

The Story of an ex-Pupil Family from 1923

This has been put together (*by Laurie Pate*) from memories and biography material provided by Adrian, Nicholas and Penelope Smith whose parents (Stanley & Marjorie) were both ex-Trinity.

The "Trinity Family" (The numbers in brackets refer to the Trinity start year).

Winifred Smith ('23), Stanley Smith ('24) & Grace ('26) Smith were siblings

Marjorie Britton ('27), Fred Britton ('24) & Tom Britton ('32) were siblings

Marjorie married Stanley on 14 October 1939



Marjorie Florence Britton (in 1929)

31 October 1915 - 9 January 1991

1927 "Girl Champion - Wood Green Sports. Muswell Hill School, Passed 11+, Started at Trinity"

1932 August Started work at Acton: Civil Service (Health - later she was seconded to London School of Tropical Medicine where she learnt much and found it interesting)

Marjorie attended a very small local 'tin-pot' school in Muswell Hill made of corrugated iron.

A teacher noticed her skills as she played in the school play area and entered her for her very first competition.

Marjorie won every event for which she was entered and received the Girl Champion Medal. She said it was the only sports occasion she really enjoyed, nothing expected of her - ever. Afterwards, she was subjected to pressure and expectations from coaches, and the joy went out of it! So she left the sport.

She also won a small Ebony clock that didn't survive a spring failure much later on.

She won many other prizes and trophies

Mum said her school had never won anything at the Wood Green schools event before, and called the medal her Victor Ludorum

There are also a couple of Trinity school medals and her prefect's badge. (Reproduced at the end of this fascinating story).



Stanley Smith in 1929

9 June 1913 - 5 June 2007

Born June 9th, 1913

Educated: Summer Term St. Mary's Primary School, Tenby, Pembrokeshire 1918

Sydney Smith (Stanley's father) spent the war in Milford Haven hanging onto, and once from, ropes attached to airships which is how he came to start school in Tenby.

Autumn Term 1918 to Summer Term 1922 Noel Park Primary School

Autumn Term 1922 to Summer Term 1924 Noel Park Boys School

Autumn Term 1924 to Autumn Term 1929 Trinity County School

1931 to 1934 London County Council Evening Classes, Highbury

Stanley writing in 2006 (probably):

"In February 1924 the Headmaster of the Boys School I was attending suddenly realised that I was in a class below my age and that I should have to sit the "Scholarship" – the Eleven plus as it became later – without the proper preparation. There were three papers and an oral examination and the Head realised that I had little hope of passing the arithmetic paper. He gave me a textbook, some guidance, and told me to work hard in my spare time! It was too late to move me into the Scholarship class.

Chicken Pox has also played a significant part in my life. A few days after I had been given the textbook my younger sister came out in a rash and I was quarantined for two weeks. At the end of the two weeks my older sister came out in a rash and I was quarantined for another two weeks, then, yes, I came out in a rash and was kept at home until I recovered. Many years later I developed shingles during a chicken pox outbreak – the two are related medically – and made a decision which changed my direction, but more of that later.

It so happened that I returned to school on the very day that I had to sit the Exam. Why my family had not been warned or informed I shall never know! A teacher met me in the playground and walked the mile and a half with me to Trinity County School where the Exam was held. I have little recollection of that day apart from the urgency of the walk. I have only vague memory of the exam itself or of the questions. None of my immediate school friends was involved. I was alone.

Some time later I had to go to the Grammar School again for the Oral Exam. I have vivid memories of that occasion. I went into a succession of rooms in each of which were two people who made me very much at ease and talked to me about all sorts of subjects. I have always enjoyed the exchanges of conversation and I still do. I carried a card with me and at the end of each interview the card was marked with the letter A. I then had a very short interview with the Headmaster who took the card and said that I had done very well. Several weeks later I had to see the Head again, this time with my father who was told that I had done well with the English and General Papers but had failed the Numbers Paper. I could not possibly be awarded a scholarship, but that as I had also done well in the Oral exam I was to be offered a place as a fee-paying scholar.

The fees were £2. a term – a small sum in modern terms but a lot of money for my father to find in the 1920s. The education of his children was so important to him that he took every overtime opportunity the Post Office offered to find the money. One result of this school blunder was that for my five years at the Grammar School I was a B Stream pupil. The missing groundwork in numbers was difficult to make up and the help I needed was not there to begin with. Later a very good Maths teacher gave the necessary encouragement.

I enjoyed school. My first year – 1924 – was the first year that Trinity County had been recognised as a full Grammar School. Before then it had been described as Higher Grade with separate Boys and Girls Departments under separate Headships. The two departments were combined as a Co-educational Grammar School under a new Headmaster, Dr. Emrys Jones, with about eight hundred pupils. He and the staff were determined to make it a good school. They worked hard, and so did we perform. Dr. Jones wrote a school song that one of the senior boys set to music:

"We boast not our antiquity, our legends old, our glorious past,

No claims of long descent have we. We trust we hold the future fast.

Our friends we shall not shame, our foes we do defy,

A glorious future we all hail! Trinity County shall prevail."

I saw my first Mid Summer Night's Dream in 1924 - a super production at Drury Lane Theatre - My mum took me because it was my first Shakespeare play at Grammar School - I was eleven and it made its mark.

Although I was always near the top of my B stream form I was never transferred to the A stream. I suppose it would be fair to say that I was good run of the mill material, but not brilliant. English and the essay subjects were always my strengths and I have a good imagination that I used sometimes unwisely. I remember that on the way into the exam room for Matriculation French Miss Copplestone, the French teacher, put her hand on my shoulder and said "Smith, I think you will do well, but I am sure that if you do not know the answer you'll make it up."

I did matriculate, the only B stream pupil in that year to do so, while a number of my A stream friends achieved the lower standard of General Schools. It was a strange year. On my autumn term report my Form Master, who taught English, stated definitely that I would Matriculate, but the Head added a rider that I would have to work very hard to do so.

I met my future wife Marjorie briefly – a few seconds only – in the summer of 1936. I had known her older brother Fred Britton since 1924. We were in the same year at grammar school and had played cricket and football together. After leaving school we had walked and camped with a small group of our school contemporaries in this green and pleasant land. Fred and I also played tennis together once a week in the summer months and together we owned a set of tennis balls. In those years of slender resources such a possession was like gold dust, and there were many requests to borrow them. One such request involved me taking them from my home to his. Fred's family lived in a third floor flat over a grocer's shop (94b Alexandra Park Road), accessed by climbing an outside iron stairway and walking across the flat roof of the shop outbuildings. This was called "crossing the lids". In all of the twelve years I had known him I had never before visited his home. I climbed the stairway, crossed the lids, and rang the bell. A slim dark girl opened the door and took the box of tennis balls from my hand, shut the door, and was gone.

The flat above the flat above the shop entry via a back alley and outside stairs (fire escape), then across a flat roof with ventilators and there were stairs immediately inside the door to the flat. Then more stairs from the dining room up to the front parlour. The kitchen and scullery were down a couple of steps too. *(It was still gaslit when Granma died in February 1965. From the window, you could see (but before my time) the GNR branch trains to Alexandra Palace. It was going to become part of the Northern line but electrification stopped in 1941 (at Mill Hill East for the Barracks) and post war, it was fairly quickly abandoned altogether).*

(Adrian says - I haven't been back there for many years. One story is that grandma used to go out on the uppermost window ledge to clean the outside of her sash windows. On one occasion the conductor of a passing doubledecker bus was so alarmed to see her out there that he notified the police. Also, I used to hangout of the scullery window [?1949, age 5] in hope of glimpsing a train. Better still was to watch from above the tunnel entrance as express trains came out of Kings Cross).



94 Alexandra Road today (2021) – front and rear



Marjorie on the "lids"

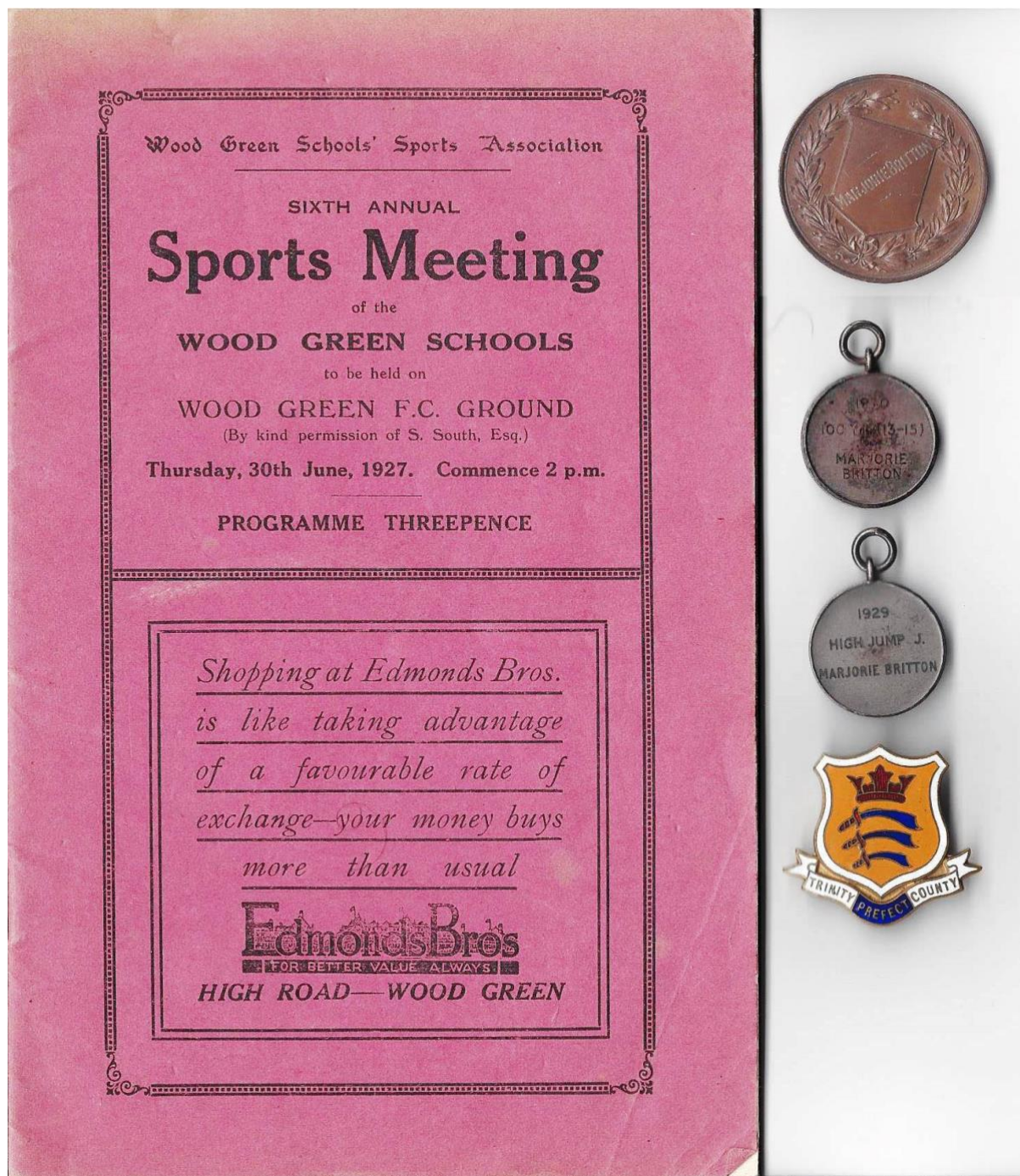
That evening I told my younger sister about the incident. She said that the girl must have been Fred's sister Marjorie, and that I should have known her as the outstanding girl athlete at our mixed school. I replied that Fred had never even mentioned that he had a sister, and as she must be all of three school years younger than me..... Years later my sister recalled the encounter and said that she was quite sure that something had "happened", otherwise why should I have bothered to tell her about it? Now, many, many years on, I too like to think that something "happened".

A day or two before Easter 1937 Fred phoned to say that he had arranged a youth hostel weekend in the Surrey hills, but that one of the party had contracted chickenpox. Was I free to take his place? My own Easter arrangements had fallen through. I was feeling blue about the news from Belfast. I was glad to accept. We were to meet after work on Maundy Thursday at the Marble Arch Corner House for a meal, and then travel by Green Line Coach to Abinger Hammer and walk to the Hostel at Holmbury St. Mary. At the Corner House I discovered that chickenpox had claimed another victim, and Marjorie was also "making up the number". We were the odd ones out and inevitably spent much of the holiday walking together and, in the evenings, sitting together by the fireside in the hostel common rooms.

Marjorie, as my sister Grace had told me, was an athlete and ran in top class club athletics for the Ministry of Health and the Civil Service at White City and Crystal Palace. One projected evening ramble was turned down because she was due to run at a White City meeting. I wanted to be a spectator but was firmly discouraged. When next we met she told me that she had run for the last time. As a schoolgirl she had run and jumped for fun and enjoyed it, but when her talent had been spotted and the coaches got to work on her it had ceased to be fun and she was glad of a good reason to leave the sport. She added that inculcation of the will to win and the killer spirit had a bad effect on character, and that many top athletes of her acquaintance were not very nice people. That was in the 1930s!!

Shortly before she died Marjorie gave me a medal inscribed "Champion Schoolgirl Athlete 1927 - Wood Green and District Sports", together with the preserved programme. She said that this was the only trophy of which she was really proud. Marjorie was then aged ten or eleven and attending a small Muswell Hill primary school a very small local 'tin-pot' school made of corrugated iron with no sports facilities. A teacher told her that she had watched her running about in the playground, thought she was pretty good, and had entered her in the District Sports as the first ever pupil to take part. The teacher took her to a large field filled with school children and teachers wearing rosettes and carrying lists. The field was marked out with white lines. Despite feeling overawed by the occasion Marjorie won every event in her age group. In addition to the medal, she was awarded a clock that I still have and which still goes, and of which I am inordinately proud. I never saw Marjorie run competitively, but to me all her movements were made with athletic grace".

Tom Britton (Marjorie's brother) was a footballer (later a referee and administrator) I think.



TIME TABLE OF EVENTS

No.	Time	Event	Heat	Page
1	2.0	Boys' 100 Yards	Finals	15
2	2.8	Girls' Chariot Race	1st Round	17
3	2.10	Boys' 80 Yards	Finals	17
4	2.15	Girls' Hurdle Race	Semi-Finals	19
5	2.20	Boys' Sack Race (under 12 yrs.)	Final	19
6	2.22	Girls' High Jump (under 12 yrs.)	Final	19
7	2.30	Boys' Hurdle Race	Semi-Finals	19
8	2.35	Girls' Senior Relay Race (12—14½ yrs.)	Final	21
9	2.40	Boys' 220 Yards	Finals	21
10	2.50	Girls' Junior Relay Race (under 12 yrs.)	Final	23
11	2.55	Boys' 150 Yards	Finals	23
12	3.0	Boys' Tug-of-War	Semi-Finals	23
13	3.5	Girls' High Jump (12—14½ yrs.)	Final	23
14	3.20	Girls' Skipping Race	Finals	25
15	3.30	Boys' High Jump (under 12 yrs.)	Final	25
16	3.40	Girls' Egg and Spoon Race	Final	27
17	3.45	Boys' Senior Relay Race (12—14½ yrs.)	Final	27
18	3.50	Girls' Hurdle Race	Finals	27
19	3.55	Boys' Junior Relay Race (under 12 yrs.)	Final	27
20	4.0	Girls' 80 Yards	Finals	27
21	4.5	Boys' High Jump (12—14½ yrs.)	Final	29
22	4.10	Girls' 100 Yards	Finals	29
23	4.15	Boys' Boot Race (12—14½ yrs.)	Final	31
24	4.20	Girls' Chariot Race	Final	31
25	4.25	Boys' Hurdle Race	Finals	31
26	4.30	Girls' Potato Race	Finals	31
27	4.35	Boys' Tug-of-War	Final	31

4.45 PRIZE DISTRIBUTION.

MRS. BAIN IRVINE

has kindly consented to distribute the prizes to winners.

ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN

WE TENDER THANKS to The Wood Green Council, The Education Committee, The Juvenile Organisations Council, The Director of Education, The Medical Officer of Health, S. South, Esq., and to the Advertisers, Parents and other Supporters

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18

No. 4.—2.15 p.m. Girls' Hurdle Race. Semi-Finals.

First Two in each Heat to enter Final.

(a) Girls 11½—12½ yrs.

Heat 1.

H2 M. Britton
P2 R. Brooking
L18 M. Neighbour
W21 D. Williams

Heat 2.

M5 I. Estelle
B18 M. Kiessler
A11 W. Soanes
W20 G. Tytherleigh

(b) Girls 12½—13½ yrs.

Heat 1.

A7 L. Lamb
B13 C. Cummings
W13 D. Pickett

Heat 2.

P1 B. Brennan
B14 E. Felton
W10 W. Neeson

(c) Girls 13½—14½ yrs.

Heat 1.

A5 I. Gerrard
N2 I. Grimsey
W8 D. Mardle
B21 R. Perry

Heat 2.

A1 E. Attridge
W3 L. Clarke
B8 M. Burbridge
L16 K. Thressell

No. 5.—2.20 p.m. Boys' Sack Race (50 Yards). Final.

Boys under 12 yrs.

2 Prizes.

B6 S. Dowdeswell
H2 A. Horn
W8 G. Jones

N12 E. Potton
B19 J. Varney

No. 6.—2.22 p.m. Girls' High Jump. Final.

Girls under 12 yrs.

2 Prizes.

H2 M. Britton
H4 A. Halla

A14 O. Webber
A10 L. Peacock

No. 7.—2.30 p.m. Boys' Hurdle Race. Semi-Finals.

First Two in each Heat to enter Final.

(a) Boys 13½—14½ yrs.

Heat 1.

N6 T. Hitchens
W9 F. Lemon
B12 C. Palmer

Heat 2.

N5 S. Fry
W7 F. Gooch
P4 L. Ward
L17 E. Wernincks

19

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24

No. 14.—3.20 p.m. Girls' Skipping Race (80 Yards). Finals.

(a) Girls under 9 yrs.

2 Prizes.

M3 B. Callister
B10 P. Carnehan
B7 D. Bransome

W7 J. Lewis
P7 D. Ward
N11 O. Vaughan

(b) Girls 9—10 yrs.

2 Prizes.

B9 B. Cairns
A3 D. Fisher
L8 V. Hackett

B20 I. Morley
W22 G. Neeson
W19 G. Saunders

(c) Girls 10—11 yrs.

2 Prizes.

P3 D. Dean
P4 J. Kennedy
L12 J. Neighbour

W18 N. Saunders
L15 E. Smythe
A12 V. Staines

(d) Girls 11—12 yrs.

2 Prizes.

H2 M. Britton
P2 R. Brooking
W15 L. Read

W20 G. Tytherleigh
B26 I. Vyse
B29 O. Wills

(e) Girls 12—13 yrs.

2 Prizes.

B1 M. Allen
B5 K. Beans
P1 B. Brennan

W5 K. Edwards
L7 E. Guiver
A15 E. West

(f) Girls 13—14½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

B8 M. Burbridge
N2 I. Grimsey
L10 N. Head

P5 E. Murphy
W14 D. Rout
B27 D. Warder

(g) Girls over 14½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

B30 E. Barber
B31 K. Clitheroe
N14 E. Jones

N13 O. Kilm
W23 G. Ransom

No. 15.—3.30 p.m. Boys' High Jump. Final.

Boys under 12 yrs.

2 Prizes.

W2 W. Bilbo
B7 A. Fanthorne
N9 P. Morgan

M5 A. Pritchard
B16 J. Seagrave

25

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(c) Girls 9½—10 yrs.

2 Prizes.

L2 D. Berry
B9 B. Cairns
A3 D. Fisher

L13 E. Nichol
W19 G. Saunders
W17 J. Stevens

(d) Girls 10—10½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

M6 G. Fensom
A9 M. Mears
L12 J. Neighbour

W11 F. Piggott
P8 R. Redeall
A18 G. Stapleton

(e) Girls 10½—11 yrs.

2 Prizes.

M4 P. Clarke
P3 D. Dean
B15 E. Field

W12 E. Pilbro
W18 N. Saunders
A12 V. Staines

No. 21.—4.5 p.m. Boys' High Jump.

Final.

Boys 12—14½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

N5 S. Fry
N6 T. Hitchens

L15 L. Wallis

No. 22.—4.10 p.m. Girls' 100 Yards.

Finals.

(a) Girls 11—11½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

B3 K. Andrews
A19 A. Halla
L9 M. Hare

L14 A. Smith
M8 J. White
B29 O. Wills

(b) Girls 11½—12 yrs.

2 Prizes.

H2 M. Britton
H3 M. Cooley
B17 M. Harmer

M7 F. Ree
W20 G. Tytherleigh
A14 O. Webber

(c) Girls 12—12½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

B16 J. Hare
N5 K. Jaques
A8 P. Long

B19 V. Mitchell
L11 D. Morley
N10 W. Stapleton

(d) Girls 12½—13 yrs.

2 Prizes.

B1 M. Allen
B4 C. Bailey
B13 C. Cummings

P1 B. Brennan
W5 K. Edwards
A15 E. West

(e) Girls 13—13½ yrs.

2 Prizes.

L1 L. Barker
W1 G. Brett
N3 H. Jarrett
W13 D. Pickett

B24 P. Stening
B27 D. Warder
N12 O. Wischhusen