

Recollections from Tom Lambert

I have an elephantine memory for certain periods of my life and the people and thus can trawl up some quirky episodes. The problem is knowing where to start and what is of any interest to other people. Whilst at Highland Road, the boys in the C & D streams did woodwork and metalwork instead of Latin and we had to use the facilities at Kingston Road School and Reginald Road School.

This often meant that special buses were laid on by Portsmouth Corporation (Wartime Utility Bedford 32 seater single deckers). Separating the streams in this way was a continuation from my father's time when the school was divided into 2 sections: the Latin Side and the Dockyard Side. Part of the envisaged function of the original Higher Grade School was to provide boys for management and technical roles in the Dockyard. PT lessons, whilst we were at Highland Road, took place in a private Gymnasium in Devonshire Avenue.

Mr. Hobson had the mightiest Gym shoe for chastising boys and if any boy had forgotten his kit he had to wear an enormous pair of ladies' elasticated bloomers - kit was remembered in future! Between May and July, if the weather was fine, then PT was on the beach. The teacher(s) would bask in the sun and the boys had to go in the sea which was very chilly in early May. I never learned to swim whilst at school and no teacher ever troubled to teach us that I was aware of. Ian Watson did, however, encourage boys who could swim to take part in various out of school events. Football and Cricket etc, as well as athletics, took place at Dundas Lane or Salterns and the annual School Sports Day at Alexandra Park.

Only some of the classrooms at Highland Road had radiator heating (from a large coke-fired boiler) the rest had open fires at the front of each classroom. The teacher would warm his backside nicely whilst those of us further back froze.

In 1950 I was the only boy in the class with a wrist watch (a ladies' watch which had been returned to me by the police 3 months after I had handed it in to them having found it in a puddle). The masters all wore gowns and any boy caught smoking or reported by a member of the public as having been seen smoking was caned.

My mother was one of the first parents in my form to have a fridge and I was prevailed upon to take ice to school for use in Physics lessons.

All this and lots more available but I don't really want to become a bore so let me know what sort of memories might be of interest.

Tom