

SEVEN HUNDRED & FIFTY



GLORIOUS YEARS

Some faces and facets
of
The High School of Dundee

1239 — 1989

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750 GLORIOUS YEARS

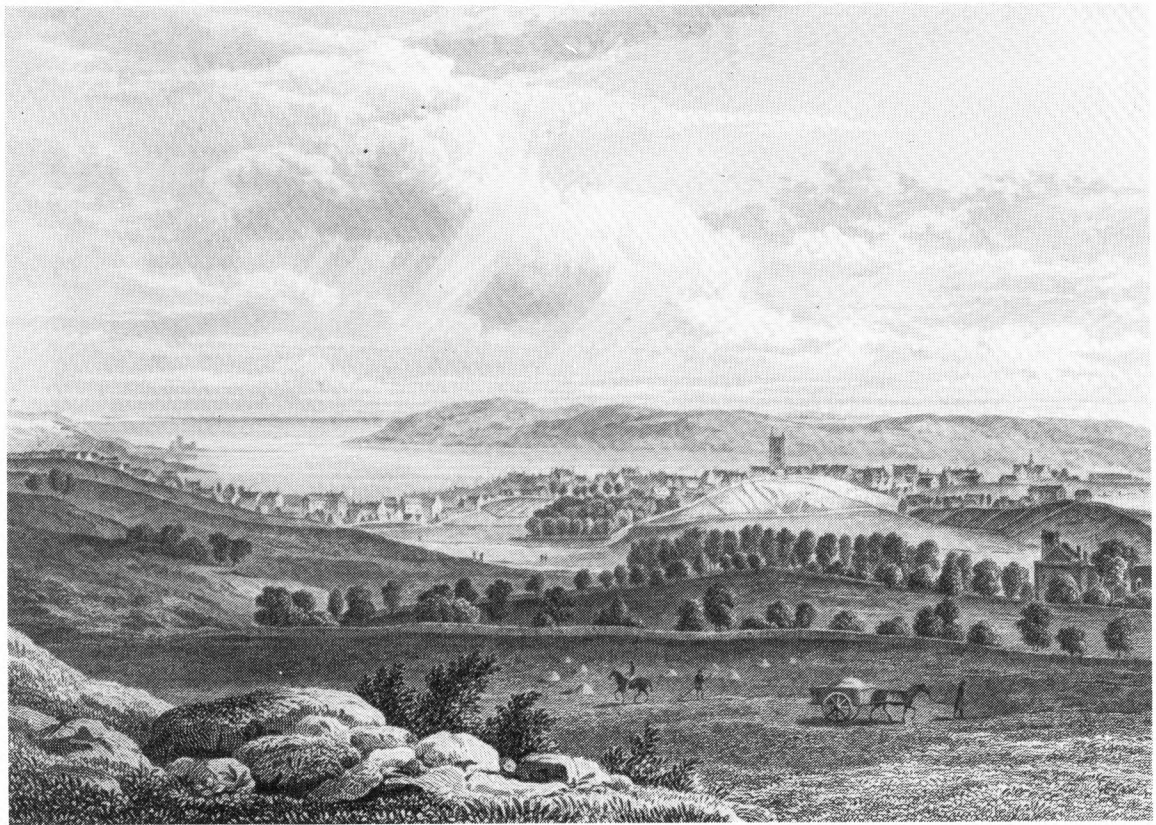
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ANCIENT VIEW OF DUNDEE.

Introduction

by

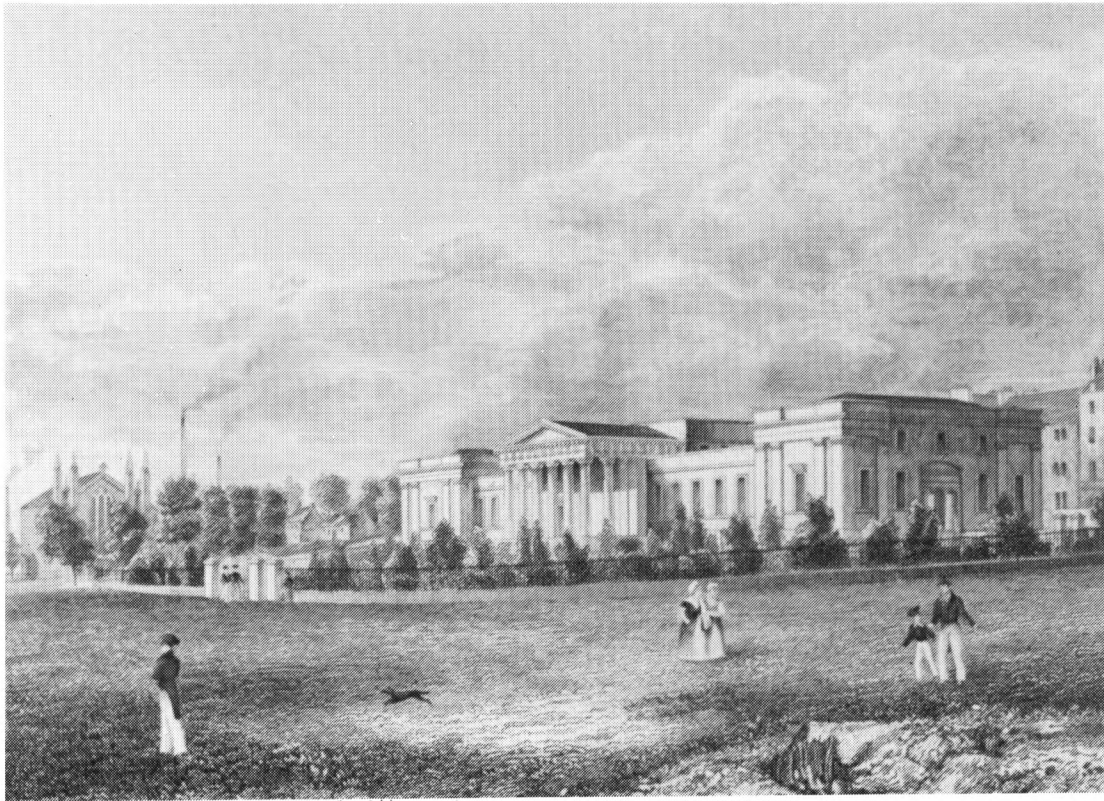
D. J. Paterson, Esq.,
Chairman, Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have great pleasure in commending this 750th Anniversary publication. In 1984, we celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the building of the present school in Euclid Crescent, and now in 1989 we celebrate the long history of the School from its beginnings to the present day — some seven and a half centuries. Down the years the School has served the City well. From its gates have gone out many generations of pupils who have become leaders in their chosen fields in every part of the world.

The long and distinguished history of the school is a matter of justifiable pride to all who serve it today.

Foreword

The Rector



NEW PUBLIC SEMINARIES

Seven hundred and fifty years is a long time by most standards. In the life of a corporate community, it is, if not exceptional, still impressive. In the life of a school it represents a large number of faces — those of pupils, teachers, governors, friends. In this volume we recall those who throughout the ages have been associated with our great school, and for whom that association has been an important and enriching part of their lives.

The question is sometimes asked whether our school is one of the oldest in Scotland. Old it is indeed, but its great age is still relative. Education in Scotland is deemed to have begun with the arrival of St. Columba in Iona in 563. From then on, as monasteries were built throughout the land, schools were set up as part of them. After four centuries or so these schools gradually became independent of their foundations and emerged as a separate network of schools in mediaeval times. Our own school appeared later rather than sooner in those mediaeval waves of educational expansion. Once established, however, it has continued to survive through some seven and a half centuries.

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In a very special way the School has reflected the history of Dundee itself. For long it was its sole or principal educational establishment. It has lived through stimulating times, both turbulent and peaceful, in conjunction with the burgh. Its history has been closely connected with the Parish Church of Dundee (St. Mary's) — soon to celebrate its octo-centenary. It has mirrored the changes in educational thinking through the ages and adapted its structure to suit new ideas. President John F. Kennedy once remarked that "Change is the law of life". Who would dare to say that after some seven and half centuries, educational thinking has reached its final consummation and that further change in education will be no more? Let us hope that our school will continue to adapt to the future as it has adapted to the past.

Throughout the ages pupils have gone forth from its portals to make their mark in high places and in the farthest corners of the globe. Occasionally a voice from afar reaches back to us. At the beginning of this anniversary year a letter conveying good wishes arrived from Vancouver. It came from a former pupil, Mr Harald Hall (now in his eighties) and read as follows:

"Three generations of my family were pupils of the School — my grandfather and his brothers in the 1840's, two uncles in the late seventies, and my two brothers and I entered in 1916." — an impressive scholastic pedigree indeed!

After sending our correspondent a copy of the most recent School Magazine, I received a second letter from which the following extract is quoted:

"The School Magazine I found fascinating, and indeed a revelation to me of the vastly expanded scope of the School's activities, compared with the rather grey monotony of seventy years ago. While we tolerated School — I can't put it higher than that — the youngsters I see in the magazine are all very obviously enjoying school. That is a dynamic difference."

Such a verdict can only be encouraging.

In the long and distinguished history of the school what matters most ultimately is not impressive buildings — monuments in stone, but people and their associations with the school — faces as well as facets. The pages which follow attempt to portray a few facets of its history and to recall some of the faces of its community in times past. Francis Bacon once remarked that "faces are but a gallery of pictures". Our hope is that the pictures contained in this volume will evoke some of the faces of the past and inspire the present members of our community to look forward with renewed confidence to the future of this great school.

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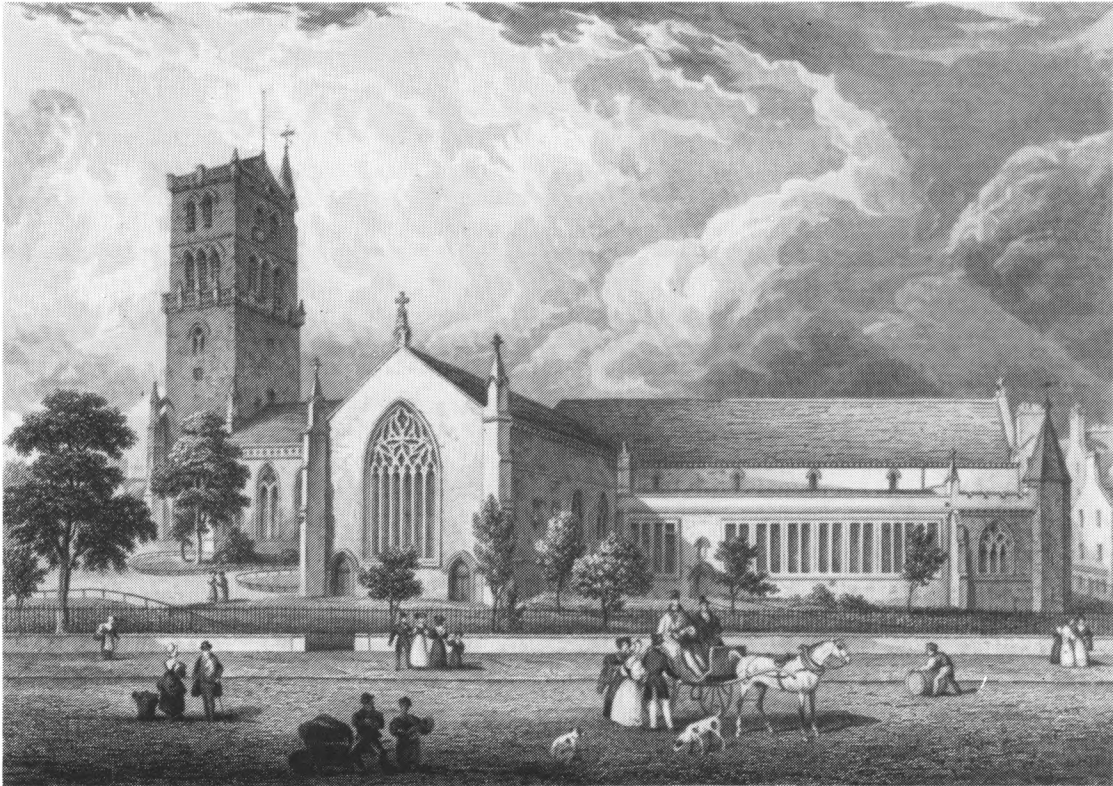
High School of Dundee

Service for the 750th Anniversary
Dundee Parish Church (St. Mary's) 12th February, 1989

Rev. W. B. R. Macmillan, M.A., B.D., Chaplain to the School

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Psalm 16 : 6



ANCIENT TOWER & CHURCHES

The Psalmist is grateful for what he has received in life. God has preserved for him something good which has come down to him through his forefathers. He regards it as a spiritual inheritance. He received it in good faith — and is thankful for it.

Today we do likewise. This school to which you belong has stood the test of time, and, like the Church, its holy mother, it is still with us to provide something of great value — and we give thanks for it.

"The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage."

I suggest that it has survived because it has been sustained by an ideal provided at its inception by the Mediaeval Church — at a time when such schools, along with universities, were beginning to be established throughout Europe for the enlightenment of the mind and to the glory of God. It was a movement which found fulfilment in the period of the Renaissance. In post Reformation times in Scotland Knox and others dreamed of a Grammar School in every parish so that people could learn to read the Bible for themselves, and in the belief that people are obliged to develop their God-given gifts in the spirit of the Parable of the Talents. A universe rid of ghostly taboos from more primitive times became filled with the glory of God — and was there to be explored and utilised for the good of mankind. Into this heritage we are now entered in our day and generation, and this is our tradition. It is education tempered by the influence of Christian teaching.

When first I went to the country parish of Fyvie in Aberdeenshire I found myself able to recognise people whom I had never met because I had come to know their children in the school and in the Sunday School. The resemblance was in their features. And so it is that schools like the old High Schools and Grammar Schools of Scotland still bear the marks of their mother despite many changes and secularising influences. A school is a living organism which must as it grows continue to adjust to the environment in which it finds itself. Yet ever and anon it must be guided by certain principles. In our own case it is a combination of the old Scottish belief in a sound education for children, a continuing link with the Kirk, and a caring respect for children akin to pastoral oversight which has to do with their behaviour and attitudes and life together. This school is an institution with a soul, and its badge defines its spiritual ancestry.

How marvellous that after some seven hundred and fifty years the community of the school, pupils past and present, teachers, and parents should be seen to meet on the very spot, here in the heart of Dundee, where first was intimated the establishment of the school all these long years ago: and that you and I see fit to give God thanks where first were heard the words of a Pontiff's letter from far-off Rome: "PRESTANTE DOMINO. . ."

"The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage."

In giving thanks for the past however, we also seek God's continued blessing in the present — and for the future. Whatever the days may bring forth we cannot, I submit, afford to dispense with what has upheld the school in days gone by. We cut ourselves off from our cultural roots — at our peril.

In face of the demands of the modern world, both technical and economic, we must prepare for radical changes. We know that, and we accept that. It is therefore more important than ever that schools like this, free and independent, should uphold tested standards whatever the trend in educational circles. Education must always be seen to relate to the whole personality, and to the whole of life, with a noble purpose and a desired end. Without these a school is but a factory making parts for an industrial machine. The threat to true education at its best comes most of all from secular beliefs about man himself which begin by regarding him simply as a natural event and end in the total dehumanisation of mankind.

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If we however uphold what we believe to be the alternative — the highest and the best precepts of the Christian inheritance of Europe — then we will help to stem that sort of erosion. There is after all a place in all proper education for the dignity and liberty of the human spirit in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ — “who died to save us all” — because each person is sacred and is of significance in the eyes of the Creator.

This school produced the first Principal of Aberdeen University in the 15th century, but in the mid 20th century he had a worthy successor, after many in that office, in the person of Sir Thomas Taylor — lawyer and churchman. I was disturbed the other day to read words spoken by him at a graduation in the early 1950's — not long after the war years. “In our country”, he said, “there are now no legal or constitutional safeguards to prevent a majority in the House of Commons, aided by Act of Parliament, from destroying free institutions as effectively as Hitler did in Germany all under the cloak of legality.”

If that is true (and it no doubt is!) then perhaps it must ever be so that those who care greatly about an institution (such as a school or the university, or the Church, or anything at all) must make the most of what they have “while it is yet day” by upholding what they believe to be principles and beliefs essential for the survival of civilised society.

Thanks be to God this day for the blessings we have received through our homes, our school and our Church — the “Dei Donum” which is given to us in trust.

“The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.”
Amen.

Schools in Dundee in the Middle Ages

Elizabeth P. D. Torrie, M.A., Ph.D., Dip.Ed.

The first schools and the lives of the townspeople in early Dundee are shrouded in obscurity.

As one of Scotland's major burghs Dundee received the unwelcome attentions of the 'auld enemie' — England — on several occasions: the Wars of Independence at the turn of the thirteenth - fourteenth centuries resulted in the destruction or removal of most of the town's charters; the burgh archives were pillaged again during English attacks in 1548; and Monck's ruthless offensive in 1651 brought devastation to people, buildings and town records. Much of the documentation concerning medieval Dundee has in consequence been irretrievably lost; but there are occasional tantalising insights, however rare, into the early schools — the precursors of today's High School of Dundee.

The earliest reference to schools occurs in the charters of the monastery of Lindores when Bishop Gregory of Brechin granted to the monastery the right to found schools in Dundee. This important concession was confirmed by Pope Gregory IX in, or soon after, 1239.

In the middle ages throughout Scotland, education fell principally within the remit of the church. Indeed, there were few aspects of burgh life on which the church did not have a profound impact, and the story of Dundee's first schools is closely intertwined with that of its town churches. Dundee had two churches by at least the early thirteenth century. That dedicated to St Clement, probably the older, was sited where present City Square now stands, in the middle of settlement to the west of the castle of Dundee. It may have been established specifically as a church to serve the castle, but it was used by the Dundonians until the Reformation and its churchyard was the town burial ground. Outside the town to the west, in a field called the wheat or white field, was a church which by 1256 was specifically called the Church of St Mary. According to Hector Boece, a fifteenth-century ex-pupil of Dundee Grammar School, this church had been founded by David, Earl of Huntingdon, in the late twelfth century in thanks for his safe return from crusade to Dundee or Deidonum, 'the gift of God'. It was probably this church that Huntingdon presented sometime between 15th February, 1198 and 10th July, 1199, to the monastery of Lindores, which he had also founded and dedicated to St Mary. The church was to gradually become surrounded by settlement and grow into one of the largest town churches in Scotland. The Old Steeple, or St Mary's Tower, marks the site of this once small church. That both churches held an importance in burgh life is indicated by the medieval seal of the burgh which shows on one side St Clement and on the other the Virgin and Child. All evidence suggests, however, that it was with the Church of St Mary, the medieval parish church, that Dundee's first schools were primarily associated.

There were two schools attached to St Mary's: a song or reading school and a grammar school. Both were maintained by clerics whose main concern initially was to educate boys as potential choristers towards a full participation in church services. The emphasis was therefore on music and the rudiments of Latin. The purpose also of the grammar school was to fulfil the church's needs for clerics. This was reflected in a typical curriculum as laid down by Edinburgh Town Council in 1520: 'grace buke, prymer, and plane donatt' — a book containing the graces for

before and after meals, a primer to teach the alphabet and basis of Latin, and the 'Donat', a grammar based on the fourth-century Aelius Donatus, which appears to have been more popular in Scotland than other classical grammars.

Dundee in the later middle ages was, however, an extremely important east-coast burgh with strong trading and cultural contacts with mainland Europe, and schooling reached a broader range of children than merely potential ecclesiastics. By the sixteenth century there is evidence that there were several townspeople able to read the reforming and pro-catholic literature that flooded from the continent through Dundee's port. Merchants, also, travelling overseas had at least to be numerate and perhaps read, if not literate. Andrew Gibson, a resident in distant Worms, described in 1552 as 'departit furthe of dunde fra the schole thirty-six years bygane', was only one of many Dundee men whose early education assisted their ready voyaging throughout Europe. But there was no question of the majority of children attending school. Youngsters were an important part of the economy as cheap labour — even a toddler could supervise a simple loom. Had Dundee's early burgh records survived, however, doubtless also would the evidence of careful provision for some poor scholars — and perhaps even, as in a few enlightened burghs, for girls.

Neither is there evidence extant of the size of the schools, although it has been claimed that there were more than 160 pupils in the grammar school by the end of the fifteenth century, but some of these might have been landward scholars. It is impossible to calculate what proportion of town children received schooling. Dundee, albeit a major burgh in Scotland, was small by modern standards: by the end of the middle ages the town plan consisted of basically only five streets: The Flukergait or Nethergait and Argylegait or Overgait to the west of the Marketgait or High Street; and running eastwards, Seagait and Murraygait leading to Wellgait and Cowgait. The site of the present High School in central Dundee was just a marshy swamp beside the Scouring Burn, outwith the town precincts. Late fifteenth — and sixteenth — century documentation does show clearly, however, that the interior of the church was maintained by the burgesses with lavishness, and in size of building and richness of endowments Dundee's parish church was one of the most splendid in Scotland. There is little doubt that this magnificence would have been reflected in the numbers of pupils and their training at the medieval church schools.

The traditional order was inevitably to change; and with it the church's function as the sole provider of education for the community. Once the burgh records are extant in the sixteenth century the town authorities are seen increasingly to control the running of schools, whether it was through the funding of a new school building as in 1551 (perhaps one of the first in Dundee outside church precincts) or ensuring that the inhabitants sent their offspring only to the officially recognised establishments: in 1555 the grammar school of which Thomas MacGibbon was master and the song school under the control of Richard Barry. Anyone found disobeying the council ruling by supporting non-Approved schools, such as that run by Henry Levinton was fined. Such initiatives brought further change and by 1589 a new grammar school was built on the south-east corner of the Vault (under the present City Square), perhaps partially on the post-Reformation site of the destroyed St Clement's Church. This school building was demolished as recently as 1871, although the school itself was transferred in 1789 to School Wynd (once named Kirk Wynd, it ran through the old kirkyard of St

Mary's Church) where it was housed with the English School, which had been founded at the beginning of the century. Another school, Dundee Academy, had been established in 1785 and the three were united in 1829 as the Dundee Public Seminaries. In 1834 they were re-housed in the current school building, the name being changed by royal charter in 1859 to the High School of Dundee.

The present school is the product of gradual progress in educational aims and practices, exhibiting superficially little in common with the thinking of the middle ages; but there has been continuity with the past. St. Mary's Steeple, a small, much-altered remnant, and the 750th anniversary celebrations of the High School of Dundee are reminders of one of Scotland's largest and most magnificent parish churches and its medieval song and grammar schools.

The Founding of Dundee Grammar School

Dr Ishbel Barnes

Assistant Keeper, Scottish Record Office

In the reign of William the Lion two monastic houses were founded by the monks of Tiron, in Scotland, the great abbey of Arbroath which the King himself founded and the abbey of Lindores which was founded by the King's younger brother David, Earl of Huntingdon in 1191. (1.) This last foundation was to be intimately connected with the grammar school of Dundee until the Reformation. Since the surviving burgh records of Dundee contain very few details about the burgh or grammar school and since the school itself has no surviving records of its own, to find out what little we can about the school in the Middle Ages, we have to look at the archives of the abbey of Lindores, as well as those of the bishopric of Brechin and the universities of St Andrews and Aberdeen.

In his foundation charter David gave to Lindores abbey not only lands at Lindores with their church and mill but, he also granted to his monks "the church of Dundee with all its just pertinents," (2.) Thus from the very beginning the monks of Lindores had an interest in the burgh across the river and, it would seem, an interest in the education of the children of the burgh, an interest which they would maintain all through the Middle Ages.

It is however, not now possible to say precisely who founded the burgh school or indeed when teaching began in the institution which became known first as the Grammar and then as the High School of Dundee. The story is not a straight forward one and to understand the origins of the present school we have to look in detail at the manuscripts which relate to the history of the abbey of Lindores.

In 1903 Dr John Dowden published the chartulary of the abbey of Lindores and in his introduction he explained about the documents he had edited and about yet another chartulary of Lindores.

"In 1841 the Abbotsford Club issued to its members a volume under the editorship of Mr W. Turnbull, bearing as a title 'The Chartularies of Balmerino and Lindores, now first printed from the original MSS in the Library of the Faculty of

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Advocates'." Dr Dowden argues conclusively however, that Mr Turnbull's collection of documents was not a collection of original documents but a transcript of original documents made probably as late as the time of James IV.

It is from this transcript of c. 1500 that we have our first mention of the link between Lindores and the school in Dundee. The transcript copies a document of about 1224; in this document Gregory, Bishop of Brechin, conferred on Lindores the right to appoint the masters to the schools of Dundee and the neighbourhood. (3.) In other words, the first mention of the school of Dundee is made in a copy of a document, the copy was made about 1500, the original is now lost. The document copied is not dated, but from internal evidence, the names of the bishops, witnesses etc., it can be dated about 1224. It is not a foundation charter, but simply listed among other privileges confirmed to the monks by the Bishop of Brechin is the right to appoint masters to the schools of Dundee. This same source gives us the confirmation of 1239 by Pope Gregory, this is again a copy (4.); the papal registers contain no original.

The mediaeval church took full responsibility for education at all levels, but within the church there were competing claims for influence and responsibility. All through the Middle Ages there was competition between the monks of Lindores and the bishops of Brechin over their respective rights to appoint the masters of the school in the burgh of Dundee. This was indeed part of a wider struggle between the monasteries and their local bishops which took place all over Europe. It was made more complicated in the case of Lindores in that the abbey lay within the diocese of St Andrews, it had rights over the church and schools of Dundee, but they in turn were situated in the diocese of Brechin.

The struggle was to continue until the Reformation. For example on 22nd August, 1434, Gilbert Knycht, priest appeared before the Bishop of Brechin and acknowledged his shortcomings. He asked the Bishop to pardon him for disobeying his commands in appealing with regard to the government of the school in Dundee to the Abbot of Lindores who had collated him to that benefice. Gilbert Knycht withdrew the appeal wickedly made by him and resigned all his rights to the schools and to their government to the Bishop. The Bishop accepted the resignation and collated to the benefice Master Lawrence Lownan, (5.)

The documents relating to the Grammar School of Dundee which survive from the Middle Ages nearly all relate to legal disputes over competing jurisdictions. It is much more difficult to find any evidence about the pupils who attended the school, and more especially, about that most famous of "old boys", William Wallace, who has carved his name on so many High School desks!

*"In til Dundee Wallace to scule thai send,
Quhill he of witt ful worthily was kend"*

So wrote 'Blind Harry' in his "Actis and Deidis of the Illustere and Vailyeand Campioun, Schir William Wallace, Knicht of Ellerslie." (6.) Blind Harry wrote his Wallace between 1472 and 1479 (7.), that is nearly 200 years after the events he describes. Perhaps his work is best evaluated by the present Historiographer Royal, Professor Gordon Donaldson, "while there is little to check it against — for the authentic information we have about Wallace could almost be written on a postcard — the assumption must be that it is a collection of folk tales — possibly augmented by the author's own powers of invention." (8.)

Lindores abbey was not interested in the education of the children of Dundee merely as part of a dispute with the bishops of Brechin. Like all good Churchmen

the monks of Lindores were interested in education not just for itself but as a means of glorifying God. It is apt that it was Lawrence of Lindores who was one of the original founders of St Andrews University, the University with which the school has always been closely connected.

On 28th August, 1413 from Peniscola in Aragon, Pope Benedict XIII issued the six bulls which brought the University of St Andrews into formal existence. He thus placed the small group of teachers in St Andrews on a level with the great centres of learning in Europe, as a *studium generale*, in Theology, Canon and Civil Law, Arts, Medicine and other lawful faculties. "On 3rd February, 1414, the Bulls were received in St Andrews, and on the next day, being Sunday, they were promulgated in the presence of a great assembly in the Refectory of the Priory. With this, and the *solum Te Deum* that followed in the Cathedral, the University of St Andrews was inaugurated." (9.)

From the very beginning boys went from Dundee to St Andrews. Johannes de Dundee 'pauper', who entered the Arts Faculty in 1452/3 (10.) was but the beginning of a long line. The line continued in the nineteenth century as the poet R. F. Murray described the throng returning to St Andrews at the beginning of term.

*"Men from Fife and men from Forfar, from the High School of Dundee,
Ten or twelve from other countries, and from England two or three."*
(11).

It continues, now with the inclusion of women, to the present. John of Dundee would almost certainly have received his initial education in the burgh's grammar school. He was followed there by a founder of another university, Hector Boece, first Principal of the University of Aberdeen. With Hector Boece (1465? — 1536), we leave the discussions of transcripts of documents and the speculations of Blind Harry and reach much firmer ground. Boece himself has left us details of his early life in his description of his role in the foundation of Aberdeen University, after he had accepted Bishop Elphinstone's invitation to settle there.

"Accordingly, when I was settled in Aberdeen, in order that the youths might be more perfectly trained in learning, I took as my colleague, William Hay, along with whom I had studied philosophy at Paris. I had in view also that our good-will to each other, which dated from our earliest years, for we were both natives of the province of Angus, had passed our boyhood together in Dundee and had been trained (however humble our ability) under the same masters in Paris". (12).

Boece taught philosophy at Montaigu College in Paris, where as an elegant writer of Renaissance prose and verse he was a friend of "The splendour and ornament of our age," Erasmus. Boece not only became the first Principal of Aberdeen, he published in 1527 his 'History of Scotland'. His value as a historian has still to be decided. Dr. Johnson felt that "His history is written with elegance and vigour, but his fabulousness and credibility are justly hamed". But a more modern commentator describes him more charitably:

"Boece shared with (Erasmus) that rare combination of a deep love of classical literature, of Christian Platonism and social concern which they had absorbed from their humanist masters at Paris, and which Boece so faithfully imparted to his own students at King's College, as may be seen by the generation of Renaissance humanists whom he taught". (13.) A school which could produce such a teacher had much of which to be proud.

While Bishop Elphinstone not only founded Aberdeen he was also most probably one of the instigators behind the Act of Parliament of 1496 so often quoted in the history of mediaeval burgh education in Scotland. All burgesses and freeholders were ordered to send their eldest sons to school —

*“Fra thai be auct or nyne yeires of age” and to remain there
“quhill they be competentlie foundit and have perfite Latyne.”*

Thereafter they were to remain three years at the schools of art and ‘jure’, the object being that

“justice may remain universally throughout the realm, and that those who are sheriffs or judges may have knowledge to do justice, so that the poor people should have no need to see our sovereign lord’s principal auditors for every little injury.” (14.)

The Act appears in fact to have had little effect. Whatever its incidental effect on education, its aim, to clear the central law courts of petty claimants, failed. The Acts of the Lords of Council show the cases continuing unabated and Flodden was to end the plans of James IV in this as in so many other matters.

As the sixteenth century proceeded the abbey of Lindores was still struggling for control over the education of the boys of Dundee, in cases before both the secular and the church courts, and indeed the cases only end with the coming of the Reformation and the final overthrow of the abbey itself. (15.)

Because of the nature of the records which survive, the history of the grammar school of Dundee in the Middle Ages tends to become a history of legal disputes and not a history of its teachers and pupils. There is however, one scrap of evidence in Dundee burgh records which suggests that some things never change. In 1558 we learn that on Sundays the masters and doctors of the schools attending church are ordered to see that neither scholars nor servants play, cry, or dispute during the preaching and, to end on a very modern note, if bairns break any ‘glasen windows’, their parents shall be obliged to repair them at their own expense. The pupils of the Middle Ages were not so very different from the pupils of the twentieth century.

1. D. E. Easson, *Mediaeval Religious Houses Scotland* (London, 1957), PP. 58 — 60.
2. J. Dowden (ed.), *Chartulary of abbey of Lindores*, Scottish History Society, 1903, P. 6
3. *The Chartularies of Balmerino and Lindores*, Abbotsford Club, 1841, P. 17.
4. *Ibid.*, P. 18
5. *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis*, 1, No. 42, P. 62.
6. J. Moir (ed.), *Scottish Text Society*, Vol. 6, Part 1, 1885, P. 6.
7. G. Donaldson, *The sources of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1978), P. 34.
8. *Ibid.*
9. R. G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews. A Short History*, (Edinburgh, 1946), P. 4.
10. *Acta Facultatis Artium Universitatis Sanctiandree 1413 — 1588*, (ed.) A. I. Dunlop, Edinburgh (1964), P. 91.
12. *Hectoris Boeti Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium Episcoporum Vitae*, (ed.), J. Moir, New Spalding Club, 1894, P. 90.
13. L. J. MacFarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland 1431 — 1514* (Aberdeen, 1985) P. 390.
14. *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 1496, c. 3, 11, 238.
15. The entertaining story of the battle of Lindores abbey v. Thomas Makgibbon is related in A. Maxwell, *Old Dundee* (Edinburgh, 1889), PP. 152 — 155.

Dundee Grammar School in the Eighteenth Century

Iain Flett, M.A., M.Fil., D.A.A., F.S.A.Scot.
City Archivist

Dundee Grammar School went through a remarkable change of character in the eighteenth century, starting with continuing the tradition of Latin scholarship and disputation, and ending with accommodating the winds of change blowing from a revolutionary Europe.

It was still popular in 1706 for the Grammar School boys to give a public performance of a Latin Comedy, and in fact one particular production before the magistrates encouraged them to allow the use of the low Tolbooth for 'declaiming'. The schoolday had much rigour about it. School life in 1700 was still much the same as it had been in 1674, when the Town Council drew up instructions for the Grammar School:—

1. School was to be opened at 6 a.m. in summer and 7 a.m. in winter.
2. Prayers were to be made in English by the Master or eldest Doctor in mornings and evenings on weekdays; on the pupils's return to school after breakfast, lessons continued until lunch and resumed at 1 p.m.
3. Recreation was provided on 'playdays', when the Master or one of the Doctors escorted the boys to the Magdalen Green, where they played for two hours before continuing lessons.

The grammar school boys were creative in finding their own amusement other than on the Green. By 1743 they presented a considerable nuisance as they played at the ball in the corridor under the Adam Town House, known to Dundonians as 'The Pillars'. The Magistrates went so far as to require Rev. George Blair, the Master, to 'discharge boys . . . to disturb the walk below the Town House by playing at the hand or football or otherwise at any time either of day or night'. This evidently had little effect, as the next year saw complaints that boys and soldiers were 'walking' in the piazza, and that its plaster was much spoilt by playing ball there. The Town Officers were authorised to apprehend any boys found playing at the ball, and the penalty for being caught was 12s Scots.

4. Discipline was to be unleashed against those who had learned their Latin constructions but still persevered in speaking in English to their masters or friends, and also against those who rode horses at market time and against those who idled about the harbour, boats and ships.

The problem of horse riding was to become greater as the century wore on. By 1761 the temptation of riding through the narrow streets had become so popular that the Council declared that the 'Drum to go through the Town discharging the haill Inhabitants and horsehirers in particular from riding through the streets themselves or allowing boys to ride . . . under the penalty of £3 Scots and otherways punished as the Magistrates shall think fitt'.

5. Public humiliation of 'Delinquents' was to be carried out every Monday. Delinquents were thought to comprise 'Swearers, breakers of the Sabbath, rebels to their masters, truants from School and fugitives from discipline'. First offenders were merely publicly whipped, second offenders were 'flogged' and third and final

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offenders were 'excluded the school till they found surety for their better conduct'.

6. The scholars in the Master's Class (the two senior forms) were to harangue (i.e. formally dispute or debate) at least once a month on some subject prescribed by the Master.

This strict regime lasted for a course of seven years right up until 1773, when it was reduced to five years. Until that time it had been the longest grammar school course in Scotland, and many of the endowments which had been left to it (called appropriately 'Mortifications' in Scots) reflected the need for support over this period.

Bruce's Mortification of 1738 catered for the education of one boy at the Grammar School of Dundee for six years. Clark's of c. 1723 catered for boys, to be admitted between seven and nine years of age, and to have left by the age of seventeen. The suffering of the schoolboys may have been compounded by the uniforms which some of them were required to wear if they had won bursaries, Roger's Mortification bursars wore a 'green habit or collars', while Ferguson's boys wore coats always grey lined with blue sleeves.

After 1707, the Town Council received government assistance which provided revenue for the teachers' salaries, and this reduced pressure on general school administration. The assistance took the form of a grant of twopence on the pint of ale, which was paid by the local Maltman or Brewer Incorporation to the town to offset the town's debts, of which a high priority was given to burgh teachers' salaries. The incidence of petitions from schoolmasters in the early eighteenth century for actual payment of their salaries would suggest that prompt payment was a problem. The Town Council had other heavy disbursements, such as for the celebration of the King's Birthday in 1729 which demolished '5 dozen & four bottles Wine @ 12d each, a beacon ham 12 lb @ 6d pr. lb. & 2 oz. sugar . . . 12 bottles Strong Ale'. The town was careful to also meet its obligations to the Duke of Atholl, who was entertained befittingly with 31 bottles Wine, a ham weighing 15 lbs., 12 bottles strong ale, and surprisingly only six broken glasses.

Accommodation for educational purposes was a problem for the eighteenth century as it is now. In 1774 the Dundee Town Council offered to pay £80 of the costs of a new grammar school provided that the remainder was met by voluntary subscription, but a distinct lack of volunteers meant that by 1783 it was the Town Council who were left with its responsibility for the entire provision. On 27th May it was resolved that a new grammar school be built in the kirkyard on the south side of the Steeple close to the stile on the west side leading to the Nethergate, with a small toofall for the fire engine adjoining it on the south side. The old grammar school was to be fitted up as guard house and the old grammar school close adapted as a meal market. There had been considerable debate about the introduction of an academy along the lines of Perth Academy, which would teach practical subjects such as mathematics, science, arithmetic and book keeping, and the suggestion was made that another storey could be added to the grammar school which could then be employed for the Academy. However, estimated costs of over £200 put paid to that idea, and the short-lived Academy was housed in the former town hospital for poor and sick people.

Escalating building costs led to economies being made, and benches from the old school were transferred to the new. The new building was divided into separate apartments for each teacher with a common wall, and the whole building adjoined and additional English school which offered a broader curriculum than the strictly classical one offered by the grammar school.

Although the separate Academy did eventually appear under the patronage of the town council in 1786, lack of good organisation meant that it had failed by 1792, and was forced to lie in abeyance until the legacy of £6000 of Messrs Webster of London allowed a proper foundation to be made in 1800. It was then a substantial institution, offering instruction in mathematics, book-keeping, navigation, astronomy, mechanics, fortification, geometry, perspective civil history and morality, which met the needs created by the Enlightenment, and which was to be amalgamated in 1832 into that comprehensive institution, the Dundee Seminaries, later to be renamed the Dundee High School.

“65 Years — Man and Boy”

Edward M. Stewart, M.A.,
Rector (1970 — 1977)

I am happy to accept the invitation to pass on a few memories of my 65 years' association with the school, man and boy as the saying goes. Very personal some of these memories are.

Every weekend of my first year in the secondary school was clouded by the fear of the forthcoming Monday afternoon when we endured one period of Latin by the Rector, the terrifying John McLennan. In a never-to-be-forgotten rhetorical flourish he once announced, 'The Stewarts are degenerating!' (I was the youngest of four brothers who had all been at D.H.S.). But I got his measure eventually and was able to march confidently into his study one frosty morning, after being reminded by a deputation of Forms 5 & 6 that it was my duty as Head Boy to go in and demand a skating holiday as the ponds were bearing. 'We'll be at the door to catch the bits coming out', were the cheerful 'last words' of my friends! But we got our skating holiday. I learned some things from 'John Mo' beyond Latin verbs, regular or irregular: fear is not a good background for learning and teachers' irate prognostications about pupils are fallible!

As we grow old we often seem to remember little things rather than so-called momentous events. I had been able, as a student in training to help Bill Laird in the preparation of the 1934 Centenary Magazine. When I returned in 1947 to take over from George Bruce in what had been Bill Laird's room in my schooldays—next to the Lady Superintendent in the Girls' School (Room XI G), I was clearing out the cupboard when I came across a loose sheet of paper in familiar handwriting. It was an article for the Magazine written by me in Class 7 (Form 3) more than 20 years earlier—and never published. It left me wondering about the workings of fate. But I did 'get into' the Magazine a year or two after this discovery when I celebrated the appearance of a mouse in Room XI G with a poem in the famous Burns' mode. I made another interesting discovery a few years later when I took over as Head of English when Bill Laird retired. In his desk in the Boys' School I discovered a black punishment notebook in the copy-book handwriting of W. P. Borland, the Head of English in my schooldays. There, in meticulous detail, were the date, the name of the culprit, the nature of the crime and the number of strokes of the belt administered all faithfully recorded over a number of years. The list included some future eminent citizens of Dundee. It was a useful book—but I used its contents sparingly! His neighbour across the passage, the Head of Maths, would have used up the whole book in one week!

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But 'momentous' is a suitable word to describe the great reconstruction undertaken by David Erskine, my predecessor, and the Board of Directors with Tommy Thoms responsible for the tricky and demanding architectural work. The Boys' School was literally torn apart inside (for as a building of historic importance we were not permitted to build onto or develop outwardly any of the existing building). A new suite of Science Rooms, a new Art Department, a new Library, two new Staff-rooms, two new class-rooms for Geography and English, a completely new suite of offices and studies for the Rector and his deputy were built as well as new passageways. (In the old days if it rained the Rector had to walk through 4 classrooms to get to the West wing of the school!) During the reconstruction every available room in the area of the school was rented—Church halls, vestries, Y.M.C.A. etc. Great sacrifices were made by staff and pupils and much laborious planning was done to keep the academic life of the school going in the midst of relative chaos. I expect that everyone who lived through that time has his or her own memory of it all. My most thrilling moment concerned the academic life of the school. I was sitting with F6 English class on chairs, knees and chins in close proximity, in what is now Mr Sandy Smith's office. Came a knock on the door which swung open. And there stood the Rector (he couldn't get in any further) with a telegram in his hand announcing the School's first ever entry to Oxford with a scholarship in English as a bonus! That was followed later by the winning of top place in the Edinburgh Bursary Competition—the most prestigious of Scottish scholastic awards in those days. It was all a spectacular triumph of mind over matter!

The school has always kept faith with those who gave their years and some of them their lives in two world Wars in defence of the freedoms we enjoy so lightly and so often abuse today. The new library was the War Memorial Library—thanks to the untiring work of Helen Falconer. There was also the lady who every day turned a page of the Book of Remembrance. For many years the War Memorial had been a worry and at times an eyesore along the walls of the front hall of the school—unprotected from the careless joustings of wayward boys. The present dignified shrine was dedicated in a moving ceremony and, for me, a very emotional one. As the pipes moved slowly into the distance they played a tune that has always been indelibly stamped in my memory. The evening of the D-day landing in Sicily in 1943. Our stricken landing craft, its skipper and many of his crew killed, lay stuck in the sand—the only vessel left on a vast stretch of beach, a sitting duck for prowling enemy aircraft. Through the smokescreen mercifully put up by the navy came the sound of the pipes of the 50th Division now safely ashore and playing that tune. An unforgettable memory! In these, as in other ways, is the texture of life woven.

Difficult decisions are the daily bread of Rectors and some are more difficult than others. There was the morning when a voice on the phone announced that there was a bomb in the toilets. An S.C.E. practical exam was in progress upstairs. Was the threat a hoax? The police were sympathetic but refused to make the decision for me. The Fire Alarm was sounded. An anxious Science master, worried about the fate of his candidates said quietly:

'Must we come out?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, like that is it?' with an odd look in his eyes.

But the eyes of the assistant janitor provided an even more engrossing, if fleeting, study.

'I want you to go and search the girls' toilets.'

'What am I looking for, Sir?'

'A bomb.' The startled eyes rose sharply.

'Yes, Sir.' And he stepped away quickly.

Equally interesting was the reaction of two male teachers who happened to come along and were ordered to go and search the boys' toilets for a bomb. 'And I suppose we are expendable,' muttered one with a wry smile. But they too obeyed the call of unexpected duty. Then the police arrived and the buzz of excitement in the playground rose — this was obviously no mere fire drill practice. Happily it was a hoax.

But there was no hoax about the thunderbolt. It was a dark thundery forenoon. I was sitting dictating letters to my secretary in my study. Suddenly the room was filled with a weird light and a sizzling crackling noise. For 10 seconds I sat in terrifying loneliness — the responsibility of coping with possible disaster to hundreds of children and their teachers. Happily for us the thunderbolt chose to pass us by and hit St Andrews Church in the Cowgate. It was St Paul who said that Satan is the Prince of the Power of the Air!

Meetings with public authorities can be boring, but they can be dramatic too. There was the meeting with all interested parties when the Technical College wanted to take over the site of our dining facilities (some dilapidated Nissen huts) in Bell Street Lane for their vast new development. But the S.E.D. officials present were cool, rational — and on our side. They held the purse strings and knew it. The result was the fine new dining hall at very reasonable cost to us. Another amicable meeting, this time in our own Board Room, was called by the Town Council, officials and police when we objected to their plans for re-routing the town's buses through Albert Square. They saw our problem — 1200 children entering and leaving our little island site twice a day at peak times. We reluctantly agreed. But I wondered if something could be salvaged in a quid-pro-quo deal:

'I would like West Euclid Crescent closed in the interests of the safety of 1200 children.'

'Certainly that should be done—no problem, Rector.'

And so one more nightmare vanished: our children could cross between the two schools in perfect safety instead of dodging cars and racing motor-bikes. The Police Superintendent looked quizzically at me and pointed to the thick file in his hands.

'20 years of correspondence about this and now settled in five minutes. Well, well!' And the orderly parking of parents' cars in the playground at 3 p.m. became a happy reality!

The acquisition of Mayfield with all its marvellous facilities was a three-way triumph of diplomacy between the Town, the Training College and the School. Half an hour before a vital meeting at Mayfield itself I found myself with the Chairman of the Board, Christian Spankie, on the playing fields. He was determined that the school should get every yard of the agreed settlement and he paced it out himself from East to West, muttering that the temporary fencing would be shifted if the measurements were false. Happily they were right and I breathed freely again!

But human problems are always far more stressful than material ones. The human scene is seldom simple and answers are never easy. One small boy asked me a question one morning and didn't get an answer. I was asked by the Rector to get a boy out of his class and bring him along to the Rector's study. A phone call had

come in that the boy's father had just died. The boy left the room with me then stopped in the corridor: with anxious, unforgettable eyes he looked at me; 'Is it my father, Sir?' I could only nod my head, speechless. We often share in the joys of families in times of happiness and success. But there are other times too. 'Floreas Schola Nobilis'

"30 Years as a Teacher"

M. E. Lawson, M.A.

Former Head of the Junior Department

When I look back on more than thirty years of teaching in Dundee High School, so many memories crowd in — of happy days as a class teacher, of occasions, grave and gay, of people, grown-ups and children, who contributed so much to the life of the school. Above all I remember the rich variety of school life, each day different, each child an individual with his own special needs, the constant polishing of old well-tried methods and the excitement of creating new opportunities. Teaching at Dundee High School was demanding, but never dull.

Teaching English to forty boisterous LVII Boys or introducing the fascinating subject of number to little LIV pupils was both stimulating and rewarding, although I was always ever aware that on Field Days more attention was paid to the weather outside than to the lesson in progress in the classroom.

There was the first venture into Project work when I found myself with LVII Girls visiting jute factories, printing works, the docks, the City Chambers, the City Churches and the research station at Mylnefield. Pioneering the teaching of Junior Science involved the staff in making their own equipment there being no thought of buying expensive materials. The establishing of a Junior School library was enthusiastically welcomed by the children, while the Junior School Public Speaking Competition was a happy thought: parents delighted in the charm of the young speakers, whose innocent remarks could provoke gentle laughter. The introduction of computers brought exciting and new ways of learning to fit the children for the technical world of the future.

When the Craft Room was furnished, complete with stage and curtains, all due to the imagination and drive of Walter Smith, it became the routine for each class in turn to present a play at the end of each term, the staff being expected to devise the back-cloths, find the props and make the costumes.

There was much fun and laughter when LVII presented 'Tom Sawyer' as a play and rehearsals were often interrupted by light-hearted arguments, the children being only too willing to offer advice to teacher and pupil alike. Did we really dare to fix the back-cloths to the walls of the top corridor to allow the children full scope to paint them as they wished? Shall I ever forget the making of 'Tom Sawyer' into a video-film — the effort to transform my classroom into Aunt Polly's parlour, the 'Dixie Band', the boy who brought the filming to a standstill while he adjusted his braces, and that never-to-be-forgotten evening when the Rector, Mr Stewart, ruined Tom's poignant funeral service (the tenth 'take'!) when he kindly 'phoned to ask for a progress report?

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'Toad of Toad Hall' brings back a picture of Toad, Ratty, Badger and Mole supported by an enthusiastic cast of ferrets and weasels having a riotous banquet, all inhibitions forgotten, everyone singing and dancing in sheer enjoyment. Despite the hours spent in the making of the animals' heads, 'Toad of Toad Hall' will always be for me a happy and joyful memory, saddened by the untimely death of Walter Smith, so shortly after the final performance.

The Nativity plays, often very demanding of the LVII pupils, and the musical, were only possible because of the unfailing and generous support of the Art, Music and Technical Departments.

There were departmental evenings in the Dining Hall when LIV would impress with their faultless French accent in their little plays, LVI would demonstrate their skills at life-saving and I remember the delightful duet sung by Ruth Dorward and Kenneth Murray on one of our Burns Evenings.

A simple Nativity play, 'Christmas Carol' and musical evenings, all presented on an open stage in the Music Centre in Bell Street, only proved that difficulties were made to be overcome. I remember with much pleasure the programme arranged to celebrate the 150th anniversary — the LIV's delightful Mad Hatter's Tea Party, the swashbuckling pirates of LV, the more serious contribution of LVI and the boys and girls of LVII who transformed themselves with such boundless enthusiasm into the residents of Dotherboys Hall to ensure that 'Smike', my farewell venture, would be a treasured memory.

Hallowe'en and Christmas parties, visits to theatres, chess matches, coffee mornings, summer outings to places of local interest and visits farther afield, 'Top of the Form' competitions, Field Days with Robert Gordon's, open days, exhibitions and events to raise money for charity made sure that staff and pupils were always fully occupied.

How important it was that, in all these activities outside the classroom, every child should be involved and so feel that his contribution really mattered! There was delight in a child discovering a hidden gift, which allowed him to shine, perhaps for the first time in his school life, and one could see this new found confidence reflected in an improvement in his class work. How heart-warming, too, was the spontaneous and generous appreciation of the children for the performance of another!

Many will remember the hazards of walking the children, even the small pupils of LIV, down to the old Baths, only LVII being privileged to go to Field. It is good that all Junior pupils now participate in games and athletics, and now that the House system has been introduced into all classes in the Lower School, there has been much added excitement, as each child's fondest hope is to be chosen to represent his House in the relay team.

All these activities outside the classroom, however, had to be weighed in the balance with the solid day to day academic work in the classroom. In my early days of teaching in Dundee High School, boys and girls were taught in separate classes, each class having, at the minimum, forty pupils and, if one's opposite number was absent, one was expected to cope with the eighty pupils, without creating a fuss. There was no doubt, too, that the old qualifying examination with its dreaded problem paper in Arithmetic and the analysis of a five clause sentence in English caused much heartache for pupil and teacher alike, while the division of Form I into a Latin and a non-Latin section made the teaching of LVII not only a challenge, but a class many teachers wished to avoid. Of course, there will always be need for progress in education. One can only hope that by introducing a broader curriculum

to enrich learning, while at the same time striving to maintain the highest academic standards, each child was encouraged to reach his potential and so enter the Senior School, a good all-rounder, a quietly confident pupil.

There have been many changes in the building and classrooms. Long past are the days when I was sent to the auction rooms of Curr and Dewar to bid for the cast-off shop fittings of G. L. Wilson's with which to furnish our classrooms. The grand reconstruction found me banished with LVII Girls to a lecture room at the top of the School of Economics, now Bonar House. Dare I now confess that, while there, I allowed two white mice, given to me for safe-keeping, to escape — alas, they were never found! The reconstruction resulted in two new classrooms and new toilets for the use of the department and, in recent years, the Junior School has been refurbished to make a pleasing environment for staff and pupils alike.

I remember with much affection and gratitude these senior members of staff, Mr Howat, Mr Paton, Mr Smith, Mr More, Mr Vannet, Miss Whytock and Miss Gray and Mr Stewart and Mr Halliday, whose professional and personal integrity, courtesy and kindliness were an inspiration and example to all young teachers. Of course, we had our fun, too. Pupils may find it difficult to believe that the hall of the Girls' School once echoed with the laughter of the staff enjoying their own party.

Friendships were strengthened in sharing the hazards to be found in escorting senior girls abroad and shall Moira and I ever forget the dubious honour of being put in charge of the Dining Hall kitchen at the Easter Fayre?

When I look back on my days at Dundee High School, I remember most clearly the bright faces of the children, the eager, the lazy, the serious, the mischievous and, in every class, always the boy with a fund of plausible reasons for homework forgotten and the girl who thought a charming smile would make the feeble excuse for some misdemeanour quite convincing. There are moments when I recognise a personality on television — how old he looks — a sobering thought!

The support and understanding of parents, the friendship of staff, and, above all, the infectious enthusiasm of the young children ensured that my teaching days in Dundee High School were both rewarding and enjoyable.

Memories of the High School

(from submissions received)

edited by

J. T. G. Baxter, M.A.

It is very easy to forget that the School throughout its 750 years has been people rather than locations or events. It is impossible to recount the reminiscences of any but the most recent pupils. To this end all ex-Presidents of Old Boys' and Old Girls' Clubs as well as a number of former Staff and Directors were approached and asked for their memories of School life. All those who took the time to do so are thanked most warmly and we present a number of recollections in this article.

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One Old Girl, whose school career straddled the years of World War I recalls the foundation of the Girl Guide Company — 2nd Dundee — in 1918 under the leadership of Miss Catherine White, the Art teacher. In these days some of the girls went after school to the gymnasium for instruction in Rifle Shooting. This instruction was provided by Sgt. Woolaway, Janitor of the Boys' School and the girls duly gained Rifle Shooting Badges in the Guide Company.

Mr Alex T. Millar, who was at School from 1915 to 1927, remembers "sitting in the big room west of the Pillars entrance with Mr Mackenzie, known to all as 'Big Bob'. Rows of boys would sit with copybooks learning to write in a copperplate hand. This was a big advance from the slates and slate pencils of Miss Peat's class, for we had steel pens and real ink. Alas, not a trace of that copperplate writing remains with me today!" This classroom was a passage to the rooms in the west and pupils quickly learned to recognise the identity of messengers without dropping their concentration. A soft silvery clinking sound indicated the presence of Sgt. Woolaway who wore a row of medals while quick steps and a rustling sound told of the coming of "that fearsome figure, the Rector, in his stiff black gown, speeding on his way."

An Old Girl, whose time at School was from 1917 to 1931 tells us "My earliest memory of Dundee High School was the tender loving care of Miss Nixon who we all worshipped, as we did her successor, Miss Chisholm. Then followed the authority of Miss Duthie.

From then on memories of myself and former classmates, are, I am afraid, mostly to do with pranks and goadings of our teachers of which we are now heartily ashamed. But a few names and phrases may stir other memories in readers, eg. 'I am pained, grieved and disappointed'. (Auntie); 'Just now..' —sums plus the discomfiture of a chalky twisted nose. (Mike); The 'Laughing Record' to break the ice at the Rector's home tea party for Class Ten pupils; Jessie — the tyrant of the lunch hall, compared with the gentle Annie.

Then there was the excitement of School Dances, sports, galas, hockey matches, of Guide Camps etc., etc., and finally, being allowed to stay off School during the "Higher Leavings!"

Alexander Stewart Davie, at School from 1919 to 1928 recalls his favourite teachers. In the Lower School he recalls Miss Peat and Miss Brown as elderly while Miss Turnbull, Miss Falconer and Miss Crowe are just vague memories.

In the Upper School memories are clearer, of John MacLennan (Moses) the Rector who taught Latin and was best remembered for his punishment 'of being pushed unceremoniously to the back of the room with some force and being made to stand there for a short spell'. "Big Bob" Mackenzie was an elderly and very well loved figure. He taught hand writing and 'despaired of my efforts'.

Mr Boreland was Head of English who was remembered as a hard taskmaster and was famous for his 'six of the best'. Only once was Mr Davie on the receiving end of this 'for chatting up a girl in the class. I think she was his daughter, Mary.' The list goes on Mr Meiklejohn (Mike) who was Head of Maths; Tom McLaren of Physical Education and of the Cadets who discovered our correspondent could not march properly. 'I insisted in trying to march with left foot and arm forward at the same time and, of course, right foot and right arm. Tom didn't seem to be able to cure the problem and so I was quietly removed from the parade on important occasions'!

The theme of favourite Staff was echoed by Mrs Effie Johnstone (nee Spreull) who was at School from 1921 to 1934. She writes of Mr MacLennan the Rector who commanded and received respect. The Lady Superintendent, Miss Anderson is

described as 'indeed a lady', with skirts to her ankles, whose strongest reproof already recorded left the culprit mortified. Miss Duthie, Head of Infants was a wonderful teacher who was totally impartial while Miss Chisholm of the Lower School is remembered as a very good kindly teacher — everyone's favourite. In the Senior School English Department there was Headmaster, Mr Boreland, a hard taskmaster, JR "Peter" Legge who provided 'light relief' after Mr Boreland and Bill Laird with his pawky humour. In Mr Meiklejohn, Mrs Johnstone tells us 'we were fortunate indeed, definitely "old school" discipline and work in his classes and we were the better for it and his "just nows", the list goes on and indeed Mrs Johnstone wonders if she should write a book about them. Mr Wilson, Mr Gilman, Mr MacDonald, Dr. Inglis, Mr Webb, Mr Stalker, Mr Bain, Mr McLaren, Mr Mackenzie, Dr. Murray, Mr Marshall, Mr Nicoll, Miss Barrie and her successor as Lady Warden, Miss Whytock, 'Auntie Floey' of whom it is said 'memories of her would fill a book and all good. Miss Matthew, Miss Mess, Miss Stephenson, Miss Coutts, Miss Geake, Miss Robertson, Misses Jeannie and Mary Brown, Misses Aggie and Mary Smith, Miss Coupar, Miss Steel and many others.

One Old Girl who was at School in the 20s and 30s writes as follows:

"I started preparatory School in the 1920's in what was then called Ic followed by Ib and Ia. These were three years of half days, but with no time allowed for relaxation — three Rs were all-important. Boys and girls were taught quite separately — the girls in the Girls' School under Miss Duthie and the boys in the Boys' School under Miss Peat. I have vivid memories of being taught tables in a rhythmic drone to the accompaniment of Miss Duthie's foot tapping and banging of pointer on her leg. We shot up and down the class like a yo-yo as we either succeeded or failed in answering a question. At times, it was hardly worth putting one's schoolbag down! Discipline was firmly enforced and self-discipline strongly encouraged, and though we at times rebelled, with little success, I think all of us must now admit that these were two lessons which were to be invaluable in later life.

Miss Barrie had just become Lady Superintendent in succession to the gentle Miss Anderson and so she led us into the 1930s — the 'Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' era. We were exactly as the Edinburgh School was depicted in that film. Deportment, lady-like behaviour, strictly enforced school uniform, upholding the honour and dignity of the School at all times, work hard and jolly hockey sticks. It is surprising that we did not all turn out like little prigs, but with healthy senses of humour, we emerged pretty well unscathed. Miss Barrie's description of us was as 'neither fish, flesh nor good red herring' — not exactly conducive to morale boosting, but nevertheless we were all the more determined, at the end of our schooldays to emerge as beautiful swans, and so confound our critic."

Colin Gibson is now well known as an artist and as journalist but fits in to the High School story as Art master and designer of the present School badge and colours. He tells us of the day when Ian Bain came into the Art Room and told him that, if we did not get a new School badge then, according to the Lord Lyon King of Arms then someone was liable to be beheaded! And so the badge worn today came into being along with the present tie, scarf etc. This we are told caused a lot of interest among all sections of the School community giving rise to a rumour that the new blazer was to be bright red!

Another story passed on by Mr Gibson may strike a chord among Old Boys of the 1930s. "Whenever I had a new class of small boys I used to say to them — 'Now this is your first visit to the Art Room. Look about you — there are a lot of ancient

things here. There's myself for a start (I was in my thirties), but these big statues are much older; they belong to the glorious days of ancient Greece. I think the Romans must have brought them here, when they tried and failed to conquer Caledonia. Now look at the desks you are sitting at. They're covered with the initials of the boys who sat here and used and misused them in the past. Who's got W.W.? You have. Good. That's William Wallace, who became Scotland's hero 700 years ago.

The youngsters knew fine I was joking, but they enjoyed hearing this, and it gave them a sense of tradition, as well as a realisation that they were the new scholars in the School's long history".

The School in wartime naturally enough stirred a great many memories. Gerald Burnett, now Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors describes one of his happy recollections of this period. "At the beginning of the war, some of the classrooms were converted into Air Raid shelters and the classes had to be farmed out. My father gave the use of our sitting room at 15 Inverary Terrace and there Miss Helen Falconer presided over a number of pupils aged from five to about twelve. Sophie Morrison, Pam Halley, 'Smoker' Duncan, 'Sleepy' Stewart and myself being the oldest group were sent to Tullideph Road where Miss Falconer's father, a retired headmaster, was a great help and encouragement to us all. Informality was the order of the day and I believe that we enjoyed our wee School as long as it lasted."

One of the Staff who joined the School during wartime was Tom Halliday and he recalls the Cadets at that time: "During the winter we did most of our training at the Bell Street Drill Hall and from Easter we trained at Dalnacraig. Each Friday the unit formed up outside the school then marched with Pipes and Drums to Dalnacraig. There was no traffic to get in the way. On our way to camp we marched from the School via Reform Street to one of the railway stations.

In wartime, 90 per cent of the boys were in the cadets and one memorable occasion for them was the camp at Kinghorn just after D-day. 'Warspite' was visited and her guns, worn out off Normandy, inspected. Just before leaving camp, the boys saw the minefields and the Forth blown up "in great cascades of water."

The air raid siren was very much part of this era and when the siren sounded the entire school made its way to the cellars of the Girls' School or the classroom air raid shelter in the Boys' School. There everyone remained until the 'all clear' sounded. Staff undertook firewatching duties remaining in school overnight when on duty. A casualty of the blackout which was part of wartime were the Literary Societies. However the Senior Boys pressed for the resumption of their society in 1943 and it was duly revived under the Presidency of Tom Halliday. Two boys on that first committee were Lord Ross and Admiral Grove. Nothing stood in the way of the Lit meetings, not even the blackout. Soon after, the Girls' Society was also revived under the Presidency of Miss Aileen Gray.

May Smith was another wartime recruit to the Staff and she tells of one activity of the early days of her career in the High School — the berrypicking. It started with a train journey to Blairgowrie via Lochee and Downfield. The daily routine was a long and strenuous one — "alarm clock set for 5 a.m. (double summertime) — rise, light kitchen fire, put large kettle and porridge pot on grate, waken girls for breakfast. Pickers depart for fields, start slicing loaves of bread, make sandwiches for pickers' — mid-yokin'. Cycle to Blairgowrie shops for rations — prepare lunch. Pickers return for lunch at noon. some return to fields, others sunbathe in garden. Evening — meal — followed by cycle run to Bridge of Cally, if sufficient energy left,

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or visit to cinema and/or fish and chip shop. End of day — midnight feast, pillow fight and dreams of raspberries all round.”

May Smith was involved also in another activity after the war when the House System was extended to include the girls and a wider range of activity. Originally the houses had been started by Mr McLaren in 1925 to encourage the playing of Rugby. He found three other enthusiasts and the four of them divided the boys of Classes IV to X into four Houses. They were named AIRLIE, in honour of the Earl who had connections with the School and on whose land at Cortachy the Cadets loved to camp; AYSTREE after the House in West Ferry occupied by Col. T. H. Smith then Chairman of the Directors; WALLACE after the great Scottish patriot who is believed to have been at school in Dundee in the 13th century. No suitable name could be found for the fourth house and it was named SCHOOL until a better name was found. It was not until 1944-45 that the name LINDORES replaced it. Each house got its colours and under the leadership of a House Master began the quest to see who would be the Champion. At the end of the season it was the red and black hoops of Wallace under Mr Hunter which defeated all comers. The others were Airlie in blue and white hoops under Mr Inglis, Aystree in claret and amber hoops under Mr Legge and School (the Wasps) in black and gold hoops under Mr McLaren. Apart from Rugby and a relay and a tug-of-war at the Sports as well as a relay at the Boys' Swimming Gala the houses plodded on until after the war.

By 1950 the Houses included girls and ladies of the Staff and they were to compete for a championship including Cricket, Tennis, Hockey, Rugby, Swimming and Athletics. Each pupil from L. V (now L. 7) was a member of a House and for 1/6 could buy a Badge inscribed with DHS and their house name on the new house colour, Airlie — red; Aystree — blue; Lindores — old gold and Wallace — white. The house masters and Mistresses who began this in 1950 were Mr Paton and Miss Gray (Airlie); Mr Edward Stewart and Miss Foggie (Aystree); Mr Murray and Miss Hutton (Lindores) and Mr Wardlaw and Miss May Smith (Wallace). In the first year of competition Airlie carried all before it and was the first name inscribed on the handsome Trophy presented by a group of Old Boys in 1951. Since then the system has developed gradually. Now all pupils from L.I to Form VI are involved and the range of activities is as exhaustive as can be, in that all School activities contribute to the house Championship. In this 750th year it is the hope that the enthusiasm is as strong as it was in 1951.

These memories are by no means complete. We have progressed very little beyond the war but the last forty years have been years of great change in DHS. As life progresses so it seems changes take place much more often and much more quickly. It would need another brochure to look at the last forty years.

The Last Thirty Years — 1959 — 1989

G. C. Stewart, M.A., Depute Rector

Sixty-five years ago Jessie Norrie prefaced her "Memories of the Old High School (1880-89)" with the thoughtful lines:

*"The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back."*

Now as then, such a meditation will surely strike a chord of memory in all those who in one way or another have known the High School during the last thirty years.

As always in reminiscence, it is the people we have known who loom large out of the shadows of time past and the High School has ever been rich in its human resources. This last quarter century has witnessed an almost complete change of cast as the older generation of staff has retired from centre stage to be succeeded — not replaced — by the present players. Likewise there have been significant changes in the membership and constitution of the Board of Directors which has faithfully directed the fortunes of the school during the three rectorships which span the period — those of D. W. Erskine (1955-70), E. M. Stewart (1970-77) and R. Nimmo (1977 — the present).

Former pupils will recall also with esteem and affection the many fine teachers and wonderful characters who, like the giants they were, stood astride the schooldays of generations of High School boys and girls. In my personal perspective, W. L. Marshall, Miss Whytock, Miss McNaughton, Tom McLaren, T. S. Halliday and W. More stand out as influential senior staff of my early years. The decade which followed was marked indelibly by impressive personalities like E. M. Stewart, Douglas R. Paton, A. P. Howat, Sandy Wardlaw, George Ritchie, Miss Dickie and Miss May Smith, ladies and gentlemen who gave the school aeons of service before retiring in the 1970s. Among more recently retired friends we recall memorable characters such as Tom Porteous, Mrs Nancy Elder, J. Stevenson, A. D. Alexander, W. P. Vannet, Miss May Lawson, Miss Edith Nicoll, Miss Isobel Anderson and W. D. Allardice. We remember also those members of staff whose untimely deaths plucked them from our midst and saddened our days — Bob Biggar, Joseph Jacuk, Walter Smith, Jim Connor and the tireless Aileen Gray. Former colleagues rich in wisdom and humanity who spent and were spent in the service of the School.

With equal readiness, memory calls up the faces and the names of former pupils — the brilliant scholars, the outstanding games players, the leaders of our school community — and over all the years, most memorable still, the scores of young people of sterling character and attractive personality who brought something of themselves, something special, into our school days.

In physical terms the school today is very much larger and better equipped than it was when, towards the end of 1959, the Rector reported the successful completion of the first phase of the Great Reconstruction. This had gutted the centre of the Main Building to provide a suite of modern science laboratories, a Rector's Study, Board Room and War Memorial Library and launched what was to be a more-or-less continuous building programme over the next two decades. The restrictions imposed by a city-centre site caused the school to swallow up its own

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internal living-space to provide numerous new classrooms for the increasing number of pupils in the Secondary Department and to permit the extension of the curriculum to include Spanish, Russian, Italian, Modern Studies, Economics and Business Studies, Food and Nutrition. To keep pace with the boom in the sciences, in the early sixties the West Wing of the Main Building was reconstructed to house another suite of science laboratories and at the same time the Art Department was relocated in more suitable accommodation. No one was unhappy to see the demolition of the old Dining Hut in Ireland's Lane when it was replaced by the vastly superior modern Dining Hall.

By the 1970s the Board had recognised that if the school was to satisfy the increased demand for its educational provision, then a wider school-complex would have to be created through the acquisition of neighbouring properties. Premises adjacent to the Girls' School were purchased to provide in stages a new, self-contained Preparatory Department, a well equipped Department of Economics and Business Studies and an attractive Reception and Staff Common Room area. In 1979 Bonar House was a major acquisition providing much needed accommodation in the form of Examination, Audio-Visual and Games Halls as well as a Careers Library, Bursar's Office and additional classrooms. In these spacious days a modern Home Economics unit was another valuable addition.

Through the 1980s the programme of development has gone on apace with the refurbishment of the Junior Department, the modernisation of the Technical Department, the re-equipment of the Language Laboratory and the Music Department and, to meet the requirements of the expanding curriculum, new Computer Laboratories and an Electronics Laboratory. To cope with the very considerable growth in the volume of educational administration, office accommodation has been extended and a Schools' computerised Administration and Management Project (SCAMP) introduced.

To mark this 750th Anniversary the Board has launched the Meadowside Project which will further enhance and expand the facilities of the school. A major reconstruction of Trinity Hall will provide a spacious, modern Resources Centre and private-study area and a large, multi-purpose Assembly Hall, while the development of the adjacent Meadowside property will give additional classrooms, further toilet and cloakroom accommodation, up-to-date Media Studies facilities and a small theatre area.

Nothing less than this impressive development programme would have permitted the school to take advantage of the opportunities presented during this era of educational expansion. The immediate objectives of the directors were to meet the ever-increasing demand for places and to cater for the changing distribution of pupils between the Junior School and the Secondary Department. Over the period to 1989 Junior School numbers were reduced (although this trend has been reversed with the creation of additional sections in L 5, 6 and 7) initially to meet the SED requirements of reduced class-size and to allow a more comfortable pupil-teacher ratio. In contrast the Secondary Department with nearly 750 pupils has increased by more than 50% and the secondary staff had grown in even greater proportion. In 1959 major departments such as English had 4 members of staff and a teaching capacity of English, History and Geography: today such departments are staffed by 8 subject specialists. Formerly the single Science department was manned by 4 gentlemen: 12 teachers now service three separate departments of science. Whereas the management team of 1959 consisted of the Rector, Second Master, Lady Warden and the institution that was Jack Stark, following the

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introduction of the New Guidance Structure in 1972, the Board of Studies currently comprises six.

The school is considerably larger than it was 30 years ago — and this despite the marked decline nationally in the number of pupils of school-age and in the face of steeply rising fees. These increases in fee levels (from £31.10/- p.a. in 1959) were sharpened by the coincidence of the phased withdrawal of grant-in-aid with a lengthy period of spiralling inflation. In 1959 Direct Grant covered some 60% of running costs: today the Assisted Places Scheme, while serving a useful purpose, accounts only for a small proportion of our budget of £2,500,000.

The increased demand for school places followed largely from the major change in educational philosophy which came to affect the mainstream of Scottish education in the 1960s. At that time the Education Act of 1944 came under heavy political attack for its elitist principle of selection of pupils for courses 'suitable to age, ability and aptitude'. The new philosophy stressed equality rather than equal opportunity and, when the politicians turned to pursue a policy of educational uniformity, secondary education was polarised into state and independent sectors. The High School of Dundee, determined to maintain selective academic education, had no alternative but to opt for independence. Following the phased withdrawal of grant the school became fully independent on 1st August, 1985.

With some 65-70% of the year group proceeding to the universities (and almost 100% to tertiary education) this decision was inevitable. In the 1960s the introduction of the Sixth Year Studies syllabuses had encouraged further the development of a strong Sixth Year and, following in the tradition of earlier scholars, this new generation of Sixth Formers soon proceeded to build a considerable record of academic success. In an era of continuous achievement, session 1973/74 was something of an 'annus mirabilis' with the school presenting six successful candidates in the Oxford and Cambridge Entrance and Scholarship Examinations and our scholars also winning first places in the Edinburgh Open, the Glasgow Open, the Dundee Open, a top award to St Andrews and another to Aberdeen. Session 1985/86 saw another vintage year with six Oxford entrants, University Scholarships to Glasgow and Dundee and Service Scholarships to the Army and the Royal Air Force. It has been a reflection of the strength of the School that over the years all subject departments have contributed to the stream of academic success.

With a much-increased number of pupils returning for Sixth Year (23 in 1959—92 in 1988), greater provision had to be made to promote also the personal and social development of these senior students. To this end, the Sixth Year Common Room in Bonar House has provided a necessary social focal-point and permitted a measure of independence to encourage, in this pre-university/college year, the development of self-discipline and mature attitudes. Increased opportunities to participate in the wider life of the community have further encouraged Sixth Formers to broaden their horizons and to assume responsibilities and in this respect the School Interact Club (a junior branch of Rotary International) — established in 1984 and already the largest in the U.K. — has been eminently successful.

One of the strengths of the school has been its aim to offer young people the widest opportunities to excel and it has been a joy to see our boys and girls develop all their varied talents. Very many pupils have found pleasure and satisfaction in a lively musical dimension where orchestra, opera, chamber group, folk group and numerous choirs have sustained high levels of performance.

Likewise, the arts and crafts have been developed to offer a widening range of interest and, on Friday, Period 9, the pupils of today are no longer directed to 'Cadets/Guides or Prep' but may choose from over forty hobby and interest activities.

The C.C.F. goes from strength to strength The Pipes and Drums — so long under the care of Pipe-Major Donald McLeod — continue to add their own memorable ingredient to our Armistice Services, Sports Days and Summer Camps. Popular recent innovations have included the introduction of girls to the Contingent since 1981 and the establishment of a Royal Naval Section in 1986. The provision of an eight-lane 25 metre Indoor Range in Lower Dens Works has done much to revive and to raise shooting standards: seven teams now operate and several of our cadets have won international honours in .22 shooting.

The expansion of this wider field of our educational provision was recognised by the appointment of a Director of Extra-curricular Activities in 1984 and the school now operates a programme of such activities during every day of the week. In recent years too the school has increasingly pursued links with the schools abroad and pupils have enjoyed the benefits of foreign travel in exchanges to Spain, Germany and France, orchestra tours to Austria and Czechoslovakia and sports tours to The Netherlands and to Ontario and British Columbia in Canada.

During this era the school has earned also a high reputation for achievement in sport. Our playing fields have never been busier, our programme never so varied and our sportsmen and women never more eminent with pupils and former pupils winning international honours in rugby, hockey, cricket, tennis, athletics, golf, squash, swimming, ski-ing, shooting and fencing. In 1989, for the second successive season, the Scottish Schoolboys Rugby XV contained three High School boys — including the captain — while one of our girls won a place in the Scottish Schoolgirls Hockey XI. Excellent grounds at Dalnacraig and since 1976 at Mayfield with its first-class amenities, have provided the strong base for this thriving activity but it is to a committed staff — and mentors like W. D. Allardice — that the school owes its outstanding record of sportsmanship.

While it is to be expected that an historian's contribution to this anniversary edition would take the retrospective view, what we really seek at such a time is a perspective. Thus we have looked back over these 30 years not in order to bask in the evening light of former glories — although that is pleasant enough — but rather in the sharp light of experience to take stock of our present situation and reassure ourselves that we are not merely marking time but always moving forward.

The Years Ahead

The Rector

Looking back over 750 years, even in a brief and episodic way as in this volume, should not tempt us to dwell solely, on the past. We must also, having drawn strength, encouragement and inspiration from the look forward to the future. As a certain sage once remarked: "I am interested in the future, because that is where I hope to spend the rest of my life!" And so, what of the future for D.H.S.?

Several trends are clearly discernible at present and are set to continue well into the 1990s. Firstly, there is the development and extension of the School's accommodation in order to adapt our premises to the requirements of a changing curriculum. This task, undertaken at various times in our history, has seemed virtually without interruption since the 1950s. Its present expression is to be seen in the Meadowside Project. Even when that ambitious plan is completed, other tasks must surely follow.

Secondly, sweeping changes are currently taking place in the curriculum offered to pupils. The sciences in recent years have increased in importance. Computer Studies and Electronics, not to mention Craft and Design and Technology are staking a claim for a place in the time-table. With the arrival of 1992 and the single European market, modern languages are set to acquire a new relevance. The new emphasis on oral work in English will give impetus to Drama and Media Studies. As well as the proliferation of new subjects all schools are presently embarked on a national programme, designed to introduce radical change in curriculum content and methods of assessment, and set to last almost to the year 2000. It is a far cry from those far-off days, when earlier generations of pupils were punished for not speaking Latin all the time in school, but lapsing into the common tongue!

Thirdly, with the adoption of independent status in 1985, the School has sought to build up the necessary endowments to support its new status. The Bursary Fund launched on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Main Building, has not yet reached its target of half a million pounds by 1989, but is already four-fifths of the way there. The success of this project — one that must continue to be worked at well into the future is most encouraging. The other success story is undoubtedly that of the Trust Appeal Fund, launched in the early 1970s, when the crucial decision to move towards complete independence had to be taken. The initial collection of funds, their careful investment over the years and the current position, which allows the Fund to contribute to projects and provide facilities for the benefit of the School, must be a source of great satisfaction to all who contributed in the early days and whose vision has now been so splendidly realised. On the occasion of the present anniversary the Trust Appeal Fund has gifted to the School a second all-weather pitch at Dalnacraig. And the newcomer whose recent arrival on the scene complements both the above initiatives, is the Patrons' Association, reconstituted from the former Subscribers. The task the Patrons have embraced is the traditional one of their predecessors, namely to take a lead in fund-raising, intended to enhance the buildings of the School. The Meadowside Project is their first endeavour in this field. In the years that lie ahead the importance of all three supportive agencies is set to increase significantly.

Fourthly, a School is no more an island than a person. It is for this reason that we value so highly the support and encouragement we receive from the constituent groups of our wider school community. We are very fortunate in having such thriving groups. The Old Girls' Club assists the School by operating a Thrift

Shop, through their fund-raising activities, and by keeping their members in touch with School developments. The Old Boys' Club, always strong numerically, has recently seen a further increase in its numbers as a consequence of the initiatives taken to set up satellite clubs in Edinburgh and London, with plans in preparation for others. The Athletic Union continues to provide a variety of sports and social activities for pupils after they have left school. The recently formed Parents' Association has been a great success, organising a variety of activities for the benefit of parents, pupils and staff and by its support for the school in many other ways. And the Patrons' Association, mentioned above, is set to play a valuable role in the years ahead. The importance of all those groups — and others yet to be formed — is crucial in the future development of the school.

Looking ahead from the threshold of the nineties we see in front of us a period of not only rapid but possibly also radical change in education. The millennium appears not yet to have been reached. Imagination as well as effort will be needed to implement the changes confronting us and to adapt to the requirements of the times. Throughout its long history the School has done just that, and there is no reason to believe that it will not continue to do so in the future, as well as, or even better than, in the past.

All of us, who are associated with the School at present — Directors, staff, pupils, parents, school community — are the heirs of a rich educational heritage. This heritage, however, must never be allowed to become a museum. In the Centenary Magazine, recently published by a large, successful business, is to be found the following statement:

“Two types of company survive more than a century — those with a unique product or service, and those which keep pace with the rapid changes in society.” This is also true of schools such as ours and sums up the challenge we face. Drawing encouragement from the past and enjoying support from the present we can look forward with confidence to the future.

R. NIMMO
Rector.

Acknowledgement

I am greatly indebted to all our friends who so generously allowed themselves to be prevailed on to contribute to the pages of this commemorative volume compiled to mark the 750th anniversary of the School. To them I wish to express my sincere thanks.

I am also grateful for the assistance received from my colleagues Mr G. C. Stewart, Mr J. Baxter and Mr J. T. Cunningham in the realisation of this task.

It is not very often that we at The Royal Bank of Scotland (founded in 1727) find ourselves congratulating an institution older than ourselves.

Therefore it is with particular pleasure that we sponsor this booklet which marks the 750th anniversary of the founding of The High School of Dundee.

We would therefore like to offer our warmest greetings to the School Board, Rector, Mr Nimmo, his staff, to all staff past and present on reaching this remarkable milestone.

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