

# FIFTY YEARS OF SCHOOL LIFE FROM 1898 TO 1948

## Beginnings

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, Kilburn Grammar School completed its 50<sup>th</sup> year. In these fifty years the number of boys in the school has risen from under forty to over five hundred, and the school building has grown from one room to its present large size. This history is an attempt to trace the development of the school during this period, with particular attention to its early years, the story of which, if it had not been set down now, might have become difficult or impossible to discover later. In some particulars the results of our researches may conflict with what has been the general tradition hitherto, and might even contradict articles which in the past have appeared in the *Kilburnian*. Yet we can assure everyone that we have the very best authority for everything stated here.

The earliest information we have about the opening of the school is an advertisement which appeared in the *Kilburn Times* on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898. We think it is worth including this in full:

### THE KILBURN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

For the sons of business and professional men  
(founded 1897)

Warden: Revd Dr Bonavia Hunt, FRSE  
Vicar of St Paul's at Kilburn (1897- )

Headmaster: Evan Evans, Esq, BA London.  
Late Senior Resident Lecturer of Culham College, Oxon

This First Grade Modern Day School will open on  
Monday next, January 10<sup>th</sup>, at 9.30 am at

The Provisional Premises, 1 Willesden Lane, NW.  
(Close to the High Road, Kilburn, and to the route  
of Omnibuses from Cricklewood, Marble Arch, etc)

School Fees: Seniors £3 3s 0d, Juniors £2 2s 0d per term

Boys may be entered at any time.

The Full Prospectus, Particulars of Scholarships, and Entry Forms  
may be had of the Headmaster or of the  
Revd the Warden, 12 Birchington Road, NW.

The first term opened on January 10, 1898, with an attendance roll of thirty-three boys. The school had only one room at 1 Willesden Lane, the rest of the building being occupied by the YMCA. The Bishop of London honoured the school by accepting the office of Visitor, and a board of governors was formed. The Hon Governors were: Archdeacon Atlay, MA (Vicar of Willesden and Dean of Harrow); James A Adams, Esq, Chairman of the Willesden Board of Guardians; The Revd G M Clibborn (Vicar of St Gabriel's, Willesden Green); J R Cooper, Esq, JP, DL, Past Sheriff of London); W Ginger, Esq, JP, (Late Chairman of the Willesden School Board). At the end of the first term it was announced that scholarships and exhibitions to the value of £100 would be awarded annually. Most of these awards went to the choristers of St Paul's Church, which has now been pulled down.

The main aim of the school was the training of boys from 9 to 17 years of age, for a commercial or professional career. The subjects taught included English composition, conversational French and German, Latin, mathematics, science, drawing, shorthand, book-keeping, commercial terms, correspondence and typewriting. Apart from these, the ordinary elementary subjects were taught and religious instruction was given. Moreover, a certain amount of time was devoted to gymnastics and sports. Reports were sent to the parents at the end of each term. The school hours were from 9.30 to 12.30 and from 2 to 4; there was school on Saturday mornings but not on Wednesday afternoons.

At the beginning of the summer term the school moved to the Polytechnic Institute, Priory Park Road, where it occupied two rooms until the autumn term when the accommodation was increased to three rooms. In this second term a Civil Service department was added to the existing commercial and professional departments for the purpose of preparing the boys for the various competitive examinations for government appointments. Boys were entered for the Chamber of Commerce Matriculation, Pitman's and Civil Service examinations, in all of which the majority passed.

At the beginning of the second year in the schools' life it moved to 28 Cavendish Road, Brondesbury. These were still temporary premises pending the erection of permanent school buildings in Salusbury Road. By this time, the attendance had risen to 85, a total of 95 boys having entered the school during the first year.

## A Private Venture School

About this time there was a lengthy correspondence in the local paper concerning the school. Mr Luke, a leading member of the Willesden Council had accused KGS of being a “private venture school”, founded to benefit St Paul’s choirboys and also to bring in money into the pockets of the founder and governors. The Revd Bonavia Hunt, the Founder of the school, wrote to the *Kilburn Times* claiming that KGS was a public grammar school and that no member of the governing body could receive any profit from the school. Moreover, he invited Mr Luke, though without success, to join the Board of Governors. Various other letters followed, mainly unsympathetic to the school, but the Editor of the *Kilburn Times* supported Bonavia Hunt. Though Mr Luke’s phrase “private venture school” has a strikingly topical sound, it would be wrong to suppose that Mr Luke, a good Liberal, believed in making education a state monopoly. This quarrel with Dr Bonavia Hunt arose probably from the feud, then bitter, between Nonconformists and Anglicans.

By the beginning of 1900 building operations had commenced at Salusbury Road. As the school roll had increased to a hundred and thirty-three and KGS had to leave Cavendish Road in March, great difficulty was found in finding accommodation until the new buildings should be complete. Since another home was not available, the school had to move into a few rooms which were ready in Salusbury Road. Thirty-eight boys attended on the first day of the summer term, followed a fortnight later by another hundred and twenty-seven. The boys were accompanied by six masters, two of whom taught conversational French and German.

The school was designed by G B Carvill and was built by George Neal. The building as entirely free of corridors and the classrooms, which all lay beneath the hall, were approached from the playground. The hall was much as it is today. The necessary capital for the erection of the building, about £4,500, was raised, in a great part, by the foundation of a small building trust.

A swimming club had already been formed and, during the first term at Salusbury Road, a Volunteer Corps was started, with a membership of twenty-two, all provided with rifles. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1900, occurred the first Annual Play Night at St George’s Hall, Langham Place. It was an entirely different affair from the present Play Night, and it included scenes from *Richard II*, French and German sketches, various recitations and several musical items.

A week later, Bishop Creighton was present at Speech Day to open the new Speech Hall named after himself, and to distribute the prizes.

There were then six forms in the school, none of the years being sub-divided. The Staff consisted of: Mr Jack, Form I, Mr Kingston, II, Revd W H Braine, III, Mr Todd, IV, Mr Jeffcoate, V, and the Head, Mr Evan Evans, who took the VI. In addition to the above there were visiting masters, Monsieur Couillault (French) Herr Lazarowitch (German), Mr Mortlake Mann for drill. One room was reserved for physics and chemistry, which were taught by Mr Todd. The staff common room was behind the stage. The playground ran right round the school and was bounded on the south side by a very beautiful lawn and bank of wall-flowers. On the other side of the lawn, and divided from it by a fence, was the school field. The school sports at this time were cricket, soccer and swimming.

Judging from some incidents which occurred at this time there must have been plenty of high spirits in the school. One of these incidents became known at the time as the Battle of Salusbury Road. The aggressors were the pupils of the elementary school. At that time, feeling ran high between the two schools and, whenever a KGS cap was seen in the vicinity of Salusbury Road School, one heard the cry: "Grammar School swank". Small boys were afraid to go home alone and many preferred a roundabout route. Of course, others chose the dangerous and adventurous path and went in parties. One day, feelings came to a head and the result was a pitched snowball battle in the road.

The school home ground for football and cricket was on the London Playing Fields at Church Road, Neasden, the field adjoining the school being used only for practices. The ambition of every cricketer in KGS at that time was to hit a ball over the houses in Salusbury Road. There is no record of anyone succeeding in the attempt, though a few windows were broken. Playground games of the period were rough and vigorous. The favourite was called "Red Rover" and was, from the viewpoint of a school outfitter, ideal. There was also an out-of-doors gymnasium provided between the side of the school and the electricity offices, but this was exceedingly unpopular.

In 1901, sixty-five new pupils were enrolled, including a few French and Japanese boys. Dr Crone, JP, Chairman of the Willesden District Council, was present on Speech Day, when the main item

was the Headmaster's report. The Play Night included items similar to those of the previous year, though *Julius Caesar* was presented in full, not in a few extracts as was *Richard II* in the entertainment of 1900. The plays and sketches were "Hâtez-vous Lentement", "Schneider Tips" and "Die Schwalben". To complete a very successful evening, the school swimming prizes were presented.

The following year, 1902, saw considerable enlargement of the staff, the new masters being E F Hamer, A Gollard, T Miles, Senor Pinochet, Professor Utulado (University of Santiago), R Thomas, B Tarnhill, E R F Julien and E C Cole, while Monsieur Couillault and Herr Lazarowitch became permanent members of the staff.

The Annual Sports were held at Kensal Rise Athletic Ground, which lay between Clifford and Leighton Gardens. They were entirely different from the present sports, mainly because there was then no House System. Two outstanding events were battalion drill by the Volunteer Corps, and a "Tug-o'War" between the masters and the Old Boys, the Old Boys winning by two pulls to one.

In August, the Creighton Window was unveiled in the hall by the Lord Bishop of London. The First Visitor of the School, Bishop Creighton, had died in 1901. During the afternoon prizes were distributed and the School Song, written by the Revd Bonavia Hunt and set to music by Mr Leonard Butler, was heartily sung. In his speech, the Headmaster mentioned the Preparatory School attached to KGS, the main purpose of which was to prepare boys for the senior school. The subjects taken were scripture, writing, music, French, reading, arithmetic and drill. The Creighton Window, which was subscribed for by the boys, was removed during the 1939-1945 war to a safer place, but it is now back in its old position with a later window to another Bishop of London.

The year 1903 opened with the School Play-Night at Terry's Theatre in the Strand. It included the usual sketches in English, French and German and a lengthy excerpt from *Henry V*. Unfortunately the performance was not up to the standard of previous years, the most enjoyed moment being a bit of slapstick in the German sketch "Biem Barbier" which was not in the script.

The Annual Sports were again held at Kensal Rise Athletic Ground. The boys were put into classes according to forms and the events included sack races, a quarter-mile running race, a quarter-mile walking race, a three-legged race, a slow bicycle race, a one-mile bicycle race, an obstacle race (in which the water jump was

unfortunately too wide to jump), long jumps, high jumps, hurdles and throwing the cricket ball. Though the venue was changed several times during the following five years, the programme underwent little modification. All but one of the meetings were held in good weather, and that one was stopped by a thunderstorm.

### **Reorganisation**

In 1904, the three departments, Commercial, Professional and Civil Service, were replaced by Science and Art Departments and a Commercial Department, the latter with a changed curriculum. The subjects taught were:

1. Commercial: modern languages, book-keeping, shorthand and all essential subjects.
2. Science: chemistry, physiology, hygiene, mathematics, etc.
3. Art: primary, advanced and technical drawing.

There were also fully-equipped junior preparatory departments. One hour a week was given to music and the same time to swimming. Dr Bonavia Hunt's son, who later became headmaster, was the second master; and one of the assistant clergy at St Paul's at Kilburn, where the vicar was Founder, also taught in the school. The result of these connections with the Church was that it was again suggested that the school was run for the sole benefit of the choirboys of St Paul's.

During 1904 the Science Wing of the school building was completed. This wing included a chemical theatre, chemical and physical laboratories, two excellent classrooms and a well-fitted gymnasium.

There is not much information about the form of the school magazine before 1908, as unfortunately we do not possess the first nine numbers. There are references to magazines of 1899 and 1903, but the only useful information which can be found concerns the magazine of 1905. This was called the "Yearly Kilburnian" and in sixteen pages it presented, among other things, a sketch on one of the boys and an article on "Our School".

Sir John Pulestin distributed the prizes on Speech Day 1906, and he was ably assisted by Mr W B Luke, who was later Chairman of the Governors for 21 years. The School Choir sang several songs and a number of recitations were given during the afternoon. Later in the year, the first Annual Dinner of the Old Boys Association was

held. In November the Head Boy planted a tree in the school field in Salusbury Road.

The Play Night was held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, in Creighton Hall, which was decorated for the occasion with flags, bunting, and a banner bearing the school badge and motto. In the previous year, the hall was overcrowded and large numbers were unable to gain admittance, but this year the difficulty was remedied by limiting admission to ticket holders. As it is a long time since the Play Night was held in the form last it might be of interest to give the programme. The items were:

1. The School Song, by the Choir.
2. A piano solo.
3. A recitation, "Somebody's Mother".
4. A recitation, "Little Bill".
5. "My Shadow" recited by Katz, aged 5 years, the youngest member of the preparatory school.
6. A French sketch, "Les Deux Sourds".
7. A German sketch, "In Einem Restaurant" acted by the Fifth Form.
8. A play, "A Bachelor of Arts".
9. A recitation.
10. "Nowell", sung by the School Choir.

Besides these items, various songs were sung by the Choir. This was acclaimed one of the best Play Nights up to that time.

### **Public Authority Takes Over**

The Local Council had been trying to purchase KGS for several years, but they failed to agree upon terms with the Board of Governors until 1907. Kilburn Grammar School became a council school under the auspices of the Board of Education in September of that year, the District and County Councils combining to pay the £6,500 asked for by the Governors. They also obtained the freehold of the land, which was vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, for the sum of £3,500. In 1907, the school buildings consisted of a few classrooms, a science room, a central hall, a headmaster's room, a dining room and a cloakroom. The roll was limited to 150 boys. Having purchased the school, the Council soon set about enlarging it, and they engaged Messrs Lawrence and Son to carry

out the work at a cost of £5,644. The new buildings, which were completed in 1909, included several classrooms, chemical and physical laboratories, an art room, a manual training room, a geography room, a dining hall and staff rooms. These provided accommodation for another 150 boys.

During 1907, Empire Day was kept at the school, the boys trooping the Colours and saluting the Flag. An Old Boys' "At Home" was held; the school cricket team lost only one game; and the boys gained ninety-two examination successes. Speech Day and Sports Day were held as usual and the Head Boy again planted a tree on the school field. Play Night was so successful this year that the entertainment was repeated in January. The main event of the evening was the performance of *The Merchant of Venice*: it was the first time that the school had presented a Shakespearean play in full. The rest of the programme consisted of the usual songs, recitations and sketches. The length of the entertainment provided shows that there were giants in the land in those days.

During the following year, 1908, the school football team was not very successful, but the cricket team compensated for this by winning eight of its eleven matches. There had been a Swimming Club for many years and a Rifle Club was formed in 1908.

Also in 1908 a Literary and Debating Club was founded and the school play was presented by the VIth Form. In this same year a prefect system was established and proved a marked success. Yet another innovation was the forming of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kilburn Grammar School Troop of Boy Scouts.

### **A New Régime**

At the end of the summer term, 1909, Evan Evans resigned as Headmaster after twelve years, his place being taken by Mr Bonavia Hunt, the Founder's son. Changes were also made to the playground, the grass surface being covered with asphalt. Another change was noted in the *Kilburnian* in these words: "An innovation has been made by a rule which requires all boys to be outside the school building within five minutes of dismissal. In connection with this rule, the bell – which announces the time of closing the doors, has been purchased by the boys. This promises to play an important part in the school's history as the name of each bellman will be inscribed upon the bell". Does anyone know what was the fate of the bell?



Yet another new feature was introduced at that time by which the school was divided into four houses, at the head of which were four senior prefects – Keith, Saxby, Ellis and Curtis.

Many well-known masters joined the school around this time: Mr Ware in 1908, Mr Westbury in 1909, Messrs Bowden, Bentley and Thurston in 1910, and Mr Burton in 1914. There were still more innovations in the school during 1909 and 1910 – hockey, lawn tennis and boxing were added to the school sports and History, Science and Chess Societies were formed.

In 1911, the House System really got under way, the Athletic Sports being an inter-house tournament for the first time and competitions also being held in cricket, tennis, shooting and swimming. All of the competitions except tennis were won by Keith, which was Champion House.

During the following years all the usual school events were held, but there were a few changes. Parents' Evening became an annual event and a school concert was held every year, because the Play Night was by then devoted to the Shakespearean play and nothing else. The Geographical Society held a summer holiday camp near Rochester in 1912, and a party of seventeen boys and three masters visited Belgium and Germany in 1913.

Since the school was founded, it had always had successful results in examinations, but the climax was reached in 1912 when, of the seven entries for the Senior School Examination, all qualified for the certificate, six matriculating – two with honours.

During the 1914-1918 war, the ranks of the Cadet Corps were greatly swollen. It had been in existence for some time, but there had not been much enthusiasm until then. The result was that the school won the Middlesex Cadet Shooting Trophy and gained second place in the Inter-Schools Shooting Competition. Also, by Christmas 1914, there were more than forty Old Boys serving in the Forces and, by the end of the following term, the number was nearly doubled.

In 1914, the Annual Sports of the Athletic Association of Middlesex Schools were held. The school did not have any great success in that year, but in 1915 the Juniors succeeded in carrying off the Junior Challenge Shield against competitors from fifteen other schools. Kilburn Grammar School was still without a cricket ground of its own, but in 1915 the school was able to use the London Scottish Ground. The three elevens celebrated the occasion by

winning sixteen of their nineteen games. In the following year, a playing field of five acres was purchased for the school by the County and District Councils.

In 1916, the Juniors again won the Junior Challenge Shield at the Inter-School Sports.

Speech Day was held every year, and in 1915 the school was greatly honoured by the presence of the Bishop of London on that occasion.

During the summer term in 1916, Mr Bonavia Hunt, the Headmaster, was unable to carry out his duties due to ill health. Mr Ware was appointed Acting Headmaster while Mr Bonavia Hunt was absent. At the beginning of the winter term, the number of boys in the school reached the unprecedented number of over 300, thus making the school uncomfortably overcrowded.

Next year, the twentieth in the school's history, saw the advent of a new House – Ratcliff. In the lent term, the *Kilburnian* marked the twentieth anniversary of the school by appearing with fifty pages, more than twice as many as in any previous number. It included a message from the Bishop of London and articles by the Revd H G Bonavia Hunt, the Founder, Mr W B Luke, the Chairman of the Governors, and Mr W B Bonavia Hunt, the Headmaster.

### **Death of the Founder**

In the Michaelmas term, the whole school was deeply grieved to hear the death of the Revd H G Bonavia Hunt.

In case any of our readers are under the impression that London had no air raids during the 1914-1918 war, let it be known that the school's production of *King Lear* was played to the accompaniment of gunfire!

The outstanding institution in the school during the war years was the Cadet Corps. The boys won many shooting competitions and even held two concerts. One of the shields which they won still hangs at the back of the hall.

The first Speech Day since 1915 was held on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919, when the Chairman of the County Council presented the school prizes and trophies. The most important prizes at the time were the Lupton Kitchener Memorial Prize, the Evans History Prize, the Bishop of London Prize for Divinity and the Crockett Memorial Prize for an original poem.

In 1921, the school was delighted to hear that a playing field had at last been obtained for its use. The first football eleven won all their matches and the second all but one. But many people in the school were not satisfied with soccer as the school's winter sport and had long been pressing the claims of rugger. The result was that the staff decided to give rugby a trial for one term, and if, after that term, there was sufficient support for the game, to take it up instead of soccer. However, nothing came of these schemes and soccer remained the winter game.

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1922, the Old Boys' War Memorial was unveiled in the Creighton Hall. It took the form of a clock surmounted by a laurel wreath and the school crest carved in oak. On the oak panels flanking it were inscribed 47 names. Below the clock the masters erected a mural tablet in memory of the late Senior Mathematics master, Mr F L Henley, who fell in the Great War.

In the same year, the fiftieth issue of the *Kilburnian* appeared with this apology in its editorial: "We note with satisfaction that the *Kilburnian* has reached its 50<sup>th</sup> issue. We should have liked this number to be specially large in honour of the occasion; but as the price of the magazine is still sixpence and we have no immediate prospects of raising it, we have been debarred from the performance of a very pleasant duty". There were nineteen pages and not one special article in the issue.

The examination results in that year were very satisfactory: out of eighteen candidates entered for the General School Examination, all were successful, while sixteen succeeded in qualifying for the London Matriculation Certificate – three with honours.

At Christmas time, for the first time in the history of the school, four performances of the play *Coriolanus* were given.

In 1921, the school Music Society was formed. Mainly due to the efforts of this society, led by the Revd C H Hughes, an Inter-House Music Competition was inaugurated. The first competition, in 1923, was won by Curtis. There was a sequel to this event – a public concert in March 1923, consisting largely of the outstanding items in the contest together with music by the School Orchestra. The proceeds of this concert went towards the upkeep of the Kilburn Grammar School Memorial Bed at the Willesden General Hospital. In order to maintain the bed, a weekly collection was instituted in all the forms. The concert became an annual event, with the proceeds going to the hospital.

The Inter-House competitions in football, hockey, cricket, tennis, shooting, athletic sports and swimming were held every year between the two wars. Also, cricket and soccer were played against other schools, several teams being run in both games.

The Old Boys' Association flourished throughout this period. Dinners were held, cricket and football matches played, and several plays presented by the Old Kilburnians Dramatic Society.

### **James McLeish Succeeds**

In 1925, Mr W G Bonavia Hunt retired and Mr J McLeish was appointed Headmaster. Mr Bonavia Hunt had been Headmaster of the school for fifteen years. In the same year, Mr Gould and Mr Sharpe joined the school and Mr W H Williams had been appointed in the previous year.

Shortly after coming into office, Mr McLeish issued to every boy a copy of the School Regulations. They were similar to the existing rules with two exceptions: first, boys could wear a straw hat with the school band instead of the school cap and secondly, boys had to change their outdoor shoes for plimsolls on coming into the school.

School dinners were provided for the boys in 1925 at the charge of £2 per term or 4s per week.

In 1926, a school party spent a fortnight camping in France. In the same year the Cadet Corps was disbanded, mainly because there was very little support for the organisation at that time.

In 1927, a new wing was added to the school. The additions to the building included two new science laboratories for senior work in physics and chemistry, a spacious and fully equipped gymnasium, new cloakrooms and lavatories, special rooms for geography, history and art, a library and a prefects' room. The Creighton Hall was also extended to provide more accommodation for assembly and school functions.

As Speech Day, 1927 was one of the most outstanding, a fairly full report may not be out of place and will also serve to show what were the usual items on Speech Day. The evening commenced with an organ solo and several musical numbers given by members of the school, followed by two pieces by the School Orchestra, and songs by Mr Yarwood (who joined the staff in 1926). Then Mr Luke, Chairman of the Governors made a speech and Mr McLeish presented his Annual Report. In the course of the latter Mr McLeish

mentioned that the school roll would shortly be increased to 450, which was made possible by the completion of the new wing. County Alderman Lt-Col Charles Pinkham, OBE, DL, JP, Chairman of Middlesex County Council, then presented the prizes and certificates, and addressed the boys. A vote of thanks to Mr Luke and Colonel Pinkham was then proposed and carried. The School Song and the National Anthem were sung, and the company had the opportunity of visiting the new wing. The prize list was a very long one, including form prizes, eight special prizes, fifteen sports trophies and General School, Matriculation, and other certificates.

To correspond with the enlargement of the school, an increase in the number of staff was necessary. Messrs Peter, Heber-Thomson and Potts therefore joined the school, the last of these being the first Old Boy to become a permanent master. At the same time, Mr and Mrs Johnson came to fill the posts vacated by Mr and Mrs Paterson who had been the school's caretakers for many years.

On 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1928, a Parents' Evening was held at the school, taking the form of a whist drive. During the evening eighteen hands were played, but a long interval was allowed for the parents to speak to the staff. This function became a frequent event.

### **A Pavilion at Last**

Inspired by the opening of the new wing, the school determined to do something about the pavilion on the sports ground. This is how the *Kilburnian* editorial put the matter: "For many years the school has had a sports ground, but only once upon a time did the ground have a pavilion. Now, and indeed for many years past, we might even say the school ground has only the ruins of a pavilion – for what else can be called the pieces of wood which, insecurely fastened together, go to make the shelter (?) used by the players for changing? 'Shelter', we said, but this is only part of the truth, if truth at all, because our 'pavilion' is verily a remarkable affair. In winter it lets all the stormy blasts through the countless chinks in its sides, thus well-nigh freezing the inhabitants, while in summer its chinks seem to be filled up causing a stagnation of the atmosphere which, combined with the heat, all but asphyxiates those valiant men who brave its terrors."

"Hence, although without our present 'pavilion' the school would be deprived of one of the best of its standing jokes, it is obviously imperative that a new pavilion should be built. But, unfortunately,

the school authorities are neither blessed with Aladdin's Lamp nor the Touch of Midas, so we, the poor Kilburnians are left with the only course of raising the money ourselves. Thus, besides many other attempts, our chef-d'œuvre, as it may be called, is a Bazaar and Fête".

Before the bazaar, about £500 was raised by collections and by devoting the proceeds of school functions to the fund. The bazaar was held on Friday and Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 1928, and was opened on the Friday by Mr P G H Fender, Surrey and England cricketer and on Saturday by Mr P F Warner, of Middlesex and England and later Chairman of the MCC. Other visitors were Mr W B Luke and Colonel Pinkham. The event was a great success, as was shown by the proceeds which totalled £350. By the end of 1928 the Pavilion Fund was closed at £1,000. In 1930, the new pavilion was ready for use.

At about the same time, two more events were added to the lengthy list of annual functions. These were the Cross-Country Run and the School Dance. The events already established in the school's life were: the Shakespearean Play, the Music Competition, the School Concert, Speech Day, Parents' Evening, Athletic and Swimming Sports, and the Old Boys' Dinner and Play. Also from 1929 onwards, a sing-song was held in the hall at the end of each term.

A School Camp was held every summer, with visits being made to France, Germany and North Wales. The camp was always followed by a camp lecture in the winter term. Later, in 1933-1938, a School Cruise replaced the camp as an annual event.

Between 1930 and 1940 there were a great many societies in the school – Debating, Junior Debating, Historical, Geographical, French, German, Economics, Music, Science, Ciné and Photographic Societies, and Hobbies, Sketch, Rifle, Chess and Tennis Clubs. Perhaps they will all be revived some day.

No sooner was the pavilion completed than a fund was started to obtain hard tennis courts on the school field, the new wing having been built on the part of the playground occupied by the original court. Again, numerous expedients were adopted for making money – whist drives were held, collections made and the proceeds of the school concert were devoted to the fund. By the end of 1931 the school had three new hard tennis courts.

Apart from the collections for school purposes, over £50 was collected every year for the Willesden General Hospital, most of the money being used for the upkeep of the school bed.

For several years the cross country run was held at Sudbury but in 1932, the venue was changed to Hampstead Heath, thus providing a few more ups and downs and other obstacles. The run was held at Hampstead every year until the 1939-1945 war.

A boxing team was formed in 1931. The school was defeated in its first match against Hampton Grammar School, but the defeat was avenged in the following year.

In the years immediately preceding the war of 1939-1945, a most enjoyable Cricket Week was held in the course of which three whole-day matches were played, and the Fifth and Sixth, by then free of exams, would go up to watch.

The fact that the school's scholastic achievements are not often mentioned must not be taken to mean that these were rare, but that they were so consistently good as to need no special mention. It is sufficient to say here that the General School of Matriculation results were always much better than the average of those schools taking the examinations. The Honours Boards in Creighton Hall record nearly forty university open scholarships and exhibitions gained since the first success of this kind in 1910.

There were many changes in the staff between 1927 and 1933. Departures included Messrs Thurston and Potts, while among the newcomers were Messrs Whitmore, Rhodes, Carpenter and Rollinson.

At the end of 1932, the whole school was deeply grieved on learning that Mr McLeish, who had devoted the seven years of his headmastership most single-mindedly to the welfare of the school, died of pneumonia after less than a fortnight's illness.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1933, Dr Anthony, the new Headmaster, officially assumed his duties.

Speech Day 1934 provided the usual distinguished gathering, the school being honoured by the presence of the Astronomer Royal, Mr Harold Spencer Joes, who presented the prizes. Later in the same year, the Bishop of London visited the school for the purpose of unveiling a portrait of Mr W Bonavia Hunt, Headmaster from 1910 to 1925. In the previous year a portrait of Mr McLeish, painted by

Mr Whitmore, had been unveiled. The school now possesses the portraits of all the former headmasters.

### **The Winnington Ingram Window**

Speech Day 1935, which took place on December 18<sup>th</sup>, was the most important event of the year at KGS. The proceedings opened with an address by the Chairman of the Governors, Alderman C Hicks Bolton, MA, the length of whose service in this capacity was second only to Mr Luke's. This was followed by the Headmaster's report and speeches by the Bishop of Willesden and the Rural Dean of Willesden. Then the stained glass window, presented by the Old Boys' Association to commemorate the interest taken in the school by Bishop Winnington Ingram, was unveiled. This gift was made possible through the generosity of Mr Evan Evans, who was present and addressed the gathering. During the evening, musical items were sung by Mr Hughes' School Choir and by Mr Yarwood, whose songs were by then institutions at school festivals.

In 1937, Mr Woodman (once Head Boy of KGS and then a member of staff) formed a Junior Dramatic Society. Its aim was to present several one-act plays each year. The main value of this society was that it gave boys of the lower school an opportunity of acting which they were very unlikely to get in the School Play, at the same time training talent which could be used later in the Shakespearean productions.

Though no mention has been made of the School Play Night since 1917, it was held every year. Little fault could be found with any of the Shakespearean plays presented, and several were good productions. During the 1939-1945 war, the continuity of the series was slightly disturbed, but it is now the outstanding event of the year at KGS.

In 1936, yet another addition was made to the school buildings when the Art Block was erected having on the ground floor an excellently equipped room for handicrafts.

By 1939 there were so many annual school events, societies and other activities that it seemed that no addition was possible. Yet time and enthusiasm were found to restart the Cadet Corps in 1938, the officers being Dr Anthony and Messrs Stuart and Evans. With war so plainly threatening there was no lack of recruits. However, the loss of all its officers to full-time military service in September



1939 brought the new venture to a swift end, though not before a most successful camp had been held near Dover.

### **Exile in Northampton**

The six war years may be called the most eventful in the history of KGS, for, during the time, the school held classes in at least eight different buildings.

While the 1938 crisis over Czechoslovakia was at its height and war seemed imminent, the whole school rehearsed its part and, for almost a week, it stood at the ready. But the crisis passed. Then, towards the end of August 1939, the German dispute with Poland became more serious and, on August 26<sup>th</sup> (a Saturday) plans were remade for evacuating the school. About 120 boys and 16 staff appeared at the school and the holidays were ended. During the following week more and more boys enrolled to join the evacuation party. There was little attempt to do school work and impromptu concerts were held in the hall every afternoon.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, official intimation was received that evacuation would begin on the following day. All boys were warned to come prepared to leave at any time; destination – “Somewhere in England”. So, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the KGS party set out from Queens Park Station and eventually the majority arrived at Northampton. Owing to a “technical hitch” about 100 boys with a few of the staff did not alight and travelled on to Market Harborough. There, and at Northampton, all were soon found new homes. Six weeks passed before the party at Market Harborough returned to Northampton.

There was no school, work done until September 6<sup>th</sup> when those living in Northampton met at the enviable buildings of the Town and County School. On October 9<sup>th</sup>, the whole school was present for the first time in the Assembly Hall, with about 300 boys, 16 staff, and Mr Westbury as Acting Headmaster, Dr Anthony having been called up at the beginning of the war. School was held every afternoon, the building being shared with the boys’ section of Willesden County School.

Later in the year, when the school was settling down, rugby was introduced as a school sport. After several house matches, KGS played its first game against Willesden County School, the result being a draw. The next three games were won, but the last of the season against Northampton Town and County School was lost.

## **“Youth House”**

The school sadly missed its social activities, clubs and societies. Mr D W J Woodman therefore set about the task of finding a suitable social centre. He acquired a large house in the Kingsthorpe district and thus “Youth House” came into existence. It was with some disgust that the Upper School read the comment in the local press, “the children will no longer be exposed to mischief in the streets”. Due to Mr Woodman’s untiring efforts, Youth House was a great success and it became the centre of school life.

In March 1940, the School Concert was given, followed in April by the School Play, “Much Ado About Nothing”, in modern dress.

At the beginning of 1940 there were about twenty-five KGS boys at Preston Manor School and another twenty at Willesden County School. To remedy this state of affairs, KGS was re-opened in Kilburn for these boys. The masters at Salusbury Road were Messrs Burton (in charge) and Mr Walters, assisted from time to time by Messrs W H Williams, Woodman, Gould and Southwell. Shortly after the school had re-opened a high-explosive bomb dropped in the middle of a pile of coke which covered the lower end of the playground and distributed fuel gratis to local residents. Another morning, a policeman waited politely during the whole of assembly and then informed the school that two delayed action 1,000 pounders were in the cemetery, just the other side of the wall by the gymnasium. Even after these had exploded, the only damage to KGS was a few broken windows.

In Northampton, the School Play was produced in December 1940, and many other annual events were held during the following year. Ratcliff was Cock House at the end of the first year the school spent in exile. However, in autumn 1940, lack of numbers necessitated a change to the House System. It was decided that, rather than mar the old system, a new scheme should be adopted. So, the houses were replaced by four “Groups” – Cowan, Roberton, Reed and Sommers. Rivalry was as keen between Groups as it had been between Houses.

An ATC Flight was formed in Northampton by Mr Yarwood and was continued when the school returned to Salusbury Road. By the end of 1941 the roll on Northampton grew so small that KGS and the County School had to be amalgamated. In the rugger season of

1942-1943 the joint school did not lose a single game. By the autumn of 1943 no more KGS staff remained at Northampton.

With the return of most of the boys to Salusbury Road, the home school adopted rugby as its winter game. As the school field was no longer available – it had been converted into allotments – KGS had to share the BKHS playing fields, a hospitality that has meant everything to us.

In September 1942, Mr Westbury, who was Acting Headmaster, became ill and his duties at the home school were taken over by Mr Bentley. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1942, when James Westbury died, the school suffered its greatest loss since the death of James McLeish.

In this term, the House System was revived and a Shakespearean play was produced. This term also saw the inauguration of a School Newspaper, the “KGS Gazette”, which has appeared at irregular intervals since then. In the summer term, many pre-war school activities were revived – such as the Cross-Country Run, the Boxing Tournament, the Sports Afternoon and the Swimming Gala.

### **Re-union**

Autumn term, 1943, saw the return of Mr Bowden, the Acting Headmaster, from Northampton. By the summer of 1944, the school was really getting back on its feet. Athletics training was in full swing and everyone was looking forward to Sports Day, when disaster came. The staff and boys arrived in Salusbury Road one June morning to find KGS damaged almost beyond recognition. During the night a flying bomb had landed close to the gymnasium. This severe blow came just before the General School Certificate Examination. The Fifth Form had to take their papers at BKHS. Until the end of the term, the Fifth and Sixth Forms continued to be housed at BKHS and Maria Grey College. During the following autumn and spring terms, most of the boys had only afternoon lessons at Willesden County School, although the Fifth and Sixth spent their mornings at the Tiverton Road Congregational Church Hall. In the meantime, repair work was under way at Kilburn, but it was not until the summer term 1945 that the school could return again to Salusbury Road. Problems were many, as the flying bomb had done much damage and the school had lost the gymnasium, the library, the chemical lab, and the geography, history and music rooms. The Cross-Country Race was run in May, followed by the Sports Meeting, the Swimming Gala and finally by an Inter-School

Sports Meeting in which KGS gained first place, beating Wembley, Harrow and Acton County Schools.

During the war, collections were made among the boys for many national causes and, from 1941-1946, a total of £832 1s was given.

Since the end of hostilities, most of the pre-war institutions have returned, with the addition of a few entirely new features in the school's life. The school now runs rugby, cricket and tennis teams, and has been represented in several athletic and boxing events. There are Science, Geographical, Music, Swing, Philatelic, Literary and Debating and Handicraft Societies, and the school has also joined the North London Inter-Schools Classical Club and the Middlesex Sixth Form Association. All the customary events such as the School Play, the Soirée and Dance have been revived, and school camps have been held in Switzerland and Belgium.

In concluding, this all too cursory survey of the first fifty years of the school's history, we are conscious that our selection from the abundant material must inevitably arouse criticism. It is also possible that, in spite of every care, we have committed errors of fact, in which case we shall welcome correction no less gladly than we shall receive any additional information to pass on to our successors "fifty years on".

Mutilated and grossly overcrowded, with far too frequent changes among a staff disappointed at past and apprehensive of future developments, the school yet retains the marks of a great school of its kind, thanks to the spirit of service in which it was founded and the fidelity to that spirit of service with which it has been guided by the present Acting Headmaster.

VIVAT KILBURNIA ET FLOREAT!

**J A H Risbridger  
D W Thomas**

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