WESTMINSTER CITY SCHOOL AND ITS ORIGINS
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by
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This history is dedicated to Henry Cooper, pageant master of the school’s tercentenary pageant in 1924 and senior history master 1937–56, who, after 41 years teaching four decades of boys, devoted many years of his leisure in retirement to research into the origins of Westminster City School.
Introduction

Henry Cooper, my form master 60 years ago, devoted long periods of his retirement to patient research into the first three centuries of the school's history. He consulted documents in the British Museum Library, the Public Records office, and various archives in Westminster.

Sadly he died before he could write a history based on his research and I have used his research material for the chapters on the Brown, Green, Black and Blue Coat Schools. I have also consulted the informative History of Emanuel School for cross checking and cross reference.

In 1894 Robert Goffin published a Brief Account of the Foundation and History of the United Westminster Schools from 1874 to 1894, and I have drawn from this the early days in Palace Street. From 1906 to 1966 the admirable School Magazine reported school life and activities in full. Unfortunately this style of School Magazine is now out of favour and I am indebted to the Foundation Office for their ready co-operation in covering recent years.

In 100 years the teaching staff has been second to none. I have not attempted to mention them by name – it would need a separate volume to do justice to their contribution. Similarly schoolboys have gone from the school to distinguished careers in medicine, law, commerce, industry, public life, science, the arts, the stage, films and music. Here again it would need a separate volume.

Like so many old boys who will read this history, I owe an enormous debt to the school. I hope that in a small way this history will go some way to repay the debt.

When I spoke to Henry Cooper shortly before he retired he said “I don’t want to go – it’s such fun”. To say this after over 40 years at Westminster City is not only a tribute to the school but to the man himself. He in his researches, and myself in writing this history, have approached the task in the same spirit, and I hope we have communicated to readers some of the fun.
Chapter 1
The Brown Coat School

Emanuel Hospital was founded by Lord and Lady Dacre: Gregory Fiennes who was the tenth Lord Dacre of the South married Ann Sackville in 1558. Lady Dacre was a maid of honour and second cousin to Queen Elizabeth I, and daughter of Sir Richard Sackville, who was so successful and astute as Treasurer of the Exchequer and Steward of the Royal Manors in Kent and Sussex that he earned the nick-name “Fill-Sack”.

Lord and Lady Dacre lived in Westminster at Sturton House near to Tothill Fields. Dacre Street off Victoria Street today marks the site of the house, and Strutton Ground (a corruption of Sturton Ground) the gardens to the house.

Of pious and benevolent disposition, Lord and Lady Dacre wished to alleviate the distress of the poor who lived in Westminster. They planned to found a hospital for the relief of the aged poor and the education of children. In 1590 Lady Dacre petitioned Queen Elizabeth for a royal charter in these words:

“Whereas your Majesty’s petitioner aforesaid hath long been and is desirous to establish and endow an Hospital in this City of Westminster for the comfort and entertainment of certain of the honest and aged poor of the said City, as well men and women, and also for the instruction of certain of the boys and girls of the said City in the knowledge of the Christian religion and such other learning as may fit them to earn their livings in soberness and industry. Therefore your Majesty’s said petitioner humbly prayeth Your Majesty’s good leave and countenance in this design. And also your Majesty’s royal charter under the Great Seal of England”.

Although Lord and Lady Dacre hoped to see the hospital opened during their lifetime, Lord Dacre was not by nature a man to produce a scheme quickly. He died in 1594 and it was left to Lady Dacre to lay the foundations for translating their dream into bricks and mortar.

In December 1594, three months after the death of Lord Dacre, Lady Dacre made her will. In it she said that she and her lord in his lifetime were purposed to erect a hospital in Westminster or in some
place near adjoining, and to give £110 in money towards the building and edifying thereof, and £40 a year in lands for ever towards the relief of aged people, and bringing up of children in virtue and good and laudable arts in the same hospital, whereby they might the better live in time to come by their honest labour. Lady Dacre increased this provision and endowment by directing her executors ("if I shall not live to perform this myself in my lifetime"), out of the issues, sales and profits of her manors, lands and tenements, to cause to be erected and built a meet and convenient house with rooms of habitation for twenty poor folks, and twenty other poor children, employing and bestowing thereupon £300.

Lady Dacre died in May 1595, 5 months after making her will and less than a year after Lord Dacre. They were buried in Chelsea Old Church, as they also owned a house in Chelsea which Lady Dacre inherited from her mother.

Lord and Lady Dacre died without heir to the title or estates as their only son died in infancy. Lady Dacre in her will therefore increased the endowment by assuring to the hospital, which she wished to be named Emanuel Hospital, the Manor of Brandesburton in Yorkshire, leased at that time for 100 years at a yearly rental of £100 with reversion to the poor of the hospital.

Lady Dacre named four friends as her executors, and she persuaded one of them, Edward More, to set aside 4 acres of his land in Westminster for the hospital. The hospital with its gardens and courtyard was built on an acre, and the remainder let on a tenancy to one William Colbeck to make a small addition to the revenue. When the work was completed the executors applied to Queen Elizabeth for a Charter of Incorporation, which was granted on 17 December, 1601. Two months later More, by now Sir Edward More, gave the land to the hospital for a nominal sum—"in consideration of some twenty shillings of lawful money of England to him beforehand paid by the said poor of Emanuel Hospital". He deserves to be remembered as another benefactor of the foundation. At the same time the Manor of Brandesburton in the county of York, together with appurtenances, lands, tenancies and hereditaments passed into the possession of the hospital, and the rental of £100 a year became a regular income.

The Charter of Incorporation ordained that "the said executors, during their natural lives, and the life of the over liver of them, and after their decease then the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London shall be, and for ever hereafter shall be called Governors of the said
Hospital and the possessions of the said Hospital”.

For 20 years the hospital was governed by the executors. The last survivor, Sir Edward More, (the over liver of them), died in 1623, and responsibility passed to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, who appointed two of their number to act as Governors. By this time the hospital was satisfying, in part, the intention of the foundress by sheltering 20 aged poor from the parishes where she owned property in the proportion of Westminster 17, Chelsea 2 and Hayes in Middlesex 1. The participation of Chelsea was dependent upon the inhabitants of the parish keeping the church and the Dacre tomb in good condition and dry and clean. But even Lady Dacre could not have foreseen the necessity for the marble tomb, (with Lord Dacre in effigy in Tudor armour and Lady Dacre in a gown with ruff at the neck), to be restored faithfully after severe bomb damage in the Second World War three centuries later.

When the City of London became responsible for Emanuel Hospital nearly 30 years after the death of Lady Dacre no provision had been made for bringing up twenty poor children “in virtue and good and laudable arts in the same hospital” as directed by her in her will, and included in the Charter of Incorporation. Except for regularly appointing two aldermen as governors, the City Corporation took little interest in the hospital, and no effort was made to provide for the 20 children, presumably because all available funds were expended on providing for the adults in the hospital.

This remained the case for another 50 years until in 1673 two aldermen, not themselves acting as Governors, produced a report. As a result of this report statutes were made to tighten up the administration of the hospital; the statutes also said that it was the intention of the Governors to give effect to Lady Dacre’s wishes regarding the admission of children as soon as the revenues permitted. This would mean additional buildings, as the existing hospital buildings were adequate only for the old folk. These buildings were ageing and in need of repair so the Governors had to wait until the 100 years lease of the Brandesburton lands fell in, to be renewed at a rental nearly fourfold.

The almshouses for the old people were renovated by 1701, and after this the Governors proceeded at their usual leisurely pace in establishing a school, as it was not until 1728 that accommodation for children was added. Four years later the City Fathers decided that the revenues were then sufficient to maintain not only the twenty poor men and women, but also twenty poor children. Lady
Dacre’s original intention 138 years earlier had been, in accordance with the ideas of her day, that the old people in the hospital would give the boys craft training and the girls domestic training (good and laudable arts) so that they could earn their living when they grew up. But in the 18th century there was a growing demand for elementary education, so the Aldermen came to the conclusion that “some honest and industrious clergyman, who has a wife, be nominated and appointed to instruct the children”, and to read prayers to old and young in the chapel.

The Aldermen recommended that the Master and Mistress should have twelve pounds per annum for each child, for which they should provide them with meat and drink, and wash them, and teach the boys to read, write and cast accounts, and the girls to read, write and work plain work.

The school was finally opened in 1736, with 10 boys and 10 girls between the ages of 7 and 15. In the next 10 years a school uniform of brown serge coats and breeches with brown woollen caps for the boys, and brown serge gowns for the girls had evolved, and the school became known as the Brown Coat School.

The first clergyman appointed as Master to teach, provide for, and discipline the children was the Rev. Thomas Bolton. His yearly stipend was £240, out of which he had to provide the children with bread, meat, drink, fire, candles and washing. It was later laid down that he was to spend £10 a year on each child, the remaining £40 a year being the salary of the Master and his wife, who also enjoyed free lodging.

School hours were long and started at six in the morning in the summer, and seven o’clock in the winter. There was a break for dinner from 11 to 1, when school continued until 5. To start the day each child was allowed for breakfast three ounces of best wheaten bread (but no butter), and small beer. The Governors ordained “that the small beer shall be of equal goodness with that usually sold for eight shillings a barrel; and that each child shall drink as much as they desire at each meal”. Small beer was a weak and thin beer, preferable to the often polluted water supplies of the period.

In 1794 the Governors sought power by Act of Parliament to increase the numbers of old people and children admitted to the hospital. This did not lead to an immediate large increase at the school, two extra girls being admitted a year later. For the boys the Governors opened a branch of the school in Yorkshire at Brandesburton, with ten boys. Then in 1802 they decided that a school in Yorkshire was outside the terms of the charity, and
decided instead to increase the number of children at Emanuel to twenty boys and twenty girls. By 1824 a new schoolroom and dormitory had been built, but it was to be another 20 years before the children’s numbers increased to 60 in 1847; ten years later the numbers rose to 68. Some of these children came from Brandesburton, the parish which provided the charity with its main revenues.

As the 19th century progressed, the Governors’ statutes aimed at ensuring a reasonable standard of education, and of admitting a type of child which would benefit from a good basic education, rather than poor children in need. Parents were to be “persons of respectability and householders of three years standing”. From 1844 classroom hours, although still long, were relaxed a little. From March to November children were awakened at 6 a.m., with one hour allowed for ablutions, matron’s inspection and prayers in chapel. School was from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour’s break for breakfast at 8 a.m. and two hours for dinner at midday. Supper at 6 p.m. and lights out at 9 p.m. Winter was a trifle less strenuous. Up at 7, breakfast at 8 and no school before 9. Schooling finished earlier at 4 p.m., but children had to be in bed by 8 p.m. By now milk and water had replaced small beer at breakfast, but “as much as requisite” was still served at dinner and supper.

Perhaps small beer gave a taste for something stronger for in April 1859 “The boys took a walk on Monday to Kensington Gardens with Mr. Shaughnessy, who reported on their return that Davies had run out of the gardens into Kensington and come back unwell. He confesses to have gone into a public house and drunk a pint of porter”.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Governors acknowledged the rise in the cost of living by raising the stipend of the Master and his wife to £50 a year each “which, with the house and garden, free from taxes, will be found sufficient to induce a respectable couple to accept the Trust, and discharge its various duties”. This enabled them to appoint the Rev. R.J. Waters, D.D., and his wife in 1804, and they ruled the hospital for 54 years. In 1822 inflation caused by the French wars and the industrial revolution was recognised when the annual salary of Master and Mistress together was raised to £150, with house and garden and 15 chaldron of coals. By now the Governors placed contracts for the provision of food for the children, relieving the Master of this responsibility.

By the middle of the 19th century the boys were instructed in the Holy Scriptures, elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, English
grammar, and the rudiments of history and book-keeping sufficient to fit them to become clerks or apprentices. Girls were taught the Holy Scriptures, reading, writing and arithmetic, grammar, needlework and the domestic duties of the establishment to fit them for domestic service. The pupils were children of shopkeepers, artisans and other wage earners rather than the poorest class envisaged by the foundress 350 years before.
In 1624 the Churchwardens of St. Margaret's, Westminster, built a school, the children of which were dressed in green, so that the school became known as The Green Coat School.

In 1633 Charles I granted a Charter of Incorporation which read:

"Charles by the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc. To all to whom these present letters must come, Greeting: Whereas divers of our loving subjects dwelling within our City of Westminster have resolved to settle a certain House, in which poor boys and girls of tender years may not only carefully be maintained with meat, drink and apparel, but also be instructed in manual arts, in a certain part of a farm of the Dean and Chapter of the Church of St. Peter's, Westminster, and have humbly supplicated us, so much as in us is, to found and erect that House into an Hospital, . . . . know ye that we, being willing to further their pious intentions . . . . do will and ordain that that House be an Hospital, and that the same hereafter be called by the name of the Hospital of St. Margaret's in the City of Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, of the Foundation of King Charles . . . .".

The Charter also ordained that forever thereafter there be 20 honest and discreet men within the City and Parish dwelling, who shall stand Governors of the Hospital for perpetual time to come. The first 20 were nominated in the Charter, which gave them power after the death of any of the Governors, or when any of them shall go to dwell in any other places, or from his place shall be lawfully removed, to nominate one other honest discreet man dwelling within the Parish and City of Westminster to the place of him so departing or going away or removing.

The troubled political situation of the mid seventeenth century must have made things difficult for the charitably minded, and when the Civil War (1649–60) was over the Churchwardens obtained from Charles II an annual grant of £100 to be shared between the hospital and the poor of the Parish. Each year the Churchwardens had to petition "his Majestie praying that the sum of £100 yearely given by his Majestie for the use of the poore of this parish maybe continued and thus disposed of viz. (£50 thereof to be Imployed yearely for the support of the Hospital of Greene Coat Boyes in Tothull Fields in this parish founded by his late Majestie King Charles the first of
ever blessed memory and the other £50 to be Imployed by the Churchwardens for the tyme being for the use of the poore of this parish as formerly it hath beene) And that his Majestie would be Gratioulsy pleased to grant a privy Seal for the renewing of the said £100 yearely and Imploying the same as above expressed”.

The school entirely depended on charitable bequests and further assistance was received from Sarah, Duchess of Somerset, who by her will of 1686, left £200 to bind 30 boys apprentices to be chosen out of the Green Coat Boys; £200 “as a stock for the 30 boys till they should have served their apprenticeships”; £100 to the Governors of Green Coat Hospital for an increase of the stock of the said hospital; and £1,000 to be laid out in purchasing lands in fee simple towards the maintenance of the said Green Coat boys”.

Another benefactor was Mr. Emery Hill, Governor and sometime Treasurer. In 1677, after his death, there is a report of “considerable additional maintenance given to the hospital for the better maintenance of the poore children here, by the charitable benevolence of Mr. Emery Hill, lately deceased”. This improved “the dyetting of every boy weekly, in this house”, and also provided a “gowne for the present Schoole Master”.

At least one bequest was anonymous, as in 1659, £50 was given by a “concealed person” for the benefit of the hospital. Not all of the income was charitable, for the accompts of the Churchwardens of St. Margaret’s, Westminster, in 1628 show an item “Received of divers persons the parishioners of this parish, for their fines for swearing and being drunk, and for the breach of the Sabaoth, and being otherwise presented acc. to the penal laws, as by a particular of their names and several fines appeareth, which hath been employed for the use of the hospitall children, the some of £3. 9s. 4d.”.

The Hospital also benefited from £500 provided by Sir John Cutler for the purchase of property the income from which was to be used for apprenticing poor boys, preferably from the Green Coat School.

The aim to give boys a good start in life and a trade to learn as apprentices was not always an unqualified success. In 1760 the Governors instructed that a notice should be affixed outside the hospital: “If any youths, who hath been educated and bound and apprenticed at the expence of this Hospital shall on Sundays or any other time presume to come and give any disturbance in the said Hospital, to any person belonging thereunto or endeavour to corrupt the minds of boys by bad advice, etc., the Governors at a
General Meeting on Thursday the 21st August, 1760, have resolved to prosecute such person or persons and publicly to correct or expel every boy belonging to the Hospital that shall misbehave by such bad advice”.

All the boys did not respond to the discipline of the hospital. In 1738 six boys who went out without leave at 3 p.m. and did not return until 9 p.m. were ordered to be “whipt in the presence of Governors”. This did not act as a deterrent in every case as three months later two boys were expelled for going without leave, and a third boy (first fault) “corrected and continued”.

The six boys who did not return until 9 p.m., apart from being absent without leave, were an hour late for bed. The incident happened in December when the hour for children to retire to rest was laid down as 8 p.m. Boys rose at 6 a.m. in the summer and 7 a.m. in the winter, retiring at 9 p.m. in the summer and 8 p.m. in the winter. School was 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. summer, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. winter with an hour’s school after supper in winter. Breakfast was simple bread and butter, with milk or water, and supper bread and cheese with beer. The main collation was dinner at midday, when beer was also served.

Although the Green Coat uniform was provided out of Hospital funds, there was a list of necessaries to be brought with each boy admitted. In 1746, in addition to shirts and other necessaries to be worn with the uniform, he had to bring a knife, fork, pewter porringer, spoon and chamberpot. Also two combs, one fine, one large. The fine comb was necessary for hair cleanliness. Head care was important, for in 1675, 3 boys “having sore heads which is very dangerous and infexion to the rest of the children” their mothers were ordered to take them home in order to cure them, “their mothers to be carefull to keep them at home and not to let them lye about in the streets”.

There were originally 20 boys on the foundation who were lodged, clothed, maintained and taught to read and write. An early experiment of admitting girls was not persevered with and it became a school for boys, who were chosen from “poor and decayed housekeepers and others having a legal settlement in the parishes” of St. Margaret and St. John. They were presented in rotation as vacancies occurred, by the twenty Governors and the numbers in the school varied as the money available for their maintenance fluctuated. As the income of the foundation increased during the eighteenth century the number of scholars was increased to 24. The outbreak of the French Revolution, however, led to increases in the
price of all the necessaries of life, and the Governors allowed the numbers to fall to 21 by 1819. But as the Master was permitted to admit additional pupils, both boarders and day-boys, for whom he could charge fees, there were at this time 12 boarders and 30 day-boys in addition to the foundation scholars so that the school was educating a total of 63 boys.

At this time the income of the foundation amounted to £723 per annum, consisting of £593 from rents, £50 from the Royal Bounty and £80 from the investment of £2,475 in Consols. The average annual expenditure was £697 of which £619 was spent on clothing, maintaining, and educating the boys, including the Master’s salary and other incidental expenses, whilst £78 was spent on taxes, repairs, ground rents, insurances, and collecting the rents. There was a cash balance in hand of £724, largely due to the receipt in 1818 of £1,200 for the renewal of the lease of the “Green Coat Boy” public house.

The Schoolmaster was paid £30 per annum, increased to £40 as time went by, and his wife received £20. A further £20 per annum was allowed for the Schoolmaster’s board and washing and £18 for that of his wife. In addition he had the use of a house and garden and was provided with coal and candles and two female servants. If the Schoolmaster was not married the salary of £20 for his wife was paid for the employment of a school mistress. He employed an usher, that is an assistant master, at his own expense.

The Hospital which occupied the site on which now stands the rear portion of the Army and Navy Stores was thus described by M.E.C. Walcott in his “Memorials of Westminster” (1851):

“The Hospital of St. Margaret consists of a large quadrangle. Upon the east side are the schoolroom, lavatory, and dormitories. The Master’s house fronts the entrance – a detached building ornamented with a bust of the Kingly founder, and the Royal arms painted in colours richly carved and gilded, which were, according to tradition, only preserved from the destructive hands of the Puritans by a thick coating of plaster laid over the obnoxious remembrancers of the rightful dynasty. The south side is formed by the refectory and board-room, wainscotted – once, it is said, with old portions of the woodwork which stood in St. Margaret’s chancel – to a considerable height, in large panels, upon which are hung full-length paintings of King Charles II by Sir Peter Lely, and Emery Hill, an ancient benefactor to the institution, in the manner of the same master; over the mantelpiece is a beautiful portrait of King Charles I by Vandyke. The windows command a view of the
Hospital Garden, with its fragrant flower-beds and grassy plots – a pleasant relief to the eye wearied with the interminable brick buildings of the outer street, and well attesting the constant care bestowed upon it.

"Upon this foundation are maintained 29 boys, who wear a long green skirt, bound round with a red leather girdle, similar in form to that worn by the boys of Christ’s Hospital. These children, under the care of Mr. Hawkes, singing master, with those of the Grey Coat Hospital, form the principal part of the Choir of St. Margaret’s Church. The grace used in this Hospital, attributed to Bishop Compton, is the same as that used in Christ’s Hospital".

![St. Margaret’s Hospital c. 17th Century.](image)
Palmer’s Almshouses and School, which later combined with Emery Hill’s School.
In 1654 another hospital, combining almshouses with a school, was founded in Westminster by Rev. James Palmer.

James Palmer was born in 1585 in the parish of St. Margaret's and from 1616 to 1645 was Vicar of St. Bride's Church in Fleet Street. He was reputed to favour strong Puritan tendencies. Among “Informations of Divers Abuses in the City of London”, appears “Mr. Palmer at morning prayer at 7 of the clock doth often omit the prayer for the Right Reverend Fathers the Bishopps and the rest of the Clergie. And also reads Divine Service at that House sometimes without the Serplice in his gowne, and sometimes without either Surplice or gowne in his Cloake.” This did not disturb his reputation in Westminster where he was respected for his piety and charity. At one time that part of the parish where he established the hospital was known as Palmer's Village, now marked by Palmer's Passage off Victoria Street.

James Palmer erected in Tothill Fields “twelve almshouses, with gardens to every house for poor people, a school house and also a schoolmaster's house, with a faire chappell, all with brick, and enclosed with a brick wall; together with a messuage and garden there containing 6 acres; the rents to be applied towards the maintenance of 6 poor old men and 6 poor old women and for and towards the education of 20 poor male children born within the parish of St Margaret”. The old men, women and children were to be catechised and instructed in religion and piety, and the children educated in learning.

In addition to the endowment of six acres, Palmer conveyed the Ashampstead Farm of 120 acres in Berkshire to the Trustees and Governors, the rents of the farm to increase the revenues of the charity.

Despite bequests from other well wishers, the Governors soon found that funds were not sufficient to meet the costs of running both almshouses and school. For the first 100 years the school lacked a settled existence and there were many periods of closure. When the school first opened two Schoolmasters were appointed and paid £3 a quarter each for educating 20 poor children and for praying and reading twice every day in the chappell to the poor people. Less than ten years later the school had to be closed for lack
of funds and one of the Schoolmasters, Thomas Wright, was granted "the sum of forty shillings for the present necessity and hard tymes until his school may be settled as formerly." Thereafter there was only one Master.

When the school re-opened in 1671, black coats and black knit caps were supplied to the boys and it became known as the Black Coat Hospital. In 1672 nine shillings and four pence was spent for a chest "to put the scholars gowns in" and the Schoolmaster was allowed one shilling a quarter for taking care of the children’s coats and caps.

Financial difficulties and the incompetence of the Schoolmaster Mr. Doddington Clarke led to the closure of the school again in 1707. When Mr. Clarke died in 1716 the Governors appointed the Rev. John Browne to succeed him. At the same time they minuted "By reason of the great age and inability of the said Mr. Clarke, lately deceased, for several years last past there have been no children taught by the schoolmaster; the present Governors being desirous that the charitable intentions of the pious founder should be rendered effectual, and hoping that by the improvement made in the estate belonging to the charity they may be enabled to support the same, have resolved that as soon as conveniently may be they will meet and elect 20 poore children to be taught and catechised according to the before-mentioned establishment, and that the sallary of the said Schoolmaster be £20 per annum".

Accordingly in May, 1717, 20 children were elected and two children admitted as supernumeraries. The treasurer was also authorised to provide pens, ink, books, and other necessaries, and in 1725 it was ordered that £12 per annum "be thereafter allowed to Mr. Brown, the Schoolmaster, over and above the £1 for pens, ink, and paper".

The Governors managed to struggle on until 1728 when lack of funds compelled them to close the school once more. Nevertheless they continued to pay the salary of the Schoolmaster until his death in 1737 when they appointed the Rev. Rice Griffiths to succeed him. Rev. Griffiths was "to take upon himself the education and instruction of such children as from time to time shall be appointed by the Governors for the time being, and perform all other duties incumbent on him by the establishment of the donor and the constitution of the charity at a salary of £20 per annum". No children however were elected for Rev. Griffiths to teach although in 1738 the Governors ordered "that the kitchen and lodging-room over be erected for the use of the Schoolmaster", and he continued
to receive his salary until 1746 when it ceased. A minute of July, 1746, states “It appearing that this charity is at present greatly in debt and there being now four of the almshouses vacant; Resolved that the said vacancies be not filled until the debts of this charity are discharged”. In spite of this economy, expenditure continued to exceed revenue; by £15 in 1746 and by £38 in 1747 when the Governors let the house formerly appropriated to the residence of the Schoolmaster. Apparently no further vacancies in the almshouses were filled and in due course the Hospital ceased to function and the buildings were left derelict for half a century after which the fortunes of the foundation became linked with those of the similar foundation of Emery Hill.

The school founded by Emery Hill had an even less fortunate career than Palmer’s. Although founded in theory by deed in 1674, in practice it was nearly 150 years before boys received any form of education, and then not in the school he built.

Emery Hill, Churchwarden of St. Margaret’s Church, was a great local benefactor. He had already contributed to the founding of St. Margaret’s Hospital school where he acted as Treasurer to the Governors. He was also Treasurer to Palmer’s School. By deed dated 8th March, 1674, he gave property in the Strand and in Buckingham Street in trust to build six houses for six poor old men, or six poor old men and their wives, and six houses for six poor old widows; and a free school to teach 20 poor town-born children born in Westminster and a chapel over the said school, and a territt at one end of the chapel to hang a bell in, to ring the poor people to prayers, and a house for the Schoolmaster to dwell in, much after the manner of Mr. James Palmer, “...The 20 poore male children, of poore men and born in the said parish, shall be admitted to be taught free in the said schoole, without any charge to their parents, and to bee taught both English and Latin and to write and keep accounts, but especially to be well catechised and instructed in the principles of religion”. The Schoolmaster was to be paid £20 per annum and the Governors were to have £10 per annum “to entertain them and their wives at two collations”. Twelve shillings a month was to be paid to each married man and eight shillings to each unmarried man or widow. A nurse was to be provided who should receive eight shillings a month for her services. The schoolmaster and each of the alms people were to be provided with a gown every two years. But the resources of the Emery Hill foundation were not sufficient to achieve the aims of the founder. Three almshouses were built in 1678 and the remaining almshouses
together with a school and the schoolmaster’s house in 1708. The old people were apparently admitted but no attempt was made to activate the scholastic side of the hospital until 1738 when the Rev. Wiseman Holt was appointed Schoolmaster and it was resolved that twenty poor boys of the parishes of St. Margaret or St. John the Evangelist be admitted and taught and “that public notice be given of the same in the parish churches and chapels”.

The Governors were now faced with a continuing dilemma: they had appointed a Schoolmaster but had not sufficient money to maintain any children; whereas if they decided to provide for the children their funds were insufficient to provide a Schoolmaster.

Economies were also effected at the expense of the poor people by paying them all eight shillings a month and by not providing a nurse. However, by 1748, an improvement in finances enabled the Governors to raise the amount paid to each man and wife to twelve shillings a month, according to the trust deed, and a nurse was appointed and paid eight shillings a month. This outburst of expenditure was naturally followed by a period of retrenchment. In 1753 the pay of Wiseman Holt, the Schoolmaster without school or pupils, was discontinued but in return for his services in the almshouses he was permitted to continue living in his house and to receive a gratuity for clothing and coal.

Further difficulties now faced the Governors. The property needed rebuilding and they had no money for it. So they were forced in 1762 to borrow £790 for this purpose on which they paid interest at the rate of 4% per annum.

For the next 50 years, as finances fluctuated, allowances to the poor in the almshouses were reduced or restored, but there was never enough money to open the school, provision for the almspeople being the first claim on resources. Schoolmaster Holt died in 1767 without ever having any children to teach.

A few years later in 1773 the Rev. Mr. Ozanne was allowed to live in the Schoolmaster’s apartment, “he reading prayers to the poor people in the chapel and visiting such of them as may be sick”. He was paid a gratuity of five guineas a year for this, and to help towards the cost of a gown. Finances were so bad in 1775 that the governors gave up £5 a year of their allowance for collations.

In 1817 the fortunes of both Palmer’s and Emery Hill’s foundation revived sufficiently for the schools to function. Both the almshouses and the school at Palmer’s Hospital were refurbished after decaying for 50 years. Twelve old people were admitted to the almshouses and 20 boys to the school. They were given clothing and
This map, dated 1746, shows the sites of the original Charities: the Greencoat School, Palmer’s Almshouses and School, the Blue Coat School, Hill’s Almshouses and School, and Emanuel Hospital (Lady Dacre’s Almshouses).
it again became the Black Coat School. James Thomas was appointed Schoolmaster at a salary of £20 a year together with free coal. Boys were admitted between the ages of seven and ten, and left school at 14, when the aim was to enter an apprenticeship.

At the same time the Governors at the Emery Hill foundation decided to combine with Palmer’s and nominated 20 boys to be taught by James Thomas who received an addition to his salary of £20 a year. At first they were taught in the school built by James Palmer, but a few years later finances improved sufficiently for the two schools to separate, and for a Schoolmaster to be appointed to open Emery Hill’s school on the site in Rochester Row which he gave and endowed in 1674. Both Palmer’s and Emery Hill’s schools were day schools.
Chapter 4
Westminster City School 1874–1914

The second half of the 19th century was a period of educational reform. The 1870 Act introduced elementary education for all; before that simple unambitious education was provided in a multiplicity of charitably endowed and church schools. In 1864 the government appointed the Schools Inquiry Commission to examine and report on these schools. Several questions were to be answered. Were the intentions of the founders still being followed? Were the schools useful institutions of their kind? Were the results satisfactory and proportionate to the amount of the endowment?

The Commissioners visited endowed schools in Westminster in 1865. The biggest single criticism of these schools, as of many others, was that there was not in any one of the hospital schools an admission examination, with the result that the boys came in at the age of eight or nine years totally ignorant. Their parents, said one of the Masters, look forward to getting them, before they are ten years old, into one of the hospitals, and make no attempt to educate them previously.

The Commissioners also reported generally that throughout the country it was now impossible, even if it were desirable, to adhere closely to the wishes of the founders. They found a gap between simple education for the poorer children and the education provided at fee-paying schools where the rich could pay high fees. Suitable education for children of the lower middle class was one of the greatest wants of London.

They concluded that the existing endowed schools were falling behind in teaching standards, and adequacy of buildings and equipment.

When the Schools Inquiry Commission had completed its work, Parliament passed the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, setting up the Endowed Schools Commission to formulate schemes altering existing and making new trusts, including the consolidation of two or more endowments, altering the constitution, rights and powers of governing bodies, and establishing new governing bodies. The preamble to the Act emphasised the need for change with the object of promoting greater efficiency, and of carrying into effect the main designs of the founders of endowed schools by putting a liberal education within the reach of all classes.
By 1870 schemes for the future of endowed schools in Westminster were formulated and immediately there was conflict. The Corporation of the City of London, as Governors of Emanuel Hospital, had suggested that they retain control as sole Governors with the school removed from Westminster to a site in the Home Counties. But the scheme produced by the Commissioners sought to merge Emanuel with St. Margaret’s, Palmer’s and Emery Hill’s schools to create a graded system of education in Westminster, where middle class children could be educated, and in addition the poorer children could, on merit, have an avenue of progress above the elementary education provided under the 1870 Act.

Westminster would reap great advantage from the Commissioners’ scheme, as only about 100 boys were being educated at the four schools at this time, whereas the new scheme aimed to use the resources available to educate 300 in a lower school, 300 in an upper school, and 300 in a boarding school – nine times as many.

The scheme was laid before Parliament without opposition in the House of Commons, but the City of London organised opposition in the House of Lords, which rejected the scheme in July, 1871. Two years later the Commissioners submitted another scheme to Parliament, a scheme which, in the words of their sternest critics, the Aldermen of the City of London, was essentially identical with the first. When it was set down for debate in Commons the Government had been defeated on an Irish issue, and Gladstone had resigned. But Disraeli declined to take office, and Gladstone resumed as Prime Minister.

Eventually, on May 13, 1873, Mr. Crawford, member for the City of London, spoke to a motion that Commons approve an address to Queen Victoria praying her to withhold assent to the scheme. Ignoring the main provision of the scheme seeking to amalgamate old foundations to achieve greater efficiency, Mr. Crawford supported the City of London in their objections to losing control as Governors of Emanuel Hospital, only one of the schools affected.

And so the future of four endowed schools in Westminster was to be decided by Parliament in full session, and the debate occupied ten full columns of the *Times* next day. Gladstone decided to speak in favour of the new scheme, and Westminster City School has the distinction of having the Prime Minister of the day acting as midwife at its birth. Gladstone demonstrated his grasp of the essential issues, and pointed out that this was the first scheme of the Commissioners to be challenged in Parliament, which had already approved 120
schemes. But this scheme affected one school which "happens to have a governing body which is of a very formidable character". Passing swiftly over the fact that the City Corporation took over 100 years (from 1623 to 1737) even to start Emanuel School, he dwelt heavily on their decision as governors in 1844, when increased revenues were used to give the City nominations to the school instead of increasing Westminster boys, he castigated the Aldermen - "Their thought was how much they could draw into the City of London - a city fed with charities, gorged and almost bloated with charities. Though Westminster was poor to the lowest depths of poverty and London was rich up to almost a splendid magnificence of wealth, they had been advised that there was nothing to prevent them admitting other parishes to the benefits of the foundation, and notably the people of London". When the House divided the motion was lost by 238 votes to 286, and the Queen approved the new scheme on June 26, 1873.

The scheme for the future management of Emanuel Hospital directed that "after this scheme and three other schemes for the management of the Green Coat School, Palmer's Hospital and Emery Hill's Hospital, all in the City of Westminster, have been established, it is intended that the Foundation and the three others, or the school branches thereof, shall be united, and placed under one management and shall be called the United Westminster Schools".

The Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, although relinquishing control of the school, retained control of the almshouses of the Emanuel foundation. The City of London was given substantial representation on the first Board of Governors of the new united schools.

The United Westminster Schools were to "consist of a boarding school, to be established in a suitable situation within 20 miles or thereabouts of London, and of two day schools to be established within the parishes of St. Margaret and St. John in the City of Westminster": the boarding school should accommodate 150 boys, be capable of being enlarged to 300, and called Emanuel School, and the day schools, each capable of accommodating 300 boys, were to be called the Palmer and Hill School (The Upper Day School) and St. Margaret's School (The Lower Day School).

For St. Margaret's School there should be a "course of secular instruction to be adjusted with special regard to industrial or technical training and besides the usual subjects of elementary education it shall comprise instruction in geometry, practical and
Mr. R.E.H. Goffin, Head Master 1874–1906.
elementary science, and drawing (with reference particularly to mechanics and engineering)”. For the Upper Day School the course of secular instruction was to “comprise English History, Composition and Literature. At least one branch of Natural Science, Elementary Mathematics, Political Economy, French or Latin or both, Drawing and Vocal Music. It shall be for the Governors to prescribe to which of the foregoing subjects the main efforts of the teachers shall be directed. Provision may be made for the teaching of German”.

Both day schools were to be fee-paying schools, the fees for the upper school to be not more than £5 nor less than £3 a year, and for the lower school from £2 to £3 a year. The Governors were directed to establish a system of exhibitions tenable at the schools, giving total or partial exemption from entrance and tuition fees, and grants to meet the cost of books and stationery, or the expense to parents of keeping boys at school. The Governors were also given powers to grant exhibitions “for the purpose of carrying on their general education at some place adapted to the education of older boys, or of fitting themselves by special education for some profession or calling”.

Boys were to be between the ages of seven and fifteen, and admission to the schools was to be entirely on merit, the Head Masters to test suitability for admission.

The new scheme required the Lord Mayor of London to call a meeting of the new Governors within two months, and accordingly they met at the Mansion House in August, 1873. In addition to the Lord Mayor there were eight City aldermen, representatives of St. Margaret’s, Palmer’s and Hill’s school Governors, and three nominated members of the Westminster Division of the School Board for London. Having made the necessary declarations of office, their first decision was to have far reaching and beneficial consequences to the new schools. They elected Sir Sydney Waterlow, the Lord Mayor who had called them together, as Chairman of the Governors, a post he was to fill with enthusiasm and distinction for over a quarter of a century.

Their next wise and beneficial decision at a later meeting was to select Robert Goffin as Head Master of the reconstituted St. Margaret’s School.

The resources to establish the boarding school (Emanuel School) and the two day schools were thirds of the income of Emanuel Hospital, the whole of St. Margaret’s School’s, quarter of Palmer’s and fifth of Emery Hill’s. Assets were improving with the rise in land values, and also the sale of land and properties for the new Victoria Street and the construction of the District Railway. Capital funds up to
prescribed limits could be expended on building new schools.

The scheme safeguarded the interests of boys and girls at the schools on the first day of March, 1872, stating “in case it becomes necessary to disturb or remove any boy or girl, they shall previously procure for such boys and girls a wholly free place in the Emanuel School hereby founded or in a Girls' Boarding School intended to be founded out of the funds of the Grey Coat Hospital Westminster, or in some equally valuable institution”. Girls were transferred from the Emanuel Hospital to the Grey Coat School, which is still a girls' school in the same buildings in Horseferry Road today. This made way for boys to be transferred from St. Margaret's, Palmer's and Hill's schools, which then ceased to exist under their ancient statutes. Emanuel Hospital (the Brown Coat School) remained as a school for boys for a few years until December, 1882, but the transfer saw the end of the Black Coat and Green Coat Schools.

One of the criticisms of the Schools Inquiry Commission was that the money spent on providing free clothing, food and drink at these schools created a privileged class, and the Commission said that the money could be better spent on giving a higher standard of education to a much larger number of boys.

There was one other important change. Previously entrance to the four schools was restricted to children brought up according to the doctrines of the Church of England. In future there were to be no restrictions to admission on religious grounds. And while the Governors were required to “make proper regulation for religious instruction to be given in the various schools,” parents could seek exemption of a boy from prayer or religious worship, or from lessons on a religious subject.

Once the existing pupils had been transferred away from St. Margaret's School, the way was clear for the new Lower Day School to be opened. Mr. Goffin took up his Headmastership at Easter, 1874, and immediately interviewed candidates for admission, and on 20 April, 1874, the school was formally opened with 100 boys. By the end of the year the number had nearly doubled.

Here we cannot do better than quote Mr. Goffin's own words. “At the end of the second term the numbers had risen to 184, and the “Technical School”, as it was commonly called, attracted considerable attention. The subjects taught, and the methods of teaching were so novel and so different to those to which the boys had been accustomed that curiosity could hardly be restrained, and when it became known in Westminster that the Lord Mayor was coming to present the first prizes to be given by the “Technical”,
excitement and enthusiasm ran so high that one half the people who applied for tickets for the meeting had to be refused for want of room. Was it possible, they said, that the Corporation, who a single year previously had resisted and denounced the Scheme, was now sending its Chief Member to bless it? Such was the case, and the effect of the presence of the Lord Mayor, Sir Andrew Lusk, M.P., and his stirring speech in favour of a liberal and broad based education at that meeting, was that a whole cloud of prejudice was dispelled, and another hundred boys were added to the School during the next year. A complete transformation was accomplished in a very short time, for, although the Court of Aldermen had resisted the change by every conceivable argument and device, when they found defeat inevitable, it must to their honour and credit be said that they loyally accepted the situation, and as honourable and earnest gentlemen, representatives of the greatest city in the world, they set about establishing the new order of things.

I would be wanting in duty and candour, if I did not record the fact that on all occasions I received the most cordial support and encouragement, in those early days of transition and anxiety, from the City aldermen. That generous support has been continued by their successors.”

The St. Margaret’s Hospital buildings could only accommodate 300 and their use was only a temporary expedient. The Governors set to work looking round for a site which would house the upper and lower schools together. They soon decided that the best site was in their ownership – the gardens and orchard of Emanuel Hospital. Formalities completed and plans approved, the foundation stone was laid by Sir Sydney Waterlow on 27 April, 1876, and less than a year later the building, together with a large playground, was ready. On 9 April, 1877, the school was opened by the Dean of Westminster, Dean Stanley, and an historic march took place, when 307 boys walked across Victoria Street from St. Margaret’s Hospital in Frances Street behind the Army and Navy Stores, to the new school.

It was the intention that the upper and lower schools should be two distinct and separate entities, and the 300 boys occupied half of the building, which had two entrances. Over the entrance to the lower school were the Royal Coat of Arms and the letters C.R. to commemorate the grant of a charter to St. Margaret’s Hospital by Charles I. The next task of the Governors was to establish the upper school, which had an entrance with effigies of James Palmer and Emery Hill. These links with the past adorned the school entrances until they were destroyed by a German bomb in November, 1940. In
addition to two entrances the plans provided for an internal wall dividing the building and physically separating the two schools. But better counsels prevailed, and Robert Goffin’s leadership and talent as a Head Master was recognised by the Governors when they amalgamated the two schools under one Head Master. The internal wall was not necessary, and the school became known as the United Westminster (Endowed) Schools.

In 1877 the road at the front of the school was named Alexandra Street, Palace Street being then a small road off Buckingham Palace Road. With the opening of the school a small community grew up around the new building and in 1883 Palace Street became one longer street running from Victoria Street to Buckingham Palace Road. It was a busy little community with coffee rooms, a butcher, dairymen, tailor, grocer, baker, beer retailer, wine importer, horse dealer, coach maker, chandler’s shop, St. Peter and St. Edward’s Catholic Chapel and the school. Of these, only the school and chapel buildings remain in Palace Street a century later.

In two years, as the upper school developed, numbers increased from 307 to 552 and every year showed an increase until 1888 when the building was bursting at the seams with 850 pupils. In 1890 a more suitable name was given to the school – Westminster City School.

The front of Westminster City School, c.1920.
Middle Class Public Day School
FOR 850 BOYS,
PALACE STREET, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER.
NEAR VICTORIA STATION.
NEXT TERM BEGINS SEPTEMBER 12th, 1898
(When there will be Vacancies).

Head Master:
Mr. ROBERT E. H. GOFFIN,
Honour Master, Gold Medallist, &c.,
Assisted by a large staff of highly qualified Masters.

Subjects taught:
ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, LATIN, DRAWING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, VOCAL MUSIC,
DRILL, &c.

EXCELLENT BUILDINGS AND LARGE PLAYGROUNDS,
CRICKET FIELD, FIVES COURTS, ATHLETICS, &c.

Separate Rooms for every Class (each under a qualified Master), Laboratories, Lecture Rooms,
Drawing School, &c.

WELL-FITTED BOYS' WORKSHOPS,
CARPENTRY—TURNING—METAL WORKING.

VALUABLE EXHIBITIONS AND SCHOLARSHIPS IN AND FROM THE SCHOOL

Recent Successes at Examinations held by the aforesaid Public Bodies—

LONDON UNIVERSITY.
The 10th, 14th, 17th, 35th, 43rd, and 95th, Place in Honours, and Forty in First Class. Eleven
Intermediate B.A., two Intermediate B.Sc. Examination, one B.A.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LOCAL.
Over Three hundred have passed, Seventy in Honours, with the First and Fifth Places in Natural
Philosophy for the Kingdom,

CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON.
Ten Scholarships of £30 a year for two years.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDIRED BY GOVERNORS.

Thirty Scholarships of £20 a year for three years have recently been given.

TWO OPEN SCHOLARSHIPS OF £100 EACH; THREE £52 10s., SIX OF £30 EACH, AND
ONE OF £40, WERE OBTAINED BY BOYS OF THIS SCHOOL IN 1896-97.

CIVIL SERVICE OPEN COMPETITION.
At recent Examinations for Boys Clerkships, the First (three), Second, Third, Fifth, Eighth,
Ninth, Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-fifth places have been taken by Boys of this School.

SOCIETY OF ARTS EXAMINATION IN ARITHMETIC.
Thirty-five passed at recent Examinations.

INCLUSIVE TERMS FOR TUITION AND BOOKS, &c.
Entrance Fee—£5 5s. per Term.
Upper Division—£3 12s. 6d. per Term.
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Hot Luncheons provided daily, 8d.

Prospectus and Forms of Application free on application to the Clerk or Head Master at the
School.

C. SPENCER SMITH,
Clerk and Receiver.

A poster which was used to publicise the School in 1898.
The credit for the immediate success of the school from the first day rests securely with Robert Goffin, with the wholehearted support of his staff and of the Governors. Goffin, a natural schoolmaster and organiser, originally intended to go into the church, but finally trained as a teacher at Leicester. Here he quickly showed distinction in science, and he furthered his studies under eminent Victorian scientists – Hofmann the celebrated chemist, Tyndall, famous for his researches in Physics, and Huxley, the eminent biologist. He had 13 years experience as a Head Master at two other schools before coming to Westminster.

The scheme for the lower school called for technical training in practical and experimental science and drawing, with reference particularly to mechanics and engineering. Mr. Goffin established courses in Mechanics, Physics and Chemistry, and his school was one of the first in the country where science was taught in the laboratory. He said "the laboratories and lecture rooms are no play places, and workshops have been added for manual instruction. They have been of considerable advantage to the boys in helping towards habits of exactness, neatness and perseverance." Expert craftsmen guided the boys' efforts in the Smithy and the Carpenter's and Turner's Shops. This insistence on fundamentals, together with a progressive policy of the Governors in granting scholarships, helped boys to qualify as mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers. At this time British engineers were in great demand, and within 20 years Old Boys were writing back to the school from all parts of the world. It was at this time that the thorough training given to boys in science and mathematics led to many joining the medical profession, rising to the top of their profession during distinguished careers, several earning knighthoods years later.

The new combined school did not concentrate solely on scientific and technical subjects. Mr. Goffin said – "a somewhat extended experience has convinced me that a broad and sound general education, based mainly upon mathematics, modern languages and experimental science, is the indispensable factor in any school curriculum, and without which neither commercial, scientific, legal, nor any other higher form of education can be added". He also started a civil service class, and from 1883 onwards a steady number of boys made their careers in the civil service.

One standard of judgement for a school is successful examination results. On this score Mr. Goffin and his staff soon made their mark. In 1876, while still at St. Margaret's Hospital, boys took Oxford University Local examinations. A few years later Cambridge and
London examinations were taken. Open scholarships were won, first at London, and in 1892 the first open scholarship at Cambridge.

Reports of independent examiners enable us to form a picture of the school at this time. Central to the early success of the school was a fine teaching staff: “Interest is taken in the boys out of school by the Masters, who have voluntarily undertaken much that usually falls to the share of resident Masters in a boarding school. In consequence they have fostered a strong esprit de corps among the boys” (1889). Then in 1899: “No one can enter the school without noticing how completely the Head Master enjoys the friendship and confidence of his assistants”. The 1886 report said “In no school that I am acquainted with are the intentions of the Founders so fairly and completely carried out, nor do I know of any in which a better education is obtainable on the same terms, or one which pursues with greater interest the present and future welfare of its scholars”.

The 1888 verdict on the civil service form is interesting. “The boys are here taught to copy rapidly the illegible writing of eminent men, to add together long columns of figures and to write from dictation against time. The educational value of this work is not very high, but the blame, if any, rests not with the school, but with a system sanctioned by the Government”.

A school exists not only to bring out the best in talented boys, or solely to collect scholarships and long lists of examination successes. Its task is also to give more ordinary boys a good start in life. And so, while it is good to read that in 1893 “the scientific classes are the legitimate glory of the school”, it is also important that in 1899 it was said “there is no tendency to devote time to clever boys to the detriment of those of less capacity, and this I consider the chief cause of the great success of the school”.

The school lacked a gymnasium and playing fields, but despite this the sporting life of the school gradually evolved. Pitches for football and cricket were hired at Raynes Park and Willesden and Boston Manor. In 1894 Mr. Goffin said “In this mighty wilderness of London, physical exercise and good air are of supreme importance. How to secure them is the difficulty. We have flourishing cricket, athletics and swimming organisations, but yearly it becomes more laborious and expensive to get outside the range of bricks and mortar for exercise”. Athletics started in 1882 with the first Annual School Sports Day: the Upper and Middle Sixth forms challenged each other to sporting contests in the playground. When Mr. Goffin was asked for his approval he said – “Why not the whole
The Statue of Sir Sydney Hedley Waterlow, Bart., K.C.V.O., M.P., which has graced the front of the School since 1901.
school?" So a committee of Masters and boys organised the first Sports Day, which was held in grounds at Wandsworth Common, recently acquired by the Governors for the boarding school required by the scheme, to be called Emanuel School.

When the school entered the 20th century the triumvirate of Sir Sydney Waterlow as Chairman of the Governors, Henry Arthur Hunt as Deputy Chairman and Robert Goffin as Head Master, had worked together harmoniously for over a quarter of a century to make Westminster City one of the leading schools in London.

A few years later in 1904 the partnership was broken when Mr. Hunt died. A churchwarden of St. Margaret’s, Westminster, he was a Governor of the old St. Margaret’s Hospital, which he represented on the new governing board, which elected him Deputy Chairman. He was enthusiastic for the new venture and for 30 years took a lively interest in the school’s creation and growth.

Two years later, in August, 1906, Sir Sydney Waterlow died. He was the classic example of the boy apprentice who rose to become head of a large firm, Lord Mayor of London and a generous philanthropist. After a rigorous childhood he left school at 14, and progressed from compositor to head of Waterlow and Sons. Waterlow Park in North London was his gift to the people of London. As Chairman of the Governors he gave 33 years of "indefatigable energy in developing the School property, of liberality and skill in administering the funds, of unwearyed zeal in the cause of education and of active and generous sympathy with all in the school", to quote an address presented to him by Masters and boys of the school.

In 1900 the London County Council placed a statue of Sir Sydney in Waterlow Park to acknowledge his gift of the park. The sculptor, Frank Taubman, then offered to present to the school the plaster model 8 ft. 6 ins. high. While the Governors were deciding a suitable position inside the school the gift was altered to a bronze replica and pedestal. This was erected on the lawn in front of the school in 1901, while Sir Sydney was still alive. He has the distinction of being the only man among the London statues with an umbrella, which he holds in his right hand with his hat. In Waterlow Park he holds the keys of the park in his left hand; in Palace Street he holds a document.

1906 also saw the retirement of Robert Goffin after over 32 years as Head Master of the school. The Governors recorded in their minutes, "From time to time many distinctions have been won by boys. The whole internal organisation, management, and discipline of the school is vested in the Head Master, and it is not too much to
say that the results achieved were attributable in the main to Mr. Goffin’s ability as a teacher and organiser, and that the smooth working of the school throughout its career has been due to the force of his character and excellent example”.

There were many tributes from Old Boys of the school. That the school did not concentrate solely on its strong scientific emphasis is evident from a tribute from an Old Boy who enjoyed a successful career as author of popular Edwardian boys’ yarns under the pen name of Herbert Strang. “There are many men holding important and responsible positions who would readily acknowledge that they owe their careers to Mr. Goffin. He was unwearying in his efforts on behalf of those who had shown themselves worthy of help.” A boy of the early “Technical School” days wrote “Many blows have been struck by me at the world, and by the world at me. Amid the buffetings nearly all my scientific baggage has been shed. Although I have parted with much of the cargo of knowledge laboriously stowed away in school-days, yet do I unhesitatingly recognise and admit that my United Westminster training was, and has proved under the severest worldly test to be, invaluable. That training instilled into me a supreme regard for order; it created in me a love of detail; it has aided me many a time and oft in sifting the wheat from the chaff under varied circumstances and surroundings; it has enabled me to view all phases of life in their proper proportions; it has governed my reading, my philosophic reasonings, and toned my whole career by sharpening my critical and brightening my logical faculties.”

Could a school, a Head Master and his staff ask for a better tribute?

Mr. Goffin retired to rural Essex, where with his youngest son he managed a farm until he was over 80. He died at the age of 85. A reflection of the era is that his presents from staff, boys and Old Boys and Governors of the school, and from the inhabitants of Westminster, included a massive gold watch and chain, and a pony and trap.

The Governors appointed Dr. E.H. Stevens as the second Head Master of the school. After graduating at London University Dr. Stevens obtained his Ph.D. at Heidelberg. In addition to being a physicist, he was an all-rounder well suited to be Head Master. A Master who later worked with him for over 20 years said “distinguished in learning, and in sport; distinguished in science, but also an exceedingly able man in the humanities; member of the Alpine Club – an enthusiastic mountaineer; one who played cricket for the Gentlemen of Sussex, football for the Brighton Association,
and represented Sussex County at lawn tennis’. Before coming to Westminster he was Second Master at Brighton Grammar School.

It was a time of educational change when, as a result of the Education Act of 1902, secondary schools were being integrated into a national system of education. At national level the Board of Education made grants, and was evolving standards for buildings, equipment and teaching structures. At local level the old School Board for London, which was responsible only for elementary education, had been replaced by the London County Council, charged with establishing both primary and secondary education in the capital. To this end the L.C.C. created scholarships for children to progress from primary to secondary and grammar schools.

In 1873 there were no national guidelines and Mr. Goffin and the Governors were pioneers when they successfully created a first class school. On this solid foundation, Dr. Stevens and his Governors sought to ensure that Westminster City continued to hold a leading place among secondary and grammar schools.

Dr. Stevens’ first major innovation was the creation of a House system in 1908, together with School and House Prefects, with the Senior Prefect as captain of the school. Boys were grouped into Houses on a geographical basis, and each House was allocated a colour which led to each boy’s school cap bearing his House colour. There were eight Houses, and five recalled the school’s historic predecessors – Dacre (green), Lord Mayor’s (white), St. Margaret’s (blue), Palmer (orange), and Emery Hill (brown). King Charles House (scarlet) remembered the charter granted by Charles I and the grants made by Charles II. Waterlow (yellow) and Dean’s (mauve) acknowledged the interest taken by the first Chairman of the Governors and successive Deans of Westminster.

On Sports Day, 1908, Houses competed for the first time for the Waterlow Cup, presented by Lady Waterlow for the House gaining most points in the various events.

Dr. Stevens placed a high value on strong Old Boy connections with the school and was the driving force in founding the Football Club. In 1908 he called together 60 Masters, Old Boys, and school members of the Literary and Debating Society. “After partaking of good cheer provided in the adjoining room, the company re-assembled to hear Dr. Stevens. He said that such a large and important school should certainly have a successful Old Boys’ Football Club and suggested that a committee be appointed.” This was done and the O.W.C.F.C. was launched. Dr. Stevens then spoke of the formation of an Old Boys’ association. He thought it
desirable that Old Boys, and especially those connected with the Lit. and Deb. Society should not, on leaving, drift away from the school and from one another. He thought that a society based on the school debating society would be best. And so the Old Westminster Citizens’ Association was formed.

There had been an Old Boys’ Club for about 25 years: in fact the meeting was held in the Club Room in the school. The club held dances, whist drives, musical evenings and had organised annual dinners. For a few years the Club and Association ran side by side until they eventually amalgamated. The good cheer provided in the adjoining room can be left to the imagination aided by a news item of 1907. “The Old Boys’ Clubroom is a comfortable place; when the porter went to open, one Saturday morning recently, he was surprised to find a burglar there. He had supped, not wisely, but too well, and lay asleep with his spoils around him. He is now in gaol.”

It is an intriguing thought that perhaps IIIc occupied the Club Room as a class room. It was asked – should not IIIc be called XXX? They boasted three boys named Beer, Ayles and Porter. IIIc turned teetotal a few months later when Beer and Porter left the form, leaving two boys, Adams – Ayles.

In 1910 the Governors obtained the lease of playing fields in Turney Road, Dulwich, nearer to the school and easier to get to

The First Eleven Football Team at the Dulwich Playing Field in 1914.
The rear of the School before the Hall was built. The view shows the steps from which the Head Master addressed the assembled School in the playground.
The main Chemical Laboratory, now known as the Senior Chemistry Laboratory.

The newly built Physics Laboratory in 1958, on top of the new School Hall.
than the pitches previously hired. This coincided with the introduction of the Wednesday half day holiday which enabled sports enthusiasts to play more games on the new field. Previously occasional form and House matches were played on the playground (cricket with a soft ball). Now House matches could be regular and organised, enabling sporting talent to develop as boys progressed through the school. In 1912, Dr. and Mrs. Stevens presented the Stevens Cup for House cricket, and two years later Mrs. H. A. Hunt donated the Hunt Cup for House football. The Old Boys’ football club used the new playing field and an O.B. cricket club was added. Competitive swimming was encouraged by annual swimming sports, started in 1908.

Government Inspectors’ reports are a measure of beneficial changes. Within a year their reports said “The school seems to be making rapid progress under its able and energetic Head Master.” The appointment of additional teaching staff led to changes in form structures and curricula and gave staff breaks and rests from teaching. Entrance tests to the school were stiffened. The gloomy gas jets had been replaced by incandescent burners “and the advantage was very marked during the winter months”. The Inspectors commented that in that short time a cadet corps had been recruited, giving boys field day and camp experience; a Literary and Debating Society and Camera and Art Club started, and a School Magazine introduced.

Dr. Stevens regarded a School Magazine – “the chronicle and representative of the whole life of the school” – as essential, and the first issue was printed in December 1906. There had been magazines before, but they always foundered when the editor left school. This time Dr. Stevens made sure that the School Magazine survived change. It survived to become, in its own words, “more than a record of school happenings, although it is one of its important functions. It is a unifying force; it keeps us all in touch with all our activities; it provides an incentive to effort of all kinds, individual and corporate.”

After five years, the Inspectors said that the Governing Board and Head Master were to be warmly congratulated on what had already been effected – “the transition period will soon be a thing of the past, and a thoroughly satisfactory standard of work may confidently be anticipated in the near future”.

The number of boys in the school was now around 600, having increased from 500 in the five years. In accordance with national policy, over half the boys were receiving free education – 250
holding L.C.C., and 45 Foundation scholarships, representing a great change in methods of admission in the 35 years of the school's existence.

The Inspectors said that "the Head Master is well qualified by academic distinction, experience and personal qualities for his post. He has shown tact and discretion in carrying out the alterations to the buildings and in reorganising the school on modern lines. He has succeeded since his appointment in creating the conditions in which a vigorous corporate life is possible. To him are due the division of the school into houses, the formation of various school societies, the rifle range for the cadet corps, and the development of games. He himself would be the first to say that this would have been impossible but for the willing and unselfish support he has received from his staff, who devote no small portion of their time to the management of the houses, to participation in the games, and to the encouragement of the school societies."

To this tribute to the staff was added that the elder men, who had given loyal service during Robert Goffin's stewardship, had taken courses of training to put themselves abreast of modern ideas, and also that the introduction of new blood had invigorated teaching.

The Governors had modernised equipment, and installed steam central heating to replace coal fires in each room. The loss of unheated corridors was not mourned. New class rooms, science laboratories, workshops, library, rifle range and bicycle sheds contributed to the smooth running of the school.

Most important of all was that, for the first time, the school possessed an Assembly Hall. Until the Hall was built, if the Head Master wished to address the whole school he had to wait for a fine day, and assemble the school in the playground, to speak to them from the steps of the school. Now the school met daily at morning assembly, "When the singing [was] exceedingly good and hearty" as the Inspectors could report.

The funds to pay for the new school Hall and the other improvements came from the closing of the Blue Coat School, and thereby yet another ancient Westminster foundation was linked with Westminster City School.
Chapter 5
The Blue Coat School and the School Hall

The Blue Coat School, a church school, was founded in the 17th century when this type of school was the main source of primary education. The strong doctrinal bias and the religious passions of the times can be seen in the document dated 1688 setting up the charity.

"In the late reign when the Roman Catholick priests were busie in making Proselites and to that end set up Free Schools in the Savoy and other places in and about the City of London inviting all poor children to be educated in them gratis, Divers well disposed persons Inhabitants of ye Parish of St. Margaret, Westminster and communicants of the new Church therein to the honour of God and for preferring and promoting the Religion by law Established in the Church of England did by Charitable and Free Benevolence erect and continue a Free School at their own annual expense wherein fifty poor boys of the said Parish whose Parents were not able to be at the charge of their teaching were and still are carefully taught to read write cast accounts and also Catechised and instructed in the Principles of our most Holy Religion and put out when fit to trades whereby they might get honest livelihoods in the World.

For defraying of which charges the person whose names are hereunto subscribed have been and still are Contributors".

The school was first established in a large house owned by the parish in Duck Lane (Duck Lane disappeared 200 years later when Victoria Street and Broadway were built). In 1709 a school house and Head Master’s dwelling were erected in an area known as Brewers Green, by William Greene owner of the Stag Brewhouse, Pimlico.

The 1688 document provided for 50 poor boys; in 1713 it was decided to admit 20 girls. The regulations required the Master to take children to church on Sundays and Holy Days for sermon and prayers, and on Fridays when there was preparation for sermon.

The school was dependent on bequests and subscriptions; an annual subscription entitled the giver to be a Governor and to nominate children for admission to the school. There was a regular flow of funds and the school operated smoothly for 200 years, educating around 100 boys and girls, seven to fourteen, the aim being that they should enter apprenticeships or service on leaving.
They were taught the Three R’s, Psalmody and the principles of the Church of England. The girls were also taught knitting and needlework and were trained in household work. There was a Schoolmaster, paid £60 a year plus coal, candles and other extras, with his wife as matron, and Schoolmistress to the girls (£25 a year). The children were provided with clothing, the school becoming known as the Blue Coat School.

In the latter half of the 19th century the school underwent change and decline. After 1876, when the Grey Coat School, previously a school for boys and girls, became a girls' school to which girls from Emanuel Hospital had been transferred, the Blue Coat became a school for boys only. Numbers steadily fell as there was an increasing reluctance to send children to schools perpetuating seventeenth century dress, and now that public elementary schools provided free education parents chose the “National” schools. Also, the Head Master, Mr. Sarsons, who with his wife had been at the school for over 44 years, was 72.

The school closed at Christmas, 1897, and in 1898 the Governors (who included Mr. Watney and Mr. Combe of the Stag Brewery) sold the school and site to the vestry and invested the money. The
school building continued in use as a school for a time under the vestry, in conjunction with Christ Church School, a Church primary school founded in 1795.

At this time the Blue Coat school, built of red brick, had a little garden at the back, with the Master's residence covered with virginia creeper at the side, together with another little garden "full of such flowers as will grow in London air". Now the gardens and Master's house have gone, and only the schoolhouse remains, preserved as a building of architectural and historic interest. It is occupied by the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty as offices. The Ten Commandments which for centuries dominated one schoolroom wall have faded and disappeared, but the building, which stands between Buckingham Gate and Caxton Street, is much as it has been for nearly 300 years. On the north exterior wall over the entrance is the inscription "The Blew Coat School, built in the year 1709", surmounted by a statue of a boy with a blue coat, yellow stockings, and a white neck tie. In a niche on the south side is a painting of a similar boy, above which are the words "This school founded 1688".

The figure of a Blue Coat Schoolboy in his uniform can still be seen outside the building in Buckingham Gate.
In 1909 the total funds of the Blue Coat charity were divided between the Grey Coat School for Girls and the United Westminster Schools. And thus, Westminster City School, already an amalgamation of the Brown Coat, Green Coat and Black Coat schools, shared with the Grey Coat the inheritance from the Blue Coat School.

The Grey Coat School was not solely a girls’ school throughout its long history. Founded in 1698 by inhabitants of the parish of St. Margaret’s, Westminster, for 40 boys and girls who “should, from time to time, be educated in sober and Vertuous Principles and instructed in the Christian Religion”, it was incorporated by Royal Charter as Queen Anne’s Hospital in St. Margaret’s, Westminster. Everybody called it Grey Coat Hospital and the Royal Charter title was soon forgotten. The school uniform which gave the hospital its name can still be seen as effigies of a boy and a girl have survived over the entrance to the school near Strutton Ground.

The new Assembly Hall built from Blue Coat School money was opened by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Knill, at the annual Prize Giving on December 10, 1909. The Hall was filled to capacity, with 700 seated in the Hall. The platform at this time was between the two entrances from the school into the Hall, with three galleries with seats for 200 and room for boys standing. After the presentation of prizes the guests toured the school to see the other
additions and improvements – workshops, laboratories, class rooms, rifle range, library and prefects’ room.

At the time of the inception of the scheme for the United Westminster Schools the Governors adopted as the school crest and badge the linked arms of the ancient cities of London and Westminster, together with the motto “Unitate Fortior”. In opening the new Assembly Hall the Lord Mayor of London was attended on the platform by the Mayor of Westminster and the Rector of St. Margaret’s. Thirty-five years of hard work on the governing body of representatives of the two cities had erased memories of the bitter controversies in Parliament and elsewhere which attended the birth of the scheme. The motto “Unitate Fortior” could now be seen as appropriate, for the unification of the old Westminster charities had produced a strong school with a vigorous life able to meet the needs of the day; and which was a credit to Westminster. Unity was indeed strength.

The new Hall also served as a gymnasium – previously the only activity possible was Swedish drill in the playground. House loyalty and rivalry was further fostered with an annual gymnastic display and inter-house competition. The Hall was also marked out and used for badminton.

Early in 1912 experiments were made in the school in wireless telegraphy, then in its infancy, and towards the end of 1913 sufficient progress had been made for the Post Office to recognise Westminster City as a properly constituted wireless station, call sign EMX, with a receiving range of over 1,000 miles and a transmitting range of 30–40. Three conditions were attached to the licence: 1. Adjured not to break in and worry the admiralty when communicating with ships. 2. Not to betray any official secrets which may be overheard. 3. To surrender the station to the Government in time of war. The school enjoyed the distinction of being the first school in London and only the second in the United Kingdom to experiment with the new invention. The new school Hall with its high tower played an unexpected and important part as the aerials of various sizes and shapes (one described as hoops tied together with string) were placed on the tower. Mountaineering expeditions led by Masters to put them into place included braving a thunderstorm and deserving, it was said, life membership of the Alpine Club.

For some time the need for a school song had been expressed, and in 1913 the Languages Master, Mr. W.F. Baugust (Bogie to boys and Old Boys), filled that need. He had been at the school since the old
St. Margaret's (The Technical School) days and took part in the historic march across Victoria Street to the new building in 1877, and was well suited to pay tribute to the ancient benefactors. The song had its first public performance at an Old Boys’ Dinner.

This was followed a year later by the school’s own hymnal compiled by the English master (Pip Palser to everybody). Among over 200 hymns for all occasions was one destined to be a great favourite with boys of all generations – “Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing”, the prelude to the call “Three Cheers for the Holidays” by the Senior Prefect as the school broke up at the end of term.

A visit to Sir Herbert Tree’s production of “Twelfth Night” caught the imagination of one boy. He related, perhaps with no little personal feeling, some extracts to his experience of school life in Palace Street.

_Headmaster:_ I sent for thee upon a sad occasion
I do assure you, ’tis against my will
Come by-and-by to my chamber

O thou dissembling cub
Give me thy hand.

_Boy:_ I would rather than fifty pound I were at home.
On August 4, 1914, during the school summer holidays, the First World War broke out. 1,100 men of the local regiment, the Queen’s Westminster Rifles, were quartered in the school on mobilisation; the sixth form room became the guard room, the library the officers’ mess and the chemistry stores the dispensary. The playground was used by this regiment and the London Scottish for drill. By the time the school re-assembled the soldiers had departed. Also during the holidays, in accordance with the terms of the licence for the wireless station, the War Office had removed the aerial and all the EMX station equipment.

This was the last Great War where idealism inspired young men. When the school started the new term, some of the teaching staff had already joined the forces, including a student teacher who was to win a Victoria Cross. In the first few months of the war, hundreds of Old Boys volunteered or were called to the colours. By Christmas news of the first casualties had reached the school and the savage slaughter had begun. One letter to the school described life in the trenches in those early days: “Fourteen days in the trenches. Rest for 4 days and then back again. Unable to change shirt for nine weeks. Took it off to wash it and it fell to pieces”.

At every Wednesday morning assembly, after prayers, the Head Master gave the school news of Masters and Old Boys and announced the sad and growing number of casualties. Against this background the life of the school went on. Examinations still occupied the minds of senior boys, and scholarships and exhibitions to Universities were still important. Although war-time conditions restricted the activities of some school societies, the cadet corps thrived. Before the War it attracted about 10% of the school; now 50% or more joined the cadets.

At last, in November 1918, the cease fire sounded, and the school emerged from the War years stronger than ever. The academic side of the school had been strengthened. Geology was introduced as a new subject in the science sixth form and was an immediate success, capturing the imagination of several boys. Economics and Spanish were new sixth form subjects to meet the growing demands of commerce. Although the arts were fully covered in the basic education up to the fifth forms, there was little demand at this time
for an arts course in the sixth forms, which offered advanced courses in Science and Mathematics, and in Modern Studies.

The 1918 Education Act laid the foundations for a national scheme of secondary education, defined as a general education, physical, mental and moral, up to and beyond the age of 16 years. That Dr. Stevens and his staff were well equipped to play their part is demonstrated by the fact that in 1920 there were eight Old Boys in residence at Oxford and Cambridge, with several more at London University. One Cambridge graduate showed the benefits of grammar school education – national 1/2 mile champion for several years, member of the 1924 Olympic team, and later Professor of Geology.

Peace brought changes in examinations. Previously they had served as tests for entrance to University Colleges, the fifth forms taking the London University Senior School examination and the sixth form, Intermediate Science. The new examinations were more a test of the general level of education in fifth forms, with specialisation in the sixth forms: Matriculation and General Schools for the fifth forms, and Intermediate Science or Commerce for sixth forms. Passes were becoming increasingly necessary for entrance to the professions and commercial organisations as well as Universities.

Gradually the school societies returned to normal. The Wireless Society continued their experiments until radio and broadcasting improved and became part of home life. Three new cups stimulated inter-house competition. Sir Edward Thesiger, who resigned as Chairman of the Governors after 35 years on the Foundation Board, presented the Thesiger Challenge Cup for gymnastics. Sir C.A. Hanson, M.P., who as Lord Mayor of London visited the school to present prizes, gave the Hanson Cup for swimming, and the newly formed Westminster City School Lodge of Masters and Old Boys gave the Lodge Cup for shooting.

By 1920 the active school clubs were the Arts and Crafts, Camera, Chess, the Literary and Debating Society (the Lit. and Deb.), Nature Study and Wireless. Sports were football, cricket, athletics, swimming and gymnastics. The cadet corps, still strong, but not recruiting so many boys as in war-time, was joined by a scout troop which was to provide valuable scout training for a decade. In staging the “Mikado” and “Miss Hook of Holland” in aid of troop funds, they showed that the school had many reserves of singing and acting talent. They also produced a scout who was asked in his test for a first aid badge how he would treat a baby who had swallowed some sulphuric acid, and replied “Test with blue litmus”. Not to be
outdone, an N.C.O. in the Cadet Corps reported to his C.O. "None absent, otherwise all present and correct. Sir".

Once the school had settled back to peace, and with younger teaching staff now available, the older generation of Masters took the opportunity to retire. In the early 1920's ten of these stalwarts retired, eight of whom, with over 40 years' service each, had started in the school under Robert Goffin. They had given devoted service in the class rooms and laboratories, successfully changing their styles when new teaching practices and techniques were introduced. The affection of boys and Old Boys was witness to their success. But their work did not end there; they gave time and skills without stint to the activities outside the class room which enrich the life of a school, and help to give boys the advantages of a liberal education. In this they were not alone – their younger colleagues and successors were equally generous in giving their spare time – and their retirement was well earned.

The School and the Foundation inspired loyalty and long service. In 1920 Mr. C. Spencer Smith retired as Clerk to the Governors. He was the first appointment made by the Governors and had held office for more than 46 years. His business skills, financial acumen and complete dedication to the welfare of the United Westminster Schools had been invaluable. His four sons all attended Westminster City school and his experience as a father shows the anxieties and grief of parents in the First World War. One son, Arnold, who had entered holy orders, was chaplain and photographer to Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic which left this country in 1914. He died in the Antarctic during the expedition. The other sons held commissions in the Queen's Westminster Rifles: Charles, the eldest, died of wounds and Martin was killed in action in France. Philip was severely wounded and became a prisoner of war.

A general wish to commemorate Old Boys who gave their lives in the War resulted in a War Memorial Fund to which Governors, Masters, parents, boys and Old Boys contributed. While funds were being raised, the Art Master, J. Littlejohns, designed a memorial to be erected in the central corridor of the school. It was unveiled the day before Armistice Day, Friday 10th November, 1922, and dedicated by Bishop Ryle, the Dean of Westminster. It consisted of three English Wainscot Oak panels. The central panel bears the school arms and the memorial inscription, with the names of some 200 Old Boys inscribed on the two side panels. A room in No. 57 Palace Street, once the Head Master's drawing room, was converted into a Memorial Library with the walls covered with oak bookcases.
The Vestibule, with the War Memorial panels, dedicated in 1922.

The 1914–1918 War Memorial Library in 57 Palace Street. The room is now used by the Sixth Form.
and panelling, with a memorial panel with the arms of the school above the mantelshelf.

1924 was the 430th anniversary of Lady Dacre’s bequest, the tercentenary of the foundation of St. Margaret’s Hospital, and the Jubilee (1874–1924) of the new Foundation. This called for celebration, and it was decided to stage a pageant illustrating various incidents in the history of the school. The whole school was involved. Teaching staff helped to write different episodes, train the choir to sing during the performance, direct scene shifters and design the stage settings. Boys of each of the eight Houses acted appropriate scenes. Henry Cooper, the History Master, acted as pageant master and the performances in July 1924 were a triumph of his skill in producing order out of schoolboy chaos.

Dacre House enacted Lady Dacre petitioning Queen Elizabeth to grant a charter to endow a Hospital School in the City of Westminster. Lord Mayor’s House represented the Court of the City of London in 1623 when the first City of London Governors of the new Emanuel Hospital School were appointed, and St. Margaret’s House commemorated the grant of a charter by Charles I in 1633. Palmer’s House went back two centuries to give a scene at Palmer’s School and King Charles House showed Charles II being persuaded in 1669 to make an annual grant towards the support of St. Margaret’s Hospital School. Emery Hill House went to the House of Commons in Victorian times to enact the debate when the scheme for the United Westminster Schools was discussed. Waterlow House gave the first meeting of the Governors when Sir Sydney Waterlow was elected Chairman of the Governors, Spencer Smith appointed Clerk and Receiver to the Governors, and Robert Goffin made the first Head Master, followed by the laying of the foundation stone of the present building by Sir Sydney. Dean’s House commemorated the opening of the new building by the Dean of Westminster, Dean Stanley.

For the finale the Herald, who had linked each scene, came forward and reintroduced the characters as they moved in procession round the school Hall and reassembled on the stage. Joined by School Prefects representing the Houses, the whole company and the School Pageant Choir sang the School Song.

An interesting historical link was forged by the use of a table which formed part of the furniture of St. Margaret’s Hospital in several of the episodes. The table had graced the platform on Prize Days and other occasions since the Hall was opened in 1909.

The cadets introduced a new sporting activity – boxing. In one
Episode II of the 1924 Pageant.
The scene shows the assumption and control of Emanuel Hospital by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London in 1623.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>H.W. Ballard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorder</td>
<td>J.J. Skinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord Mayor Proby</td>
<td>J. Isaacs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>R. Symons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Serjeant</td>
<td>R. Carrington</td>
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semi-final bout in the London Cadets Boxing Tournament, the boxer from the corps won because he stayed on his feet just long enough to see his opponent take the count. Then he collapsed. Two junior cadets (4 stone 6½ lbs against 4 stone 1½ lbs) boxed exhibition bouts in a class specially invented for them - the paper weights. Their heads did not come above the ropes. For cricketers, nets, with coconut matting wickets, were erected in the play ground. Crowds collected to enjoy the entertainment when Dr. Stevens visited the nets during lunch breaks to offer criticism and advice to batsmen and bowlers.

The high quality of the sixth form science teaching (and particularly geology) was demonstrated when the Chairman of the Governors, Sir Edward Thesiger, wrote to Dr. Stevens: “At the meeting of the United Westminster Schools Board held yesterday the Governors received with great pleasure the announcement that in the recent examination for Scholarships offered by the Surveyors’ Institution, open, I believe to all England, four boys from your School gained all the awards offered, the fifth being sixth on the list. The Governors have asked me to write and congratulate the School, yourself, and the Masters who assisted towards this result. They feel proud of being so closely connected with the management of the

![Image of the 1924 Pageant: Samuel Pepys, King Charles II, Robert Boyle]
Dr. Stevens and his Staff in the mid-1920s. This photograph spans the generations. Mr Palser, the Second Master, sitting to the right of Dr. Stevens, started in the School in 1896 under Mr. Goffin; and Mr. Porter, on the left of the back row, became Second Master under Dr. Shutt.
School.” Boys of all ages in the school rejoiced – they were granted a special day's holiday to celebrate.

The scholarships were tenable at Imperial College, London University, from which many other boys from the school graduated. A few years later the Rector of Imperial College was guest of honour at the Old Boys’ Annual Reunion Dinner, and he said that he had come to see why it was that Westminster City School sent such remarkably able students to Imperial College.

In 1925 the school received another visit from Board of Education Inspectors. Their report gave a very favourable account of the work and character of the school. There were, of course, a few criticisms but these mainly concerned the building – “the school bears a great name, and is doing such excellent work that it deserves to be as well provided with the usual amenities as the newer schools now being built. The quality of the staff as a whole is a matter for congratulation. The general level of teaching ability is high, and the staff give unsparing devotion to the various activities of school life. A strong corporate life has been developed, and the school appears to be as successful in the development of character as it is in academic achievement”.

In the same year the school received further distinction when Dr.
Stevens was elected the 1925 President of the Head Masters’ Association – an association of heads of schools of public school status. This was a great honour for both Dr. Stevens and the school.

In the second half of the nineteen twenties new and vigorous school societies came into existence. The first was the Dramatic Society. For many years various activities – scout and cadet concerts, play readings in the Lit. & Deb., and the 1924 Pageant – showed that there was no lack of histrionic talent, and finally a start was made with an evening of short one act plays. This was followed by a three act play, Bernard Shaw’s “Arms and the Man”, and the Dramatic Society was now to play a regular part in school life. A small band of musicians played interval music and this led to the suggestion that there should be a school Musical Society, and it was only a matter of time before the School Orchestra took shape as boys were encouraged to learn wind and brass instruments. The school already had a strong choir, many of the boys of St. Margaret’s House being members of the choir of St. Margaret’s, Westminster. Another society was the result of the general anxiety as to the state of the world – a junior section of the League of Nations Union, based on the need to promote international cooperation, and the overriding need for nations to accept obligations not to resort to war in the settlement of disputes.

The school lost a great friend when Sir Edward Thesiger died in 1928 at the age of 85. As Clerk to the Mother of Parliaments at the other end of Victoria Street he had a distinguished career in public life. He first joined the Board of Governors in 1880, and with a short break through illness he was a Governor for 45 years, and Chairman for 16. His unfailing attendance at Prize Days and Old Boys’ Annual Dinners showed his pride and affection for the school. The message sent by Old Boys with flowers to his funeral bore testimony to the feelings of all connected with the school – “From the Old Boys of Westminster City School, in grateful memory of a wise counsellor and a great gentleman – We honoured him for his long years of service to the School, and we loved him for his friendly kindness and noble example”.

In December, 1929, at the end of the Christmas term, Dr. Stevens retired after 23 years as Head Master. Although proud of the high academic distinction won by its best scholars, he declared that examinations had ceased to be the concern of a few select candidates and had become the concern of the many. With four streams in each school year, he was as interested in the welfare of the boys in the C and D forms as he was in the higher. He said that
Dr. E.H. Stevens, Head Master, 1906–1930.
the school existed to prepare all its boys for life after school. The 
tributes paid to him not only dwelt on his success in raising the 
school to its high position: they dwelt also on his personal qualities. 
He was said to epitomise the best qualities of his generation in a 
changing world. A moment in the School Pageant demonstrated the 
admiration he won from boys and the teaching staff. One of the 17th 
century characters, having a vision of the future school and its head, 
turned towards Dr. Stevens in the audience with the words “He 
shall not only be a great gentleman himself, but one well skilled in 
the art of making others so”. He retired to Devon, and in contrast to 
the pony and trap presented to Mr. Goffin, the old boys gave him a 
cheque towards a motor car.

In his stead the Governors appointed John Cyril Dent, M.A., 
who read English at Lincoln College, Oxford, and took First Class 
Honours in the Final Honours School of English Language and 
Literature. Commissioned in the West Yorkshire Regiment, he was 
wounded in the battle of the Somme, and before coming to 
Westminster was Senior Classical Master at St. Alban’s School, 
Hertfordshire.

When Mr. Dent took over in January, 1930, he smoothed the 
difficulties of change by steadily winning the confidence of boys and 
teaching staff. He showed that while ready to introduce new ideas 
he was determined to preserve the basic features which had 
contributed to the high reputation of the school. He was firm in the 
belief that games and physical activity were an integral part of a 
boy’s education and that the development of both mind and body 
were equally important. With this in view one of his first decisions 
was to spread the weekly half-day holiday over three days (Tuesday, 
Wednesday and Thursday) instead of one day (Wednesday). This 
enabled the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools each to enjoy the 
use of the sports ground on one of the half days. He also 
accompanied the Chairman of the School Governors to inspect 13 
acres of ground at Mitcham, the freehold of which had been in the 
possession of the Foundation for some years. As a result the 
Governors decided to lay the ground out as the school’s playing field 
and to build a brick pavilion, with hot water installation, as an 
improvement on the spartan timber dressing rooms at Dulwich. The 
Old Boys, who shared the use of the Dulwich ground, undertook to 
meet half the cost of the new pavilion. While the Mitcham field was 
being converted, the school launched an appeal fund for their share 
of the cost of the pavilion to receive donations from parents and 
Old Boys and profits from entertainments and other activities.
Unfortunately, before he could see the fruits of his labours, the Chairman of the School Governors, Colonel A.S. Ralph, died suddenly. As a tribute to his enthusiasm and his work for the project, it was decided to name the pavilion the Ralph Memorial Pavilion when it was completed and ready for use in the summer of 1934, and the lease of the grounds at Dulwich surrendered.

When it was opened the pavilion was not yet free from Debt. The previous summer, the last at Dulwich, had seen a fête organised to raise funds, and this was continued at Mitcham for several years. The debt was reduced, pleasant social occasions were held, and school, old boys and parents worked together for a common cause.

With the opening of the new school playing field Mr. Dent reorganised the House system by reducing the number of Houses from eight to four. This enabled the Upper, Middle and Lower schools to field stronger teams in interhouse football and cricket and thereby nurture sporting talent at every level. In announcing his decision Mr. Dent said that it was only natural that there should at first spring up feelings of outraged loyalty, but that it should lead to a strengthening of the House spirit. The earliest benefactors of the foundation were commemorated, the four Houses being Dacre’s, Kings’, Palmer’s and Hill’s.

Governors and Head Master used every opportunity to improve the working conditions of the school whenever money was available. A few months before Mr. Dent’s arrival, the Governors had relaid the surface of the playground, enlarged the rifle range and built a geography room between the range and the fives courts. The fives courts were dilapidated and unusable, and when they were reconditioned and restored a year later, it led to a revival of a game which had been traditional in the school for over half a century. The school was then redecorated and electric lighting installed to replace gas before a call for economy halted further progress.

It was five years before any more improvements could be made, when in 1936 a new gymnasium was built in a corner of the playground, and a special music room provided. The removal of the gymnasium and its apparatus from the school Hall released the Hall for other and more appropriate uses. The music room, in addition to being designed for musical activities – lectures, recitals, rehearsals – housed the growing collection of vocal and orchestral parts, and provided storage for instruments, and other musical essentials.

Important also was the re-positioning of the stage in the school Hall. For over 25 years the platform had been between the swing doors leading to and from the corridor, and as the most likely single
potential for fire, during stage performances, the platform was a serious hazard barring the exits if there had been a fire. It was a relief to all concerned when a new stage appeared under the north gallery. Constructed in Canadian maple and approached on either side by three steps, it filled the whole space under the gallery and was therefore wider than its predecessor. It was also lower and thus was an advantage for school assembly, leading to an increased sense of communication.

In 1935 the school said goodbye to its Second Master, E.M. Palser, affectionately known as Pip Palser. He joined the staff in 1896 under Mr. Goffin, was appointed by Dr. Stevens to the newly created post of Second Master in 1910, and for 25 years set a standard of loyalty and efficiency in this important post to be followed by others since. As Second Master he was mentor to the Prefects and leader of the common room as well as deputy to the Head Master. Many an old boy owed his appreciation of English literature, poetry and drama to his love of the best which he communicated to boys as Senior English Master. As Second Master he played a leading and valuable part in easing the transition period with the change of Head Master five years before. He valued the friendship of the large number of Old Boys whom he knew in nearly 40 years at the school and said in farewell “Who else but a school master gets the chance of so great a company of friends?” The Old Boys presented him with an easy chair which sadly he was not able to enjoy as he died within two weeks of retiring.

His name is remembered in the Palser Cup for fives interhouse competition, which he presented soon after the fives courts were reconditioned. The cups on display on Sports Day and Prize Day had grown a few years previously. Sir Edward Thesiger’s son, Admiral Thesiger, took interest in the school when his naval duties allowed and he gave a cup for the House which showed the greatest proficiency in both sporting and academic spheres. Two other cups came from Old Boys. The Woodger Cup for the House gaining the most points for the junior events in the Annual Sports came from an Old Boy who was at the school from 1901 to 1906, and the Fish individual Victor Ludorum Cup for the boy obtaining most points in different events came from another Old Boy of Mr. Goffin’s time who left the school in 1890.

During the 1930’s, form structures were re-shaped to meet changing conditions. Population movements to the suburbs and the opening of new schools as part of the policy to extend secondary education led to a fall in numbers of boys entering the school. As a
Front Row.—F. B. Russell, M. J. Daintith, D. J. Gillilan, Mr. Cousins.
The Headmaster, C. E. Drew (Senior Prefect), E. K. Williams, H. R. Barnard, K. A. Lewis.
The Senior Chemical Laboratory c. 1930. It is now the Senior Biology Laboratory.

The Workshop, c. 1930.
result forms were organised in three streams (classical, modern and remove) instead of four (A, B, C and D). Mounting unemployment due to world wide trade depression led to difficulties in finding jobs when leaving school and many boys stayed on into the sixth forms. Mr. Dent took the opportunity to institute a tutorial system and to add a post-matriculation Arts course to augment the thriving science, mathematics and economics sixth form courses. He also appointed a Careers Master who worked in co-operation with the Headmasters’ Employment Committee to help boys to find suitable posts. Parents’ open days became a regular feature.

The life of the school outside the classroom was as vigorous as ever during this period. The Science Society, regularly producing papers on a wide range of subjects, was joined by a Classical Society, and a series of modern languages entertainments stimulated interest in French and German. The new stage brought productions of “She Stoops to Conquer” and “The Rivals”. The orchestra and choir conquered new territory. In 1931 the orchestra appeared in cinemas on film and were invited to broadcast in 1938, followed by the school choir in 1939. Seven boys sang in the Westminster Abbey Choir at the Coronation of George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. A new sport was introduced with the formation of a Boat Club to work on the tideway, and the Boxing Club boasted a membership of over 100 in 1934. The school sides had the usual fluctuating fortunes at cricket and football. An individual record was created in 1930 when F. Hoffman of the school team, playing for the Old Boys, scored 209 not out in two hours, easily beating the only century scored for the school team at Dulwich (118) and the century scored some years later at Mitcham (119 not out). For the school 2nd XI, F.W. Smith took 10 wickets for 5 runs in 1936.

Mr. Palser’s successor as Second Master, F.J. Cousins (Freddy), was forced to retire through ill health after only three years, and the school was the poorer that his warm and human qualities could only be given to the post for this short time. In 1938 he was succeeded by Capt. R.F.W. Shackel (Shacks) who had been a tower of strength to the cadet corps for over 30 years, and in command for all but the first year.

Capt. Shackel had steered the cadet corps through many difficulties, not least those of the previous years. In the 1930’s, Japanese aggression in Manchuria, Italian in Abyssinia and Hitler’s aggression in many parts of Europe had led to criticism of both the school branch of the League of Nation Union and the cadet corps.
The League of Nations steadily lost credibility as nations failed to prevent the use of force by the belligerents and the school branch lost support. At the same time the cadet corps was accused of fostering militarism. Capt. Shackel countered this by stressing the benefits of cadet training during formative years, and the value of accepting discipline in developing self-discipline. He was sustained by the tributes paid by Old Boys in all walks of life to the part the corps played in their progress through the school. As one C.S.M. said—"although the training is military in character, no attempt is made to impart a belief in the necessity and glory of war. On the contrary, a closer acquaintance with the facts of warfare convinces many of its complete futility".

Capt. Shackel could not combine cadet duties with the demands of Second Master and had to relinquish command of the corps. His unquenchable enthusiasm and indefatigable energy was now at the disposal of Head Master and school and both were to be severely taxed in the years ahead.

The military ambitions of Hitler's Germany bringing an ever increasing threat of war cast a shadow over the end of the decade. In September 1938 the authorities ordered standby evacuation plans to be operated, and the gallery of the school Hall was filled with the luggage of 560 boys and Masters, and the Hall was used for the issue of gas masks. The exercise was called off without the school being evacuated. It was only a temporary respite and a year later came the inevitable, and Great Britain and Germany were at war.

With war and evacuation, the school was forced to leave the building it had occupied for over 60 years. What had it achieved in that time?

It had earned a high reputation as being one of the leading grammar schools in the capital. Its boys became men who achieved distinction in and graced medicine, science, engineering, research, law, the Church, public life both in and out of Parliament, commerce, banking and insurance, and the Arts—stage, screen and the concert hall. Its noblest son, Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, of whom the school was justifiably proud, had the rare distinction of being President of the Royal Society and President of the Classical Association at the same time. A Nobel prizewinner and chemist of international repute, he was a gifted linguist fluent in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian, with a working knowledge of Chinese. As relaxation he read Tolstoy's "War and Peace" several times in the original Russian. His country recognised his achievements with a knighthood and the Order of Merit. He
acknowledged his debt to the school and kept in touch throughout his life.

But a school does not exist only for its academic achievements, and Westminster City bestowed equal patience and affection on boys not so gifted: the boy who wrote in an essay “I come to school to moulder my mind”; the boy who said to a Master “I'm not much of a mathematician either” and the other, when asked by an exasperated teacher “Is this work beneath you?” replied “No sir, it is beyond me”.

Speaking at an Old Boys' Reunion Dinner, a Master asked the rhetorical question “What is the spirit of the school?” He continued: “I would say that the School is distinguished by a certain freedom of outlook, a broad liberty, a lack of formal rules, regulations and restrictions; by its dependence on an appeal to reasonable conduct rather than to authority; by its spirit of comradeship. It is the same spirit of comradeship that animates the Staff Common Room, where resounds the language of philosophy, science and art - where discussion ranges from the insoluble problem of Relativity to the equally insoluble problem of the winner of the 3.30 Handicap”.

N.C.O.'s AND OFFICERS. 1936.


Chapter 7
1939–1945

During 1939, as it became increasingly obvious that war with Germany was inevitable, it was expected that mass bombing of London would follow immediately after the declaration of war. When the school broke up for the summer holiday the boys had instructions to report on the second day when evacuation orders were broadcast on the radio. In August came the first radio call – to rehearse the evacuation scheme. Half the boys were out of London on holiday and the remainder rehearsed the walk to Victoria Station – not the most demanding of tasks. From then onwards the Headmaster received a confusion of orders from the London County Council, until the official second day when 369 boys assembled at 7.30 a.m. After a roll call and luggage check the party moved off from Palace Street. At 9.05 a.m. the train left Victoria for the unknown. Nobody had been told where the school was going, it being clearly important to national security that it should remain a secret. At 10 a.m. the secret could be kept no longer – the party was turned out of the train at Edenbridge in Kent. It was reminiscent of market day as the boys were marshalled into pens from which 235 were taken to find billets in Westerham leaving 134 at Edenbridge. It was Saturday, 2nd September, and the country was still at peace, war being declared the following day.

As they settled down in their unusual surroundings, the awful truth dawned on Headmaster and staff. The master plan at County Hall had made no provision for schooling, and no school or other building had been allocated for the school to continue its work. While the boys roamed the countryside and picked blackberries, the authorities set to work to repair this not insignificant deficiency in the evacuation plan. A week later the Governors of the Judd School at Tonbridge generously offered to share their school with Westminster City. The Judd School was founded in 1888 by the Governors of the Tonbridge public boarding school to provide education for Tonbridge boys, and was named after the first benefactor of the Tonbridge School who was Lord Mayor of London in the 16th century – another historic link with the City of London.

Westerham was too far away and too awkward a journey so next there was a search for new billets. Ten days later the Westerham
contingent moved to Southborough, two and a half miles south of Tonbridge, and Shipbourne, four miles north, and their surrounding villages. Tonbridge itself could only billet a handful of boys.

Head Master and staff then had to organise the school in a building where the combined number of the two schools, 500, needed to fit in a building for 350. At first W.C.S. had the use of Judd three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, augmented by the use of village halls and large rooms in inns and other establishments. Transport for boys and staff was mainly by bicycle (in all weathers) or bus (with a two hour wait if you missed it).

By 1940 the three days a week had increased for some to four days a week. Co-operation between the two schools was possible and harmonious because Judd did everything they could to make Westminster City feel at home. The Masters offered to share the common room and the Prefects the Prefects’ room. Many problems remained to be solved. School dinners, the target for cynical jokes in happier days, were provided in many different ways. The dining room could not accommodate all the boys, and when rationing problems could be overcome, mid-day meals were taken back at billets, at cafés and at neighbouring schools which volunteered to help. Added to this was the need to work out schedules for use of class rooms and halls, and teaching rosters for scattered boys and Masters. The burden on the Head Master and his staff was great.

The corporate life of the school, so strong before evacuation, and so important in the all round development of the boys, suffered a setback. Although Mr. Dent held morning assembly and prayers as often as he could, he could never assemble the whole school together at one time. Travel difficulties and winter black out regulations restricted the activities of the school societies. The Lit. and Deb., operating only in the summer for these reasons, was a forum for older boys to solve some of the world’s problems. The School Players had intended to stage “Macbeth” in 1940, but this had to be abandoned. However, in the spring term the music, choral, modern languages and drama societies staged an entertainment by the school for the school. The item looked forward to most eagerly by the school was the quarrel scene from “Julius Caesar”, enacted, not deliberately for that reason, by the house captains of Dacre’s and Kings’. Shakespeare’s dramatic instinct prevailed and it passed off without incident. The School Orchestra, although not so strong in all sections, transferred themselves and equipment to their new home.

In sport the Boat Club tried unsuccessfully to transfer to the
Medway. Football and cricket survived at all levels. Informal games were played around the county when opponents and pitches were available. The school team played a few games, and inter-house games were played when geographical difficulties could be overcome. Cross country running took a new lease of life, and was augmented by tree climbing when a bull joined in.

The cadet corps survived the move, but training was often perforce by sections miles apart rather than the corps as a whole. As the German army overran Europe, and invasion became a threat, senior cadets and Masters joined the local Home Guard.

Perhaps the geologists came off best in the move. They enthusiastically explored and dug new areas and were able to identify and send specimens of interest to London museums.

One effect of evacuation was to shorten the summer holiday to a month, and one of the rigours of the new life was the absence of a school tuck shop.

With senior boys leaving at the end of the 1940 summer term, and with the normal intake to replace them severely reduced, the school number fell to 230 at the beginning of the autumn term. This involved yet another reshaping of forms and teaching schedules. Air raid alerts meant that often classes were held in trench shelters.

Back in Westminster the school was badly damaged during an air raid in November, 1940. A high explosive bomb landed in the forecourt leaving a large crater. The south porch, with its ancient arms above, was completely destroyed and half the north porch disappeared. Rooms inside the building suffered and windows were blown in. The foundation office on one side, and the library on the other side, also suffered blast damage. With tiles blown off the roof, the upper part of the school building and the hall were left at the mercy of the winter elements. The school caretaker – Aubrey of the green baize apron – sleeping in an improvised air raid shelter in a cupboard in the basement under the south porch was luckily unhurt. And blast damage to the plinth of his statue failed to shake Sir Sydney Waterlow’s Victorian imperturbability. A few nights later a smaller bomb penetrated to the Common Room and added to the chaos.

In 1941 the increasing importance of the Royal Air Force in the successful prosecution of the war and the defence of Britain led to the formation of an Air Training Corps from within schools. In February the W.C.S. Flight was formed and attached to the Tonbridge Schools Squadron. The air space above and around Tonbridge had been in constant use by both our own and enemy air
forces and a visit to a local Fighter Command Station was interesting as battle operations were in progress at the time. The three fighting services announced their plans for pre-entry training to enable boys to express an option for the service in which they wished to enrol when called up. Training in the cadet corps was essential for the army or navy, and in the A.T.C. for the R.A.F. or Fleet Air Arm. University short courses eased the problem for boys wishing to go on to University before call up.

The autumn term of 1941 marked the third year of evacuation. Numbers were 251 and an uneven balance of age groups in the school led to further rearrangement of forms. The biggest change was in the VI forms which became less specialised. The Arts VIth relaunched mathematics, and the Science VIth studied Art, English and French. By now Mr. Dent was able to assemble the whole school for prayers three mornings a week. Another occasion when the school foregathered was the first war-time sports day, held on grass tracks at the Judd School Playing Fields. True to tradition the starter's pistol developed a mechanical defect but the presentation of cups for interhouse competition could not take place, because "as a war measure the cups had been locked up".

The swimming sports were also revived, held for the first time in the school's history in an open air pool. The experiment was successful as the weather was kind. Through the generosity of the Tonbridge School in making their courts available there was a resurgence of Fives. At Westminster the school played Eton Fives, and the Tonbridge version was Rugby Fives, and the school team did not adapt to the new rules to avoid defeat when the two schools met. But one advantage of Rugby Fives was the playing of singles matches, not possible with Eton Fives. Cross country running, both practice and interhouse competition, was now a regular part of the sporting scene.

The indoor societies continued to battle against adversity. The Science Society, sharing time and place with the Lit. and Deb., continued to produce interesting papers. One Lit. and Deb. debate was "That the modern girl is an improvement on her predecessors". Finally the motion was carried, mainly due to a lack of knowledge of the predecessors. Perhaps this was why they expanded their activities to holding debates not only with Tonbridge School, but with girls' schools evacuated in the neighbourhood.

By 1943 the Musical Society could no longer raise an orchestra and they concentrated on playing chamber music and listening to record recitals. The School Magazine, much slimmer due to paper
rationing, came out only twice a year to record the school’s tribulations. The magazine became more important than before when the Old Boys’ Association decided to send it to all who kept in touch. It was read and re-read in all parts of the world. As one Old Boy said: “Nowadays it is the only lifeline with the school, and as long as it isn’t cut, we can still maintain contact with memories we don’t want to forget”. Pages of news from Old Boys printed in the magazine helped to sustain the Head Master and his staff in their battle to keep the old traditions alive. But they were also saddened by the news of casualties of boys whom they knew well. Some idea of the waste of good lives war produces can be grasped from the fact that three boys who were senior prefects were amongst those killed in action.

In 1943 Mr. Dent described the evacuation of the school thus: “chaos masquerading as administration was let loose upon us”. He was not to know that more chaos was to follow: Hitler had not yet launched his flying bomb attack on London.

The school had been evacuated to Kent for safety, but then found themselves in the battle zone of the Battle of Britain, with aerial activity and combat overhead. Now they found themselves in the path of the V1 Flying Bombs, popularly known as doodle-bugs, and this part of Kent became known as Bomb Alley. It was in this alley that Fighter Command sought to shoot the V1s down before they hit their target in London.

The renewed air attack on London came at a time when Mr. Dent was trying to establish a bridgehead in Palace Street as a prelude to the return of the whole school. Repairs to the building had started and he planned to use some class rooms for the lower school. Not only were these plans abandoned, but the authorities decided to re-evacuate the boys from Kent to Devon. In July, 1944, 120 boys, together with 40 from the Judd School, were uprooted at short notice and transported in a special train to Exmouth. Boys taking Higher and School Certificates remained behind to take their exams and follow later, and in September, 80 new entrants journeyed to Devon.

The move to Exmouth enabled Dr. Stevens to renew acquaintance with the school as he had moved there when he retired in 1930. He visited the school during the first term in Devon, and when he celebrated his 80th birthday, the school was given a half day’s holiday to mark the event. In the following year, as the school was re-establishing itself in Westminster, he died peacefully in his sleep.
The school was affiliated to Exmouth Grammar School and term ended a week early with end of term examinations cancelled. School dinners were provided throughout the summer and the boys settled down to a pleasant holiday in Devon. The short period before end of term showed that there was insufficient room to accommodate both schools, and Mr. Dent searched for suitable premises. American troops had just evacuated Cauleston, a fine mansion which had been equipped with a good kitchen. Mr. Dent’s untiring persistence and skilful diplomacy fought off the Devon County Council, the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health who were competing for possession, and he persuaded the Army to allocate it to the school. A working party of senior boys cleaned up to make the premises ready, and desks and apparatus were sent from Palace Street to enable a start to be made in the Autumn term. Some improvisation was necessary. Gillian Dent was acting as secretary to her father and the Head Master’s secretary’s office was one of the bathrooms with a board over the bath as her work table.

Billeting difficulties led to the opening of three hostels for the boys. Two of these were supervised by the Head and Second Masters, adding still further to the burdens of evacuation on Mr. Dent and Capt. Shackel.

And so, with the war in Europe in its final stages, and with numbers down to 198, the sixth and final year of the school’s evacuation quietly took its course.

During five years sojourn in Kent the school made many friends. In the early days of evacuation it was usual to talk about the school in exile, but this word usage was soon dropped as the people of Kent welcomed the boys into their homes, and everybody at the Judd School made it possible for Westminster City to retain its identity away from home. As a mark of appreciation the governors placed a wall plaque in the entrance lobby of the Judd School with the inscription:

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September 1939 – July 1944
WESTMINSTER CITY SCHOOL
placed this tablet here to record
their gratitude for the hospitality
which gave them a home in this building
during the vicissitudes of war
and to commemorate their friendship with
THE JUDD SCHOOL
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As the German bombardment of London slackened and ceased, the school became increasingly anxious to return to Westminster. But first, priority permits were needed for materials and craftsmen to repair the bomb-battered building and the insistence and persistence of the governors persuaded the authorities of the importance of W.C.S. returning to base.

In April 1945, with work still going on around them, 136 boys reported to Palace Street for tutorial classes while the fifth and sixth forms stayed on at Exmouth to concentrate on their important examinations. The Hall was unusable so morning assembly was held in the gymnasium in competition with the noise of District Railway trains in the cutting below. School dinners were provided by the London Meals Service, a foretaste of the School Meals Service yet to come.

In April 1945 there was another important event affecting the school – the Education Act 1944 came into operation. Under the act fees were abolished, but more important was the fact that the London County Council was to have greater control over major decisions concerning the life and future of the school. When the L.C.C. published their views on the application of the Act to London, it was found that they came down in favour of the American system, variously known as the one type, omnibus, or multilateral system, with all post primary pupils, often 2,000 in number, put into one school. In the words of the L.C.C. report, the schools “have a complete cross section of the population, boys and girls, prosperous and unprosperous, clever and stupid, industrious and idle”. In this country the schools came to be known as comprehensive schools.

And so, when the whole school re-assembled in the old building in September, 1945. Governors and Head Master were united in their resolve to restore the school to the position it held six years before, and to preserve the school’s identity, standards and traditions as the new scheme of education in London evolved.

The school numbered 350, three times the strength of the last term at Exmouth, but well below the 520 of the 1939 summer term. Only a mere half dozen remained from that school term to remember the school before the war. To the others the aroma of
malt and hops from Watney’s Brewery across the road, and the sound of bottles of beer being loaded on to brewers’ drays, was unfamiliar and in sharp contrast to the rural scene to which they were accustomed.

Although class rooms and laboratories had been made habitable, the Hall still needed a new floor and stage and a roof, which was to be flat and not domed. The 1914–18 War Memorial panels, which had been removed for safety, had been restored to the central corridor, and the library re-established in the main building with scope for extensions for a reading room and a reference library.

In the summer of 1946 a prominent figure, important in the smooth running of the school, retired. In official records he appeared as Mr. W. Bone. To boys of several decades he was known as Aubrey of the Green Baize Apron. He was appointed School Porter in 1913, and in the days before a standard uniform for caretakers, his cloth cap and green apron were part of the tradition of the school. While he stoked furnaces, organised and supervised cleaners, and reprimanded boys – despite the lack of specific power to do so, Mrs. Bone acted as housekeeper, and, as cook, was in charge of school dinners before the war. It was the end of an era.

Later in the year Capt. Shackel, the Second Master, retired after 40 years with the school. As Second Master, Shacks shared with “the Chief” the burdens of evacuation, re-evacuation and de-evacuation. As Mr. Dent said “No Head Master could have been more blessed with his Second Master than I. During the strenuous and darkened years of war, Shackel was ready in counsel, fertile in improvisation, indefatigable in work with mind and body and drove through difficulties with an energy that nothing seemed able to quench”. He added: “his heart was gentle, particularly towards sinners”.

With the departure of Shacks, boys could no longer, when singing hymn number 170 in the school hymnal, bring special relish and emphasis, without as much as the flicker of an eyelid in the direction of the tall burly man with the stentorian voice, to the lines

“Then shall all shackles fall, the stormy clangour
Of wild war music o’er the earth shall cease”.

During the war years Shacks also found time and energy to start and continue to organise agriculture camps, which were so successful that they continued for a few years into peace. Centred mainly at West Farleigh in an oast house converted to living and sleeping quarters, Shacks made sure that the boys, who were paid for their work, were well fed, while a succession of labour masters (school staff or old boys) supervised work in fields and orchards,
and paid out the boys on pay day. In this way, over the years boys
picked plums, apples, loganberries and damsons, kept rooks away
from crops, helped with the harvest, pulled up and cut down weeds,
gathered vegetables, and in a few cases helped with hop picking.

At the end of the day, and certainly at the end of a week, many
boys had cultivated a healthy respect for those who worked on farms
in all weathers. Another to acquire respect for workers vital to the
war effort was the first coal miner produced by the school. To
ensure that the coal mines had sufficient labour, the government
introduced a scheme to divert a limited number of those awaiting
call up to the mines instead of the fighting services. One Old Boy,
awaiting call up to the navy, found that his name was prominent in
the ballot. At this time mine workers, like farm workers, not only
were among the lowest paid workers, but suffered primitive working
conditions. He was on the miners’ side after that.

The rural environment of evacuation, and the corporate
experiences of agriculture camps, did not unduly influence the boy
who declared that a cynic was a baby swan. And civic studies
inspired another to declare that manhood suffrage was caused by
marriage.

During the war, the playing field at Mitcham was under
requisition by the National Fire Service as a substation, the tractor
sheds housing the fire appliances and the pavilion the firemen.
When they left, football was resumed, and in 1946 sports day was
held there after 6 years’ absence. The trophies were brought out for
display and presentation.

Later in the year repairs to the School Hall were completed in
time for Speech Day. The spectacle of the Masters entering in
procession in their academic robes and hoods to mount the dais,
with the Head Master resplendent in his scarlet hood, was new to the
boys. In the chair was an Old Boy, G.F. Wilkins, as Chairman of the
Foundation Board, supported by his brother who was Chairman of
the School Governors, the first time that Old Boys had occupied
these chairs. They were at school under Robert Goffin before the
turn of the century, thus spanning many eventful years of the
school’s history, and evidence of the loyalty the school commanded
right through from the earliest days.

When the Old Westminster Citizens’ Association resumed
activities there was a strong desire to commemorate in a worthy
manner the Old Boys who sacrificed their lives in the war. It was
decided to endow travelling exhibitions so that boys could learn
more of the way of life in other countries and so contribute to better
The First Eleven football team in front of School, with the war-damaged Statue, and the old Stag Brewery in the background, in 1953.

*Back Row*: J. Buckle; G. Wise; L. Clarke; G. Page; R. J. Graham; M. H. Phillips; L. Scarborough.

*Front Row*: C. Dryland; D. Potter (Vice-Capt.); D. Martin (Capt.); P. T. Johnson; A. R. Mayhook.
international understanding. It was also decided that a memorial volume should be inscribed with the names of those who died.

The Book of Honour was dedicated at a moving service in the Church of St. Margaret within the sound of the chimes of Big Ben, symbol of home to the armed forces serving in all parts of the world during the war. Before Alan Rogers, an Old Boy later to become Bishop, dedicated the volume, Mr. Dent, in steady tones concealing the emotions he felt, read the names written in the volume, the names of men he remembered as boys who died before fulfilment. He said afterwards “I cannot express my relief at feeling my own part is now over. Never again, I hope, may I have the experience of calling over such a Roll”.

The Book, a leather bound volume on vellum and illuminated with a 10th century script, was then placed in an oak case incorporated into the 1914-18 Memorial. The pages are turned from time to time and the book is seen through a glass panel.

As school numbers rose steadily back to the pre-war figure of 500, the societies so important to the life of the school regained their old vitality. The Lit. and Deb. and Science Societies had struggled on during the war and now appreciated working from a secure and permanent base without black-out and travel restrictions. The Chess and Camera Clubs were joined by a new activity – table tennis. Sportsmen could choose from football, cricket, fives, swimming, athletics and badminton. The tuck shop re-opened, but it was to be a year or two before Masters and boys could sample its delicacies to the full as sweet rationing was still in operation. Foreign visits, with groups of boys travelling to Europe, now became a permanent feature of school life.

In 1949 the school was again visited by H.M. Inspectors. Their criticisms were mainly about the bomb-battered Victorian building and its relationship with new standards arising from the 1944 Education Act. Academic standards were returning and there was praise for Mr. Dent: “The traditions for which he has always stood are the best that the English Grammar School has had before it in the past. He has a natural gift for leadership”.

Praise also came from an unexpected quarter. A visiting French teacher spending a few months at Palace Street, in comparing Westminster City with Parisian secondary schools, said “I saw that the sixth formers were in no danger to become existentialists, for which I thanked Heaven”.

The School Orchestra and the Dramatic Society both took some years to repeat pre-war successes. The orchestra resumed as a string
orchestra as the first step towards rebuilding its pre-war 70 strong orchestra. Shortage of wind, woodwind and brass instruments hampered the training of instrumentalists. Meanwhile at concerts, choir and orchestra were joined by the Modern Languages department with French and German songs, recitations and sketches.

The dramatic society could not function as soon as the hall re-opened, as they had to wait for stage curtains to be delivered. A start was made in 1948 with scenes from "Midsummer Night's Dream", and a year later, with improved stage lighting and an entrance giving direct access to the dressing rooms, a full length play, Sheridan’s "The Rivals" was produced and pronounced a success. Players were now able to reach the stage without the great inconvenience of running through the playground after being made up in a warm dressing room, and without the risk of catching a chill while waiting on a draughty staircase.

At the end of 1948 the Cadet Corps and the Air Training Corps elected to become members of the newly created Combined Cadet Force. Before entering either the Army or Air Section each recruit joined the Basic Training Section in which he was required to pass Part I of Certificate "A" before specialising. And so the A.T.C. acquired its fifth nomenclature in its short life. At Tonbridge it was B Flight 513 Squadron; at Exmouth, C Flight 299 Squadron; at Westminster it was first attached to 382 Squadron, and then became independent 2162 Flight. While still the A.T.C., three N.C.O.s had the distinction of selection to take duty at the Olympic Games staged in London. They were on duty at the Fencing Section of the
Games at Wembley, operating the score board and undertaking general duties, and the Corps’ Flight Sgt. was appointed to take control of all cadets on duty during the Games.

After the School Hall had been restored, a foundation board was placed on the west wall as a permanent record of the school’s origins commemorated in the four House names. It was followed by a handsome case to exhibit the interhouse competition cups. Mr. Dent decided it was time for a new Foundation Song for which he wrote the words. The first School Song made reference to “St. Margaret’s rector Palmer”. Researches revealed that although James Palmer resided in the parish he was never the rector. The previous song referred to the original eight houses. Mr. Dent concentrated on the surviving four houses. Soon afterwards there was another change, this time in the school crest. The linking of the arms of the cities of London and Westminster in the first crest was frowned on by heraldic experts, and when the Governors commissioned a house flag to be flown on special occasions, the arms of the two cities were separated.

On Palm Sunday, 2nd April, 1950, Mr. Dent died peacefully in his armchair. Three years earlier it had been realised that all was not well when his doctor ordered complete rest and forbade all school duties. He resumed work as alert as ever although it was obvious that he had slowed down physically. His two predecessors both enjoyed long retirement and lived to be over 80. Mr. Dent was only 58.

His Headmastership fell into three distinct stages. In the first, from 1930 to 1939, he put into practice his ideas for the school under peacetime conditions. Then came the war with the problems of double evacuation, followed by the return of the school to a bomb-battered building.

In his first nine years, untroubled by war, Mr. Dent, a man versed in the arts and humanities, took over a school with a high scientific reputation and tradition and VIth forms strong also in modern languages and economics. Taking advantage of the increasing number of boys staying on into the VIth forms and a growing interest in arts subjects, he added an advanced course in classics. He himself also took English as a general subject in the science VIth which had a salutary effect on any scientist who showed weakness in expression or critical thought. As war broke out eight of his boys had gained places at Oxford and Cambridge in addition to the usual number at London University.

To the stresses imposed by the war and post war years was added the physical and emotional strain of knowing that Mrs. Dent, who
supported him wholeheartedly in his work for the school, was suffering from a progressive and incurable disease. He did not spare himself during these ten years and this undermined his health.

At his last Speech Day, when paying tribute to his staff for restoring pre-war standards, he reported “The tide has now turned and we are beginning to flow strongly”. He did not live to see the full effect of the academic turn of the tide, when eight boys gained entrance to Oxford or Cambridge in one year, followed by twelve the next. But he was able, as a classicist, to congratulate one of his pre-war boys on his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society, the accolade of scientists. But he did not judge the success of the school only on academic successes. His interest was in all his boys, whom he knew well, and he gained the affection and respect of boys of differing capabilities.

A tribute to him as schoolmaster came from four old boys at Lincoln College, Oxford, his own college: “He was a ruthless examiner of beliefs and convictions which he suspected of being merely conventional or basically unsound. Many an illusion, as we know, has been left behind in the sun-lit classrooms of Judd School. The process was sometimes hard and always disturbing, but it had the virtue of making what we are left with the more precious.”

His gift of leadership combined sagacity, wit and humour, the felicitous choice of the right phrase, the giving and receiving of affection, his understanding of boys and men under his charge and
the determination not to accept anything lower than the high standards he set himself and the school.

As the school’s fourth Head Master, the Governors appointed Mr. R.J. Fearn, Headmaster of Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar School, Hartlebury, Worcestershire, from January 1951. In his first year he saw a change in examination procedure resulting from the 1944 Act.

Until then boys sat for University School Certificate examinations. The fifth forms took the School Certificate which gave exemption from professional preliminary examinations, while a credit mark in five prescribed subjects qualified for exemption from matriculation examinations. The sixth forms took the Higher School Certificate where marks gained exemption from University Intermediate Degree examinations. These examinations were replaced by the General Certificate Examination at ordinary and advanced levels: – G.C.E. ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels. A certificate could be obtained by a pass in only one subject, and other subjects could be added at a later date. A growth in the number of University places available when new Universities were built led to different Universities requiring different pass levels as entry qualifications.

At Christmas 1951 the school held a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols for the first time in St. Margaret’s Church. Since the war there had been carol concerts in the school hall, and two years before the Head Master had been invited by the Rector to participate in St. Margaret’s own Festival by reading a lesson. From this, with the co-operation of the Rector who took part in the service, the school’s Festival developed, to become an important annual event in the school calendar. There could not be a more appropriate setting than this beautiful church, linked over the centuries with the school, with its memorials to James Palmer and Emery Hill.

The life of the school outside the class room steadily regained its traditional vigour. The modern languages concert as a full evening’s entertainment reappeared, and the Dramatic Society invited Grey Coat school to play the female parts in “Much Ado about Nothing”. New societies appeared: the Council for Education in World Citizenship (CEWC), a Problem Club, Christian Union, Film Society and Rifle Club giving variety to school life, and the C.C.F. formed a new section, the Naval Section. The Orchestra increased in numbers and musical balance, the school choir thrived, and eight boys from the school who were members of the choir at St.
Margaret’s Church sang in the augmented Westminster Abbey Choir at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. To span the generations, an Old Boy who left the school in 1912 served as Gold Staff Officer at the ceremony.

Changes were made in the prefectorial system. In Dr. Stevens’ time there were School and House prefects; Mr. Dent changed this to school prefects and house monitors. Mr. Fearn instituted a system of prefects, sub-prefects and house monitors, and the senior prefect, a title held for nearly 50 years was changed to head prefect. This enabled one or more deputy head prefects to be appointed.

The school hymnal which had been used for 40 years was replaced by the English Hymnal. A striking change was the disappearance of the tiling in the school hall (aptly described by Mr. Dent as lavatorial green) when the tiling was covered by oak panelling subscribed for by Old Boys. This gift to the school extended to panelling the vestibule outside the Head Master’s study opposite the War Memorial:

The panels were shaped and made up in the school workshops by members of the school, and this prompted editorial comment in the school magazine: “it shows that we ourselves continue to display a robust independence, initiative and versatility, which is just as it should be”.

When a distinguished old boy, the Rt. Hon. Gwilym Lloyd-George, returned to his old school on Speech Day to present the prizes, he received a special ovation, a big cheer coming from the patrons of the tuck shop. As Minister of Food in Her Majesty’s Government he had de-rationed sweets.

In 1954, after 4 years as Head Master, Mr. Fearn left to take over a private school in Surrey. His task had been of consolidation: to ensure that the strenuous efforts of the staff in re-establishing the school back in Westminster bore fruit. Gradually pre-war academic standards returned and more boys stayed on to benefit from school life in the VIth forms thus adding strength to new and old school societies. “Parity of esteem” was a phrase often heard in debates on education at that time, and Mr. Fearn continued the tradition of the school in developing the talents of the less gifted without allowing this in any way to retard the progress of the more gifted. He accepted the grammar school tradition of fostering and nourishing ability and said at the Speech Day when Major Lloyd-George visited the school: “It is of course not only the intellectual training of gifted boys that is important. If a boy is highly intelligent it is all the more important that his moral standards should match his
intellect; if they do not he is a greater potential danger than a dull person. We have had some frightening examples of brilliance without integrity. What we hope for in this school, and happily often see, is a clever boy leaving us at about eighteen years of age showing signs of a rounded and integrated personality, emotionally stable, spiritually minded, and socially responsible”.

To follow Mr. Fearn the governors appointed Dr. Gerald Shutt, M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D., who was Headmaster of Raine’s Foundation Grammar School.

He came to the school at a time of great social and educational change. With education attracting a greater share of public funds, the London County Council as the local education authority had an increasing influence on the administration of the school, with representatives sitting on the governing body. The L.C.C. was laying out new playing fields and building modern comprehensive schools and expected to find the same standards in the old building at Palace Street. The Head Master’s relationship with some staff changed radically and there were some workers in the school no longer under his sole jurisdiction – school cleaners were appointed and paid by the L.C.C., and school dinners were supplied by the School Meals Service. If there were complaints about school dinners, Dr. Shutt could not deal with them himself by a visit to the school kitchens: he had to complain to the School Meals Service and hope that their supervisors would effect an improvement. There
were increasing numbers of officials and committees outside the school to deal with, occupying time and energy. Diplomacy in a Head Master became even more essential.

Classroom relationships between teacher and pupil were changing and it was important to enlist the interest of parents. Open Days and parents’ meetings made a significant contribution and in order to accommodate the maximum number of parents, two Speech Days, one for the senior school and one for the junior school, were held.

Perhaps the biggest change, bringing its own particular problems, was the turnover of teaching staff. Up to 1939, once they had settled in, Masters tended to spend most of their teaching life at the school. Now, with new universities and comprehensive schools being opened, there was a continuous stream of attractive positions available for young and ambitious staff. The reputation of Westminster City was still high, and to be able to quote a few years’ teaching experience there was advantageous when applying for a better post. This created obvious problems of team work and maintaining esprit de corps.

Despite these problems Dr. Shutt skilfully steered the school on a steady course to preserve the traditions and high standards built up by his predecessors. He was fully supported by the governing body who, in order to prevent the school being submerged in the tide of educational reform, secured the status of Voluntary Aided Church of England School. This meant that the Foundation would have to meet 50% of the cost of structural and other improvements to the school, public funds supplying the other half.

A major change to the fabric of the school came in 1957 when work started on building new laboratories above and over the school hall. This involved removing the roof and the hall was not available for morning assembly (held in the dining room), for stage shows (the Greycoat School offered their stage) or Speech Day (held in Church House). The work took two years, and to add to the noise and dust generated, when the work on the school was nearing completion, Watney’s Brewery across the road in Palace Street was demolished, to be followed later by the offices on the other side of the District Railway cutting in Victoria Street. After that came the erection of multi-storey office blocks.

In 1958 the Second Master, Mr. J.W. Lewis, retired. He had given great service to the school in several capacities. At the outbreak of war he was Senior Science Master. During evacuation he assumed overall responsibility for 120 boys billeted at Edenbridge. Appointed Second Master in 1947, he assumed the duties of acting
The School Hall with the dome, in 1909.

The rebuilt School Hall, with new laboratories replacing the dome, in 1958.
Head Master three times. First when Mr. Dent was ordered to rest, then for a period between the death of Mr. Dent and the arrival of Mr. Fearn, and finally between Mr. Fearn and Dr. Shutt. He had just the right combination of the qualities of leadership and administrative ability to be able to hand over a school in good working order each time.

1958 was the 50th Jubilee Year of the Old Westminster Citizens’ Association, founded by Dr. Stevens in 1908 to replace the Old Boys’ Club. In launching the Association he said “There is no greater asset to a school than the manly tone and the loyal devotion of its Old Boys.” It was in this spirit that the Old Boys decided to create a Jubilee Trust Fund to make grants from time to time to enrich the life of the school in helping activities where public or Foundation funds were not available. Early examples of worthwhile causes were grants to acquire musical instruments for the School Orchestra and to the Photographic Society for equipment. Individual boys were assisted in pursuing special courses or educational tours abroad, or with grants towards the cost of entrance examinations or interviews at Universities. One year a minibus was donated for group activities involving travelling.

In 1963, the 330th anniversary of the grant of the Royal Charter by Charles I to St. Margaret’s Hospital was celebrated by a service at St. Margaret’s Church attended by the Queen Mother, who visited the school after the service. There she was shown the Royal Charter, inspected exhibitions of work in the spheres of Art, Woodwork, Geography and English, met Governors, teachers, prefects and boys. As she left she persuaded the Head Master to grant an extra day’s holiday.

The life of the school outside the classroom continued to thrive with the teaching staff giving their time to societies and sports. Rowing revived, and volley-ball, basket-ball, tennis, hockey and fencing were introduced as new sports activities. In fencing, the school produced brothers who each became schoolboys’ champion, the elder later as British Foils Champion competing in the world fencing championships in Moscow and in the Commonwealth Games. The School Players staged successful plays annually while the Orchestra and Choir steadily returned to pre-war standards. In 1961 two boys sang the parts of Moth and Cobweb in the Covent Garden Opera House’s first performances of Britten’s “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” members of the Choir having previously sung there in “Parsifal”.

New societies were born, some for only a short life. New were the
H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother examining the Charter of King Charles I for St. Margaret's Hospital which was granted in 1633. In 1963, on the Charter's 330th Anniversary, the Queen Mother visited the School, and is seen here with Dr. Shutt.
H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother meeting the Prefects in the old Library. Colonel W.H. Godfrey, the Chairman of the Governors and an Old Boy of Mr. Goffin's era, stands behind Her Majesty.
Film, Geographical, Historical, Philatelic, Numismatical, Astronomical and Ornithological Societies. The Lit. and Deb., after gracing the scene for many generations, merged with the Council for Education in World Citizenship Society and the Historical Society to form the Senior Society. Perhaps the Historical Society needed moral support after a boy asked why Lady Dacre had been beheaded. He asked because the Foundation Board says that her executors founded Emanuel Hospital. The Nature Society obviously made an impact on one boy, who, appreciating that fish are cold blooded, wrote that fish went about the sea in shawls.

Field courses and expeditions, some educational and others holidays, to various places in this country and abroad, led by teaching staff, became a regular feature. The art master did not realise he was harbouring a genius until he took some boys to the open air sculpture exhibition in Battersea Park. One of the party was heard to say when contemplating a sculpture by Picasso “I could have done better myself”.

In 1964 came the retirement of another Second Master (now termed Deputy Headmaster) to whom the school owed a debt. W. H. (Bill) Porter had been at W.C.S. for 30 years and was Head of the Modern Languages Department when Dr. Shutt asked him to be his deputy. Dr. Shutt wished to draw on his boundless energy and enthusiasm for all things to do with the school. Together they formed a very effective partnership.

Two years later Dr. Shutt retired. He had steered the school efficiently and successfully through some anxious times. Academically his record was impressive. New techniques in teaching maths and the sciences were introduced and he was always alert to alter the teaching schedules and structures to the advantage of the boys. The stream system of A, B and C forms was replaced by a less rigid and more equal system. He built up the sixth forms from a disappointingly low level when he took over to 174 when he retired, and increased the range of Advanced Level courses. The number of University places gained increased annually from 18 in 1957 to 48 in 1965. His University net was flung wide and included Yale and Ohio in the U.S.A. and Reykjavik in Iceland. A keen disciplinarian, he maintained high standards of discipline at a time when old values were rejected by many.

Dr. Shutt also strengthened the school’s ties with Westminster. The Mayor of Westminster was often invited to important school occasions, and at the start of the school year, a school service was held at St. Margaret’s Church. Dr. Shutt took an active part in the
Mr. Porter in typical pose, flanked by Mrs. Burgin the Head Master’s Secretary, and Mr. Pringle, in 1964.

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Spink with a Geography Field Trip to Westward Ho!, North Devon, in 1963. Field Trips were initiated by Mr. Spink during the 1950s.
life of Westminster Abbey joining the Honorary Corps available for special events in the Abbey. When he retired he decided to stay in Westminster, and after a lifetime of directing the efforts of the young, he devoted his retirement to helping old folk.

From September, 1966, to follow Dr. Shutt, the Governors appointed Stanley Allder, M.A., who was Headmaster of Tollington Grammar School.

London's local government was then settling down after drastic re-organisation. The City of Westminster lost its separate identity by amalgamation with Marylebone and Paddington to form a new borough three times the size. The London County Council had been abolished, its functions shared between the new larger London Boroughs, the Greater London Council (the G.L.C.), and for education the Inner London Education Authority (the I.L.E.A.). This had the effect of slowing down long-term plans for education on the part of the L.C.C. before its demise, and it was now the task of the I.L.E.A. to determine the shape of education in London.

The opening of the Pimlico Comprehensive School brought the fear that W.C.S. might become redundant, and the Governors explored the possibility of moving the school to the outskirts of London. Then came an approach from a consortium of property developers with an offer to purchase the Palace Street site for multi-storey office residential redevelopment, if an alternative site suitable for rebuilding the school in Westminster could be provided in exchange. When it was clear that there was no alternative site in Westminster it was suggested that a new school should be built just across the Thames at Nine Elms where the Covent Garden market was being re-sited.

This all added to the problems of a Head Master. On the academic side Mr. Allder expressed disquiet that O Level results left room for improvement. The approach to education by the young was in the melting pot - world-wide student revolt on the one hand, and apathy, with energies diverted from study by many new distractions away from school, on the other. Mr. Allder set up a School Council to combat apathy, but the Council itself soon collapsed through apathy. To this was added a natural apprehension among the teaching staff about the future of the school and their own personal future. In order to maintain morale, the staff were regularly consulted and informed while the school's requirements in a new building were decided. Further demands on Mr. Allder's time were made in discussions with the I.L.E.A., architects engaged on the scheme and as professional adviser to the Governors.
The Nine Elms project was finally submitted to the Wandsworth Borough Planning Committee for agreement to build a comprehensive school with non-selective eight form entry. Immediately the first difficulty was encountered. The master-plan for the re-development of the whole site at Nine Elms did not include the apportionment of land for education. Planning consent was therefore not to be obtained speedily.

While these problems were being resolved, Mr. Allder died suddenly and unexpectedly in March, 1972. Undaunted by the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the future of the school and the demands made on his time, he was progressive in introducing new studies (computer studies being an example), and alert to altering teaching schedules to meet the needs of the boys. Four brothers who passed through his hands gained entrance to Cambridge University as witness to his success in maintaining academic standards. He gave further encouragement to sporting activities by persuading the I.L.E.A. to allocate use of new playing fields recently opened, and he smoothed the way for the annual triangular athletics contest between W.C.S., Emanuel and Sutton Valence Schools suggested by the Foundation Board.

A trophy for the athletics contest was presented by an Old Boy Governor, Col. W.H. Godfrey. Bill Godfrey can claim to be in every way a Westminster Citizen. Born and educated in the city, he took over his father’s business and lived all his life in Westminster. He knew every Headmaster of the first 100 years having entered the school under Robert Goffin, left under Dr. Stevens and become a Governor during Mr. Dent’s Headmastership. A Governor for over 25 years, he was Chairman of the School Governors from 1961–68. When he retired as Chairman, he was succeeded by Peter Coles, with A.J. Sims as Vice-Chairman, two more Old Boys. Peter Coles took office at the time that the consortium made their first approach, and he was destined for a strenuous period in office with hopes and disappointments in plenty.

With the future of the school undecided, it was impracticable to appoint a new Head Master, and the Governors appointed John H. White, M.A. (inevitably Chalky White) Deputy Headmaster for eight years, as Acting Head Master. P.J. Spink was made Acting Deputy Headmaster at this critical time in the school’s history.

In June, 1973, an impressive ceremony in Westminster Abbey commemorated the centenary of the United Westminster Schools. It was a service in which all the schools of the Foundation took part. Back in Palace Street, W.C.S. celebrated in its own fashion with the
The Westminster Psalms in the School Hall in 1973, conducted by Mr. Bontoff and Mr. Marshall.
world premiere of the "Westminster Psalms", a work of thanksgiving written and conducted by Mr. C.H. Bontoft. The orchestra, augmented by Old Boys who returned for the occasion, friends and a school pop group, numbered over 70, and the choir, drawn from the junior and senior school, 120. These large musical forces occupied the floor of the hall, leaving little room for an audience. In the first movement the choir and orchestra rendered Psalm 100, and in the second they combined for the "Te Deum" leading to Bach's "There's a Wideness". An exhilarating account of Psalm 150 was given in the third movement with all the forces (including percussion and organ) in competition rather than combination, the pop group introducing a swing rhythm taken up by choir and orchestra. The mood changed for the finale - Wagner's little known "The Spacious Firmament" ending on a quiet note.

Three performances were given, demonstrating that the corporate life of the school retained its vigour. School societies continued to flourish and flounder. The Combined Cadet Corps was finally disbanded through dwindling support and difficulty in finding officers. One of the thriving societies was the Christian Union.

The Nine Elms project was considered at many levels - the London Borough of Wandsworth, the Greater London Council, the Inner London Education Authority and by the Secretary of State for Education, and the possibility of redeveloping the Palace Street site...
was submitted to the City of Westminster authorities where it did not receive unqualified support. These procedures were time consuming and the years went by until finally in March, 1975, seven years after negotiations started, the Governors conceded that the exchange of sites was no longer practicable. The political and economic climate had changed, and whereas the Nine Elms project might well have gone ahead some years before, now rapidly escalating building costs, together with financial difficulties and recession in the property market, meant the end of the scheme. All the toil of Peter Coles and the Governors, Stanley Allder and John White and their staff came to nothing.

The Governors notified the I.L.E.A. that the scheme had been abandoned, and began discussions as to the future of the school on the existing site.

Now that it was apparent that the school would not become part of a full size comprehensive school by amalgamation with other existing schools, the way was clear to appoint a Head Master. John White had been Acting Head Master for three years and the Governors had no hesitation in appointing him Head Master from May, 1975, as a tribute to his loyalty, help and steadfastness during the years of uncertainty.

Mr. J.H. White, M.A., Head Master since 1975.
This time negotiations about the future of the school were not protracted and it was soon decided that from September 1977, Westminster City was to become a four-form entry mixed-ability intake comprehensive school. The Head Master would still be able to decide finally which boys were to enter the school, but selection was to be within three grades of ability with the numbers in each grade pre-determined. Some alterations and additions to the building became necessary, notably new specialist rooms for Geography, Technical Drawing, Design and Technology, Art, Religious Education and English.

Governors, Head Master and staff had two years to prepare themselves for the change in character of the school. Visits to new comprehensive schools and conferences were made, and there were innumerabl e staff meetings to discuss the problems arising, particularly alterations to the curricula to suit mixed-ability pupils. To ensure two-way communication, representatives of the teaching staff now attended meetings of the School Governors.

The smooth administration of a successful school needs a number of non-teaching staff, three of whom retired at the same time and deserve mention to represent the many others who served the school faithfully in its 100 years’ existence. In 1977 Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Burgin retired from the Head Master’s secretariat: they were typical of many who gave quiet and effective support to Head Masters and boys over the years. Soon afterwards Bill Collins, who had worked at the school for 33 years, also retired. School-keepers vary, but Bill was willing and co-operative throughout his career, never needing to make excuses for deficiencies in performance. Jack Cameron had a similar record of long service when he retired as senior laboratory technician. He left behind in the school many examples of his skill and craftsmanship, in particular the panelling in the School Hall and Vestibule.

In 1977 the school celebrated 100 years in Palace Street. In the afternoon of 24 March, a service of Commemoration was held in St. Margaret’s Church and the long association with Westminster Abbey was marked when the Dean of Westminster addressed the boys and congregation. In the evening, every room, laboratory and the Hall were alive with activity as Open Day gave boys and Masters an opportunity to demonstrate to Governors, parents, Old Boys and friends of the school the continuing vitality of the school.

Further evidence that the school could still hold its head high came from a boy who came from another school and joined W.C.S. in the sixth form. He said “There seems to be a greater amount of
mutual respect and co-operation between the teachers and pupils at W.C.S. which obviously contributes to a reasonably relaxed atmosphere”. So the tradition of the school lived on.

Three reasons were often given by parents when asking for their boys to be selected for admission. The first was that the school had a good reputation for sound discipline. The second was that Christianity and religion were part of school life, and the third that school was of manageable size compared with newly built comprehensive schools.

As the school looked back over 100 years it had seen many changes. The Head Master no longer wore a top hat and frock coat or a watch, chain and waistcoat, although the school’s revered statue is a reminder of days long ago. Palace Street no longer has village and craft shops, and the school is now dwarfed by modern
high rise edifices. Schoolboys no longer climb the playground wall on scrumping expeditions for mulberries and other fruit in the orchards of Emanuel Hospital. The generations have seen Watney's Brewery come and go, the aroma of malt and hops and the sound of bottled beer loaded on to brewers' drays gone for ever. (As one wag put it - "ferment on each side of Palace Street: ferment of education on our side and of refreshment on the other".) Prefects have worn all kinds of headgear (special school caps, bowler hats, straw boaters) and none at all. School numbers (at their highest 850 in the 19th century) might well now become 750. And as a sign of the times the staff team for the annual cricket match against the school had now included a woman teacher.

After a look back into the past the school now looked with confidence to the future. The resilience and adaptability shown in the past would play an important part in continuing worthwhile traditions and ensuring that the School's individuality would not be lost in the new style of school. Certainly here was an opportunity to demonstrate that the manageable size as a grammar school, which commended it to parents, could now be a good and acceptable size for a comprehensive school, which need not necessarily be three times the size.

And with boys of mixed ability to be admitted, after a hundred distinguished years as a grammar school, Westminster City was now to play a part in education which came near to the intentions of the founders of the hospital schools centuries ago.
WESTMINSTER CITY SCHOOL
one of the United Westminster Schools (Established 1874)

The four Houses of the School commemorate
in their names the Pious Benefactors
of the Foundation

DACRE'S
of the Foundation of Anne Lady Dacre who died in 1594,
and whose executors established Emanuel Hospital,
incorporated by Queen Elizabeth in 1601

KINGS'
arising from the St Margaret's Hospital, established
by the Churchwardens of St Margaret's in 1624,
incorporated by Charter of King Charles I in
1633 and aided annually by King Charles II

PALMER'S
continuing the tradition of the School
provided in 1654 by the Rev James Palmer, of the
Parish of St Margaret's Westminster

HILL'S
retaining the name of the School established
in 1674 by Mr. Emery Hill, a Churchwarden in the
Parish of St Margaret's Westminster

The Foundation Board in the School Hall shows four of the Benefactors of the Foundation after which the School houses are named.
The first school song

1. Now let us bless our great Queen Bess
   And her stout knights and yeomen,
   Who rid the land of storm and stress,
   Of home and foreign foemen.
   Those heroes who the flag unfurled
   And made this realm a nation,
   With Shakespeare, wonder of the world,
   Beheld our School’s foundation.
   Their name be praised, who England raised
   To heights whence none could shake her;
   And loud acclaim that noble dame,
   Our foundress, Lady Dacre.

2. King Charles—by foes a tyrant called,
   By friends, the Blessed Martyr—
   Himself our patron next installed,
   And granted us a Charter.
   Which act of grace holds fitting place
   With those he scattered freely
   On Rubens, glory of his race,
   On Vandyke and on Lely.
   The artists’ King, whose praise we sing,
   Secured to ages calmer
   The pious will of Emery Hill,
   And St Margaret’s rector, Palmer.

3. The second Charles, the blithe and gay,
   With toil made no alliance,
   Yet followed in his father’s way
   With Art and eke with Science;
   His slackness with propriety
   We therefore may be mute on,
   For he crowned the Royal Society,
   And honoured Boyle and Newton.
   The Merry King, whose praise we sing,
   When poverty loomed o’er us,
   With timely aid our trouble stayed,
   And cleared the way before us.
4. This goodly seed had taken root,  
   Though seemingly was sleeping,  
   And gave at length its harvest fruit  
   All ready for the reaping.  
   And foremost of the serried row  
   Of reapers staunch and manly,  
   Stood London's Lord Mayor, Waterlow  
   And Westminster's Dean Stanley.  
   All honoured be the memory  
   Of those whose love for learning  
   Produced a blaze, which after days  
   We'll still see brightly burning.

This school song was written by Mr. W.F. Baugust in 1913 for Founders' Day and other occasions. He was a Master at the school, teaching Latin, Modern Languages and History for 43 years; when he started, the school was in the old St Margaret's Hospital and he took part in the march across Victoria Street to the new building in 1877. He retired in 1919. The song was sung with gusto for over 20 years to the well known tune "The Vicar of Bray". Historical research revealed a small error of fact: James Palmer, although he lived in the parish of St. Margaret's, was at no time rector. When the houses were reduced from eight to four, (Dean's, Lord Mayor's, St. Margaret's and Waterlow houses the casualties) Mr. Dent the Headmaster decided that a new school song was needed, which he himself produced.
The second school song

1. We join in song of living praise
   For founders dead and gone,
   For what they wrought in far-off days
   And built their hopes upon.
   United strong in purpose now
   The generations stand –
   Unitate Fortior.

2. Our song the gift of DACRE names,
   Which Anne, our Foundress brings.
   St Margaret’s benefaction claims
   The aid and name of KINGS’ –
   These first of sowers from whose seed
   The harvest now we bear –
   Unitate Fortior.

3. We celebrate James PALMER’S fame
   And bless his bounty still.
   With thanks we magnify the name
   Of pious Emery HILL.
   For what they built we build upon
   And as we build we sing –
   Unitate Fortior.

4. When youth goes forth to run its race
   Some gaze at learning’s prize.
   Some contemplate the athlete’s grace,
   Some go with half-closed eyes –
   But happiest those who run with friends.
   Strong clasped in Friendship’s hand –
   Unitate Fortior.

5. The blinding years fall soft as snow,
   The generations pass;
   The friends who come are friends who go
   Like shadows o’er the grass.
   But faith grows strong if Hope and Love
   With Memory bind it fast –
   Unitate Fortior.