

Past Mingles with Present at Grammar School Jubilee Gala



(Photos Holme, Long Eaton)

A Scene from H.M.S. Pinafore which ended the Grammar School Jubilee Celebrations.

MORE than 1,600 people milled through the grounds and corridors of the Long Eaton Grammar School on Saturday, when an open day and gala was held as part of the Jubilee celebrations

The crowds made up of large numbers of old scholars and former members of staff as well as parents of the present generation of pupils, exceeded all expectations and the printed issue of the programme was soon sold out.

LINK WITH EARLY DAYS

A link with the early days of the school was provided by Mrs. Mary Attenborough who performed the opening ceremony on the School Field As the daughter of the first headmaster, the legendary Samuel Clegg as wife of Mr F. Attenborough, one of the teachers in those pioneering days and later principal of Leicester University College, and as mother of two nationally known personalities, Richard and David Attenborough, Mrs. Attenborough remarked humorously that she had never had chance to become known in her own right She said, however, that her various associations with the school had led her to look on it as another home. Remarking on the deep and far-reaching influence which her father, Samuel Clegg had had on all his pupils, Mrs. Attenborough said that her famous son Richard often met people who introduced themselves: You will not know me, but I was a pupil of your father's! "Then they tell my son," she said, "how much father meant to them." The chairman of the school governors, Mr. E. W. Roper who presided, introduced the chairman of the Long Eaton Council, Mr. W. S. Geary who spoke of the character which the school had acquired over the years, and wished it well for the future.

HEAD BOY

A vote of thanks to the distinguished visitors was proposed by the Head Boy of the school, Roger Graham. He told the audience that the proceeds from the day's activities and from other events, during the Jubilee Week, would go towards the building of a Sports Pavilion on the new sports field, as a permanent reminder of the school's first fifty years. The various forms in the school had each erected around the field a money-raising sideshow and visitors were encouraged to try their luck at knocking down tin-cans, bowling at skittles, have their fortune told and all the usual accompaniments of a summer fete. Many people, however, some of them intent on reviving old memories, preferred to tour the school buildings and look at the exhibitions of school life and activities that had been staged by the various departments. For two hours long queues of visitors thronged the corridors and staircases, while pupil's and staff endeavoured to explain the exhibits. In the new science block, a source of constant admiration, experiments in physics and chemistry were shown in operation, and in the biology laboratory a neatly dissected rat pinned to a board caused a minor sensation. The German room was gay with maps and coloured pictures of Germany, but in the room dedicated to French studies the exhibits appealed to other senses besides the eye. While a tape-recorders kept up a continual background of French popular music and dramatics, visitors were invited to taste French cheeses or buy a ticket for a raffle for French wines on show. Meanwhile queues stretched down the staircase for the half-hourly showings of a short comedy film, "The Tasks of Fred Hercules," which had been made by the Lower VI. For many visitors, however, this was a day for reviving old friendships

U.S. VISITOR

Among the former scholars who have been visiting the school during the Jubilee celebrations is Mrs. Millicent Ashden, who now lives at Meriden, Connecticut, U.S.A. Mrs Ashden was one of the original pupils when the present building was opened, and the classes were moved there from the Central Methodist school room.

Among these present were number of personalities from the early years, including Mr. S. H. Hickling, the only surviving member of the original Board of Governors, Miss R. Taylor and Miss J. Turner, two former senior mistresses, Mr. S. Mansfield, senior master for many years, Mr. F. E. Macdonald, a well remembered mathematics master Mille. Goniche a French assistante teacher from the 1920's, Mrs. M. V. Woods, one of the first pupils, Miss Dediccoat, an early member of the staff, and Mrs. Frost, chief cook for, 32 years. Mr. F. E. Roberts, headmaster from 1930-1957, was prevented from attending by his duties as a Cambridge examiner. According to early estimates, the money raised towards the sports, Pavilion from this day of celebration and memories will total £200.

COMMEMORATION SERVICE

The Long Eaton Grammar School is important not only to those who go there, but to the whole of Long Eaton, said Mr. Whitfield Scorer, former Divisional Education Officer for South-East Derbyshire, speaking at a Commemoration Service held in Mount Tabor Church last Thursday, as part of the Jubilee celebrations. Mr. Scorer recalled the early days of the century, when the growing need for cultural and scientific teaching led to the passing of the Secondary Education Act, and the building of what is now the Grammar School.

EARLY BUILDERS

"Those early builders," he said, "who, brought those stones together, belonged to a time which to us seems. very peaceful and remote, very settled, but to them seemed full of strange, chaotic things. Unless they did something about educating their children, the nation would fall behind the world." In 1910, he recalled, the school opened with 92 pupils. To-day there were 630, and the attendance book shows that 4,500 people have passed through the school over the fifty years."Since that day that faith brought those stones together, 4,500 people have been enabled, either at their own request or at the request of their parents, to get an education that was based on Matthew Arnold's idea that culture was acquirable in one of two ways, either by study of a language, the humanities or by study of a natural science."

The one mistake that was made, said Mr. Scorer, was by "throwing overboard technical education to the evening classes."

The Long Eaton Grammar School, however had not just provided the means of a cultural education, it had turned out men and women prepared in character to meet the world, due largely to the "pastoral care" shown by their teachers.

DEVELOPED A CARE

"The teachers," he said, were not only prepared to teach the new languages they were not done with that - they also began to look upon their school as clergyman looks upon his parish.

There developed a care for each child, so that they got out of each child the best that was in it."

Grammar School pupils, Mr. Scorer went on, were taught not only to place their learning at the service of the world, but to place themselves also. "What mean ye by these stones?" he asked the present day pupils ranged before him. "Have you ever thought of it, as you walk down Tamworth Road and through those gates? Those stones have a meaning not only for you but for the whole of Long Eaton. Do not take them too much for granted."

"For fifty years men and women who care for learning, who care also for character, have given their strength and their skill for this purpose, that you may take out into the world not only the challenge of their strength and skill, but also the challenge of selflessness and service."

FORMER PUPILS

Taking part in the service were two former pupils of the school, Mr. Albert Henderson, a teacher at the Hallcroft School, Ilkeston, and a lay preacher, who read the first lesson, and the Rev. Raymond Jowett, a Methodist minister at Loughborough, who said a prayer for the school. An introductory prayer was said by the Rev. R. Kettell, resident minister at the Mount Tabor Church. The Headmaster of the Grammar School, Mr. G. Gray, read the second lesson.

HISTORIES IN SOUND AND PRINT

A history of the Grammar School, which is being prepared to mark the fiftieth anniversary, will be published in September.

The result of considerable research and collation of information, the work will record, in addition to the known facts of the school's development, the memories and anecdotes of generations of pupils and members of staff.

At the same time a history of another kind is already in existence, and is continually being added to. Since the school acquired a tape-recorder some years ago, all sorts of occasions, some official, some unofficial, have been preserved in sound. These have now been edited and arranged in chronological order, on a single tape, and give a fascinating cross-section of school life.

The items range from delightful folk-singing of a party of children from Rahlstedt, the Grammar School's "twin" school in Germany, to the powerful noise of the school jazz band, at a Christmas party three years ago, from the speeches on formal occasions to ragged versions of the Sixth-form song an annual performance in which pupils poke gentle fun at members of the staff.

A complete recording of last Thursday's Commemoration Service is the latest edition to these archives of sound.

EXAMINATIONS STOPPED

REHEARSAL

The cast of "H.M.S. Pinafore," which was performed at the Long Eaton Grammar School on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday as part of the Jubilee celebrations, had to break off rehearsals for six weeks while the school hall was used for examinations. They were left with only a week to put the final touches to the production.

(Continued on Page 6) – sadly this is missing