

Local History Cafe



Sir John Moore Foundation, Appleby Magna



Sir John Moore School was designed by Sir Christopher Wren.



School dinners

The good, the bad and the ...



Basil has been out and about at SJMF. There are stories from the mouse hole in this month's newsletter ...

The School Photograph

Memories of that one day each year ...

There was one day in each school year that guaranteed extra tidy uniform, faces washed and hair brushed and that was the day the school photographer had been booked.

The picture below was taken at Sir John Moore Foundation in 1960 and is taken from our archives. Mr Jack Smith is stood on the left with Miss Wilkins in the centre and Mrs Evans on the far right.



© Margaret Cater

I think the more embarrassing moment was not the picture taking itself, although children fidgeting must have been a nightmare for the photographer, no

the more difficult time was when they arrived in the classroom and the teacher handed them out. The whole class erupted in laughter as we showed one another the images that soon would be proudly displayed on grand parents mantelpieces.

There were also the panoramic whole school photographs where if you were quick you could appear at both ends of the same picture; however that could lead to dire consequences ...

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HISTORY MYSTERY

February's object was a pair of cutting compasses.
Details on page 4

2

MILK MONITOR

Memories of school milk
Details on page 2

3

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 16th
at 10.00 am

The Infants' Chapel School ...

Anne Silins recalls her time at the Church Street school ...

My school days began in the one room Infants School just a short distance along Church Street from where I lived, so only a few yards from my home. It was called the Infants' Chapel School, not because they hoped we would all turn religious, but because the building had been the General



Baptist Chapel. From 1940 until 1957 it was the Infants' School. This building was one large room with a balcony across the back one-third of the room. The teacher stood at what must have once been a pulpit. We sat in our seats and stared up at the teacher,

who looked 'god-like' so high above us. Punishment, for even the smallest misbehaviour meant being sent up the stairs to the balcony area. This was not so bad, and I certainly did my time up those stairs. If you were quiet, and moved like a mouse, you could slowly work your way down to the front seats of the balcony and peer down at the teacher and the other pupils as they worked. Sometimes you were forgotten and I spent many hours watching children scratch their heads, pick away at their noses and generally do the things children of that age do instead of their classroom work.

Milk time ...

Who is on milk monitor duty today ?



© Leicester Mercury

We all have strong memories of our first few days at primary school, although nowadays most children tend to go to pre-school, so it is not such a shock to the system for them as it was for the children of the 1960s!

In the 1960s there were no state pre-schools or nurseries, so for most children just turning 5 years old, their first day at school was the first time they had been on their own, away from home. Most mothers did not work outside the home, so for many children this was also the first time they had been apart from their mothers.

Having got over the first pangs of separation, school life soon fell into a predictable routine. School milk was part of this routine, uniformly detested by all children. In Post War Britain school milk, a third of a pint per child, was introduced in schools to supplement the child's diet.

During the harsh winter of 1962-3, or the big freeze of 1963 as it became known, it was a common sight to see the small crates of milk outside the school gates with the shiny bottle tops standing proud above the bottles on a column of frozen milk. Of course the only way to defrost the school milk was to place it by the radiator, and then the poor children were forced to consume watery, lukewarm milk. And forced they were : "milk is good for you child, you WILL drink it all up!"

History mystery ???

It is a tool designed to do just one specific job. Its crudely cast in copper alloy and would have been used in a nautical situation ...

The answer will be in our April Newsletter



Taught a lesson ...

Ouch !!!

I wrote lines. Usually 100, going down in columns one word at a time.

I think we tried to avoid them as they were not only boring but wasted the time we could have had free after school or at playtime !

In the late 40's, I remember boys being caned on the backside with a thin willow like swish that whistled through the air. That and a ruler were used on the palms of hands and knuckles. I don't think we resented it because we knew we had chosen to cross the line and that if we complained at home we would probably be in trouble for causing the teacher grief !! Counselling for kids was unheard of, even those who were bombed out or lost family in the war got no special treatment aside from love and sympathy from family and neighbours.

Ann Rudy

I had lines in '60s and the cane or slipper were used constantly. Did anyone have to duck when the blackboard rubber came hurtling across the room?

My first Teacher used a pencil on your head and a ruler on your knuckles, we were 5 and she was cruel.

That's right ! Boys sat at the back of the classroom . The girls had to duck fast as it was aimed at the the back. One-second the teacher would have his back to the class at the blackboard, then next he would turn and throw ! What memories !!!

Lesley Smith & Carol Moore

On the topic of writing lines ... I remember them — so tedious. Another punishment was to write compositions on obscure subjects such as *Walls!* ... would you believe! There were a varying number of pages set. This is where enlarging handwriting played its part. The punishment story that was given one on walls led to something quite interesting. Initially 8 ran out of anything to say, so I started studying them. I found different types and uses, including the history. It was so fascinating and in the end I handed in twice the number of pages that were asked for. I don't even know if they were even read by anyone ...

Gaby Mitchell

I had a hundred lines. I used carbon paper to make it easier. I was found out and given another hundred !

Susan Dodds



FaceBook Catch up

A look at what's been happening on line ...

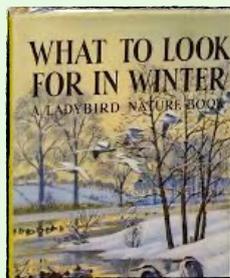
Many things have changed in schools over the last 50 years or so and when our FaceBook page reflects some of those changes it triggers a raft of memories for many of our readers and followers.



This last month one particular topic that attracted a lot of attention was that of the Nature Table.

Nature Tables were in most junior school classrooms and attracted many different types of collections. Some of our readers remember adder skins, owl pellets and even jars of tadpoles. One particularly gruesome object was a dead mole one pupil's grandfather had trapped and given her to take to school.

The other great success story this month on FaceBook was our discussion around the wonderful illustrations of Mr. F. Tunicliffe in the Ladybird books series.



In this month

1876 ... Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone.

1912 ... Both the Oxford and Cambridge boats sank in the annual Varsity Race

44BC ... Julius Caesar is stabbed by Marcus Brutus

1904 ... Britains first mainline electric train ran ...

Appleby Grammar School

Reginald Eyre remembers changing schools in 1928

After three years in the infants I then went on to the village boys' school.

The school was called the Grammar School because it was built as that in 1693-97 by the then Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Moore who was lord of the manor in Appleby Parva and principal landowner in the area.

The original design was by Sir Christopher Wren, but a distinguished local architect Sir William Wilson, whom Moore described as an "ingenious gentleman," completed the work.

It served the boys from four local villages aged 8 to 14, the legal school leaving age at the time.

Here reigned one William Riley, known to everyone as old Billy, a patriarch if ever there was one.

He taught all the classes with no assistance, no mean feat even then.

A word about Billy Riley would not go amiss at this juncture. He was a wonderful man, a devout Christian, churchwarden, choirmaster, organist and an indefatigable charity worker.

Wheels

The village wheelwright

Last month's "History Mystery" was a pair of cutting compasses. Each village would have a wheelwright both making and repairing wheels for carriages and carts. The compasses would have been used to cut leather washers.

The washers once covered with grease would be placed on the axle to ensure the wooden hub doesn't wear into the cart quite so fast. They would be replaced regularly.

The Wheelwright in the village of Newton Regis in the 19th century was Thomas Hames.



The Hames Family ... Newton Regis

You want more ???

A brief history of school dinners ...

School dinners first became a topic for the national agenda in 1906. The Provision of Meals Act in that year was designed to give free school meals to all children.



Nursery school pioneer Margaret McMillan, who lobbied for the bill, argued that if education was to be compulsory then it was only right for the state to provide a hot meal too.

This free hot meal tended to be breakfast and

the offerings were limited to say the least. If you were lucky enough to go to school in the early 20th century then you could expect porridge, bread with dripping and a nice glass of milk to wash it all down with.

Things did get better during the twenties and thirties as British classics began to be introduced (mutton stew, anyone?) and desserts like treacle pudding found their way onto the menu

Just before the end of the Second World War in 1944, it was made compulsory for local authorities to provide school dinners. Part of the war effort on the home front was to maintain morale, and that couldn't be achieved on an empty stomach. However, food rationing continued for several years after the war ended, and this was certainly reflected in school dinners.



Tinned meats were popular because of their longevity, and there was plenty of mash to go with it. The simple jam roly-poly also made its debut on to school menus.

The cost of providing free school meals soon became apparent though, and parents began to shoulder much of the burden, with some reprieve for those families on lower incomes. As rationing came to an end and the economy began to recover, baby boomers were treated to the luxuries of corned beef, and fish and chips would become a Friday staple across canteens nationwide. Iconic school desserts like spotted dick and rice pudding (with a dollop of jam of course) became the norm.

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government of the eighties was widely criticised for 'milk snatching,' but its impact on school meals was wider than just that. Provisions of school meals were opened to competitive tender as private contractors battled it out to put food on the school dinner table at lower costs. Nutritional standards were also affected in a further bid to keep spending down. Schools saved money and pupils got to feast on a new variety of sugary and salty treats.

The eighties saw an increase in 'fast-foods' like pizza, fries and chicken nuggets being served from the school canteen, along with more fizzy drinks with high sugar contents. This trend continued into the nineties and went largely unchecked. A 1999 medical survey suggested children in the 1950s had healthier diets with a higher nutritional value than children in the 1990s — and that was during rationing!

In 2005, Channel 4 aired *Jamie's School Dinners*, a four-part series examining the state of Britain's school dinners. The programme brought to light the poor nutritional value of food served out of the school canteen, and how this was contributing to an increase in child obesity rates as well as negatively affecting educational attainment.

The show made a villain of *Turkey Twizzlers* and other junk foods that were now staples of the school dinner. The TV chef called for the government to act and the public quickly got behind the cause. Over 270,000 signed a petition calling for better nutritional meals. Soon, many schools banned *Turkey Twizzlers*, fizzy drinks and sweets and added healthier options on to their menus.



“Natures Bounty”

Junior School Science in its infancy ...

At the beginning of each term each primary school classroom in the 1950s and 1960s would have somewhere in its environs, a “Nature Table”.

It would be groaning under the weight of whatever the teacher could find to illustrate that particular season in the countryside. With no National Curriculum and very little guidance this was the nearest the children got to a formal science education, yet those tables, filled with empty birds nest, vases of catkins and collections of birds eggs, often sparked a lifetime interest in many children.

During each term children would be encouraged to bring something to add to the table and Appleby would have been a wonderful hunting ground for what today are called ‘found objects.’

The Sir John Moore Foundation Archive contains a collection of birds eggs collected in the mid 20th century, long before it was rightly outlawed, but at the time would have formed pride of place on the classroom nature table along with frog spawn and a jar of sticklebacks fished from the brook as it gurgled its way along past the Moat House.

“I remember searching all over the playing fields for adder skins to take to school to put on the nature table in my class room”

Jonathon Treadwell

“Loved how the fir cones opened out on our Nature Table”.

Nancy Tucker

“Get changed for PE”

Thrilling words or do they still strike fear into your heart?

Physical Education at school seems to polarise folk. Some really looking forward to it each Tuesday, whilst it left others feeling physically ill ...



I just loved the gym, even after school club, and later with my team of Morris dancers, joined the boys gym club, for displays on Bank holiday field days! I USED TO BE ON THE TOP OF THE PYRAMID, only a little slim thing then! **Jacqueline Blundell**

In the P.E. changing room, all I remember is the smelly feet. **Allan Fletcher**

Hated those damn one piece yellow gym shorts with elastic around the legs.

Janet Lincoln

I loved all sports definitely cross-country especially after school when all the schools come together and did it. I remember 1 time there was 99 of us and I came 3rd

Sharon Fripp

In the 50s we just ran around and in the back playground Our long walks to school were our P.E.

Mary Hatwell

Going on a huge trampoline was scary! Then there was horse type contraption you have to clamber on/jump over. And the on the wall poles that I don't ever remember going on but I do remember the plimsolls being tight and extremely uncomfortably

Rani Mahal

Dinner's ready !!!

Memories of school meals. Which side of the argument are you on?

I left school in 1960 and we had what I call "proper dinners" potatoes, meat and vegetables. Sometimes a roast meat, such as beef lamb or pork. Sometimes stew with beetroot. Puddings were, rice or sago or even semolina as well as cake and custard. I loved the chocolate cake and white sauce.

The pudding I hated was rhubarb roly-poly and custard. It was all soggy as the water had got in. Dinner lady made me eat it, to her cost I might add, as I was sick all over the table which caused a chain reaction with some other kids. She had to clean it up. I was about 7.



Dot Grindley

At my school chocolate concrete came shaped as balls. We called them canon balls. They were very popular, mainly I am sure because sweets were still on ration and these were like giant sweets and they tasted good.

Geneva Bridgeman

We had brilliant school dinners. All cooked on site. Roast beef, roast lamb, chicken, plus the old favourites like sausage and mash, pie and chips. Puddings were great, sponge, treacle sponge, lemon meringue, jelly, blancmange, rice puds. And if you timed it right, you could get seconds. I loved them.

Mark Spence

I taught in a deprived school where school dinner was the high point of some childrens' days because for many it was the first meal they had eaten since the night before.

I have to say there was NEVER any dinner left over but the favourite meal seemed to be steak and kidney pudding and then cake (any sort) and custard. I think the steak and kidney with mash and cabbage really filled their hungry tummies!

Susan Charters

The very worst pudding I remember was a shortcrust (very, very dry) biscuit, a stringy bit of over cooked pineapple, and some pink (strawberry, raspberry, pupil's blood?) blancmange. All tasted disgusting together, but I was not allowed out to play until it was finished. I also was sick more than once after trying to eat this.

Steve Lee



We had several varieties of sponge pudding at school. We called it 'stodge'. There was chocolate stodge, treacle stodge, coconut stodge, lemon stodge and apple stodge!

Lynda Rose

I loved school dinners, even the "kit-e-kat" pie! It was a really tasty meat pie but did have the consistency of cat food LOL.

Michele Mormont

Marina's Research Page ...

Marina Sketchley is a current member of The History Cafe and enjoys research on many historical topics. She is currently embarked on a series about Victorian Engineers.

This month we feature her work on George Stephenson

Did you know that it was George Stephenson who brought railways onto our doorstep — at Ellistown, Coalville, Leicester and Birmingham.

I have been reading “Fred Dibnah’s Victorian Heroes” by David Hall and it struck me forcibly that many of these extraordinary, talented engineers received little or no education. They achieved amazing feats by sheer determination — and they succeeded against considerable odds.

George Stephenson 1781-1848 “Father of the Railways” was **born** near Wylam Colliery, near Newcastle, where his father worked as a fireman. One of six children, he came from an

underprivileged background and had no education. Aged 8 he worked as a picker at Dewley Burn pit, near Newcastle, cleaning coal, but learned by observation (for example, he took



Thomas Newcomen’s and James Watt’s engines apart, to see how they worked). Aged 15 he was Fireman there, keeping the steam-powered pumps running. At this time he was actually in charge of Water Row Colliery, Newburn (where his father also worked).

Then he fell in love with Fanny, a woman 12 years older, who was a servant at a local farm. At 21 he managed to get a one-room cottage at Willington Quay and moved in with his bride. He filled his cottage with models, and he repaired clocks, watches and shoes to earn extra money. This is where his only son, Robert, “the apple of his eye” was born in 1803.

In 1806 Fanny died of consumption. He grieved and almost emigrated, but decided to stay, for the sake of his

son — but also because he was fascinated with the local railway locomotion.

Stephenson worked at too many collieries to mention and worked on many experiments, continually gaining experience. He went to night school, but he found literacy difficult and never wrote a letter and rarely read a book.

His gave practical tuition to his son Robert, who followed in his footsteps and 1823 was the opening of Robert’s works at Newcastle. 1824 Robert went to South America, but it didn’t work out as he had hoped, so he returned.

Father and son worked together on many projects, Robert taking over his father’s business and becoming the first engineering millionaire.

These are some projects for which George Stephenson is famous:

- Leicester to Swannington Railway
- 1825 Opening of Stockton and Darlington Railway
- 1830 Opening of Liverpool and Manchester Railway — using the famous prototype ‘Rocket’
- 1830s The Midland Railway
- 1838 London to Birmingham Railway completed
- 1839 Birmingham to Derby Railway
- 1839 Opening of Sheffield to Rotherham Railway
- 1839 Sheffield to Rotherham
- 1841 Great Western Railway, London to Bristol

In 1820s on the Edge Hill Tunnel, Liverpool (2 miles long), Stephenson was working on notoriously difficult terrain, across a peat bog at Chut Moss and meeting with severe opposition. His men worked with pickaxes, shovels, wheelbarrows, candles and gunpowder. They eventually solved the problem by building a ‘floating railway’ but many men were killed.

In 1829, because of the problems encountered, the investors held The Rainhill Trials Competition, near Liverpool, to determine if anyone could get the job done. Stephenson’s Rocket prototype won.

George Stephenson was an obstinate, self-taught man — to whom we owe so much.

In the headmaster's study ...

Further memories of troubled times !!!

I must admit I spent more time with the headmaster than my teacher and I could never understand why . But the punishment I received eventually had its meaning and I never became a star pupil but I did come to respect others . That a lesson I have remembered for all of my life

Michael Cunnington

Oh I have memories of being in the headmaster study. On one occasion I found myself in there with my future wife as I had been caught putting grass down her bra on the playing field. I went to the headmaster and my wife to head mistress. She got the cane but I didn't, the head master said basically don't get caught! We have been married for 60yrs this December 2020. The twist to the story is that our son went

to the same school and years later at an open evening we met the head teacher, she came up shook our hands and said I tried so hard to separate you but so glad I didn't!

Derek Greenwood

I had my own chair outside of the beak's study. There were always three of us called to visit him on several occasions. We were always being accused of something or being behind the organisation of some 'terrible crime'

Nichlas Embleyheap



It looks rather cozy without the head master in it When I was at school our headmistress had a huge office with giant leather sofas and a Persian rug. The desk was just like one. I'll never forget going in there

Kate Cross

In the last century all schools had to keep up to date records in the Punishment book. Sir John Moore Foundation was no different.

In our archives members of the History Cafe Group have discovered records covering the years 1929 to 1968. The early entries reveal that the cane was a weekly rather than a daily occurrence and that sometimes months would pass without resort.

The reasons are familiar: smoking on the school premises, lighting matches in class, "vulgar horseplay in the corridors," misuse of soap in the lavatory, fighting with a girl, riding two on a bicycle, taking a mackintosh from a girl's bag, burning a boy's coat, kicking a ball in the classroom. Other offences are recorded along with the eventual punishment: For example there were four strokes given for "shameless lying," and three strokes for singing in class and firework-throwing. Hopefully not at the same time!

Peelings ...

There were a few ways boys in the village could make a penny or two pocket money. Cow 'tending' was one. A boy would mind or tend a small herd of cows while they grazed the road verges. This was a common practice in summer. The herd would be made up of one, two, or three cows from three or four smallholders who owned or rented a few



acres. Some or all these few acres would have to provide hay for winter so the cows had to be fed elsewhere. Roadside grazing was a right. In the days before cars and lorries took over the roads the sides were very lush grass,

Taken from
"Son of the Rectory"
by Aubrey Moore

Become a newsletter contributor

We always welcome stories and memories to feature in our newsletter. Our topics for the next three months are: Summer Holidays, Farming and Countryside Rituals. We especially love your family stories and we value input from our readers.

We also invite comments and suggestions about our content and format. Send your thoughts memories and stories to the Editor.

The email is: SJMF@post.com

That reminds me

Doreen Docksey recalls some shops in Appleby

I was born in Appleby Magna in December 1944 and lived in the council houses at St Michaels Terrace as it was then called.

We always used Mrs Johnson's little sweet shop in Top Street to buy sweets while waiting for the school bus to pick us up and transport to Ibstock Secondary Modern school. She had such a great selection in there.

My Mum bought all groceries from the Co-op, meat from Lenny Betteridge. Appleby Magna certainly had plenty of shops, which was good, as in those days not many people had cars(except for the local undertaker, Mr Jones) and we had to use the local bus service to go out of the village.

Basil's bit ..

Without a doubt !

It's been very cold this month in school ... one day I looked out and the sky had that peculiar tinge of pink that meant it might snow! A blackbird 'chattered' its alarm across the front of the school and it reminded me of a story my great great great grandfather told me of a winter back in Appleby in 1963. That's nearly 50 years ago! He remembers the children coming to school in big coats and wellies every day. There were no days off school back then ... every child no matter how young was expected to attend.

The snow was drifted that deep by the side of Top Street it was often taller than the children themselves. Mums and Dads would sometimes carry a shovel to help children get to the school.

It was a tough time but my great great grandad remembered how some kind children would bring bits of old cheese and leave by his mouse hole ...



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Foundation Heritage

NEXT ISSUE

Springtime in the
Countryside

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