

Memories of School

I started school when I was 5 years of age which was the acceptable age then.

I attended the Acacias Primary School in Burnage which was 5 minutes walk from my home. Mother used to take me to the main road and there was always a policeman on duty to see the pupils across the road. Mum said to the Policeman, 'What do you do with little girls who don't eat their dinner?', and he replied, 'Oh we have a place for them.'

My memories of subjects taught are a bit hazy but I remember learning numbers and the alphabet was a priority. Reading was also very important and we read from large print attractive little books. The pictures related to the main characters in the book. Nursery rhymes, songs and musical games were used to remember facts. Later came spelling tests, mental arithmetic, tables and then everything became competitive.

Morning Assembly played an important role in the school day. Miss Shepherd, our Headmistress, was very religious and over lunch break held a Bible class in her room - only for the top class, however, and only if they wanted to attend.

As I remember, Miss Shepherd was very proud of her 'top class' students and encouraged them to strive for excellent examination results. Admittedly, the vast majority achieved good results and passed the entrance examination to attend Manchester Grammar School, Manchester High School for Girls or Withington High. To this end, in the entrance hall there was a display of names of the pupils who had passed, recorded in gold paint for posterity.

The teachers I remember were Miss Goulding, Mrs Shuttleworth, Mrs Gallagher and Miss Boyes. Mrs Gallagher, I remember, slapped my arm – a punishment for giggling in class.

As we grew older I definitely did not like mental arithmetic and used to feign illness on a Friday morning when we always had the dreaded tests!

Schooling was interrupted because of the war at which time school closed. I went to stay with relatives in Blackpool. Later school opened for a few hours a day and I was brought home.

Winter I remember as a time of good fun throwing snow balls and there were great slides on the ice where certain pupils exercised their skating skills - or not!

I sat my School Certificate at Fallowfield Central where I went after the Acacias and it was whilst I was there that I decided to enter the nursing profession. I left Fallowfield at 15 as did others in my class.

I went on to St. John's Continuation College, Atherton Street in Manchester situated close to Granada Studios. During our time at the College, we studied a variety of subjects including Nursing which concentrated on Child Care and Welfare. This involved working in nurseries for half the week. I was designated to Lower Ormond Street, All Saints and then to St. James' in Gorton.

I was by then about 16 – still too young to start my nurse training. I therefore went to Ancoats Convalescent Home for some valuable experience. When I was 17, I started my formal training and I found myself back at school! This time at a school called P.T.S. (Preliminary Training School).