In the late 1960s there was a shortage of teachers in England. The National Union of Teachers, was involved in intense negotiations with local authorities and government over their salaries; so intense they resulted in a long strike in 1969/70. BFES offered an attractive alternative.

The base salary on offer was the “Burnham scale”; the national salary system for teachers. In 1968 the average salary of men teachers in England was about £1,880 according to the Minister of Education in a debate in the House of Commons. She also said the average had been around £1,244 in 1963. Some teachers, new to the profession and more likely women, were earning less than £1,000. The high rates of inflation in the early 1970s increased the rates considerably. By 1978 a grade 3 (of 5 grades) teacher was earning between £4,200 and £5,958. By 1983 these had increased to £7359 to £10,497. Headteachers’ pay was based on the size of the school. The Windsor schools were band 9 out of 14 and the scale ran from just over £5,000 to £11,544. Good honours degree holders earned a supplement.

Pension rates were safeguarded. The “extras” started with Foreign Service Allowance (which varied on location around the world and family circumstances) and “accommodation is provided rent free.” Return passages

to the UK, including for family, were also free.

The advertisement carried an important note:

*Preference will be given to teachers applying for posts in boarding schools who are willing to undertake extraneous duties. An allowance of £300 a year is paid to staff who voluntarily perform an average of 15 hours a week outside the normal school hours and outside the normal school curriculum.*

All that time teachers devoted to sports, activities, visits and other “extraneous duties” did not go financially unrewarded! It is difficult to find a teacher at the Windsor schools who did not carry out activities beyond the classroom: in the houses, in sports and activities.

There were further additional payments for example, head of department and housemaster. Mr Worrall was instrumental in the mid-1970s in convincing BFES to recognise, financially, the post of Assistant Housemistress/master especially given its additional responsibilities for the high number of day pupils. One sentence reflected the agreement Mr Trevelyan had achieved back in 1946:

*Status: teachers appointed to Service Children's Schools are civilians with the status of commissioned officers in H.M. Forces.*

This enabled the teachers to be members of the Officers Mess in the Kurpark.

Contracts were for three years and renewable. SCS only moved to permanent contracts in 2000.

Other perks came into play once in Germany. Drinks and cigarettes were tax free in the Mess, petrol was also markedly cheaper with the Forces allowance; cars could be bought duty free (one reason why the adverts in the school magazines included car dealers). Compared to teacher's salaries in the UK it was a very generous package.

In March 1978 the defence minister was asked in the House of Commons about the comparative cost (not just the salary) of civilian and military posts in BAOR. He replied:

*The costs of married and single executive officers were respectively £12,101 and £9,892 compared with £12,784 and £13,689 for the*

*equivalent rank of captain. The cost of an average teacher would be similar to that of an executive officer. In comparing these costs, however, it should be borne in mind that conditions of service and entitlement to allowances differ considerably between military and civilian personnel, and the elements which make up each set of totals are therefore not identical.*

Mr Hunt, a teacher at Edinburgh School in early 1970s, gave an interesting comparison:

*His (post) was called a Scale 4. It meant that, at Edinburgh school, I was now on the same pay scale as the heads of the major academic subjects. At last, technical studies was being recognised. The top of the ladder, for us all, was the coveted Scale 5, which was exactly the same salary as a Member of Parliament, at £3,005 a year.*

## **Arrival and Accommodation**

A teacher's arrival at Hamm was, as for pupils, often unforgettable. Many travelled by road or train from other BFES schools in Germany. Two of the early teachers at Windsor School described the standard route of the 1950s. In January 1954 fourteen teachers left London for Hamm. David Benfield recalls how he and Bob Ford:

*met on that wonderful old ferry, the Duke of York, which sailed for many years between Harwich and the Hook of Holland, bringing young "pioneers" of BFES of the British Army of the Rhine. No flying or car ferries in those days! The military train awaited us and a slow journey across Holland and Germany followed.*

Meriel Oversby recalls the same trip, traveling with Rita Colvin:

*It was a wet stormy night; the boat tossing about so much it felt as though we would all be thrown out of our bunks to land in a heap on the cabin floor.*

The Harwich/Hook of Holland ferry route remained standard until the early 1960s.

Mike Capey, the incoming head of history at WBS, with his wife Carole and a young baby, arrived in September 1963 on a Gatwick/Dusseldorf flight. They were met by the bursar who took them to the Feldhaus hotel near WGS. The next day soldiers took them to a house some seven kilometres from WBS. They later moved to a house in Am Huckenholz.

As she was leaving WGS in 1976, Miss Wild recalled her arrival:

*I remember the day I arrived in Hamm, a muggy, grey day in September 1968. Had I done the right thing, fleeing my cosy bedsit in Birmingham? My headmaster had once been the deputy headmaster at Queens School, Rheindahlen (in the days when Kent School was still BMH Hostert) and had fulsomely sung the praises of serving in BFES. So a colleague and I packed our bags, she to the ex-BMH and me to WGS. Now as I gazed at this vast forbidding barracks, I felt it all could have been a ghastly mistake. The feeling was compounded by the attitude of the then headmistress. We had arrived in a minibus from RAF Gütersloh. Feeling rather lost, we persuaded a more audacious member of our party to contact the HM from the guardhouse (a white painted wooden shack at that time). She was of course in the middle of lunch and was not all pleased at being disturbed. We quaked in our shoes.*

Five years after Miss Wild's arrival, Mr Derek Cole, the new head of English at WGS, and his family travelled by Boeing 747 from RAF Brize Norton:

*At RAF Gütersloh there were two reception parties; one was a nice sergeant in a minibus who drove my wife (Chris) and two daughters to Hamm. The other was a teacher, the first staff member from WGS that I met, Sam Tarling, deputy head. We drove off in his luxurious car. This was the first time I had come across that, in the Services, "Head of Household" had a real meaning.*

The following day, the "Head of Household" (always the man in the military structure and culture) came into play again:

*Again, Chris and the girls went off somewhere different, while I received the keys to our quarter (in fact, a nice 4-bedroom house –*



*officers, for the use of) from an enormous Scotsman with legs like tree trunks under his kilt – who introduced me to the mysteries of Mats, Bath, one, and Spoons, Mustard, one, amongst the complete kit needed to live in the house – issued, of course, to the Head of it, even though the wife might reasonably be expected to have a view on crockery, cutlery and the like.*

The “nice 4 bedroomed house “*officers for the use of*” was in a street called Am Huckenholz, close to WGS. The houses, and the flats in the adjacent Fasanstrasse, have their own history. One of the most unpopular actions of the occupying forces was the requisitioning of private houses. Thousands were taken, often at short notice, and many left empty. As the war receded into the near past the continuing requisition of so many private houses became a major problem for British-German relations. In 1947 and 1950 there were demonstrations in Hamm as the British army attempted to requisition more houses when over 1,000 were still living in bunkers. Governments hammered out a solution. New housing would be built, financed by cities, regions, and the West German state as a charge against the occupation funds; when the British no longer required them, they would revert to German ownership.

In 1951/52 the first phase of the Am Huckenholz development was built. It followed the general custom of the new “Operation Union – Build Programme”: in open fields on the outskirts of the city and convenient for Newcastle Barracks. The design, approved by the British authorities, was by German architects, Pieter Poelzig and Willi Palm of Dortmund:

*two-storey, basement construction as a light plastered building with a flat saddle roof and flush-fitting windows turned out to be a constant, which became the characteristic of the British occupiers across all build programmes.*

A second phase came into use later with low rise flats in Fasanenstrasse. The houses (for officers) and flats (for “other ranks”) were used by the living-out staff of the schools and officers from the Hamm Garrison. Padre Bill Fillery recalls his arrival in 1976:

*3 of us spent our first month or so in the Officers’ Mess before*

*accommodation (in the soldiers' quarters) became available and our wives and children joined us. There were only 9 Army Officers in Hamm and most of the Officers' quarters in Am Huckenholz were occupied by WBS married staff so some of us never got there although we did live in very spacious double flats in Fasanstrasse.*

He describes the flat (a "Jumbo flat"):

*There were 3 main front doors in the block which was divided into 4 flats instead of 8. The one at each end only gave access to a single jumbo flat on two floors. The middle main entrance was used by two families who had sideways jumbo flats on one floor each.*

In WGS, where most teachers were single women, there were shared flats in the houses and in the upper floor of the dining block. In WBS there were flats above the dining hall as well as housemaster and deputy housemaster flats in the houses. Miss Angela Forer (WBS 1963–66) recalls sharing the flat above the dining hall:

*In September 1963, a naïve 24 year old, I arrived to teach Geography and English at WBS where I was to share a flat with Toni Leadbitter from Hong Kong and Beryl Jackson from somewhere north of the Watford Gap. Sharing a flat was a completely novel idea to me, as was the visit of the Padre, warning us about "breaking up marriages" and other moral issues regarding females working in a boys' boarding school. What sort of place had I come to? I was soon to find out. There were now three female staff joining about fifty men – a male bastion!*

At WGS single women teachers were not allowed to live offsite until well into the 1970s and then only in pairs. Mrs Elaine Fletcher, arriving, dejected and 12 hours late (foggy conditions) in January 1973 found:

*The guest flat in the mess block was to be my temporary accommodation pending a reshuffle (the original intention had been for me to share a flat with a certain housemistress who absolutely abhorred smoking and I happened to be one of the brigade who indulged in the dirty, disgusting, filthy habit). I did my first six to seven weeks in Marlborough House discovering its characters (and*

*otherwise), and by mid-term I was installed in Block 2 and became absorbed in the Caernarvon set-up.*

An accidental legacy of British occupation of Am Huckenholz became apparent in the mid-2010s when a new occupant was renovating a house and found an English language children's book tucked into sliding door frames.

## **A young teaching staff**

In 1973 when David Cole met his staff in the WGS English department he was surprised that at, 31, he was the oldest. At WBS he would have been only slightly older than the average age at appointment (30). Mr Bartlett also reflected on the younger age of the WGS staffroom, when compared to schools in England. The average age of teachers in 1966 at WBS was 33. They ranged from 23 year old Miss DuBois, the German language assistant, to Father Convey, 51. The school inspectors in 1978 noted the young age of the WGS housemistresses, not seemingly approvingly.

BFES operated a mandatory retirement age of 50 (not applicable to padres). Mr Worrall was aggrieved at his enforced retirement from BFES schools in 1977. Other teachers affected by this rule included Messrs Benyon, Kopcke, Phipps, Haydn Jones, Wheeler, and Kitchen (who was granted a year's extension). As far as I can find out only Miss Willson and Mr Bartlett were affected at WGS but I suspect more were.

## **Staff Mess and "free time"**

Although several teachers, in their interviews in the school magazines, joked "what free time?" there was indeed an active life beyond the classroom, house, activities and sports-fields. The teacher's social club followed military tradition, the "Staff Mess." In 1954 it moved from the dining hall block, to the domestic science rooms and finally, in November, it became the one of the first occupants of the newly restored "bombed block". As *Concordia* noted:

*there they live, far from the world of classrooms and chalk, listening to the gentle pitter patter of girlish feet from the Balmoral floor above.*

When the schools diverged in 1959 each carried on with a Mess. Over the years they organised sporting teams, football, cricket, badminton, hockey. In-house events included dances, cookery lessons, “gramophone recitals” and formal dinners. Membership extended to the British administrative staff as well as teachers. The WBS Mess had its own band from time to time (Messrs Thompson and Dudley being to the fore). At WGS the single teachers often took their lunch in the Mess (it was above the Dining Hall). Mr Tony Fox (WBS 1967–81) revelled in his role as wines member for both the WBS and Officers’ Mess. Holiday tours to German and Italian vineyards increased his love and appreciation of wine:

*All the time I was accumulating knowledge and presenting talks and tasting in the Teachers Mess. The culmination of these activities was my appointment as Wines member of the Officer’s Mess. I loved it and begged the CO to continue long after my spell of duty expired. This is generously allowed me to do and I’m proud of the fact, amongst other purchases, I was responsible for laying down cases of 1963 Vintage Port. Oh, where is it now I wonder?*

Mr Ellis recalls:

*I also organised and captained the Hamm Casuals Rugby Club [a joint Military/Civilian Rugby Team based at Windsor Boys’ School] who used to play against a variety of Minor Unit Teams, but also against some seriously stronger opposition.*

During the 1970s a Hash House Harriers group was formed combining running with a relaxing lunchtime in a bar to recuperate.

There was a fascination, in the Staff Mess notes in *Concordia* at least, with cars: the number, makes and especially over the car rallies organised from time to time, at both schools. The car rallies did not always go as planned. From 1963:

*The outstanding event of the summer term was a car rally cunningly devised by Peter Jackson and Frank Taylor. Unfortunately many of the participants missed the first check point and finding a convenient “Sackgasse,” hopefully milled around in fairground profusion cursing the organisers.*

Mrs Chris Cole remembers being asked by Miss Brown to organise a car rally at WGS:

*Again, without any idea of what I was doing, I took it on, noticing when I left the gates of WGS that the small road on the right, once the major road into town, was named 'Der Alte Weg.' So I started writing: 'Take the Old Way out of the school...' and I went on, noting landmarks and exploring country roads until we got to our designated spot – a distant pub which served good food. I devised clues from points on the route, the answers fitting into a crossword puzzle! It now sounds far too ambitious and I would probably have been hopelessly lost if I were set it. In the end, only Pauline and her partner that evening got everything right – many people were still back at the start looking for an old way! We had agreed a cut-off time, along with the destination address, so we did all end up together and had a great evening!!*

One teacher recalls membership of the officers mess was resented by the military but it was to be a successful civilian/military partnership. One memory:

*However single male staff were accommodated in the Officers Mess, of which they were also Members, as were all male staff. We had excellent Mess dinners at WGS at the beginning and end of every term and various other functions on Burns Night and St. David's Day.*

Tim Girvan remembers the lunches:

*The kids dined in a separate room on a polished wooden table as big as a football pitch. The dad's all played snooker and I remember a giant chess board outside the French windows.*

Curry lunches were popular:

*The Officers' Mess near the Kurpark used to host great curry Sunday lunches, once a month which many of the Hamm garrison <civvies> from both schools, BFES Supplies Section and <Disposals>, used to go to. There were tennis courts too, round the back of the mess.*

Jane Brindley, daughter of Padre Brindley, also recalls them being a big part of Hamm life.

Peter Ellis posed a question, not yet answered:

*By the way, does anyone have the ingredients of the 'Tank Transporter' cocktail? Some of the items were Vodka, fresh Orange Juice, Sekt, Cointreau, + + Mineral Water [? + + it was a 'totally innocuous' cocktail, that made you feel wonderful, but, without your knowing about it, had anaesthetised you from the waist downwards ... as soon as you got off your bar-stool, you collapsed onto the floor.*

The “*Windsor Players*” was the name of the staff’s occasional theatrical group. Composed of staff from both schools, and their wives and sometimes additional support from the garrison staff. Its performances included, in 1962, *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder (which came second in the BAOR Drama competition). In 1968 Mr Barry Cummings, head of art at WGS produced *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith. In the 1970s the Players performed *Hobson’s Choice*. The School Plays often featured teachers, both as cast and in a wide range of backstage roles.

## **Holidays**

Holidays feature strongly in school magazines and interviews. None perhaps as exciting in August 1968 when three WGS teachers, Misses Copeland, Embley, and Austin, found themselves in the Tatras mountains in Czechoslovakia when the Soviets invaded the country. Mr Bartlett (WGS 1961–71), asked as he was leaving, what he would miss said:

*Being able to travel...straightaway being in Europe and being able to go to Copenhagen at half-term.*

The most adventurous of leavers were the four from WGS (Misses Hayter, Beckwith, James, and Luck) who embarked on a round the world experience after they left in 1965.

## **And not forgetting**

Whilst their husbands were teaching, or running activities, teachers' wives engaged in a wide range of activities outside the home. Many were teachers, full or part time although vacancies could not be guaranteed and the unavailability of a teaching role for their partner did lead some to leave early including Padre Cooling For those who were "living in" there were house roles. The primary school depended on teachers' wives for its teachers and support.

With so many single teachers it is not surprising that there were many marriages. Misses Colvin, Barrow and Knowles arrived in the first six months of Windsor School. Within two years all three were married. Miss Barrow married Mr Harold Birtley, moving to what was then Rhodesia. Miss Colvin started a trend which lasted throughout the school's history by marrying a military officer, Lt Roynon-Jones. Miss Knowles married fellow teacher Mr Duffield and they stayed at Windsor for another nine years. The longest stayers at Windsor who married there were undoubtedly the Kitchens, Peter and Margaret Bamfield. They arrived on the same train in 1958; married the following year and stayed until 1982. Many married and left Hamm but not BFES: Mr Lacklison only spent a year at WBS, 1962/63, married and moved to teach at Kent School where he remained for many years.

The house notes in *Ambassador* frequently mention the regret of a teacher leaving on marriage, and wishing her good luck. Some typical examples:

*Wonderful news reaches us of Miss Davies' engagement. All Edinburgh wish her every happiness in the future. (1965)*

*On the staff scene Miss Lovette-Horne has left to get married and we wish her the best in her new role. (1973)*

*Miss Williams is relinquishing her post of housemistress to become Mrs Ransom in August. The best of luck to you both from us all. (1978)*

Mrs Christine Cole recalls:

*Compared to David's hardworking female colleagues burdened down with the extracurricular activities of a boarding school, my life as a wife was easy really, looking after the family, coping with everyday routines like shopping, cooking, carrying out the monthly Nuclear*

*safety drill. A fearful warning hoot would sound out over our part of town to signal commencement of the drill (all laid down in Station Orders whereupon I had to hurry down to the cellar and check that I had the designated provisions all ready in case the Russians attacked us.*

For some pupils, babysitting for the young children of teachers provided a useful source of extra pocket money (and the occasional beer).

### **And the language assistants**

The schools' shared the two language assistants (who stayed for one year), one French and one German. Pamela Ross remembers:

*Jean-Philippe Blin, our French assistant, was a very good pianist – he put on a performance and I did the lighting. I think he went on to form a jazz trio when he left WGS.*

### **A fascination: co-educational or single sex schools?**

One topic fascinated the interviewers of teachers in the school magazines: a preference for co-educational or single sex schooling? As might be expected views were firm, on both sides of the argument. Their own experience, either as pupils or as teachers, clearly influenced their views. Mr Ball pointed out that he had gone to a boys boarding school (Giggleswick, a public school):

*I see nothing at all wrong with my education. I see no reason to alter the system and I'm perfectly happy to work in a boys school and see the boys segregated in this way. I know current trends are against it, but I don't see any reason why it should be considered unnatural for the boys to work on their own, particularly going through the difficult stage of adolescence. What I don't like here is the fact that the boys and girls are allowed to mix at weekends and other times. I would prefer to see the schools well separated.*

Mr Hawthorne (WGS) had a different experience:

*It was entirely new for me to move to an "all-girls" school. My past*



*experience had been in mixed schools. Well, I enjoy this school very much, I have done since I came here but I think it's a healthier atmosphere for girls and boys to be taught together; it prepares them for the outside world.*

Miss MacNeice (WGS) was clear: *I am much more in favour of mixed schools.*

Mr Boyd (WGS) was asked, in 1973, who he preferred teaching, as well as his preference for single sex or mixed schools:

*Teaching the seniors is more rewarding academically. I find I can approach the subject with much more detail because with the juniors I must use a completely different approach. They are a great bunch of lads in the A level group and they balance out the lesson well. The girls seem more sensible, and as the lads are setting the pace, the girls work harder. It is difficult to get a class discussion going with the girls as they do seem to clam up although they always have plenty to say when they shouldn't be talking.*

Asked if he would move on to another girls school:

*I would never do it again! I am convinced of the need for mixed schools. Why? Although girls seem to be better disciplined than boys, they are very shy and reserved. This presents lack of class participation and I am left with a feeling of dissatisfaction after some of the lessons. I have taught in a boy's school and the atmosphere was less formal than in a girl's school. I am very much in favour of mixed education.*

*I am very pleased that I live out, the atmosphere of the school is very intense because of the narrow confines. There is a very nice attitude between teachers and students, especially between the seniors and staff. People have to get on in this society especially in places like this.*

Mr Alec Chater (WBS 1968–1973):

*Another contrast with the co-educational schools at which he has*

*taught is that he finds the boys here have a greater respect for the girls but there is less competitiveness in the classroom.*

Mr Walker, WBS, said in 1966 in a discussion with senior boys and Mr Capey (the boys were themselves split on the question):

*I was in Windsor School for one term – when it was mixed. Looking back, I preferred it; this was the natural thing: the boys learn better manners and are tidier. Also girls often look at problems in lessons in a different way from that of boys and so broaden the discussion.*

It was up to Mr Ken Thompson (WBS 1964–82) to give perhaps the definitive view, when asked what changes he would make if he became headmaster:

*I think I would make it a mixed school – if only to save the lads all that walking.*

## **The joys of teaching**

Mr Boyd was not alone in stating his preferences for teaching senior pupils. The 27-year old Mr Thompson when asked:

*I like teaching all sections, but confess I prefer the seniors, I feel more in touch with them; their interests and mine are closer. After all, and don't tell anyone – I'm not that much older than they are and it's not all that long since I was in their position.*

Mr Patrick Birdsall (WBS 1968–70), producer of *Pirates of Penzance* and *Androcles and the Lion*, recalls:

*There was a lot to be said for those days when a young inexperienced English teacher was free to choose his own topics of interest to share with his pupils, before the dreaded National Curriculum came along with its fixed syllabus to take over most of our creative decision making.*

Another route to professional engagement was followed by Mr David Chedgey, (Head of Art at WGS):

*I was put in charge of GCSE's for Army schools in NW Europe and Singapore, and had to attend steering committees in Southampton where I was made Chairman of the Southern Regional Examinations Board.*

## **And the pupils' views?**

As with all schools many teachers made an enormous impact on their pupils. Many recall standing up when a teacher entered the classroom (and sometimes school prefects). Teachers stood on a small wooden platform at the front of class. Phrases such as “an inspirational teacher;” “a joy to listen to”; “she gave me a lifelong interest in literature/history”; “her enthusiasm for Biology led me into nursing”, “he helped me develop my interest in theatre” “I became a teacher because of him” feature frequently when pupils recall their favourite teacher. Here are some comments from the 1950s to the 1980s (of course there are many more teachers who could be mentioned!):

*He gave me my love of Geography; he was a fantastic raconteur with his stories of his time on steam locomotives.*

*I do remember singing on the Concordia recording. Mr Purvis inspired a love of singing that has continued throughout my life.*

*\*\* gave me a fear of maths that has lasted until now.*

*Geoff Hern was my favourite teacher. A real character with a great sense of humour who encouraged you to learn through taking the initiative. Great teacher and motivator.*

*He could be a sod if he didn't like you,*

*Mr Fox. Had the most awesome classroom. Got me hung up on medieval history and brass rubbing.*

*Miss Broderick. She was lovely. English literature. Gave me my love of Thomas Hardy.*

*He ("Pop" Chater) gave me a love of Geography that endures, a fantastic character with so many brilliant stories of his life and times.*

*Miss Blackman was not only a great teacher but she incorporated ethics and values into her lessons.*

At the same time other pupils remember those teachers with an ability with a slipper, a fierce anti-smoking disciplinarian, those adept at throwing blackboard erasers, even chisels, twisting sideburns and other memories of the harsher side of boarding school life. Certainly many of the methods used by teachers are no longer tolerated in schools. A clash between pupil and teacher in the closed confines of a boarding school resonated far more than in a day school.

It was not all serious; several pupils recalled this incident from the 1950s:

*We pinched his car (Mr Loft Simpson, music) and moved it. A group of daring boys moved his car from the front of Balmoral House and carried to the middle of the front field as a prank – no idea where we got the energy from but it was done. None of the staff were pleased.*

At WGS there was a formal “letting the hair” down moment every year, the staff entertainment on the school’s birthday. Teachers put on a revue one year and the following year prefects and senior girls did the same, reciprocally mocking the others foibles and mannerisms.

## **Sad Times**

There were sad times as well. Miss Joyce Stewart, 34, died just a few months after arriving in 1956; a memorial service was held in St Boniface attended by her parents. Father Michael Convey, the Roman Catholic padre to both WGS and WBS for four years, died suddenly in 1969. Miss Evelyn Ramsay, housemistress WGS in 1977. Mr Victor Bailey, head of remedial department at WBS, died aged 47, in early 1978.

## **And then**

For most of the teachers the Windsor School was just one episode in their teaching career. In some years only a few left; in others, (for example, 1965 and 1975 at WBS) many left). They moved on to other BFES schools (Miss Jeens and Mr Tovey from Windsor School joined Mr Aspinall in Cyprus in

1959, Miss Herbert and Miss Sherwin both moved from WGS to Senior Mistress posts at Queens in 1963 and 1967 respectively; Miss Mallon and Mr Ken Thompson to PRS Rinteln, Mr Greer to Havel in Berlin, Major Boyes to Gloucester School, Mr Joliffe and Mr Lees to Alsager College; to other Service Children's schools worldwide or back to the UK. Mr Thomas, the first Senior Master,(1953–58) went as headmaster of Windermere Grammar School and became the headmaster of the first purpose built comprehensive school when it merged with other schools (Lakes School) in 1965. It is noteworthy to read just how many left Hamm on a promotion: to become a housemaster, department head, deputy or headteachers.

Some continued with their international careers (in the 1950s Miss McCormick to Nigeria and Miss Dunn to Spain. Mr Hern to Denmark; Miss Blackburn to a headmistress post in Peru). Australia was an attractive destination, Mr and Mrs Loft Simpson and Mr John Rhodes for example. We started the chapter with Mr Robertson; he recorded his impression of returning to the UK:

*Adjusting to life in London, after Hamm, was no easy matter. Whereas after six years on the site of WBS, I had come to feel that living, working and playing in the same spot with the same set of people, was oppressive, coming to the metropolis was like entering a vacuum. I know practically no-one here.*

*Economically, too, I soon came to feel that I had come down after six years in a fool's paradise. For six years I had been cushioned from the economic realities of life of a British teacher. Accommodation, petrol, car tax, the cost of entertaining and travel forced attention upon themselves in a way they had never done in Germany and I soon came to see why some of my colleagues had travelled so little.*

## **The Last Word**

To end this chapter four comments which seem to sum up the teaching experience of Windsor. The first is by Mr Chris Fulford (WBS 1964–69) writing his farewell. The second is by Mr Leighton, the last headmaster of the school. The third comes from one of the earliest teachers Miss Freda Butterworth (Windsor School 1954–59); short but eloquent:

*The spontaneous easy going friendliness of this place is something all of us leaving will miss and remember. The boarding school camaraderie exaggerated by our foreign isolation gives Windsor Boys' School a unique atmosphere.*

*It would take many pages to enumerate in detail all that the departing staff and their wives and families have contributed to this community during their time here. Let it suffice to say that many of them have been here a long time and, because of the demands a boarding community invariably makes, they have undertaken responsibilities and commitments which are over and above what one would expect, and all of them have entered fully into the challenge of meeting the needs of an expatriate community of boys and girls.*

*I think Windsor School, Hamm, was a life changing force for all of us.*

And finally, Padre Kinrade, in the 1978 *Ambassador*, (of doubtful authenticity he notes):

*Two teachers who formerly worked at WGS met in the other world. "What a wonderful place Heaven is after that school we taught in" said one. My friend, replied the other, "this is not Heaven."*

## Behind the scenes (mostly)

When most people think of the staff of a boarding school it's the teachers, or perhaps the matrons, who spring to mind. Perhaps surprisingly they are in a minority. The HMIs in their WGS 1964 report noted the headmistress and 39 teaching staff and continued:

*The school has an establishment of administrative, domestic, and labouring staff totalling 133, of whom 6 are UK based.*

An organogram of the school puts the headmistress/master on the top with two on the next level. Academic matters are led by the deputy or the senior mistress/master above the heads of departments. The other senior post is the Bursar, managing the rest of the school. (Mr Wylie noted there was no place for pupils in the organogram chart on his wall).

The 1956 *Concordia* listed fifty administrative staff. Seventeen are matrons under Mrs Steventon as Head Matron: we will return to them in the next chapter. Six are associated with the Sick Bay (chapter 18). The remaining 27 cover the range of administrative, domestic, and labouring staff:

<i>Bursar</i>	<i>Mr FJ Parker MBE</i>
<i>Quartermaster</i>	<i>Mr HC Sunderland</i>
<i>Supervisor Stores</i>	<i>Mr GH Steventon</i>
<i>Supervisor Catering</i>	<i>Mr F Hughes</i>
<i>Supervisor Rations</i>	<i>Mr H White</i>
<i>School Secretary/HMs PA</i>	<i>Miss O Moore</i>
<i>Private Accounts</i>	<i>Mrs S Sunderland</i>
<i>PA's Assistant</i>	<i>Frau Rehme</i>
<i>Bursar's Assistant</i>	<i>Frau Schwartz</i>
<i>Bursar's Clerk</i>	<i>Frau Wilden</i>
<i>Public Accounts</i>	<i>Frl Dohle</i>
<i>Civil Labour Office Supervisor</i>	<i>Herr Faulhaber</i>
<i>Civil Labour Office, Assistant</i>	<i>Herr Kleine</i>
<i>Supervisor Transport</i>	<i>Mr Theaker</i>
<i>M.T. Clerk</i>	<i>Herr Ermlich</i>
<i>Accommodation Stores Clerk</i>	<i>Herr Wolter</i>
<i>Accommodation Stores Storekeeper</i>	<i>Herr Lesoch</i>
<i>Technical Stores Clerk</i>	<i>Herr Sperling</i>
<i>Technical Stores Storekeeper</i>	<i>Frl Graeve</i>
<i>School Caretaker</i>	<i>Herr Tobies</i>
<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Frau Longin</i>
<i>Post Orderly</i>	<i>Herr Schluter</i>
<i>Typist</i>	<i>Frl Meyer</i>
<i>Typist</i>	<i>Frau Krause</i>
<i>Labourer Chargehand</i>	<i>Herr Jaerig</i>
<i>Head Cook</i>	<i>Herr Cordes</i>
<i>School Shop</i>	<i>Mrs Theaker</i>

Herr Sperling and the Theakers worked for the school until it closed in 1983. Along with several of the matrons their employment was longer than any teacher: a real commitment. The Steventons and Theakers were married before they came to the school. The Sunderlands were the first of the “Windsor marriages” when Miss S Jones married Mr Sunderland in early 1955; “*Truly an administrative romance*” as *Concordia* recorded. Missing from the list as he was not an employee was Herr Knips who ran the shoe repair shop in the gym.

Bursars and deputy bursars were civil servants and their careers moved them around the world. They tended to stay at the schools for 3–4 years. Mr Fulton (*WBS 1970s*) had been a civil servant all his working life (excluding war service). Asked how he got the job of Bursar, and whether there was any training, he replied:



*I had no choice in my job in Germany, except of course I could have turned it down. I was however misled as I was told it was a sinecure with nothing to do and all the school holidays, well!!*

*...I've never been a Bursar before. The Executive Class in the Civil Service has always been a "jack of all trades" but this is gradually changing in the highly technical world of today.*

And his initial thoughts, perhaps unsurprisingly for someone new to schools let alone boarding schools: *I like the atmosphere of the school although to my mind it's a bit monastic.* He was not the only one to find the closeness of the school somewhat overpowering. Mr Hawthorne was glad that he could live off site rather than onsite at WGS.

Mr Bollen (*WGS 1977–81*) summed up the role of the bursar, with, I suspect, a bit of a tongue in his cheek as he listed the "*mundane matters*":

*Anything that takes place in the school except the education and care of the children.*

*For anyone used to the normal Service or Civil Service life, things are very different in a school. The teaching staff are rightly and understandably concerned with the education of the children, and are not concerned with the such mundane matters as transport, accounts, telephones, domestic staff (including recruitment, terminations, discipline, leave etc), stores, maintenance, works services, heating, fuel supplies etc.*

Mr Fulton had expressed this a slightly different way but with similar sentiments:

*I think on the whole teachers are too introvert and sheltered in their jobs and don't appear to take much notice of what's going on in the rest of the world. I think they should get away from teaching ways and do a few years in industry to see what life is all about.*

Perhaps it may have surprised him just how diverse the background of many teachers was before they started teaching.

We came across Mr Johns when he had overseen the management of the

WBS flood in December 1960. He set out the work of the administrative staff in a humorous survey of what happens after pupils have left at the end of term and teachers are off on their holidays. Although this account is from Windsor School in 1958 the tasks remained the same in the two schools:

*The Private Accounts clerk is balancing her books, assembling the chits for haircuts, shoe repairs and other miscellaneous services, prior to making out and despatching bills to 500-odd parents. The Public Accounts clerk is preparing and despatching official bills to units.*

*The Bursar's Clerk is preparing movement orders and rail warrants to bring the children back to school. She cannot complete the task because the Headmaster's Secretary is not able to produce the lists of leavers and newcomers for she is too busy preparing the "Letter to Parents" and making copies of reports.*

*The Librarian is painstakingly checking all books and trying to chase the missing ones, which will have to be recovered and paid for.*

*In the silent kitchens, the Catering Supervisor is making sure that everything is spotless and under cover for the usual visit by the Hygiene Team who will soon arrive with their fearsome apparatus.*

*The Quartermaster will soon be collecting all blankets, linen and other items for dry-cleaning. He must ensure that the Engineers commence their major tasks such as relaying of steam mains, clearance of drains, re-painting of buildings and he must shortly prepare accommodation for the newly appointed Primary School Teachers (all BFES), which will assemble, as it does every holiday.*

*Meanwhile the Stores Supervisor is steadily working around each bare classroom noting damage to chairs, desks and other equipment. Repairs must be arranged and demands be prepared for books, pencils, books, stationery, ink, chalk and all the other educational aids.*

*The Supervisor, who also controls transport, is sending busses, cars, and lorries to the workshops for essential maintenance.*

*Out on the deserted playing fields, the sports staff are clearing or erecting netball, tennis, soccer, rugby, hockey or cricket gear according to season marking out pitches or running tracks, examining all sports gear. Re-seeding of grass areas is being arranged.*

*The school livestock, abandoned by the Young Farmers Club, has to be fed, and with no swill coming from the kitchens, corn and other food must be purchased.*

He missed one important role: preparing, along with the headmaster, for the school finance committee with representatives from BFES, BAOR and RAF.

The high turnover of pupils, certainly made the work of the administrative staff (and teachers doing the timetables/allocating to houses etc) hard work. One department missing from the overview was the Civil Labour section: dealing with employment matters of the German staff who were subject to German labour laws and employment legislation.

Mr O'Neill, the WBS bursar, in an article in *Concordia* in 1965, concentrated on two logistical events every boarder will remember:

*For the bursar and administrative staff, assembly and dispersal days present themselves somewhat differently and the problems are manifold and complex.*

His categorisation of boys (and probably girls at WGS) will bring back memories:

*Those who definitely want to go and to this end assemble in the Assembly Hall early enough to be inextricably mixed with the party before their own.*

*Those who simply go and are piled uncomplainingly or otherwise, later upon layer in to the Stadtwerke buses.*

*Those who, seemingly don't wish to go and are found after frantic phone calls to their Housemaster, having a last reefer with their pals in another house,*

*Those who don't know where they live, a species mostly found among the newcomers and younger boys.*

He turned his attention to the teachers acting as escorts:

*Can Mr Grade who has never been known to remember to pick up a piece of paper once he has set it down somewhere, be entrusted with a railway warrant authorising 49 boys and 52 girls to travel from Hamm to Twitterheim changing at Unterstein and Oberschloss – especially when his German is limited to the word “Isenbeck”?*

A vivid example of the volume of administration was given by Mr Hodgson in 1967:

*I am led to believe that the allowance of file paper is around 25,000 sheets per annum, which is about 50 sheets per boy. This excludes the fact that this is normally used only by sixth form boys of whom we have around 80. Foolscap paper for our duplicating machine runs about 200,000 sheets a year and is used for the day to day notices of administration. That’s about 325 sheets per boy per annum or ten sheets a week which is a fair supply of paper aeroplane material by anyone’s’ standards.*

“Keeping the show on the road” was a task frequently ascribed to the headmasters secretary. Mr Hodgson again:

*Sheila McLennan was personal assistant to the headmaster for three years and as such was at the hub of the organisation. She carried out her duties with aplomb, efficiency and charm. Many an obtuse word or Latin phrase we have endeavoured to decipher together penned in the delicate hand of ‘his highness himself.’*

The ‘highness’ being Mr Wylie.

## **The shop at WBS**

Mrs Theaker ran the school shop at WBS. In 1968 Mick Cross interviewed her for *Concordia*:

*MC: The Post Office is part of the shop; do you find it difficult to run?*

*Mrs T: As you see, I have a small corner allocated for the post. Now*

*the mail for a school of 600 can be quite a lot, and when the magazines, newspapers etc come in with them, it's a bit cramped.*

*MC: Do you work overtime?*

*Mrs T: I get my salary for working 8 ½ hrs a day. Sometimes I do an extra quarter of hour for the lads which I don't put in the book but since the sweets have gone, I don't get so many happy faces. The older boys use the shop now for tinned foods, milk for their coffee and biscuits to go with it.*

The shop was going through a tough time as house shops came into operation (sweets now sold there) and cheques introduced instead of cash. Padre Fielding also complained about the cheques (another Wylie reform) as collections at the chapel fell away.

## **Dining hall and catering**

BFES made sure they met the standard. We saw in Part A what the HMIs and Lambert thought of the catering. Pupils at the schools recall, mostly positively, the food they had. In recent years many look back at menus and are astounded at just how much was on offer. The catering at the schools was indeed exceptional. Perhaps more so given the financial allowance (based on Army rations) to the catering managers was not generous. Here is a typical daily menu from 17 December 1968 at WBS:

### ***Breakfast 0710 and 0735***

*Cereals, Fresh Milk*

*Fried eggs, grilled bacon*

*Bubble and squeak*

*Tea, coffee, bread, margarine, marmalade*

### ***Break 1100***

*Cheese straws, coffee*

### ***Lunch 1230 and 1255***

*Braised beef and vegetables or*

*Meat and kidney pie*

*Roast and mashed potatoes, cauliflower  
Baked apple, custard or  
Bakewell tart, custard Fresh milk*

***Tea 1600***

*Victoria sponge,  
Tea, bread, butter, jam*

***Supper 1900 and 1930***

*Sliced ham, Sliced cheese  
Chopped pork, Lyonnais potatoes. Mashed swede  
Pineapple and cream,  
Raspberry blancmange, tea*

***House***

*Cheese scones  
Ovaltine*

A similar menu in 1977 shows few changes (it was a Friday so fried fish and fish cakes were the choices for the main lunch course). A key and probably welcome change was that breakfast was at 0900hrs. The sheer scale of the catering function can be spelt out: three full meals a day for between an average of 500 pupils every day for a typical 12 week term: 126,000 meals a term. Add break and tea snacks, packed lunches for Duke of Edinburgh Award and rambling excursions; sports teams, birthday cakes, Christmas dinners and house birthday parties. It was not surprising that the catering department was the largest of all support departments. A photograph of the catering staff in the 1950s shows over 50 staff from the catering manager, cooks to serving staff.

The catering managers tended to stay for some time. In 1968 Mr Robinson left, after 6 years, to go to the Army School of Catering in Aldershot (not as a trainee!). Mr Stirk, who had started at KAS Plön in 1952, moved to WGS and stayed until 1971. Mr Dunn took over at WGS to its close in 1981. One pupil recalls:

*He inspired me to go into catering after doing my work experience within the Windsor kitchen part of our City and Guilds course. I have fond memories of the wonderful food he created giving us so much*

*choice and variety especially when we had our house parties & birthday cakes... he always managed to provide for us to celebrate in style.*

Each house had its own room in the dining halls. The nature of the service changed over the years in both schools. In the earlier periods:

*You always had a prefect at the head of your table (and your napkin) and at end of each meal it would be someone's turn to collect all the empty plates, and the knives and forks had to be arranged so that the knives all went under the forks. (WGS)*

*When I was there, food was brought to the table, but we took our empty dishes back to a table on the side. (WGS 60s)*

*Can still hear the applause and feel the embarrassment when everyone stood up and cheered as you walked in after winning some sporting event. (WBS 1960s)*

*As usual Mr Stirk was most obliging and provided us with a magnificent buffet which was appreciated by everyone. (WGS 1966)*

*We re-assembled to the cacophony of the cafeteria system. The sudden influx of boys had meant that, among other things, that there was insufficient room for everyone to be seated in the Dining Halls at once. Soon however, we grew to accept the system and welcomed the choice of food made available: it was hotter too! (Concordia WBS December 1966)*

The cafeteria system explains the dual times in the menu. It was not universally popular but needed as school numbers were so high. Tony Ferro, in *Concordia* in 1968, wrote a review of the system, or rather its weak points. Boys in the first shift took the best of the choices on offer; cereals were only available every other day, the rugby team, and school choir (a strange coupling!), “*always received a simple but well-cooked tasty dish.*” Such was the criticism that Mr Wylie penned a reply pointing out the article was not accurate and contained spelling and grammatical errors. His reply prompted replies criticising him for missing the main points.

Changes came to WGS in the 1970s:

*So it would have been him (Mr Dunn) that introduced the different choices we had, originally it was just everyone had the same but then he introduced where if you wanted something and chips you went to one section, if you wanted a full cooked dinner there was another section, and if you wanted Salad or sandwiches another section. (WGS 78/79)*

And the favourite dishes, what have pupils remembered years later? Top of the list is Farmers breakfast (Bauernfrühstück but often called Gaffers). A dessert called, unappetisingly, “Windsor Spit” (*a pink instant whip or angel delight, whipped up light and fluffy*). Other memories:

*By and large I really enjoyed the 4 meals we got at WGS, breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner, if ever there was a place to comfort eat it was WGS!!!!*

*my tastebuds still hanker after the French toast at breakfast. (WGS)*

Naturally the meals did not always appeal to everyone:

*By the time I was there in 1977–79 the food was terrible, although I have fond memories of the deep fried jam sandwich in batter with custard. (WBS).*

*Drink was Jungle Juice, either fluorescent orange or radioactive green.*

It was not just the standard meals; Mr Hern recalls the catering manager helping:

*In the 70s the 5-a-side developed into a regular Friday evening inter-house unofficial tournament with trophies provided at first by Gordon Rowell (usually an felt-pen-inscribed cracked Dining Hall teacup).*

## **The Plön connexion**

Several administrative staff started their BFES days at KAS Plön. At WBS Frank Taylor who in his 11 years at KAS had moved from stores clerk to



quartermaster went to Hamm in 1959 in the same role. He stayed for 11 more years, retiring in 1970; 22 years in BFES. His wife was the head domestic matron. He had gone to Spain as a 17 year old in the 1930s and witnessed the civil war and wrote about it in *Concordia*.

At WGS Mr Coleman was the stores clerk, as he had been at KAS. Herr Poppendich, affectionately known as “Pop” was the Librarian for many years, as he had been at KAS for four years. The WBS library was looked after by a German woman who was known to have worked with Admiral Dönitz in the war. She presumably had moved from KAS to Hamm. In the mid-1970s Simon Brindley recalls

*we found two sets of first edition large folio signed books by William Makepeace Thackeray and George Bernard Shaw. Never taken out. Mint condition. We handed them in to the German librarian lady.*

## **Contrasting backgrounds**

We saw Herr Karl Wolter returning to the school after his imprisonment there after the war. Most if not all of the early staff would have had wartime experiences. Just two examples. Herr Robert Ostrowski and Mr J Brochwicz had contrasting experiences. The former, in the Wehrmacht, fought in France in 1940 and in Russia in 1942 where he lost his toes in his left foot in the sub-zero temperatures. Herr Ostrowski started at Windsor School almost from the start. He had a range of jobs, from kitchen help to staff mess waiter to storekeeper and finally groundsman. He was indifferent to both rugby (*seemed a dangerous game*) and cricket:

*...he still remembers the days when the School was mixed. However he thinks the present segregation system best, as he believes these conditions to be the most favourable for academic work.*

Mr Brochwicz, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Polish Lancers in 1939, was also in France in 1940 with a British Army Armoured Brigade. In 1942 he joined the Parachute regiment. He was wounded and taken prisoner at Arnhem. The WGS visits to Arnhem had stopped by the time he arrived. After POW release in 1945 he resumed his army career until joining WBS as quartermaster in 1970, staying until the school closed in 1983. He, like Mr

Taylor before him, was the business manager of *Concordia* and *Ambassador*, gathering the advertising and paying the bills.

## **Sad News**

There was sad news from time to time. In 1962 George Steventon died. He had arrived at the school in October 1953, a month before it opened, and had been responsible for furnishing and supplies. As an ex RSM, he was a key assistant in the early years of the CCF. His wife, Leni, was the Domestic Matron and stayed on until 1975 as matron in Caernarvon.

Herr Horst Borkner, laboratory assistant died suddenly over Christmas holidays 1967/68. He had been at the school over 12 years and only a few months previously had been one of the 14 German staff of the schools to have received a Long Service Certificate from the British ambassador.

## **Good news**

Mr Allan was the transport manager at WBS for many years and well known for taking sports teams to their matches. In 1948 he was one of many British soldiers who married a German woman, Elfriede Schlieper. The law at the time meant she lost her German citizenship; she became British. Mr Allan died in 1975. When Brexit loomed the Hamm authorities contacted the British living in Hamm, including Mrs Allan. She regained her German nationality as the local newspaper reported in 2017:

*Although she had always lived in Hamm, the native of Heessen was naturalized on Thursday at the **age of 94**. “You are the oldest citizen we have ever naturalized,” said Wolfgang Müller from the Office for Social Integration at the small celebration in the Citizens’ Office for Migration and Integration in Heessen.*

## Unsung heroines

Who else could these be but the matrons? For many, the matron was the front line of pastoral care. Several stayed for many years, longer than all but the longest serving teachers and far longer than most house mistresses/masters or head teachers. They collectively carried the pastoral ethos of the school. In return many pupils formed close relationships with matrons which lasted long after they had left. A few quotes give a flavour of their role and influence:

*A very special mention should go to matron Sill. She is faithful, my favourite, and very very loyal and we all love you very much. Do you love dear St James after 25 years? (Matron Sill had previously been at KAS Plön)*

*my thanks also to Matron Sura for putting up with 60 girls the year round for 9 years. She does a great job and we'll all miss her when she goes.*

*I would like to remember our house matron Frau Schroeder who has put an immense amount of work into the house for us all. She is always willing and I am sure that without her we would not be as well cared for.*

*House matrons played a big part in our young life's and were like substitute mothers for us lads from 1st to 3rd years.*

*I remember Matron Schroeder who gave me support and made me feel protected when things were at their worst – she was a wonderful lady and I still miss her.*

In 1961 a group of junior and intermediate boys were interviewed about life at the new WBS. Some of their answers appear, shall we say, modified but this appears heartfelt:

*Q: Is the part played by the matron an important one while you are juniors?*

*A: Yes, definitely. She is like another mother and does a lot for you. Some are very fair and are prepared to talk for a long time with the juniors. When they treat you so well and then ask you to do something you feel bound to do it as a duty.*

*Would you like to be a matron?* was the challenge set by the two matrons of Sandringham (boys) house in 1958:

*I am sure you would! Just look at them in the morning, sun-bathing, going “down town,” going to the hairdresser, in short – enjoying themselves.*

*Matron has to get up at the break of daylight and has to be in the corridor when the rising-bell goes. Then the fun begins with a cheerful “Good morning. Rise and Shine.” But they neither rise nor shine. Slowly after matron’s second friendly request to get up, some of them manage to crawl out of their haven. At 7.25am even the last straggler will wind his way to the washroom after some more unfriendly invitations by matron. One would think that after the daily routine has been drilled in week by week it would be done automatically. But no, they love to hear matron calling every morning “Don’t forget your mats, strip your beds, fold your blankets, get in for roll call!”*

And no mention yet of the most important and well-remembered lesson: *how to do hospital corners*. One of the matrons, Frau Witte, had been at the school for several years as a reserve matron filling in gaps in the rota. The other had only been at the school a few months so it is perhaps excusable her name was misspelt as Miss Schidlow; she was Miss Ilse Schidlof. Twenty years previously, just before Christmas 1938, as FrL Schidlof, she had boarded a train in Vienna, with her older brother Hans (later Peter), bound for England. They were *kindertransport* children. It was not safe to be

Jewish in Austria after the Anschluss with Germany in early 1938. Their journey was arranged by Mrs Truus Wijsmuller-Meijer (a Dutch Christian) who faced down Adolf Eichmann, the head of the SS in Vienna, and brought out 600 Jewish children on one train. The Schidlofs would not see their parents again; they were murdered in the Holocaust in 1942. The *kindertransport* children were not initially allowed to work in England but the outbreak of war changed that and girls were allowed to work as domestic servants. The young Ilse started working as a domestic servant in a succession of houses. In 1943 she started work in Tooting Bec Hospital, a psychiatric hospital, as a trainee nurse. After the war she took posts as a matron in Dorchester Grammar School and then Eltham College. In 1949 she acquired British citizenship. By 1957 the College “restructured” and she was out of work. A social worker alerted her to jobs in British schools in Germany. Miss Schidlof was apprehensive. Her concerns were set aside by her brother. He had been interned on the Isle of Man during the war. On release he and two fellow internees and a friend formed the Amadeus Quartet which became world famous. The Quartet played in Germany and Peter was able to reassure a hesitant Ilse that the quartet had been well received. Reassured she applied and in December 1957, Mrs Steventon, the head matron, offered her a post, starting in January 1958.

The offer letter gives an insight to the formal arrangements:

*A furnished room and use of bath are provided at DM18 per month, with heating and lighting free. As matrons eat with the children, food is provided free of charge.*

Miss Schidlof lived in this room in Sandringham House until the schools closed in 1983:

*Officially the hours of work are 45 hrs per week with 18 days leave per annum. However matrons do in fact work as follows, overtime hours being carried forward to enable them to have the same holidays as the pupils.*

*Duties commence at 0700hrs to 0930hrs. Matrons are then free until 1230hrs. From 1230hrs until 2200 hrs are on either stand-by duties or full duties. One day per week is given as rest day when matrons may*

*leave the school.*

A very demanding schedule with the responsibility being:

*For the cleanliness and behaviour of approximately 50 children between the ages of 11 and 17 years.*

Miss Schidlof accepted the offer: it had an important consideration. It was very well paid compared to her matron posts in England. It was paid at an expatriate rate. The starting salary was DM 370 per month, DM 4,440 a year. This compared to the DM 1,640 (equivalent) she was paid at Eltham College; an immediate rise of DM 2,800. With the monthly salary scale rising to DM 495 the move to Germany became even more attractive.

Miss Schidlof joined a team of ten matrons, and two supplementaries. Eight were German and there was one other British matron. Each was assigned to a boys or girls house (at this time each house was only on one floor). This pattern of one matron per floor continued until the schools closed.

The regular formal duties, of waking pupils up (there was a range of methods in the houses over the years: bells, triangles, shouts and waking the duty house official first), overseeing washing and off to breakfast then to school (after inspecting the dorms and those beds with hospital corners):

The lunchtime downtime was rarely spent at leisure. Often a visit to Hamm city centre:

*When matron leaves the school to go down town, the shopping list reads as follows: watches to be mended, birthday presents for Mum and Dad, stockings, records, pens by the dozen, birdseed and worms for the fish.*

Another task for the matrons was ensuring the dorms were tidy, Tim Feast recalls:

*The Sandringham Matrons awarded a term prize for the best kept dorm, I had to re-make a bed 100 times for apple pieing someone's bed and remember someone being carried out in their bed and left in the corridor while they were asleep! We got new beds and mattresses around summer '66, the old ones were pretty shot and I found you could use the broken wire springs as keys in the dorm furniture locks,*

*not so popular when I had difficulty re-opening one in dorm 2 for one of the guys, an anxious moment!*

The story of the matron's day continued through lunch, the rest period until the evening:

*No need to describe matron's duty in the evening. Everybody knows what a problem it is to get one boy to bed, to say nothing of 55 or 65. A boy who would like to stay in the swimming pool all day, if permitted, will use all the tricks he can think of to miss the water if it is connected with soap.*

At weekends for many years the matrons accompanied small groups of junior pupils outside the school, to the Kurpark, sometimes to Hamm. The groups of girls with their red berets (redtops) are still remembered.

Another view of the matron's life comes from Jean Barnes-Harvey, who as Mrs Coffin applied to become the Senior Matron at WGS, starting in January 1976 replacing Jackie Cunliffe. As Senior Matron she oversaw the matrons, the cleaners and the sewing "maids." The latter worked at keeping the textiles (curtains etc) and the girl's uniforms and other clothing in good repair. The cleaners are often overlooked. Not so in 1962 when a WBS house report takes rather a strong line:

*About a month after school assembled trouble reared its ugly head in the form of a cleaner's strike. Nobody in the house ever did discover the grouse, but whatever its cause, it left the house cleanerless for a fortnight or so.*

The cleaners did get a rare recognition in the 1977 Hillsborough notes:

*A final thanks go to the cleaners, who must think their job is endless, for their devotion to duty in clearing up after us.*

Amongst the matrons in the late 1970s were several with long service (over 15 years) including Frau Eva Giesefeld, Frau Annette Bielefeld and Fraulein Gertrude Sill had worked since WGS opened, Frau Irmgard Schroeder, Fraulein Lotte Poëtsch and Frau Gisela Hessenbruch (all over 15 years). Mrs Barnes-Harvey recalls:

*Frau Sura, Fraulein Sill, Frau Schroeder and Frau Hessenbruch each had the use of a mini flat (living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom) on the floor of their house for the days when they were on duty. At other times they went to their other homes. The mini flats were the same as those occupied by the house-mistresses.*

*The Matrons worked closely with the house-mistresses and became almost surrogate mothers to the girls, most of whom had never left home before arriving at WGS. The only problem was that they were not used to English ways and did try to instil German values etc. which could be difficult. In general they did not approve of posters on walls or English pop music. They also had their own ideas of the way the girls should live in the houses and there was occasional friction with the housemistresses. I was often the mediator.*

The 1978 HMI report on WGS commented:

*Finding appropriate applicants for posts as matron is becomingly increasingly difficult, and the whole question of staffing the houses may in the future present difficulties which can only be solved by radical changes in the arrangements.*

The recruitment problems was solved through a radical change: the merger reduced the number of matrons.

Miss Schidlof and Frau Giesfeld both continued working at the combined school until its close in 1983. The former's contract ran until March 1984 and she spent the period after the closure helping its rundown.

Perhaps the best way to summarise the matron's role is to end this section with quotes from alumni and heads of houses in the school magazines:

*By no means the least popular member of the house is Fraulein Petzold, our matron who keeps a motherly eye on us and is ever willing to enter into our interests, games and pastimes, several of which she has inaugurated and fostered. (She also trained the house choir).*

*Matron Giesefeld and I were in touch for many years, until her death a couple of years ago. She even came to my wedding.*



*And who could forget our very own super matron Giesefeld. She was like a second mum to us all, bless her.*

*Frau Dilla was German and Frau De Silva was Indian, very small petite and when I first arrived in the Monkey dorm she was very kind helped all the new boys missing home.*

*Miss Pozzi was lovely too she always used to come to our dorm when she didn't have any cigs and ask to borrow some off us and always paid them back too.*

*matron was nice at times used to cook us waffles at her flat but get on the wrong side of her my god you knew about it!*

*She was firm but she was fair, but we were still scared off her, we usually behaved.*

*Matron Hessenbruch gave me a bundle full of memories that I will cherish always. Found her firm but never harsh.*

(Frau Hessenbruch was also remembered for her poodles)

*The atmosphere and appearance of the house greatly changed under the care of Matron Little. The common room was transformed and the corridors made much more attractive. Thank you, matron.*

*We would like to thank matron for making our smart netball skirts.*

*my thanks also to Matron Sura for putting up with 60 girls the year round for 9 years. She does a great job and we'll all miss her when she goes.*

*I remember matron used to take us 1st years out for a walk on Saturdays and in summer time she would take us to her house to pick fruit from her trees. (Full uniform with berets and white gloves, no eating in public).*

Many pupils kept in touch with their matrons, and vice versa, after they left. A quote from the biography of Matron Schidlof:

*To this day former residents of Sandringham House call her*

*occasionally and the telephone table in her flat is a reminder of “her boys”.*

## The House

Royston Lambert wrote in his pioneering 1968 study *“The Hothouse Society”*:

*Most people think of “school.” Most boarders do not: they think of “house.”*

We see this loyalty in the 1965 *Concordia* when pupils in Caernarvon House at WBS were asked whether they were attached to their house:

*Perhaps we won't talk about our house much when we are in it, but outside we will defend it to the last gasp.*

Years later the posts on the schools' Facebook groups are full of good natured rivalry between the houses. Virtually everyone seems to remember their house and number, C108, StJ67, B42, S75 (evens for boys, odd for girls, the numbers were recycled after the pupil left). The school magazines nearly always carried “House Reports” detailing sporting prowess, or not, house parties, house visits, staff comings and goings. Comments about house members, occasionally scurrilous, pop up as well as heartfelt thanks to the housemistress/master, duty staff and matrons. Back to Lambert:

*To many children in boarding schools the house is the focus of their lives, the small primary unit on which their immediate loyalties, hatreds, activities and friendships are based. To the junior boy it is virtually his entire world; to the senior boy, whose friendships and activities may range more widely over the school, it is still his home, his base, the place where he learns to wield power and to organise, to manage and care for others, to come into hour by hour contact with the staff (housemaster, tutor, matron), to live in a close, indeed*

*sometimes packed and tense community.*

That final clause certainly resonated in a WGS house in the early 1970s:

*Frayed tempers occurred towards the end of term, but we were saved by the Christmas holidays, during which many of us recuperated from the trials of the term.*

## **Community**

Houses were not just places to sleep. They were the foundation of a sense of community and hierarchy. Rituals stood out. The annual House Birthday party. The very irregular house photo. House ties and badges at WBS in the 1970s (4DM but 9DM for the sixth formers). A (short-lived) Caernarvon house magazine. Inter-house competition became a way of life and not only on the sporting fields. How much money did each house make at the school fete? Formal competitions at both schools: Kensington Cup at WGS and the WBS Cock House competition. WGS ran a top class drama competitions for several years. You name it, there was an inter-house competition.

It was not only the formal events which created a sense of community. Malc McGookin remembers a ploy by Mr Ken Thompson in Edinburgh House:

*Does anyone remember the end of year house meeting where Thommo produced a slide show of the photos he had taken throughout the year? Just about every Edinburgh housemate was featured. It produced a great sense of camaraderie and belonging.*

The one area where inter-house rivalry, and prestige, seems not to have been prominent was in the academic sphere. Very rarely after the 1950s do house reports mention the examination results of pupils, or their subsequent move to further or higher education and employment. These were school, not house, achievements.

## **Homes away from home**

Houses became a home after home. For some the camaraderie and friendships of the house and school provided a welcome escape or diversion from their home life. It is a sensitive matter but pupils have mentioned on

social media that they had a difficult home life and boarding provided a very welcome experience. As early as 1955, Mr Blenkinsop MP had identified these concerns with this astute comment:

*When we consider the whole problem of children's education abroad, we have to think not purely of the provision that we make in the schools, but we must think also of the sometimes very unhappy conditions in the homes which are generated partly by the continual movement of serving men all over the world.*

His concern was well-founded as these girls wrote:

*I think boarding school was an "escape" for quite a few people – even for me, I love my parents dearly, but they were a bit "restricting", and at school I got the opportunity to develop my own interests etc.*

*It was so liberating. My parents so old fashioned concentrated on my younger brother. Because girls would marry and have a family... WGS fed my independence and promoted a wide scope of learning... I am eternally grateful.*

*I didn't like leaving my dad but was very relieved to get away from my step mother! Being a boarder meant weeks of relief from her kind of discipline!*

*one good thing about Windsor was the freedom from our home boundaries. I for one enjoyed a freedom I wouldn't have had at home.*

## **The Dorms**

Dorm furniture was spartan. Army issue metal beds, wardrobes, bedside lockers and cupboards in the corridors. Occupancy ranged up to 10 for newcomers in the first year (often called the "monkey dorm") to double or even single dorms (some with en-suite bathroom) for senior pupils and heads of houses. Bunk beds, more beds to a dorm, conversion of day rooms and annexes, were all called upon to cater for the high numbers during the peak period of the mid-1960s and early 1970s. In only three years from 1964 Caernarvon House at WBS grew from around 70 to over 90 boys. The school

inspectors in 1978 were not overly pleased with the dorms at WGS; the comments could equally apply to WBS:

*The only space personal to a pupil is her bed, and the bedrooms appear to be the places prefer to use in their free time. It is good to see that pupils take advantage of the freedom they are given to ornament the walls to their taste, but the impression still produced is that many of the rooms are barely furnished, with few rugs to be seen, and are arranged in a style more institutional than homely.*

“Ornament the walls” is a lovely turn of phrase for plastering the walls with photographs and posters of pop and sporting idols (and pin-ups) of the time. Such a practice was frowned upon in the 1950s and often by matrons, but times change as a pupil at WGS in the 1970s recalls:

*we had the metal bedsteads when I first arrived but they were exchanged for the cheap divans plus bright orange counterpanes – good seventies colour!*

As numbers declined towards closure far more space was available and some effort was made to move to a more “bed-sitter” arrangement as suggested by the inspectors.

The washrooms were spartan. Nigel Frith’s memory from the 1950s could have applied at any time:

*The dreary row of washbasins you stuck one’s face in one a frosty morning before shivering off to breakfast with wet hair.*

## **The House staff**

Housemistress/masters lived in flats in the house. In an article in the *Times Educational Supplement* in 2020, Michael Spens, an experienced boarding school housemaster and headmaster, said of the housemaster role:

*It is potentially the most rewarding and fulfilling role that a boarding school can offer,” he says. “Equally, when performed at its best, it is also unquestionably one of the most challenging and committing.”*

*Housemistresses and housemasters have the privilege and opportunity*

*to be guide and mentor during the turbulent years of adolescence,” explains Spens. “Houseparents can exert a very significant influence on the development of the character traits and values of their charges.*

“Houseparents”? at WGS “*mutti*” and “*house daddy*” crop up frequently in the house notes.

Around 100 teachers became housemistresses or masters. The administrative head of a house. They oversaw discipline, the social life of the house and most importantly, the pastoral care of the pupils. It was an all-consuming job. Appointment to the post was both by internal and external recruitment. Many remained in the post for several years. For some it was most of their time at the schools; Messrs Kitchen and Jones were housemasters for over 20 years, Miss Waldron for over 10 years at WGS. At WBS, Hillsborough had only two housemasters in 20 years, Edinburgh only three.

Turbulence was not only a pupil issue. In 1964 five of the seven housemistresses at WGS left. By 1978 the WGS school inspectors were clearly concerned about the lack of experience:

*only two of the seven have been in post for more than three years and only three of them were aged more than 28 when appointed.*

Just over a decade earlier, in 1966, the average age of housemasters at WBS was 34, with ages ranging from 28 to 39. Miss Vera Mallon, recruited from the UK, recalls:

*I had not realised just how different my role would be compared with my previous pastoral responsibility for the girls in my last school. I found it a much closer, warmer relationship; got to know the girls better; found it very rewarding when their worries were overcome, problems coped with or solved – homesickness or absence of parents at Visiting Weekend often caused distress.*

*I was fortunate in that my predecessor, Miss Hancock, had left me what her house staff called ‘Hank’s Bible’ – an exercise book full of instructions about the daily and weekly routine in the house and the requirements for special events. It made life easier in the first few weeks.*

The staff inspectors in 1978 pointed out a major difference between the schools:

*WGS: The fact that the posts of housemistresses are not open to married women provides a further restriction on appointments to these key pastoral posts.*

*WBS: Housemasters appreciate the responsibility and independence which they enjoy. They are all married but there is no defined role for their wives. Each works out a role appropriate to her circumstances and so contributes to the boys enjoyment of school life.*

Mr Leighton considered that housemaster's wives were not essential to the welfare of a boarding house, but they

*...can make a valuable contribution on the social side. They can be especially helpful with young and nervous new pupils and, at the opposite end of the house, in helping to organise and perhaps provide the venue for social events to which senior boys have invited their girl-friends. Fortunate is the housemaster who has a wife willing to accept such a role.*

Mr Peter Kitchen was the longest serving housemaster. On leaving he was asked "What's it been like running a house?":

*Well, it's just like looking after a large family, so when in the mid-sixties, we in BFES experienced the bulge and our house numbers shot up to 115 for one term – 95 was the more usual number then, and now with falling rolls, 65 pupils per house gives us all a good deal more "social room" and breathing space*

The "family" analogy occurs frequently. Pupils in 1965 were asked whether the duty staff in any way took the place of parents:

*The Juniors felt they did, in some respects. But as one fourth former remarked "No parent has 90 children."*

An example of the pastoral role, and that of the housemasters' wife, comes from some WBS pupils:



*I remember being invited to tea in his apartment with all the other newbies and being made to feel very welcome by Mr and Mrs Kitchen, for a shy, young 12 year old away from home for the 1st time it was a nice moment.*

*I can remember Mick Donovan's wonderful wife, Lorraine – every Balmoral boy on his birthday got a cake or a fruit flan.*

At WGS the housemistress was joined by up to four other teachers who lived in shared flats in the house. Single women teachers were not allowed to live off site until the mid-1970s. At WBS there was usually one additional staff member and his family living in the house. They were supported by three to five duty staff living off-site and the matrons. Mr Hugh Ritchie recalls:

*As a male in WGS, my duties included gate duty at weekends, showing the film on a Saturday evening and prep duty once a week. I never did duty in a boarding house.*

Miss Angela Forer recalls, how as a 23 year old in 1963, she became one of the first female teachers at WBS:

*lots of male teachers – some frowned on a woman working at boys' school and as for doing duty in Balmoral...highly immoral it was considered by narrow minds of the time. I was allowed to be on duty until 20.00 as after that a man had to take over from me as duty staff.*

The arrival, in 1978, of Mr Arnold (described in the house notes as *a perfect gentleman*) as the first male member of the duty staff in Edinburgh House at WGS prompted some changes:

*His first duty was met with mixed feelings as everyone was having to dig out their dressing gowns and having to remember to put them on, before nipping down the corridor in their baby doll nighties!*

One drawback of the housemistress/master role was that the Burnham salary scales did not recognise the post for pension purposes. Many housemasters, in particular, moved on to similar posts at day schools in the UK, which were pensionable.

It is no surprise to learn that pupil's memories of their house mistress/master vary. Some were found to be strict and unbending, lacking empathy. Others are fondly remembered for their positive influence. The same person could appear in both lists; even the most popular house staff annoyed, to put it mildly, some of their charges.

## **Bells, bells, routine, routine, and routine**

Jane Brindley sums up the routine:

*Every minute of every day was accounted for by meals, school, activities, prep – there never seemed to be time to simply sit and read or think. Bells ruled our lives – slow bells, fast bells – telling us to get up, go for meals, have a rest.*

Someone once calculated that there were over 140 bells in a day. Revenge of sorts came when two girls, on leaving WGS as it closed down, took the house triangle with them and deposited it in the North Sea. Or from the 1950s:

*My dorm stuffed the rising bell one morning with socks and the whole house of Caernarvon slept in!*

House rules, and routines, were not written down, but everyone knew them. Newcomers were soon made aware of them, sometimes deliberately tricked into transgressing them.

The daily timetable started in the houses with the wake-up call, a bell, a triangle, an abrupt command from a matron or the duty house official. The morning ritual stayed the same, washing, making beds (everyone recalls the hospital corners and matrons stripping the bed if not made properly), breakfast and the first roll call of the day. (Everyone still here?):

*I can't even guess how many times I took roll call in the day room. In my first year (1964) there the boys had to answer "Sir" to their names. They abolished that practice after a year or two. Dave Naylor WBS*

*In the dorms you had your bed with the 'biscuit' mattress, a shared wardrobe and a locker and we were allowed a poster over our bed and*

*I think mine was David Cassidy. Roll call was 7.00 I think then we would go to the communal bathrooms for washes before breakfast. Bath times were written up on the door. 1968 WGS*

Then off to school for assembly and lessons. Returning to the house during school hours was banned (except sometimes for senior pupils). Books for all the morning lessons had to be taken. Lessons over, it was a return to the house before lunch and then back to the house for the obligatory 30 minutes so called “quiet period” laying on your bed. Post arrives just in time. More bells, afternoon school starts:

*On Sundays we would all go to the common room in the attic to write letters to home and also receive post.*

*We would collect pocket money....*

After school (a term with many connotations but clearly separating the academic world from the social and pastoral), off to afternoon tea and then back to houses and off to activities, or sports and games. Then back to houses for some “spare time”, for games in the house, chatting, watching TV, snooker or table football, washing clothes not risked to the weekly laundry. Time to collect pocket money from the house mistress/master or duty teacher. More bells and the second roll call (everyone still here?) and off to dinner. “Lights Out” mark the end of the day. House officials and duty staff patrol the corridors.

## **Breaking the rules**

The rules, together with the routines, were remarkably consistent over the years. No smoking, no running in the corridors, no-talking after lights out. A look at the penalties book of WBS Marlborough in 1978 gives us a glimpse of the transgressions, names withheld out of compassion:

*Talking in prep*

*Talking in detention*

*Talking in chapel (misspelt as chapele talking)*

*Continuing talking after lights out*

*Fighting after lights out*

*Scrounging around*  
*Being cheeky*  
*Swearing, cheeky*  
*Missing roll call*  
*Late for roll call*  
*Cleaning shoes in dorm*  
*Riots (4 pupils)*  
*Running to meals*  
*Playing with ball in house*  
*Disobeying what a prefect said*

Some more transgressions:

*The whole of the dorm were in trouble when we tried to make bunk beds by placing one bed on top of the other (1956)*

*Washing my hair – not on the night that was timetabled for me!!!*

The list now reads as petty, open to abuse by house officials, almost calculated to trip every pupil up. Missing from the list are smoking and illicit visits overnight to the opposite school (a school level punishment rather than house). Keeping discipline in a closed community of 60–100 people or up to 600 in the school, requires control measures!

Teachers took the main oversight role. Housemasters and duty staff set the standards to be followed. At times with changes in personal, restrictions were relaxed (relatively speaking), at other times stricter. The house officials bore the brunt of detailed supervision.

One of the value characteristics of boarding schools is their intention to instil leadership and the associated acceptance of that hierarchy. In schools with an overwhelming majority of children from military families the idea of rank and hierarchy was not a new concept. The schools offered a considerable range of leadership opportunities. Sports and games had their captains, at age, house, and school levels. Many activities introduced ranks or levels: the CCF and Guides/Scouts in particular. In the houses the starting level were the dorm captains. Moving up the scale came the house monitors or assistants and then house prefects, leading to the deputy and head of house. The pyramid progressively became narrower. Some of the house officials

were further promoted to school monitor and prefect and deputy and head of school. The number of house and school officials varied but there were more as the years went by. Photographs from the 1950s show 8–10 school officials. By the 1960s there were over 20 at each school. School prefects in both schools had more freedom, to leave the school, to visit the NAAFI, to go to the garrison cinema. House official numbers also varied, on the house, on the availability of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils, on the policy of the housemistress/master.

The head of house had its perks. Julian Gatt remembers:

*I was head of house in Hillsborough in 1968 and I remember having a nice size room to myself with an adjoining bathroom with a bath to myself. I thought I had landed a cushy number; the privacy was great and for the first time since going to school I was able to study properly uninterrupted anytime night or day. It was a much more spacious flat than the one in the photo by Andy, and included a desk and chair and a sink in the bedroom as well as the bathroom. It was just great, best year of my school life.*

A head of house in the 1970s:

*As head of house: Looking back I wonder that one kid could look after 80 other kids with practically no adult supervision at all. I practically never saw a teacher and with my house monitors had to wake everyone up, get them ready for school and then take care of them when they got back...at 16!!*

Bill Gent, head boy in 68/69, looked back on his time and wondered on the impact of being head boy on his future life:

*It gave me a certain self-knowledge and confidence, I suppose. And I had genuinely been proud to be selected. But the truth is that the school could have made so much more of the role and thereby, perhaps, have allowed the post-holder to gain so much more from the experience. But these were days long before the concept of ‘pupil voice’ became fashionable.*

His comment on “pupil voice” not being fashionable chimes with the

surprised reaction of Mr Wylie (who appointed Bill) when asked about seeking the views of 6<sup>th</sup> formers before introducing the Sixth Form house.

A view from the 1970s comes from Barry Lewis made some notes about his time as head boy:

*I don't remember any handover notes and certainly don't remember leaving any myself. I think by time you arrived at the beginning of the year all appointments for the year had been made. Again don't remember any team meetings but we must somehow have organised rotas such as covering church on a Sunday.*

*Got a free newspaper but limited choice. Because I already got to read the Financial Times through economics A level, either had Telegraph or Guardian. Geezer (Butler, the previous head Boy) might have had special pass (to WGS) I did not have one.*

*I did get the best room in Caernarvon single dorm with on suite. Suspect it would normally be reserved for head of house. Generally had more free movement as sort of part of house but also above it. Special role would be giving head boy speech at end of year which I can still remember giving. What I do remember as head boy was how the system seemed to run itself. The experience of the team showed through but also all the boys knew what was expected of them, they might be disobedient but they knew*

## **Punishments**

The penalties for misdemeanours followed a standard pattern, lines and detentions; the latter often timed to coincide with the Saturday film show as an added twist. Other standard punishments included “bumping the floor,” “standing against the wall”. The bunk bed episode led as Margaret Fawcett recalls: *we had to scrub the whole of the corridor.* Other recollections:

*I had to re-make my bed 100 times for apple-pieing someone else's.*

*I remember having to copy verses from the bible as we were caught jumping of the top of the wardrobes onto our beds!!*

*running up and down stone staircases in bare feet for talking after lights out*

*Made to run around the hockey pitch after lights out if we were caught talking*

*Made to wear CCF uniform and boots for a week*

*having to stand out facing the wall in the corridors and also the worst punishment being given a sheet of newspaper and having to cross out all the vowels*

A feature, more so at WGS than WBS, was a public shaming: in front of the house or at times the school. It was not conformed to disciplinary transgressions but also conduct and indeed grade marks. At times such a visible penalty rebounded as the culprits gained a few hours of public notoriety and “fame” or acute embarrassment.

*we used to come upstairs and create mayhem in the middle of the night. Midnight feasts and end of term pillow fights and getting caught. I remember end of one term a few of us got caught and blow me at the beginning of the next term we were dragged out the front of everyone and given a half term loss of privileges. (WGS early 1960s)*

Corporal punishment (with a slipper or cane) was gradually reduced at WBS especially after the arrival of Mr Wylie. Some teachers gained notoriety for their use of the slipper. Other physical punishments are remembered: twisting sideburns or a knuckle on the head. A recent debate on Facebook on the value of corporal punishment brought out a mixed response from those where were caned or slipped. Many, especially those who had become parents themselves, were retrospectively appalled and would not allow that to happen to their children. Others, the majority, accepted that the punishment was right at the time and caused them no lasting harm, physical or psychological. Corporal punishment was banned in English schools in 1987, after the Windsor Schools closed.

More serious punishments included suspensions and expulsions for the over 16s as they were older than the school leaving age:

*my sister got EXPELLED in 1973 for having a boy sitting on her windowsill and having a crafty fag!!*

Suspensions, for a few weeks or the remainder of the term were more frequent for serial transgressors. The schools were under Army Regulations. This meant letters of wrong doing could be sent to the pupils' parents and her/his camp CO. This especially covered suspensions and expulsions and serious disciplinary matters.

### **And finally**

One of the most surprising comments I've found in the school magazines comes in *Ambassador* in 1972:

*Nothing much of consequence happened this Spring term.*

I find that very unlikely.



## Turbulence

Children of military fathers led a peripatetic life. In the 1950s and 1960s this was truly global as the UK maintained bases in Africa, Middle East and Asia as well as in Europe. Even as the military withdrew from “East of Suez” postings within the UK and overseas were frequent.

The average schoolchild in the UK changed schools once: from one primary school to one secondary. Relatively few made another move from secondary modern to grammar at 16. By the early 1980s there may have been two moves: primary to middle to secondary. Mobility within the country was far less than it has become in recent years.

Children of the military were an exception (along with the diplomatic service). A career in the military was, and still is, based on short postings and attachments. In 1965 the Ministry of Defence calculated children of officers changed schools on average 4.1 times; children of other ranks moved slightly more frequently, 4.4 times. The average length of stay in a school was around two years. At the Windsor schools it was closer to just five terms.

This “turbulence,” as it was called, was evident right from the start with little subsequent change. We saw the comments of Nigel Nicholson MP in 1955 with his famous quip that the school was an “*educational marshalling yard*.” His comment was accepted by the editor of *Concordia* who noted that it:

*contained more than a grain of truth in so far as too many children arriving at the school may be uprooted in less than a year or even a term when their fathers receive a posting.*

Nicholson said that “turbulence” was the term used by the RAF;

“disturbance” was the army term. (BFES had used in 1953, the terms “shifting school population” or “constantly moving”.) The most optimistic expectation the editor could put forward was that there were many children at the school who hoped to spend 2 or 3 years at the school. He noted that the turnover was especially high in the younger age groups, many who had already been to primary schools in Germany and came to Hamm in the final year of their fathers’ posting.

In 1960, Miss Willson remarked, in the first year of WGS:

*During this term we have numbered over 570 girls – the youngest is 11½, the oldest is 19. Some have already been to 10 or more schools – some have had most of their education in BFES schools – one will only have been with us for one month before she moves on to yet another school.*

The following year she reported to parents at Speech Day highlighting the administrative headaches turbulence caused:

*During this year 349 new girls have joined the school. This means almost two-thirds of the girls with us today have not been in the school for more than a year. We have numbered over 570 girls this term. Four times during the year we have to make a new timetable to meet the needs of our changing population and each time this has meant re-arranging 30 lessons a week for each of 27 forms taught by 40 members of staff, no small task for those concerned.*

A few years later, at WGS, over 40% of the pupils changed in one year:

*96 new girls joined the school in September 1963, and 135 during the course of the year, making a total of 231.*

And in the following year the staff inspectors noted:

*Many of the girls have been to a number of schools before coming here; for example a sixth former has been in eleven schools, including six secondary schools and a girl in the fourth form has attended as many as 16.*

Summer 1966 saw a major change at WBS. Mr Hodgson, WBS deputy

headmaster:

*According to my calculations, of the 480 boys at present in school, only 200 will return in September*

That September saw a roll of 550 boys (with a further 60 at half term, this was the start of the surge in numbers) with 160 new pupils in the first year. In the final *Concordia*, in 1983:

*Some pupils have had a new school for each year of their lives.*

These were the formal, impersonal, organisational views of pupil mobility. Let's turn to the memories of pupils themselves. For many the number of schools they attended is almost a badge of pride, certainly of difference. It was not just the number of schools, but their worldwide location: within Germany and UK but also Cyprus, Aden, Singapore, Hong Kong, Gibraltar, India, Kenya, Egypt, Malta, Bahrain, Libya, France, Belgium, Austria, Italy. Global nomads indeed.

These comments, selected from many, illustrate many of the common themes. Not just of the number and locations of schools but the positives and negatives:

*Good side is the places we travelled to anywhere in the world exotic or tropical or not, and the people we met and friends we made, plus we could visit beautiful country's that were close and easy to travel to. Down side was. Upping sticks every few years. Losing friends every few years. Stop starting school every few years. Losing touch and not growing up with family members. (WBS)*

*That army lifestyle I think also made me resilient, able to cope with change and gave me a love of travel and other cultures... how lucky we all were! WGS)*

*I went to 5 military schools and 3 civilian ones. (WBS)*

*7 schools in less than FOUR YEARS! (WGS)*

*I had 13 schools before WGS as a first year.*

*WGS was the longest I had ever lived in one place – 5 years. (WGS)*

*... a lot of us moved mid-term to another school to miss out on a subject & start going over something you had already covered at your previous school! (WBS)*

*I had 13 schools and the two years at Hamm saved my education. (WGS)*

*11 schools and a rainbow of memories most civvie kids can't comprehend. (WGS)*

*it was a very positive experience that I can adapt quickly to new situations, that I make friends quickly, that the schools were excellent and far, far better than those in civvie street. (WBS)*

*Many would say that there are positives and negatives from our situation, however for me the positives far outweigh the other! I had 4 primary schools in 3 countries and 3 secondary schools each of them overseas. I also had a 5 month gap in education between postings. (WBS)*

*Although I loved my time at WBS and cherish the memories. It did not help me academically. I went as a 1st year, left at the end of 2nd year back to blighty. Then attended 3 different schools up to leaving at sixteen. My so called options or syllabus if you like changed at every move. (WBS)*

*Only left because dad was posted and as usual with the army everyone we knew well left at the same time there was no one 'in country' to act as sponsor so I could stay. Would "deffo" have finished A levels and played a lot more rugby.*

*same thing happened to me in 75. Ended up missing out on completing my A levels!*

*I moved from Wales to Windsor Girl's School in Hamm a month before my exams – had to take the English Board Exams when I had studied the Welsh Board! Lots of stuff in the paper I hadn't even studied.*

Postings included leaving Germany and returning. Colin McEwen and

Malcolm Brunsdon were not the only pupils who went to WBS, left and returned several years later. As for me? Six primary schools and one secondary, all in the UK, followed by three years at WBS.

Perhaps the most remarkable comment on global movement was this from the mid-1960s report on a trip of senior pupils (16–18) to Stratford-upon-Avon:

*For many of us it was the first visit to England.*

These anecdotes introduce most of the issues associated with turbulence the effect on pupils, both academically and personally. We will look later at how the schools, in the words of a WBS headmaster (probably Mr Wylie in the mid-1960s), tried to “*Obviate the deleterious effects of turbulence*”.

Before going further we need to recognise that some pupils spent their entire secondary school life, whether from 11 to 16 or 11 to 18, at Windsor. Keith Buckley and Michael Barnacoat were the first, in 1961, to spend the whole seven years at Hamm. Elizabeth Wright, WGS Head Girl in 1962, speaking at Speech Day, pointed out her record of seven years at the school. Long stayers continued to appear, always only a few each year. *Ambassador* 1971 had a focus on Su Turner, the only girl in her seventh year at the school. David Jones, Virginia and Lindsay Kitchen, children of long serving WBS housemasters managed to spend their entire school career, from primary to secondary, at Hamm.

There have been many surveys and reports seeking to identify any special characteristics of “turbulence”. Most run up against a major hurdle: it is practically impossible to isolate turbulence from many other factors affecting a child’s education or development. Age, gender, family circumstances, accommodation movements and moving as part of a regiment or as an individual posting are just some of the factors to consider.

In 1965 Major Ritchie of the Research Wing of the Directorate of Army Education undertook a review of “*The Effects of School Changes on Service Children*”. His report summarised two recent research projects. One, a MA thesis by Mr Newell, used the Army Grammar School in Singapore for its source material and the other, by Major Williams of the Institute of Army Education, used BFES schools. Mr Newell found, (albeit from a small sample) that it could be inferred there was a positive

relationship between the degree of turbulence and depression of examination performance. Such a possible negative finding was immediately challenged by Major Ritchie whose strongest objection came:

*“there may be some significance in the average GCE “O” level pass rate in Service schools being above the national figure even though there is a tendency for their better pupils to be creamed off to UK boarding schools”.*

Major William’s project focussed on primary school children aged 11 who took various tests such as the Moray House and NFER. His findings were that there was no adverse correlation between attainment levels in English, Arithmetic or IQ and the number of schools attended (or number of teachers). His secondary findings were to prove more controversial. He researched personality and behavioural characteristics. He found that IQ varied depending on the rank of the father; officers to NCOs to Corporals and below. He claimed that “aggressiveness traits” were to be found more in the junior ranks’ children than in the more senior. The 1960s were a time when research based on class and IQ tests were in vogue. Most findings, if not all, have been rejected in subsequent years. In summary Major Ritchie made some pertinent comments which have resonated with pupil’s own recollections:

*Major William’s studies do tend to support the consensus of teacher opinion that instability of home and school may have its effect on other aspects of the child’s development other its academic attainment. Thus constant uprooting develops a kind of insulation against close friendships and attempts to satisfy the need for affection and support from other children.*

Ritchie did not feel that boarding schooling reduced these social effects of turbulence.

We need to turn to Australia and USA for more understanding of the effects of turbulence on military children. An Australian study on Australian armed services, referring to a 1981 study:

*found no significant negative impacts on measures of academic and social achievement for the children of Defence Force families, despite*

*high levels of mobility. This could be due to the highly structured and supported relocations of Defence Force families*

And an US study, published in 1987, referred to research in 1966 which looked at US military movements:

*it is usually easier for people to accept change and new experiences if such changes are frequent in their lives. Perhaps because of the chronic mobility associated with the military way of life, families have become relatively immune to these disruptions. And, as indicated above, similarities in living conditions from base to base and the presence of like others further tend to reduce stresses. To the extent that families strongly identify with this way of life, assimilation into a new community will occur faster. For children of military families, there was some evidence that the frequent mover is likely to take part in more activities and organizations than the less frequent mover. And participation in such activities is positively related to school achievement. This finding and others indicating no detrimental effects of repeated mobility on the military child contrast with results of studies indicating moving-related difficulties for non-military children.*

Although it did not specifically look at boarding schools the comments on participation in activities would surely be recognisable to those at the Windsor schools where activities were a key part of school life. This positive conclusion came with a sting in the tail:

*However, the curriculum of military base schools is fairly standard from one base to another, so that changing schools doesn't involve as significant curriculum changes as it does in non-military schools.*

Here was a crucial difference with British service schools. The curriculum was different within BFES, within Army schools worldwide and different again to schools in the UK (noting that Scotland and Northern Ireland followed different paths to England and Wales). The national curriculum with its four Key Stages did not come into play in England until 1986, three years after the Hamm schools closed.

We have seen how Mr Gysin outlined the problems of moving schools using

different curricula, from French rather than German, the “new” maths compared traditional approaches, geography instead of history and totally different books for English Literature. He pointed out there were attempts in BFES in the late 1970s to reduce the differences.

In 1955 Mr Nicolson had, in the House of Commons, already suggested a common course to alleviate the problems of turbulence. He was quickly shouted down in *Concordia*. These were the times when the teacher’s right to choose what was taught (up to the externally imposed examination syllabuses) was firm (and in England policed by the National Union of Teachers). Mr Pat Birdsall remembers his two years at WBS (1968–70) with affection as it was a period when he could teach what he wanted.

This pedagogical freedom worked, to a degree, if pupils stayed in the same system, which of course most pupils did in the UK. It was not helpful to those who moved frequently. So how did the schools “*Obviate the deleterious effects of turbulence*”?

The headmaster of KAS, Mr Wallis-Hosken, wrote in 1956 a long overview of the secondary boarding schools in BFES in *Red Dragon* and explained the school’s role:

*The next essential, having placed the child at a level in keeping with its age, aptitude and ability, is to give it the opportunity of full development against a stable and secure background. This latter is of the utmost importance. Relatively few of the children in the Secondary Boarding Schools have previously enjoyed a settled educational background for any considerable period of time. Many in fact have attended 10 or 12 or an even greater number of different schools in various parts of the world. In such cases the imparting of knowledge is not always the first immediate concern, but rather the inculcating and development of a sense of confidence in the approach to school work. Once this has been achieved, assimilation will follow, and progress will result.*

The main formal policy to alleviate turbulence effects centred on smaller class sizes and a higher teacher to pupil ratio than in the UK. In the late 1960s WGS had a mentoring system where senior girls assisted newcomers. Linda Dawson is still in contact with her mentor in the late 1960s, Rebecca



Thompson.

One area which cropped up frequently was the problem of passing information about a pupil's attainment to their next school. BFES annual reports record projects seeking to improve the situation. But none really worked. Pupils arrived at a new school in the UK and at Windsor, with limited information about them and their academic levels.

Returning to the UK posed special problems. In some places where there was a strong military presence the local education authority made special arrangements (e.g. in Wiltshire and around Colchester). But not all were so well disposed. Returners arrived in-term, at short notice, they left early and often abruptly, they made planning difficult. Some pupils recorded problems:

*There were a lot of army kids and we were treated like second class citizens, had thinner exercise books, not allowed our own hymn book, no school ruler etc, all in case we left suddenly.*

*I passed the 11 + but the local Grammar school in Worcester wouldn't allocate me a place, after all what was the point of an Army child having it when they might leave at any moment?*

Wiltshire with its large army bases and many schools was particularly affected; its rate of turnover was:

*Usually excessive and transfer rates three, four or five times the normal rate could be expected.*

The county education authorities made special steps to manage. Teachers were redeployed to balance over and under supply in schools. It increased its youth centre activities and careers service. In 1966 its application for additional funding from government was turned down.

Turbulence didn't go away. In 2006 the House of Commons Defence Committee investigated Service Children's Education. Turbulence, now called by a softer term "mobility", was a common theme throughout their report. Comments to the MPs on the committee from pupils, teachers and parents could have been written by their counterparts from the Windsor schools decades previously.

Did turbulence have a long term effect? The Hamm schools, especially WBS, had a far higher proportion of its alumni joining the Services, not

surprising as overwhelmingly they came from a military background. They opted to continue a peripatetic career. Many have found it difficult to settle down in one place and moved (or have the inkling to move) frequently. Others have taken the opposite view:

*Despite the fact that I loved my military brat upbringing, I wanted my children to have a "Home" and not change schools 13 times.*

Academically it is difficult to argue that turbulence had a significant effect. The schools, once they settled down as comprehensives, with a strong technical subject provision, appear to have met the norm for senior pupils to move on to higher and further education. The majority of pupils left before either 16 or 18, unlike "normal" schools so leaving destinations do not give a fair view of the school's performance. It is more difficult to understand the emotional and social effects of constantly moving homes, countries, let alone schools. It was part of military life.

## The American wave

In December 1965 *Concordia* reported:

*Du Pont, the American ICI, are opening a new factory near Hamm. Gradually, as the price of land soars in the area, so the number of American Day Boys goes slowly up. Dr GR Hudson, an American fortunate enough to have a sabbatical year has joined the staff to look after their interests and to provide for their special educational needs.*

There had been several Americans and Canadians at the schools before but largest single group with no obvious link to the British military would come from the USA. It is estimated around 200 children attended the three schools over the years.

The story of Du Pont and the Hamm schools started a few years earlier. In the early 1960s Du Pont was seeking a site for a production plant for its new German subsidiary. West Germany was still experiencing its post war *Wirtschaftswunder*, its economic miracle, and cities were looking for inward investment to maintain the momentum. The process of bringing together cities seeking investment and companies seeking new locations was the same in the 1960s as it is now. Cities, looking for a long term benefit, offered subsidies and assistance through their development organisations. Private sector companies sought a good deal. Successful public-private partnerships came from a shared win-win.

In 1964 the Unna regional economic development organisation advertised the area around Hamm “as an oasis for expansive industrial entrepreneurs” as it was in the “heart of the common market”. The marketing offer was taken up by an American company. They only later revealed they were DuPont, a major global chemical company known for their trademarked Nylon and

Dacron. They were concerned that if their interest was known too quickly land prices would rise.

Du Pont and the development organisation reached an agreement. The company required, within eight months, suitable land with road, rail and shipping links. The development organisation set about acquiring the land. It was canny. The leading German magazine, *Der Spiegel* reported in 1965:

*The area was purchased within six weeks in day and night shifts, says Hüller (the director of the development organisation). He also revealed the tricks with which he pushed the land prices. For days, surveyors walked with red-white slats across the field mark of the rural community of Werries (near Mark). They blocked out the lines of communications, probed the layers of earth with drills and acted as if heavy reinforced concrete structures were to be erected there.*

*The rural population was convinced that the new Du Pont factory, which had by now been reported in the local newspapers, would be built at Werries. While the landowners already discussed fancy prices at the beer table, envoys of the business development company in the neighbouring village of Uentrop negotiated with 30 farmers over the purchase of a total of 160 hectares of land between the Datteln-Hamm channel and highway. There, the factory is actually built.*

The negotiators told the landowners in Uentrop that they wanted to acquire land to compensate the farmers in Werries, and so bought the land at low agricultural prices between DM6 and DM10 per square metre:

*However, the entire project was threatened with failure when the Protestant church administration refused to sell a forest plot located in the middle of the terrain – 50,000 square meters of church land – for ten marks per square meter. The church councillor from Hamm demanded at least double – a total of one million marks. He had not been duped like the farmers by the diversionary manoeuvres of the development organisation.*

*The negotiations with the church dragged on for months. Only on Tuesday of the last week before the deadline did they agree and not endanger the contract with Du Pont; because without the central*

*parcel, the American company owners would never have signed the purchase contract.*

The land was resold to DuPont for 3DM per square metre, along with agreements to provide water and sewage, electricity, roads and a 3km railway track to connect the site to the mainline. The total expenditure by the development organisation came to DM25m of which DuPont paid under DM5m. Their own investment in the works was estimated between DM150m and DM180m.

The arrival of DuPont was not universally welcomed. Local companies were worried they would lose employees to the Americans and others complained the German taxpayer should not be subsidising foreign investment which would come to dominate the EEC market.

The development organisation pointed out the long term advantages, not least the taxes from DuPont operations. The DuPont works grew to employ over 2,500 workers at its peak whose local spending benefitted the city. It was indeed a long term gain to the city. (Uentrop was incorporated into the Hamm city administration in 1968). In 2023 the Du Pont workforce is down to 330 with another 500 on the site in other companies. Its future is uncertain following Du Pont's sale of its Mobility and Materials division to Celanese.

The construction took from 1965 to 1969. The company posted senior managers and engineers from the USA, and its Luxembourg operation, to Uentrop to oversee the construction and development of the plant. It was their children who came to WGS and WBS. Du Pont was generous with the travel arrangements from the USA. Many families travelled at least one way on ocean liners including the "*Rotterdam*" and "*Queen Elizabeth 2*".

When Du Pont had opened a facility in Luxembourg in the early 1960s one of the wives of a posted American manager started a small private school for children of the managers. Mrs Batten's school grew over the years under various ownerships and progressively larger buildings and still runs today as the International School of Luxembourg. Her husband was posted to Uentrop and her children subsequently went to WGS (several other children also followed the same route). There was no need for a new school in Hamm: the new facility had three English-language schools ready made on its doorstep: WGS, WBS and the primary school; undoubtedly a positive element in Unna's bid.

The first pupils arrived in 1965. One recalls boarding at WGS for a short period before changing to a day girl. The numbers steadily rose at all three schools. In 1966 *Concordia* recorded:

*On 29th November some of the staff visited du Pont. We await a photo of them, clad in gum boots and steel helmets.*

Du Pont provided an “American Counsellor” to oversee the educational and pastoral needs of the children at all three schools. Mr Borberg was the first to arrive, he stayed for a year. Dr George Hudson, in the summer of 1966, outlined the differences between school education in the USA and at the Hamm schools:

*I suppose that initially one is struck by the obvious differences – school uniforms instead of more informal dress (but not all Americans wear blue jeans either), students being addressed by last names instead of by Christian name, students rising from their seats when a teacher enters, and school assembly with prayers and Bible reading (both forbidden in the US as a violation of the principle of separation of church and state).*

He went on to cover the differences in the curriculum (especially maths, or rather math) and different games:

*Rugby, cricket, rounders and netball are generally unknown in the States. Perhaps more important is the difference in emphasis. At the Windsor schools just about everyone plays on one or more teams. In America fewer people play (American) football for instance but the ones who do make the team practice at least two hours a day as a team.*

He provided a sharp insight: sharper than the school magazines of this period were admitting:

*For some, school is something to be endured until they are old enough to leave; for others it is but the prelude to other forms of education. These differences in educational, and thus occupational, plans are sometimes reflected in attitudes toward the school itself.*

Mrs Theaker, in the WBS shop, was asked in 1967 if there were any language problems. Her reply:

*Not with the English boys but the Americans with their twisted English such as cookies, candy and cans instead of biscuits, sweets and tins.*

Dr Hudson was succeeded in 1968 by Miss Ruth Blake, who stayed for nearly 6 years. She had worked in American schools in the Philippines and Morocco before her arrival in Hamm. In 1971 she was interviewed in *Ambassador*, already noting that the American community was getting smaller and found:

*Another difficulty is being a day student in a boarding school. This poses problems since the school is simply not geared for a day student so there are more adjustments to make although it is very fine for them to go home and be with their families and they appreciate that.*

There was at least one non-American: Mike Meinhold was an Australian whose father worked for Du Pont.

Children under 11 attended the primary school situated at the back of the WGS site. Such was the increased demand for places at the small school that Du Pont contributed to the costs of extending the school, adding further classroom space. Many mothers helped at the school. The American families presented a statue to the RC chapel at WGS in memory of Father Convey who died unexpectedly in July 1969.

Mr Dudley, in his report on the 1975 Basketball season at WBS ruefully noted:

*All in all the end of an era in school basketball; the American Wave is almost spent*

Bobby Hoffman, a member of that basketball wave, recalled:

*As far as the DuPonters – it was starting to wind down in 1975 when I left (there were only 23 families at that time about 1/3 of peak time). When I passed thru Hamm in 1979 there were still about 10 families. And I think a few remained until the 1983 Windsor end.*

As the numbers declined Mr Draper Read, who had succeeded Ruth Blake,

returned to the USA in 1976 after two years. He would make occasional visits for a few more years.

One of the last pupils recalled:

*I was at Windsor when it was just Windsor School. Balmoral and Edinburgh girls houses were in the boy's school campus! Loved saying I went to a boys school! After it closed in 1983 we were bused with the British kids to Edinburgh School in Muenster. Just three of us yanks on the bus. My youngest brother was still at Hamm primary. Another primary school aged girl went to the German school. Maybe 5–7 Americans at DuPont then.*

## **Who paid?**

British government rules required BFES to charge Du Pont the full cost of their education. In the 1970s the rate, for tuition only, was DM3,103 a year (about £500, which in 2023 prices would be around £8,500). In addition parents paid for meals if taken, although many went home for lunch or brought sandwiches,. Parents were asked for a voluntary contribution to the school amenity fund. Not surprisingly one pupil recalls the bursar at WGS being very happy with the number of American pupils for this financial bonus. Despite the payments, British regulations meant they were not allowed to use the NAAFI (sited next to WGS) nor the sick bays and the medical facilities. These were managed by different parts of the UK's Defence budget: bureaucracy knows no limits!

## **The Brandywine connection**

A key issue was how the Americans would have their education at Hamm recognised when they returned to the USA. An important role for the counsellors:

*DuPont felt it was important for the US students at Windsor to have the equivalent of a US High School education, so they had a counsellor to make that assessment and provide some US specific courses (I don't recall having attended any of the US courses). It was all somewhat ironic as the British education was significantly better*



*than a typical US high school; and the US-tie seemed completely irrelevant to the education we were receiving, the environment we were part of. But Draper Read would do some sort of assessment and for those of us who completed the 6th form we also received a diploma from Brandywine High School in Wilmington Delaware (home to DuPont). So I have the diploma – never been to the school.*

One pupil at WBS in the 1970s recalls:

*As far as how US students integrated – I think it depended a lot on how old you were when you arrived and how long you stayed. I arrived at 11 and left at 17 – I really knew no other world. I enjoyed being a day boy at WBS, from the 1st Form through the 6th Form (and all my 6 Form “A” level classes were held at WGS so that had a certain non-scholastic attraction). Returning to the USA was a real culture shock (and still is in some ways). I think some of the US kids who came older and stayed shorter probably maintained more of an “American” attitude. As far as academics/qualifications: the British system and curriculum surpassed the US in almost all areas – I was able to enter US University a year early because of the WBS education – I had no issues with recognition of the British education / qualifications.*

The advantage of being a day pupil and being able to go home at the end of the school day was both a bonus for some and a cause of resentment for some British boarders who were envious of the additional freedom. The proximity to the schools, and no need for bussing, marked the difference from the Soest and Werl day pupils. There were other advantages. One British day boy from Soest remembers staying with an American friend overnight so that he could participate in activities and sports after the Soest bus had left. Parties at the Americans’ houses were also a welcome diversion for many British pupils.

The Americans made a significant contribution to the WBS basketball team and had their own bands (*Scurvy Rose* and *Bad Grass* being just two). At WBS the daybugs did not become school officials but they did at the WGS. Rebecca Thompson, was offered the post of head girl but had to return to the USA.

The American community brought touches of the USA to Hamm. Independence Day, 4th July, was celebrated on sports fields as David Curran

remembers:

*We celebrated Independence Day at Windsor Boys School I believe it was 1969. We played baseball and grilled hamburgers and hot dogs and had apple pie and everyone had a really good time!*

*It was pretty cool you Brits letting us have our celebration there.*

At Christmas 1967 Padre Fielding conducted two services in the American Rite of the Holy Communion for the American parents. Many pupils have pointed out that their schooling at Hamm was ahead of comparable US schools. Many went on to higher education in the USA. One example:

*I returned to USA after 5th form with two years remaining of high school remaining in the US. I had enough credits to go to college/university at 16 but elected to continue final two years of high school before attending university. I was two years into university studies majoring in math before I saw any new material. Geoff Hern was the best teacher I ever had. Many of my American friends would agree.*

It was not always a happy experience; one girl has mentioned that she missed out on eight years of American lifestyle; a common expatriate view.

The American pupils have kept a strong affiliation with their time in Hamm. A private Facebook group was formed leading to reunions in 2012, 2014, 2019 and 2023 (in South Carolina). Several attended a small reunion of the primary school netball team in 2019.

For most the stay in the Windsor Schools was a positive experience. They gained an appreciation of a different culture and education. They may have only been 1% of the total pupils at the Windsor schools but their impact was considerable. Their peak period of late 1960s to mid-1970s coincided with a time when the USA was frequently the main news story, Vietnam, the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Apollo 11, and 13, Watergate (let alone music from Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, the Byrds, Mamas and Papas, Motown, the list is endless). For the British pupils it was the first and certainly the longest personal experience they had had with Americans and the same in reverse for the Americans. A true mutual cultural relations experience.

## Illnesses and accidents

A closed community of around 600 people, pupils and staff, living on top of each other, in today's jargon 24/7, lends itself to a breeding ground for accidents and illnesses. Sister Malloy, the first sick bay sister in 1954, wrote:

*Sick Bay is a necessary department in any Boarding School.*

BFES annual reports had a special section on illnesses. Health was a high priority; they could not afford a poor record or they would lose the tacit support of parents. Fractures and appendicitis were the main causes requiring hospital treatment. In true bureaucratic impersonal style, the 1957 report proclaimed:

*Although the number of infectious diseases in the boarding schools is not large, nevertheless the presence of infectious cases in a closed community is of considerable inconvenience.*

That "inconvenience" occurred regularly. The first outbreak came only a few months after the school opened as *Concordia* recorded:

*One of the less pleasant features has been the outbreak of scabies and impetigo. In consultation with Captain Watson, the medical officer, we decided there should be a wholesale scrubbing of every boy and girl to prevent the spread of the infection. It is an unfortunate disease which might come from many sources but there are lessons which can be learnt from this epidemic.*

The report pointed out the rumour mill:

*The chief among them is that some parents to the wildest conclusions. It appears in Düsseldorf there was a strong rumour that in Windsor School infantile paralysis was spreading rapidly. According to inspired gossip in Bielefeld the whole school was laid low with the plague.*

An outbreak of flu in 1955 led to 64 cases treated in sick bay, with 130 pupils affected in total.

There was no doctor (or dentist) stationed at the school; the Hamm Garrison doctor oversaw the sick bay at the schools. The school, and later WGS and WBS, had a resident nurse. The first to arrive, fortunately during the scabies outbreak in March 1954 was Sister F Malloy. She came from over three years as the matron of a large hospital in Kuwait and was to stay at Hamm until 1967.

The sick bay was initially at the top of the dining block but moved to the top floor of the “bombed block” after that came into use. The six-bed facility remained there until the school closed. A sick bay on the fourth floor could cause problems. I recall the effort as a stretcher bearer when Pete Arnold broke his ankle in a five a side football match in the gym.

The sick bay dealt with the usual “wear and tear” of accidents (many from the sporting field) and illnesses. Tonsillitis, sprained ankles, sunburn; the “gargle and swallow” cure for many ailments. More severe cases were sent to the British Military Hospital (BMH) Münster.

In 1956 the headmaster was able to report that only 1.6% of pupils were on average on the sick list any day and the highest daily sick list was 39. It was the periodic major outbreaks which caused disruption. In the 1957 Annual Report, BFES reported:

*Windsor School, Hamm, owing to a number of the pupils being day pupils, stands the greatest risk of infectious diseases occurring.*

An interesting observation which chimes with statements about closing borders and lockdown during the COVID19 pandemic. The report continued:

*The only disease of medical importance which occurred at this school was one which presented as headache, nausea, giddiness, and in a few cases, vomiting. This was almost certainly an outbreak of food*

*poisoning. The school was visited by D.D.A.H and advice on the standard of hygiene of the workers and cleanliness of the kitchen, which is a small one, was given.*

The report spoke just a little too soon. Later that year Windsor School suffered a major outbreak of the global Asian Flu pandemic. In Germany over 28,000 died. King Alfred School had an outbreak earlier in the year with over 200 pupils affected. At Hamm over half the school, 302 pupils, caught the virus. One pupil recalls:

*There were so many of us went down with it, that they made Balmoral into an extra sickbay (sickbay was on the top floor of Balmoral block). All the Balmoral kids that were well had to take the places of the sick ones, while they were in sickbay. It was good fun when you were on the mend but pretty awful at first.*

Mr Howard's film of Windsor School shows pupils lining up for the polio jab in the summer of 1958 (before the sugar pill was introduced).

In the early 1960s a pupil, Douglas Ogilvy, died. He had what is now termed a pre-existing condition but his sudden death sent ripples through the school.

## **WGS gets a new sick bay**

The new sick bay at WGS opened in January 1962 and its first task was to vaccinate the whole school against smallpox. The sick bay ("attractive" according to the HMI inspectors) was built, across the sports field between the gym and the open air theatre. It had room for 16 or more patients in wards and single rooms and a dental centre. In 1961 about 40 girls a day attended as out patients (more at examination times). The sick bay was overwhelmed a few months later, when an unknown virus hit the school. BMH Münster sent a sister and three nurses to supplement Sister Bignold and the Garrison doctor Captain Heywood. The house notes of Marlborough continue the story:

*In both the Spring and Summer terms, the school was confronted with sickness – in the first case "flu" and in the second merely "a bug."*

*But in both cases several rooms in our house were used for sick girls, and it must be said that although many of us had to move once, twice and even three times, the morale of the house was not affected, and we continued as usual, under what were certainly awkward conditions.*

Lockdowns and anti-vaccines are not new. In 1968 Sister Campbell was asked: *is there anything special you wish to say about the flu epidemic?* Her reply was clear:

*Yes. The stopping of Wednesday afternoon exeats stopped the spread of it to the Girls School and the rebound of it back here. When the injections started a lot of skivers showed a reluctance to come up here. I mentioned injections one morning and four boys left immediately.*

There were periodic infectious outbreaks. Some examples remembered by pupils:

*Chicken pox, 65/66 in WBS.*

*I was in Edinburgh House 73/77. I remember one of the house blocks (Marlborough) had an outbreak of scabies. They separated the infected girls and had to destroy bedding towels and mattresses. (WGS)*

*There was a lockdown when I was there because a girl in Edinburgh had meningitis. – so if you had been in contact put in quarantine in Edinburgh House I believe. I was in quarantine. I remember not being allowed to go to lessons or the dining hall. Had outside time when everyone else was indoors. (WGS, 1972)*

The girls who endured the quarantine were most anxious that they could be released in time for a school dance. The girl with meningitis had a very serious attack but survived. Other lockdowns:

*Does anyone remember when the WBS had a lockdown? No one was allowed out the school, sick bay was full, and those that were infected had to stay in their dormitories. I think it was a gastronomic virus the school had. Sickness, vomiting and diarrhoea. 76 or 77 I think it happened.*

*The year before Windsor closed down for good, a bug went through the school (not sure what exactly, as I was one of the “lucky ones” who didn’t get it) seem to remember it last 5–6 days as most were out of bed by the weekend. Sickbay was very quickly overrun and those ill kept in their rooms.*

The medical staff could see the lighter side of their work. A doggerel in the 1976 Concordia was signed by “Anon” but the first verse gives the game away:

*Oh the things I have learnt  
And the things I have seen  
Since coming to Windsor Boys’ School sick bay  
Plunged in at the deep end, soon earning my keep  
I started to work, no delay  
White pills for chills, blue for the flu  
Then Verrucae were “in” and from out of a tine  
I slapped on the wart paste with glee  
Crepe bandage for sprain, a sling made to fit  
Then out with the pen, another “off games” chit*

The fourth year football team in 1978 reported, after losing a match 4–1 to Hayfield School from England:

*However in our defence, I must say that the team was much weakened by the dreaded flu which swept through the school, and many of our regulars were unable to play.*

The school inspectors gave an independent view of the sick bays and medical attention in the late 1970s. At WBS the report started with a description and made an observation:

*The sick bay, staffed by two resident nurses appointed in the United*

*Kingdom, and assisted by two non-resident part time nurses, occupies the top floor of one of the residential buildings. In the event of broken limbs or minor emergencies the sick bay is inconvenient and difficult. The provision of a small medical room at ground level would be a valuable amenity. The medical officer attends sick bay every week day and is available for consultation at these times; he is also on call at night and at weekends in case of emergency. The nurses provide a 24 hour cover and hold daily clinics.*

After discussing medical record keeping the HMIs made an important observation which touched on the segmentation of staff responsibilities:

*In discussion it was evident that the school nurses would welcome any opportunity to become more personally involved in the life of the school and in the promotion of closer links and communications with the housemasters.*

At WGS the inspectors focussed on a particular service provided by the sick bay: that of admitting girls during school hours even if they were not ill enough to require hospitalisation:

*The figures are remarkable; in the last 12 months there were 87 overnight admissions as against no fewer than 678 day-time admissions sent back to sleep in dormitories. This differs from the general practice in English boarding schools where sick bays provide a significant part of the pastoral provision by caring for pupils who are feeling homesick, suffer sleeplessness, or for other reasons need temporary refuge from the strains of dormitory life at night.*

The two reports indicate the schools were less adept in adapting to newer developments in boarding education on what now be called the “soft” side of pastoral care where departmental boundaries (and authorities) were loosened. It is interesting to note that in the many comments from pupils about the negative aspects of school (homesickness, loneliness, bullying) a few have mentioned the nursing staff as helpers (as well as matrons). One example: *The one person who I did find to be a caring and kind person was the nurse in sick bay.*



## Chapel Going

For many new pupils at the Windsor Schools there was a lot to get used to; chapel was one of them. In 1975 Lambert observed based on his lengthy researches into boarding schools in both the private and state sectors:

*Residential education in this country is still much used as a means of sustaining various kinds of religious faith.*

The Windsor schools, in all their formats, certainly would be aligned with Lambert. Chapel going was a core part of the pupil's life. WBS deputy headmaster, Ken Leighton, made two observations in a 1976 article in the *SCEA Bulletin*:

*Many children have not attended church services with any regularity before coming to Windsor Boys School. Compulsory chapel is another feature (after long hair) which finds little support from boys, and usually their parents.*

The compulsory attendance requirement was a key part of chapel going. And it changed over time reflecting the signs of the times.

Before we look at chapel going, and chaplains, in the schools, it helps to see the external context. Quite simply, it was one of decline in active participation in church affairs. Research by organisations such as *Church History* and *Christian Research* indicates that attendance at Church of England services declined from around 3m weekly in the early 1950s to less than half that in the early 1980s. Roman Catholic attendances at Mass held up better, from a starting level of 1.5m they peaked in the early 1960s at just under 2m and then declined back to 1.5m. Confirmations, an indicator of a more active participation in the Church of England, fell by over a half

between 1960 and 1977. By 1980 less than half of children had been baptized.

An indication of the “official” attitude of the army, and politicians, to religion comes in a 1953 House of Commons debate on the benefits of National Service. The Minister for the Army said:

*These young men meet the padres, and many of them become confirmed and go to church voluntarily. The Chaplain General, the Bishop of Croydon and the Church Houses have done great work in that respect. This situation gives the churches an opportunity at the present time. Apart from that, the young men learn to look after themselves, and they gain in independence. The house should not overlook the fact that a large number of young men annually leave the Army fitter, better educated and more God-fearing citizens than when they entered it.*

The general decline in active church engagement is reflected in the schools. We saw in Part A how the four chapels were built relatively quickly. At Windsor School both the Roman Catholic chapel and the Church of England, St Boniface Chapel, were open by Spring 1955. The latter took less than 10 months to build. The same speed was seen at WGS; the conversion of a former tank depot and the paint workshops enabled St Mary’s Chapel and the Chapel of St Maria Goretti to open in autumn 1960.

On May 9 1954 it was announced that a chapel would be built at Windsor School. It was to be the last major new building work on the site. The dedication service on 27 April 1955 was a grand affair broadcast live on the British Forces Network radio. Distinguished guests included the Assistant Chaplain General, BAOR and several principal chaplains of the army and RAF. The chancel furnishings were made by Mr Riley and Herr Franz. A bible was donated by teachers from other BFES schools. The Bishop of Fulham preached the sermon (“*memorable*” according to *Concordia*) on the role of religion in education and a chapel’s place in a school community. We can gain an insight into these thoughts by two comments made a year later. First, Mr Aspinall:

*It (the chapel) occupies a place in the life of the school commensurate with its geographical location – right in the middle. As our tradition*

*grows older, the power of the Chapel grows stronger.*

And Padre Dyson (who had succeeded Padre Dossetor):

*The school Chapel of St Boniface is now well-established in our midst. Here we come on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as Sundays. We come not merely as individuals but as members of the school. And the life of the school flows more strongly here than anywhere else, stronger than in house, classroom or playing fields. Our fellowship with one another and our affection for our friends finds its expression here, and in finding expression it becomes more real.*

The use of the word “power” by the headmaster is instructive. Boarding schools since the 19<sup>th</sup> century had been built on the concept of *Muscular Christianity*; the Church of England was a central part of their rationale. All the early BFES secondary schools were led by headmasters brought up in the public school ethos. The first BFES director, Trevelyan, was the son of a parson. In the early 1950s the views of Mr Aspinall and Padre Dyson were the norm: chapel and religion were indeed central to the school. The assumption of the chapel as the prime vehicle for “fellowship” was instructive. It excluded the Roman Catholics in their own chapel; there was no resident RC chaplain at Windsor School.

There were two surveys at WBS, in 1960 and 1979, of the distribution of pupils between the major religious categories. They showed relatively little change (1960 first number, 1979 second):

<i>Church of England</i>	58%	69%
<i>Roman Catholic</i>	20%	21%
<i>Non-conformist churches</i>	10%	9%
<i>None of the above</i>	12%	7%

The Roman Catholic number is far higher than in the UK which was around 6–7% in this period. Probable reasons include the distribution of regiments from high Catholic areas of the UK (and Malta) and those with Catholic German mothers.

Let’s take three topics in order: chapel attendance, confirmations and then

the Roman Catholics, before we come on to the chaplains and the activities of the chapels (and pupils' engagement).

## **Attendance**

Attendance at the Sunday service was compulsory for many years and was one of the new adjustments most boarding pupils had to make. The year after Padre Dyson made his comments, his successor, Padre McClure, regretfully accepted a reduction to Sunday services only as the two mid-week services were being overwhelmed by school notices, better suited to the assembly hall. The Roman Catholics attended their own morning service and went down to the assembly hall for the school administrative messages.

The Sunday service (including a separate Holy Communion) remained compulsory through to the 1970s. Padre Fielding commented in 1968:

*The Chapel continues to be a central feature in the life of the school.*

During the 1960s there were several unsuccessful attempts to bring about a change. Mr Wylie, who had introduced a Wednesday afternoon short compline service, put forward an idea that pupils wishing to skip the chapel service should make their case to a panel of himself and a housemaster: a daunting task. A few years later a minor change took place: pupils over 18 were given the option to attend the Sunday service. The main change in WBS came in 1972/73. Padre Brindley explains:

*The old rule (chapel being compulsory) has been replaced by a situation in which the headmaster sends a letter to the parents of new boys to the school in which he explains his (and my) points of view about the positive values of chapel attendance. At the end of this letter is a pro-forma which parents are asked to complete and return. Parents say whether or not they wish their sons to attend chapel regularly.*

There was a twofold result. Many parents put the responsibility for the decision onto their boys (a situation not approved by the Padre) and a considerable drop in attendance at the Sunday chapel services. But, continued Brindley, accepting the loss of a "captive audience":

*There is now a much more concentrated and attentive atmosphere.*

A similar approach occurred at WGS. By 1977 there was a more explicit approach set out in its Rules and Procedures:

*On Sunday mornings the school attends church but this for Protestant pupils on several Sundays in each term is not compulsory.*

Mr Leighton at WBS was still emphasising in 1976 the values of chapel attendance and the spirit of his predecessors in the 1950s:

*When a new boy arrives the parent very often thinks it to be a good thing for the boy to attend the Sunday morning service. However within a few weeks, the boy will very often have persuaded his parents to write to the headmaster requesting that the boy be freed from such a commitment.*

*We feel the act of corporate worship is something all boys should experience and then in the light of that experience they may choose with greater knowledge whether to accept or withdraw from Christian worship.*

The opt out approach was not total:

*We insist on all boys attending three compulsory services each term.*

Padre Dyson would have been relieved to learn that school assemblies were moved back to the chapel in the early 1970s. It was an attempt to keep the chapel in the minds of pupils, including those who had opted out (and to include the day pupils from Soest and Werl). The 1944 Education Act had given parents the right to ask that their children opt out of assembly (and the right was enshrined in the BFES rules for the schools in 1957).

## **Confirmation**

The first confirmations took place in December 1954, even before St Boniface Chapel was completed. The Bishop of Fulham confirmed 40 candidates. The confirmations grew through the 1950s. A variety of Bishops led the ceremonies including the Bishops of Stepney, Peterborough and

Thetford. The Bishop of Fulham was the main celebrant; the post-holder had episcopal oversight for northern Europe. *Concordia* often listed the names of the confirmed. By 1956 the annual number reached 68 and remained around that level for the remainder of Windsor School. At times the confirmation service also included members of local garrison. The numbers dipped temporarily as the school divided but by 1960–61 the numbers picked up. There were three confirmation services, shared between the schools, and well over 100 boys and girls were confirmed. Padre McClure was disappointed with the low attendance at Holy Communion (a constant refrain). Even this rate of confirmations was not enough! Padre Fielding takes up the story in 1962:

*Efforts to impress on parents the boys the necessity and opportunity for Confirmation in the show began to show its effect at this stage of the school year. Hilary Term began with almost fifty boys entering their second term of preparation and half that number their first term. Indeed, at one stage, the Chaplain felt that he might not be able to cope with such numbers satisfactorily when at the same time was giving as much help as he could to the Girls' School which was without a chaplain for the first two terms of the year. However the extra effort was amply rewarded on Wednesday 28 March when the Bishop of Fulham, Dr R Coote, confirmed over seventy candidates including several adults and youths from neighbouring stations.*

His efforts certainly paid off. In March 1965 over 150 boys and girls were confirmed in St Boniface. In 1966 33 boys and 60 girls were confirmed in a service with 281 communicants. These were peak years. In 1968 only 17 boys were confirmed, in 1969 just 25 boys and girls. Padre Fillery recalls that in 1980 the confirmation service as WGS was reinstated after a four year gap with over 30 candidates from both schools. As with attendance the pattern at the schools had mirrored the national trends. Not all candidates were perhaps fully signed up to the ideal as one in the 1950s remembered:

*Signing up for confirmation classes mainly for the renowned cream cakes in the dining hall after the service*

Others had a more secular motive: attendance at early morning Holy

Communion freed up the rest of Sunday.

## **Roman Catholics**

The Roman Catholic Chapel of the Holy Name, in the attic of the teaching block, came into use before St. Boniface Chapel was completed. As there was no resident RC Padre at the school, an arrangement was made with a Jesuit seminary at Münster where newly ordained American priests spent a year. A changing group of four visited the school, in pairs, to lead services and classes. At times two of them stayed for a full week. They were supported by Catholic teachers (including Messrs Kelly, Nesbitt-Hawes and Lacklison). The first confirmation service in the chapel was led by Archbishop David Mathew (RC Bishop to the Forces). Confirmations were later held at Münster cathedral. By 1958 C P Hook was reporting in *Concordia*:

*Our numbers have increased so much that we have found it necessary to move from a classroom to the chapel for prayers in the morning. However this means that morning prayers have to be finished slightly earlier in order to be in time for the general assembly and of course ventilation has never been adequate in our small yet beautiful chapel.*

The division of the schools in 1959 led to a change for a year or two. The new chapel (of St Maria Goretti) at WGS was not ready in early 1960 so for two terms the girls attended the German chapel outside the school gates. There was still no resident RC Padre. Father Boulton, the RC padre at PRS Wilhelmshaven, frequently made the long journey to Hamm. He mainly preached at WGS; WBS continued with the Jesuit priests from Münster and the Catholic members of staff.

One of the former KAS pupils, P Goodliffe, recorded that for the over ninety Catholic boys at WBS, their needs were not neglected:

*First impressions of our Chapel here were not very reassuring to the newcomers. When we first assembled it was a gloomy day, and there were no lights in the chapel and consequently it presented a very dismal sight. But what a difference there was on the following Sunday.*

*The soft lighting, the beauty of the altar reversed first impressions. Although plain and simple in design it is a very beautiful Chapel.*

At WGS:

*Although as a community we can scarcely claim to be living in the lap of spiritual luxury, since we share a chaplain with PRS Wilhelmshaven, nevertheless we have all the essential help needed to live an intensely spiritual life.*

*What our services lack in liturgical splendour, they make up for in warmth and devotion, we are proud of our choral performance, which, under the able and devoted tuition of Miss Jameson, has reached a high standard.*

WGS gained the first resident RC chaplain when Father Horgan arrived in 1962. WBS had to wait until Father Convey replaced him in 1965. He covered both schools until his sudden and untimely death in July 1969.

There was an annual retreat, initially at the Münster seminary or at Benkhausen. At the 1962 retreat a group of boys went to the Münster seminary for a weekend. One of the Jesuit priests leading the retreat was a Father McGuire. He had led services and talks at the schools. Over forty years later he was convicted in USA for child sex abuses and sentenced to 25 years in prison. There was no suggestion at his trials that anything illegal happened in 1962; his crimes started in the late 1960s in other parts of Germany.

In the 1970s the Sunday Mass would often alternate between the schools and finally remained at WGS.

## **“Others”**

Not perhaps the most appropriate term to cover a range of traditions including Methodist and Baptists. From time to time a minister from BAOR went to the schools to confirm pupils, (especially children of teachers) or to lead a service. In the 1950s at Windsor School there was a regular visiting minister from the Church of Scotland:

*During 1955 the Church of Scotland and Free Church children, about*



*fifty at present, have been very happy to visit St Andrews Free Church at Münster, at Die Brücke, on three occasions and join in the services there where Padre Crofton has made us feel very welcome and at home.*

In 1978 Padre Fillery arranged for Padre Whitaker from RAF Laarbruch to visit WGS regularly to see the members of the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches.

## **The chaplains**

Now let's turn to the chaplains. Their formal title is Reverend but in the military sphere "Padre" is the usual term. Church of England to start:

*Windsor School:*

Dossetor 53–54. Dyson 54–56, McClure 56–59

*WGS:*

Tewkesbury 59–61, McClure 62–66, Thackray 67–73, Cooling 74–75, Fillery 76–81.

*WBS:*

McClure 59–61, Fielding 61–69, Brindley 69–76, Ellwood 76–79, Mr Leonard 79 to 82

The keen eyed will see that Padre Hugh McClure appears three times. He holds the unique record of being chaplain at all three schools. He held a trenchant view of the chapel when he arrived at WGS:

*The chief disadvantage is, of course, the design of the pews, which squeak and squeal in a most disconcerting way. One feels that craftsmen and architects of former days, who were worshipping craftsmen and architects, would not have been guilty of such obvious mistakes.*

There are also some gaps between padres. In 1975–76 at WGS Mr Alex Boyd filled in as lay reader at WGS. He left to teach at Loretto School,

Edinburgh, and was ordained. Mr Leonard was not an ordained priest but took charge in the closing years at WBS. What is not visible in the list are the shorter gaps between post holders. Both Padre Fielding and Brindley helped at times in WGS. Padre Alec Tewkesbury had spent seven years at KAS Plön before moving to Hamm.

Padre Fielding, who was appointed the rural dean for northern Europe during his time at the school, had a unique experience. To set the scene he explained that he had invited a chaplain friend (*a man of substantial proportions*) to lead a christening service for one of his daughters. A few days later Padre Fielding took his place in *the small Jacobean-style pulpit*:

*Now this is where it gets more exciting! That very week, on the Friday afternoon, (last period of the teaching day of the week) as all you young fellows of the era will well remember, the whole school gathered for the customary hymn practice along with myself, the Chaplain, and the then Director of Music, Mervyn Loft-Simpson. I was in the pulpit doing my bit: conducting the practice and exhorting everyone to “sing up” as if they were enjoying the experience (and on the whole we usually did). It was not a hymn we were practising when it all happened but the Merbecke setting of the Nicene Creed. Just when it came to the words “he descended into hell” the Chaplain lent over the pulpit to exhort his captive audience; the pulpit began to tip and ever so slowly continued on its forward descent tossing its occupant out as it crashed down.*

Of course the singing stopped, a round of applause rang out, singing practice was never the same.

The school choir, or rather choirs senior and junior, at WGS under Mr Purvis in the early 1960s, made a strong impression. Many years later Padre Fillery lamented, when looking back in 1978:

*at older school magazines all contain long chapel reports full of glowing comments about the golden age of chapel choirs. Alas we no longer have a Junior and a Senior choir with “a large repertoire built up of descants for most of the well-known hymns” but the singing this year has seen the introduction not only of a new order of service but also of a small volume of additional psalms, hymns and spiritual;*

*songs.*

Padre Fielding, whose initials *JJF* chimed with a well-known Rolling Stones song to go along with the usual nicknames of “devil-basher” and Eric Burdon-inspired “sky-pilot,” was the only padre to record his reports in *Concordia* as Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity terms. He was involved in one of *Concordia*'s more controversial debates when he took to task an editorial by Ron Lancaster which opened the idea of cultural relativism. Padre Fielding was having none of it, defending Christianity strongly.

Until the late 1970s the chaplains came loosely under official Church of England European Diocese of Fulham and Gibraltar (whose Bishop led the confirmation services along with the Bishop of Fulham, Chaplain to the Forces). In 1977 they were officially taken over by the Army's Chaplain-General wing. The Assistant Chaplain-General visited, the Revd Robin Roe, a former Irish Rugby international.

The Roman Catholic Padres:

*WGS*

Boulton 59–62 (based at PRS), Horgan 62–65,

*WBS and WGS*

Convey 65–69, Freyne 69–70, Kinrade 71–72, Welsford 72–73, Kinrade 75–83

*Ambassador* noted the new arrival in 1969:

*Father Thomas Freyne arrived to assume his pastoral duties at the schools. After working for several years as a priest in rural France. Father Frayne's new responsibilities could hardly have provided a more extreme contrast. Nevertheless he has adapted himself in his new role very easily and we appreciate both his endeavours and moral guidance throughout the year.*

Although the padres were the most visible example of the religious side of the schools they were not alone. Mr Leighton mentioned that headteachers were required to be practising Christians and queried whether the same should be true for housemasters.

In an interview in *Concordia*, in 1968, housemaster Mr Brian Birkby was clear:

*Since I think that most people are in need of a religion, I think it is incumbent on the school to provide one. This is not to say that any one will do. The Christian religion teaches the human being more about himself and God than any other. If through our adherence to a religion in a boarding school we further this cause, then we are doing the right thing.*

*I feel I ought to say that mere observation of religion is valueless. I am sometimes disturbed by the apparent acceptance of the Christian faith by those people who patently want no truck with it.*

A pupil at WGS recalls her housemistress, Miss Elliot, frequently saying:

*We are a Christian house*

## **The services**

As well as the regular Sunday services there were several highlights of the chapel year. After the start of term came the Harvest Thanksgiving, followed by Remembrance Day. This was celebrated with an outdoor parade of the uniformed services: Guides at WGS; CCF and Scouts at WBS. From time to time members of the Garrison took part. In 1967 the service was joint Protestant/Roman Catholic. At WGS in the 1970s, after the service, girls “planted” their poppies in the shape of their house’s initial outside their house. In the mid-1970s senior girls at WGS also attended the German ceremony in Hamm.

Christmas brought the carol service, mostly held in the Pauluskirche (a joint WBS/WGS service). In the 1950s before the Pauluskirche was fully repaired, the service took place in the school. David Dunlop recalls:

*Christmas preparations involved Mr Loft-Simpson on the organ – girls on the left side.*

In 1976 the Polish choir from the MSO unit at Cromwell Barracks also took part.

From time to time memorial services were held. They ranged from Churchill and Mountbatten, the Aberfan disaster to the fortunately rare deaths of teachers and administrative staff.

In the late 1970s house services came in both schools. In 1978 WGS:

*attempts to organise a lantern procession for the Lower School along traditional German lines were made rather frightening by the gale force wind, but we did manage to get through without setting the chapel on fire.*

The chapels often had chapel committees, sometimes formal, other times informal, where pupils could put their views. The Chapel Liaison Committee at WBS in 1968 (six boys, Mr Greer as chairman and the padre):

*took upon itself to discuss the suggestions, opinions and ideas of the church and our own services as given by the boys who on the whole form our church.*

*Boys complained of lengthy boring services and the types of readings which the younger members gleaned little from. They criticised the way in which we worshipped by saying that times had changed therefore surely services must change.*

Well, that was clear feedback. Changes followed: “services with a swing” with boys using guitars, recorders, the piano accordion, and drums. Readings came from the *New English Bible* and on one Sunday Head Boy Mike Sheard led the service and Ric Bowman gave the sermon. The School Choir acquired a Choir Band of seven (all school officials) to liven up services.

Mr Leonard took over the duties of Chaplain in 1979 (*everyone had to get used to a leader without a dog-collar* he implored) and inherited a view which had greeted his predecessors:

*Chapel is boring, sir.*

*That was probably the most polite expression of opinion which greeted me on my arrival a year ago. There are other comments which are best not written down.*

At the same time Father Kinrade wrote:

*It is surprising that, in many people's minds, Christianity is associated with gloom and despondency rather than light-hearted optimism.*

He then proceeded to prove his point by mentioning Pope John XXIII, several Archbishops of Canterbury, Nietzsche and George Orwell.

By 1979 Holy Communion was a joint service between WGS/WBS in anticipation of the merger. A Sunday School opened (in the balcony of St Boniface).

Perhaps the most memorable meeting, at WBS, was a presentation by two Mormons. It prompted an honest comment by a participant:

*At the end of the meeting we were all pretty confused and made a mad rush to the door to get back to our houses.*

The closing ceremonies of the schools in 1983 saw St Boniface chapel host the final service.

A frequent recollection of pupils is of trying to evade going to chapel. Hiding in wardrobes, in obscure parts of the campus, feigning illness, the imagination ran wild over the years. Chapel going was for the formal hierarchy an integral and essential part of the education at the schools. The compulsory nature changed over time but not this underlying ethos. For many going to chapel was a weekly ritual, it was a timetabled event with little meaning. For others, chapel going was a formative part of their time at Hamm; they may not have absorbed the full meaning of the religions but it gave them a space each week (or several times a term later) to pause (and sing) collectively. The last word belongs to Padre McClure, the longest serving padre, writing towards the end of his first year at WBS (and after six years at Windsor School and WGS):

*We have worshipped together since my institution some forty times. I wonder what effect all this has had on our lives. Perhaps, for some, our meeting together for worship is simply a formal observance. I feel that we should make greater preparation for our worship of God, strengthen our intentions about it and make up our minds to sacrifice some time or pleasure to achieve this.*

## A Busy Life

The intention was clear:

*In general, where ever possible, efforts are made to ensure that the pupils experience a busy life outside school hours.*

That was an understatement. The *Guide to Parents for the Windsor School* in 1959 gives an indication of those efforts:

*Outdoor activities apart from the normal games include sailing, riding, rowing, cross-country running, and archery. In addition, the following interests are encouraged by clubs and societies which children may join: Country dancing, Scottish Dancing, Photography, Bird-watching, Arts, crafts, Homecraft, Printing, Book-binding, Weaving, Dress-making, First Aid, Stamp-collecting, Dramatics, Boxing, Model-making.*

*The school runs a Scout Troop, a Guide Company and a Contingent of the Combined Cadet Force.*

The following year, as WBS was starting, Mr GB Jones noted there were 53 activities and sports taking place in one week:

*A rough estimate shows that 70% of the school engages in some form activity, strenuous or otherwise, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays.*

It was no different at WGS; for example, in 1977:

*Most boarding pupils join at least two activities a week. These are organised by members of staff and vary widely from energetic athletic*

*to the restful sedentary type of occupation.*

*Included in the list of activities are usually Gardening, Girl Guides, Choir, Dancing, Chess, Knitting, Art, Embroidery, Cookery (for the first years), Pottery, Drama, Yoga, Guitar, Film Club and library work.*

Sports and games (and drama) will be covered in other chapters so let's focus on the "less strenuous" with a closer look at the so-called "service" group (Guides and Scouts, Combined Cadet Force and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme). We'll end this chapter with a miscellany from other activities.

Mr Jones felt that the range of activities was too wide to enumerate, neither can they be easily bracketed into groups. It is perhaps worth a try! The selection changed both over time and between schools so this isn't by any means a comprehensive list!

*Hobbies: stamp collecting, model making, Scottish and country dancing, rambling (although this was strenuous), bookbinding, birdwatching.*

*School subject related: Young Farmers, Gardening, Animal, natural history, Russian, French, domestic science.*

*Creative: film club, arts, pottery, music, guitar, drumming, photography, jazz, drama, stage make up, piano, crochet, DJ.*

*School community: choirs, magazine, printing, library, chapel committees.*

*Service activity: Guides and Scouts, Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Duke of Edinburgh's' Award Scheme (DofE.)*

*Others (there is always an "others" category). Windsor Society/Sixth Form Debates, Junior Activity, Car driving, yoga.*

Activity time was, on most days of the week, from the end of lessons and tea, at 1630hrs to the pre-dinner return to houses for roll call at 1800hrs. Wednesday afternoon was reserved for the sporting type. As well as the changing offer one feature was the degree of compulsion to take part. As we



can see from the 1959 example above children were “encouraged”. During the 1960s after the schools split a degree of compulsion developed. Pamela Ross again:

*it depended on which year you were in – the first and second years I think had to have four, three for third and fourth years, two for fifth years.*

Tuesdays in the 1970s at WBS became reserved for house based activity. Mr Leighton, in 1974, reviewed the policy of compulsory Monday activities at WBS. By then first and second years had to take compulsory sports. Third years and above could only select from the 28 non sporting activities. Leighton outlined the benefits:

*The administrative convenience of having all boys out of the houses at one time, the fillip given to ‘service’ activities by restricting sport to the juniors, and in alternatively, the benefit accrued by the juniors having the opportunity of having games coaching given by the specialist sports staff.*

The downside, he continued:

*Is the undoubted feeling among many boys that, having taken part in a compulsory activity on a Monday, followed by the compulsory House Day activity on Tuesday, by Wednesday they wish to be left to their own devices and to have the opportunity to look again at the outside world beyond the school gates.*

Here we see several movements coming together. A new deputy headmaster reviewing his inheritance; an acceptance that pupils were in a straightjacket with little free time (a common complaint throughout the years) and that going outside school more frequently was a legitimate desire. His suggested compromise was to stagger the compulsory nature and, in the summer term, allow boys to choose just one activity a week. He had seen another weakness in the system: that boys could find their wish to do several activities unmet as they clashed. Mr Jones foresaw this in 1960 when he commented that boys signed up for several activities only to find they took place concurrently; the hazard of a wide choice! Perhaps the most unfortunate clash came in 1955 as

Margaret Day recalls:

*After the Christmas holidays senior rugger took place at the same time as the ballroom dancing activity and the rugger side lost a number of promising players.*

## **The Service activities**

The “service” activities, so-called by Mr Leighton, were always among the most popular activities: Guides and Scouts, the CCF and the DofE.

The three activities exemplified one of the core objectives of schools: to instil confidence, team working, a sense of community and service to others as well as acquiring specific skills. The ranks of CCF and Scouts/Guides contributed to an aim of taking responsibility.

All three shared an approach: training in particular skills, community service activities and a camp/expedition element. Several of the skill areas were common, First Aid for example. All three worked within an external and international structure which set the rules, objectives and standards. One major difference was the DofE did not require a uniform nor had “ranks” of authority; you did not “join” an organisation nor wear a uniform.

## **Guides and Scouts**

The Guides and Scouts were the first to be up and running. Troops were formed in the first year of the school. They provided the Guard of Honour at the school’s formal opening ceremony in May 1954. The Scouts assumed responsibility for building the November 5<sup>th</sup> bonfire: both were active at the school fetes. Experience and expertise came with help from visiting UK based Guides and Scout leaders. Membership grew, four Guide patrols; around 50 scouts. An early highlight was the first camp, at Sennelager. Let the Guides take up the story:

*The Scouts were camping in the same field as us but we were strictly divided by a rope with a large OUT OF BOUNDS notice on both sides.*

The report by the Scouts was content to highlight a midnight hike with the Guides.

Teachers took the lead but the scouts were run for a time by Sgt Wynne of the MSO unit at Cromwell Barracks; he also ran the cubs at the Primary School. At WGS Misses James, Hayter, Davies, Falcus and Waldron were among the teacher-leaders.

Membership varied for both the Scouts and Guides/Rangers, a consequence of “turbulence.” In the early 1960s the Guides at WGS went from one company with only one Guider to a waiting list where new girls could only join if they had been in the Guides or brownies elsewhere.

Several Scouts were selected to go to the World Jamborees in England (D Haslam) and Scotland (W Pallant). In 1963 S Hurt endured a 56 hour train journey to the Jamboree in Greece, passing through Skopje just days after the massive earthquake.

By 1966 the Scout numbers reached 85 with Mr Hodgson and Mr Ross leading. R Richards and Colin Dagg achieved First Class Scouts status, the first for the Troop. That summer saw the inaugural week-long camp. Mr Rodgers took over the troop after Mr Hodgson left.

Field days had their own surprises:

*Field day was again enjoyed by all, even the patrol leader who managed to lose half of his patrol.*

Membership varied, and in 1968 the troop was re-organised on house lines. In 1969 Mr Rodgers left and it appears no teacher was available to continue with the activity. Numbers declined. Ashley Case recalls being in a troop of four with leaders coming, about twice a term, from Dortmund. The Scouts appear to have slowly dropped off the list of activities. The Guides also faded away for most of the 1970s; there was a short lived attempt to re-start under Miss Bennett. The Americans from DuPont families ran their own Scout troop. The primary school had a brownies troop.

## **Combined Cadet Force**

The CCF was formed in the UK in 1948 and overwhelmingly based in public schools. The army section came first at Windsor School:

*On May 29<sup>th</sup> 1955 the first routine weekly orders of the Cadet movement went up, the spark of enthusiasm kindled amongst a few*

*members in the Spring Term having now become a vigorous flame.*

The RAF section followed in 1956. The CCF, minimum age 14, was boys only until 1982 when the MOD finally allowed girls to join. It benefitted from teachers who themselves had military experience, whether in the Regular Services or on National Service. Teachers acquired a military rank, from their Reserve status. Lt Col Ronald (10 years including time in the CCF at Plön), Lt Wilkerson RNVR, Flying Officer Tovey, Lieutenant Morgan. Pilot Officer Cutler, Flying Officer (later Flight Lieutenant) Kitchen, Lieutenant Farrell, Major Kopcke, Major Boyes, were just some of the teachers swapping the classroom and office for parttime uniform. RSM Steventon and Lieutenant Brochwicz gave invaluable support with stores, and logistics (and the former with drill and parade preparation).

Numbers gradually increased during the 1950s, in 1958 reaching nearly 60. By 1967 it had around 90–100 members each term. At times over 200 boys took part in the CCF for at least part of the year.

Highlights included the annual inspection by a senior army or RAF officer and the annual camp at various BAOR training grounds at Haltern Ranges, Reischlen and more frequently at Sennelager. Richard Spencer recalls the early days:

*I was also in the CCF and got marksman on the .22 range in the cellars at Balmoral House indoor range. I was promoted to Lance Corporal. Also in those days we did the Annual Camp during Summer Hols. I can remember firing 2 inch mortars, Bren Gun and throwing live hand grenades.*

Mike Snook recalls:

*being dropped in Sennelager with just a parachute and supplies and told to make camp for the weekend. We “played” escape and evasion at night.*

*Also got attacked by the Black Watch during the day, scared the living daylight out of us as we dived into ditches and bushes. We were all carrying .303 rifles, luckily with no blanks as I think mine ended up with about 1.5in of mud up the barrel!!*

Not everything went smoothly as Michael Cutts remembers:

*We had a week at Dulmen barracks. We spent a night in the wilds and were then dropped off in small groups with a map and had to make our way back to the campsite. The only issue was they had given us all the wrong maps. Fortunately after a few hours walking we managed to flag down a British Army land rover who gave us a lift back.*

An annual night exercise saw the CCF out in force. The basic premise was the same, although the “story” varied each time. Groups of cadets were taken away from the school. Some were tasked to return to the school or another checkpoint, others to defend that “HQ.” Just how the Hamm and area residents took to troops armed with rifles, wandering around at night, often lost, is a mystery.

For a few years in the early 1960s the CCF had a 25 pound field gun on loan from the Royal Artillery who used it as a demonstrator with their visiting instructors.

The RAF section benefitted from the continued leadership of F/L Kitchen, (aka PMK and housemaster Marlborough), who led it for nearly 20 years. A highlight for the RAF section was an annual day-trip to RAF Gütersloh. A tour of the base nearly always (weather permitting) included “air experience.” For a few cadets the first visit, in 1956, gave them an opportunity to fly in a Percival Prentice (the RAFs three seater trainer, then being phased out). Some even had the chance to take the controls. A common memory of the helicopter flights is recalled by Ian Morrison:

*Went there 1971 & flew in the Wessex. Sitting opposite the door I was told to put my seat belt on, why I asked? Reply: because we don't shut the door!*

In the 1960s a few cadets were given the chance to “fly” the simulator. The “team” souvenir photograph of the visit was in front of an aircraft; they ranged from the Lightning to the Harrier to the Wessex and other helicopters depending on the squadrons at Gütersloh.

Cadet WO Squires was the first to be awarded a Certificate of Good Service by the Air Officer Commanding Air Cadets. It was rare but not unknown for a cadet to reach the WO rank, another consequence of

turbulence. In 1968 Iain Sanderson and John Nightingale gained their glider wings after a course at RAF Halton. It was not all airborne in the RAF Section as PMK reported. The second paragraph sums up neatly the weekly activities of the RAF section:

*More recently the 4 mile march (in 55 minutes) produced initially some interest and later on several blisters.*

*The section is very well qualified in .22 shooting, holds a good proportion of ordinary and advanced proficiency certificates and the current examination squad is slowly but surely completing the syllabus for navigation and principles of flight for the ordinary proficiency examination in December.*

In 1980 the MOD allowed girls to join the RAF sections. Corporal M Ayling described the first recruitment in *Concordia* (Miss Hughes had taken over from PMK):

*The hardest task of the year (1981/82) for Miss Hughes was recruiting the cadets. A large number of girls turned up for the briefing (which included the good and bad side) Eventually twenty girls were chosen and the rest had to leave disappointed. Unfortunately the girls section must never be bigger than one third of the whole group.*

The 1982 visit to RAF Gütersloh had an additional hiccup to get over:

*Owing to the requirement for the girls to wear uniform, several trips were arranged to the supply flight for this purpose.*

As a result “we are the only girl’s RAF CCF Unit in Germany” and Cadet WO S Peacock could report:

*I am pleased to report that the expected difficulties (of a girls section) have been dealt with; the female component, under the tutelage of Miss Hughes, is now forming into a more-than-competent military body.*

*Captain Martel RAOC, who commanded the Contingent in the absence of a volunteer from the staff, continues to give excellent support to the*

*Army Section. Flying Officer Newbury took over as CO in November.*

## **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme**

The DofE Award Scheme started in the UK in 1956 for boys and 1958 for girls. It was quickly adopted in 1958 by BFES and Service Schools worldwide. At Windsor School in November 1958 a “*stimulating talk*” was given by Brigadier Folkard and Col Lowe, (a future Director of BFES), both Army Educational Corps, to help launch the activity. In the second year, 1960/61, the “*scheme took on a new lease of life*”. A report in *Concordia* continued:

*Finally I give my thanks to Mr Rattray, Mr Hodgson and Mr Ronald for their help during the term and especially to Mr Edmeades who has helped a great deal during the period when the running of the Scheme was being handed to me. G Hern*

Mr Geoff Hern was to organise the Scheme until 1980. Ably assisted later by Mr Ken Thompson at WBS, he left a very strong legacy.

That same year, at WGS, Anne Metcalfe gained the first Silver Medal for the school. Some of the courses were *The art of Make Up and Hairstyles, Child Care, Home Nursing*, and an overnight stay in a youth hostel near the Möhneseesee.

Mr Hern wasted no time. The following year he reported, pleased with 4 Silver and 21 Bronze candidates but, following the Fitness Test: “*It was obvious some boys had not trained enough*”.

The scheme grew slowly. In 1962–63 it averaged 25 per term with 8 bronze, 3 silver awards but “*unfortunately no boy has stayed long enough to follow through and take the gold award, although several have begun and left*”. At WGS there were 7 bronze and 2 silver candidates.

Some did achieve the Gold Award. Barbara Simpson took the Bronze at WGS, Silver and Gold at Queens and collected the Gold at Buckingham Palace whilst at Exeter University. Later, Lesley Chandler-Clare illustrated the peripatetic lifestyle of military children:

*I did DofE at both St. George's, Hong Kong and Windsor Girls' and then went on to co-ordinate the scheme at the first school I taught at.*

*Gained so much from it!*

The range of skill courses available gradually increased. Car maintenance, canoe building, first aid (often provided by Canadian army units from Soest). By 1966 the scheme had around 60 participants, including four closing in on the Gold Award. After their expedition to the Harz mountains, in 1967, Keith Buckley, Trevor Andrews, Geoff Soulsby and Dave Partridge became the first to achieve the Gold Award.

The rapid turnover of pupils continued to limit, but did not stop, the numbers progressing through the three levels. Dave Hodgson and John Pirrie did all three levels. The 1970s saw several Gold award including three sons of staff members. David Jones recalls:

*I did all three awards at WBS with my Gold expedition in Iceland. D of E was a great opportunity I have to say. I remember our first expedition from WBS where we drank beer after breakfast while walking but ran out of food and our last meal was tea leaves mixed with sugar!!!*

On that Iceland expedition:

*after a presentation at WBS about the British Schools Exploring Society I applied for an Iceland expedition and that counted as my Gold Expedition. Mind you it was something like 3 weeks on an ice cap! Brilliant.*

Martin Brindley recalls some of the attractions of the scheme:

*Those in the D of E got a day off school every term to go orienteering (with the girls!) and during summer term a week's camping.*

His brother Simon recalls the expeditions:

*The DofE went to the Harz for a week over by the East German border near Clausthal-Zellerfeld etc about 1970–73 and after that it was to the Sauerland not far from the Möhne See. Then to Altenilpe. That was the summer week. Saturday hikes were mostly in the Sauerland I think. Then sometimes we did weekend training expeditions around Hamm.*



The expeditions had the moments reported in *Concordia*:

*Sauerland 1968. Silver and Gold. 19 boys. Orchard borrowed from a farmer “it didn’t take us long to discover that the trees still bore fruit and even shorter to discover that Messrs Hern, Thompson and the farmer were not amused by this phase of our adventure training”.*

*Orienteering. New sport. 1st outing arrived at start to find 12 inches of snow. A “disadvantage not prepared for.”*

*Our two hopes for the Gold Award completed everything except for the expedition section. They failed this, to the disappointment of us all.*

Jones and the two Brindley’s and George Black went to Buckingham Palace to collect their Gold Awards. Jane Brindley reached bronze and silver at WGS and after leaving went on to Gold when back in the UK. She recalls:

*I also remember going to the German pool in the Kurpark to do our Bronze medallion lifesaving certificate.*

Mr Hern wrote in 1966:

*“the number of awards gained, although low when compared to similar schools in England, accounts for the majority of those in BAOR.*

Night exercises, camps, expeditions didn’t always work out; I’ll leave this memory as anonymous:

*unfortunately one of the groups was shown in its true colours; it got lost. They walked through mud, and thick woodland, in cold conditions for five hours, only to end up one hundred yards from where they had started.*

## **A miscellany of activities**

We see individual staff bringing their own interest to the activity list. Mr Howard, famed for his camera work, ran a film club. Successive heads of Rural Science/Studies (affectionately known as “Gaffers”) ran Young Farmers/Gardening/Natural History clubs.

Pamala Ross recalls from WGS in the 1960s:

*It depended on the skills of the staff. Miss Cormack was an Olympic grade fencer, although I didn't take that up. Miss Pugh taught archery. Miss Beckwith taught Scottish Dancing. There were photography clubs (including developing and printing photos in the darkroom in the basement of Sandringham House), there was also a pottery room down there. Horse riding, piano tuition – all “extra” and chargeable.*

At WBS in the 1970s Mr Tony Fox led a Heraldry course; Mr Dudley a Modern Music activity and there was a Disco/DJ activity later in the decade. In the early years the school magazines often reported on the activities but increasingly the reports disappeared.

Deborah Angell recalls the mix of sporting and “less strenuous” activities:

*Yoga, fencing, woodwork, piano lessons, needlework, pottery, stage make up, I did all these from 1972–77, in our 6th form we could go to the gym on Wednesday evening and the 6th form boys could join us, we played volleyball, basketball, badminton as well as mucking around and chatting.*

Here is a selection of activities along with some memories of pupils. A comprehensive survey would take too many volumes. I've chosen examples to illustrate the variety over the years.

## **1960s Film Club**

*It was actually called “Umbra” – Latin for The Shadow. I played a boy who wakes up one day alone in the school. All the others have been killed by a mysterious shadow (played by a paper bag tied to a glass stick casting its shadow). After various “adventures” I was finally caught by the shadow and died dramatically on the chapel steps. Great fun. (Nick Lord)*

## **1967 Junior Activity Club**

*It was a very brave decision to let 165 untamed first years loose in the heart of the woodland around the Möhnesee.*

## 1977 Kneelers

*1977 was Jubilee year, marked by some kneelers for the chapel at WGS. Such was the interest in these that kneelers became a full time activity for several terms and the chapel now has been beautified by the addition of some two dozen kneelers in various designs including a special school design incorporating the school badge and motto.  
(Padre Fillery)*

**1954 The Young Farmers' Club** was one of the first clubs to be formed. Initially for both boys and girls, for some reason it became boys only. Robert Norbury recalls:

*We rear our own livestock, consisting of chickens, turkeys, ducks, rabbits and the occasional stray pet that may wander in. teachers may complain about the YFC until they want a dozen eggs, maybe some flowers or a chicken plucked for their Sunday dinner!*

It was not just the odd bird culled. Throughout the 1960s boys recall executing ducks and chickens for the Christmas dinner (200 in 1962). Brian Bethel recalls:

*I was in the YFC for a few years in the 60s and recall raising chickens, geese, ducks and rabbits – which we thinned out periodically and sold to the teaching staff in the school.*

It became very popular, in 1962 there was a waiting list to join. The Club gained membership of the UK National Federation of YFCs. An article in *Farmers Weekly* in 1955 about the club was perhaps the first time the school was in the British media!

At WGS the **Gardening Club** became the **Animal Society** and then the **Natural History Society**.

## 1950s Model Railways and Maths WS

*I was also in the model railway club located in the basement of the house. My extra-curricular activities included the maths club, and the chess club. I once represented the house in the internal school chess competition.*

## **1970s orphanage visiting WGS**

*I remember we had to sign up to 2 activities. I remember volunteering for orphanage visiting as it was one of the things that happened outside the school gates with Padre Thackery. (Lyn Hartley)*

## **1978 War Games WBS**

*This activity assembles in the old Staff Mess (at WBS) each Monday and prepares for battle. Mr Badham's foreboding shadow looms over the war games group as he surveys the happy atmosphere of this successful activity.*

## **1978 Chess WBS**

*This seems to be one of the popular activities which is run by Mr Hanslip and Mr Carey. There are approximately fifteen games running at the same time. The club's biggest achievement in the match against the Märkisches Gymnasium.*

## **1978 Violin WGS**

*The activity has five members under the supervision of Mr Marsh. "he tries to teach them in a calm manner – thrashing them with the bows and strangling them with the A string".*

## **1962 Sixth Form Russian WGS**

*Nowadays we are always being told that Russian is the language of the future and, not wishing to let ourselves appear behind the times, six capitalist members of the Upper Sixth (with obvious left-wing tendencies) decided to learn the language.*

## **1965 Literary Society WGS**

*The first reading of this society was the play "A Man for All Seasons" by Robert Bolt. Not content with this we attempted, with much enthusiasm and a variety of Lancashire accents, the light hearted "Hobsons Choice."*

## **1957 The Windsor Press**

*Firstly it teaches one in small stages the correct method to set up, type, design and layout, lino cuts and many other items. It also caters for the school itself in printing such items as programmes, invitation cards, sports fixture cards, Xmas dinners menus, and many other additions that somebody or other would like printed (within limits).*

## **1954 Windsor Society/Sixth Form Society**

The activity went under various names; at times a joint effort from both schools, others each school ran independently. An opportunity for debate, brains trusts and balloon debates. Teachers, other pupils, and visitors often led the event. In 1956 the society voted against abolishing capital punishment by 61 to 38 votes and heard from a Major Archer of the “*African soldier reacting to the sight of civilisation*” and Mr Wilkerson’s interests in medieval misericords. In 1966 Mr Thompson reviewed the year:

*Other matters raised at the discussion included: prisons, Capital Punishment, Windsor Schools Discipline, Flogging, Drug Addiction, populations Control etc. of course some of this was tame stuff we did however have our flashes of calculated invective. But what have been the highlight of the term? Well, Miss Evans’ lecture on Dylan Thomas certainly.*

In 1969 the 6<sup>TH</sup> Form Society at WGS addressed a very topical issue through a Brains Trust with Padre Thackery, Miss Blake, Dr Semmelroth (Dupont) and Mr Marsden (WBS) with Mr Tarling:

*The fourth question “Americans on the Moon”. This ended with many of the members of the audience joining in and almost everyone agreed the money spent on projects which involved “moon-visits” could be used to better purposes here on earth.*

By the late 1970s the society became more a social occasion with discussions around school topics (the state of the new common room, money raising activities and integration with the Hamm Youth Club).

## **1960s Car Driving at WBS**

A request from the school council to buy a car for driving lessons introduced Frank O'Hanlon and Godwin D'Anastasi to driving:

*In 60s I had driving lessons in a Black VW Beetle at the school.*

*We also had a grey Taunus in 63–65. I learnt how to drive in it.*

In summer 1967 there were 14 learners, under the watchful eye of Mr Spankie.

## **1970s Health and Beauty WGS**

*one of the teachers held a health and beauty club. We thought we were going to learn how to put make up on but spent most of the time learning how to cleanse and use astringent!!!! (Liz Gardiner)*

And crochet, ballet, ballroom and Scottish dancing, highland dancing (with blunt swords on the floor), piano, guitar, clarinet lessons (extra charge), bridge, photography, and more.

Just a small window into the wide variety of activities. Did the schools live up to the aspiration of “busy life outside school hours”? Certainly. For many it is the recollection of their activities (strenuous and less than strenuous) which contributes to their fond memories of Windsor.

## **1981 Parachuting**

The Joint Services Parachuting Centre at Bad Lippspringe saw Mr Moore and seven intrepids learning to jump from an Islander plane. Jane Gysin, Mark Wood, Steve Lewis, Laurence McGovern, Raymond Kaye, Lindsey Kitchen and Steve Jensen spent two days learning and then managed two jumps a day.

*What's it like, that first time? At jump-time, the adrenaline (better known as butterflies) rushes through your body. It really was fight or flight for us!*

## A busy (sporting) life

Mr Peter Ellis, head of PE at WBS, 1974 to 1980, recalls:

*I must admit the sport at WBS/WGS was amazing, and I was proud to be a PE teacher at the time ..... it really was '7-days-a-week', with PE lessons, after-school training and clubs, and weekend 'inter-house' competitions, and 'inter-school' matches ..... brilliant.*

From table tennis in the house day rooms to sailing on the Möhne See there was something for (probably) everyone. Over 30 sports and games were available (not all at the same time). Some, athletics, football, hockey, basketball, netball, were ever present; others such as judo, riding, boxing, fencing, skiing and volleyball, came, went and in some cases returned.

In keeping with military and public school tradition, Wednesday afternoons were devoted to sports. Weekends saw the sports fields and gyms fully utilised with sports: inter-house and school teams. Spare time after lessons was often devoted to practice or simply recreational playing between friends. The main sports had an annual cycle. At WGS, hockey was the dominant sport in the autumn term, netball in the spring and athletics, swimming and tennis in the summer. At WBS, football took the honours in the autumn term, rugby (15-a-side, then 7-a-side) in the spring and athletics and cricket in the summer.

The sports section in many editions of *Ambassador* and *Concordia* was the largest section. In the early years the reports were detailed, in the 1960s they became sparser and picked up again during the 1970s and 1980s. Pen portraits of players, especially at school level, ranged from a pithy one liner (from positive to humorous) to a critical analysis of the players contribution to the team (the latter more often coming from the PE teachers running that

particular sport). The final *Concordia* in 1983 had 29 team photos and reports; probably most pupils were in one photo or another. The house notes in editions of *Ambassador* and *Concordia* illustrated the emotions that winning, or losing (and at times simply taking part), that inter-house sports generated. The support and enthusiasm of sporting housemistresses/masters and duty staff was warmly acknowledged.

The schools had two full time PE teachers (sometimes three) but many others coached on a part time basis. Often a new teacher brought a new sport into the portfolio. The sporting facilities were also of good quality (except the swimming pools). The sports field at Windsor/WBS was the grassed over parade ground. Tim Feast recalls:

*in the winter when it got badly worn/churned up you could see the granite block cobbles of the original parade ground underneath. The turf was probably only 6 inches deep.*

Kathleen Wilkie recalls from the 1950s:

*We also played soft ball in the summer on there. Rounders was played on the field behind the church.*

For its first few years athletics at Windsor School had an unconventional track: 300 metres around the cricket field. The gym at Windsor School/WBS was exceptionally large, ideal for 5-a-side football and basketball. The crowd could create a considerable atmosphere, intimidating at times for visiting opponents. Specialist equipment, for fencing, sub-aqua etc could be funded from the amenities funds (topped up from school fete proceeds).

## **Playing for the house**

Sports came into their own at house level. With the range of inter-house competitions on offer it often seemed as though virtually every house member took part in one sport or another; if not as a player then certainly as a spectator. In 1957 Caernarvon House notes recorded:

*The boys returned after Christmas full of the festive spirit which was soon transformed into games spirit in view of the imminent soccer, basketball, boxing and rugby contests.*



*Ambassador* 1962 gives another indication:

*The house matches have again been contested very keenly. Junior hockey matches were played for the first time, where several promising players were noticed. Senior teams often have to be selected from a very small number. It is most commendable to see girls, though studying very hard and whose talents on the games field are not at all outstanding turning up to make up the numbers.*

A Google search of “importance of sport in schools” brings up a range of attributes: leadership, teamwork, abiding by rules, fitness and health. In a boarding school the inter-house match, far more than in day schools, contributed to the cohesion and camaraderie of the houses. With often only 60–90 pupils in a house, spread through all age groups, it is easy to see that most would be team members somewhere: providing junior, intermediate and senior teams of hockey or football means 33 players (no substitutes in those days): half the house. It was not uncommon at times to call for “army volunteers.” As the numbers ran down in the 1980s it became a considerable effort to fill all the places. It was fortunate that the schools ran a wide programme of activities for those not inclined to be athletic. Even in the final year, with dwindling numbers the school still managed to enter girls teams into the BFES Festivals in athletics, rounders, swimming, volleyball, hockey, netball and cross-country and run inter-house competitions.

These next quotes are from WGS house notes in 1961 and 1962; they could apply to WBS and in all years:

*The hockey team and the junior netball team were also unsuccessful.  
(Marlborough)*

*On the sports field both the junior and senior hockey and netball teams worked hard. (Edinburgh)*

*Our outstanding achievement was winning the junior hockey cup.  
(Balmoral)*

*In the tennis we managed to get into the finals but unfortunately did not quite manage to beat Marlborough. (Caernarvon)*

In athletics, held “*in glorious weather on Speech Day*”:

*Edinburgh increased their lead as the day wore on. They won eventually with comparative ease, which was due to keenness, hard work and even early morning training!*

Over at WBS the inter-house matches created their own enthusiasm, but not always winning, as Balmoral reported one year:

*The house did very well in the cross country competition.*

*Balmoral has had a very unsuccessful term as far as sport is concerned. In all our age groups we failed to gain any cups in football, basketball or rugby.*

*The seniors were also beaten in the rugby tournament 3–0 by Edinburgh. This was a great disappointment to the team as they had devoted a lot of their time to training.*

Caernarvon also had their weaknesses but still found a positive shine:

*In the field of sport our juniors seemed to have excellent spirit, although they lacked skill. On the whole the spring term was very successful. Most of the events which took place proved to be exciting and enjoyable to all concerned. As usual we had our share of wins and failures but in sport we were unfortunate in not winning any cups. However it was clearly seen that the teams which represented the house showed sportsmanship, skill and courage.*

The non-playing members had a role to play, even if at times their support wavered:

*Banners were held high but the house supporters steadily drifted away as we plunged to defeat.*

To spare their blushes this house will remain anonymous!

## **Rain, snow, ice may stop play**

Many sporting events were affected by the weather. *Artic, ice and snow,*

*below zero being common reasons but some games took place with a wet pitch and blinding snow storm and several thermometers have been broken by nervous bathers testing the temperature of the water before taking the plunge this year. The adverse weather precedent was set at the very first Sports Day in 1954:*

*Our first Sports Day should have been held at the end of the summer term but torrential rain, resulting in a flooded track, forced postponement until the beginning of the autumn term. On the re-arranged date, October 14, good fortune favoured us with beautiful weather. We were also fortunate in so much as we were able to borrow the Jahn Stadion and enjoy the benefit of an excellent running track and jumping pits.*

The Jahn Stadion hosted the athletics competitions for two more years before the playing fields came into full use. WBS also used the Stadion for its first few years. Both schools used their own athletics facilities until 1980 when, in advance of the merger, the Sports Day was once again held at the Stadion and remained there until the school's closure.

Of course the variety of sports could not satisfy everyone, as "mystified" of 1954 wrote to the editor of *Concordia*:

*Dear Sir,*

*May I ask why soccer takes precedence over all other winter activities? My experience is that in most schools in England today (1953), the boys live and die for their sport. My house, it seems, is soccer mad. They talk soccer at meals, in bed, anywhere and any times. Frankly I cannot understand it. I would like to know how many people can find enjoyment in sprinting around a field punting a piece of leather.*

*None of these football enthusiasts ever thinks of playing a game of ruggor or hockey. I have played football and to say I have not enjoyed the game would be untrue. But I have also played ruggor and the feeling after a good game has been gratifying, both physically and mentally, which I cannot say for football.*

*Please would someone enlighten me, a poor misguided rugger player?*

*Yours truly*

*“Mystified”*

Sporting success brings joy: recalled by Brian Livingston:

*Just for the record, in the 67/68 inter-house Football Cup I scored an early goal to beat Sandringham and eventually won the Cup. That unforgettable moment of going into supper with 100 boys cheering and hitting the tables with their cutlery.*

House colours were awarded to the leading players in many sports.

## **Playing for the School**

Different sports had different opponents but they tended to fall into three main groups: other BFES schools; army and RAF teams; and within formal leagues. Inter-school games often meant junior, intermediate and senior matches. House notes often record with pride when their members are selected for the school team. The award of school colours for a sport (usually marked with a tie) was equally a proud moment.

School opponents varied both by sport and by period. In the early 1950s the inter-school matches were bilateral:

*Especially should we like to refer to our meetings with Prince Rupert School and King Alfred, the first of many fixtures to come, we hope. Keen and friendly competition of this sort is a fine spur and we look forward as we grow older, to meeting them in ‘open’ competition and including the Queen’s School München Gladbach, on our fixture-list.*

In autumn 1961 BFES introduced Festivals in a wide range of sports bringing together the five secondary schools (Queens, PRS, Kings and the two Windsor Schools).

Army and RAF sides formed a major element of school matches. Boys and girls against adults did not always go the way of the adults. In several sports teachers played for the school. The Canadian Schools at Soest and local German schools were often opponents. In October 1966 the WBS football,

rugby and basketball teams made a week's tour of Gloucestershire. Each team played four matches (with some players doubling up) against schools and teacher training colleges.

The WBS hockey team in the mid-1960s seem to be the pioneers in playing in formal leagues. During the 1970s several teams, from both schools, played in Hamm leagues often under the umbrella of a German club.

We saw in Part A Mr Farrar making an impassioned plea after funding cuts. Funding from the schools amenities fund helped as did other fund raising activities including as Deborah Angell recalls:

*who remembers I think it was in 72/73, getting sponsorships and swimming up to 20 lengths in the Girls' School pool, and the money used was to buy a mini bus. (I remember being chuffed as I did the 20 lengths and getting quite a bit of money towards it).*

In 1956 Ellen Geyer led the hockey team and Brian Terry won three events on Sports Day. They started a trend. Head Girls and Head Boys often featured strongly in various sports. *Concordia* in 1955: "mention must be made of Buckley, who is only just 15, and who came second in approximately 59 seconds". Gertrude Scott, Babs Odams, Robert Sherrell, Mike Sheard, Peter and Keith Buckley, Bill Gent, Iain Butler, Iain Aberdeen are just some of the Head Girls and Boys excelling at various sports. Was sporting prowess and leadership a factor in choice of Head Girl/Boy?

## **The Sports Almanac**

It would take another book to record 30 years of 30+ sports and games. Rather than attempting a comprehensive almanac of results and players, here is a miscellany of reports culled from the school magazines and social media memories. Between them they not only record some highlights of the individual sport but also the scope and depth of sporting interactions.

## **Archery**

*During the summer term (1956) the Windsor Archers continued to flourish, meeting twice a week in the "safe area" behind the Chapel on the as yet new field. The Club was limited to senior girls as we had*

*only a small amount of equipment and although we lost no arrows during the whole season due to the number of younger boys who were interested spectators and willing arrow retrievers.*

Miss Pugh was the driving force behind the activity which continued at WGS (although probably not with the help of younger boys).

## **Athletics**

Athletics was the staple sport of the summer term but:

*The Athletics season is always, of necessity, short affair. With the May winds and rain usually making their presence felt, the whole of June and very early part of July serve to constitute the "season."*

It may have been a short season but it was packed. Pride of place was the annual inter-house Sports Day. Sometimes held on the afternoon of Speech Day at junior, intermediate and senior level it engaged a fair proportion of the school. At Windsor School in the 1950s and 1980s the boys and girls competitions took place together. It did not only occupy pupils. The programme for the 1965 Sports Day at WBS listed 26 members of staff in various officiating roles. This halved two years later as more boys officiated after taking the Umpires and Referees activity. The 1967 Sports Day programme lists over 150 boys taking part in the track events. The field events had already taken place. Probably one in three boys at the school took part.

The 1950s the races were over metric distances; in the 1960s over yards and back to metres in the 1970s. Some novel events took place: girls threw the rounders or cricket ball and boys had the tug of war. In the 1950s girls were limited to racing 150 metres; by 1983 third years were running the 1,500 metres.

It is unfortunate that the school magazines did not always record school records. There are occasional references to "new school record" but not enough to discern a gradual or rapid improvement. To give just one example. in 1956, M Osborne won the girls senior long jump with 5 feet 9½ inches (4.80m). In 1977 Virginia Kitchen almost equalled this with 4.77m (but still retained her 80m hurdles record).

The *Courier*, the magazine of Queens, reported in 1957 on the first multi-sport visit by Windsor:

*Our Windsor friends stayed with us for a weekend fixture during the summer and this proved to be quite a successful experiment and likely to be repeated. Once again, they proved to be better all-round performers at Swimming, Cricket and Athletics.*

Training was serious. In 1960 Mr Rattray, head of PE, was very sharp in his criticism of certain boys who “*only trained for three months*”. Two years later his criticism bore fruit:

*Troops of athletes could be seen training vigorously throughout the spring term in a valiant effort to remove surplus fat.*

It must have worked. The school team won the BFES Festival, took part in the Canadian Brigade championships (Barnes winning the Boys Champion award) and played German teams in the Westfalen Youth championships. Five boys went to the national inter-schools championships at the White City, London with considerable success. Tim Gadd won the junior AAA long jump with 19 feet 4 inches and Kennedy reached the final of the senior long jump.

Bob Sherrell, ex-KAS, was successful as he came up the age groups, with a speciality in the one lap race. He made this tantalising comment after that season, just what was he alluding to?

*Overall this has been one of the best in the history of our school athletics and it is to be hoped our young potential “record breakers” are not lured into “riotous living” as has been many the case with many of our senior athletes.*

The next Head of PE, and athletics coach, Mr Dave Ross introduced his review of the 1966 season with:

*We have had a keen bunch of athletes who have worked hard and produced commendable results. But we have lacked the inspiration of the stars of the past. We have not had a Green, a Gadd or a Sherrell to inspire their teammates to greater efforts.*

We have heard of Gadd and Sherrell. Ian Green (and a deputy head boy)

was an outstanding sprinter, probably the best the school saw. He outlined his career:

*I was in Carnarvon 1963/65. Went on to represent Great Britain in the sprints from 1969 to 1971 including the European championships in Athens in 1969 and won a bronze medal in the Commonwealth games in Edinburgh in 1970 representing England.*

## **A snapshot: 1966**

A special supplement in the 1966 *Concordia* allows us to see the athletics season in greater depth. Published as a duplicated booklet it evaded the usual problem that the athletics season came too late for the *Concordia* summer deadline.

The usual match against Soest did not take place (the Canadians were *not doing athletics that year*). The junior and intermediates won their triangular tournament against PRS and Gloucester. The junior and senior teams beat Aldegraver Gymnasium but lost against Freihur Von Stein Gymnasium, the first defeat in five years against this school. The BFES Finals for junior and lower junior, at WBS, saw over 100 boys competing. Randy Hudson and F Daly won all three of their events, Tim Buckley won both of his. Randy Hudson recalled the day

*Later, unexpectedly being called to the front of assembly and receiving my school colors tie from Mr Wylie was one of the biggest shocks and pleasures of my young life.*

The BFES senior championships at Rheindahlen coincided with the swimming matches. *“It was a pleasant sight to see winners coming from the “new” day schools.”* The inter-house sports were held on three days with the track finals on the afternoon of Speech Day. Mr Ross summed up the year:

*The captain K Buckley and the “Old Hands” M Sheard D Pipes N Turner and J Massara deserve a special word of praise for their personal efforts and for the way which they encouraged the younger members of the squad.*



## **BFES Festivals expand to Zones**

By the mid-1970s the BFES Festival was divided into zone championships. Winners and runners up in each event went to run for their zone in the final, normally held at the Rote stadium in Dortmund (in 1978, the Schalke 04 football stadium).

The two Windsor schools sent a large contingent to the finals; in 1978 WGS sent 25 girls. The two schools were by far the largest in BFES. As the only boarding school by this time the schools benefitted from more time and better facilities for training compared to the day schools.

1978 saw two significant successes, this time at national level. Two girls qualified for the All England Schools Championships. Third year Beverley Fox in 100m and 200m and Linda le-Cun in the senior javelin. This was the first time WGS girls had qualified for the championships (and it seems no boys since Tim Gadd). Linda came in the top 10, a considerable achievement.

The report on the 1982 season ended with the proud record:

*As usual after eight weeks of the term the school sports loomed as the competitive beginning of the season. A keenly fought contest saw most of the winners and runners-up representing the school the following week at the regional Mid-Zone meeting held, like the school event at the magnificent Jahn Stadium in Hamm. This was to be our last year as hosts for this meeting due to the 1983 closure. As a school we were keen to end this era by continuing our remarkable record of 1<sup>st</sup> place in the zone meeting every year since its inception in 1972*

## **Athletics: the Sherrell Cup**

From 1965 until the school closed, the Sherrell Cup/Trophy was a feature of the WBS inter-house athletics. The trophy had been presented by Robert Sherrell, Head Boy in 1963–64, an outstanding athlete. On leaving WBS he went to train as a PE teacher but unfortunately a severe car crash resulted in his confinement to a wheelchair. Undaunted he continued his teacher training and taught technical drawing subjects in schools for many years. It was mainly awarded for the 400 metres or 4x400m relay:

*The Sherrell Trophy provided the curtain-raiser to the season once again, with the difference that this year the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years ran separate races in view of their respective larger numbers. (1981)*

## **Athletics The Milocarian Trophy**

The Milocarian Trophy was organised by the Milocarian Club (a club for officers from all Services) after the war and aimed at public and grammar schools. The Amateur Athletic Association later took over organisation. It had an ingenious way of enabling schools to compete without actually meeting. The detailed rules changed over time but generally each school had to enter 20% of its 16 and 17 year olds up to 30 boys. They each took part in three to five events at their own school. Rather like the decathlon each event had a table of points. The winner was the school with the highest average of points. During the 1950s, KAS, PRS and Windsor took part. KAS won the competition six times, an exceptional performance given the competition in the UK. Its best result was in 1958 behind KAS and PRS.

In 1961 the WBS entered a team of 14 boys. It expected its average of 42.5 points to be enough to be in the top six of schools although Leggett, the best athlete of the year, was slightly too old to be in the team. It appears that Windsor dropped out of the competition in the following years. (PRS continued the BFES successes by winning it three times in the 1960s).

## **Athletics: Standards and the AAA 5\***

Athletes in the Windsor School competed in the Standard Tests: points scored for performances in five events (100 yards, High Jump, Long Jump, Hop, Step and Jump and Throwing. It's not clear what was thrown!). 93 girls achieved 60% or higher and 15 reached all 5 standards. Boys also competed for the standards which were part of the inter-house competition.

In the 1970s the schools adopted the similar Amateur Athletic Associations (AAA) Five Star scheme. The results in 1976 were a typical year:

*Every girl has the opportunity to learn every athletic event and her achievements earn her an individual certificate and house points which count towards the athletic trophy. In the summer of 1976 the following awards were presented*

107	<i>1 star award</i>
123	<i>2 star award</i>
63	<i>3 star award</i>
25	<i>4 star award</i>
5	<i>5 star award</i>

At WBS, in 1978, Mr “Pop” Farrar reported, after noting Balmoral “emerged triumphant”:

*Although the school average did rise slightly, I would be happier to see it rise past the three mark, for all houses, as I am sure there is this potentiality within the school as a whole. Is there a house which can challenge the Balmoral superiority this year? I hope so!*

## **Badminton**

*This is becoming an extremely popular game in the Senior Girl’s part of the school and we now have two activities weekly. From these a team was chosen to play in our first inter school fixture against PRS. Our girls performed very well and won all their matches. 1959.*

By 1964 matches were played against the Canadian Senior School in Soest and a German Youth club from Berge. Five years later a Sunday evening badminton club was in full flow with mixed couples. Opponents included the staff and Canadian Schools.

## **Basketball**

*As we the end of another basketball season I feel I can look back with a great deal of satisfaction. During the Christmas term we lost only one game, and this term two, both at the Soest international Tournament. This means we won 22 out of 25 games. However this is not the main source of my satisfaction – I shall always remember this year’s basketball because of the fine squad of boys who made up the team.*

Mr Morgan's generous appreciation of the 1968 squad marked a high point of basketball. The sport had had a slow start. In 1956 only four games were played in each term, although it was felt the sport was gaining a foothold. The game against PRS had an unusual interruption:

*The referee was forced to stop the game twice and request less cheering from the spectators as the players were unable to hear the combined blasts of the two whistles.*

By 1959 the first team played 10 matches and an "A" team entered the Canadian High Schools tournament: a regular event until the Canadians left in 1970. The 1961 team won the school's first trophy: the Hamm Schools Trophy.

Inter-school rivalry was no different to other sports. *Cavalier*, the PRS school magazine, in 1965 reported:

*The highlight of the winter games was the final match of the BFES Senior Basketball Festival at Hamm, where, at long last, PRS defeated Windsor Boys' School.*

The inter-house matches continued. By the mid-1960s they were run in a league format at three age groups (and counted towards the Cock House prize).

Mr Morgan ended his praise for the 1967/68 team (who defeated PRS 52–17) with a regretful tone:

*It would be impossible to speak of each individual player but I am sure the team would like me to mention Dave Hodgson who has done a fine job as Captain. I am extremely sorry to say that for various reasons none of these lads return to Hamm next September.*

This was "turbulence extreme" when of the 480 pupils in July only 200 were expected to return.

*It was quite obvious that the American continent is the home of Basketball.*

A throwaway line from the 1962 *Concordia* came back to bite in 1968/69. For the next 8 seasons up to half the squad were American "daybugs". The 8-

strong team at the 1969 Soest International Tournament included 3 Du Ponters.

A quick detour. Basketball was not only a WBS activity. In 1969 senior and junior teams from WGS played in a Basketball Jamboree at Soest Senior School. A senior team, including Mary Ann Eagles, Babs Odams, Sue Andrew and Sue Pepper, lost both matches *“since we played only the occasional game of basketball.”*

The 1973/74 BFES final was contested between WBS “A” and “B” teams! And the “A” team only won after extra time. That year Mr Dudley had some sharp words on the inter-house games:

*In some cases, however, a natural desire for victory blossomed into a somewhat unsporting propensity to question referee’s decisions. This cannot be tolerated, and during next season as in this one, it will not be tolerated.*

The “American Wave” was almost spent after 1974/75. Mr Dudley commented:

*I should like to thank Greg Oxford, team captain, for his efforts over the last three years. He is undoubtedly the best outside shooter we have had in the school. Along with Bobby Hoffman, who is also leaving, he helped form the best mid-court combination we have ever had.*

The 1977 review started with a common lament of coaches:

*The season started off with the youngest and most inexperienced squad we have had for years.*

But despite this initial obstacle:

*The BFES Festival saw us reach the final for at least the tenth year in succession. In this time the only BFES school to beat us has been AFCENT.*

The AFCENT school from Brunssum in the Netherlands fielded Americans and Canadians. They played in the BFES Festivals. The 1974/75 final against them was the highlight of that season; WBS won. The popularity of

Basketball was more than evident in 1979/80 when the 3<sup>rd</sup> year team was being selected. Almost 40 boys turned up seeking one of the 15 places.

## **Boxing**

Boxing was a regular sport throughout the Windsor School period and into the first years of WBS. Boys boxed at both junior and senior levels in inter-house and matches against other schools:

*In the first house Boxing Championships thirty two boys competed, nearly all of whom were closely matched. (1955)*

*After ten months of boxing Windsor School held its own in a match for the first time drawing sixteen points in all. It was very pleasing to know that our boxers were equal to the best of Prince Rupert School. The match was remarkable for the aggression and courage shown by all boxers. (1956)*

By 1960 the school resumed matches against the younger section of a German club:

*Out of a total of 44 boxers in the house championships this year, some twenty have boxed for the School.*

A no holds barred report on boxing came the following year:

*This year the boxing was held on the afternoon of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> of February. It was indeed the lowest standard of boxing the school has ever seen. Many of the boxers lacked the stamina necessary for three rounds and were obviously unfit. Several seemed to lack skill and experience as there was a lot of unnecessary dancing around showing little economy of effort.*

Boxing was discontinued in 1964. The School Council passed a motion calling for its re-introduction. It was not; the official reason being “no master was available at present.”

## **Cricket**

Cricket, played on a matting wicket over a shale base, had relatively few school matches, at times as few as six and rarely more than ten. The cricket nets were originally next to the swimming pool but moved to behind the chapel in 1956. The season usually opened with a match against the staff (in various guises, Headmaster's XI or Mr Riley's XI...housemaster and *a very good wicketkeeper and big hitting batsman* as Robert Oakley recalled) and sometimes a Parents XI. External matches were limited; the first opponents being BMH Iserlohn and 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Workshop. KAS was initially the only school played, with alternating annual visits. The early 1960s saw a slow expansion of opponents: RAF Gütersloh and King's School. By the late 1960s the team played a regular 9 or 10 matches a season. Queens was by now the only school played and RAF Wildenrath joined RAF Gütersloh. Modesty should forgive this 1967 quote:

*S Green has been a useful spin bowler at times, although inclined to be expensive. Although basically a defensive batsman, he has also scored his share of runs.*

A matting wicket is better suited for bowling than batting. Annual reviews in *Concordia* often lamented the weakness of the batting. Individual scores tended to be low; a score of 20 to 30 being a success. Clayton hit 79 against the Parents XI in 1956. In 1960 school captain, and leading batsmen, Rodney Fox made 97 whilst playing for the Staff XI. This seems to be the best score by a pupil. The only century recorded appears to be the 104 not out by Mr Grant against 22 Signals Regiment in 1968.

The best bowling seems to be Derek Williams who was a very effective fast bowler in 1967 and 1968, returning 8–27 against F.S Depot in 1968 when he took 33 wickets in 7 matches. Armstrong's 7 for 24 against 22 Signals Regiment in 1967 being the next best. Teachers often played for the school against military sides. As well as Mr Grant, Mr Gibbs, the coach, and Mr Rodgers turned out for the school in the late 1960s.

In 1969 only six matches were played. Reviews in *Concordia* fall away after 1968: it was published before the season ended.

Inter-house matches, at senior, intermediate and junior level were well underway by 1956. Often played on a knockout basis they were keenly fought and continued until the close of the school. In the 1970s the pitch was moved

from the front playing field to the back field, the shale base probably interfering with the football and rugby pitches. Iain Butler confirms:

*tackling the opposition in the Concordia Sevens on this strip resulted in much removal of skin!*

In 1979 Hillsborough beat all the other five houses. A final was arranged Hillsborough versus the Rest of the School. Unusually it was a two innings match ending with victory for the school.

## **Cross Country, Steeplechase and Bridge to Bridge**

A sport where the weather was a key factor:

*In 1956 the inter-house race was held before Christmas “as the usual cold weather in February and March invariably restricts training and is liable impose strain on the boys, particularly the keen spirited ones who entre the competition late, solely to support their house.*

Twenty years later Mr Peter Ellis recalls:

*I remember, vaguely, [maybe December 1975 or December 1976] it started to snow on New Year’s Eve ..... and it continued, intermittently, until Easter the next year. The playing fields were ‘out of commission’ ... they could not be used for games for months... and we all had to share the indoor facilities ... the GYM ...so, being reasonably young [?] and fit, I used to organise ‘cross-country runs,’ on the snowy roads/footpaths outside of the school, around the local villages, but finishing off back on the WBS ‘front field’ .....these runs seemed quite popular [anything to get out of the school gates] ... and, to be honest, I think we all enjoyed them ..... particularly as they usually ended up with a ‘mass snow-ball fight; on the ‘front field.’*

The two schools held different cross-country races. At WGS Deborah Angell remembers the “bridge to bridge” race in the Kurpark. Held every spring term; all first to fourth years had to take part:

*Ran from the bridge down the one side to the other bridge, crossed the bridge ran up the other side and finished once to climb the steps to top*



*of the bridge. It was freezing when we ran it, wearing our navy blue knickers and white t-shirts, I knew loads of girls would smoke and walk it.*

The distance was around 1,600 metres and in 1977 the record was held by a third year, Fiona Stoddart, in 7 minutes 30 seconds. For the really keen, Miss Walshe held an activity for practise.

The annual steeplechase was, at WBS, one of the least favourite sporting events not least because it often took place in poor weather in February or March. A race around the school grounds, with added obstacles including a water pit and a net pinned to the ground:

*Despite the Monsoon like conditions of this year's steeplechase, the teams turned out in high spirits, especially members of both senior teams who eagerly awaited their race to the echoes of "Jerusalem" and "We shall Overcome". (1983)*

*It was a cold day and the courses both junior and senior were waterlogged owing to the heavy rain which had fallen a few days before. (1962)*

Gez Jerry Gilmer has a vivid memory:

*ohhh let's do it at the coldest time of the year, right you lot off you go and don't forget head down and push when you go under the net pinned to the front pitch so low you literally had no room other than to crawl, hats off to the organisers who made the long jump pit into the Himalayas though.*

Graham Kenny has a more positive view:

*Here comes a big head from 68/69, trained for it with my CCF army boots on and won it by a mile.*

## **Fencing**

The arrival of Mr Backhouse prompted the introduction of fencing. In 1978, 11 pupils (4 from WGS, 7 from WBS) gained the Amateur Fencing Association bronze awards for foil. The examiner was WOII Cooper of the

Army School of Physical Education at Sennelager. The following year saw a setback: there was a problem obtaining an army instructor so no awards were achieved. Soon overcome, bronze and silver awards were met in subsequent years. In the final year of the school 3 girls and 9 boys continued fencing until the option shut down at Easter.

## **Football**

Football was not spared the consequences of turbulence:

*The ever-present problem in a school where boys rarely stay for more than one season, and where the number of senior boys is, as yet, is one of finding replacements. (1956)*

*The task of forming an almost completely at the start of the season is always difficult. (1960)*

*A full fixture list, with few cancelations, a virtually new team and a new administration produced the poorest opening to the season that the 1<sup>st</sup> XI can have enjoyed for many years. (1966)*

Headmaster Wylie, who doubled up as the school football coach, made a plea at the end of a successful second half of that 1966 season:

*If the team, which is now closely knit, breaks up, it will be a pity – but until we have that excellent American system of sports scholarships (in our case retention for players) we must look forward to re-creating a team each season and sometimes each term.*

We saw in Part A that the school was “young” in the 1950s. Sports teams consequently took several years to have senior sides. The teams gradually matured enabling a greater range of opponents. The 1958 team played 16 matches with this strategy:

*Frequent matches against service sides gave ample opportunity for weaknesses to be removed before the matches against our sister schools.*

Was it a successful approach? Queens were beaten (in a blizzard (5–1);

KAS won 3–0 (in 3 inches of snow) and PRS won 3–1 (weather not reported). *Merely to participate can be as rewarding as to win* was the chivalrous summary by captain Healey. The season ended:

*by a sound victory over a gallant yet labouring staff team. The final score shall remain hidden in the archives of time.*

House matches in the spring of 1961 were six-a-side, played in a single day with Marlborough winning. Unlike many subsequent 5 and 6-a-side games these were played outdoors. The 1965 BFES senior tournament was cancelled but the school won the U15 tournament, beating Queens 5–1. Wilkinson scoring 9 goals in the three games. The senior house final deserves special mention:

*Played on 2 inches of snow, the lines having been cleared by a large number of junior Volunteers.*

Success did arrive in 1968:

*Despite a large influx of inexperienced players this term, the team has done exceptionally well, reaching its peak in the BFES Football Tournament which it won very convincingly.*

In the 1970s the team was playing in local German leagues and cups, winning the “Stadt Trophy” in 1974. The report on the 1975 season by team captain Steve Hollis opened “*The first 21 matches were played without loss*”. With a weekly match in the German league the team managed 40 matches in the season, winning 29 and losing only 6. After losing in the final in 1973 and 1974 it was third time lucky for the team in the BFES Senior Festival. Winning on penalties was enough to beat Kent School. Sam Weller scored 45 goals that season (a record)

In 1977 Mr Farrar reported on a successful year (194 goals for, 35 against, winning 27 losing only 3) but concluded:

*This year we are losing the entire squad so next year will be back to square one.*

And *Concordia* duly reported in 1978:

*This year Mr Farrar has probably seen the most inexperienced squad ever, forming the 1<sup>st</sup> XI*

The 4<sup>th</sup> year team won their age group BFES Festival for 3 years running in the mid-1970s. In 1976 the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> year team, playing as S.C Westtunnen II, finished in the top three of their Sunday League division. Scot Innes recalls the time:

*My best sporting memories are playing for the 1st XI in my 5th year a small number of us got into the team alongside the older lads and we played in the local under 18 league, we also played other BFES Schools and we won the Football Festival held at WBS. In my 6th year I had the honour of being made Captain of the 1st XI which was run by the late great Pop Farrer.*

Not all football was formal as Mr Hern recalls:

*In the 70s the 5-a-side developed into a regular Friday evening inter-house unofficial tournament with trophies provided at first by Gordon Rowell (usually an felt-pen-inscribed cracked Dining Hall teacup) and then by the Art Dept (John Wenn) who made special scrolls for the winners.*

## **Gymnastics**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s gymnastics (a mainstay of PE lessons in the gym) made a competitive appearance. In 1956:

*The first individual gymnastics competition to be held in the school was won by W Eckert of Sandringham, who gained 286 points out of a possible 390. The 17 contestants had to perform one balance, four agilities, six vaults, a combined agility and a voluntary.*

In 1965 WBS started the Junior Gymnastics Team Championships. Each house team consisted of twenty juniors trained by a senior boy. Marlborough won the inaugural event.

## **Hockey**

At Windsor School hockey was a girls activity. This report from 1957 packs so much into a short piece:

*Two members only of the team left at Xmas so we able to get something we had lacked before in our teams; continuity in our practice together. This spring term the school XI has really played together as a team, the forward line having improved considerably. Their 11-1 win over the Staff one Saturday gave them rather a false idea of their improvement however, and when they met PRS on March 16 in pouring rain on a flooded pitch, they lost 3-0.*

If not rain, then fog: an example from a WGS visit in 1964:

*The highlight of the season was of course the week-end spent at PRS in Wilhelmshaven. The weekend was marked by a singular lack of vision as fog was the order of the two days. Many of us had hoped for a glimpse of the sea after the wide flatness of Hamm were disappointed and referees found themselves umpiring a group off ghostly figures vaguely seen at the far side of the pitch.*

We gain a window on the depth of inter-school sports in 1977. There were five Hockey festivals: the Seniors (8 teams), 4<sup>th</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> years and 1<sup>st</sup> year. WGS hosted the Seniors and 1<sup>st</sup> year Festivals. Edinburgh, Kings and Gloucester schools hosted the other festivals. WGS won four of the five festivals and came second in the other. 58 girls represented the school across the age groups. The Seniors won the title for the third year running after seven matches in two days, on both shale and grass. Diana Craig top scored with 12 of the 19 goals. Captain Linda Le-Cun summed up:

*All our thanks go to Miss Walshe and Miss Beatson who put up with our moans and groans at the beginning of the season, when our playing was not exactly outstanding.*

Over at WBS Hockey was introduced in 1964 with the arrival of Mr Gibbs. M Green, the captain commented in 1965:

*As you can see we have the enthusiasm for hockey and all we need now is a pitch to play on.*

Tim Feast takes up the story:

*I remember when we were first allowed to use the new Hockey pitch behind the CCF block in I think '67. It was supposed to have been allowed to settle and amalgamate during the summer, but if you stood on the ball it would sink into the surface, so it was closed again for a while, rolled and watered etc.*

Matches continued to be played at WGS. The school joined the Rhine Area League (probably the first school team to join an organised league). By mid-season 12 games out of 34 had been played and the team was halfway in the table. There are comments reminiscent of the rugby team:

*generally we have a higher standard of stickwork but so far have lacked the necessary weight and bustle for goal scoring.*

A Club XI was formed from staff at both schools. The following year:

*In a fairly successful and very enjoyable second half to the hockey season, the first eleven played some seven games in the BAOR league. Our present position is 12<sup>th</sup> out of the 20 teams competing, we are the top minor-unit. Throughout Mr Gibbs and Mr Hern have been the backbone of the team and whenever either has been unable to play, the gap left was evident.*

The 1977 season started with no fixtures and no definite team. Games against the WBS staff (twice), WGS (the BFES champions) and two army sides led up to the mixed hockey 6s tournament (won again by the staff). The trophy had been donated by Tony Woofitt, a former head boy. The indefatigable Mr Hern was coaching the team.

## **Hockey: Ambassador Sevens**

Not to be outdone by the Concordia Sevens at WBS, WGS launched the Ambassador Sevens in 1977:

*This year, in complete rivalry with those "Male Chauvinists" of Windsor Boys' School, there took place in the merry month of March, a brand new inter-school seven-a-side Hockey Tournament. So now,*

*instead of the male-dominated Concordia weekend, let's think of pure equality. Long Live the Ambassador Sevens!*

Seven teams took part (Kent, Gloucester, Kings, PRS, Edinburgh, Cornwall and WGS), with WGS ending up as winners. The tournament continued until the school closed.

## **Mixed Games**

Mixed sports tended to be informal and limited to senior pupils who had freer visiting privileges. Deborah Angell's recollections from the mid-1970s:

*in our 6th form we could go to the gym on Wednesday evening and the 6th form boys could join us, we played volleyball, basketball, badminton as well as mucking around and chatting.*

By 1978 mixed hockey came to the fore. Initially, as Linda Le-Cun reported:

*the session was of a mixed standard, with the girls in most cases coming out on top, but eventually the boys discovered how to use a hockey stick.*

The initial knock abouts developed, "with A J Wheeler at the top" into a mixed XI house hockey league on Sundays. "The games that were played clearly separated the football players from the hockey ones". Wednesday afternoons saw the "Mixed Sixes" (three girls, three boys) with eight teams including a staff one.

## **Netball**

A major sport with the first inter-house competition in 1954. Reports often mentioned that the matches were played in or outdoors depending on the weather. Indoor matches gave the home team a distinct advantage as first PRS juniors and then Queen's found out in the 1950s:

*(PRS) found themselves in the middle of our huge gymnasium surrounded by crowds of spectators. This situation caused "stage*

*fright.”.*

*In the Spring term 1957 the matches were played in Windsor's vast gym with the whole school surrounding the court. Rather overwhelmed, our juniors were outclassed by a very competent Windsor team, who marked relentlessly, and were very speedy in attack. (Queens' Courier)*

Even at this time gap it is difficult not to feel sympathy for Queens, they lost 12–2.

Inter-school matches were initially bilateral except in 1957:

*With the financial difficulties of teams travelling between the other schools no inter-school matches were played until the end of the Spring term, when we had a very successful run of matches to round off the season.*

PRS hosted the first BFES tournament with teams from Kings, Queens, PRS and WGS. The deciding match against PRS ended in dramatic fashion. WGS won by a single goal after extra time. The same year a youth club in Essex sent senior and junior teams to Hamm for a weekend of matches.

The 1978 BFES tournament was played indoors with WGS winning the final against Queens, despite losing Virginia Kitchen and Lesley McBride to injuries. Team captain Denise Fletcher thanked Miss Scott, Miss Walshe and Miss Beatson for coaching.

A marked lack of pupils only slightly hampered the 1983 BFES tournament, the second year team being chosen from just 12 pupils. The seniors, led by Mairi Gowans, came second, prompting Miss Coor to remark:

*The Gloucester-Windsor match was the highest standard of play I have ever seen in a school match and equals some of the games I saw played at the All England Finals two years ago.*

## **Riding**

Riding was one of the few sports which required an extra payment from parents, a barrier for some girls. In the 1950s soldiers provided the instruction at Newcastle Barracks. Teresa Fenton recalls:



*The Captain (I think) who should have taught us was 'otherwise occupied' with a certain lady and we were left to the mercy of a series of young National Service grooms – or they were left to our mercy, more like.*

Vivienne Kearney had a surprise when she returned in the mid-1960s, *the Army barracks where I used to go riding was now the girls school.*

With Newcastle Barracks converted to WGS, a new venue was needed. F Coxe of 4A described the activity in 1961:

*The riders have to go to a German school, as our school being new, does not have any riding facilities. The lessons last for an hour and are carried on in a large indoor school, the ground of which is covered in peat moss. The lessons consist of walking, trotting, cantering and halting at each pace.*

The trainer was Herr Kobbe who took part in gymkhanas. Later, Herr Byer took over. Many girls remember the strict instruction, and the names of their favourite horses.

## **Rounders**

*Rounders have once again played an important part in the summer season's activities. Never has the house equipment been used to such advantage – and in consequence the standard of play has risen considerably (1956)*

In the final year, 1983, with dwindling numbers at the school:

*We had to pick these two teams from about 40 girls (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years only and both teams finished 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 5 in the North and Mid Zone festivals*

## **Rugby**

In the 1950s the rugby team found it difficult to find opponents. KAS and PRS did not play the game. The first game came in 1956, against the Hannover Club's under 15½ side: probably the first time junior German schoolboys played against British schoolboys at rugby. This developed into

annual weekend of matches at Hannover and a combined Victoria and Mittelschule club (there were very few German clubs). The school team travelled in a convoy of teachers' cars. In 1957 the Hanoverians played at Windsor starting a reciprocal arrangement.

By 1959 Michael Barnacoat could report:

*During our Army and RAF fixtures some of the smaller players were replaced by the staff, whose experience and weight kept us together. The value of playing men is that we got used to facing bigger and stronger opposition but having to continually tackle 14 stone of solid soldier was no joke and tended to hold us back, which is not good in rugby.*

Teachers continued to play in the school team (in 1967, 22 boys and four teachers played in the six games). Rugby benefitted from coaching from teachers who had played at first class level including Kelynack, Rodgers, Webber, Joliffe and Womersley.

Rugby suffered from a familiar problem, this from 1967:

*September brings the same problem every year, that of building a team. Due to our special circumstances in BAOR we only have a 1<sup>st</sup> XV – there are no opportunities for younger teams to play – which means most of the boys are inexperienced when they first win a place in the team*

Memories were short. In 1959 a Colts XV was formed (for the first time) playing two matches against a schoolboy team from the Hannover 1878 club and the youth teams of the 1900 club.

By the mid-1970s there were matches against other school sides including, in 1977, against Windsor Grammar School from UK as well as Army and RAF teams. That year Mr Ellis echoed the 1950s when pointing out that the youth team was usually much lighter than the opposition. There was now a 4<sup>th</sup> year team playing 15-a-side against Queens, Soest Gymnasium and Highfield School, St Helens as well as in the BFES Sevens (Kings, Queens and PRS). The 3<sup>rd</sup> year team also played 7-a-side against Kent, PRS and Edinburgh.

## **Rugby The Concordia Sevens**

The Spring term in 1957 saw the first inter-house 7-a side rugby matches. By 1960 a school team was playing army teams. In 1963 the school team became the first overseas school to play in the UK Public Schools Competition. Ninety-six teams took part. The WBS team garnered most of the publicity with articles in *Daily Telegraph*, the *Times* and the *Sunday Times*. The team lost in the first round and went on to play in the Middlesex Sevens.

1964 saw the start of a long tradition:

*On Sunday 21st March 1964, we were hosts to sixteen teams from Army, RAF and Civilian Units and Schools, taking part in our own Invitational Seven-a-side Tournament. This proved to be the highlight of our rugby season; a day spectators and players will remember for a long time.*

The winners were the Duke of Wellington's Regiment A team, led by Captain Mundell. They defeated RAF Butzweilerhof and 6 Inf WS on their way to victory. The tournament was overseen by Mr Colin Kelynack. The 1965 tournament saw 14 teams, including WBS staff, Queens and Kings schools. It was an all-RAF final with RAF Butzweilerhof defeating RAF Gütersloh. 1967 saw the all-time high with 32 teams. In 1968 the WBS first team reached the final: a team of former pupils reached the Plate final. Mr Joliffe had left Hamm for Alsager College, a teacher training college in Cheshire. He brought the college side to the 7s and they won in 1968 and 1969.

During 1970s several English school and college sides took part to complement the BFES, army and RAF sides. These included Wells Cathedral School and the Christopher Wren School. A German side from Hurth, near Cologne, made a rare appearance, winning in 1972/73.

Towards the end of the 1970s the tournament became focussed on BFES. WBS usually reached the last four, winning in 1974, 1976, 1978 and 1979. The competition became an "old boys' reunion". The final years were BFES schools only, including a valiant effort by a very young team from Havel School, Berlin. In the final tournament, in 1983, Brigadier Mundell, now the Hamm Garrison Commander presented the trophy.

## **Sailing**

The British Sailing Club on the Möhne See hosted sailing; a short coach trip from school. Originally closer to the dam the club moved in 1958 to its main location (until closure in 2019).

Up to 30 senior pupils from both schools took part each year. Proficient sailors could earn a RYA helmsman certificate. In the 1970s a swimming test (taken out 50 to 100 metres and told to swim back, with life jacket if necessary) was introduced. The tests included righting a capsized boat. There were always teachers willing to lead the activity, included Howard, Clarke, Wroot, Joliffe, Rodgers, Greer and Reed.

The dinghies changed over the years. Initially they were Pirates (a German wooden dinghy) and Sharpies. The better sailors tried Stars, an Olympic class dinghy helped by Major Tricot, the Belgian Commandant. These boats had been “liberated” at the end of the war. The Bosun, a dinghy commissioned by the Royal Navy for training became the standard. By 1966:

*With twenty five dinghies, costing £8,000, a stretch of water five miles long and in place a nearly a mile wide we have made full use of the facilities offered to us by the Club.*

Most of the sailing time was for fun (as well as learning to sail). An inter-house competition, the Helmsmen Trophy, appeared from time to time. The first inter-school races came in 1958 when KAS visited. In 1960 the school visited PRS, two boats each. D McGill reported:

*Used to seeing large checked buoys about four feet high on the Möhnesee, we found that picking out a small flag bobbing on a cocoa tin on the opposite side of a small bay is not at first very easy.*

By 1966:

*Six fixtures have been arranged against Army Regimental Sailing teams, won 4, two to sail.*

In the winter of 1978 at WBS sailing was combined with the woodwork activity. The aim:

*So that the sailors can get an eye in at boat building and the boatbuilders can learn some theory.*

Two Bosun dinghies were overhauled and an Optimist dinghy was built from a kit. Sailing time was by now on both Wednesdays and Saturdays in the summer as well as the short annual camp.

## **Sub Aqua**

The activity was an example of an activity triggered by a new teacher: Mr Stephens arrived from Cornwall School in 1976, a qualified diver. It took place at the Hamm Freibad:

*Pool sessions are far from boring as the Girls' School run a swimming activity at the same time and in the same pool!*

The school acquired five new sets of aqua lung equipment, practised snorkelling in a lake near Münster and camped with the DoE group in Sauerland.

## **Swimming**

Pools at the schools, converted from water storage tanks, were never popular. Jane Brindley gives the main reason:

*I remember the freezing pool. The girls school pool always seemed much colder than the one at WBS which, as a daughter of staff, we could use in the holidays.*

The weather did not however impede swimming. From 1956:

*Swimming in our very small pool may not be conducive to Olympic standard performances but we are able to achieve the more important result of being able to teach almost everyone in the school to swim.*

Remarkably every pupil was able to have four or five sessions each week (in lessons or as activity). It does not appear to have been a long running activity. That summer saw a gala:

*The first success of the day was in squeezing the entire school and visitors into the pool enclosure and a survey of six hundred people's measurements had to be completed.*

Two years later the school took part in its first match, against Queens:

*The magnificent pool at HQ seemed enormous to us, but we thoroughly enjoyed being able to swim without continually turning, and had a most successful afternoon, winning the match by 133 points to 83.*

Roger Barnacoat reported on the first WBS inter-house gala in 1960. Juniors raced over one length, intermediates two and seniors three. With more secondary schools the BFES Schools Gala started in the 1960s with WGS winning in 1963 and second the following year. A WBS highlight was T Andrews who in 1966 won the 50m breaststroke for the third year running. The 1970s were a golden time for WGS as they won the North Zone Gala six years running. Their success, when added to the points from lower places by WBS, enabled Windsor to win the overall trophy three years running. In 1978 Kate Manley broke the school record in the senior freestyle despite the freezing cold

In 1981 the Property Services Agency gave up the ghost in trying to maintain the pool at WBS. Swimming continued at the Hamm Freibad.

## **Tennis**

The courts at the schools were well used; tennis being one of the most popular recreational activities. Inter-house competitive tennis started in 1956 (once the umpires chairs had arrived). A round robin system meant 63 games in one afternoon before Pat Blanchfield and Pamela Smith were declared winners.

The BFES festival started in the 1960s. WGS winning in 1964 but in 1968 they came last. Excitement came when the bus broke down returning from Kings and the team were marooned on the autobahn until midnight.

## **Volleyball**

*The Canadian School in Soest was our host for the inter-school volleyball tournament which took place in the Winter term. Both senior and junior teams were represented, this year with the juniors showing much more skill than the seniors. The senior team lost to both Soest and Hemer. The junior team lost to Werl but beat Soest soundly*

(WGS – 1969)

Phil McGregor remembers in the mid-1970s at WBS:

*the inter-house volleyball comp, the courts were set up on the main pitch in front of the house block, Caernarvon were, unusually, spectacular losers.*

By 1977 WBS entered the BFES Festival, after only a few weeks training. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year team won undefeated but the 4<sup>th</sup> year team did not do so well. *They apparently spent more time arguing with each other than playing* was the harsh report in *Concordia*.

In 1983 it was the girls teams who entered the festival with a 3<sup>rd</sup> year team *very enthusiastic but we didn't get very far* was the verdict.

### **And to end the chapter: the whistle-blowers**

Games need referees and umpires. Demand was high, with inter-house and school matches in a wide range of sports. Headmaster Wylie tackled the topic when together with Deputy Headmaster Mr Brian Hodgson (ex-KAS Plön, scoutmaster there and now at WBS) and head of PE, Mr Dave Ross, set up a “Refs and Umps” course. Mr Ross wrote:

*In September we started the course with a very mixed bunch of boys, most of whom were afraid to put a whistle to their lips in case it made too loud a noise. The Basketball course ran for six weeks of term by two Canadian Army referees was perhaps the best we have had and produced some good results. This was followed by three weeks of hockey at WGS where we all learned to put the rules into practice under the able guidance of Mr Gibbs. I feel quite sure that we would not have been able to play as many inter-house games at all levels without the help of boys from this activity.*

Dave Naylor took advantage of this initiative as a first step on his way to becoming an international basketball referee. Other sports followed including cricket.

## **From skiffle to punk, Shakespeare to slapstick**

Society changed over the lifetime of the schools. Social historians describe the early 1950s as a time when children dressed like their parents and deference was the order of the day. The subsequent 30 years saw a revolution in attitudes even if, with the hindsight of the early 2020s, it still feels unreformed.

We saw in Part A how the schools, as institutions, slowly changed. A relaxation of rules and restrictions, driven by Miss Brown and Mr Wylie, reflected a trend away from the 1950s Public School culture and discipline. A glance at school and house photographs illustrates changes: girls' skirts raise from ankle length to just above the knee, boys hair grows from short back and sides to just above the collar. Berets, ties and blazers slowly disappear. So how to reflect the cultural changes at the schools? I've selected three activities to guide us. First, from skiffle to punk: the development of groups and bands; secondly the school play and finally the school magazines.

### **From skiffle to punk**

The early 1950s music charts (only changing from sheet music to record sales in late 1952) were dominated by a continuation of the 1940s: swing orchestras and crooners. Dance halls were the main social attraction, exceeding cinemas, with over 10,000 dance orchestras in Britain. A new music craze was slowly developing: jazz. Using black American music from New Orleans as a base, the jazz revival led to the first pop explosion for newly emerging "teenagers": skiffle. It is difficult to recognise nowadays just how important skiffle was to the generation born in the 1940s. It had one



great advantage: limited musical skills needed (three chords on the guitar) and instruments. An article in the *Observer* in early 1957, quoted in Billy Bragg's informative history of pop music, outlines its emergence:

*A year ago there were only about twenty groups around London. Now there are nearer 400, with one to ten groups in every English-speaking centre from Glasgow to Cape Town. Sales of guitars have broken all records; shops in Surbiton display them hanging in rows like so many turkeys for Christmas. You can buy washboards, tea-chests, lagerphones, all the paraphernalia of a down-and-outs band. Skiffle has taken by storm the youth clubs and the public schools, and the Army has carried it to Germany. The remarkable thing is that in an age of high-fidelity sound, long players and tape recorders, the young should suddenly decide to make their own music.*

It did not Windsor School long to catch up. Ralph Czumaj recalls, in spring 1957:

*The school had a skiffle group which was good enough to go on the Forces Radio, with Mike Buttenshaw on clarinet and Terry Caron on double-base; (tea chest and broom handle)! We even had our own little star in Hillsboro called Ricky Rees, who could play practically anything, and was particularly good with Lonnie Donegan's records.*

Kathleen Wilkie remembers:

*I was there at the first performance of the skiffle group! 1957. It was held in the big gym, and whole school invited. We danced!*

A photograph of a slightly later six piece skiffle group in the assembly hall shows the full ensemble complete with ukulele, washboard, double bass and snare drum. Watching from the side-lines was Lance Lupton who shone as the pianist and organist in school events and chapel.

In December 1958 “*the skiffle fans of the CCF were delighted by the presence of the Seaforth Highlanders skiffle-group*”.

Skiffle opened the doors for groups, in current language it was “accessible.” In the same year a girls' house bought their own record player as they were fed up of listening to the boys playing trad jazz records.

Records by Nancy Whiskey, the leading female skiffle singer, were in high demand, along with Elvis, in the record auction in Balmoral boys' house. School dances are recalled:

*The skiffle group was good. Just taken me right back. I was in Hillsborough, 1955 to 1958. Our socials, were once a term, when we went to the boys' house, or they came to us. We practised «one two three together» and danced face to face in the good ole waltz way. Strictly no rock and roll!*

By 1960 there were between 30,000 and 50,000 skiffle groups in Britain. Virtually all the pop and rock icons of the 1960s started out in skiffle. National Serviceman L/Cpl Bill Perks formed a skiffle band at RAF Oldenburg. Returning to London he joined fellow former skiffles Jaggar and Jones and changed his name to Wyman.

In 1959, Mr Loft Simpson, the head of music since 1954, recalled the various visiting musicians (for example Harriet Cohen the pianist, Elizabeth Napier, violin) and the frequent visits to classical music concerts at the Kurhaus:

*If these visits, coupled with music in the school, have convinced some that there exists good music outside the scope of the "Top Ten" which can give pleasure for a lifetime, then something worthwhile has been achieved.*

He mentioned that 30 to 40 pupils were learning instruments. The times were changing however. The following year, in the new WBS, a Jazz Club started along with a jazz band of three teachers (GB Jones, Hallworth and Hughes) and two pupils (Aspinall and Gold). Not to be outdone a new skiffle group started, again from Hillsborough (Rogers, Buckley, MacKay).

The new groups had not yet fully taken over. In 1961 the evening social for the visiting PRS sports team at WGS, was entertained by the band of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. House and form socials still had their music from tape recorders and record players. Barry Hartfield recalls:

*I remember in the early 60s when the twist came out, we had a dance in the main hall and when the record came on, Let's Twist Again, the whole dance floor went up and down as one. I did observe several*

*teachers laughing.*

In spring 1962 whilst some former skiffers from Liverpool were learning their new trade in Hamburg, the Shadows headed the charts and in Sandringham House:

*during the last senior social a group of four entertained the others for about half an hour. Playing on electric guitars they played a selection of pop tunes to which the others danced or listened.*

The dam had burst. From this small beginning WBS was not without its own groups. At least one group, sometimes three, was active providing the entertainment for socials and dances (and often outside the schools). They gave a start for many in their careers in music, either as full or part time professionals or amateurs. Dave Naylor remembers:

*I arrived at WBS in Spring term 1964 and we started Bash St in Summer term 1964. The original members were Tim Cahill, Rob Killow, Mick Green, me, and our lead singer, Roger Kirkpatrick. Group66 were the established band at that time and a "friendly" battle for gigs ensued for the next two years or so. Their drummer was Coco Palmer. We got on ok and shared equipment.*

*Bash St and Group 66 vied not just for dates but also for the one PA system administered by the Bursar Mr Bond. They were recorded by BFN's programme "Pop goes the Needle". Dave Naylor again:*

*Both Bash St and Group66 played a lot of the same songs...60's rock and roll. They played Route 66, obviously. We agreed not to play that. We always started with Roll Over Beethoven then continued with a mixture of Beatles and Rolling Stones songs, as well as Chubby Checker and Little Richard tunes. We added some Spencer Davis songs, as they became popular. My favourite was Keep on Running.*

Whilst the bands were playing the audience had often other ideas. Piers Handling describes the before, during and after:

*Clothes were borrowed, Beatle boots brushed, bellbottom trousers pressed, hair endlessly combed and recombined. Romantic encounters*

*were the fantasy of the day. When the evenings arrived, boys and girls stood nervously facing each other until the ice was broken as it inevitably was. Romances flowered, partings were languidly taken by the lucky ones at evening end, letters followed and exit days would mean long walks over to WGS and on to the canal bank, the only privacy in the area.*

*Bash St and Group66 were followed by two successful bands: Jacks Union alongside the Innovations (Bruno Lord, Geoff Roberts, Ken Rickaby, Dave Page and Ken Perrers). Jacks Union was originally formed in Sandringham under a variety of names including "Down the Road Apiece" with Keith Bonthron, Dave Page, Rory Gillies and Jeff Andrews. Page and Gillies left, replaced by Steve Gibbons and John Pirrie. Pirrie recalls spending two terms learning the guitar parts and the 108 songs in the repertoire to replace Gillies:*

*Jacks Union played at almost every school dance for all of the next 3 years. Jacks Union developed an almost 'cult like following' not only within Windsor Boys' and Windsor Girls' School in Hamm but across the armed forces through playing gigs across West Germany and occasionally Holland. As luck would have it Keith, Jeff, Steve and me stayed together as Jacks Union from mid-February 1967 until early February 1970, when Steve's Dad was posted back home to England. Rick Fry took his place, until we all went our separate ways at the end of year 13, (or upper 6th as we knew it) in July 1970.*

The opportunities for bands can be seen in *Concordia* 1968:

*Twelve house socials, four year-group parties, a fifth and sixth year dance, two house birthdays parties and a monitors and prefects dance kept us circulating, Jacks Union, now developed into a very accomplished group, was in great demand.*

Some of their songs have stuck in the memory: opening with *Baby Come Back*, *Under the Boardwalk*, various Bee Gees songs. Their closing with *Knights in White Satin* almost always brought out teachers overseeing the close dancing with a little tap on the shoulder! Padre Fielding even used one of his sermons to complain about this "unseemly" dancing.

Pop music was not the only music available. *Concordia* gave over its pages for Tony Jobber to cover jazz, Dave Creighton followed with his like of the blues and Bill Gent finished the trilogy with a paean to folk music. Gent recalls his singing of “*I come and stand at every door,*” a Pete Seeger anti-nuclear song, caused consternation among senior military officers when he performed it at a Staff Mess event.

Demand for bands to play was sometimes intense. Bruce Kolesar recalls:

*I played with Bo O’Barr, Baz Timmons, David Sellers and the Marsdon Bros. I remember as 4th years, Jacks Union got a gig somewhere else, and we were the only other group with enough gear to play the 5th/6th. Our only other experience was a couple evenings at the Friday night “Youth Club” over by the Barracks. Kind of terrifying at the time, but we split the social with Mike Gardener, Dai Newman and one or two other Caernarvon lads. We certainly weren’t Jacks Union, but it was fun.*

More bands emerged in the early 1970s. Indeed it is difficult to discover all the bands which appeared let alone their changing line ups. Some were short lived; others lasted a year or so. Terry Horner, in his *Rocking and Rolling Back the Years* memoir recalls:

*Arriving at WBS in November 1970 in the 5th Year, I was an enthusiastic beginner playing my guitar tuned to E. Within a few weeks I had joined the modern music after school activity headed up by Geography teacher John Dudley, a talented drummer who admitted to once playing along with Blues legend John Mayall in a local club in Manchester.*

James Morton recalls Mr Dudley’s influence:

*Wow for me listening to my first live band was a life changing experience, I used to listen to Jacks Union from outside the maths block in all weathers, until one evening Mr Dudley let me enter the room and sit at the back of the room he gave me a pair of Ludwig drumsticks to practice on my legs whilst listening to the band at after school activities “Modern Music” I was invited up on stage at a gig to play one song ...I was eleven! I have spent my whole life playing in*

*bands as a drummer and in recent years I have become a singer songwriter/ guitarist Biggest thank you ever to Mr Dudley.*

Mr Dudley, together with Mr Thompson, had a great influence on the development of bands. *Durgy Grommit* (Ian Pirrie, Neil Campsie, Kevin Bulford, Martin Fry, Phil Hooper) emerged as the leading band in the early years of the decade. The “Du Pont” Americans were not to be outdone with *Scurvy Rose* (Gary Gardenhire, Steve Harrell, Bruce Kolesar, and Fred Shute). In November 1970 *Bad Grass* (Tom Ritter, Bill Galloway Paul Nicholassen, Mike Kolesar later with Glenn Holiday and Dave Coty) featured Alice Cooper and songs of the early 1970s.

Terry Horner picks up the story with his band (Rob Ford, Bo O’Barr and Ralph Whalebone):

*With the rotation of pupils at school there was always a chance for others to take over the music mantle and take their turn on the stage at WBS and WGS. Our turn soon came and under the name ‘Body’ (for no particular reason), we were soon ready for our first long anticipated gig was at WGS at the 5th/6th Year Social in September 1971.*

*Our varied setlist in the coming terms reflected the music of the day with the explosion of the Glam Rock scene (T-Rex, Sweet and Slade) along with our own mixed musical tastes. Bo was keen on bringing the influence of American artists from Frank Zappa to Santana. He also demonstrated his skill on guitar on the classic Led Zeppelin’s ‘Stairway to Heaven’ which became our final song of the evening.*

*Chapter II, (later Neshabur after a Santana song), with Malc McGookin, Allain Grainger, David Cotty, Graham Craigmayle, Kim Ponting and Bruce St Aman followed with sets including *Jumping Jack Flash, Black Magic Woman, Born To Be Wild* and *Light My Fire*.*

Mick Hughes recalls:

*it was the WBS Rock Legends ‘Amulet’ who were my first experience of a live rock band in the main hall at my first Social, Autumn Term 1974. First time I heard ‘Smoke on the Water’! That night was part of the inspiration for my own rock ‘n’ roll adventure. Martin Brindley – Guitar, Sam Weller – Bass and Greg Oxford – Drums (and Ken*

*Dodgson). This was followed by many an evening in Dorm 2 Caernarvon House with Mike Price and I trying to learn many a rock classic and more specifically our favourite Status Quo tunes.*

His band was *Shell Shock*; members included Mike Price (guitar), Kev Mackie (Drums), Frank McCarthy (Drums), Mel Tough (vocals) and Jimmy Mair (Bass Guitar). They played mostly Status Quo and a couple of original tunes. The one and only gig was in Caernarvon House Dining Hall before Xmas 1976. Ken Dodgson of *Amulet* recalls:

*One of the reasons I formed the group was because I realised that if I didn't, the school was not going to have a school band in that academic year (1974/75). The band name was suggested by Greg Oxford, our drummer, which we all bought in to. I was also responsible for choosing the songs we learnt and working out how to play them. We played at all gigs for all year groups held at both WBS and WGS. We also played at a wedding and at the local youth club in Hamm. We used to practice on Wednesday evenings in a room in the chapel, provided to us by Padre Brindley. We had just over 50 songs in our repertoire, with a few of them composed by ourselves.*

*Amulet* used two amplifiers borrowed from Mr Lewis and one from a fellow pupil Erhardt Vandaele.

It's back to Terry Horner to describe a typical social, little different to the one described by Piers Handling ten years earlier. The scene could have been played out in most dances, regardless of the group although Brut (and not Old Spice) and "tank tops" date this period:

*With Brut 'splashed all over', hair combed and tank tops and short skirts much in evidence, the function was underway. The girls, who always spent more time preparing than the 'lads' would usually start the dancing in small groups with the boys generally trying to act cool around the side of the hall before working up the courage to ask for a dance.*

*Under the watchful eye of the staff, girls and boys eventually relaxed, gyrating and trying to sing along to the band's misheard lyrics. Lower school boys would often spend most of the night showing off to each*

*other with the occasional Peter Kay knee slide. Others would spend the evening along the front of the stage watching the band or eyeing up possible 'talent' hopefully to meet up with for a Saturday stroll around the Kurpark. For many it was the only chance to get to know members of the opposite sex and the termly socials were always keenly anticipated by most.*

*Finally after a slow dance, again under watchful staff eyes, the hall lights would announce the end of proceedings for another term and with a possible sneaky kiss and promises to write and meet up, it was back on the bus and to the dorms with, no doubt, plenty of discussion about the night's activities whispered late into the night.*

Musical influences at Windsor did not just come from the bands. German TV shows such as *Beat Club*, *Disco* and *Musikladen* were popular. Visits to concerts became frequent in the late 1960s and 1970s (including Bee Gees, Dire Straits, Queen, ELO), many organised by Mr Martin from WGS. Fred Garnett recalls, in his Beatles blog, bringing the Sgt Pepper's album to school:

*Three big hugs for my Mum on my birthday. First hug; she bought me a stereo record player. Second hug; she'd ordered Sgt Pepper from the NAAFI even before it was released. Third, and biggest hug of all; she got my Dad to drive his wife in to the boarding school over a week ago with the first stereo record player it had ever seen and heard. AND the first copy of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club band ever heard in a school loaded with 600 boys.*

The staff also played on, as John Rhodes recalls:

*Music was provided by Ken Thompson, who had organized a swinging group with John Dudley on drums and Brian Birkby (bass) which played exuberantly for the staff dances in the Mess at the end of the Edinburgh/Balmoral block. Later they were joined by Colin Ramsdale who perhaps struggled a little to keep up on rhythm guitar. No problems. Brian would surreptitiously lean across and turn down the volume so that Rammers continued to strum happily although silently, until the end of the number.*



Disco came to the fore in the 1970s. DJs were hired for dances at WGS including Black Knight, Jax Disco and Bill E King. DJ memories from Dale Harding and then Gez Jerry Gilmer:

*I remember bringing my own disco unit to school and had it in the annex before the school brought their own sound out system. Mick Donovan told me off for playing music too loud.*

*I remember a couple of soldiers who did some disco events for us in the mid 70's under the name of "White Heat" that were awesome. This was for the official house parties and proper years disco (3rd yr. 4th yr. 5th yr. etc).*

In 1976 weekend discos at WBS attracted 300 first to fifth year boys and girls. By 1978 there was a formal Disco Activity at WBS. The school bought, for DM4,000 from the May Fete funds, twin record decks, amps and speakers, and a light box.

As music changed in the 1970s a move away from guitar/drums to include keyboards and at times sax. By 1980 *Skyline* (OMD, Spandau Ballet, Boomtown Rats) had keyboards, sax, rhythm and drummer. Punk arrived in the form of *Marginal Distortion* between 78/79 (Andy Potter, Ian King, Tom Scott and Rob Webster (singer).

Perhaps the apex of performance came at WBS in 1980 with an end of term "Musical Reverie", introduced rather formally in *Concordia*:

*This end of term concert will give our "fans" an idea of what we aim to do at Windsor, musically. We also follow the traditional appreciation, theoretical and practical offered by the Royal Schools of Music and allow scope for individual creativity in various fields of the subject.*

And what a line up. Nearly 90 participants. Mr Loft Simpson would have been proud. The *WBS/WGS School band* performed three times, opening and closing the concert, had (and this sounds like the voice over in *Tubular Bells*) seven trumpeters, two flutists, four trombonists, nine clarinetists, two alto saxes, a euphonium, one horn, a bass guitar, seven guitarists and one percussionist. The *school choir* had 34 singers. The six piece *jazz band* matched the string and wind sextet. *Folk* was not forgotten with a duo from

WGS (Magee and Burns) and Anthony Parslow and Paul Brooke. Ceri Riddle gave a solo piano recital. And two bands: rock band *SIAM* (Iain Mair, Mike Scott, Austin Gardner and Sean Fry). Playing Moody Blues (Nights in White Satin) Ramones (Sheena is a punk rocker) Boomtown Rats (Rat Trap) Eddie Cochran (Something Else), Split Enz (I got you) Led Zeppelin (Stairway). And to cap it *AB Negative*, the punk band playing their own material (Dap Padbury, Chris and Paul White, Charlie Lees and Vernon Johnson).

The gradual closure of the schools did not prevent music continuing, in 1981/82, with rock band *Black Widow* (Mike Massey, Mike Snook, John Orrock, Steve Valentine) and *Anticharged* (Vic Gysin, Paul Leighton, John Orrock, Tommy Simpson, Rob Mitchell,). Paul Leighton gives an honest assessment:

*we were not great, but in line with the Punk movement made a right racket with Rob Mitchell. I think our catalogue of music was limited to a few tracks from The Sex Pistols and Exploited. I seem to recollect that we had a go at a track from The Cure, but it was probably a little complex for us at the time!*

And as Billy Reid recalls:

*I remember doing my first ever gig (in the 1980s) at the Saturday afternoon disco. It's was a punk song as we hadn't learned to play properly.*

Full circle from skiffle to punk. Well not quite as Chris Rees recalls in the final year

*I DJ'd the Saturday afternoon discos in the hall in 1982/83. I recall Turn to Stone by ELO was a kind of Windsor Boys' anthem and resulted in a massive mosh pit.*

From skiffle to pop to rock to glam to punk to a mosh pit.

### **From Coventry Nativity Play to Banned from the Disco**

Musicians weren't the only ones on stage. The school play was a perennial

major event. There were three distinct periods. The first was the plays at Windsor School. The second was from the division in 1959 to around 1976. The final period continued until the school closed.

## **The First Act**

The school was just over year old when the first play was performed in December 1954 with a young cast. The choice, the *Coventry Nativity Play*, was as Miss Corlett, (housemistress Balmoral Girls) pointed out in *Concordia*:

*was an ambitious choice for a first production in a school which has as yet no dramatic tradition. It depended on the child creating a presence on the stage instead of simply executing actions proficiently, aided by all the artifices of modern stage setting. The children found this difficult and were, of course, not helped by the dialogue, it being stilted, old English and in some cases lost on the audience.*

“Child” and “children” emphasis the young age of the cast, probably all under 14. The review ended on a positive note, *a successful production has laid a good foundation for the dramatic tradition of the school.*

That tradition became firmly embedded with *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* as the next two plays, both formidable challenges as Mr Aspinall had noted. A 1959 review of the Dramatic Society’s performances made an interesting comment:

*It had been the original aim of the producers (Miss Butterworth and Mr Howard) to stage Shakespearean productions, but this was changed as it was thought better to show the school a wider view of English and European literature.*

Accordingly, more modern classics followed with Oscar Wilde’s *Importance of Being Earnest*, Jean Anouilh’s *Ring Around the Moon* and Terence Rattigan’s *The Winslow Boy* and a modern dress version of *Macbeth*. In its final year the school play was the premiere of headmaster Aspinall’s play *The Judgement*. The play centres on Pontius Pilate in the lead up to his decision to condemn Christ to die:

*The play was a test for the Senior Dramatic Society; of late they have been performing 'drawing-room' plays; plays of dramatic tension and emotion indeed, but not treating of a theme at once familiar and of the stature of Greek tragedy.*

An exception to the norm of teacher-led performances came in 1956 when a group of 5th and 6th years did 10 days of frantic rehearsals to put on Noël Coward's "*Blithe Spirit*".

*With very little adult guidance they gave a lively and attractive performance. It was well staged and well-dressed and, in both movement, and character-drawing, the whole cast avoided all that gaucherie which so often spoils a juvenile production of a sophisticated comedy.*

A year or so later the same group produced "*The Admirable Crichton*." Another variation from the standard canon of plays came with "*The Dear Departed*." A 1908 play, it has a clear message, how did that go down?

*(It) satirises the degradation of moral values in the British middle class. In trying to grab the things belonging to their father, the children completely disregard modesty, decency and obligation towards their family.*

With the high turnover of pupils the casts changed annually but a few seemed to have stayed more than a couple of years. The standout actor was undoubtedly Nigel Frith, from his performance in the *Coventry Nativity Play* through to the school closing in 1959. A few reviews:

*The producers were fortunate in having in Nigel Frith as Hamlet, a boy who can speak verse with an understanding beyond his years. A boy with natural acting ability, his performance had from the moment of his entry an authority which would have been striking even in a more mature cast.*

*The acting laurels must of course go to Frith, who was faced with the task of playing the parts of twin brothers.*

*This debonair performance, his third major role at this school, showed*

*with what versatility he can exchange from the tragic to the comic mask.*

Under the joint direction of Miss Butterworth and Mr Howard, who produced all the plays, (except the “independent” 5th year plays) the school play reflected the culture of the new school. A lengthy review featured near the front of *Concordia* with often trenchant comments of the performance and actors. Innovations included actors walking through the audience in the opening nativity play and Maureen Bilham playing Claudius, well before cross gender acting became common. From the start local German schoolchildren were invited to the performances.

## **The Second Act**

The division of the school in 1959 increased the scope for plays: double the number of pupils and more staff to help. Both schools put on their own plays and periodically came together in a joint production. At WGS girls often played the male roles, with the opposite at WBS. On a few occasions girls and boys were “loaned” to a production by the other school. The main change was the introduction of musicals, most notably that staple of amateur dramatics, Gilbert and Sullivan.

WGS opened with an all-girls production of “*The Merchant of Venice*” and followed with a Gilbert and Sullivan trilogy. The co-production with WBS of “*HMS Pinafore*” came first and then all-girl versions of “*Trial by Jury*” and “*Pirates of Penzance.*” Drama returned with the 1930s play “*Tobias and the Angel*”. The school had two other dramatic strands: the inter-house competition and the Christmas play. The former saw each house presenting a short play, directed by house tutors. The selection was varied, with Mexican, Japanese, Chinese and Arab stories sitting alongside Shakespeare, Dickens and Mrs Gaskell. It would be fascinating to read the script of the Edinburgh house play of 1962 “*a portrayal of life as it might be in 1999*”.

The Christmas play started with a couple of nativity plays (incorporating carols from around Europe) produced by head girl Alex Yeadell. The 1964 triple bill, produced by future RADA graduate Pamela Ross, included extracts from Engelbert Humperdinck’s *Hänsel and Gretel* and “*The Little*

*Sweep*” and a selection from *The Mikado*.

Meanwhile WBS started with a new ambition, set out in *Concordia* in 1960:

*For too long, drama in schools has been static, the producers relying too much on the well-tried, and by now near hackneyed, classics of playwrights such as Shakespeare, Goldsmith and Shaw. Undoubtedly these plays are excellent, but that does not necessarily qualify them as suitable for production schools where finance, facilities and available talent are limited.*

A strong manifesto, but not one followed. WBS started at the end of its first year with “*Seagulls over Sorrento*,” a small all-boys cast, reasonably modern with limited set requirements. The next production was with WGS, “*HMS Pinafore*” (more later on that). Despite the 1960 manifesto it was back to Shakespeare with an all-boys version of “*The Taming of the Shrew*”. For Shaw’s “*Arms and the Man*” three girls from WGS joined the cast. “*My Three Angels*” in 1963 was another small cast play. That year also saw “*By Which We Live*” produced for a drama festival with Canadian schools from Werl, Soest and Hemer.

“*Without the Prince*” (i.e. Hamlet) played to two performances. An interesting approach was taken with this play written for radio, “*Man Born to be King*.” Mr Boddington and Mrs Loft Simpson took the leading parts. After rehearsals the play was recorded in Mr Boddington’s flat and played in a Sunday service in the chapel. The account in *Concordia*, by A Jackson (who oversaw “effects”) is honest:

*At the end of the recording the majority of boys I spoke to in person, termed it a success, although some said it was boring.*

“*HMS Pinafore*,” in 1961 was the first joint “blockbuster” production with Mr Purvis as musical director, Mr Loft-Simpson on piano and Mr Hallworth as producer. In a review Mr Howard described the pre-production stage; similar comments would be written for all future joint productions:

*The organisation of rehearsals, the transporting of large numbers of pupils at all sorts of times, the erection of scenery in one school which had been made in the other, the necessary liaison of “front of house”*

*business, stage management, publicity and printing, presented problems that the vessel might well foundered.*

It was a demanding production: the lighting rig transferred from WBS to WGS, the primary school called into help for preparation and storerooms for costumes, singing rehearsals in teachers' homes, a piano tuner arriving during singing practice and dismantling both pianos. The cast of over 100 (around 60 from WGS, 40 from WBS) had limited access to the stage but improved over the three performances. Of the many new features one stood out: all but one of the principal cast were teachers. Lorraine Yeadell was joined on stage with Messrs Purvis, Joliffe, Hallworth and Cummings, Mrs Hughes and Miss Jameson. A German guest could not imagine that happening in a German school. Mr Howards' review was critical of their performances and commented that an idealist would deplore the dearth of children in the principal parts in a school production.

Mr Hallworth gave a very downbeat account of WBS' "*Taming of the Shrew*":

*I cannot, on reflection, feel it was successful*

Strong words, more so as he was the producer! He gave some insights into the educational benefits of school plays:

*It is a pity that the audience's experience of a play is confined to an hour or two in a chilly auditorium. Behind stage, it is often quite possible to see quite startling development of character, in the atmosphere of cheerful self-reliance and mutual trust that exists there – and arising, too, out of a prolonged intimacy with the eloquent wisdom of a great dramatist. One of the acid tests of the success of a play is whether it continues to hold the interest of the cast through a series of often exhaustive rehearsals.*

By 1964/65 this pattern of performances was to run until the mid-1970s. At WGS productions of "*The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrow*" and "*Richard of Bordeaux*" (Becky Thompson's marathon performance deserves the highest praise) were matched at WBS with "*The Long, the Short and the Tall*" and "*Androcles and the Lion*" (with two girls from WGS). After the success of "*HMS Pinafore*" more co-produced Gilbert and Sullivan operas followed:

*“Pirates of Penzance”* in 1969, and in the early 1970s, reruns from 1973 of *“HMS Pinafore”* *“Pirates of Penzance”* and then *“The Mikado”*. Teachers once again often took the leading roles, with, for example, only John Pirrie, of *Jacks Union*, leading in the 1969 *“Pirates”* with five teachers in the other principal roles led by Mr Patrick Birdsall, the producer with Mr Capey as musical director. Mr Arthur Marsden excelled as a very modern model major-general. The Pirates, Police and General Stanley’s daughters formed a large and impressive chorus of pupils, staff and wives of teachers. Deputy headmaster Jack Worrall progressed from a chorus role in *Pirates* to play the lead role in 1975 production of *The Mikado*.

An exception to these teacher-actor performances was the joint blockbuster in early 1966 with *“1066 and All That”*, a sketch based play drawing on the Sellars and Yeatman “alternative history” book of 1934. This time teachers and administrative staff, from Mr Wylie (leading on make-up) onwards, provided the backstage crew (with Mike “Prof” Sheard running the electrics). The show attracted a long article in the local newspaper. The performance was ground breaking in its effect on the schools. It appears to have had a far greater impact, at least for a few years, than previous productions. Perhaps through its sheer scale (over 100 on stage) and ambition, its *mix of comedy, patter, song and movement*, the involvement of *Group 66*. Mr Brian Cadby summed up:

*The actors themselves literally improved with every performance and by Saturday night they were “ad libbing” like troupers. Very few of our cast had previous stage experience, now over one hundred have had their baptism of fire. Let’s hope they use “1066” as a beginning and go on to greater things.*

The house notes of St James aptly summed up the impact: *Summer Term seemed strangely quiet after the hubbub of 1066.*

In the early 1970s WGS took plays to PRS in Wilhelmshaven. These included Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and *The Pied Piper*. One of the strongest memories of these trips was being put up in a freezing attic! *“Baltic cold”* is one memory.

Meanwhile at WBS produced all-boys performances of *“Sweeney Todd”* and then their own large scale show with *“The Royal Hunt of the Sun”* in



1975. This took advantage of the new lighting control system (*No production will be technically impossible* according to Mr Jackman, the producer). Backstage preparations included Mr Backhouse making 21 pairs of boots and Mr Jackman's bath being used to dye the Inca costumes. Ian Dell as the Inca king risked decapitation when the sun was unveiled in rehearsals. Robert Gates as Pizzaro noted that the adult audiences were small (a point picked up by the reviews in the local press). Mr Jackman commented:

*I firmly believe we have tapped a source the potential of which is greater than realized and as such must be given every possible encouragement.*

In 1975 and 1976 musical productions at WGS took on a new direction. Both were produced by Mr David Cole with Miss Ann MacIntosh as musical director. In 1975 it was Benjamin Britten's opera "*Noye's Fludde*". And what a production! Performed in the WGS St Mary's chapel involving over 200 people. Mr Cole:

*Firstly we wanted to use a lot of the younger children who would have had no previous experience in drama and whom we wanted to encourage, and secondly, we wanted to do something which would involve as many sections of the community, both British and German, in this area as we could.*

Fittingly Padre Brindley played the "Voice of God" with Padre Cooling and headmistress Brown as Mr and Mrs Noah. Over 100 pupils, mainly from WGS but including some from WBS and the primary school, formed the chorus. The orchestra and choir, under Miss Anne MacIntosh, was truly mixed. The Hamm Musikschule provided a sixty strong string and recorders section; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Queens Regiment from Werl provided trumpeters and drummers.

A year later Mr Cole produced another opera: Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. This was a rarely performed piece. This time Mr Cole brought the Westfalen Baroque Chamber Orchestra; its founder, Wolfgang Günther, from the Hamm Musikschule, had conducted the German participants in *Noyes Fludde*. The lead roles were performed by Lieutenant Michael Forster, stationed at Dortmund with the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment Royal Artillery and Miss MacIntosh. The

supporting cast came not only from WGS (including Miss Wild) but also from the Märkisches Gymnasium. Rehearsals were often bilingual. The piece has more female parts, and was easier to cast as Mr Cole pointed out *It's difficult at times to get boys to sing on stage, and act.* (Clearly, he had not seen the groups at WBS!).

The following year it was back to regular drama with a reprise of the 1967 play but this time it was a co-production. Mags Shaw probably summed up the initial reactions at the start of all co-productions:

*A freezing cold day in November saw an apprehensive group of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years huddled in the WGS assembly hall – suddenly the door banged open and in breezed an enthusiastic-looking man feebly followed by a band of boys, introducing himself as Mr Telling, one of the producers (the other half being Miss Penney).*

*As he handed out copies of Robert Bolt's The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrow the boys and girls furtively eyed each other, with mutters of "Oh no, not him," and squeals of anticipation "Who's that? He's nice."*

The comment reflected another made by "Buttercup" (Miss Wild) about the 1973 *HMS Pinafore*:

*How many joined the cast just to spend extra time with their girl/boyfriends? Most of them! They were told at the outset that if they weren't prepared to work, as well as enjoy themselves, they'd be given the push. A few were, and I think, regretted their stupidity.*

Mr Telling's own review of *Baron Bolligrow* paid tribute to the backstage crew who had a wider range than set and costume design, make up, music and lighting:

*David Jones (the special effects technician) had to creep around behind it (a screen) from the dragon's den carrying the equipment to pour concentrated hydrogen peroxide onto potassium permanganate, and prevent the sizzling peroxide from damaging actresses, costumes and himself.*

The sound effects were enhanced by Will Oxford “*whose Moog Synthesizer arrived in the nick of time to supply roars, thunder and other suitable noises.*”

### **Act Three**

The school plays took a sharp change and a new approach in the final six years. Two plays were specially written: 1979’s *Hitchhikers Guide to Changing Places* and 1982’s *Baloney*. Indeed *Baloney* was still being written by Mr Telling whilst rehearsals were underway! Two came from the pen of the zany Ken Campbell, *Jack Shepherd* in 1981 and *SKUNGPOOMERY* as the Christmas pantomime, and final performed school play in December 1982. The remaining two, both musicals, were also contemporary. The *Wacky Dracky Spectaccy* was how *Ambassador* headlined a review of the 1978 play. *The Dracula Spectacular* was the usual title, a “*spooky musical was still playing on Broadway*”. It was followed by *Crease* (was that a deliberate spelling mistake to avoid copyright?). The film had only just been released and was shown in both schools.

*Concordia*’s review of the play, written by Jeff Greenall, ended on a wistful note:

*Unfortunately the dramatic future of Windsor, like much else, is in doubt. This years’ play could well be the last, pending school closure. A great pity. Thus the stage is bare, the curtain is drawn, and there may be no next time.*

There was a next time. Christmas 1982, a school with barely 200 pupils, winding down quickly as pupils and teachers left. But time for one last performance. *SKUNGPOOMERY* is the name of the play, not an April Fool’s joke. Written by Ken Campbell for an audience of 7–13 year olds. It is, in the words of Julie Jones: *The whole thing was a scream from the first day of rehearsals. Mad, mad play.* Alan Gardner and Dave Reid, two cast members, wrote:

*It was only a short play, in which actions were more important than words. The slapstick element was vital to reinforce the already hilarious lines. Despite this the mind was boggled by such words as*

*SCHLONGPECKSNURBRUNKLEWIBBERING* (saying it was hard enough). In this play the actor could enjoy the time onstage for example by flicking mushrooms at the very surprised audience was tremendous fun, as is diving into boxes of tomatoes.

Paul Capon recalls his role “I played PC Wibble, and had a solo piece drawing faces on my knees, that subsequently got married (you had to be there...)” Lynda Wood remembers other primary schools coming to watch as there weren’t enough pupils to fill the hall. Alan Gardner continued:

*The best reaction came from the young kids in the audience who were absolutely amazed at the things we did and said. It was almost as if they couldn’t believe that older people could be so silly or act so daft.*

It was not quite the end of the dramatic tradition at Windsor. In April 1983 the 4<sup>th</sup> year CSE drama group entered the BFBS drama competition for the final time. They took their play “*Banned from the Disco*” to the BFBS studios at Köln. Mr Marsden drove them in the school minibus, driving either like a *maniac* or a *loonie* according to the report in *Concordia*. The play, looking at problems and conflicts of school life, was performed in the small studio. Previous entries had not been selected for broadcast. The final *Concordia* went to press before the decision this time around.

## **Curtain fall**

So ended the school plays. From the 1954 *Coventry Nativity Play* in 1954 to the 1982 slapstick pantomime and a final radio play. And how they changed. The opening years in the 1950s saw relatively small casts, a relatively traditional repertoire, often called “drawing room theatre”. The Angry Young Men wave of late 1950s theatre bypassed the school as did Pinter and Beckett. The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of musicals and large scale co-productions between the schools. The final years saw a more eclectic modern set of plays ending with an enjoyable slapstick.

This survey still omits many other performances, house plays, Christmas plays, WBS history pageant in 1966, other BFBS drama competition entries, the open air theatre at WGS. It hasn’t covered the visits to Stratford to see the Royal Shakespeare Company or visiting companies performing at the

schools. Hundreds of pupils performed on stages; probably more worked behind the scenes as set designers, make up, hair, costumes, lighting, music and sounds. Teachers acted, produced, sang, ran the box office, planned the marketing, conducted the singing. All in all it was very difficult to avoid the dramatic arts.

## **A chronicle or “with-it”?**

In 1965 the *Times* devoted an editorial on school magazines. Whilst praising them (it would be a fair bet than most of their journalists and readers were public school) it felt magazines fell into three categories:

*A straightforward chronicle*

*A chronicle cum literary production*

*A light hearted rather self-consciously “with it”*

*Concordia* and *Ambassador*, from 1954 to 1983, demonstrate all three categories. The first and last editions have little in common from format and production to content and style. They provide a tangible illustration of the changing times from the early 1950s to the 1980s.

*Concordia* first appeared in summer 1954 and covered the first two terms. 400 copies were printed; there were only 360 pupils. The edition quickly sold out, priced at 2/-, (the equivalent of a week’s sweet ration as it was pointed out; in itself a telling comparison of the times when some wartime rationing was still in place in the UK). 600 copies of the second edition were printed. Subsequent issues came out at two termly intervals. The production values were high: professionally printed, with photographs as well as line drawings. Members of staff edited the magazine but increasingly pointed out that many articles were written by pupils.

These editions were more of a chronicle with added literary efforts relegated to a final section of 10 pages out of 48. The content was formal: headmasters letter, chapel notes, school play review (often quite critical), house notes, reports on outside visits, staff lists. Sports reports were factual and detailed with few comments (unless didactic, for example on the scoring system for archery, congratulatory or exhortations to do better next time). In

the days before data privacy, lists of former pupils often included their addresses. The literary section enabled 15 or so pupils to have their poems, drawings and essays printed. A novel idea, one year, was a competition with junior, intermediate and senior prize-winners. The incentive was free entry to the cinema for the summer term.

*Concordia* continued through the 1950s as this formal, staff managed, chronicle. The format barely changed. The other BFES secondary schools had the same format.

### ***Concordia* continues and *Ambassador* arrives**

The move to two schools in 1959 could, one supposes, have caused a dilemma. Mr Kelly, the editor surmised, in the final editorial of the *Concordia* of Windsor School

*The future of Concordia – that question doubtless on every lip – is not yet certain, but the wide-eyed junior who asked if, when we have a boys' school and a girls' school, it will continue to be a 'common' magazine, was as near the mark as anyone can be at this stage.*

Both schools duly maintained the Windsor name, the *Concordia* motto and badge. Was there any discussion on a shared magazine? Perhaps WBS took advantage of the dislocation at WGS, starting for a term in Plön and then moving to only partially completed premises in February 1960? In any event WBS maintained possession and *Concordia* remained its title through to the end. The format of its first few editions stayed the same under Mr Kelly, who had edited the previous few years.

There were several noticeable changes which had the effect of reducing the formality of the magazine. Essays, poems, and illustrations now fitted in throughout the magazine. Its opening editorial, somewhat cheekily perhaps, used the *Concordia* imagery to bring together the pupils from King Alfred School with the Hamm pupils:

*This first number of the magazine of Windsor Boys' School has adapted from the Chronicle of the original Windsor School its title; much of its form and character; some of its contributors and, at least our business manager hopes, most of its subscribers.*

In the second edition, in autumn 1960, sixth former J Knowles set out the role of a school magazine. These extracts give a flavour of the culture of the magazine and how its readership was seen:

*School magazines are generally accepted as part of a school's life. It gives a picture of school life to the outsider and brings many a memory to "old" pupils.*

*The sportsmen like to look at team photographs and reflect on past victories and defeats, and in the latter case resolve to do better.*

*The intellectuals look at examination results with mixed feelings. They usually remember the painful interview with Dad when they failed.*

*So-called authors look up the literary section immediately for their brief accounts and budding Wordsworth's read their pitiful poems time and time again.*

WGS opened its account with *Ambassador* in December 1960, some four terms after its opening in Plön. Both magazines continued in a similar format, inherited from Windsor School, until 1962. But neither published in 1962/63. Both re-started in 1964, in radically new formats.

## **The New *Ambassador* and *Concordia***

The new *Ambassador* arrived in Summer 1964. It was in A4 "in the nature of an experiment in magazine production". The aim was "a lively and readable magazine which has been produced almost entirely by the girls of the school". The editorial board initially had four teachers (Cummings, McClure, Misses Martin and Price). *Concordia* resurfaced in Autumn 1964 with a "temporary" small size 33 page edition and its new format appeared in Spring 1965, in a similar format to *Ambassador*.

In summer 1961 the *Concordia* Editor, Mr Kelly, had surmised

*Perhaps the day is not, after all, too distant when "Concordia" will be produced without the interference of members of staff.*

That day was to take several years and a change of headmaster. The new *Concordia* went one step ahead of *Ambassador*: a pupil became editor, Ron

Lancaster. His first editorial prompted the first controversy. Previous editorials (by teachers) had given a quiet introduction to the magazine, a call for more contributions, a word or two of thanks. Lancaster's editorial tackled the issue of relative morals and cultural relativism. It prompted a furious backlash from Padre Fielding and Mr Nesbitt-Hawes in the next issue who both not surprisingly defended the Christian value system.

Mr Mike Capey, charged by Mr Wylie to revive the magazine, became its first Advisory Editor, set out a new policy in a supplement to the summer 1965 edition:

*The headmaster has called it "New Concordia," which rather pleases us. What is, in fact, "new" about Concordia?*

*Firstly it is planned and controlled by boys in the school, not by the staff. When an impasse is reached between myself and the Editor, it is the Editor who wins.*

*Secondly, although a school magazine, it does not pretend to be entirely representative of the school. If a house, an activity or an event does not inspire written comment then it will not receive one, save possibly a passing reference in "Term in Brief".*

*Thirdly, although we look upon New Concordia as a record of school affairs, we look upon it more as a forum of school opinion, a vehicle of school jocundity, and a symposium of prose and poetry that the boys, and some staff, have wanted to write.*

Mr Barry Cummings, head of arts at WGS, was asked to review this "new Concordia". Not surprisingly he was not keen on the new production approach, lacking the sharpness of typesetting:

*The main strength in this issue of Concordia lies in its bold, youthful style of English, and the brevity and variety of its articles.*

*The overall quality of the magazine tends to be just a little too flippant and satirical. The editorial staff seem to have used the pages of the official school magazine to exploit their wits at the expense of the Establishment as a whole and the school in particular. This they have*



*done extremely well. But I can't help feeling that a more genuine attempt to make Concordia a vehicle to display the literary, artistic and humorous talents of a greater section of the school community would result in a far richer pot-pourri to set before its readers.*

The new style spelt the end of the “chronicle-led” stage of the magazines. *Ambassador* was slower to change than *Concordia*. Gone were the days of a comprehensive set of articles covering virtually all aspects of the school, every sport, every activity, every visitor (mostly senior military). In their place came a selection of articles, far more graphics and cartoons, a considerable increase in humour (including some awful puns and “*Windsor Witticisms*”), interviews with both pupils and teachers. Out, in both magazines by the 1970s, went Term in Brief/Diary, staff and prefects listings, examination results, Staff Mess news. At times even old faithfuls disappeared such as Chapel Notes, Speech Day reports, It was a new way of recording events in the schools. Out went news of former pupils, in came reviews of the year by Head Girls and Boys. *Ambassador* remained an annual publication. *Concordia* came out termly, yes termly, from 1965 until 1968 and twice a year between 68/69 and 71/72 and then annually.

## **From history to interviews**

In the mid-1960s *Concordia* featured long essays on historical subjects. Tim Feast was to write to the Editor that the magazine was turning into a History Department magazine after articles on the Spanish Civil War (Mr Taylor), Operation Barbarossa (Mr Farrell) and the Battle of Naseby. A six page article on Agincourt perhaps the last straw. Mr Birdsall's memories of his national service in Cyprus and Mr Taylor's report on the Spanish Civil War stand out.

A noticeable development in *Concordia*, later adopted in *Ambassador*, was the interview with a teacher, or a round table discussion with teachers and senior pupils. Some of the teachers' responses are clearly tongue in cheek, others enlightening both of their pre Windsor days and their views of the respective school. Mr Wylie, frequently featured in *Concordia*, made sure he edited his interviews.

One difference stands out between the magazines in the 1950s and later.

There was little obvious effort made to “sell” the schools to parents. There were exceptions, notably the speech day reports by headmistresses Willson and Evans in *Ambassador*, but both magazines turned inwards.

## The 1970s

The 1970s saw teachers back in the editorial seat (for example Padre Brindley at WBS and Miss Blackmann and Miss Norma Cousin at WGS). Did this herald a change? In *Concordia* to some degree. Controversial matters took a backseat. Sports reporting expanded, school plays were well reported (but with less criticism) as were visits to Paris and Stratford on Avon. Quizzes and crosswords appeared, CCF and DofE expeditions were recorded in detail. In *Concordia* Mr Gysin revived the headmasters’ introduction pioneered by Aspinall and Benyon. His aim was to write articles with an educational slant. Topics included the standardisation of the curriculum in BFES, discipline and punishment, and a firm reminder that the high rate of unemployment in the UK was a reason to work hard.

The last two editions of the magazine, from the merged school, are the largest and perhaps the most eclectic. House notes were spread over several pages, a significant change from the 1970s when editors despaired of their similarity (and the 1960s when several *Concordia* editors dropped them altogether). The final edition covered every sports team with a photo: probably most pupils in that final year appeared.

Did the magazines meet the hopes of Mr Cummings? In design and production probably not; *Concordias* are very prone to fall apart. The production values changed regularly as did the artwork and design. The trajectory from chronicle to “with it” was progressive and irreversible. The magazines have been an essential source for this book. The “chronicle” periods have yielded information, the “with it” periods have given context. The controlled formality of the early years, up to 1962, the openness of the mid-1960s at WBS (conflict admission: I was on the *Concordia* editorial team in 1967/68 and editor in 1968/69) and the longer article style of the 1970s reflected the changing times. It is a shame there is no complete collection of the magazines, online or in an archive. The next task?

## Looking in, looking out

In the late 1970s, some years after I left WBS, I met a German student doing his PhD at a London college. We were the same age. He was from Hamm, indeed lived in one of the streets bordering WBS. He and his mates used to wonder “Why do the British keep their kids behind barbed wire?” Headmaster Wylie was asked almost the same question, “*would he consider getting rid of our barbed wire fence*”? “Yes” he replied. “*Why don’t you?*” asked Neil Culley:

*The security of the place, for which I gather I am responsible, would not be improved if we didn’t have a fence. If we didn’t have one we might well find picnic parties on the back field on a Sunday.*

Two views of the same fence: looking in, looking out. The schools being British enclaves in Germany, or as *Ambassador* put it in 1973:

*A British school in the middle of the Westphalian Plain cannot long remain immune from the locals.*

Or, indeed, vice versa. The relationship between the schools and the “locals” was an ever present aspect of their 30 year life. In 1947, just two years after the end of the war, BFES director Trevelyan posed a question:

*Again we have the interesting question of the relationship between British and German children. If they can come to know each other we may be sowing the seed of a future relationship between the two nations which will contrast favourably with this relationship in the past 35 years. Such a relationship cannot be forced: it must grow naturally from the natural desire of all children to meet and mix in activity and play.*

Mr Aspinall picked up in a similar vein in his regular “Letter” in *Concordia*:

*For many Germans, Windsor School is a window on Great Britain. Can we claim to have enhanced our country’s reputation by the work we have done, the standards we have achieved and the way we have achieved them? We are, perhaps, inclined to sit inside our cosy and close community and, because we are what we are, bewail the insularity of the inhabitants of Great Britain. We must beware of becoming insular ourselves.*

At WGS, Mr Tarling, in 1969, also set the scene:

*A British school in the heart of Germany enjoys at least one great advantage over schools in the United Kingdom. The study of Germany, its language and its peoples, its culture and its traditions becomes much more alive.*

*“Anglo-German relations” does not mean as some would seem to think, fraternizing with a few more or less reputable German youths who have taken to patrolling the perimeter at dusk and during week-ends.*

## **The City**

At a formal level the city of Hamm honoured the schools in 1966: *Concordia* reported:

*A small party of staff from the Windsor Schools were invited to the Rathaus to meet the Burghermeister and his council. Mr Wylie, Miss Evans and the Burghermeister made speeches to mark the occasion, and the staff signed the “Golden Book” of the town – an honour for the Windsor Schools.*

An honour indeed. The gold-plated 4.5kg book contains the signatures of Konrad Adenauer, Willy Brandt, and (later) Angela Merkel amongst others. A recognition of the importance the schools brought to the city, in terms of employment and visibility (with the regular number of visitors from

ambassadors, senior military officers and church leaders). Cities appreciate this recognition. Two years later, Mr Wylie and Mr GB Jones were invited to the New Year's reception given by Stadt Hamm. Senior city officials often visited the schools including the Hamm Education Committee.

The schools had a major economic impact on the city. From the 1960s onwards the two schools employed well over 200 local people. The advertisements in the school magazines indicate the commercial opportunities: car dealerships, international insurance, travel bureaux, DIY tools, banks and the Hotel Bielefeld (a mainstay for visiting parents).

## **School to school**

An enduring window on the schools comes from visitors, fortunately recorded in the school magazines. One of the first, and longest lasting, partnerships was with the Bockum Hövel Realschule. Just a year after opening, in November 1954, a group of 12 year olds visited Windsor School, saw some lessons and played a game of football in the afternoon. Later in the term some Windsor pupils repaid the visit. The history of the Realschule (which also opened in 1953) records this visit as an occasion to share Christmas customs and books. In the following year pupils from both schools went on a joint visit to the "Atoms for Peace" exhibition at Bockum.

Herr Knippschild, the head master, played a valuable role between the schools. He acted as a guide for Windsor pupils visiting factories and mines in the Hamm area and spoke to the Windsor Society on the differences between German and British schools. The Realschule hosted visits from WBS. R Braithwaite recorded one in 1966:

*After a short sung in German, the headmaster read a short address, first in German and then in English. (The English version was for the uneducated amongst our party). After the main body of the school drifted back to the classrooms, leaving our future partners, some of whom were girls (much to the delight of the senior members of our party).*

The visit included taking part in German and English lessons, and lunch at the home of the partner. A tricky moment came when one of his dorm-mates treated the class with a long talk on the rules of cricket, "we were allowed to

leave.” These early links with a German school, set a pattern which was extended right up to 1983.

In the early years of WGS there was a regular exchange arrangement with a school in Osnabrück. A preliminary visit in 1962 led to a programme of week-long exchanges with groups of pupils spending time in each other’s schools. WGS pupils stayed with German families. Ailish O’Driscoll reported, in *Ambassador*, initially apprehensively:

*This prospect had its frightening aspects. The obvious one was the barrier of language, but the difference in food and manners might create difficulties. At the beginning it seemed that the following week would bring with it many uncomfortable incidents. Only in a few instances did our anxieties materialise. The generosity and thoughtfulness of our various families soon straightened out the major problems.*

A very modern approach to Physical Education (rhythmic exercises) and a well-equipped art room stood out. The exchange programme, “Austausch” started with 6th formers; by 1969 4th formers were taking part.

In February 1983, just months before the school closed, a group of pupils from Geschwister-Scholl-Gymnasium in Unna visited the school. Many of the comments made by one of the visitors chimed with a visit made by a student from Münster University in the first year of WBS in 1960:

*From the first day I was very impressed by the excellent discipline of the classes and the correct and polite behaviour of the pupils towards the staff. (1960)*

*Since you often have to sit still during the whole lesson – as we saw during the two days – it is true that your discipline is more severe than ours, which in my opinion is another advantage of your system (1983)*

In 1968 a visitor, Herr Bludau, also commented on the “unusually quiet and self-controlled boys”.

Some common threads appear in visit reports. The strangeness of the boarding concept, the inter-actions between teacher and pupil, small class sizes, the quality of the art, woodwork and metalwork rooms. Most appreciated the range of extra-curricular activities, sporting and otherwise.

A cautionary note came from Herr Bludau:

*I have for instance rarely found much interest in afternoon activities organised by the school, and I can hardly imagine a German boy being very enthusiastic about the idea of binding books with his History Master at 5pm.*

A view probably not shared by the boys concerned! An astute note was seen in a 1977 visit, echoing of the criticism of the dorms from the school inspectors:

*The boarding houses were badly equipped. The younger pupils have to live in small rooms with little furniture but the positive consequence of this can be that the pupils learn to live together in harmony and to make new friends.*

Visits to German schools were still taking place in 1982, with some pithy comments from the Windsor visitors:

*We thought the Maths work they had was easy! Did the teacher really write the answers on the board and let the children just copy them?*

*When we arrived all the children were staring because we were all in school uniform, which they found peculiar, as they just come in jeans and T-Shirt.*

*The discipline is not at all strict, because the children run riot and the teachers don't do a thing to stop them. I would hate to go to a German School!*

Sports and games provided another obvious area of engagement, covered in more detail in the chapter on sports.

Margaret Fleming recalls a very moving shared event in the early 1960s:

*I remember a joint memorial outdoor service at a church with German service graves. We laid wreaths, along with members of boys' school, Hamm council members, German school children.*

The language issue crops up time and time again. In 1955 *Concordia*, in its reply to the comments made in the House of Commons by Nicholson:

*With few exceptions the only children who speak German naturally are those who have been to German schools or are of German parentage. This is largely due to the successful transfer of a British way of life by the Services into a foreign country so that the horizons of most children are bounded by their school, the NAAFI, the A.K.C. cinema and their English friends.*

This inward looking attitude is captured in Roy Bainton's "*The Long Patrol, The British in Germany since 1945*". He describes, with many contributions from those who served in the military, their life in Germany and how for some it was a case of remaining within "Little Britain". For others it was a golden opportunity to explore another country, buttressed by good pay and allowances.

German was the first foreign language taught in the initial years of Windsor School but soon French replaced it. This was to ease the transition from a BFES school to UK schools (and other schools around the world) where French was the first foreign language. In the lists of examinations results in the school magazines the number of pupils taking O and A level French outnumbered those taking German (although less so at WGS).

Attempts were made to integrate into a German speaking environment. Mr Tarling introduced a visit for 15 or so girls to a week-long "*Schullandheim*":

*A Schullandheim is a kind of country retreat to which most Gymnasien have access to at some time or other during their academic year.*

*Excursions to places of interest and pleasurable evening activities such as communal games, singing and dancing help to make the week an enjoyable one. All this, and spoken German too for all students unless inarticulate will be forced to communicate in German for some of the time.*

Schools were not the only destination for visits. Starting in the 1950s day trips to Hamm and surroundings were organised. Naturally the marshalling yards featured frequently, as did the Isenbeck Brewery. In 1967, we learn from *Concordia*:

*Throughout the term, groups of boys have made visits almost weekly to*



*many places of interest in Hamm, including the fire station, the police station, the museum, the library, the abattoir, the townhall, the harbour and the zoo. Many of these trips were made possible because of the friendly cooperation offered by Stadt Hamm.*

One of the largest visits was a two-day visit in December 1967 to Limburg for 120 girls and boys. A mix of speeches, from the local mayor to the British Ambassador, Catholic pupils taking Mass in the cathedral, and:

*To Teleman School where we listened to a priest who sang to us, then to our school group, a slight contrast there.*

Outside visits were a mainstay of many years. In 1975/76 the science class at WBS not only made the regular visit to Isenbeck brewery but also visited the Schiffshebewerk lifting lock, the Pelkum coal mine and the VEW Nuclear Power plant. The Soest Sugar Factory appealed to those with a sweet tooth. The school bands often supported events. In the same year for example:

*For the first time in the history of WBS, some hundred seniors were invited to a dance at the (German) Girls Grammar School in Hamm. The lively music of the beat-band soon broke down the initial shyness between the German girls and British boys.*

The following year a group of boys went to a social centre in Unna for new arrivals from the DDR. *Jacks Union* again played at the evening dance.

The 1960s saw an expanded programme of events. *Concordia* frequently records up to a dozen every term. At the centre of these was Mr GB (Brangwyn) Jones. He had joined WBS in 1959 after two years at King Alfred School. When he left in 1970 Mr Worrall called him “*probably the best known British teacher in Germany*”. An accomplished musician Mr Jones was tireless in developing Anglo-German links, both for pupils and for teachers. In 1966 for example he, together with Dr Gronwald, director of Education for Stadt Hamm, brought together 17 German, 6 Canadian and the two Windsor schools to discuss ways of achieving closer cooperation.

One long-lasting outcome was an international music evening in the Kurhaus. It was first held in November 1967 with choirs from ten Canadian, German and the two Windsor schools. The WBS choir sang five songs (with clear religious overtones) including the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, Wesley’s Lead me Lord

and a Jewish ritual dance song. The WGS choir stayed with Beethoven and Schubert. Excerpts were broadcast on Westdeutscher Rundfunk and a record made, which many pupils have kept. The Musikabend continued well into the 1970s. The WBS choir must have raised eyebrows in the late 1960s when its repertoire included *The Peat Bog Soldiers (Die Moorsoldaten)* and *Sha Still*. The former written by political prisoners in 1930s concentration camps and the latter, a Yiddish folk song.

Mr Jones left a legacy with his three volume German language textbook "*Lustiges lernen.*" Mr Barry Cummings, the head of art at WGS, provided the illustrations. The textbook was used not only in BFES but also across schools in the UK. Mr Jones left in 1970 to work for the German Ministry of Education in Bonn as well as continuing his work with Inter Naciones, the German agency charged with providing information for the Allied forces and internationally.

Schloss Oberwerries, near Hamm, was the location for another three way programme, funded mainly by the Ministry of Education in Düsseldorf and Stadt Hamm. Around 50 German, British and Canadian boys spent a few days together. A German pupil remembered their apprehension of using each other's language but:

*The atmosphere became friendlier which I ask a British boy for "fire" for my cigarette. I now learn something new. The correct request is for a "light" and not for "fire", Thus the ice is broken.*

This programme also continued in the 1970s but as Simon Brindley recalls:

*I remember going to Schloss Oberwerries on something like this maybe about 1973/74. It was meant to bring kids of different nationalities together but I don't remember that working very well at all as we just stayed with our mates.*

Simon had a more fruitful engagement with local boys playing on the "Green", an open space in Am Huckenholz:

*That space was great for spending time in the evenings. For at least a year or two about 72-74 time there would be a nightly game of football against a group of German guys we got to know and it would be hard for guys and often go on until nearly dark. It was one of the*

*few places we ever actually met and became friendly with young German people our age.*

Of course many pupils saw more of Germany as they holidayed with their parents. On parents visiting days many went to the Möhnesee. Despite the limitations on leaving the school grounds there were many girlfriend-boyfriend relationships, although these were not encouraged at WGS. At times teachers stepped in to discourage or ban such personal encounters but adolescents will be adolescents.

### **Don't mention the war**

Inevitably, given the period, the location and adolescent children, the “war” was never far away. “Colditz” was a common definition of the school buildings and “escapes” were likened to POW escapes. In the 1950s many staff, British and German, and many parents would have had wartime experiences, either as combatants or civilians. We saw how many teachers retained their reserve rank when leading the CCF; Herr Wolter moved from being a prisoner to an administrative post, Miss Schidlof from evacuee to matron. Although the rationale for British troops in Germany during the lifetime of the schools was one of facing the Soviet Union, the Second World War was never far away. A trenchant view was taken by Mr Phipps, housemaster of Caernarvon at WBS; he had been evacuated from Dunkirk and returned to occupied France with the Airborne Division on D-Day+6. He was asked, in 1965:

*“What is your view on the present epidemic of reading war comics in school?”*

This is interesting. In his analysis of the British and German relations, Speiser noted that war films in the 1950s featuring British heroics, the Germans were almost incidental. There was a distinct change in the 1960s where the Germans were increasingly portrayed in a harsher light. The *Commando* comic series, starting in 1961, was an element in this cultural change. It would have been their comics Mr Phipps was questioned about. His reply:

*It's been going on for a long time now, and it is high time that it stopped. I get the impression that some boys are more anti-German because they read these things. Certainly they give a very false impression of our enemies. The Germans are now our allies for the first time since Blücher crossed the Rhine for Waterloo. They are now firmly and decisively on our side. We should know, of course the various misdeeds the Germans perpetrated but not in the form of comics.*

One constant memory of the war was the standard visit, with parents, to the Möhne See dam. Many pupils did indeed visit the sites of concentration camps during their time in Germany with their families or on school trips.

The Windsor schools made considerable efforts to integrate in the city and to develop an awareness of Germany. There were of course troublesome actions (shoplifting, fights, a rare stabbing incident):

*I remember the stabbing incident – (pupil, name withheld) was at the fence and (local lad, name withheld) stabbed him... they brought him up to our sick bay on a wooden cart...scary at the time. 1960s.*

*4 German guys broke in and climbed through my dorm window, had the police in and had to give statements. WGS 1970s*

*I remember sneaking out at night through a hole in the fence by the hockey pitch and scrumping in the local Gardens. WBS 1970s*

Mr Hawthorne recalls, in the 1970s:

*On Sunday afternoons during my gate duty, I had to tour the pubs to remove WGS girls.*

Many Hamm residents recalled the “redtops”: the berets of WGS as school uniforms were required outside school grounds. Mr Leighton noted the impact of school uniforms:

*...the pupils are readily identifiable in the streets of Hamm, and in the self-service department stores where the occasional boy may succumb to temptation! But is it fair they should be so identifiable and visually separate from the German youth? And if a boy disgraces himself*

*publicly, is there not a greater risk that the German populace will tend to condemn all boys in a similar uniform?*

The schools made continual efforts to engage with the “locals”. Many of these were of an observer nature rather than co-participant. At a personal level there were limited relations between British pupils and their local counterparts, not least because of the language barrier. There is a noticeable lack of mentions (e.g. in debates) in *Concordia* and *Ambassador* of contemporary developments in Germany, a strange omission.

Many pupils returned to Germany after they left the schools. For some it was with the military, for others on holiday, for those with German parents (mainly their mothers) it was their home country. Many stayed permanently. Many teachers also “stayed on” after their BFES careers.

An exhibition of the “*British in Westfalen*” held at the Stadt Archiv in 2018 was well attended by current residents of Hamm as they learnt of the schools in the city from 1953 to 1983. The buildings of WBS may have gone and WGS re-purposed, but the emotional attachment remains.

## Not everyone was happy

Not everyone enjoyed their time at the schools. The reasons included the common problems of residential schools: homesickness, the restrictions, the discipline, the lack of privacy and “not fitting in”. For some it was being the victim of bullying. Here is a mix of comments from the 1960s and 1970s:

*I went there in 1961 when I was 11 and spent three years at WGS Caernarvon House, my number was C47. I was really homesick and therefore probably didn't enjoy the experience that much, memories are quite sad really as I felt lonely.*

*My time at WBS was a sentence, hated it and most of the other boys. Just a couple were decent.*

*To be uprooted from such a place of contentment to what I felt was prison was awful. I was very homesick, I missed my parents, siblings, friends and of course the horses. Oh, we'd moved around a lot but that move was difficult. Maybe it was my hormones... Becoming a teenager and all that. I really wasn't happy at Hamm and couldn't wait to leave. WGS*

*I could never get over how teachers and more surprisingly fellow pupils used to call others by their surnames and not their first name.*

*Coming from America and having to wear a uniform and being a day student was terrifying to me.*

The harsh culture is captured in this recollection, tempered by what would be called today a learning point:

*No dissent was tolerated. Draconian, inflexible rules and mores could not be challenged. Looking back, I can say that the experience at Hamm was both useful for self-analysis and for dealing with other people. (WBS early 1960s)*

The comparative for many in the late 1950s and early 1960s was the perceived style of Public Schools. This is not surprising. There were very few state residential schools (Woolverstone Hall being a leading exception; Mr Smitherman was its first headmaster, after he left PRS). The headteachers came from Public Schools and brought their culture with them. They laid down many positives but within a tightly controlled environment. For some it was too tight. One pupil stood back from posting comments on social media explaining:

*..... was mainly due to hating the place from Day 1 in Autumn, 1959 until the day I left at the end of Summer Term in 1961. I saw no point in highlighting the experience of a 12 year old living the downside of a Public School culture at the mercy of a few teachers who would not be tolerated today. The vast majority of postings commented on other boarder's positive experience of the boys school as well as the girls school which was unknown territory to me.*

Another from the same period:

*Absolutely detested the school and the discipline. Moaned that much that my parents eventually removed me and I ended up at Queens School in Rheindahlen with a 1.5 hour bus journey every morning. But still wore my red blazer to Queens.*

Mr Hern, who joined the school in 1958, later made an astute comment in reply to a pupil:

*Some of the details show how the school was run along classic Public School lines with little consideration or understanding for those who had difficulties conforming to the somewhat rigorous system. There can be no excuse for some of the treatment that you and others receive.*

For those who were at the schools in the 1970s and 1980s the culture of the

schools in the 1950s, and early 1960s, is difficult to relate to (and vice versa).

Some teachers came in for criticism:

*He taught me in an atmosphere of fear as he seemed to make a point of disliking me and my inability to learn the subject. (WBS early 1960s).*

*My last two years were made especially difficult by an awful housemistress.*

Homesickness was common. For most it lasted a few weeks at most before they adjusted and integrated in the school systems. Matrons in particular are praised for their support. For some it was more severe:

*I did have one really good friend who suffered the most awful homesickness, lived in Berlin and waited anxiously for her daily letter from home.*

## **Locked In: Restricted to the school grounds**

“Exeats,” permission to leave the school site, came with strict conditions. For many this rule was the most irritating. It compounded the sense of being locked in, of a lack of privacy, and for older pupils a loss of their perceived status:

*... (the school) seemed to be run on the lines of a British boarding school with little freedom especially for the juniors who only had infrequent exeats and even then under supervision. Exeats for the rest were very restricted and the weekly allowance was carefully recorded. (WGS early 60s).*

*I was at the school around 1963 to 1965. The first term was the pits, only allowed out of the school twice a term to go to Hamm and then you had to get a sixth former to take you. (WBS)*

*In those early years run on English Public School lines with no exeats for juniors and only limited ones for the seniors.*

*When I was there you only got to go outside was with the matron in*



*full uniform and there was a chap in a little hut and bloody big barrier to keep us in.*

The schools took due diligence very firmly. Junior pupils in both schools were only allowed out with an escort (matron or sometimes a prefect) and for short periods. Even as late as 1977 the WGS rules:

*Third year pupils are allowed out of school between 4.30pm and 5.30pm on one weekday. Fourth, fifth and sixth years are allowed out on two occasions but all girls must possess an identity card and observe specified limits surrounding the school area. First and second year pupils are only allowed outside the school bounds if accompanied by a school prefect, sisters, matron or a member of staff.*

School uniform had to be worn, only prefects were exempt. Once outside, the permitted areas were limited and increased with age. Those WGS rules were very specific, pointing out areas which could, and could not be visited. The restrictions at WBS were less rigid by the mid-1970s. Both schools relaxed rules over the weekends: with Saturday afternoon being a prime opportunity for the discos in the late 1970s.

## **Bullying**

There was bullying at the schools. This is not a surprising statement, bullying exists at all schools, day or boarding. There is no way of knowing whether it was more widespread in Windsor. We saw that WBS had a reputation of being hard in the 1970s. Certainly bullying more prevalent for the more junior pupils and was present for both girls and boys. Former pupils have been open about bullying on social media. For some it markedly ruined their time at Windsor and affected their lives subsequently. For others it was a hard passage of school life to be endured. In most cases it passed, they moved dorms, the bully left, they themselves left the school. In some cases the bully was a teacher.

*My years as a third and fourth year at that school were (to be honest) a total misery. The bullying was absolutely everywhere and being a boarding school you just couldn't escape it. In my 5th year things*

*started to change. (WGS)*

*I arrived shortly after my twelfth birthday and my baptism was to be beaten up by three older boys on my second night there. (WBS early 60s)*

*There were two teachers on the girls side who were more “subtle” and went in for humiliating you.*

## **The night time raids**

A mixed school, with girls in one block and boys in another. Too much not to expect some night time visiting. With both boys and girls houses on the same site in the 1950s nocturnal visits were to be expected:

*Do you remember when some Sandringham girls sneaked over to the boys block and we ALL got detention and had our bonfire night cancelled? A bit harsh.*

It was not long after the schools divided that the temptation to make an illicit night-time visit from WBS to WGS was too much to hold back. Tom Ryan (H59–61) recalls the first night-time “raid”:

*Remember the assembly when Mr Benyon named them and one by one they had to stand up and leave the hall in ‘disgrace’ to be taken to a bus and sent home forthwith? Not a very pleasant occasion but reflecting the way that the school was run.*

Another witness:

*The ‘urban legend’ relating to the break-in by a raiding party from WBS into WGS is certainly no myth. I was at the school when it happened and the dramatic scenes at school assembly on the morning after it was discovered left an indelible impression. Several perpetrators were expelled and other, lesser stars, were suspended for the rest of the term.*

It was not all one-way:

*I’m not sure if anyone remembers the incident when a couple of girls*

*from another house (own up if you are on this site) got caught outside the grounds, I think over in the boys' school. They were hauled in front of the whole school and we were forced to send them <to Coventry> They were even isolated from everyone and punishment for anyone who got caught talking to them. early 60s*

*One night a group of girls on their way back from WBS were chased by some Gastarbeiter – seeing a car with a BFG registration, they flagged it down, but oops, it was a teacher from the Boys' School. 1960s*

*Do you remember how some girls used to break out at night and go to the boys' school! They were literally running around the countryside at 2am in the morning. When teachers suspected it they used to have a fire alarm in the middle of the night which was horrendous for the rest of us. Some of the girls in my dorm also used to have boys visit them which was horrible for the rest of us. We never reported it though as we didn't want to be <snitchers>!*

The public shaming in itself was a punishment (Amnesty International frequently calls out countries for this). It was also a badge of honour for many!

By the 1970s the visits were not exactly commonplace but quite frequent. Gaps in the fences, the least observed areas in both schools, were part of the “under the radar” knowledge. A teacher's view comes from Mr Hawthorne:

*Occasionally at weekends – WGS would go co-ed and we had to return the boys to WBS during the night!*

Penalties for being caught were progressively reduced from expulsion to suspension to a stern ticking off and loss of privileges. Security was tightened after several British soldiers were discovered in WGS. Piers Handling recalled the punishment dished out to some overnighters:

*Not allowed to wear school uniform, they slept in the gymnasium and ate in the kitchens after we had all finished! Even visiting them in their disgrace was forbidden.*

By 1981 housemistress Miss Barnett could tell an amusing story in the final *Ambassador*. Miss Scott woke her up with the news: “Boys in. Watched them come in up the stairwell in this block: they are on this floor.”

*“I found it a somewhat ridiculous situation to be in – standing outside dormitories, hardly daring to breathe for the noise it made, trusty torch in one hand, the other clutching my dressing gown to me... Ah now I could hear the whispering. I triumphantly flung open the door and simultaneously reached for the light switch.... Six sleepy faces.....I looked bewilderingly around the room and then I remembered where Windsor boys are supposed to hide”*

Under the beds (of course). Miss Barnett continued, after finding all three:

*I'll never forget his cheeky little face ... and he had the nerve to send me a Christmas card from the one under the bed, greet me enthusiastically at the Christmas fair and send in a request for me on the radio. I must admit, I couldn't resist his style.*

On another occasion the search for the intruding boy was unsuccessful. Claims he had jumped out of the window were not fully accepted. The housemistress wrote:

*he was found in a snoring drunken stupor behind a wardrobe in a dorm in Sandringham at seven o'clock in the morning.*

## **Let's runaway, for an evening...or to go home**

The nocturnal visits between the schools were not the only reason for leaving the schools illicitly. The strict rules over exeat and the closed community culture led to two broad categories of “escape.” For some the thrill of being outside for a few hours, or for an evening, was too good to miss. At WBS going over the back wall and scrumping apples in a nearby orchard was a frequent exploit. Complaints from the local farmer led to a stern and often painful meeting with the headmaster.

Three memories from WGS capture the fun of the short term freedom:

*Some of us used to climb over the fence and go for midnight walkies. I*

*remember we used to go and get fags from a fag machine down the road. How on earth no-one noticed 3 or 4 young girls doing all this in the middle of the night, God only knows.*

*I have one of those photo booth black and white things. It was taken on a night when about 6 of us 'escaped' in the middle of the night to go into town. We were only 15 and we didn't have a clue what we were going to do when we got through that fence. It was exciting though.*

*Anyone remember midnight scrumping from Marlborough House? Got caught twice. Once had to spend all Saturday peeling a sack of onions.*

For some at WBS the "escape" was a welcome challenge:

*Regular escapes and night walks out over the back fence by the hockey pitch... loved to find ways of escape.*

*I did the exact same thing in 1970 with 2 others, picked up by the German police on the autobahn and returned back to WBS. I always thought I was the only one who did it. Looking back it was pretty silly and we got a hard time from matron for a few days.*

*The lad I went with was thrown out of the school, he was a Berlin boy, Dad was in the Cheshire's. He was a bit of a tearaway and had gone over the wall a few times and I think they had had enough of him.*

*Yes twice, got suspended and sent back to Berlin for the rest of the half term, was well worth it.*

*I did ...cops were searching for me all day ...left just after roll call and jumped the train then walked all the way from train station to Lotte in Osnabruck ...mum and dad were in bits as I was gone till nearly six at night when I eventually got home. As a mum now I see their pain I would have throttled me lol ...we did dares and that was mine was meant to leave in the middle off the night but was too scared and they took the Micky at roll call ...so off I went ...*

Piers Handling, one of the Canadians at the schools, recalled one of his "adventures":

*...going over the wall to Hamm to carouse at the Star Club into the early hours and then crawling back, over the infamous railway bridge which crossed a river and had to be negotiated in a beery haze.*

Not every attempt was successful as Monica Murray remembers:

*myself and a couple of dorm pals had a midnight tryst with some German lads, found a loose railing, jumped out of window (nearly broke our necks I think!!) trouble was they had fixed the railing and we never did get out, had to get one of the girls to unlock the main door for us and next day got in loads of trouble cos we had left trail of MUD all the way from main door to our dorm and even worse our beds lol!!!! can't remember the punishment so couldn't have been that bad.*

## **Homeward Bound**

Further afield was the aim of the second category: they wanted to get home. The reasons were manifold and personal. For some a challenge, for others a serious attempt to leave the school; it was too much. John Cole was an unsuccessful young absconder:

*I ran away when I was 11. I got to the Kanal and thought I could follow this to the Autobahn. Ended up totally lost. At midnight I finally knocked on a German's house and as I could speak German got them to let me call my parents. Who weren't amused. They asked the family to call the German police which took me back to Mr. Jones who wasn't amused neither.*

Scott Innes was another young absconder; his reasons were probably common:

*I first went to WBS as a 1st year and was scared witless, It was like an army prison camp and at 11 years old I believed and still do that it was too young to be away from the comfort of your family. I only lasted a week or so, ran away and got sent home to Scotland to live with my Grandparents.*

Two more 1970s WBS stories; the second shows how Army Regulations

could come into play:

*I arrived as a 12 year old and instantly hated it. There was bullying in our house and I was on the receiving end several times. So much so that I was running away on almost a weekly basis. Coming through 14/15 years old I really got into the WBS world and when it was time to leave it dawned on me I didn't want it to end.*

*my brother had an absolutely horrible time of it when he returned in 75 or 76 as an older boy without the protection of older sisters. So much so that he ran away to Berlin without his passport! He refused to ever return despite our father being on a charge for his son's behaviour.*

Most runaways were unsuccessful, often caught by the police on the autobahn. One pupil remembers a friend, in the early 1960s:

*I remember the night she ran away to get back to Paris but was found by the German Police and brought back.*

A group attempt was made by Nic Cuthbertson, with Peter Crowther and Paul Brightman, aiming to reach Osnabruck. It didn't go well for Nic:

*When I first went to WBS Sandringham House age 12 in 1973 I had a bad time with older lads and the housemaster. I hated it, but I was a choppy 12 year old, angry and with a chip on my shoulder. I ran away, got into trouble and left.*

*It was me that got hit by the Police car, Gordon, we were tabbing down the autobahn hitching a lift, Peter Crowther ran across the autobahn and I ran down the hard shoulder, the copper knocked me off my feet with the car and broke my leg! Pete made it the whole way home and I ended up in BMH Munster for a week then had 3 weeks off!*

Both Scott Innes (2 years later) and Nic Cuthbertson (after 7 months, *I loved it*) returned to Windsor. Scott recalls:

*I had a great time, got into lots of trouble, but the friendships I made and the help I got from certain teachers will never be forgotten.*

*School's Out* by Alice Cooper provided the backdrop to perhaps the most adventurous, and successful, escape. In November 1972 Jeannie Forbes walked out of WGS after morning roll call, never to return. Her escape was planned well in advance. Summer earnings saved up; a friend in Scotland providing an air ticket, clothing stored week by week in the left luggage at Hamm station. Train to Dusseldorf airport, flight to London, train to Scotland. Under Scottish law as a 16 year old she was entitled to have left home so could not be returned to school. Her absence was not noted until evening roll call when she was already in London. The sting in the tale came when her dormmate fell ill with meningitis, prompting quarantine for many girls. The World Health Organisation and others put out contact alerts until Jeannie (the asymptomatic carrier) phoned in the following day.

Schools nowadays are required to have a detailed protocol on dealing with those outside school without permission. A key element is the counselling on return. No such system in place at Windsor. Absconding was seen as a serious infringement of the rules, a threat to the "*in loco parentis*" function and reputation of the school. A stern talking to, loss of privileges, suspensions and expulsion were the fate waiting returnees. That the "fault" or reason for the episode might rest with the school was not acceptable.



## The Primary School

The first British school in Hamm opened in January 1947, six years before Windsor School. It closed over 40 years later; well after Windsor School closed.

It was a primary school. One of the quirks of BFES was that it never adopted the Windsor name, remaining “Hamm Primary School” or “HPS”. One of the school log books has survived thanks to Mr Birkby, a former housemaster at WBS who later became an Assistant Director at BFES. It gives glimpses into school life that are sadly lacking for the Windsor schools.

The school was in the first wave of 70 primary schools opened by BFES. By August 1947, after the first six months or so, it had precisely 15 pupils making it one of the smallest. The sole teacher was Miss Kathleen Allan from London. She had been one of the first cohort of teachers recruited in late 1946; one of the 2,001 applicants for the 200 places. Mr Frank Buckley, later Deputy Director (Primary) based in Hamm and whose three sons attended the Hamm schools, was in the same recruitment cohort, going to Düsseldorf.

Initially it catered for the children, age 5 to 11, of army units stationed in Cromwell, Brixton and Newcastle Barracks. During the 1950s the school grew steadily as more units with married personnel and children were based in the Hamm. The opening of Windsor School in 1953 changed the school. It brought more married families and their young children.

By 1957 the school had 82 pupils and 9 teaching staff (not all full time). It was located on the ground floor of Block 3 of Newcastle Barracks (the future Edinburgh/Balmoral block of WGS). Harry Watson, a pupil at the time, recalls troops being billeted above the school. He remembers some of the teachers including Miss Williams, Miss Mann and Miss McGregor (his mother as a supply teacher). The age breakdown was:

Age 5: 15  
Age 6: 19  
Age 7: 11  
Age 8: 17  
Age 9: 15  
Age 10: 5

With the conversion in 1959 of Newcastle Barracks into WGS the primary school was moved to the first floor of the former garages at the rear of the site. Phil Conrad describes the school:

*A gym and coatroom on the first floor. You went up the stairs to where all the classrooms were. There was a big bird aviary with budgies at the top of the stairs. To the left, down the hall, you found the headmasters office on the right. To the right down the hall, the dining room, which is also where we had assemblies, music and theatre lessons, etc.*

There was a small playground to the back of the school. The entrance was through the WGS grounds (the primary school was out of bounds to WGS pupils). In the 1960s the arrival of Du Pont brought more children (and their parents). The company financed the building of two additional classrooms. After the Windsor School closed in 1983 the Property Services Agency suggested the school move to Block 12 (Marlborough/Sandringham block). Although the headteacher thought the move offered opportunities it was not taken up.

In the 1950s and 1960s children under 5 went to a German kindergarten in Mark village (pupils remember being bilingual before they were 5). By the early 1970s that kindergarten stopped taking British pupils and the primary school started its own. BFES had stopped supporting kindergartens in the 1950s as an economy measure so the kindergarten had to be self-supporting. Concern was expressed in the early 1980s that the costs were exceeding the income from parents but it continued.

Primary schools in BFES came under the management of regional directors. Until the mid-1970s Frank Buckley was the regional director. His three sons, Peter, Keith and Tim, spent their entire school careers in BFES. A few other children also spent their entire school career in the primary school and then

WGS/WGS. Four were children of long serving housemasters at WBS: Virginia and Lyndsay Kitchen (PMK: housemaster of Marlborough) and David and Sian Jones, (Haydn Jones of Hillsborough).

The headmasters of the school were recruited in a similar way to teachers at WGS/WBS. From the mid-1960s to 1983 the headmasters were John Goddard, George Simpson, Norman Thomson (initially he had a posting to Mönchengladbach and then was promoted to the headship at Hamm) and Robert Ranson.

Many trained teachers who were wives of teachers at the Windsor schools worked at the primary school. Among them were the wives of Messrs Joliffe, Cate, Dudley, Brindley, McKay, Bartlett, Hawthorne and Fillery. Other teachers included Mrs Whipp, Miss Knight, Miss Prince. Several teachers ran the cubs including Mr Joliffe. School padres helped with services. After 1983 some teachers were recruited in the UK in the block SCEA/BFES recruitment exercises and were met on arrival at RAF Gütersloh.

Steve Lacey, a pupil in the early 1960s remembers his teacher, Miss Coombs, and has remained in contact with her. He also recalls an attempted robbery at the BFES offices. The weight of the safe proving too heavy for the would-be thieves who dumped it in the garden. Jeri Atkins, one of the “Du Pont”:

*Having gone to the primary school between 1969 and 1973, it seems 100 years ago. I loved it. The large budgie cage, the way we ate (family style), the teachers, playing netball, what was there not to love? It was my first experience out of the country and between Germany and England, it was great. Most of my friends were day students, a mix of both countries. My favourite teacher was Mrs. Brindley, hands down. Ideas also part of the British Brownies, swam and played netball in tourneys. I remember going to a youth hostel and staying for several days, maybe a week, with school. Great fun! I loved the whole European experience school, traveling, sightseeing, all things new and different. It also gave me a great love of reading as we had no telly in English. I have found that most of us from that era are voracious readers.*

Many pupils remember the German cook, nicknamed not surprisingly,

“Cookie”. Many senior girls at WGS acted as teaching assistants including, Hilary Strange, Jacky Byrne and Debbie Allen; they assisted for an afternoon a week. Jane Winter did work experience at the school after her O levels. In 1973 the school took part in the annual Internationaler Musikabend at the Kurhaus for the first time, alongside choirs from WGS, WBS and eight or nine German Schools.

By 1976 the school had 35 in infants classes and 42 juniors. Class photographs from the 1960s to early 1980s show class sizes in the mid-20s, far lower than in primary schools in the UK at the time.

Mrs Christine Cole recalls her husband, Mr David Cole, bringing home pupils from WGS and meeting her daughter, Angie:

*Angie attended The Nursery School, which met in a room of the Primary School and was organized by Mrs. McKay, wife of a WBS teacher. I served as Treasurer to the Nursery and organized fund-raising fairs. I suggested to Pauline the idea of extending the nursery school one day a week to WGS if it would fit with their curriculum and, typically of her, she reacted with enthusiasm, even selecting a suitable slot in the fifth form timetable, eager to provide something of benefit to the pupils. I was aided in fund-raising by the many American mums with children in the British school. They were in Hamm because their husbands worked for DuPont. That contact lent a new dynamic to international life in Hamm!*

Mrs Cole also worked for Service Children’s Education Authority (the overall organisation above BFES):

*The Primary school was SCEA operated. During the latter half of my time in Hamm, I worked part time for the School Meals Organiser of the Services Children’s Education Authority office, housed above the huge Prep Room of WGS. I typed all the weekly Menus prepared by the German cooks in British SCEA-run schools from the Baltic Sea down to Frankfurt.*

Phil Conrad again:

*We ate lunch family style at long tables and the students in the oldest class had to serve the younger kids and go fetch the bowls of food from*

*the kitchen. We used fountain pens to write, and the desks had places for inkwells even though our fountain pens all uses cartridges. We went on a class trip one time to the Münster Zoo.*

The closure of Windsor School in 1983 brought many challenges to the primary school. Headteacher Mr Thomson recorded in the school log book at the start of the summer term:

*Regrettably, many of our old and reliable colleagues will leave this term upon the closure of the Windsor School in July. During the term we will need to replace or recruit for Mrs Wilson, F/T LET, Mrs Bugden, Secretary, Mrs Backhouse (Ancillary) and Mrs Bennett and McCurdy (lunchtime supervisors), Miss Parkinson (YOP) who has been a great help also now leaves for a job in the UK with her fiancé.*

The winding down of Windsor School led to some unexpected benefits. Mr Riddle offered aprons for the arts and crafts activity; they fitted the juniors. At the end of the summer term in 1983 the headteacher records:

*I have written to Mr Leighton expressing our indebtedness to him and his staff for the help and support afforded us over the years. Next year will be very strange without the Boarding School and staff here.*

The autumn term started in September. For the first time since 1953 the primary school was the only British school in Hamm. The first entry in the September log book:

*All staff returned fresh after a long summer holiday – and one of the driest and sunniest on record.*

There were four staff. Mr BS Jones, the headteacher and 69 pupils. Misses Strawson and Hood returned as full time teachers having spent some of the summer vacation at in-service training courses in the UK. BFES rules meant that a school with 69 pupils was no longer entitled to a third full time teacher, only a part timer; Mrs C Tedridge arrived on 0.6 part time contract.

Teachers went to the teacher centre in Gütersloh for regular in-service training (including a computer course and came away with “goodies”). The cubs, brownies and kindergarten flourished.

The absence of the Windsor School meant the school faced three challenges.

The first was the lack of a swimming pool. A meeting with Herr Weitlich, the head teacher of the Theodor Heuss primary school, led to swimming being resumed at their indoor pool. Class 3 were the lucky group to first use the pool, supervised by ancillary helpers, Miss Jones and Mrs Hardman:

*Several of the pupils are most proficient swimmers and have clearly missed great opportunities in the past. The pool is small so awards will be limited to SCS 1 and 2. More advanced awards can be taken at a German pool as an out-of-school activity*

The second needed a solution in time for the harvest festival, an event fondly remembered. A visit by the divisional Roman Catholic Padre, Father Michael Masterton, was timely. He agreed that the school could use the Chapel of St Maria Goretti at the former WGS. The head teacher recorded after the service:

*The ladies had worked tremendously hard during the past two days to decorate the chapel. Delighted that the chapel was packed and that both Padre T Davidson-Kelly and Father Masterton could contribute to the service too.*

Other guests at the service reflected the Polish element of 617 Tank Transporter Unit based at Cromwell Barracks:

*Staff Sergeant W Paterek MBE, 2 Polish ladies and 2 Polish girls dressed in national costume arrived to receive the contributions. We were pleased to receive from them a beautiful ikon and some lovely lace tablemats. The children had the opportunity to chat to the girls after the service, they spoke English fluently by the way!*

The visit of Staff Superintendent (to give his correct rank) Paterek was an honour. He served the British Army for 43 years and was known as the Father of the Tank Transporting MSO (the Mixed Service Organisation). Later in the term there was a first: an Anglican service at the RC Chapel.

The third challenge was perhaps the most important; it needed resolution before summer 1984.

As pupils graduated from the primary school, and their father stayed in Germany, they went to a BFES secondary school. From 1947 to 1953 this meant boarding at either PRS or KAS. From 1953 for those who stayed in Hamm there was a (relatively) seamless transition to become a day pupil at a Windsor School and this was the route followed by many.

With no Windsor School on hand in the summer of 1984 a new solution was needed. A key part of the decision to close the boarding school was the availability of day schools within an hour's coach journey. The decision was taken to bus the new first years to start their secondary schooling at Edinburgh School in Münster.

In autumn 1983 the headteacher took the primary school fourth years, with most of their parents, on an introductory visit to Edinburgh School. Parents expressed concern about the early bus ride (it would leave Hamm around 0755am). The two schools liaised over their curriculums to limit the disruption. Later in the term three teachers from Edinburgh School spent a day at HPS.

The school continued to run the 11+, the selection examination for secondary schools. Although more and more schools in England and Wales were moving to comprehensives the 11+ remained in those areas still retaining grammar schools where entry was selective.

By 1987 the school was now running a class structure reflecting the changes in school approach. Mrs Ireland taught the juniors (2nd, 3rd and 4th years); Miss MacGregor the middle and top infants and 1st year juniors; Mrs Canwood the reception class and Mrs Lawrence the special needs. This three class structure, compared to four previously, meant a very wide age range. The head teacher hoped he could help with the maths and language lessons. Mid-term saw fifteen people for a new venture: "German for Adults" classes. The school play was videoed by Driver Williams: the children had mixed reactions when they saw themselves on film the day after the show!

It is noticeable how often staff went to in-service training. The Teachers Centre at Gütersloh and the Talavera primary school at Werl were frequent locations, covering computers, special needs and regular meetings of SCS headmasters.

Military life outside the school was reflected when Padre Cameron videoed some children whose fathers were in Northern Ireland.

The annual school fete took place in the summer of 1989. The supply depot

at Marker had closed in the mid-1980s. The 617 Tank Transporter Unit left in 1990/91 for Kuwait; there would be few military units left in Hamm. The Newcastle Barracks site had been used in part by German administration functions since 1981. It was fully handed back in the early 1990s. The log book ends in December 1990.

The primary school buildings gradually fell into disrepair. A Hamm Council planning document of 2005 describes their poor state. They were pulled down shortly afterwards.

The building may have gone but fond memories remain from former pupils and staff. To illustrate the bonds formed at the school: six members of the 1971 netball team, including some former Du Ponters, held a joyous reunion in 2018.



## A Miscellany of Memories

Anecdotes, memories, extracts from the school magazines to illustrate life at the schools. A couple of views to start from outside:

On reaching Hamm, which we had a little difficulty finding, we were struck by the rather formidable appearance of the buildings. Their grounds are not as spacious as ours, but what they lacked materially, they made up in hospitality. We were surprised, and a little disappointed that the food was not up to the standard of our own. *KAS Red Dragon 1958*

Science Weekend in WGS: After a two hour bus journey we arrived at Windsor Girls' School, surprised to see a sign on the barbed wire fringed fence stating "Beware, Guard Dogs on Duty." Inside, however, we were welcomed, given a meal of stew and bread, and shown our dormitories. *Queens Courier 1979*

It's often the small things which stay in the memory and are looked upon fondly (mostly):

The canal bank in the Kurpark. Strictly out of bounds according to the rules. Rules are made to be broken, especially by couples.

Hamm Flyer, the very slow train which whistled as it passed WBS every morning.

Magic Bus, Bambi, Hotel Bielefeld, the kiosk selling chips.

The special trains laid on for arrival and dispersal (or reserved carriages in regular trains). And the Berliner military train for those in Berlin.

A clear memory from 1957–59 was we were permitted to walk our ‘crushes’ around the school grounds on Wednesday afternoons (half day) and Saturdays.....loved it seeing who was stepping out with who (and the beady eye of Miss Jeens).

Visiting musician Bruno Hoffman performing an excellent rendition of tunes on a variety of wine glasses (a glass orchestra).

Tie threading, pulling out strands. Cutting ties. A Carnival novelty.

I remember a rota for a little bathing cubicle with (thankfully) a locking door and having to “Vim” the bath after use for the next bather.

The weekly laundry is well-remembered:

At the Boys’ School we just sent everything off to the Laundry (Kampschulte), praying and hoping it came back the same size and colour. (Same at WGS)

Our laundry sent back everything starched rigid – you had to tear the fabric apart – and all the plastic buttons smashed. We all hand washed our smalls, civvies and nylon uniform shirts. Skirts just never got washed.

I do remember the Cellar Club – in the basement near the laundry room where there were sinks for us to do our ‘delicates’ washing and anything else that we didn’t want boiled and starched by the school laundry service. (WGS)

Outside visits often came up with strange events:

I joined Walks as one of my clubs too with Mr Tarling, the French teacher, we went for walks down by the river/ canal and were allowed to stop at a kiosk outside school to buy 1 DM worth of sweets in a paper cone. I remember one walk when an old German guy exposed himself to all us 11 year olds ... Mr Tarling told us to cover our eyes and walk faster lol.

After class a group of us signed up for cross country. Often times we would stop at a pub in Bad Hamm? Not far from the end of our run and

peep through the pub windows only to see some of WBS seniors having a pint. Never understood how they got away with it!

A WGS teacher remembers “On Sunday afternoons during my gate duty, I had to tour the pubs to remove WGS girls”.

The military connection was never far away

BFPO 14, BFPO 20, BFPO103 the changing postcodes.

...with my 2 bob BAFVS. We had to buy our own toothpaste and all toiletries from these as well as sweets etc. We had to replace them ourselves after running out of the ones we were given from parents at the beginning of term, I always thought that was a bit harsh at the time, but it certainly taught me how to handle money. 1950s

All stationery had its Army supply code. From library tickets to toilet paper.

Shiny toilet paper, every sheet stamped “Government property.” Good as tracing paper. At WGS many girls had soft paper sent from home.

You can never have so much as “not enough”:

In 1954 the Model Railway Club asked Disposals (at the Marker Depot next to Newcastle Barracks) for some spare timber so they could build a table for the layout. Disposals delivered three tons of wood.

September 1975 saw the delivery to WBS of 3,000 packets of Polycell paste followed the next month by a new kiln, ordered two years previously. The kiln fell off the forklift truck on delivery and wasn't repaired until the Spring.

Traditions meant many things:

We used to have bonfire nights on 5th November but one year (1956) it was cancelled as some of the boys from Sandringham (ground floor) had jumped out their windows and were causing havoc, whilst being cheered on by everyone else! That caused us all detention on Saturdays for 2 weeks and of course the bonfire cancellation.

Guy Fawkes night was eye-popping for Americans. A drizzly night-time celebration of a long-ago event previously unknown for most of us. Having never experienced it, we Americans (at least my brother and I) were probably more excited than anyone else there!

I left in 1975 and still have two of my 3 wooden coat hangers with my house number on them!

WGS tradition to leave shoes out in corridor. Left out on 5th for Dec 6th St Nicholas. In the morning twigs, for naughty girls, sweets for the rest. I remember in 1956/7 in Sandringham House, Mrs Muir our house mistress, used to make the fudge that went into our shoes.

Completing termly grade cards at WGS. All red was excellent, blue was bad and pencil average and dreading getting a blue grade which meant a real telling off from the head of house.

I had an all red card once and remember the house mistress making me stand for everyone to applaud me. I was so embarrassed.

Over the Xmas holidays 61/62 a Rolex watch was wound up and left to run down in the school safe, and the boy who sold the winning raffle ticket with the correct time to the exact second the watch stopped, won the watch (which could be swapped for a ladies' model if he wanted to claim it for his mum). Anyway to cut a long story short, I won the bloody thing and the head sent it by hand delivery to my parents in Dusseldorf. the letter is signed T E Benyon.

The beginning of the winter term is one that the girls in block 12 will not forget too soon. They were confronted with a very cold reception, due to a breakdown in the central heating system, lasting two long sniffing weeks.

From about fifth form, usually in 3-bed dorms at WGS, we were allowed immersion heaters to make hot drinks – tins of milk on the outside windowsill with tabs of paper over the two punched holes.

Sometimes the teachers joined in:

There was an old car there once about 71 and one of the lads dropped a match into the petrol tank and there was an explosion! When the school was told off about it in assembly, Tommo played “come on baby light my fire” as the head walked out. All the lads knew the tune and were laughing but the head and deputy probably didn’t!

## Aftermath: the buildings 1983 to 2023

The fortunes of the two sites are ironically bound up with the contemporary equivalents of “displaced persons”, an echo of Windsor School in 1953. We can follow the story from articles in *Westfälischer Anzeiger* and various planning documents from Stadt Hamm. Interestingly in these articles and documents the WGS site is referred to as “Newcastle” whilst the WBS site as “Argonner.”

Once the British had no further use of requisitioned properties they were returned to the German state/region in line with agreements from the 1940s and 1950s. The owner of former British military sites went through various names and is now the *Federal Agency for Real Estate Tasks (BIMA)*.

In 1983 the majority of the staff houses and flats on Am Huckenholz and Fasanstrasse were returned to German ownership. Some were kept for the Garrison and handed over later. Most have been renovated and more houses added to both streets. In one house the owners discovered an English children’s book tucked into the sliding doors; a memento of previous owners. Cromwell Barracks closed in 1991, used as an asylum centre until 1999, demolished in 2009 and a housing estate built.

### **WGS/Newcastle Barracks/Dannevoux Kaserne**

The British army used the former WGS (the Windsor School Annex from 1981) as an exercise base even before Windsor School closed. The final *Concordia* carries an interview with Territorial soldiers on a NATO exercise staying at the former school. From 1981 the school block and dining hall were used by the German Federal Administration and Customs. The house blocks were refurbished in the 1980s as a reception centre for new settlers and used until 2005. The former army buildings adjoining the school

site became storage for a circus. The NAAFI became a furniture showroom. The hall was used by the Hamm Forum organisation.

In 2007 the planning department of Hamm council proposed a wholesale development of the site. Various options were put forward with around 150 residential units over both the school area and the adjacent tank garages. Buildings in poor condition such as the primary school would be (and were) demolished. The plans were put on hold.

## **Wir schaffen das**

Chancellor Angela Merkel's commitment in 2015, "*We'll manage this*", gave new impetus to the redevelopment of the site. Germany accepted an open border for asylum seekers. The empty barracks were brought back into use. Proposals for residential use were shelved. In 2015 plans were announced. The BIMA, the owners of the site, gave a 20 year lease of the barracks to the building subsidiary of Hamm City Council. The initial works were to convert three residential blocks, and the former dining hall, to house up to 800 asylum seekers. The works were completed in four months with an initial budget of eight million euros. The buildings were described as dilapidated. *Westfälischer Anzeiger* reported:

*The higher you get in the buildings, the more moisture damage you can see. ... the humidity and lack of ventilation were enough to allow the wood to swell over time. For example, the old parquet floor gives the impression of being able to make waves. Chipped paint, mould on the edges of the windows is not surprising. Metal thieves did a great job years ago. Photographs show empty cable ducts and dangling cable stubs. However, further damage caused by vandalism is rather limited. The electrics and heating including the lines, in short, "the entire building services infrastructure must be renewed." All the windows in the three three-story houses, plus the converted attics, are made of wood and are dilapidated. They must be completely replaced. The roofs also need to be extensively renovated. The floors will be replaced. After all, the lease is valid for 20 years. The previously estimated renovation costs are only estimated at eight million euros. But not everything that is in the houses has become unusable. "Some*

*of the toilet facilities are still quite good.”*

The Central Accommodation Facility for Refugees (ZUE) opened in August 2015 after four months of works financed by the national government. The renovations had come in under budget. At the opening the cross party support for handling the refugees was emphasized. The Lord Mayor of Hamm, Thomas Hunsteger-Petermann said at the opening:

*“For politicians in Hamm, it goes without saying that we work closely together when it comes to accommodating the refugees – from the individual council member to our MPs in the state parliament and our representatives in the German Bundestag. Especially in times when important decisions must be made at very short notice are met, that’s a great advantage,”*

In 2016 work continued to convert the former health centre and hall. Further investigation of the site led to the “*rediscovery of a former, almost overgrown, open-air theatre.*” Plans to build three new residential blocks on the site of the former tank garages were abandoned.

The following year, Stadt Hamm renovated the former Marlborough block for the asylum seekers housed in the dining block at the Argonner site, enabling that building to be demolished. There was a budget of €6.5m. A group of former Windsor pupils and local residents visited the building in late 2018. They were impressed with the renovations.

In 2019 construction of over 50 housing units in three blocks started in Schützenstrasse, alongside the WGS site (location of the cinema and youth club. The works were held up as the ground was found to be contaminated with oil waste and the soil had to be removed.

With most of the original buildings still in use, the site is the last of the 1930s barracks in Hamm.

## **Windsor School/WBS/Brixton Camp/Argonner Kaserne**

Matron Schidlof (and I suspect others) had her contract extended to March 1984 to help with the clearance of the school. The British army used the barracks for exercises through the 1980s. Nic Cuthbertson, a former pupil, recalled:



*I stayed at WBS in the mid 80's whilst serving in the army. We were on an exercise and it was used as a holding camp. I actually stayed in my dorm in Balmoral House and my camp bed was where my bunk used to be, it was real nostalgia!*

Johnathon Hamilton-Bristow had a similar army experience in 1984: *I was on exercise in Hamm and we used the school for showers.*

The buildings were returned to German use in 1991. Initially there were used to house ethnic Germans resettling in the former West Germany and from 1998 for asylum seekers, notably from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Geoffrey Pickles visited the site in 2005 and found *"The maths block was not quite the same with all those bed-sits inside"*. Other users of the site included:

*Until the summer of 2002, a branch of the Realschule Mark was housed in one building, until the Konrad-Adenauer-Realschule was opened. Until the end of 2003, the Federal Agency for Technical Relief used the eastern area to house the vehicle and equipment fleet, as a material warehouse and as a training ground.*

Slowly the site became deserted except for the dining hall area which housed asylum seekers. From 2001 it was protected behind a high barbed wire fence. The reason? To control drug trafficking.

The Hamm planning department had started work, in 2000, on a site development plan. This was finalised, after public consultations, in 2006. Photographs of the site in that year by Karsten Lohner show an overgrown, dilapidated, site with many broken windows except for the fenced off dining block area.

The intention was to develop the site for light industrial use. Some companies had registered an interest as early as 2003. A major delay came with the discovery that the drainage system was no longer effective given the high flood plain of the Ahse river. Were the 1960 floods remembered? In 2009 several million euros were spent upgrading the water and waste management systems.

The first arrivals, in 2010, were a new Fire Station and a BMW showroom, both along Hohefeld Weg. A new road was built meandering through the site, named Herbert-Rust-Weg after a long serving senior Hamm Fire Brigade officer. By 2010/11 most buildings on the site had been demolished;

progressively new buildings came into operation. In 2017 the last 60 asylum seekers were moved to another site (at Newcastle Barracks!). The dining hall was demolished.

Only one Windsor building remains: the chapel. Many churches in North Rhine Westphalia have closed in recent years. When they are no longer needed the first attempt is to find an alternative use rather than demolish. The former St Boniface chapel, used from time to time by the refugees, has been since 2012, a water company warehouse, a car repair shop and in late 2022, a warehouse for a small tools and car parts company (who reportedly paid €400,000). Over 30 different companies work from the site in 2023.

Only one building remains from Argonner Kaserne: a small electrical substation at the corner of the site on Soester Strasse. It was outside Windsor/WBS. In 2012 the Windsor Society arranged with the Hamm authorities for a small plaque recording the school's history to be placed on the front wall by the main entrance. This wall was, despite local opposition, demolished. The plaque was moved to the small substation.

## Dispersal

Many school histories list the “famous” alumni, those who had jobs which brought them into the public eye or reached high positions in organisations, public and private. I’m not following this approach. Not because no-one achieved public heights, from a Member of Parliament from WGS to Brigadiers from WBS. MBEs OBEs, and CBEs reflect a form of official recognition. The main reason is that such lists are unfair: they exclude the vast majority of people. Many had fulfilling lives in jobs, or with not working, which did not attract formal attention, or reach organisational heights.

Members of bands continued to play, either professionally or part time as did performers and stage crew from the school plays. Not surprisingly given the very strong military connection it would appear that a more than average proportion from WBS (and many from WGS) went into the Armed Forces: some via Sandhurst and Cranwell, more via Welbeck. Some served over 30 years in the Royal Navy, Army or RAF, others for shorter periods in a variety of trades including a Red Arrows pilot. Some were on deployments to Northern Ireland. Several moved on to the Armed Forces of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

The sixth form was relatively small in the 1950s and the first direct university entrant was in 1959. From the mid-1960s a handful of pupils from both schools went on to university every year (at a time when only 8 to 10% of the age group went to university). More went to university from their subsequent schools (or later in life), including those who left and went to UK schools for their A levels.

Teaching was a popular career, with many finding inspiration from their teachers at Hamm. Five pupils (including three Head Boys) went to Culham College for their training. Nurses, vets, civil and public servants, sports

coaches, lawyers, diplomats, carers, dentists, office managers, company directors, working in various roles in social services, running their own company, police officers, chefs, firefighters, musicians, actors and theatre professionals, international film festival director, hairdressers, engineers, civil construction, management consultants, academics, graphic designers, TV production, the list goes on. In their private lives we have both 40+ year partnerships (some having met at Hamm) and others with multiple divorces. Sadly some died young, others living into their 80s and still going.

Their lives took them all over the world. Many continued their peripatetic travels moving on to other schools in the UK and worldwide. Most made the UK their home (although many frequently moved within it!). Most of the Du Pont day pupils stayed in the USA, joined by many others. Among the current social media contributors are alumni in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Malta, Cyprus, Portugal, China, Hong Kong, and Spain.

There were several attempts during the school's history at forming an alumni association but these tended to be short lived. In the 1990s the Windsor Society was formed, an initiative of Bob Jordan. It organised large reunions starting with a meet-up at Newbury Racecourse in 1993. Held just 10 years after the school closed it attracted over 700 former pupils and teachers. More large reunions were held in the subsequent years. It organised the visit to Hamm in 2012 where the city hall organised a lunch for the 80 visitors and paid the €300 for a commemorative plaque on the WBS wall. There were similar societies in Canada and Australia. The society had a thriving Visitors Book, and issued informative newsletters, until it folded in the late 2010s. The arrival of Facebook replaced the society. There are, in late 2022, six private (and overlapping) Facebook groups with well over 1,000 active members.

## The Final Report

I'm writing this final chapter shortly after the fortieth anniversary of the schools' closure. It is a strange thought that this period is already ten years longer than the schools' whole lifetime. The "past as a foreign country" cliché holds true: the culture and lifestyles of the early 1980s, let alone those of the early 1950s, seem almost archaic in so many ways. The schools were of their period. I've tried to concentrate on what has been termed "school memory": the recollections and experiences of individuals connected to the schools linked to contemporary writings in school publications etc. With the advantage of hindsight how can we reflect on the schools? I'll pick out a few topics.

Miss Brown gives perhaps the most succinct summary of the schools: *All BFES schools have to get used to change*. It is a wonderful understatement. "*Mutatio*" (*change*) rather than "*Concordia*" is a more apt school motto. The schools were in a constant state of flux. *Educational marshalling yards* may have been a politicians' cheap gibe but it carried more than a grain of truth. Nicholson had picked up the turbulence of pupils but was not to realise just how turbulent the school's history would be. In a mere thirty years the school set itself up, divided into two, withstood surges in boarders and day pupils and then remerged prior to closing. All driven by external changes over which the school had no choice.

For many at the schools, whether pupil, teacher or administrative staff, the changes passed them by: they were not at the schools long enough to see even one of the changes. Turbulence, the short stay of many pupils (and many teachers) underpinned so much of the school. Sports teachers lamented the need to rebuild a school, or house, team. Teachers had classes of newcomers and old hands, changing every term. Dormmates, friends (and bullies) came and went. Administrative staff had to re-write the timetables. For many the

number of schools became a badge of honour; it was simply a “*fact of a military brat’s lot.*” For others the constant disruption was painful. There was a limited choice and agency when a posting to Germany was announced. Realistically only officers could afford to send their children to a UK public school. Ian MacEwan’s *Lessons* gives a good description of an officer’s child, albeit from a Libyan posting, at Woolverstone Hall school, a boarding school run by the London County Council which attracted many pupils from the military. The possibility of staying in the UK with family or friends to attend a day school was an option. But for the majority if the posting meant there was no secondary school within an hour’s bus ride then boarding was the result. As BFES day schools increased, and the military reduced, the catchment areas decreased leading to more “reluctant boarders” of the 1970s.

Despite this organisational turbulence the schools remained for the most part educational pioneers. As Blenkinsop pointed out in the House of Commons in 1955, BFES boarding schools provided an experiment for comprehensive schooling. Windsor attracted influential educationalists, Professor Dent, Royston Lambert and TES editor Walter James. A wide range of subjects, a considerable and varied list of activities, a move from quasi grammar to comprehensive under one “roof” demonstrated that external pressures did not stem the flow of educational development. In common with many schools of the period some teachers clearly preferred the senior, more academically minded pupils, a preference which did not go unnoticed by pupils. A level pupils enjoyed small classes. Through an emphasis on technical and vocational subjects and, in the 1970s, on remedial support, the schools ensured a curriculum for all

WGS does stand out. There were far fewer British boarding schools for girls than for boys and WGS was one of the largest. Miss Willson was keen to emphasise the values the school imparted (quality of character, finding joy in hard work, the value of an appreciation both of British heritage and that of Germany) and to commend those who did not achieve examination success. Miss Evans developed a more direct appeal to parents (and pupils) to remain at school, to gain qualifications, to “prepare for the new modern life”. Both schools focussed on values, both individual and collective, what would now be called soft skills and what Lambert called in the 1970s “expressive values”.

The early adoption of CSEs and the work to integrate with the middle schools both indicated attempts to keep with the direction of school developments. The worrying HMI comment that the schools were *for educational and not custodial purposes* and the *reluctant boarder* syndrome indicate changing times from the mid-1970s. The schools changed from around 1972. The closure of PRS as a boarding school and the high number of day pupils at Hamm meant boarding was a minority in BFES secondary. The school cultures altered.

The comment from a school visit to Stratford upon Avon: *For many of us it was the first visit to England* is perhaps the most extreme statement to illustrate the international experience of the pupils. Historian Timothy Garton Ash has recently written how *It's hard to recover a sense of just how remote continental Europe was to an English schoolboy in 1969*. For some this was true, Germany was their first foreign country: for others it was just another stop on a global journey. For many being in Germany meant little as they lived in British enclaves during holidays and had limited opportunities to leave the schools. For others, notably the more senior, the schools made significant efforts to integrate with the local community, aided by some far sighted teachers, local headmasters and council officials. Although the decision to make French the first foreign language was taken on sound educational grounds it did seriously hamper efforts to develop Anglo-German relations. For many years these were based on observation: visits to and from schools, invitations to school plays, day trips to businesses. It was the Germans who had to learn English. Slowly there was a change to partnerships: co-productions of plays, teams joining local sports leagues. But in the end perhaps an opportunity lost.

What if Mrs Thatcher had not launched the Rayner scrutinies and the merged school had continued? For how long? Pupil numbers in BAOR were already in decline in the 1980s. The financial pressures on government would have undoubtedly prompted another review. The schools were a product of the Cold War and that war ended in 1989. The fall of the Berlin wall prompted a major defence rethink: the 1990 *Options for Change*. The subsequent changes to the army and RAF would mean fewer than 2,000 secondary pupils in Germany. Service Children's Education consequently led a wide consultation on schooling options; one key response was a plea for minimal boarding (no more reluctant boarders). The mid-1990s saw the

closure of Cornwall, Edinburgh, Havel and the merger of Kent with Queens (to form a new Windsor). If still open, Windsor would certainly have closed in this group. The next closures came in 2014–15 for PRS Rinteln, Gloucester and the “new” Windsor. Kings in Gütersloh closed in 2019, the last BFES secondary school, 59 years after opening.

Was it worth it? That depends on for whom! Organisationally the school was a factor in the recruit and retain policy for the military in Germany during the Cold War. Certainly it can be said it was a success until at least the mid-1970s. Its flexibility enabled it to withstand the turmoil of the period. BFES had, since 1960, been focussing on new purpose built day schools. Boarding became out of fashion. It had always been expensive to run; when Mrs Thatcher was looking for a sharper managed public service it was an obvious target for the MoD.

The final *Concordia* looked back on the history of the school. It ended with a positive appeal as relevant in 2023 as in 1983:

*The school has always exerted a deep effect upon its pupils, one way or another and the dominant factor of boarding is largely responsible. The fact that many pupils have very proud and happy memories of their school is borne out by the number of visits we receive and by the impressive attendance in London of the former staff and pupils at the 21st and 25th anniversary dinners. It is sad the school has to end but on the other hand it is remarkable that it has lasted 30 years. I don't suppose it was ever envisaged that British Military families would be stationed still in Germany 38 years after the end of the war. Such a phenomenon has had a big sociological effect and many pupils have German mothers. Such integration by marriage and by residence must help us to enter more easily into the spirit of the European Community concept.*

It is a cliché to read that schooldays were “the happiest time of my life” or “they were the worst time of my life”. Memories are distorted by what has happened since; only selective incidents, good and bad, are recalled. Those former pupils of the Windsor schools who contribute to social media are overwhelmingly supportive of their time there, whether it was short or long. It is rare that an outright unfavourable view emerges. Of course, those who



did not like their time are unlikely to seek out the various outlets! The day pupils from Soest and Werl tend to have a more nuanced view. With well over 3,000 of the 16,000 being active social media participants at one time or another a reasonably balanced overview emerges. Here are three comments, drawn from many:

*Was it worth it? A resounding Yes, the school certainly educated you, made you resourceful, resilient, and independent and I for one am glad I was sent there.*

*Hamm was an extraordinary school: structure, discipline, creativity, fun and, I now realise, a huge amount of freedom both physical and mental.*

*My time at WGS was brilliant, amazing teachers, good food, fantastic sports facilities, wonderful matron and prefects and head of house.*

The Windsor Schools, 1953–83, schools of the Cold War, served their purpose well.

# Sources and Acknowledgments

The formal primary records of the first four secondary schools (PRS, KAS, Windsor and Queens) have disappeared. The only log book which has survived is the final one for the primary school.

I have used, extensively, the school magazines (*Ambassador* and *Concordia*), school leaflets, *Guide to Parents* etc, Windsor Society Bulletins, comments by staff and pupils on social media and by personal correspondence. I have cross checked personal stories to limit embellishments over time! The school magazines of KAS (*Red Dragon*) and Queens (*Courier*) have also been of use. These school based sources have provided the majority of quotations and background.

There are two main accounts of the organisational history of BFES, (and Service Childrens Education in general). Both have brief mentions of the Windsor Schools and put them into a wider context. St John Williams was a former principal staff officer for children's schools worldwide in the Army Educational Corps and served in Germany.

Paul A Macardle *The History of Service Children's Education in Germany 1947–2007* privately published for BFES/SCE Association 2008

Lt Col NT St John Williams *Tommy Atkins' Children. The story of the education of the army's children 1675—1970* HMSO 1971

Two more sources on Service schools in general are:

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Royston Lambert wrote several books in the 1960s and 1970s when he was the leading expert on residential schools.

Royston Lambert and Spencer Millham The Hothouse Society  
Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1968

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Royston Lambert The State and Boarding Education Methuen 1966

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Newson Report, 1968). The report (and far more documents on  
education) are compiled by Derek Gillard on his essential website at  
<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/>

For quotes and background from external sources I have tried to identify the  
source in the text. Here they are the main sources by chapter. If no chapter is  
listed only school based records were used.

## **Chapter 1 Operation Union**

Sarah Paterson Operation “Union”: British families in Germany 1946  
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Cabinet Papers at National Archives CAB/129 have minutes of Cabinet  
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Macardle and Williams (op cit)

Nature 2 August 1947 (Lt Col Downs, BFES in Germany)

The Birth of a School JSH Smitherman The Wilhelmshaven Association  
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Prince Rupert School Wilhelmshaven 1947–1972 The Wilhelmshaven  
Association 2004

PRS, KAS and Queens have alumni websites, including their schools’  
history.

PRS Wilhelmshaven Association <https://prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk/history-of-prs/>

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### **Chapter 3 From Argonner to Windsor**

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### **Chapter 5 Educational Marshalling Yards**

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1955/mar/08/childrens-educational-facilities> for debate on Nicholson's visit and overseas schooling for service children

### **Chapter 6 Full Flow**

BFES Annual Reports 1953–57

WBP Aspinall Deutsches Soldatentum A German Military Reader

Harrap 1943

## **Chapter 7 Windsor School draws to a close**

*Red Dragon*, King Alfred School

BFES Annual Report 1955–57. A common difficulty in assessing the costs of BFES schools was that their funding came from different ministries and agencies.

Army Education Corps internal papers and Weaver Report at National Army Museum

Macardle and Williams

## **Chapter 8 New Foundations**

BFES Secondary Schools Admissions, Transfers and Retentions 1959

WBS Guide for Parents 1959

BFES Annual Report 1957

A glimpse of the floods can be seen in an except from Mr Howards' film at [https://youtu.be/EULN\\_Ij7o9c](https://youtu.be/EULN_Ij7o9c) (mistakenly entitled 1957 instead of 1960)

## **Chapter 9 The Swinging Sixties**

HMI Reports 1964 and 1966

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The Canadian counterpart of BFES/Service Children's Service was the Department of National Defences:

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Plowden Report: see at <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/> and Macardle for impact on BFES.

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## **Chapter 11 From merger to close**

The Margaret Thatcher Foundation has an excellent, online, collection of her Cabinet papers and associated memoranda. Items relating to the Rayner Scrutiny programme are under Government Machinery, PREM/1960.

<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/default79on>

The National Audit Office report “The Rayner Scrutiny Programmes 1979–83”, 1986 gives a full background to the programme.

## **Chapter 12 Teachers**

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## **Chapter 27 Aftermath: the buildings 1983–2023**

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## The British in Germany

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There are many books on boarding schools, far too many to mention. Many of the more recent have focussed on the darker sides of residential education (especially from age 8) or the influence Public Schools have on top positions. Neither group has been too helpful. The following have been more helpful.

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PhD thesis Brunel University 1968

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## **Historical background**

There are many books covering the pre and post war history. Those by Tony Judt, Richard J Evans, Ian Kershaw, Adam Tooze, Peter Hennessy, David Kynaston, Andy Beckett and Dominic Sandbrook provide the background, political, social and cultural.

Exchange rates are taken from <https://www.measuringworth.com/>

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# About the Author

Stephen Green went to Windsor Boys' School from 1966 to 1969, the last of his eight schools. He was editor of *Concordia* and captain of the school cricket team. He left to go to Hull University where he graduated in economics and started (as yet, uncompleted) doctorate in social history. After a year as president of the student's union he followed a 35 year career in international cultural relations with the British Council. Subsequently he was an independent expert member of the international selection panel for the European Capitals of Culture 2012–16. He chaired the panel for the last three years. Until retirement he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He lives in Spain.

## **By the same author**

[Capitals of Culture An introductory survey of a worldwide activity 2017](#)

[Guide to Candidates for European Capitals of Culture 2020](#)

# CONCORDIA

The Windsor Schools, Hamm, 1953–83



Stephen Green

