

A History of Trinity School, Wood Green

by Bridget Barling

What was to become Trinity Grammar School opened on August 11, 1884 as two temporary Higher Grade Schools: one for girls and one for boys. The boys were housed in the Wesleyan School Room in Trinity Road and the girls in the Presbyterian Hall in Naas Road, Green Lanes. Each pupil was charged 9d a week – except for a small number of exhibitioners for whom fees were waived.

The schools were established by the Tottenham School Board (Wood Green then still part of the enormous parish of Tottenham) supervised by the national Education Department and its inspectors.

Instruction was to be given in Latin, French, Physiology, Euclid, Algebra, Composition, and History. The Education Department sanctioned the use of rooms for 144 boys and 144 girls. The sanction, however, was for two years only. Mr. F. Kennet was appointed head master and Miss L. Griffiths, head mistress. The proposed accommodation of 10% for “exhibitioners” was not observed. The first report of the H.M.I. showed an annual attendance of girls 56 and boys 52. (Miss Meredith, later to become head mistress, recalls on retirement that the school opened with 10 girls, all coming from private schools) (3). The H.M.I. bestowed nothing but praise on the Girls school, whereas the Boys School was severely criticised. (2, Jan 1885).

The Schools being sanctioned for two years only by the Education Department (2a, June 1884), the Board decided in 1886 to continue the temporary Schools as “efficient elementary schools” in order to meet the necessary school provision laid down by the Department. The Schools were, therefore, renamed Trinity Road Board School for Boys and Naas Road Board School for Girls (2, Jan 1886). In the meantime Miss Griffiths resigned and Miss Allison was appointed new headmistress in February 1886.

References – (3) Miss Meredith; (2) HMI reports (2a), Education Department;

Others – Minutes of Tottenham School Board; Minutes of Education Committee and Higher Education Committee of the Urban District Council of Wood Green; Local newspaper reports; School magazines; Memories of local people.

It is difficult to piece together the history of a school when all official records of that particular school have gone astray. This history, therefore, has been attempted by gathering together information from Minutes of the Tottenham School Board and the subsequent Education Committee and the Higher Education Committee of the Urban District Council of Wood Green, from local newspaper reports of the time, from school magazines and from memories of people involved in the building up of the school into a lively community. It was borne of social, economic and educational needs in the late 19th century, grew and bore fruit under headships, ambitious for its progress, and eventually ceased to exist as once again conditions and aspirations changed

The building of a school and, in fact, the working of the school itself, are perhaps best seen against a background of significant historical events. I should like, therefore, to give a brief outline of both the national and local setting which influenced the establishment of the Wood Green Higher Grade (* see note below) Schools, later, and after quite a stormy passage, to be known as Trinity Grammar School.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By the early part of the 19th century the effects of the Industrial Revolution had spread to all parts of society. There was a rapid increase and redistribution of population, stimulated by the improved means of communication. The new population concentrated in the towns of the industrial areas, which were growing at an incredible speed. Along with this rapid, uncontrolled expansion came a shortage of schools. As far back as 1818 Brougham was suggesting that there should be some form of national provision for education. The first successful attempt at state intervention in elementary education came in 1833 when £20,000 was given to the two religious societies (National Society and British & Foreign School Society) for the provision of elementary education. But population had by far outstripped the school provision; something more had to be done. There were many Liberals and Non-Conformists who would have liked to see a system of State controlled schools, people who, Gladstone said at the time: “look upon these voluntary schools....as admirable passing expedients, fit, indeed, to be tolerated for a time, but wholly unsatisfactory as to their main purpose and therefore to be supplanted by something they think better...” It was not to be. A compromise was made, nevertheless, by W.E. Forster with the introduction of a Bill in which he proposed to fill up gaps in the present voluntary system. The 1870 Act, therefore, did not go so far as to create a national system of

education; instead, where there was a deficiency of accommodation in voluntary schools, a SCHOOL BOARD, elected by the borough or parish, was formed and built its own schools, aided by the rates and special grants. The School Board was, however, empowered only to fill in the gaps as far as elementary education was concerned. But the need was growing for more people to know ‘more’. Industry was expanding, endless new posts were being created and had to be filled. The Industrial Revolution had its ‘snowball’ effect in education, too, fostering the need for and an interest in mechanical subjects such as mathematics, science and drawing; people were wanted in industry with instruction in technical, commercial and scientific subjects in order to be more effective in their jobs and of benefit to the employers. In these areas the schools were lagging behind the ‘needs of society’.

The 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition had mirrored these needs even more. Though British firms were still in the lead it was recognised that Prussia, France and the United States were moving ahead at a ‘disturbing’ rate. The provision of elementary schools till then was considered the limit and perfectly adequate for most children. The establishment of the Science & Art Department of the Board of Trade in 1853 was confirmation of the ‘lacking’ in British education, and allocated grants for instruction in the science and arts subjects. Many were aware of the wastage, in the elementary system, of able children. It was becoming obvious that there was a complete deficiency in secondary education as far as most children were concerned.

To meet this situation some of the larger and more progressive School Boards stepped into the breach. The Education Department was giving grants not only for ‘obligatory’ and ‘class’ subjects, but also for what were called ‘specific’ subjects, earned by children in the upper standards of elementary schools. The specifics included branches of mathematics, and science, languages, commercial and domestic arts. Indirectly, therefore, where these grants were awarded, education of a secondary nature was beginning to take shape.

(* Note – In places I have used ‘Higher Grade’, in others ‘Higher-grade’. This is because of the variety of ways I have seen it in print. Apart from this sometimes the school is referred to ‘Higher-grade School’ and others ‘Higher Grade Schools’. The same reason applies. My apologies for any confusion caused by the inconsistency.)

In 1872 the Leeds School Board established what is called a HIGHER GRADE board school. Its example was followed by other large towns, including London. The position of the Higher-grade school was not at all clear, because, although the Education Act of 1870 gave the School Boards control over elementary education

only, the actual meaning and limits of the term ‘elementary’ had not been set out. Higher-grade schools, therefore, especially when maintained by rates, could be, and were, looked upon by many as illegal. So it was that the idea of a type of higher education for able children in poorer stations began to take shape and spread.

Tottenham, (of which Wood Green was a part at the time in question) it would appear, was more conservative in its ideas in education being rather reluctant towards change as we shall see later on. First of all let us take a look at the development in the local history which must have played some part in the setting up of the Higher Grade Schools for Wood Green.

LOCAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Wood Green was originally a part of Tottenham. In 1801 it was nothing more than a small hamlet when, according to the census held, it had a population of only about 100. By 1859 the number had increased to about 3,000, due largely to the building of a railway network as from the 1840s, and to the Victorian mania of the emerging middle class to escape from the proximity of the slums. By the mid-sixties, the area between Green Lanes and Bounds Green Road (where the Higher Grade Schools were eventually to be built) was rapidly being built over, mainly with middle class housing. Perhaps one of the most important factors to influence the continued development of Wood Green was the opening of the first Alexandra Palace in 1873, intended as an educational and recreational centre for North London. The Palace undoubtedly drew attention to Wood Green as a desirable residential area. The railway link from London to the Palace opened in 1878 encouraging the further growth of the village. Once the commuter service improved, Wood Green began to grow as a London suburb. At that time most of Wood Green was favoured by the ‘better-off’ with villa residences and superior terraced housing, the only working class housing having been built 1866-1896 (The Noel Park Estate) by the Artisans, Labourers & General Dwellings Company. In 1899 the population of Wood Green had risen to almost 40,000.

SCHOOL BOARD FOR TOTTENHAM

After the 1870 Act Tottenham had resisted the formation of a School Board for as long as possible, ostensibly on the grounds of economy. A strong local faction maintained that the voluntary and Sunday schools, if increased in numbers, would be adequate for the working classes, while the better off could afford to pay for education. By 1879 the Education Department decided to wait no longer, and ordered the formation of a Board. One was duly elected and found there was a deficiency in elementary school

places of over 2,000. Once a Board was established, the scene in Tottenham began to change rapidly. One by one voluntary schools in the area were asking to be taken over by the Board. In April, 1880 (?2) the Board decided to divide the parish into blocks in order to get a clearer picture of the educational scene, and in doing so discovered that from the seven blocks set up, the Wood Green district was sorely in need of schools. The School Board looked for temporary accommodation in the parish.

FOR AND AGAINST HIGHER-GRADE

It is interesting to note that immediately the School Board was formed one member of the Committee suggested establishing at once a Higher-grade Boys school at Wood Green (boys to be admitted who can pass standard IV government examination (April 1880). The idea was brushed aside, looked at again by the Committee in May 1880 but with little interest. In June of the same year the Education Department wrote to the Tottenham School Board asking how they proposed to deal with the large deficiency of school accommodation in the district (June 1881). Consequently the Board enquired of the Society of Fishmongers & Poulterers the amount for which an area of their land could be had (Sept. 1881). (This was, in fact, to be the site eventually for the Higher Grade Schools). Once again in March, 1881, the subject of Higher-grade came up. The Board was still of the opinion that the question was premature and should be postponed. Nevertheless, they did agree to make enquiries to other boards, where such schools were in operation, as regards the character of education given and the relative burden on the RATES. Enquiries were made to Nottingham, Liverpool, Sunderland, Bradford, Sheffield, Derby and West Ham (March 1881).

In May 1882 the School Board Minutes read:

“That this Board having taken steps to provide all the necessary accommodation for elementary instruction, consider that in the interests of a large section of the ratepayers who desire a more advanced education for their children the time has come to form Upper Grade Schools in the district”.

The fee was to be not less than 9d. per week besides the cost of all books and necessary apparatus, and that not less than 10% of the accommodation provided be available for scholars (“exhibitioners”) “who having passed the V standard in elementary school shall by competition gain entrance to the Higher-Grade Schools to which they shall by competition gain entrance to the Higher-Grade Schools to which

they shall be admitted at the same fee they have hitherto paid at the elementary school (i.e. 3d). “

There was, however, a great deal of disagreement (March 1883) within the Committee as to whether or not it was expedient at that particular time to build Higher-grade schools. There was one suggestion of opening a section of Higher-grade instruction in the elementary boy's schools in the area and another of finding temporary accommodation to house them. That night the Board actually recorded the time of adjournment. (11.15pm).

OPENING OF TEMPORARY HIGHER-GRADE SCHOOLS

After repeated heated discussions on the subject, it was not until January, 1884 that the Board finally decided to continue the tenancies of a girls and an infant's temporary schools in Wood Green for at least 12 months for the purpose of opening the premises as Higher-grade schools for boys and girls. Placards were issued announcing the opening of the Higher-grade schools (June 1884).

“Schools will be opened on 11th August 1884 at the Presbyterian Hall for girls and at the Wesleyan School Room for boys, 9d per week” (See item 1 & 2).

Instruction was to be given in Latin, French, Physiology, Euclid, Algebra, Composition, History. The Education Department sanctioned the use of the rooms for 144 boys and 144 girls. The sanction, however, was for two years only. Mr F. Kennett was appointed head master and Miss L. Griffiths, head mistress. The proposed accommodation of 10% for “exhibitioners” was not observed. The first report of the H.M.I. showed an annual attendance of girls 56 and boys 52. (Miss Meredith, later to become head mistress recalls on retirement that the school opened with 10 girls, all coming from private schools). The H.M.I. bestowed nothing but praise on the Girls school, whereas the Boys school was severely criticised (Jan 1885).

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After studying the current H.M.I. report the School Management Committee asked the Board to terminate its arrangements with Mr. Kennet (Feb 1886). The Education Department, in turn, declined to give a grant to Trinity Road School (Dec 1886), on the grounds that the report was totally unsatisfactory and that no Time Table approved by the H.M.I., had been hung in the school room. The School Board was asked to comment on the report, which read as follows:-

“These are no longer called Upper Grade Schools, but they remain higher fee (9d per week). The difference is in name only. The boys, I am told, come from more or less well-to-do homes, and probably bring reading, writing and much arithmetic with them. Of English, Geography and History they learn very little in School while over French, Physiology and Algebra, they waste their time, learning nothing of these subjects. The ordinary Board schools are doing better work, and in my opinion inefficient, dearer schools like this at Trinity Road should be closed and the boys sent elsewhere under better and more efficient teaching.”

The School Board wrote immediately to the Education Department (1887) begging that the whole grant might not be withheld, pointing out the heavy annual expenditure involved both by the Board and ratepayers and the extreme difficulty they were having in carrying out the Education Acts efficiently in such a large suburban district “where so many of the working classes reside”. The Board also pointed out that the boys who came under inspection were boys who had entered the school only 6 weeks prior to the H.M.I.’s inspection. At this point a deduction in the Head teachers’ salary of 10/- per annum (Trinity £150 – Naas £100) for every vacant seat on the annual average attendance. According to the certified accommodation, was recommended by the Board (1887). A proposal was made to close the schools after examinations in October, since the schools had been opened as Higher-grade but were now being carried on merely as Higher Fee elementary schools, which were not needed as new elementary schools were being built in White Hart Lane where the children could be transferred. After much debating it was agreed, and the Department consented, that both schools would carry on, on monthly tenancies from the trustees (July 1887).

MISS MEREDITH APPOINTED HEAD MISTRESS (1888)

Miss Meredith (who was to serve a long term of headship), appointed as second mistress to Naas Road in 1887 was elected head mistress in the following year when Miss Allison resigned. The Boys school under the new headship of Mr Townsend began to improve steadily and the 1888 government reports on both schools were only complimentary towards both successors. Mr, Townsend took this opportunity of

applying to the School Board for a share of the drawing grant allocated. In 1888 there were four masters in Trinity Road but only the head mistress, Miss Meredith, and one assistant in Naas Road, Miss Meredith applied for further help.

GROWING NEED FOR MORE ADVANCED INSTRUCTION

By 1889 both schools were in trouble as regards overcrowding. At the end of the year the Education Department wrote to the Board asking why, in spite of repeated warning, they had permitted overcrowding to an even larger extent, (over 200 in each school, Nov 1889).

The Tottenham School Board had produced a 'commodity' in creating the Higher-grade Schools in the area, a commodity which was more and more in demand. The climate of opinion as regards the value of education had changed drastically since 1870; education was now being appreciated by a wider section of society, spreading down the social ladder. Grammar Schools were still very much middle class in character, with very few places for working class children. Though the School Boards had been established to 'fill in the gaps' for elementary education they had, in fact, started to offer more than the normal elementary diet. An awareness was growing on the lower rungs of the ladder of society that there was a possibility of yet another door to be opened, having passed through the door that led to elementary education. The Tottenham School Board had, in fact, given a taste of what was behind the second door, and there had been a rush to get there. The Wood Green Higher-grade schools were recognised as a route to the fast developing skilled and clerical occupations on the 'doorstep' so to speak.

Up till now the temporary Higher-grade schools in Wood Green had catered for what the chairman of the Manchester School Board had said of Higher-grade schools in general, i.e. the 'labour aristocracy', the 'upper strata' of the working class, since the 9d per week made them prohibitive for the rest of the working class.

Until 1893 the two Schools had been accommodated in the halls of the Presbyterian and the Wesleyan Churches. Miss Meredith recalls on retirement almost 40 years later, that as far as the Girls School was concerned, there were five classes accommodated in the large hall and two classes in a small room. Three rooms were built on the ground adjoining the Church (see item 1) and the accommodation more than doubled (3). The rooms were opened in 1894 when the average attendance was 248. The attendance at Trinity Road Boys School at that time was 265 (1894) (2).

PERMANENT SITE FOR HIGHER-GRADE SCHOOLS SOUGHT

In 1893 the Board had started to look seriously for a permanent site to supersede the temporary rooms which were now bursting at the seams. They encountered difficulty after difficulty, trying to obtain the Fishmongers site. In the meantime the Education Department finally stepped in and condemned the premises of the Trinity and Naas Road schools and at the same time issued a provisional order for the Land Clauses Act to be put into force in order to purchase the site other than by agreement. (2) (April 1895).

The School Board wanted the new Higher Grade School to be wholly fee paying but this was refused by the Department who further stipulated that 100 boys and 100 girls should attend on the basis of scholarship, a fee of 6d per week being sanctioned for the remainder.

At long last early in 1897 the Fishmongers' site was acquired for the Wood Green Higher Grade Schools. One building (was) to house two departments (girls and boys).

The Board reports:

“The population of the school district continues to increase rapidly and constantly”.

The year before the Board had 18,000 scholars on the rolls whereas in that year there were nearly 19,000, and was now begging indulgence of the Education Department to allow 8 sq. ft. limit per child instead of 10 sq.ft. “Build as we may, we cannot possibly keep up with the population that is thronging into the district” (4) (Dec. 1895).

The 11th June, 1898 saw the memorial stone placed to mark the erection of the School. A petition, signed by 211 parents, was sent to the Board asking that Mr. Allen, who had been acting as head since the death of Mr. Townsend, and had been doing an excellent job, should be appointed head master. Mr. Crook was elected as the new head master. At the end of 1898 the School was rapidly approaching completion. The Board agreed that all scholars at present in the temporary schools were to transfer without question. Free places (as the Board commented “conditions imposed by the Department) were to be found for 200 scholars in the upper standards of the school. It was ruled that after 12 months from the date of opening of the schools no scholar be admitted not equal to work of standard IV or upwards, (2) (May 1899). The

elementary section of the school was to be subdivided into junior division (standards II to IV) middle division (standards V & VI) and senior (standard VII). It was further decided in May, 1899 that some schemes should be devised to provide a preparatory school by which the lower standards below standard IV can be removed from the Higher-grade School. (This was eventually solved by using St Michaels School nearby as a main feeder school (2).

1899 OPENING OF WOOD GREEN HIGHER-GRADE

The opening ceremony was given lengthy coverage in the local press. The Vice Chairman of the London School Board opened the School. Long speeches were made, in which Germany was held up as a pioneer in all educational matters. The Chairman of the Tottenham School Board pointed out that parents from neighbouring districts had rushed to get their children into the school but that “common sense, justice and prudence plainly suggested that the Board should look after their own children first.” He spoke of the urgency for such a school in the district of Wood Green, with a population of almost 40,000. “Competition in life is keen” he said, “and we have to see that the boys are educated in an adequate manner so that this country might hold its own with any other nation.” (It is perhaps interesting to note that no mention was made of the 450 girls entering the school). (4) (Sept 1899).

CURRICULUM: (2) (May 1899).

Boys: Obligatory – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Drawing, English. Two or more optional subjects – selected from French, German, Book-keeping, Algebra, Euclid and one science.

Girls: More or less the same with the addition of needlework, domestic economy, dress-cutting, cooking.

Subject to the approval of the Education Department there was to be an organised School of Science, covering a 3-4 years course. (2) (May 1899). Girls who had passed standard VII were to be allowed to attend the School of Science.

Every student on whom variable grant was claimed had to be presented in the obligatory subjects of Science, in such Art subjects as were obligatory, in at least one language, together with some literary or commercial subjects approved by the department (Chemistry, Maths, Commercial Arithmetic, Physics, Art subjects, English and English History, Book-keeping, Commercial Correspondence, Shorthand,

Commercial Geography, Woodwork, Metalwork, and Music, Latin, French, German was the list from which the subjects were chosen).

Physical Exercise was to be 'taught' in all classes. Provision was also to be made in the time-table for the boys and girls to take part in:

1. For pupil teacher examination.
2. County Council & other scholarships.
3. Oxford & Cambridge local examinations.
4. After $\frac{3}{4}$ years course in the Science School - London Matriculation examinations.

STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL (See item 4).

Girls' Department (ground floor): 8 Class Rooms: Six of 60, one of 50, one of 40 and hall. Usual cloakroom and lavatory conveniences. Dual box desks. There were to be two classrooms to add to the hall when necessary.

Boys' Department (first floor). Similar to girls. North Turret to be chemical laboratory, with balance room and store room. South Turret – art room with store rooms. Private rooms for head and assistants on each floor.

Detached building on the ground floor. Dining room for boys and cookery room for girls. Caretaker's house.

Playground for each department with covered shed and W.C.s. (4) (Sept 1899).

On opening the School in September 1899, there were 460 boys on the roll (400 fee paying and 51 scholarships) and 495 girls (417 fee paying and 81 scholarships). Both departments were more than full but 49 boys' and 19 girls' scholarships had not been filled. A second examination was arranged to take place before Christmas to fill the vacant places. (2) (Oct 1899).

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE FOR THE HIGHER GRADE?

The excellent progress made by the Bruce Grove School of Science had convinced the Tottenham Board that there was a “good field for secondary education in the district”. Whilst the Higher-grade School was under construction, therefore, the Board applied to the Education Department to open a School of Science at the Higher-grade: “The School of Science could not be recognised as forming part of the Public Elementary School”. (2a) (June 1899).

The Education Department referred the Board to the Science & Art Department for application of recognition and pointed out that in consenting to a loan for the erection of the new school that they had assumed that the whole of the premises was required for the use of the Public Elementary School and that the Board should not incur expenditure for the maintenance of a School of Science.

The correspondence grew over the next few months between the School Board and the Education Department and the Science & Art Department, in the Board’s repeated attempts to secure a School of Science for the Higher-grade School. In the end a deputation, backed by the London School Board was made to the Education Department and an appeal was made to the High Court of Justice (2). (Nov 1899). The School Board saw it as “manifestly unjust to say that a School of Science is legal in Tottenham but illegal in Wood Green”. E.M. Field, the H.M.I. at the time commented: “Whilst an accurate definition of a Higher Grade School remains a matter of dispute, it seems most unreasonable that higher education in its best sense is, in the meantime, denied to a portion of the school district.” (2) (Nov 1899).

NATIONAL SCENE

The Majority Report of the 1888 Cross Commission had questioned the legality of the development of rate-supported ‘secondary-type’ schooling in the form in (?) the Higher Grade. Then in 1900 Mr. Cockerton, district auditor under the Local Government Board, disputed the London School Board’s use of rates on education of pupils over 15 years of age on the grounds that such education was of a type not provided for in the Code for public Elementary Schools. The matter was a Court Case and the Court’s decision was against the use of rate-aid for Higher-grade schools. An emergency act was passed in 1901 authorising Boards who had set up Higher-grade Schools to continue their work under the auspices of the County.

It was now being recognised that a clarification of the meaning of Elementary Education was needed. At the same time rationalisation in the form of a single central department and local authority was looming large as a necessity in many people’s

minds. The Board of Education replaced the Education Department, the Department of Science & Art and the Charity Commission in 1899. To some extent a clarification of Elementary Education came with the 1902 act in the reorganisation of local administration. School Boards which had been regarded with some hostility by Robert Morant for having moved in (if only marginally) on the secondary scene by creating their Higher-grade Schools, were abolished. Education was put on a municipal basis. County and County Borough Councils assumed overall responsibility for both elementary and 'other than elementary education'. Rate-aided support was sanctioned for use in 'other than elementary education'. The Urban area of Wood Green, having a population of over 20,000 became a Part III Authority, formed its own Education Committee and was thus severed from Tottenham. The Education Committee now responsible for elementary education had the Higher-grade school under its wing.

The 1902 Act, however, did not settle the fate of the Wood Green Higher-grade School immediately as we shall see. Higher-grade Schools in other parts of the country were, soon after the 1902 Act, converted into Higher Elementary Schools or became Secondary Schools, but Wood Green Higher Grade was to experience a period of wavering and uncertainty, due perhaps in part to the fact that the School of Science had not been sanctioned. (There are no records to show that one was established). Both head master, Mr Crook, and head mistress, Miss Meredith, were doing all they possibly could to keep one foot in the secondary sector, keeping children on beyond the VII standard and entering them for examinations which were hardly elementary in nature. It is interesting to note here that on her retirement Miss Meredith (head mistress 1888-1924) recalled the school having been built in 1899 as a 'secondary school'. It seems certain, therefore, that in her mind at least, the status of the school was not at all clear.

FUTURE UNCERTAIN

It would appear from the records of the Education Committee that for about 16 years it was never quite certain which direction the Higher-grade School was going to take. This did not affect the pupils it would seem. Miss Cook (note – Miss Cook – answered an advertisement re Higher-grade school, 83 and lives in Embassy Court, Bounds Green, N22), who attended the school from about 1908 -1912 remembers that it was "an exceedingly good school , which gave children a firm foundation. When I was quite young my mother was ambitious for me to go into the Civil Service, so I was transferred from Noel Park where you couldn't take any examinations. At the Higher Grade I took the Junior Oxford examination and from there went on to

Clarke's College." Miss Cook, now 83 says she did not have to pay to go to the school (but she did not take a scholarship). Her mother had to pay 6d a week for her brother, "which was quite difficult, but she managed. She was determined that we should have more of a chance than she had."

There were a number of proposals put forward during the course of these years. Should the school take on a Higher Elementary status ((2) (May 1900) or become a High Class Commercial School (2) (1899-1900).

In May, 1900 an application had been made to the Board of Education to sanction the Higher-grade school as a Higher Elementary School. Arrangements were in full swing; the cost of the organised School of Science estimated at £150, parents of children below standard IV were advised there was plenty of room in other Board schools. The Higher-grade was due to be conducted as a Higher Elementary as from January 1901 (1). The School Board decided to postpone the change. In July of the same year the Board of Education wrote asking what was happening – to which the School Board answered that they had in fact prepared a scheme whereby scholars in suitable proportions from standards IV, V, and VI could gain entrance to the new Higher Elementary School, but they saw not point at this time to establish such a school, bearing in mind the Cockerton judgement and the new Education Bill pending legislation.

The school was doing well. Mr Crook wrote to the School Board in 1902 (before they were abolished) drawing attention again to the long list of successes attained by his boys in examinations (local Cambridge and Oxford and London Chamber of Commerce). The girls, too, were doing extremely well in examinations in the local Cambridge and Oxford papers and had, in fact, for the past few years been given a day's holiday in recognition of their achievements by the School Board. (2).

The change-over from School Board to local Education Committee was by no means welcomed in Wood Green. A lengthy criticism of the 1902 Act makes up the front pages of the Committee's first volume of Minutes: "to transfer the powers of the School Boards to non-elective Committees is calculated to prevent the development of education". (5) (1904).

PROPOSAL - HIGHER GRADE TO BECOME SECONDARY

In 1904 the Middlesex Education Committee, responsible for secondary education in the district, was approached regarding the possibility of transferring the Higher-grade buildings to the County for the conversion of the same into a secondary school since: “they are admirably adapted for the purpose. This would involve (the Wood Green Education Committee writes) the purchasing of a new site by the District Council upon which to erect another building to take the place of the present premises and, if it be possible to make arrangements for this to be done, the Council may rely on the Education Committee doing everything in its power to help the project, as it is obvious the establishment of such an Institution in our District would be of enormous benefit to the locality and do much to improve the educational facilities for our young people. Having then, within our District, a full complement of excellent elementary schools, a good Secondary School (which our Pupil Teachers could attend) and the Home & Colonial Training College, we should be in possession of educational opportunities second to none in the country.” (5) (1904).

In the same year Mr. Crook, head master, sent another long list of examination results with a covering letter (5) (1904): “In view of these results, all of which are outside the usual routine of an Elementary School, may I ask the Committee to reconsider the advisability of equipping and conducting the school on Higher Elementary lines, pending any decision as to its possible future as a Secondary School.”

Many requests had been made by the head master for a Physics and Chemistry room to be fitted, for the appointment of a Manual Instructor, for Art desks and seats for the Art Room to be provided, for the dining room to be furnished etc but all requests were shelved since the future of the Higher-grade School had not been settled. (5).

The school was certainly not being run on Elementary lines. Mr. Crook and Miss Meredith suggested in 1906 (5) that free places at the school should be offered to all those children who had completed standard VII and whose parents pledged to keep the children at school for another two years. For some years now it had been an annual plea by the head master and mistress to the Board of Education to allow an extension of the age limit stipulated under the Elementary Regulations. Finally in July 1908 it was decided to offer free scholarships to children having passed through standard VII and for whom no provision was made for higher education in their particular schools. A letter regarding the Scholarship Scheme was sent out to parents in July, 1909: (5).

“My Committee have for some time past been considering means whereby the educational facilities of Wood Green may be improved, and it is my pleasure now to report that arrangements have been made with the Board of Education whereby an

extended course of instruction can be given to at the Higher-grade school to boys and girls of Wood Green parents thereby better fitting them for business and other callings in this competitive age.....”.

Children were allowed to attend the Higher-grade schools beyond the usual age sanctioned by the Education Act, until a secondary school was erected in Wood Green.

The scholarships were for two years having passed standard VII, the course of instruction being as follows:-

Boys: Bookkeeping, French, Shorthand, Elementary Science, Woodwork, a thorough Commercial training, including preparation for the London Chamber of Commerce Junior Commercial examination.

Girls: Advanced Drawing, French, Algebra, Geometry, preparation for the Oxford & Cambridge local examinations, pupil teachers and other scholarships.

Yet again in 1909 the future of the Higher-grade School was discussed. Just prior to the opening of the Wood Green Secondary School in 1910 (see item 3) the Board of Education wrote agreeing to the extension of the age limit for scholars at the school until 1911, but pointed out that under no circumstances would they extend the age limit after that time (5a) (July 1911). Then came the disagreement amongst the heads in the elementary schools with regard to transferring only part of standard IV; some wanted to transfer all. Others did not want to transfer their standard VII.

Consequently Mr. Crook wrote to the Committees:- (5) (June 1910): “Miss Meredith and I pleaded last year for some fixity of system in transferring children from the other schools here by scholarship. The wholesale transference of classes is not a conferring of scholarship, and is not calculated to increase the reputation of the Higher Grade Schools. We understood last year that the scheme then evolved, subject only to the question of percentage of transference should have a full trial and Miss Meredith and I both wish the scheme to be maintained. It will be obviously impossible for us to allow the organisation of our schools to depend upon the varying and variable wishes of the Head Teachers of other schools”. It would appear that by this time the heads of the Higher-grade School were tired of the chopping and changing.

YET ANOTHER CHANGE

It would appear that attempts were made once again by the Board of Education in 1911 to curb the level of education given in the Higher-grade School. Outside examinations were discontinued. Admission of younger scholars and some re-adjustment within the school using partitions to adapt the rooms for smaller classes was suggested. Under the new scheme the School should continue to be a fee-paying school, and should include one class of standard II & III, two each of standard IV and upwards; no class was to exceed 40 scholars (30 in the highest classes). The School was to form its own standard II & III from fresh applicants and not from the St. Michaels feeder school. The present system of awarding scholarships to standard IV children from other schools was to be discontinued (5) (May 1911). Mr. Crook wrote asking that he may be allowed two ex-VII classes (5) (July 1911). The Board of Education's answer was:- "The Head Teacher be requested to organise the School so as to carry out the original Scheme by rigidly following the rules observed on the other Elementary Schools in the district in reference to the leaving age of the older scholars... (5a).

By July, 1912 the Committee decided that "arising out of the reorganisation of the Higher Grade Schools and numerous complaints addressed to the Chairman on the account of the absence of sufficient arrangements by the County in this district for the continuation of the education of scholars on attaining the elementary school age limit, it was resolved to state the case to the Board of Education for the purpose of obtaining sanction for the retention of such scholars at the Higher Grade Schools." (5).

The Board must have agreed to the retention of pupils though I found nothing in the records to say so, because Mrs Gabriel, who gained a scholarship in 1910 at the age of 13, stayed at the school until she was 16, and Mr. Beckett, who started in 1914 as a 6d a day fee-paying scholar, remembers scholarship boys coming from the Noel Park School. (Mrs Gabriel & Mr, Beckett answered advertisement re- Higher-grade schools).

Mr. Crook was elected Vice- President of the National Union of Teachers in 1914 (5). The school was beginning to be overcrowded again and it was suggested that the Wesleyan Church be used for the overflow, or that St. Michaels' old school premises should be bought when the new school was built, (neither of these suggestions were carried out, however).

A modification of the curriculum in the Boys school was proposed in 1915 in order to give more prominence to the Commercial side of education (5) (Jan 1915). Shorthand, Book-keeping, Typewriting, Commercial Correspondence, Commercial

English, Commercial Geography, Commercial History, Commercial Arithmetic, Commercial French, Handwriting, & Drawing were to be offered.

The object of the scheme was to prepare pupils for the London Chamber of Commerce Certificates, the age for candidates being about 15. The scheme would affect ex-VII boys: a two year course for two classes of 30 pupils in each class. Ex-VII girls were to share in Shorthand and Typewriting facilities. “Practically every boy from these top classes goes to the City, and unless well equipped on commercial lines is seriously handicapped. “ It was pointed out that there would be no grant forthcoming at first since the scheme would have to be put into operation before the H.M.I. could approve it. Later the Board might give a grant under special expenditure, or recognise the school as a Junior Commercial School, in which case there would be a grant of £6 per head forthcoming.

It can be seen that the Higher-grade School until now had had quite an ‘up-and-down’ history, but both heads had persevered and managed to keep a ‘secondary’ character for the School. Mr. Beckett (Higher-grade pupil 1914-1918) described the School as definitely being a ‘cut above’ all other schools in the area. “Everyone had to pass an examination to get there, even if he was fee-paying.” He explained that St. Michaels School only went up to 10 then you had to leave, but if you were not up to the required standard for Higher-grade you had to finish your years at one of the elementary schools in the district. “Mr. Crook was extremely strict, and would stand no nonsense from anyone” says Mr. Beckett; “if you were late, no doubt about it he was ready with the cane.” The war made little difference to the running of the school except that a few teachers were called up and replaced by women teachers. One of the women teachers started up a school choir during 1918. “Any medals or cups that were going for swimming were taken up by the Higher-grade boys”. (Mr. Beckett now living in Winchmore Hill recalls).

CENTRAL SCHOOL

Post primary experiments in education were still going on and the Higher-grade was right in the middle. It seemed as if the future of the school was never going to be

settled. Wood Green Higher-grade was directly affected by Morant's policy to prevent any post-primary growth which might threaten to compete, however marginally with the grammar schools and once again blur the distinction between elementary and secondary education.

With the continuously developing needs of industry and commerce and the ever changing social scene, such an approach could not last for long however. Morant's downfall, helped in part by the National Union of Teachers and the organised Labour movement, led the way to new developments.

In 1911, the same year as the H.M.I., on inspecting the Wood Green Higher-grade schools suggested a change in the organisation (see item 4). Central schools were started in London. Talk of re-organisation, and re-organisation inevitably means a time-lapse, and it was not until 1917 that the Wood Green Education Committee actually decided that the district required a school "different from the ordinary elementary or secondary type" (5) (in fact they had it in the form of the Higher-grade). A scheme was put forward to the Board of Education for a Central School and Pupil Teacher Centre for Wood Green, the Higher-grade School being "obviously the most suitable for effecting the change". Mr. Beckett says: "Just before I left, the head master called all the boys into the hall and told us that the School was changing to a Central School. It was being up-graded." (See item 5).

Children were to be selected through the Middlesex County Council Scholarships. The Central School was to have both a commercial and industrial bias. After two years in the school, scholars would pass into one of two 'sides', where their general education would be continued but with a bias of the one kind or the other. So it was that in 1918 the Higher-grade school became a Central School. The idea of 'secondary education for all' was spreading.

The enthusiasm of those members of the Tottenham School Board, pledged to educational development (2), had managed to introduce a School with a 'semi-secondary' nature into Wood Green and the head mistress and master had 'hung on' to the reputation that it had very quickly developed as being a 'cut above' all the other local schools, but, in fact, both the need and the demand for more advanced education for the children was there in the area. The Higher-grade School had not kept to the administrative rules in the strictest terms, by continuously applying for sanction to keep children at school for more advanced instruction, beyond the age limit allowed for an elementary school, and by using money from the rates for the School. It would

appear that they had been an embarrassment to Administration, hovering between elementary and secondary sector for many years.

The 1918 Act, which had raised the school leaving age to 14, required the local authorities to provide both advanced and practical instruction for the senior elementary pupils; The Central School was the answer to any administrative dilemma caused by the Higher-grade. The School was not to remain a Central School for very long, however. It would appear that there had been either a lack of foresight or a lack of co-ordination between Part II and Part III authorities.

COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOL

As was the case for many London suburbs, the population of Wood Green was still increasing and with it the number of children with the ability to cope with more advanced education. Wood Green County School, the only secondary school in the immediate district was not providing enough places.

The Part II Authority that had been responsible since the 1902 Act for the launching and development of a State system of secondary education had at last seen the need for more 'secondary' places in the area. It was therefore, in 1921 that B.S. Scott, Secretary of the Middlesex Education Committee, made a recommendation to the Board of Education that the Wood Green Central School become a County Secondary School, much to the delight of the two heads. (5). The Middlesex Education Committee now took over direct responsibility of the School. Mr Brandon, English master at the school, writes: "When Middlesex County took over the building from Wood Green, agreement was made that the fees would always be the lowest in the County. There were so many reductions and remissions for fees that in the end few pupils paid fees." (Mr. Brandon, now living in Devon, was editor of the School Magazine, 1925-1957.)

The School had been Central for such a short period (1918-1921) that all the official bodies were still referring to it as the Higher-grade School.

The only sources of information on the School for the next decade were the local newspaper, and a scrap-book compiled by Mr. Swinden, who was a master at the school during the period (later headmaster) that tells some of the story. In September, 1921, "The Weekly Herald" reports on 'another new name' for the Higher-grade School. Attention was drawn to the fact that, had Mr. Gott not worked throughout his

holidays, the school could not have been opened as a Secondary School in September but in January of the following year. (4).

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

The story attached to the naming of the School, and the length of time spent choosing a name for the School deserves some space. The newspaper reports on quite a lengthy discussion taking place as regards the best name for the school under its new status and several names were put forward, including: Central County – Bounds Green County – Fisher County (in recognition of the Education Act) – High School – and Trinity County. Eventually after much debate the latter name was decided on. (4) (Sept 1921). The newly acquired name, however, lasted for two months only. The Local Higher Education Committee (established in 1921) had christened the school “Trinity County School”, but the Middlesex Education Committee, whose direct responsibility the school now has, had not approved the name, saying “it was not a happy choice” and asking for another suggestion. (4) (Dec 1921).

Shortly after the name “Trinity” was announced, a deputation from the Trinity Wesleyan Church (where, in fact, the temporary Higher-grade Boys school had started), objected to the name on the grounds of “priority of title” and of the possibility of the clashing of the names of the school and the church hall. The Chairman of the Education Committee, Principal Thomas (principal of the Home & Colonial Training College) said that he had a vague suspicion that the similarity of names had given rise to a feeling there was a kind of religious bias. (4) (Dec. 1981).

The head of the school, Mr. Crook, said it was essential that the name should be settled at once as he was experiencing difficulties in deciding what to write at the top of references, testimonials, etc. He had, in fact, together with the head mistress, Miss Meredith, ordered a large supply of hats and capes with the badge “Trinity County School” on them (3). After more debate and disagreement it was ultimately agreed to call the School the Wood Green Central County School, though some could not support the name as they said ‘Central’ had educational implications in many people’s minds. It was decided to emphasize to the public that the ‘Central’ in the name was used in a geographical sense and not on an educational sense (4) (Dec.1981).

Nevertheless, whatever the name, the School was now a secondary school with secondary status and syllabus, recognised as such for the purpose of grant. Bursaries under the regulations for the training of teachers were also tenable at the school as it was still to be recognised as a pupil-teacher centre (5).

Unfortunately, this was by no means the end of the story as regards the name. The other secondary school in the area was called 'Wood Green County School', and it would appear that confusion had arisen not only because of the names of the schools, but because the two head masters had similar names (Mr. Crook and Mr. Cook) and as a consequence Mr. Crook was receiving Mr. Cook's letters and vice versa. The school was renamed 'Bounds Green County.' (4) (Jan. 1922. This name lasted approximately for one year – more confusion. At the other end of the Bounds Green Road was a junior school of the same name. Once again the Local Higher Education Committee got down to the name problem. A competition in the local press was suggested with a prize of two guineas for the best name.

In March, 1924 the matter came up again (4). Mr. Cook, headmaster of the Wood Green County School, asked that the name of his school be changed to 'Glendale County'. The suggestion met with immediate approval. Then came suggestions for the Bounds Green County School. Duckett Manor and Sir Hugh Middleton were proposed, being of local historic significance. One member suggested that since they had an Alderman in the chair and with a view to avoiding more confusion, might they not ask for the portion of the road where the school stands to be renamed 'Northway' and call the school 'Northway County'. Names were being thrown in from all sides; 'Durrant County' (Colonel Durrant had been president of the local School Board), 'Hill County', 'Palmerston'. A lady member said all of the names she had heard put forward none appealed to her so much as "Trinity County School". Finally, it was agreed to ask the Middlesex Education Committee if it would not be possible to call the school 'Trinity County School'. Three years had passed, the Wesleyan Church deputation did not reappear and the name was accepted. The hats and caps were presumably taken out of storage!

Whilst the name changing was going on in the Wood Green Higher Education Department, the school was developing in other ways. It was no longer completely, "nose to the grind-stone" as Mrs Gabriel remembers (1910-1913). "We did have a little P.E. and we did something like country dancing but that was all. Netball was first introduced for the girls in 1917 and tennis was played in the upper classes. Football and swimming had been introduced in the Higher-grade days. In 1919 the

first North London Central School Sports had been held (3), and sports was becoming a regular feature. The School had no playing field and was finding it difficult. In 1922 Mr. Crook had brought up the matter up with the Higher Education Committee. It was in this year that the head master was elected M.P., and resigned his headship upon taking his seat in the house, saying he hoped to serve the cause of education in Parliament. (4) (Dec. 1922). Mr. Crook's resignation had seen Emrys Jones, M.A., PhD, appointed head master. (January 1923).

Dr. Jones entered the school when the school was experiencing economic difficulties – a period for cutting down in educational expenditure. The post war slump had arrived and the Geddes Committee had come down heavily with its “Axe”, recommending that spending on education be cut by one-third. Many of the hopes which had found expression in the Fisher Act were shattered. The experience of the war had stimulated interest in improving education at a national level. The mood was there, the funds were not, which meant no chance of a sports field for which the school was feeling a need in order to develop that side of school life.

Mr. Crook and Miss Meredith, under their long headships, had slowly but surely guided the school into the field of secondary education. It was the end of one era which led smoothly into the next.

At his first prize-giving Dr. Jones invited Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education to give the address. (3). To recall part of his speech might give an insight into the feeling of the time. He pointed out that in a sense the school was a new school, entering a new phase of existence, and while it had the tremendous support of past history and its various Old Boys' Associations, it had got in a way to make the transferred school a school on its own merits and its own form.

“I am afraid secondary education in the past has been regarded as a means of escape from one's surroundings, a means of getting on, a way of going out into the world with a secondary label. Now we all know that kind of idea of secondary education is wrong..., At the present moment our country is passing through a pretty bad time. We all realise the amount of suffering depression, and even despair which is going on around us. We have got to build up the country again and it is up to the boys and girls who pass through our secondary schools – not because they are any better than other boys and girls, but they having received more education they have more responsibility. They have to carry out the work of building up the nation.”

In the following year, 1924, Miss Meredith, who had been head mistress since 1888, retired, pointing out that the educational welfare of the school had been her first consideration and she now recognised that the time had come when she should stand aside “for the application of modern methods and conditions”. Miss Meredith had been remembered by many for her “patience, kindness, understanding and charm”. (6) Miss Macrae (now 90), daughter of the Minister of the Presbyterian Church where the temporary Higher-grade Girls School was housed, does not disagree with these words of description. Miss Macrae remembers Miss Meredith, not only when she worked as a mistress in her school 1918-1951, but as a small child going into the school room (church hall) to help thread needles. “She was an absolute disciplinarian. If she said: ‘I am leaving the room for 10 minutes. There must be no talking.’ not a word was uttered.

Mr. Brandon who joined the school in the early twenties recalls that at that time the majority of the staff were old Higher-grade staff, “excellent disciplinarians but with little understanding and much suspicion of the new changes. Several women had come into the Boy’s school during the war so that in 1925 there was still a big majority of women teachers and the new appointments were men. We resented being called “mere lecturers, not real teachers.” (Letter received from Mr. Brandon).

The upheaval of the war had also brought about a radical change in the climate of opinion. Dewey’s influence on philosophy of education was gradually seeping into English schools. Interest and concern about the social aims in education was becoming more apparent. Practical pursuits rather than just mere book learning were engaged in, educational visits were organised more and more, co-operative activities both in and after school were developed in the form of clubs and societies. Mr Brandon writes: “There was no change in subjects being taught but there was a revolution in methods and attitudes and also in the standards aimed at. Learning became lively and enjoyable. The General School Certificate was the target. It took many years before the four forms at entry became four forms at School Certificate, and longer for the Sixth Form to develop.”

Under its new status and new headship Trinity began to develop and flourish at an amazing rate. Sports and social activities advanced rapidly. Sports were held on a Saturday morning and unfortunately the lack of a field was felt by the school; throughout the twenties children had to travel to one of the four different grounds quite some distance away on the tram. (6).

The Old Scholars Association was encouraged by the head master and staff and one by one new sections were opened in the developing tradition of the school; Old Scholars Operatic Society, Drama Section, Tennis, Football, etc. Within the school the Operatic Society started about 1925 performing annually Gilbert & Sullivan Comic Operas. The Country Club organised rambles regularly throughout the year, trips abroad were organized as from 1926, an annual boys' camp (followed shortly after by a girls' camp), started in 1925; historical, geographical and many more societies, discussion groups were formed; a school magazine was published each term; some forms produced their individual magazines; 'le cercle francais' reported about events in France, in French. (3&6).

The school was fast becoming in a Deweyian sense a community within a community. The change in spirit from what had up till the early twenties been "all work and no play" to a more light hearted approach towards learning is perhaps illustrated in this first verse of a lengthy poem written by a schoolboy who had attended one of the first school camps, on camp food:

" O pea-green soup so wan, forlorn, Within those depths one pea was born, Eyes bulged 'is that a pea I see', Down flashed the fork with silv'ry glee, O pea-green soup so wan, so forlorn, Where hast thy one green pea gorn?" (3).

In changing to a County Secondary School it was not only the curriculum that was modified, in so far as though commercial subjects were retained, for the top classes more and more emphasis was being given to the Arts and Sciences sides. Dr. Jones was remodelling the School, like many other newly established secondary schools, on the new flourishing public and grammar schools. A House system was set up; St. Georges, St. Patricks, St. Davids and St. Andrews, together with a system of prefects. Competitive sports and other activities were engaged in between the Houses. (6).

Considerable extensions to the building and many interior alterations were finished in the summer of 1931. (6). The School had managed to get there before the impact of the May Committee economies, which suspended building in education. To one end of the school dining room (later gym) with kitchen was added and a biology room. Taking up part of the girl's playground – two classrooms and two art rooms were added to the building. To the other end of the building (Trinity Road) also extending into the girls' playground were added cloakrooms for girls, a common room for mistresses, a classroom, and above that two Science Labs and a classroom. (It would be hard to tell by looking at the building nowadays where the extensions were made.

The school merely took on a different shape). The top hall was converted into two large and one small classroom with a corridor. Central heating was also installed.

Unfortunately, the cuts in funds for education made by the May Committee were felt by the school in another way. After having waited many years for a Sports Field, eventually grounds were acquired not far from home in White Hart Lane; (the present site of the Wood Green Comprehensive). The question of a pavilion had been brought up, but the financial crisis had its grip and the sum allocated by the Middlesex Education Committee, together with money collected over the years by the head master, Dr. Jones, and contributions from old scholars was not enough to build the kind of pavilion which had been planned (a hall with kitchen attached, two changing rooms for boys and two for girls, each with its own wash room.) (6).

THE PAVILION

After much deliberation by the Committee and the School eventually a shell was put with the money available. Starting almost from nothing, - no ceilings, no floors, no partitions, the Staff and senior scholars, together with the help of old scholars and friends, built the pavilion as planned (see item). It was no easy task which began in June, 1932 and was finally finished in October 1934. The work was carried out under the direction of the woodwork master, Mr. Chick.

On opening the pavilion, Alderman Marlow Reed (whose name incidentally had been put forward as a possible name for the school 'Reed County' a decade before) spoke of the extraordinary and infectious enthusiasm. "The volunteer labour thus given saved a large amount of expense, but far more important is the magnificent spirit of public service which made this achievement possible." The interior of the pavilion finished, the outside work was tackled. Crazy paving was laid by senior boys, a flagstaff erected and a drinking fountain and garden seats were presented by the Old Trinity Scholars. Flower-beds and shrubberies were laid out and planted by girls under the direction of two mistresses. Inside the pavilion gradually the bare walls were covered with Honours Boards from all parts of the British Empire – British Oak, Satin Wood, Silver Greywood, Walnut, Camphor Wood from Australia, Ceylon, India, Nigeria, and East Africa.

A report on the panelling appeared in the National Press: “The scheme of panelling initiated as a memorial to King George V, commemorates the close association of the School with the Dominions overseas, begun when E.H. Mundy (pupil 1920-26) won the first Victorian State Scholarship to Melbourne Grammar School.” To complete the job of the Field, a tree of every type that grows in Great Britain was planted round the Field. During the war the panels were stored for safety in the “Priory”, Hatfield Peverel, where the School was evacuated and the pavilion was occupied for some years by a searchlight party. Prior to the war a group of Danish schoolboys used the field and the pavilion as a school camp. (6).

PLUS CA CHANGE, PLUS C’EST LA MEME CHOSE

It is interesting to note how the removal of the tramways in 1938 affected the school and to realise the truth in the French saying. Reporting on the replacement by trolleybuses of the trams in the Bounds Green Road, the school magazine comments: “They have been reflections on Progress. ‘So civilization advances’....There have been improvements which we in this School have not failed to notice. Those who work in rooms near the main road have appreciated the lessening of noise...The ‘banana’ route, as it used to be called, because the trams came in bunches, still deserves its old name. Evidently tram-drivers, even when shifted to trolleybuses, are sociable fellows and like to go about in threes and fours. So we still wait our fifteen and twenty minutes on a three minute service... There used to be a tram-stop just outside the School – placed there for the School – which provided its convenience particularly in wet weather. Now there is no stop – ‘So Progress’ we might reflect, ‘has its price’...We have not seen all the price we are to pay for Progress. Bounds Green Road is to be widened, and in the widening we are to lose some of our playground. (6) (1938).

THE 1939-45 WAR

The Second World War, unlike the First, brought disruption to the school. In September 1939, the School was evacuated to Hatfield Peverel in Essex, and the army took over the Wood Green School building. In January, 1940 the children who had not gone to Hatfield Peverel and those who had returned were rounded up and taken to Minchenden (a secondary school in the Southgate area) for afternoon lessons - Minchenden used the school in the mornings. Later Trinity moved to Glendale County, the nearest secondary school to the Trinity building, sharing mornings and afternoons on alternate weeks (In a letter received from Mr. Brandon).

SCHOOL EVACUATED

The disused basement and first floor at the 'Priory' in Hatfield Peverel, (see item 7), headquarters of a Dutch / German missionary to South Africa, were taken over in 1939 as class rooms by the evacuated part of Trinity after they had been cleaned and made ready by the older pupils. An annual harvest camp was held at Terling in Essex where children who had remained in Wood Green joined the evacuated children to pick tons of peas which would otherwise rotted, due to lack of labour at the time. (E. Report written by 6th former evacuated at the time.). After the war Trinity presented Hatfield Peverel with a gateway to their village recreation ground (see item 8) as an expression of the School's appreciation of the kindness shown to its members by the people of Hatfield Peverel. (6) (1949).

POST WAR

The fact that secondary education was made free for all children by the 1944 Act made little difference to Trinity in so far as very few pupils paid fees (where parents could not afford the fees Middlesex had been paying). The school did, however, take on a new name – Trinity Grammar (6) (1945). If Mr. Crook and Miss Meredith had guided the School into its secondary status then Dr. Jones had certainly modelled and created from the secondary a 'grammar school' prior to the new title.

"DR. JONES WAS TRINITY"

This was probably thought by many and said by an old Higher-grade pupil who had known Dr. Jones because of his close association from the beginning with the Old Scholars Association. During his period of headship, 1923-49 he had been with his "energy, enthusiasm, and unswerving devotion to the school, the originator inspirer, director and resolute counsellor" of all the numerous clubs, societies and activities almost all started in the early days of his headship and carried on without a break, apart for the war years.

The School magazine of summer, 1945, reports: "We have made some return to normal in our work. We have grown, we realise now, too serious during the war years. We have far to go before we regain the fun and enjoyment associated with School life before the war." It would seem that the 'spirit' was never quite regained.

The decision made by the government in 1945 to increase the annual grant to universities, had its effect on the school. Gradually the number of pupils staying on in the 6th form grew and with it the numbers going to university. If the ambition of the later Higher-grade or Central pupil had been to enter the Civil Service or to become a clerk in one of the large firms in the City, then the target for the pupil of Trinity was a place in university or at least one of the professions.

Mr. Swinden who had been a master at Trinity from 1928-46 and in charge of the School evacuated to Hatfield Peverel, resigned to take up the headship of Bounds Green Secondary Modern School but returned to Trinity in 1949 as its new head master. (* Interview with Mr. Swinden, now living in Surrey).

Talk of a new building for the School had been in the air for quite some time since for many years Trinity building had been considered ill-equipped for its purpose. An annexe for the younger pupils had to be opened in an old school in White Hart Lane, but more than a decade was to pass before Trinity and Glendale schools were merged to form the Wood Green School, built on the Trinity Sports Field (6) (1963).

A war brings with it many changes. Attitudes towards society in general, and education, in particular, had been modified after the Second World War. Important social legislation seen as the foundations of the welfare state was made when the Labour government came to power in 1945. In education there was a determination for equality of opportunity.

The selective system and the associated 11 Plus examination were having to face growing criticism and challenge. People in the field of education (and outside) were disputing the tripartite system. When the investigation was made on behalf of the National Foundation of Educational Research in 1957, quite a disturbing margin of error was revealed in the existing selection procedures. The 11 Plus was found to be unreliable as far as most children were concerned, and therefore unfair.

The idea of the comprehensive school was gaining ground. One of the teachers at Trinity during the period writes: "Soon after the Second World War there was a talk of 'comprehensiveness'. We had just got the School back to normal conditions, and the threat had a demoralising effect. Staff who could, fled to a safer retreat, and many grew despairing and careless."

But the need to fulfil the task of giving equality of opportunity was apparent and had to be dealt with, in the same way as the need for 'more' education had brought about

the Higher-grade School and the ‘knowledge explosion’ with the need for improved facilities led to the merging of the two grammar schools into a new, and better sited building. Finally, in 1967 two more secondary schools joined the Wood Green School, an additional building was erected, where the Trinity pavilion stood, to form the lower School and Wood Green Comprehensive was created.

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