

Compiler's Note

This is a memoir rather than a history, but I have tried to see that it contains the main facts of the school's life. A lot of information came from old school magazines and scrapbooks and I have also had help from the O.F.A. editor, Mr. F. W. Simmonds and from the County Archivist, Miss Gollancz and the staff at the Surrey Record Office.

Two Old Girls have made generous donations towards the cost of publication, and many past pupils and members of staff (not all of them mentioned in the text) have contributed memories, criticisms and technical assistance towards the preparation of this booklet. I am very grateful to them for making the business of compilation a pleasure, marred only by the need to leave out a lot of interesting material because of lack of space. Errors of fact, of omission or of judgment are of course my responsibility.

H.N.

The Story of a School

F.G.G.S.

1901 - 1973

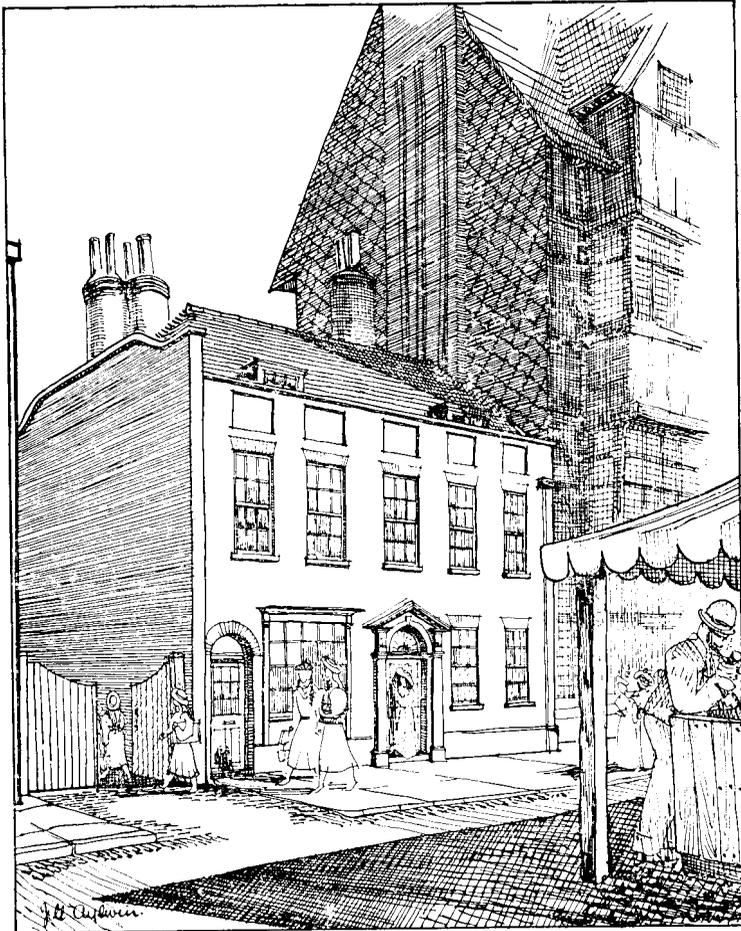
The Background

In 1933, when he was an old man and a Canon of Canterbury, the Reverend Thory Gage Gardiner returned to the Farnham Girls' Grammar School, which he had founded more than thirty years before, to distribute the certificates and to give the address at its annual Speech Day. 'We simply wanted' he told his audience 'to see that the girls had a chance. Believe me, when I was young, girls hadn't much of a chance in education'.

This was true enough. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 had authorised the setting up of Public Elementary Schools, managed by local School Boards and financed from the rates. From these, a few boys and girls proceeded at the age of fourteen to Pupil Teacher Centres, where they attended classes for half the year, and for the other half acted as assistant teachers at local schools, but in 1895 when Mr. Gardiner, then forty years old, became rector of Farnham, the Bryce Commission could still report to Parliament that in the whole country the number of pupils in secondary schools did not exceed one in four hundred of the population, and almost all of them were boys.

In Farnham there were two Pupil Teacher centres and five Elementary Schools of which one, St. Polycarp's, was a Higher Elementary where additional subjects such as Music and French could be taken on the payment of small fees, but this town of fourteen thousand people (rather less than half its present population) contained only one secondary school. The former Farnham Diocesan school had fairly recently been resuscitated as the Farnham Grammar School by the Reverend Charles Stroud; it was beginning to increase in size, but still had fewer than a hundred pupils. In Mr. Stroud's day they had included a small number of girls. The headmaster's own daughters were pupil-teachers there before founding a school of their own, Elmsleigh School in The Fairfield.

Otherwise, for girls, the only educational opportunity lay at the other end of the county, where the Tiffin Girls' School in Kingston offered a few scholarships.



74, CASTLE STREET.
MRS SWAIN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS' - AT THE
TURN OF THE CENTURY
Later the Farnham Girls Grammar School.

The Modern Commercial School

The prospects for an ambitious girl were hardly encouraging, but not long after Mr. Gardiner's appointment the local situation began to improve. The Farnham Council, in 1897, granted Mrs. George Swayne, whose husband kept a leather and grindery shop in the town, a licence to open a school at No. 74 Castle Street, the red brick house now occupied by Messrs. Weller, Eggar, the auctioneers and estate agents. From this beginning, the Farnham Girls' Grammar School was to grow.

The Modern Commercial School for the Daughters of Tradesmen was necessarily very small. There was a lobby, where the girls hung their coats and shoe-bags and the straw boaters with a ribbon inscribed 'M.C.S.' that made their only uniform, a kindergarten, a music room, a large assembly room reached by a flight of brick steps, and another smaller classroom. Half a dozen boarders slept in the attics and were fed from the basement kitchen. Here too the girls came for their domestic science lessons, now best remembered for a day when while the cook's back was turned, the resident kitten was whisked like a powder puff through the bowl of flour on the table before being returned safely to its basket. The resulting cake was less popular than usual in the schoolroom.

On paper at least the school's curriculum was a wide one; Mrs. Swayne, who as Miss Curtis had been headmistress of the Farnham Girls' National School, the Pupil Teacher Centre for Church of England children, was herself a qualified teacher and advertised that she was 'assisted by foreign governesses and certificated teachers'. There were two 'mamselles'--the young, fair and cheerful Mlle. Rose Golder, who had charge of the kindergarten, and her sister Mlle. Henriette, a pupil teacher, while a visiting mistress came twice a week to give German lessons. On one day a week the boarders had to make all their domestic requests in French. In addition the girls could take 'Science, Drawing, Painting, Singing, Music, Shorthand, Book-keeping, the usual English Subjects and Scientific Dressmaking'.

No organised games were possible, because the school had only a small garden, but later Mrs. Swayne extended this back towards Bear Lane by buying from the brewery a piece of land (now occupied by Watney's spirit stores) on which a gymnasium was built. It had a concrete floor, and Mrs. Swayne herself demonstrated exercises to the girls in it! She is said to have been very go-ahead and to have brought back new ideas from her holidays abroad.

Certainly life in the Kindergarten, in Kathleen Parfitt's recollections, sounds both modern and charming. The children modelled with clay, wove cane baskets, and learned to read and print from a Nellie Dale letter frame and to do sums with coloured sticks and shells. Round games were played in the garden, and each child was responsible for one plant in the window box of the

classroom; this was 'Nature Study'. The kindergarten was a mixed one, and during the F.G.G.S. Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1951 this fact allowed two prominent male citizens of Farnham to claim with pride that they had actually been expelled from the Girls' Grammar School.

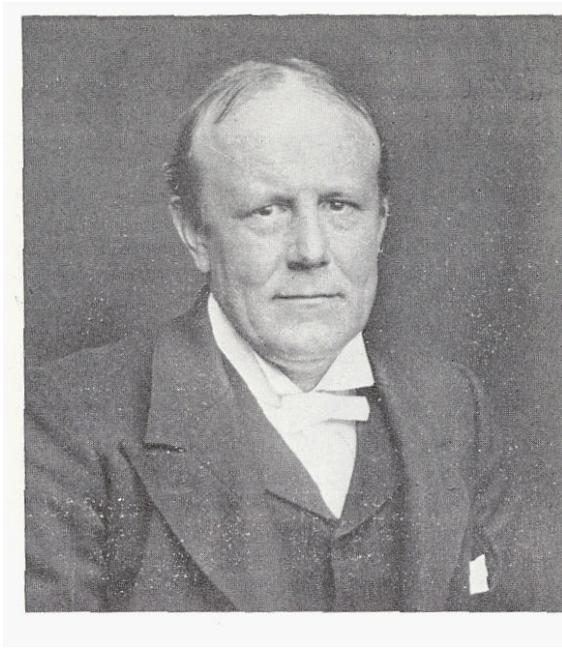
Occasionally, the kindergarten pupils joined their seniors in the upstairs assembly room for hymn-learning sessions. Mrs. Swayne, remembered as 'a very just woman' was also a very religious one. The entertainments put on by the school at the Church House were usually in aid of some missionary cause, and in addition to holding daily school prayers, at which the Lord's Prayer was always sung, Mrs. Swayne used to march the girls off to the Parish Church at every opportunity. On one such occasion the Reverend Samuel Priestley, then headmaster of Farnham Grammar School, was delivering a sermon to his pupils. The Modern Commercial School crept into one of the side aisles, to be completely ignored by the preacher who continued stonily to address his augmented congregation as 'boys'. The schoolchildren, however, did not share their elders' chilly attitudes and regular exchanges of notes took place between them.

The Foundation

It may have been Mrs. Swayne's attachment to the Church that first led Mr. Gardiner to take a particular interest in her school, as he began increasingly to do, although by 1899 it was no longer the only secondary school for girls in the town, Mr. and Mrs. Penn and their daughters having opened the Farnham High School in East Street.

To those interested in education, however, and Mr. Gardiner's interest was widespread and lifelong—later he was to be an active supporter both of the Nursery Schools Scheme and of the Workers' Educational Association—it was by now clear that neither private individuals nor voluntary organisations alone could satisfy the total demand for secondary schools throughout the country. The Board of Education Act 1899, as well as raising the school leaving age to fourteen, took the necessary first step towards Government assumption of responsibility for secondary education by setting up the Board of Education in Whitehall 'to superintend matters relating to education in England and Wales'. The creation of County Council education committees was also planned.

It was in this atmosphere of impending national change that the rector must have begun to form his plan for Farnham. His idea was that a secondary school for girls should be founded in the town, to be run on non-profitmaking lines until it could be integrated into whatever state system might be set up. Farnham seemed to Mr. Gardiner particularly suitable for such an experiment for three reasons. Firstly, since a Grammar School for boys already existed there, this and the new foundation could



“The Reverend Thory Gage Gardiner, Founder”

share visiting teachers and join in some of the same activities, to their common advantage. Secondly, the Governors of Farnham Grammar School were already planning the move, dictated by their school's rapidly increasing numbers, from the old 'Schola Grammaticalis' building in West Street to enlarged premises in Farnham Fields (now Morley Road). Accommodation ready made for another school would thus shortly become available in the centre of the town. Thirdly, Farnham was relatively easy of access because it was served by the railway, an important consideration seventy-five years ago, when motor cars were rare, and the rector himself made the rounds of his parish on foot or on horseback.

In the spring of 1901 a committee was assembled by Mr. Gardiner to put his plan into effect. Its members were Miss C. M. Brown, the Reverend W. J. Chant (the Methodist minister), Mr. W. T. Coleman, Mrs. Crundwell, who was later to be Farnham's first woman magistrate, Mrs. Randall Davidson, wife of the Bishop of Winchester, in whose diocese Farnham then stood, Mr. Edgar Kempson, a local solicitor who was clerk to the Farnham School Board and afterwards held the same post to the Governors of the Farnham Girls' Grammar School, the Reverend Samuel Priestley, and Miss A. C. Mason as Honorary Secretary. Thory Gage Gardiner, as the chairman and inspirer of the committee,

was always to be regarded by the Girls' Grammar School as its founder and it was as their founder that Canon Crum, a later rector of Farnham, many years afterwards described him to the girls:

'His manner was an intriguing mixture of a genial and hearty kindness, and a shrewd, dry and even sour humour, but underneath all this he was extremely sensitive. [He] had a keen sense of right and wrong and liked to direct others, but he qualified his desire with a degree of sense of their right to be themselves. He was scrupulously anxious not to impose his will on unwilling subordinates, yet restless until he felt sure they were going to do as he wanted.'

The committee **did** 'do as he wanted'. The goodwill of the Modern Commercial School was bought, and Mrs. Swayne was found a post in the District Schools' orphanage at Crondall; she continued teaching until 1921, and died in retirement at Bourne-mouth ten years later. In her place at Farnham the committee appointed Miss Annie Julia Case (Girton College Cambridge Classical Tripos).

So, under its new headmistress, and with a new name, the Grammar School for Girls, Farnham, opened at No. 74 Castle Street on September 23rd 1901, a date which later generations were to commemorate as Foundation Day.

First Years

Miss Case, who had previously taught at Wimbledon and Dover High Schools and had been second mistress at the Roan School, Greenwich, held what was effectively a **B.A.** degree, although Cambridge, the first English University to admit women to its degree courses was the last, in 1923, actually to grant them degrees. Like her successors, Miss Clarke, Miss Williams and Miss Drought, she is remembered in the stylised description 'strict but fair'; the girls used to call her 'A.J.C. Come to me' from her habit of thus endorsing essays handed in for marking.

Introduced to the parents at a meeting in the Institute Hall in June 1901, Miss Case had told them of the importance she attached to good literature, needlework and athletics as part of a girl's education, but her views do not seem immediately to have brought about any change in the curriculum. A surviving school report for the Spring Term of 1902 shows that the twelve year old Dorothy Tribe, one of five girls in the Upper Fourth form, had studied Scripture, English History, Language and Literature, Geography, French, German, Arithmetic, Euclid, Drawing, Music, Class Singing and Drill, coming first in seven out of the eleven examination subjects.

These were internal examinations, but in the summer girls from the school took their first public examinations—those of the Royal Drawing Society—and received their certificates, elaborately decorated in green and brown, each marked 'This certificate is to be carefully preserved'—which Dorothy, and Lily Wallen,

another contemporary, dutifully did for more than seventy years.

At the beginning of the school's second academic year, the governors granted, at their own expense, three scholarships to girls under fourteen from the Public Elementary Schools. These scholarships were to cover tuition and the use of books and their first holders, all from the Church of England Girls' School, were Winifred Crosby, Laura Garfath and Bessie Pierce.

However, the most important event of the year for the little school was a national one, the passage in December of the Education Act, 1902. Known as the Balfour Act because of the skill and eloquence with which the then Prime Minister shepherded it through the House of Commons, but in fact largely the **work** of a distinguished civil servant, Sir Robert Morant, this Act determined the organisation of secondary education in England and Wales for the next forty years. According to its provisions, the old School Boards were to be wound up and the County Education Committees were to be responsible for the elementary as well as the secondary schools in their districts. The latter were to be open to the children of rate-payers, either on the payment of fees or by scholarship examination, and since it was not expected that they would be self-supporting, a rate not exceeding two pence in the pound was to be chargeable for secondary education.

The provision of secondary schools was evidently regarded as a matter of urgency and by May 1903 the Surrey County Council Education Committee could examine the report of its inspector on the situation in Farnham. 'There is no other locality' wrote the Reverend T. W. Sharpe, 'which would repay liberality on the part of the County Council in the present emergency so effectually . . . ' Mr. Gardiner's forethought had been strikingly vindicated and events now moved rapidly towards the conclusion, or the new beginning, that he had hoped for. In June the governors of Farnham Grammar School decided to ask permission from the Charity Commissioners to sell the West Street building to Surrey County Council for the use of the Girls' Grammar School, in November the Morley Road site was purchased, and in January 1904 the 'Farnham Grammar School for Girls' was officially taken over by the County, the first girls' grammar school in Surrey to be integrated into the new state system.

A New Beginning

The Castle Street house was plainly inadequate as a school for some fifty girls and the Education Committee decided on a move to temporary premises until West Street was ready for occupation. The Non-conformist Pupil Teacher Centre, the British Schools in East Street, was taken over for the purpose, its boy pupils being transferred to Farnham Grammar School while the girls joined the incoming school. Two headmistresses lost their jobs; Miss Brown, who had had charge of the pupil teachers, went to Stoke-on-Trent, and Miss Case to the London Day Training

Centre. In their stead, the county appointed as headmistress of the amalgamated schools Miss Ellen Margaret Clarke, formerly headmistress of the Northwich Girls' Grammar School.

Ellen Clarke came from a rather poor Norfolk family and had taught in a private school for several years before she was able to go to the University. At Newnham she read the Natural Sciences Tripos (sacrificing herself on the altar of women's rights; she had wanted to study the Classics but was persuaded instead to become one of the pioneer students in a field where the extraordinary public prudery of Victorian times still caused resentment against the presence of women at the lectures and demonstrations in physiology). After completing the university course, Miss Clarke remained for some years on the staff at Newnham, where she helped to organise the Women's Laboratory. Then in 1884 she became science mistress at Edgbaston High School, Birmingham, and in 1889 headmistress at Northwich. She left Cheshire to come to Farnham when her school was combined with its boys' counterpart, inevitably then under a headmaster. (Almost inevitably, one suspects, even now, for how many heads of mixed secondary schools are women?).

At a guess, Miss Clarke had no real feeling for the science subjects as a field for creative study. During her headship at Farnham she kept the science and mathematics timetable to the very low legally required minimum and on one occasion at least expressed the rather discouraging opinion that most girls have little natural mathematical aptitude. However, her knowledge was wide, her mind clear and firm, and she both understood and was interested in, business and political affairs to a degree unusual for a woman in those days.

In the early part of 1904 the new governing body, often with Miss Clarke in attendance, met frequently. (It was not yet officially a Board of Governors because the school's Articles of Government had still to be formulated and approved by the Surrey Education Committee). The fees were fixed at £2 a term with a half-crown charge for stationery, the County School for Girls at Wallingford was applied to for a model prospectus and, at Miss Clarke's instigation, arrangements were made for the University Association of Women Teachers to examine the school 'to form an idea of its position and standard'.

The cost of this examination was met by Thory Gage Gardiner, then still chairman of the governors. During the school's independent life he had spent more than £300 a year out of his private pocket to keep it going and had given financial help, apart from his share in granting scholarships, to girls whose families could not afford to buy textbooks, or school clothes. Even some of the furniture at Castle Street had originally come from his home. It is pleasant to know that his colleagues recognised his generosity; commenting later on the Board of Education's model Articles of Government they said that in view of Mr. Gardiner's services to the school they would wish him to remain a governor even if

at some future date he should fail to attend meetings for more than two years.

East Street

One of the principal obstacles in the way of educational achievement at East Street was the building itself, which a contemporary account describes with some fervour as being about as ill-designed for the purpose as it was possible for a school to be. (After the Girls' Grammar School left, it became a knitting factory and later still part of Messrs. Swain and Jones' office accommodation). It was noisy and dusty, the stairs creaked, the drains gave constant trouble and there was no playground. A single large classroom divided by curtains held all except the youngest and oldest children and here too the girls spent their recreation periods. Only a few of them had desks and the others worked round trestle tables, which were occasionally collapsed by mischief-makers. In summer the room was close in spite of open windows and in winter a 'Tortoise' stove roasted the girls nearest it while those further away still froze. There were no school meals and girls who brought packed lunches had nowhere to eat them, except in a cookery lecture room which was not even reserved for the school's exclusive use.

The permanent staff of the school numbered six, including a student assistant. The headmistress herself gave classes in history, scripture and English literature and took the youngest girls for individual tuition in reading. Miss Bates, whose appointment as senior assistant mistress had been secured by Miss Clarke within a few weeks of her own arrival in Farnham, taught the formidable mixture of English Grammar, Mathematics and Needlework, insisting 'with a strange combination of icy charm and unquestioned discipline' on equal perfection in all. Singing and music lessons were given by visiting teachers and the girls went to the Institute for Drill and to the Art School, then housed in Victoria Road, for drawing classes. There were still no regular organised games, although both hockey and cricket seem to have been played occasionally, and the juniors took nature walks in Farnham Park.

General Inspection

Despite Miss Clarke's early qualms about the academic standing of the Girls' Grammar School, it was recognised as 'efficient' by the Board of Education in 1905 and in the same year underwent its first official inspection and held its first official Speech Day.

On the whole the report of the Board of Education's inspectors was a favourable one. They thought it an unsatisfactory arrangement that the two forms in the Preparatory Division (girls between five and eleven years old) were being taught in one room by a single teacher, and suggested that the headmistress ought to be allowed secretarial help—twenty years and two headmistresses later the necessary grant of salary for this was made—but their

only serious criticism concerned the teaching of French. The mistress in charge of this subject could not speak the language conversationally, and was allowing gross errors in pronunciation to pass without correction. This probably sounds worse now than it would have done at the time; as late as 1938, when Miss Edmonds joined the staff, it was thought to be worth comment that part of her training had actually been in France.

The inspectors also pointed out that the staff were all badly paid, but then the finances of the school were very narrowly calculated. The Board of Education and the Surrey County Council made only such grants as were sufficient to keep it just solvent when added to the income received from fees and allowances for the pupil teachers. Occasionally the Clerk had even to arrange for an overdraft at the bank to pay the teachers' salaries.

At the time of the inspection there were 81 girls on the school register, only 40 of whom had been at the school for more than a year. Six were privately boarded in the town and it was one of Miss Clarke's duties to supervise their welfare. It is interesting to note that, so far as the fee-paying majority was concerned, the school was effectively a comprehensive. 'Anyone who applies is received', according to the report; there was an entrance examination, but this was used only to assign girls to a form within the school.

The chairman of the Surrey Education Committee, Mr. Chapman, giving the address on Speech Day, also referred to the school's numbers. The county wanted, he said, to develop in Farnham 'a really large school of at least 200 girls', and it was therefore to be hoped that no school would be opened at Aldershot—evidence surely that the authorities were still underestimating the demand for secondary education. The chief *raison d'être* of state secondary education was still considered to be the training of teachers for the elementary schools and for several years to come almost all the advanced work at Farnham was done by embryonic teachers.

The Move To West Street

The Girls' Grammar School spent eight terms at East Street and its move to the former boys' school in September 1906 was a major civic event at which almost every imaginable Farnham worthy was present. The occasion began with a ceremony in the Corn Exchange where Miss Clarke's former mentor and colleague Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, the Principal of Newnham, was the speaker, and the official 'opening' in the school itself was performed by the Bishop of Winchester, Herbert Ryle (Randall Davidson had been raised to the See of Canterbury in 1903).

The cost of converting the buildings was £1200 towards which the Farnham Council had made a grant of £500, and the town seems to have been justly proud at seeing the school of its own creation properly housed at last. Newspaper reports spoke enthusiastically of the modern cloakrooms and sanitary accommoda-



“Schola Grammaticalis, West Street”

tion (outside lavatories, gas-lit, with cold water washbasins) of the dual desks in the classrooms and of the scheme of decoration ‘the Eau de Nil green distemper with which the upper part of the walls has been treated being particularly pleasing and restful’. The Grammar School boys dissented from the general enthusiasm, doing their best to spoil things for the girls by reminders that ‘You’ve only got our leavings!’

Now the school had a hall in which morning assembly was held, the roll call answered and the weekly lists of marks read. There was a dining room, in a tin hut in the garden called by the girls ‘The Tabernacle’, space out of doors for play, for games and for morris dancing, adequate classroom accommodation and ascience laboratory in the room which had been the boys’ dormitory. The girls themselves helped the science mistress to set this in order, working after school hours and being rewarded with tea and cream cakes at Darracott’s, the local café which in later years supplied the hockey team with match teas and the Old Girls’ Association with reunion suppers.

On Behaviour

Both inside and outside the school a strict discipline was enforced. Talking was forbidden at all times in the classrooms and passages and on the stairs, and even in the garden the girls were expected to be quiet in case the neighbours complained. Running upstairs, slouching and failing to look at a mistress when she greeted the class were also offences. The penalty for the last was to repeat the greeting with everyone else in the class staring at **you**. Breaches in the rules were generally dealt with **by** the giving of order and conduct marks, and those who acquired

too many of them would receive a summons to Miss Clarke's study, a place much dreaded even by those with clear consciences.

As many rules governed the proper behaviour of the girls in the streets as in the school. They must never appear hatless or gloveless, they must not walk three abreast, and they must never let an older person step off the pavement to make way for them. Rosy Sykes (Williams) said that this made such an impression on her that over sixty years later she was still automatically giving way to everybody.

Quite soon after becoming headmistress, Miss Clarke had told her pupils that any one of them found talking to a boy in the street would be expelled. Next day Rosy, then eight or nine years old, was greeted in the road by a childhood friend of about her own age, to whom she gasped out in terror 'Don't you talk to me, or I shall be expelled'.

The girls may have felt towards their teachers a respect so deep that it bordered on fear, but it was still a respect combined with affection and gratitude. Rosy Sykes 'had nothing but admiration for the teachers', Kathleen Parfitt has written of the 'kind, firm and just direction of Miss Clarke and all her staff' and Edith Todd thought that the training she and her contemporaries got at school left them feeling capable of tackling any situation that arose in their later lives—with Miss Clarke, as it were, at their elbows.

Early Problems

Property brings care and in the years immediately following the move to West Street the governors had to deal with the claim of Messrs. Kingham to 'rights of light' on one side of the school and with the problem of whether the school or Mr. Bethunc owned the door in the garden wall. The question of who was entitled to use this door, and the right of way across the water meadows, in fact caused so much trouble that they had to appoint a special sub committee to resolve it.

A problem of a different kind arose in 1908 in consequence of a letter from the headmaster of Farnham Grammar School. Although the founding committee of the Girls' Grammer School of which Mr. Priestley had been a member, had consulted the governors of Farnham Grammar School about the choice of a name for the new school, he had now decided that the name ought to be changed. The title 'Farnham Girls' Grammar School' might lead people to suppose that there was a connection with the boys' school, a supposition of which he evidently felt the girls to be quite unworthy. Mr. Gardiner, in his letter of reply (he had resigned as rector of Farnham in 1905 and no longer lived in the town) led the committee in its unanimous opposition to the suggested change. 'Both institutions' he wrote 'receive considerable benefit from Public resources and neither, as it seems to me, can afford to disparage the other'.

As Mr. Priestley had pointed out, it was usual for wholly main-

tained secondary schools to be called 'County Schools' and the Education Committee was at first inclined to favour his suggested change. However, the governors' representations eventually convinced it that there were 'strong local reasons' why the title of Grammar School should be retained for the girls' foundation, and so it was, to the end of its separate history.

In a way of course the dispute was a trivial one, but it still appears to symbolise a more important principle. An institution is not necessarily inferior because female, or indeed because state-supported, nor is it an insult to the male to claim an equal status with him.

Consolidation

While the question of the school's name was still being debated, the governors were formalising its constitution. A Miss Lucy was paid three guineas to complete the admission register as required by the Board of Education, and in 1909 the Articles of Government were finally approved. The governing body was to consist of eleven representative governors of whom three were to be nominated by the Farnham Urban District Council and one by the Farnham Rural District Council, one university governor, appointed by the University of London, and three co-optative governors nominated by the representative governors, provided that one at least of the representative governors appointed directly by the County Council was to be a member of the Surrey Education Committee, and that two at least of the representative governors appointed directly by the County Council, one of the governors nominated by the FUDC and one at least of the co-optative governors was to be a woman.

There had been an interim inspection of the school, chiefly concerned with the new premises, in 1907 and the University of London inspectors had made the first of their advisory visits in the same year, but it was not until 1910 that the second full General Inspection by the Board of Education took place. The inspectors' report gives a fairly complete picture of the school at that time.

Ninety-eight girls were on the register, a worrying decline from the peak of 138 reached in 1907, and they ranged in age from student teachers of nineteen to children of five in the Preparatory Division where 'there is one little girl in attendance who has not yet learned to read'. Fifty-four per cent of the pupils came from Farnham, and forty-one per cent had previously been at one of the Public Elementary Schools. The average duration of school life after the age of twelve was two years four months, and of the forty-seven girls who had left during the year ending in June 1910, thirteen had gone to other schools, ten had taken up teaching and eleven had entered 'business or commercial life'.

Where you had come from was of as much interest to the Board of Education as where you were going, and a table was also provided of the 'class in life from which [the] pupils are drawn:

Professional	15%
Farmers	8
Wholesale traders	6
Retail traders and contractors	33
Clerks and commercial agents	13
Public service	10
Domestic service	6
Artisans	7
Labourers	1
Occupation unclassified	1'

The classrooms, according to the inspectors, were ample in size but not sufficient in number and those facing the main street suffered from the 'distracting rumble' of traffic. The inspectors found the noise 'the reverse of restful' but commented rather hopelessly that it seemed impossible to suggest a remedy.

They did, however, suggest that a drying room should be provided, and that the heating system should at the same time be improved as 'records for the laboratory show on three occasions during the past winter temperatures of 49°F at 11 a.m.'

About half the girls now remained at school throughout the midday break, but only a few of them took the hot meal provided by an outside contractor, and the inspectors thought that better provision for a school lunch was required. This recommendation was acted on soon afterwards and meals, including fresh vegetables from the school garden, were supplied at a cost of 4½d each.

The inspectors reported further that the staff salaries were now on the County scale and the staff themselves were commended. The headmistress 'appears to devote her time and energies ungrudgingly to the welfare of the school' and the assistant mistresses were 'loyal and hardworking. They have been selected with considerable discretion and are doing good work'. The teaching was generally satisfactory and the inspectors were particularly pleased to find that worn garments were being brought for patching in the needlework class.

There were few out of school activities, partly because many of the schoolrooms were let for outside classes in the evenings. However, the inspectors did mention the existence of an Old Girls' Association—which must have been of short life since no other record of it seems to have survived—and of the school magazine. This had been started in 1909 and originally appeared every term. It contained the usual news of school events and the doings of Old Girls, competitions, highly derivative short stories and columns of facetious comment, written apparently under the influence of 'The Fifth Form At St. Dominic's': 'Are the girls at the back of the hall ready to discontinue the 'Pin' and 'Pinch' war?' and 'Has anyone found a cure for sleeping sickness? If so are they going to try it on the fifth and sixth, as those forms need it so badly?'

School Life Before World War I

At the time of the inspection no domestic science lessons other than needlework were being given, but *a* little later the girls began to go to the Castle Street Institute for laundrywork. Miss Clarke, who was herself a notable housewife, thoroughly approved of this and when there was an exhibition of students' work at Guildford, she took the trouble to visit it and to write an account for the school magazine of the Grammar School's entry. Some of the mothers were less enthusiastic, complaining that 'after a whole afternoon you come back with one handkerchief half ironed!'

Drawing classes were still being held at the School of Art, *a* mistress always accompanying the girls, just *as* one always sat in at the singing classes given by the organist of the Parish Church. It is not quite clear whether this was for chaperonage, or because Miss Clarke thought that *a* male teacher would be unable to keep the girls in order without reinforcement. Mr. Allen, the art master, used sarcasm as *a* form of discipline—'Do you know what happens to methylated spirits if you leave it in the air? — It evaporates—Yes, and so will your brains if you talk so much' and again 'Aren't both sides of your head the same? Then why are you drawing the sides of that vase differently?'

The last quotation seems now to imply *a* narrow view of what art could do, but the surviving work of Mr. Allen's schoolgirl pupils appears to be technically quite accomplished, and if some of them became bored with the endless still lifes, and the annual command to draw *a* Christmas cake with *a* slice cut out of it, others *as* evidently enjoyed their art work, for even their mistress's lists were decorated with land and seascapes or paintings



Hockey Team 1913, with Miss Wint

of flowers and leaves.

Since the move to West Street it had been much easier to arrange for regular organised games. There were two tennis lawns at the school and the girls went swimming in summer and played hockey, on a thisty and cow-haunted field in Farnham Park, during the winter. All the forms had drill lessons, but few girls wore special clothes for P.T., which the seniors therefore carried out in all the glory of their long skirts and pinned up hair.

As late as 1913 the school seems to have had no formal indoor uniform, although the girls were expected to provide themselves with a navy blue washing overall to be worn over their ordinary clothes. Nevertheless it was during Miss Clarke's time as headmistress that navy gym tunics and square-necked white blouses were introduced as the regulation wear, while members of the hockey team played in navy skirts reaching their boot-tops, white blouses and yellow ties.

The girls' high spirits made secret societies popular. Kathleen Parfitt recalled 'dark deeds with tins of metal polish in the bicycle shed' and Doris Stewart the occasion when numerous small frogs were discovered in the desks during a French lesson. Probably the frogs came from the lower garden where there was a pond which later found a more respectable use as an adjunct to Nature Study classes.

On a more orthodox level Miss Galloway, the science mistress, founded the Scientific Society in 1911. Under the Presidency of Miss Clarke, and with a large and enthusiastic membership amongst the older girls, this met several times a term until the outbreak of the war to hear 'papers' read by the girls themselves, by members of staff or by outside speakers. Some of the titles were 'Ants', 'Coal', 'Butterflies and Moths', 'The Earth and the Planets' and 'Ceylon and Its Tea Industry'.

Academic And Scholarship Affairs

The governors, recommended in the report of the 1910 inspection to look carefully into reasons for the school's fall in numbers, duly attempted to do so. Fewer girls were presenting themselves as pupil teachers, and a private secondary school for girls had recently been opened in the town. However they concluded, rather uncertainly, that the chief cause of the decline was probably simple snobbery. About a quarter of the girls at the Grammar School, a rather higher proportion than was then usual, held free places and 'scholars are sent where their parents think they will be likely to meet more children of their own class'.

Snobbish feeling there certainly was, for Rosy Sykes has remembered being told by one of the early scholarship holders that there were girls in the school who would not even speak to them, but the staff seem always to have discouraged these shows of class spite, which was not invariably the case in other schools. Even so Miss Clarke sometimes showed special concern over the manners of girls entering from the Elementary Schools. She

seems also to have found that the attendance records of the free students were generally poor. At one of the early Speech Days some mention was made of girls being kept away from school for inadequate reasons, and the 'Farnham Herald' commented that 'the sweet girls of Farnham who cannot be induced to attend the Grammar School on wet days must be all sugar'.

The 'scholarship girls' had, however, been well taught; the Elementary Schools' curriculum was a narrow one, an early report on the pupil teachers indicating that these girls of fourteen and fifteen had learned no higher mathematics, no science and no foreign languages, but it was evidently thorough and the free students usually stood high in their classes.

Academically the school as a whole was establishing itself. Its first County Major scholarship was won in 1910 and in 1912, with another County Major, Marjorie Mason went up to University College London, graduating with a degree in English in 1915. She was the first girl from the school to obtain a university degree, and for many years only the occasional pupil aspired to university entrance, but each year Miss Clarke could report successes in a variety of lesser examinations—London University Matriculation, the Senior Oxford Local, the London Institute of Plain Needlework, the Associated Board of the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy.

There were disappointments too, of course. Many girls still left very young, before Miss Clarke thought them really fitted to earn their own livings. 'Left when she was beginning to know how to learn' she noted of one pupil but of another with humour 'Sent here 'to finish!'' while one shares the interest that must have prompted her to record, of yet another girl 'Left early to be placed under a specialist for stammering. Became a designer of fashion-plates.'

World War 1

The real tragedies of the war are reflected in the school's history only after the fighting was over, when the admission registers note many girls as the daughters of dead serving men with their fees paid by various benevolent funds. Individual members of the school must have suffered losses at the time, but in the general pattern of school life the war appears mainly as a monstrous background creator of nuisance, against which something like the normal round of work and games tried to maintain its rhythm.

War Work And Economies

All out of school activities were cancelled from the start of the first war term and instead girls and staff collected for War Savings Certificates and worked for the armed forces and for Belgian refugees. In her half term report for October 1914 Miss Clarke told the governors with some pride that the girls had already made 80 khaki handkerchiefs for the Expeditionary Force. Later

on they gave a bazaar-cum-fete to sell their handiwork, and wounded soldiers from Waverley Abbey House hospital, in their blue convalescents' uniforms and red ties, were invited as guests.

The devotedly patriotic Miss Clarke imposed severe restrictions in the use of gas to light the classrooms, and herself kept what Miss Hughes described as 'an almost Lenten fast' to show how much food might be saved for the army. The price of the school dinner rose to 6d, it became uneconomic even at this level and ceased to be supplied. As the war went on, a communal restaurant was opened in the town and several girls bought their dinner from it. One of the seniors had to be sent over to fetch the pots and plates at the beginning of the midday break; Miss Clarke thought this 'not quite suitable' and wondered whether the governors would allow her to employ a 'lad with a small push-cart' to do the carrying.

Speech Days were replaced by a semi-private ceremony of Distribution of Certificates with no distinguished guest and the presentations made by the headmistress. There was a shortage of stationery so severe that in two successive years only the most senior classes did written examinations at the end of the summer term while Miss Clarke, assisted by other mistresses, gave viva voce tests to everyone else.

Staffing And Other Difficulties

Miss Clarke seems to have been more enthusiastic than the rest of the staff about the idea of oral examinations and indeed up to a point the sacrifices and economies demanded by the war were probably rather up her moral street. Others of the changes it produced, however, were far more painful, threatening as they did the maintenance of her high standards.

The music mistress, Miss Williams, left to train as a nurse and was replaced by the new church organist, Mr. Macklin, whose own appointment was necessarily uncertain because of the continual likelihood that he would be, in the then current phrase, 'called to the colours'. Mr. Scantlebury, who had shared the heavy work of caretaking with his mother, was called up, and for some time a firm of contractors had to be employed to stoke the boilers. As more and more men were conscripted and killed, a greater number and variety of jobs became available to women; mistresses left, and were not easily replaced. Although Surrey was one of the better paying education authorities (Miss Clarke was earning about £300 a year at the beginning of the war, the assistant mistresses roughly half this amount) staff salaries did not keep pace with the fast rising cost of living and on more than one occasion Miss Clarke found herself obliged to appoint to a teaching post not the applicant she thought most suitable but the only one willing to take the job at the salary she could offer. These makeshift teachers lacked the qualifications and the disciplinary capacity of their predecessors, morale was low, and the behaviour of the girls deteriorated, also affected, Miss Clarke thought, by

‘the spirit of lawlessness that seems to be passing over the country at this time’.

Travelling difficulties undoubtedly made matters worse. Immediately after the start of the war the local train services had been considerably reduced and as a result it was impossible for the ‘train girls’ to reach school before ten in the morning and they had to leave again at three thirty in the afternoon. Even so it was half past five before their connection reached Camberley and they did their homework during the long wait at Brookwood station. Their own work, and that of their classmates was necessarily affected by the shortened day, and in the winter of **1915-16** the attendance record worsened still further when heavy snowfalls prevented girls living at Frensham, Seale and Tilford from bicycling to school for several days.

Matters Improve

It appears very much to Miss Clarke’s credit that, even when in manifestly low spirits on account of what she considered to be their deficiencies, she continued steadily to champion the cause of her staff, but to them, even though ‘it was one of two things: live **up** to her or go’, she was always kind and helpful. Gradually, things righted themselves, or perhaps they never had been as bad as Miss Clarke was inclined to think; one of the University of London’s reports had apparently been less satisfactory than usual but the report of the General Inspection in **1915** concluded that ‘the school is doing valuable work for the locality, and deserves all possible support and encouragement’ and a year later Miss Clarke herself wrote that ‘the upper forms have attained a high standard of honour and industry’. Salaries were raised to a more satisfactory level, and the staff began to work better as a team although when, in 1917, Miss Clough of Newnham addressed the girls on the incentive of war, and work for women in the post-war world, Miss Clarke may perhaps have reflected that increased opportunities held certain disadvantages so far as those trying to recruit into the established professions were concerned.

One anxiety at least was relieved by the war; school numbers began to climb steadily again, as indeed they did in secondary schools all over the country. With the increase there came an increased rate of turnover **of** pupils, and also a change in the age distribution of the school. A directive from the Board of Education obliged Miss Clarke, very much against her will, to raise the age of entry into the Preparatory Division to eight years old. (Schoolmistresses evidently like to catch their pupils young—in the **1940s** Miss King was to feel a similar disappointment when it was decided to stop admitting children under secondary school age to the grammar schools altogether).

In **1915** the Farnborough convent closed its day department and this led to an influx of girls of lower middle school levels of attainment, while still others joined the school as evacuees from the cities after the Zeppelin air-raids began. **As** a result there

was severe overcrowding in some of the classes (a recurrent theme in the school's history). Miss Clarke reported to the governors that Room G, which measured 17 feet by 20, was used by thirty-two pupils and the thirty girls in Form 3A were crowded into a room 13 feet by 20, the desks being placed so close together that it was impossible for a mistress to pass between them.

As was to happen again in World War II, the state of national crisis led to much rethinking and new planning in the field of education. The examination system was revised in 1917, and the General Schools Examination and Higher School Certificate with possible exemption from matriculation were introduced. The School Certificate examinations approximated to the 0-levels and A-levels of the present day, the most obvious difference being that they required a group of subjects to be taken, and passed, together. The Farnham Girls' Grammar School was recognised as a centre for post-matriculation work in 1918.

The End Of The War

On November 11th 1918 lessons were held normally up to the mid-morning recess. The break was unusually prolonged, the church bells rang, and then the girls were summoned to the hall and told by the headmistress that an armistice had been signed and that they might go home for the rest of the day. So the Great War ended for the school, and next year Miss Clarke was discussing with the governors how they should celebrate what was briefly to be called the Great Peace. She recommended them to follow the example of many other school authorities and to grant a week's extension of the summer holidays, pointing out with characteristic prudence that this would not only strengthen the girls before their 'hardest term' but would also save the cost of a week's gas and general wear and tear on the building.

And The End of An Era

Miss Bates left in 1919 and the close of the year completed for the school an important chapter in its history, when Miss Clarke offered her resignation to the governors. She had for some time been suffering from throat trouble, exacerbated by the strain of teaching against the continual barrage of noise from West Street; besides she was now over sixty and had been teaching for more than forty years. With regret, the governors accepted this decision and Miss Clarke went into her long retirement. For many years she kept a vigilant eye on the behaviour of 'her' girls about the town, devoting herself until the failure at last of her own health and sight, to the Parish Church, the Field Club, and sick visiting, chiefly at the Institution in Hale Road. She lived to see work begun on the new school building in Menin Way, and died in May 1938 at the age of eighty-three.

The opportunities for women in the post-war world were less generous than Miss Clough had predicted. There were ninety-eight

applicants for Miss Clarke's vacant post and from amongst them the appointments committee chose as the new headmistress Miss Celine Newstead Williams, head of the history department at the Colston's Girls' School, Bristol.



“Early Headmistresses”

Miss Clarke (1904-1919) Miss Williams (1919-1925) Miss Winters (1933-1937)

A Change Of Style

More than a generation younger than Miss Clarke, Miss Williams was very different from her austere Victorian predecessor. Miss Clarke had worn, almost as a uniform, her long skirts and her long sleeved grey or black blouses, their high necks surmounted by a strip of sober coloured ribbon; Miss Williams' clothes were striking and unusual—her Indian shawl and a greenish-blue dress with a chessboard pattern on the bodice being remembered by her pupils to this day. Miss Clarke, moving silently about the school, would come upon you suddenly, with a 'scary' effect; Miss Williams, when she left her little study on the landing, closed the door with a bang that could be heard all over the building, so giving everyone time to sort themselves out. Miss Clarke, for all her austerity, could encourage her pupils with an abrupt and homely phrase, could act as a gracious hostess to visiting parents, but Miss Williams was the more easily approachable, 'very alive and inspiring', a fine teacher and a good administrator.

Education In The Post-War World

The five and a half years which Miss Williams spent at the school show a great mixture of events and influences, not all of them individual to Farnham. It was a period during which the educational system was overhauled and modernised, but also a period when, in the post-war slump, the so-called 'Geddes axe' fell, cutting Government spending on education by a third.

After the early 1920s, county secondary schools were obliged to enter for the General Schools Examination, every girl in the 'Certificate form' instead of, as hitherto, being able to select at their discretion those girls they thought most likely to pass, and the work at Farnham was reorganised on a five year scheme to fit this requirement. Miss Williams, complaining that once a girl

had matriculated there was little useful work that the school could give her to do, nevertheless set about arranging courses for the most senior pupils, including the student teachers, who now returned to school on one day a week. Vicky King remembered learning the elements of astronomy, and reading 'St. Joan' under the trees in the lower garden in this, the happiest year of her school life. Although the value of the Teacher Training Scholarships was cut as an economy measure in 1923, there were still 10 student teachers in attendance when Miss Williams left.

The school itself adopted a formal entrance examination, and an informal interview, even for the fee paying children and after 1920 parents were expected to sign an undertaking that their daughter would remain at school until she was sixteen. It was an undertaking that was very often violated, but where a girl was nearly sixteen and had a job to go to, leave was usually given, for this was a time of increasing unemployment.

In 1921 the fees were raised to £12 a year, which the governors thought exceedingly high, and indeed a certain number of girls were withdrawn early for financial reasons, while in other cases the Clerk had to be instructed to take action to obtain the payment of fees due. Twenty or twenty-five girls a year applied for the four or five free places, augmented in 1922 by the endowment of the Langham scholarship.

Clubs And Societies

After the war was over, activities and institutions multiplied. May King (Vince) and Gwen Beckett (Stroud) founded the Old Girls' Association in 1919 and its first reunion was held in 1920, when the Old Girls presented Miss Clarke with a Queen Anne type sugar bowl.

School dinners were re-started in 1920 and meat, two vegetables and a pudding were supplied at one shilling a day, or 4/6d for a whole week—many girls seem to have taken the meal regularly, but not daily. Soon over 200 meals a week were being served and the Dinner Fund showed a small profit. Out of this, amongst other things, the school paid sixteen shillings a week to a gardener. Miss Williams had hoped that the girls might do most of the garden work, but here she was disappointed. Enthusiasm fluctuated and in any case the weeds grew rank again in the holidays.

Miss Davies, who came to the school in 1920 as English mistress, started the School Guide company and was also largely responsible for the running of the Literary, Dramatic and Debating Society ('the Lit'), and for the growth of the Library.

'Dave' or 'the Lady David' as the girls called her (it was an era of nicknames; Miss Williams was 'Bill' or 'Billy', Miss Hughes 'the Ogre' and Miss Wilson, the P.E. mistress, 'Bunny') was a strange, lovable and stimulating mixture of the intellectual, even the fantastic, and the practical. She taught her classes with

eloquence, disliking the mechanics of English grammar, but able to communicate her love of poetry to the girls without sentimentality, encouraging them to discuss each other's essays informally while she sat on the radiator, 'till she nearly singed'. She was a fine singer and a fine dramatic reader, set the school a high example of ladylike behaviour, and at the same time was a dreamer, a doodler and a fidgetter. The girls, knowing of her absent-mindedness, once put two toy cars on her desk, and Miss Davies played with these for some time, running them up and down, before becoming aware that her class was struggling not to laugh. Yet, too, she could give shrewd good advice, was sharply intolerant of real silliness, (though of that only), was an excellent tennis player, and made a highly successful Captain of the 3rd Farnham Girl Guide Company (the school company) organising its annual summer camps with particular verve.

The first school Guides were enrolled by the District Commissioner on Empire Day (May 24th) 1921 in the school hall. Their Lieutenant was Miss Bannister, who had recently joined the school to take charge of the youngest children and to teach needlework, after four years spent working in a military hospital in France. The Guides met on Wednesdays after school, when they worked for their badges and had inter-patrol games and competitions. The patrols were at first named after birds, but were soon given instead the picturesque and more unusual 'light' names — Moonbeams, Lantern Bearers, Beacons, Stars and Torch-bearers.

On Fridays the Literary, Dramatic and Debating Society met in The Tabernacle and refreshed itself with sticky buns and tea before turning to the business of culture. Its members studied the works of selected authors, sang and gave play-readings. Sometimes there was a guest speaker, the most distinguished of whom was probably Walter de la Mare, who visited them in 1924. For this occasion some of the senior boys from Farnham Grammar School were invited to join the usual audience. Phyllis Smith recalled de la Mare as an elderly, rather portly gentleman, who nevertheless managed to infect the girls with some of his own enthusiasm, for as many as could afford to rushed out afterwards to the school bookshop (Sturt's in the Borough) to buy copies of 'Peacock Pie'.

The Library, in these years, had grown from on inconsiderable collection of reference books in an attic to an 'Olympian abode' as Miss Williams told the governors. The girls held a bazaar to raise money for books, and at first the Library was run as a club with a subscription of 6d a term. There was a great vogue for the works of Angela Brazil, which cost five shillings each to buy, but 'fortunately' Miss Williams said 'the classics are cheaper'. The Library was furnished, (from part of the profits of the Dinner Fund) with 'a gate-legged table, usually with flowers on it, some comfortable small settees, beautiful purple and blue striped curtains and cushions. It had bookshelves wherever the



The Library, West Street

walls were vertical.' The room also contained an ottoman, on which any girl who felt unwell was left to rest after being given a drink of ginger or peppermint and 'gently told the whereabouts of the basin'.

Routine Matters

Care of the sick and first aid to the injured were the province of Miss Wilson who, like Miss Davies, had joined the staff in 1920. Before this the school had, for several years, shared with other Surrey schools a P.E. mistress who came one day a week and **took** the girls in four 'sets' for gym—games were usually supervised by one of the ordinary teaching staff. 'Bunny' was a Scot, very sweet and kindly, untidy and charming, a pourer of oil on the waters, a lover of nature and 'little things'. Absent-minded in some respects, especially in later years—she would put a thermometer under the tongue of a suspected invalid, depart on another errand, walking at top speed as usual, and forget all about the patient for half an hour—Miss Wilson was deeply interested in all the girls, and would stop them in the street, years after they had left school, to enquire in minute detail about every member of their families, including the dog.

In addition to her responsibilities for all the gym, games and country dancing in the school, Miss Wilson 'took' spelling, then a very seriously regarded part of the curriculum, gave part-time secretarial help to the headmistress, and supervised the remedial exercise groups, where her task must have been made more difficult by the fact that she apparently had to diagnose the need for the exercises as well as to apply the 'cure'.

As early as 1910 the governors had been asked to arrange for

medical inspection of the pupils, many of whom were said to be suffering from adenoids (indeed the adenoids are pathetically evident in some surviving photographs). When Miss Williams came to Farnham, regular medical inspections were still not a part of the Board of Education's policy for secondary schools, and she began campaigning for them. They were instituted four years later, but at such short notice that Miss Williams wrote to the governors 'I resisted the offices *of* a nurse'—until she had had time to get the parents' permission for the examination to take place.

Miss Williams extended singing lessons from the junior forms to the whole school, established the 'House Beautiful' inter-form competition, abolished the weekly reading of marks in favour of a monthly written report on each girl's work, developed the prefectorial system, and modernised the school uniform. The skirt of the gym tunic was shortened, officially from two inches below to two inches above the knee, though the aim of the smart set then was to wear the tunic as short and its braid girdle as low about the hips as possible; it was still a voluminous garment, worn over ample navy bloomers and thick black stockings. The school boater had been abolished by Miss Clarke, to the relief of almost everyone except the juniors who found it quite useful as a substitute hoop in the playground. In its place the girls wore navy caps or 'pudding basins' in winter and panamas in summer. The hatband carried the school's initials in their most modern form, F.G.G.S., glossed into 'Fresh Geese Gladly Sold'. (At Speech Day in 1936 Canon Crum was to claim that, on his first coming to Farnham, he had been astonished to see girls going about the town with the word EGGS, as he supposed, written on their hats, and went on to discuss the importance of developing one's character rightly while one was young—or as it were, in the egg). There was no official summer uniform, and in Miss Williams' day, as for many years to come, the girls wore white dresses and long black stockings for Speech Day.

The School Family

The girls, in these early post-war years, felt that they meant something, and that they were of value, 'all belonging together', as one said. Friendliness existed between parents and teachers, and surviving letters show that Miss Williams was consulted in confidential terms by parents anxious to help their daughters choose careers, or was asked to 'speak a few words of warning' to a girl leaving home for the first time, while she gave help and encouragement without fuss when one of the senior girls had to interrupt her education for several weeks because of illness in her family.

On a lighter level, Miss Williams could sympathise teasingly with Mary Macklin because, as Mary's father was still teaching at the school, she could never take home any fresh gossip. When Vera Allen's father wrote asking if he might take his daughters to

the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924, Miss Williams at first refused permission. He went to the school to plead his case in person, and at the sight of him, Miss Williams exclaimed ‘Oh Mr. Allen, have you come to melt me?’ The necessary leave of absence was eventually forthcoming, although the school had made an official trip to the Exhibition already (where they gazed ‘with awe and admiration at . . . a reproduction of the Taj Mahal—and a model of the British Isles and the neighbouring countries . . . [with] tiny ships and trains plying to and fro from port to port and station to station’).

Requests From Miss Williams

Above all, the school and its girls were the continual object of Miss Williams’ lively concern. In her lengthy reports to the governors, between their formal beginnings ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg to present my report’ and their formal endings ‘I am, ladies and gentlemen, your obedient servant’, she discussed the standard of workmanship in the redecoration of the school, or the effects of applying a preparation called ‘Dust-olio’ to the floor of the staff cloakroom with as much detailed enthusiasm as she did syllabuses and examinations. Above all, though not unreasonably or extravagantly, she asked for things; she wanted clocks for the form rooms, because the girls must learn to work to time, she wanted a new carpet for the headmistress’s study because the old one was so full of holes that she thought it would fall to pieces when it was next beaten, she wanted permission for the caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. White, to close the school for ten days in the summer holidays so that they could go away.

Most of these requests seem to have been granted, but there was one thing Miss Williams could not get, and that was a hot water supply for the girls’ lavatories. Hot water had been installed in the staff cloakroom in 1920, and had been found a great comfort, and Miss Williams thought that the girls ought to enjoy the same benefit. She first asked for it at the beginning of 1921, and she went on asking. She wrote that ‘in the very cold weather it was wrong’ to make some of the children wash, she wrote that girls ought not always to be expected to wash in icy water, she wrote that ‘Lessons of endurance are better taught in other ways’, she wrote that she had resorted to the desperate and grossly uneconomical expedient of having buckets of hot water drawn from the domestic geyser for use in the cloakrooms, and still the necessary authorisation was not forthcoming.

In the end, this was a campaign that Miss Williams left for her successors to continue. She herself became headmistress of the Ipswich High School, a Girls’ Public Day School Trust foundation, in the summer of 1925 and after a term in which Miss Litchfield, the second mistress, served as acting head, Miss Doris Drought M.A. arrived in Farnham to take up her position as the new headmistress of the Girls’ Grammar School.

Miss Drought And Her Staff

Miss Drought, as was customary, had been interviewed for the post at a meeting held in London and first saw the school building on a Sunday, when she was shown over it by Mr. White. Meanwhile she had been presented to some of the parents in such glowing terms that they inevitably conceived a slight prejudice against her, a feeling which she was unfortunately not quite the type to dispel at once. She was not easy to get to know and, as the parents said, she 'held her position', but she 'improved on acquaintance', and in the end her dignity, humour and kindness made her both generally admired and liked.

Doris Marjorie Drought was born in Ireland, and educated privately there and in France before going up to Lady Margaret Hall Oxford, where she took a first class honours degree in French language and literature. She had been language mistress at the Bedford High School for Girls and at the Godolphin School, Salisbury and was, in the stately language of the Board of Education inspectors' reports, 'a teacher of unusual competence'. She was also sensitive and shy, blushing warmly when she had to tell the staff that someone had written up a rude remark about her in the girls' lavatories. Her shyness made her seem formidable to the girls, and she could be rather precious in her ways but, as her reports to the governors show, she possessed a sense of humour and an understated turn of phrase that was almost wit. 'The art inspector's report arrived during the holidays,' she wrote. 'He disliked the stuffed birds in the hall,' while on another occasion a lecture was attended by the girls in 'coughless silence'. She could laugh at herself, saying of a party she had taken to the National Gallery that they had enjoyed the escalators on the Underground more than the 'intellectual entertainments' and when she had an ear operation and was away from school for six weeks she reported that on her return 'one of the parents assured me kindly that they had got on just as well without me'.

Nineteen twenty-six, the first full year that Miss Drought spent at Farnham, saw a number of staff changes. Miss Litchfield left to enter the Anglican Order of the Community of St. John the Baptist at Windsor, eventually becoming a professed Sister and teaching in the Order's mission schools in India. Miss Dixon, who had been with Miss Williams at the Colston's Girls' School, went on to join her at Ipswich and was replaced by Miss Basford, Miss Selleck came to teach the little ones and Miss Andrews too joined the staff, at first attending two days a week to teach needlework and handicrafts and after Mr. Allen's retirement being appointed as full-time art mistress.

Art And Science

Although she held a Diploma as Teacher of Fine Art from Reading University, Miss Andrews was so youthful in appearance that the girls used to suspect her of having 'improved' her

age in order to sound more mature for the post. (Years later, when she spent an exchange year teaching at a large co-educational school in the United States, she found herself being asked for dates by her senior male pupils). She began her school career in Farnham with a little trepidation, but found herself in 'a very happy school, intimate and very friendly'. Farnham was still a little country town, and those of the staff who had no motor transport (Miss Drought had an Austin car named by her 'Austina' and 'Dave' a motor cycle and sidecar) could walk to their work across hopfields and water meadows to the gate the garden wall. After school, they often had tea together at the Lion and Lamb café; Miss Selleck, on her way there, once found herself following a group of girls who were themselves following Miss Andrews, attempting to imitate her walk and exclaiming 'High Art! High Art!'



"Miss Drought and her Staff"

Standing, l. to r. Miss Andrews, Miss Basford, Miss Selleck, Miss Ramsden,
Miss Snewin, Miss Phillips.

Seated, l. to r. Miss Wilson, Miss Davies, Miss Drought, Miss Hughes,
Miss Skerry.

Art at this time was something of a Cinderella subject, but Miss Andrews found that she had every encouragement from Miss Drought 'who was very sure all creative work was important'. She made a great deal of the House Beautiful competition and despite the shortage of space in the school a glass fronted cupboard in the hall was set aside as a miniature art museum, while Miss Andrews was allowed to exhibit the week's best work on a wall upstairs. There was a rush of girls to this every Monday morning to see 'if mine is up'.

However, the conditions under which art had to be taught were not, and could not be, good. The noise in West Street was increasing termly, reaching levels where sustained verbal teaching simply could not be carried on in the front rooms, to one of which Art therefore necessarily fell heir. Science was as badly housed, but the laboratory with its fume cupboard, sinks and zinc benches could hardly be transferred elsewhere, and in any case Miss Hughes was probably a match for the traffic. In full cry against her classes she could certainly be heard as far away as the lower garden and by the 'bus queues waiting in the street outside, while inside the exclamations of 'You'll fetch the coroner', 'Nothing is sweet in chemistry' (to a girl who had admired the red colour of a chemical compound) and 'Where do you expect to go when you die, m'dear?', as one pupil remarked '. . . gave more of us duodenal ulcers . . . ' As a matter of fact, the girls preferred Miss Hughes on their immortal souls to Miss Hughes on science, and she herself probably found in her explosions of temper some relief from the, to her, infuriating stolidity of her pupils. She once exclaimed to her colleague 'Oh Mr. Macklin, they are such **puddings!**', but she was genuinely devoted to the welfare of the 'puddings', weeping with relief when they passed their exams, and as the girls grew older they slowly discovered that her bark, after all, was very, very much worse than her bite. She had, amongst others, the endearing habit of cancelling order marks that she had handed out in a particularly hot moment a day or so previously and had, so another pupil recalled, a great sense of humour—if you appreciated it.

The Fellowship Fund And Other Activities

The late 1920s were a time of financial stringency and Miss Drought, in one of her reports to the governors, spoke of the desirability of having a school fund to help pupils in occasional money difficulties. In the event it was the Old Girls' Association which took up the idea, and founded its 'Fellowship Fund' on the basis of the half crown fees paid by its members to Miss Wilson for their weekly gym class at the school.

The Old Girls' efforts to raise money for the Fellowship Fund were greatly helped by Miss Hughes, whose considerable talents as an organiser of whist drives and of jumble sales were at their service as they were at that of the infant Roman Catholic church of St. Joan, whose devoted parishioner she was. The school took part as well, and of course both girls and Old Girls supported other charities besides their own. The school sponsored a child through the agency of the Save The Children Fund and there was an annual collection for Remembrance Day—in the 1920s, part of this was always spent on flowers to be laid on the town War Memorial.

The Old Girls' Association (the OGA) was affiliated to the Union of Girls' Societies and through them supplied clothes and toys to two children of poor parents. The Old Girls met several

times a year in The Tabernacle, made their own teas, danced, with each other as no men were allowed, and had a lively Dramatic Society. There was then no Public Library in Farnham, and Miss Drought arranged for the O.G.s to use the school's library on one evening a week, and its tennis courts on two. A fine horse chestnut tree formed a likely hazard for high lobs at tennis as it did for netball games in winter.

Despite this idiosyncrasy of their netball pitch, the school team used to do well in the Surrey League Netball championships. Country dancing was also very popular; the girls danced in their lunch hours and gave exhibitions on the school's various Open Days. They presented, in their home-made costumes against the background of the Parish Church tower, so charming a picture that one governor was moved to exclaim that they looked like bunches of flowers. (One of the girls, more prosaically, recalled that she 'emerged each year as a village idiot-type in a smock and basin hat').

Parents helped with the costumes, supported the fetes and attended the Open Days. The 'Athletic Sports' which took place annually on the Brewery sports field they found themselves expected to take part in as well as to watch. The sports were not then of the serious track event kind, and the 'Fathers' spoon and potato' race took its place between the 'Combined Biscuit and Whistle, Blazer and Shoe' and the 'Circular Jump'.

Innovations And Requests

Miss Drought believed additionally in interesting the parents in the more routine aspects of school life, and during her time at the school several Parents' Conferences were held. One mother, invited to suggest topics for discussion, wrote at length deploring 'the present day slang language (which almost amounts to swearing). It seems to me to do away with all the gentle refinement of girlhood'. Other particularly favoured topics were school uniforms, and homework.

Some modifications in the uniform were introduced—blue winter jerseys and butcher blue summer frocks with white collars and cuffs—but about lessening the homework, Miss Drought could do very little. All the mistresses set it, even Miss Hughes, who did not really approve of it. However, what she did set had to be thoroughly done, and the heavy red or blue marking pencil left characteristic comments behind—'Brevity may be the soul of wit, but it is **not** the soul of science', 'Has your textbook gone into winter quarters, m'dear?' and worst of all, 'See me'. Her class notes were learned by heart and recited verbatim, to be remembered for life: 'Matter, material or substance is anything that takes up space and that I can learn by means of my senses. . .'

In 1928, Miss Drought was at last authorised to employ a part-time secretary and asked Vera Allen, then a very new Old Girl, if she could suggest a suitable candidate. Vera replied 'I think I

know where you can find one', Miss Drought exclaimed 'Oh, would you?', and so Vera resumed after the briefest interval her close connection with the school to which she had first come as a child of six and in whose service she was to spend the whole of her working life. She came to school in the afternoons and worked in the stationery room, an attic cubby-hole, overhot in summer, very cold in winter and at all times dusty, with a view of the Parish Church tower, framed in chimney pots.

Miss Drought, like Miss Williams before her, was a great 'asker', and to read a list of her requests to the governors is to see the pattern of school life at that time made up of pieces of mosaic. She asked for waste paper baskets, linoleum in the staff cloak-room, an alpaca coat for the caretaker, twelve desks for larger children, a policeman's rattle for use as a fire alarm, a maypole, tools for leather work, a coal scuttle, gramophone records to illustrate particular musical forms and a brass plate inscribed 'Please do not ring unless an answer is required'. She asked for a supply of carol books, an enamel jug to hold paint water, new wire netting round the tennis courts, a new ball for the globe, a maximum and minimum thermometer, a set of folding maps of Asia, a tap for drinking water in the playground and 200 yards of bleached calico for book wrappers. And in 1928, between requests for an epidiascope and for a wooden box to hold first aid equipment (this must have been the little black box containing the famous bottle of iodine that 'Bunny' carried to the scene of any accident) she asked for an open air classroom to be put up on the caretaker's vegetable patch in the garden.

Space, Money And Time

Pressure on space in the West Street building was by now extreme. At the start of the autumn term 1929, numbers rose by 20 to 186 girls, and Miss Drought found herself obliged to create a new form, which had no classroom of its own. Duly, at the end of the year, two hut classrooms were erected in the West Street garden, and the situation was temporarily eased. The girls liked the new rooms for their views of the garden and bird table, the staff because they were 'quiet, sunny and spacious' — although even then Miss Drought noted for the governors that 'the only furniture provided for them so far by the Surrey Education Committee is two very good door mats'.

A permanent solution to the problem of space was also in view. The Board of Education in the same year, 1929, allowed the raising of a loan to purchase from Mr. Mardon at a cost of £200 an acre, seven acres of land between the Tilford and Waverley Roads as a site for a new school.

One of Miss Drought's innovations was the taking of school holidays abroad. In 1928 she had escorted a party of girls to Bruges and in 1930 a larger group went to Bayeux. A summary of accounts for the Bayeux expedition has survived and shows that a week's holiday for two mistresses, one Old Girl (Vera

Allen) and eighteen pupils, including the double journey, a week's board and lodging at a convent, expeditions, teas and postcards cost £103.16.4d in all.

The cost was still beyond the means of many parents and in spite of scholarships, bursaries and grants, the governors seldom met without having to consider at least one application for special financial aid to deal with the ordinary expenses of school life. To families where five or six children had to be supported on an income of £150 a year, a few pounds entrance fee for an examination, or a few shillings a week for remedial exercises could be almost impossible to find. A free place at the Grammar School must have been eagerly hoped for in such a financial climate, but although the Board of Education had urged local education authorities to increase the number of free places in secondary schools to **40%**, in Farnham, the 'scholarship girls' remained only about a quarter of the school population and there were over forty applicants for the three or four places offered every year. On one occasion Miss Drought had to report to the governors that an arithmetic paper set for the scholarship examination had 'escaped from the printers' and had been passed round amongst groups of children on a 'bus before coming into the hands of one of the Elementary School headmasters. In the couple of days available the staff devised and duplicated a fresh paper.

Academic Achievements And The House System

In 1930, Mr. Macklin left and Miss Phillips joined the staff to teach class singing and aural training. Mrs. White had to be taken to the 'insane asylum'—she died the following year—and the school had its best ever examination results. Twenty-three candidates out of twenty-seven were successful in the General Schools Examination and all three Higher School Certificate candidates passed in all the subjects offered, with exemption from Intermediate Arts.

Next year the Board of Education inspectors were commenting on the school's academic progress under Miss Drought. It was, they said 'greatly to her credit and that of the staff that with only 200 girls there is a sixth form of fifteen, all but one of whom have matriculated. The staff is on the whole a competent body and works harmoniously together, the girls are responsive and keen and it is clear that the school is a valuable influence in the area it serves'. But despite the new classrooms they found the school noisy and crowded, and thought it desirable that the new building should be completed as early as possible in the 1933-36 programme.

Unfortunately for this hope, 1931 was also the year of the National Economy Act and in October the Surrey County Council Education Department, addressing Miss Drought, possibly from motives of economy, as 'Dear Sir/Madam' informed her that all teachers' salaries were to be reduced by 10% from the first of the month. In the following year, estimates for books and stationery were also cut.

Loss of the immediate prospect of a new school building meant that more space had again to be found, and it was in 1931 that the dining room was turned into a classroom and school dinners began to be taken at the Old Mitre cafe; one little girl told her mother that 'we have to go to a Hotel for our dinners now, because Miss Drought is too busy to prepare them'.

The meals were not always very good—Miss Andrews recalled a horrid incident when the cook warned the young ladies to be careful how they ate, as part of the mincing machine had got lost in the shepherd's pie—and soon fewer than 50 girls formed the crocodile that daily crossed West Street under the supervision of a policeman. Half the girls still ate their midday dinners at home and the remainder brought sandwich lunches which they ate in the garden till as late in the year as possible, and then in the hall. Afterwards they were free to lie outside on ground sheets, or in winter, having obeyed 'Bunny's' rubric of 'hats, coats and outdoor shoes' to play hopscotch and other games on the asphalt.

Miss Drought introduced the then popular House system, about which she had been thinking for some time, in 1932, and the school was divided for competitive purposes into four houses. At first these were called A, B, C and D but soon, perhaps because the girls nicknamed them 'Abominables, Blessed, Cursed and Damned', they were re-named after the United Kingdom's patron saints. The 'Damned' became St. Patrick's with green as their house colour and, inevitably, the Irish Miss Hughes as their housemistress. Most of the organisation of the houses was in the hands of the girls themselves, and house activities centred round various competitions—games matches and gardening in the summer term, plays in the autumn and a mixed bag in the spring. In different years this included French reading, handwriting and music, the last of these being won by St. George's less on account of its musicianship than because of the brilliant tactics employed by its conductor Doreen Lehmann (now Fletcher), who got the girls through their sight-reading test by arranging them in ranks so that the unmusical ones were able to 'follow' their betters 'unflinchingly, even though each note was rather cone-shaped'.

There was a complicated system by which the work and conduct of each member of a house was counted with the competition marks towards a final yearly score, and this decided the winner of the House Banner, a handsome object embroidered by the girls in the intervals of making clothes for the unemployed.

Academic Distinctions

Miss Selleck had a year's leave of absence in 1932, and her place was taken by Miss Minto, who shared her love of nature and crafts and who taught the little ones, amongst other delightful tasks, to make dyes from hedgerow berries and to model clay pots round orange skins. Girls and their parents were invited to

a meeting on 'Prospects in the Nursing Profession', the choir took part for the second time in the Woking Music Festival, and Mr. White re-married. This was also the year in which Miss Drought had what, as a French scholar, she probably felt to be her greatest vicarious academic triumph at Farnham. Phyllis Smith, one of the school's 'grandchildren'-her mother had been a pupil teacher in the British Schools' days—won a scholarship to St. Hugh's College Oxford to read for a degree in French, and so became the first pupil from F.G.G.S., as Miss Drought wrote, 'to wear a scholar's gown' at Oxford. In the same year, Jane Hensley obtained a distinction in Greek in her School Certificate; paradoxically this is a reminder of how comparatively narrow a range of subjects the school could then offer, especially at senior levels. She was the school's first student of Greek and although a contemporary prospectus states that 'The Course includes: Holy Scripture, English Language and Literature, History, Geography, Mathematics, French, Latin, Botany, Chemistry, Physics, Nature Study, Drawing, Writing, Needlework, Handwork, Class Singing, Aural Training, Physical Exercises, Organised Games and Singing' there was for example no real Sixth Form work in Mathematics or Science, nor was there to be for many years.

Nineteen thirty-two was the last complete year that Miss Drought spent in Farnham. In the autumn term of 1933 she took up a new appointment as headmistress of the County High School, Altrincham where she remained until her retirement. The Farnham girls ('my pretty girls' as she wrote of them) said goodbye to her with the gift of a Cromwellian chair, and the staff held a farewell picnic on Hindhead. A page is turned in the official report book, and Miss E. D. M. Winters is making her first report to the governors.

An Interlude

Margaret Winters was, surely, a rarity for the times, a headmistress whose first career had lain outside the teaching profession. Born in India, the eldest and only surviving child of a Methodist missionary, she was educated at the Bridlington High School in Yorkshire and at Somerville College Oxford where she took a brilliant first class honours degree in history. She then entered the Higher Civil Service and only began to teach (at Malvern Girls' College) when she had for a time to live at home on account of her mother's failing health. After the death of her parents, Miss Winters taught for a year at Seaford, and then went to the Maria Grey College to train as a teacher. Between 1922 and 1933 she was senior history mistress at Colchester County High School for Girls whence she sent a long succession of pupils to read history at Oxford.

Perhaps because she spent so comparatively short a time in Farnham, less than the average school life of one of the girls, Miss Winters seems to have left less strong a mark on the life of

the school than its other headmistresses. Old Girls now remember their surprise at her appearance, contrasting with that of the large and stately Miss Drought—a neat, stocky North country-woman with a rolling masculine walk, an Eton crop, and a charming, almost a pretty face—they remember that her vivid personality made a great impression on them and yet it is not easy to define what that impression was, although one of them has contributed part of a verse description she wrote of Miss Winters at the time:

‘She strides along the corridor,
With grim determination
She says no word until she gets
Right to her destination.
No other person in the school
Has such a store of knowledge
I’ll be content if I know half
—When I come out of College!’

Another reason for the slightness of this stamp may have been that Miss Winters and Farnham never really ‘gelled’. Herself full of animation, vigorous, impatient and excitable, she thought the little town dead and alive. She had a very clear, quick mind, was kind and compassionate, but did not suffer fools gladly. Intensely human, with her enthusiasms for birds and for Spain, with her passion for Chelsea buns—she would pound upstairs to Vera Allen’s office to exclaim, after Vera had been ill ‘Beetle off, get some fresh air!’, but also sometimes to ‘get things off her chest’, as she said. to talk out her frustrations, her hard breathing then already foretelling that her vitality would prematurely wear out an unrobust constitution.

Then, too, the years between 1933 and 1937 were uneventful ones for the school, well enough described by Miss Winters herself when, in a letter to the school magazine she quoted ‘Happy is the country that has no history’.

Uneventful Years

So, in 1933 Miss Winters reported to the governors that she had instituted the teaching of civics and that she and Miss Basford had begun giving talks on current affairs to the fifth and sixth forms. The gas pipes supplying the lavatories were becoming badly corroded and the caretaker estimated that the total amount of light they were giving was about equal to that of three candles. A girl broke her leg playing netball, no doctor could be obtained because it was mid-morning, but a neighbour and his son, called on for help, set the leg so efficiently that no eventual re-setting was needed. The school made and sold its own Christmas card, and the governors were asked to authorise the purchase of a good duplicator.

Next year, the University of London inspectors, making their usual advisory visit, commented in detail on the work of some of

the staff. Miss Davies' teaching was very careful and thorough and her blackboard work was exceedingly good; Miss Basford was very clear, and possessed a voluminous knowledge and remarkable illustrative power; Miss Cresswell, the classics mistress, was a 'most vigorous, skilful and resourceful teacher' (though the inspectors perhaps rubbed some of the bloom off this last compliment by adding the rider that nevertheless the girls were not very good at Latin). As for the headmistress, she was 'a skilful organiser and possesses a keen sense of humour and much tact. She is deservedly popular with her staff and pupils'.

There were minor changes in the arrangement of the curriculum. The girls went to the Castle Street Institute for Domestic Science (learning the correct way to fold and iron a tablecloth and how to make Irish stew), and to Brightwells to play tennis, while amongst the pupils a long tradition came to an end this year when Christina, 'the last of the Loughlins', left. One or more of this large family of sisters had been continuously at the school since 1917.

Another tradition was revived when the school began again to publish a magazine, this time annually and in conjunction with the Old Girls, who had been producing a magazine of their own since 1929. At first, the contents of these publications were purely factual—brief accounts of school activities and news of the Old Girls. A very high proportion of those leaving the school still became school teachers in their turn, and the next most popular profession was nursing. It is surprising now to find that throughout the 1930s quite a number of girls left grammar school apparently only to live at home, with no definite occupation whatever. Not that they were necessarily idle; in *one* year the O.G.A. editor reported that another Old Girl, asked if she would write an article for the magazine, had declined on the plea that she had an engagement for every evening between November and the following Easter.

Academic Exchanges

Financial estimates for the school in the year 1934-35 were for an expenditure of £4,591, of which £3,480 went on salaries, and for an income of £1,819. This is a reminder of how far from being self-supporting even a fee-paying school was expected to be. (After 1924, free places had been re-named 'special places' and the Board of Education required even scholarship winners to pay fees according to their parents' incomes.)

Miss Andrews spent this academic year in the United States and the Farnham girls were taught by her exchange teacher, Miss Frances Failing from Indianapolis. Miss Failing encouraged her classes to paint in a bold and abstract style, and also talked to them a good deal about the differences between England and the States. She outspokenly preferred her own country, but certainly the exchange fully served the purpose of introducing everyone concerned to differing points of view.

Another foreigner spent this year at Farnham. She was Jacqueline Pelletier from France, who worked as a student teacher with the sixth form and can therefore perhaps be regarded as a forerunner of the annually changing 'assistantes' who were to come regularly to the school after the Second World War.

In 1935 Mrs. Philipson-Sitow became chairman of the governors, and it was announced that building of the new school was projected for the year 1937-38. Miss Winters sat on the Farnham Celebrations Committee for the Silver Jubilee celebrations of King George V and Queen Mary, and Miss Williams left Ipswich to become headmistress of St. David's School, Englefield Green, a private preparatory boarding school for girls which she kept with her sister until her retirement in the 1960s.

A wireless set was estimated for, and was installed in the following year in time for the school to 'listen in' to the proclamation of Edward VIII as King.

Paris And Plans

In the summer of the same year, 1936, a school party spent a week in Paris. Miss Winters in her good luck telegram advised them to go to Chartres (rendered by the Post Office as Charters) and if they did not do this at least they managed to see many of the sights of Paris itself, including Napoleon's tomb, the view from the top of the Eiffel Tower, the shops and the Opéra Comique. Christine Sumpster reported unfavourably on the pictures in the Louvre; there was 'something repellent' about the Mona Lisa, and in Rubens' paintings 'the women were fat and repulsive looking and the babies like little pink shrimps'. However a visit to the offices of the paper 'L'Intransigeant' was much enjoyed. The girls were taken up to the roof of the building by 'a man who was the image of Robert Montgomery' and 'everyone was very polite and we did not feel like school girls at all'. In these days before T.v. and easy travel such visits could be intensely exciting, and were long remembered.

Canon Gardiner resigned from the Board of Governors in 1937, and the vacant place was taken by Norah Meddows-Taylor (Langham). She was the first of only three Old Girls to serve the school as governors. (The others were Vicky King and Stella Pudles (Eldridge) who eventually became chairman.)

Plans for the new Farnham Girls' Grammar School were now being discussed in detail and were so far finalised that Miss Winters and Mrs. Philipson-Stow sent out a circular letter suggesting that friends of the school might like to subscribe to buy some commemorative extra for the school building. All the same, Miss Winters did not stay to see the move achieved. She had been a member of several educational committees sitting in London and was appointed headmistress of the City of London Girls' School in the summer of 1937. Miss Frances Wake King, who had been second mistress at Mitcham County Girls' School, came to Farnham in her place.

The Last Years At West Street

Miss King's connection with the school began happily when, on her first visit to Farnham after being appointed, she found Vera Allen waiting on the station platform to meet and welcome her, to introduce her to the town and to take her through Gostrey Meadow to West Street and the grey school building with its walled garden. She also enjoyed her first introduction to the 'Farnham Herald'. The local paper, an indefatigable chronicler of the school's affairs—in those days it even gave the results of the school netball matches along with the name of every player in the team—had written to her soon after her appointment asking for a suitable photograph to print. Miss King took some pleasure in explaining that the most recent photograph of herself she possessed showed her in walking dress, sitting on top of a mountain arm in arm with two male friends in lederhosen.

In the old building where she spent her first two years as headmistress, Miss King found 'a family spirit, a friendliness and ease'. She was to speak warmly too of the help she received from the governors, and in particular from their chairman. Mrs. Philipson-Stow, like her predecessors Canon Girling and Mrs. Coleman, often visited the school informally and 'a chairman can be of great support to a headmistress by listening to problems, or just by being there'. The relationship between the Surrey Education Committee and the schools it served was good at that time too, so that the background machinery of school life worked very well.

The start on the new school building, projected at one time for the year 1937-38, had been delayed for a further year, and though the girls went up to Menin Way to play hockey, the only other sign of occupation on the site was a solitary green hut. However, in February 1938 it was announced that the tender of Messrs. Way, Chapman, Lowry and Puttick had been accepted by the education authority and in April under the headline 'Cheer, Girls, Cheer', the 'Farnham Herald' announced that work had at last begun.

It must in some ways have been a difficult period, when everyone was looking forward to the move, but when the restrictions and makeshifts of the present had still to be dealt with. Sports Days had been given up because of the difficulties of organising them on the Brewery field, but the girls still gave their entertainments to parents in the school garden and there were plays, parties and dances at Christmas. The Houses continued to hold their dramatic competitions, the choir still met on Mondays, the Guides on Wednesdays, the Literary, Dramatic and Debating Society on Fridays. A school orchestra, called by the girls the 'squawkestra', was founded, and there were more changes in the school uniform. 'Bracken-coloured' stockings replaced black, and the senior girls might wear navy winter dresses with white collars and cuffs. Meals were now taken at the Mecca café ('the Mecca

of the West') a few yards further up the street from the Mitre.

The Munich Emergency

While the school watched the new building spreading and rising, the wider future was casting its ominous shadow before it, touching even on this little world. By the late 1930s a few names of probably Continental European origin have begun to appear in the admission registers, names of girls who were refugees, with or without their parents, from Nazi expansion into Europe, the fees of one of them paid by the headmistress and staff.

In 1938 the September crisis of Munich came and someone wrote a rhyming comment on its effect on the school.

'Everything has happened that ought not—

The plays have not been practised, and important things
forgot

Oh, blame it on the European crisis.'

The Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment was told that the governors of F.G.G.S. would assist in every way in providing accommodation at the school for the sick and wounded in the event of invasion, and the girls made a collection for the Czechoslovakian Children's Relief Fund. The emergency receded, for a time, but next year when the Houses made scrap books of the school's history as their competition pieces a fanciful picture of the uniform of the future showed the girls in gas masks and there was also a cartoon depicting a girl presenting her home-work, 'Please Miss Basford, which boundaries shall I put for Germany, this week's or next's?'

School Organisation

Although numbers in the school had remained more or less static at between 180 and 200 girls since the days of Miss Drought, Miss King had already noted a change in age distribution which not only promised future expansion, but also increased the current pressures on space. In 1939, there were only 16 girls in the School Certificate form, but the lower school was so crowded as to be nearly ready for a two form entry, and Miss King was obliged to tell the governors that in the younger age groups she would not be able to accept even transfer pupils until the move had been made. She also discussed with them her hope that those senior girls who wished it would be able to take Domestic Science in the General Schools Examination by 1940. The school could not provide science courses at a sufficiently advanced level for this specialisation and she was therefore exploring the possibility of co-operation with either the Guildford or the Frimley and Camberley County Schools for Girls.

Neither then nor for many years afterwards was it practicable to consider co-operation on this considerable scale with the Farnham Grammar School. Here at least, Thory Gage Gardiner's vision remained unfulfilled. Later generations of girls, trekking across the Hogs Back to Guildford for their Higher Schools or

Advanced Level Physics courses, thought that this arrangement was necessary because 'co-education was an unheard of word'. So indeed it may have been, but not on the women's side; in spite of the fact that the Girls' Grammar School privately considered the boys' school 'hoary and out of date', both Miss King and Miss Inman after her would have been glad of much closer and more frequent contacts between the two Farnham schools than they were ever able to achieve.

Miss King, with Miss Allen, and Miss Selleck, belonged to the Society of Friends, and this strong Quaker presence in the school at a time when the total permanent staff numbered only 10 must have influenced its general atmosphere, the kind of family life that it presented. The University of London Report on the school in 1939 spoke of the 'general tone of mutual helpfulness and natural self control [that] reflects the spirit of the headmistress and her able staff'. The internal organisation of the school at that time shows the means by which the staff tried to encourage these virtues.

The older girls acted as games officials and as prefects, the latter at least having considerable power in the school context. They were elected by the upper school from a list nominated by the last year's prefects, took 'prep' and even lessons when a mistress was absent, and could give lines, order marks and conduct marks. As one of the girls wrote, 'An order mark looked at from a worldly point of view is nothing. But. . .'. There was a suggestions box in the entrance hall, and Miss King instituted various changes in the timetable to encourage the girls to work independently.

The sixth form already had some free periods, for a while no homework was set on one evening a week, and before the start of the 1939 examination season, all the girls were allowed a Preparation Day at school. The importance of doing consistently good rather than occasionally brilliant work was emphasized by the introduction of the signature system, a certain number of consecutive A or A- marks earning a signature from the headmistress, and the number of signatures a form received adding to its merit in the regular assessments of work. The practical as well as the academic had value, and girls who achieved S.R.N. qualifications found their names on the Honours Board equally with those of university graduates.

The Move

During the summer term of 1939, the older girls began to take some of their classes in Menin Way and to help in the removal of the school's goods. This operation was superintended by Miss Wilson, the lighter equipment being shifted on handcarts, and the settling in process went very smoothly. Everyone seems to have been glad to be going to the new school, but there was still sorrow to be felt at leaving West Street.

They were leaving so much behind—lessons in the garden, and the hierarchy of privilege that allowed girls into the lower garden with its apple and nut trees, and then into the ‘lower lower garden’ where Miss Hughes grew herbs for her botany lessons; knocking tennis balls over the wall into the next door garden in the strawberry season (although the rules hopefully said ‘Nothing of any description is to be thrown over the garden wall’); the sixth form room in the attic where new members were initiated by being told to put their hands into the door in the wall, and so plunging them into the icy water of the radiator tank; the sweet shop across the way where the girls were such regular customers that the owner had presented them with a wooden box in which to carry back the communal order, the coughing horse that made deliveries at the wine merchant’s and the brass cat knocker on the door of Miss King’s study.

They were leaving the tradition of Speech Days at the Corn Exchange, the Brewery Memorial Hall or the Church House, with the earlier procession through the town of girls carrying flowers and plants to beautify the chosen hall on the afternoon of the ceremony. Above all, perhaps, they were leaving the Parish Church and its bells. The bells, ‘very near and very loud’ had been part of the chorus of noise which had beset the school for so long. The chimes played every three hours, except on days when there was a funeral, and at noon repeated their tune three times, bringing lessons to a standstill for seven minutes. Although the girls called them ‘our chimes’ they must have been a great nuisance from a practical point of view—but the tune they played was ‘Life Let Us Cherish’.

Opening Day

The Menin Way buildings were formally opened on July 20th 1939 and the day, with every detail planned by Mrs. Philipson-Stow, was another capital-lettered Great Occasion. The opening ceremony was performed by the Duchess of Gloucester with, as supporting cast, the Band of the 1st King’s Dragoon Guards (National Anthem), Anne Larkins, the School Captain (presenting a bouquet to H.R.H.), the Chairman of the Governors (speech of welcome), the Rector, Canon Girling (the Dedicatory Prayer), the Chairman of the County Council, Sir Philip Henriques (formally handing over the buildings to the Chairman of the Governors), and Mr. C. E. Borelli (vote of thanks). The Duchess toured the building and was photographed at the garden door, the Guides formed a Guard of Honour, and the girls cheered and waved their programmes as the royal car drove away.

On the afternoon of the same day, in brilliant sunshine, the school was open for inspection by guests, parents and the girls (this being the juniors’ first visit). The architects, Messrs. Jarvis and Richards, had provided a page of notes in the souvenir programme:



"Opening Day"

Mia King with H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester (centre) and Mrs. Philipson-Stow.

'The elevations are in a simple Georgian style in multi-coloured brickwork, with hand-made red tiled roofs. The main entrance in Menin Way is in Douling stone, with . . . curved wing walls to the steps. . . . The Gymnasium Block forms a projecting wing on the northeast side. . . . Behind the school the ground has been laid out as playing fields.'



“The Farnham Girls’ Grammar School, Menin Way”

There were special rooms for Housecraft, Geography and Art, two laboratories and a library. The space available for the current number of girls was extremely generous, for the building had been designed to take **330** pupils in a two form entry, and the Assembly Hall and cloakrooms were large enough to allow future expansion to three form entry. The staff were full of plans for developing the use of subject rooms and private study schedules, and in fact were able to run this experiment for their first year at Menin Way. They also held careers sessions for senior girls long before this became a usual part of the secondary school curriculum.

Of that first afternoon, Miss King was to remember ‘a feeling of happiness and hopefulness, though the clouds of war were still gathering’. Friends of the school as ‘a special mark of their affection and esteem’ had presented it with a grand piano, an oak armchair and a refectory table, all of which made part of the platform furniture of the hall. The piano destroyed a school tradition (at West Street the girls had kept croquet mallets in the piano, but one can’t do that with a Blüthner grand) and the refectory table made one—or made an ‘historic’ occasion at least. It had a trestle top and when, many years afterwards, a distinguished guest chose to give his talk to the school while sitting on one end of it, Miss Inman, to save him from being catapulted into the choir, seated as usual just below the platform, had herself to plunge forward and make the other half of the see-saw for the duration of his speech.

The building itself acquired traditions—not many, it was too purpose-built for that—but the central quadrangle became a kind of substitute for the lower lower garden, only prefects and staff being allowed into it. As for the front door, once the Duchess had passed out of it, it seemed to acquire a sacrosanct character and generations of schoolgirls scarcely remembered to have seen it open. Miss Hair, when she came for interview in 1948, was warned that to arrive at the front door would be practically sufficient to disqualify her for the post; she avoided the pitfall (or door) and got the job.

The new school had cost just short of £50,000 to build and was the last to be completed by the Surrey County Council before the outbreak of war.

The ‘Phoney War’ At School

On September 1st 1939 a national state of emergency was declared and all state school teachers, in accordance with a previous order from the Board of Education, returned to their places of duty. In the case of the F.G.G.S. staff it was to find that they were in danger of having effectively no school at which to teach; with all the eager forethought that had gone into planning the handsome new building, no provision had been made in the contract for the construction of air-raid shelters.

The Surrey Education Committee was understandably reluctant to let children work in a place where there was no effective protection from air attack, but by dint of much hard work Miss King managed to persuade the authorities that the semi-underground boiler room would be an adequate shelter for up to 40 people, and on this basis part-time schooling, supplemented by schemes for home study, began on September 19th, only five days after the scheduled start of term.

By half term the shelters were partly completed, permission had been obtained for a hundred girls to use the basement in case of emergency, and the school re-opened to something like normal life. There were no out of school activities, partly to make up for time lost in the first half of the term and partly because of difficulties caused by the blackout as the evenings shortened, but there was greater enthusiasm for games now that the playing fields were near at hand, and the staff reported a general feeling of improvement in their health from the absence of traffic noise and traffic pollution. This improvement did not altogether extend to the girls, for one of the features of normality in that term was an epidemic of German measles.

Numbers had increased to just over 200 including some girls privately evacuated from London—though most of these stayed only a term or so; the magazine published at Christmas 1939 carried reports of Old Girls who were teachers evacuated with their town schools to various remote places, while other Old

Girls were already doing war work, nursing or in the Land Army, but in Farnham school life had not yet undergone any very great change.

1940

A year later, although the schoolgirl editor of the magazine could say, with a magnificent display of sangfroid, 'When I attempted last term to write the editorial, I found myself wondering what news there was to give', the European situation had surely changed enough, and even in the routine of school life, the war asserted its place.

Gas mask inspections and Air Raid Precaution rehearsals were held regularly, the possibility of camouflaging the school from the air was discussed, and individual arrangements were made as to what each girl in the school was to do if a raid were in progress and the All Clear had not sounded by the end of school hours. The Houses grew vegetables in their garden plots, and the girls entertained evacuees from Sheephatch Camp School to tea and games. Also a junior choir was started, and a Charity Committee, the school joined a picture circulating scheme and there was an Open Day at the end of the summer term. Club meetings, held in the lunch hours instead of after school, were less successful than usual, but the Old Girls' newly founded Social Club flourished.

It was in 1940 that, for the first time, the school celebrated what it then called Founder's Day with a short service held in the school hall on June 26th, which was Thory Gage Gardiner's birthday. The form of the service with its address, and the reading of 'Let us now praise famous men', remained substantially unchanged for many years, though the date was later altered to avoid involvement with examination timetables. The original idea for the celebration apparently came from Miss Davies and on this first occasion a greetings telegram was sent to Canon Gardiner in Canterbury. He was by now both aged and infirm, and he died in the autumn of the following year, but he had at least been honoured in his generation and had been, in a small way, the glory of his times.

Miss Hughes, who had been ill since the previous November, in June 1940 resigned her position at the school. She was the guest of honour at the Old Girls' summer reunion where Joan Baigent read her speech of farewell—characteristically affectionate, penitent at past bad temper, hopeful of a future when her former pupils would be able to visit her in peace time in a cottage in Ireland. She did reach Ireland, and there her health seemed to revive for a little, but she died prematurely in 1942, writing to the end of her life of 'beloved Farnham' the town which she had once felt to be so strange that she could never expect to be at home there.

Sharing With The Greycoats

The authorities had decided, after some hesitation, that Farnham should be designated as a 'safe' or reception area, and the greatest change in the life of the school during 1940 was brought about by the arrival of the Greycoat Hospital School from Westminster, re-evacuated to Farnham via Brighton. The magazine editor, as polite as she was imperturbable, reported that 'In July we had a very pleasing surprise when we learned that we were going to share our lovely building for the duration of the war'. Led by Miss King, the school as a whole seems to have shown a sustained and rather noble determination to make the experience of sharing a beneficial rather than a disagreeable one, but the difficulties of the situation were still very considerable.

The Greycoats had arrived in Farnham in mid-July and their headmistress, Miss Chetham-Strode, organized a 'summer holiday term' during which they made expeditions to local places of interest and had games and drama competitions. By the time the autumn term proper began, the Surrey County Council had rented Shide House in Great Austins to provide extra accommodation and a total of **430** girls (the two schools were almost exactly equal in numbers) were able to receive full-time education. Now the new buildings could no longer be seen as spacious and the Girls' Grammar School and the Greycoat Hospital were able to function as independent, though co-operating, bodies only by an elaborate jigsawing of timetables.

Each school alternated mornings and afternoons as 'On' or 'Off' sessions. During an on-session a school occupied the classrooms and hall of the main school building in the normal way, while during an off-session classes were held at Shide House, or anywhere in the school where space could be found—the hall, the cloakrooms, the staff room and the cleaners' cupboard all came into service. The shelters, having been built to take 200 girls, were obviously inadequate and somewhat to their parents' disquiet, numbers of girls had only the corridors in which to take refuge during raids. In fact, because they could only be reached by going out into the grounds, the shelters were regarded as being entirely unusable when the weather was wet or when enemy aeroplanes were already very near at hand by the time the warning siren was sounded, and at Shide there were no shelters anyway.

Like the school's other temporary home in East Street, Shide House had many disadvantages, although the girls liked it, one of them summing up 'It is true that it was easier to work at school, but Shide House was such a nice house'. Its charms included wistaria covered pillars, a flowery bank excellent for dramatic performances, especially of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', attics in which wet 'recesses' could be spent, and a garden path that formed the track for many games of progressive leapfrog. The disadvantages were more mundane; of the six rooms available as classrooms only one, the former dining room,

was really big enough for its purpose, and the garage had to serve as a cloakroom. The house was also rather far from the school, 5 minutes by bicycle or 12 on foot, and because the girls had no access to the Menin Way formrooms during an off-session they had to carry all their books and equipment about with them between Shide, school and home. School hours varied according to which half of the day was one's on-session and prayers were held in the afternoons during afternoon on-sessions. The opportunities for confusion were many, and order marks proliferated, but both schools survived, even perhaps with a certain amount of pride.

The Greycoats In Farnham

If Miss King and the F.G.G.S. staff had the strain of being perpetual hostesses, the Greycoats' staff were responsible for keeping alive the identity of a school that had effectively no home of its own. They also had to supervise the out of school welfare of their pupils, who were all boarded privately in the area, and it is still remembered amongst the 'Billet Parents' how faithfully and frequently Miss Chetham-Strode made time to visit her charges. Ironically these girls, who were so far away from their own homes, were in general living nearer to the school than the Farnham girls. The Greycoats were able to keep later school hours for this reason, and so many of them bicycled to school that new cycle sheds had to be provided.

The long traditions of the Greycolat Hospital were transplanted for a time. Their custom of attending a service at Westminster Abbey on Ascension Day was observed at the church of St. Thomas-on-the-Bourne, and was followed by form picnics to local beauty spots. Commemoration Day on November 30th each year (the school had been founded in 1698) was celebrated by a special speaker at prayers, and the Bishop of Guildford took the annual Confirmation Service.

Joint Activities

On the large playing fields at Menin Way the Greycoats were able for the first time to play hockey and tennis as a school. They usually lost to Farnham at these games when inter-school matches were played, but as they were the Grammar School's superiors at netball and rounders the rivalry remained evenly balanced. Other occasions were shared, there were joint clubs, excursions and prefects' teas, and once or twice a term each school attended the other's morning assembly.

To Miss King the daily 'Assembly' was very important, an affirmation of the school's existence as a family, 'the focus' she wrote 'of all our activities, all our being and doing' and much care was taken in its preparation. It was Miss King who introduced the custom of making a different section of the school responsible for prayers on each day of the week; Monday was the day for form prayers, Tuesday for staff, Wednesday for

prefects, and on Friday the school listened to the B.B.C.'s broadcast service. Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Hymn' and Blake's 'To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love', both from the school hymn book 'Songs of Praise' were favourites.

As time went on, some classes were held jointly by the schools on a regular basis. Miss Andrews recalled taking a group of a dozen girls from both schools for experimental craft work in a cupboard. Needing to work with 'small compact carryable' equipment, the class made toys from scraps. 'It meant that everyone became resourceful and inventive—a penguin was mad: from 2 old black velvet sleeves—ponies from bits of coarse towel—giraffes from shepherd's plaid.' With the help of families (fathers supplying seesaws and engines made of scrap wood) 200 toys were made and given to a charity school. Thanks to the help of the Greycoat Hospital's physics mistress, Miss Lewis, the Girls' Grammar School was able for the first time to offer science courses to Higher School Certificate level, and throughout their stay in Farnham the Greycoat staff shared in the duties of fire-watching at the school.

The War And School Life

Two members of staff and the caretaker were on duty every night between 8.30 p.m. and 7 a.m. next day. In pitch darkness they patrolled the building and its spacious, inadequately railed roof, carrying buckets of sand, long shovels and stirrup pumps to use against possible incendiary bombs. Even in daytime the raids became frequent enough for air raid drill to be a routine part of school life. The warning siren, the Alert, was repeated in the school by three rings on the bell, at which the girls left their work (though if the Alert sounded during dinner they took their plates with them) and filed down to their assigned places in one of the four shelters. The form prefect had charge of the First Aid box, the form mistress, complete with tin hat, called the register, books and quiz games helped to pass the time. The examination forms alone were partly exempt from this routine because of the pressure of their work. During air raids they continued their lessons in the lower corridors or formrooms and when an actual examination was broken into, sat in silence in the entrance hall waiting for the All Clear. Only two bombs fell on Farnham during the war, but one School Certificate paper was interrupted three times by warnings.

Farnham was lucky; luckier than its Greycoat visitors, the central part of whose 17th century building, including the panelled Hall and the Board Room, was destroyed during the heavy bombing of London in May 1941.

By this time the Girls' Grammar School wore something of the air of a defensive fortress, with its windows caged by wire netting and veiled in muslin, the front entrance closed by a brick blast wall, the garden given over to vegetables. Tomatoes were grown in the flower borders and a ton of potatoes was lifted from

the erstwhile front lawn to help supply the school canteen.

The Surrey Education Committee, anxious to encourage the taking of school dinners, had begun, shortly after the start of the war, to subsidise the cost of meals quite heavily. The move was so successful that the number of girls taking the meal rose from about 70 to 250, this being the maximum number that Miss King thought could be accommodated in the hall, and there was still a waiting list. The greatly enlarged Dinner Fund with which the school was left as a result of this policy change became the School Benevolent Fund for helping the poorer girls meet minor expenses. The greatly enlarged amount of paper work connected with the provision of meals fell mainly on the shoulders of Miss Allen, though she received some help from a group of senior girls called the 'Pioneers' who were charged with various odd jobs round the school.

By September 1941 the Girls' Grammar School and the Greycoats together totalled 500 girls. F.G.G.S. was now completely a secondary school, its preparatory form having been closed, in accordance with official policy, the year before. The Greycoats, who still had a junior school of very little girls, were able to rent 'Two Gates' in the Tilford Road for their lowest forms, and also served some dinners, and held some recreation periods there.

The Farnham girls still found time for some ordinary out of school activities in addition to their school work—a recorder band and a country dance club were formed, and the school committee reported its hope that compulsory wearing of the school hat might be discontinued (20 years later Miss Inman was still considering whether to allow this)—but they were necessarily, especially the seniors, increasingly involved with the war effort.

First Aid classes were held after school, there was a class period known as 'form time' in which the girls knitted for the troops, and in the summer of 1942 parties of girls went by lorry to 'Bron-y-de', Lloyd George's farm at Churt, to help in the harvesting—chiefly of fruit. Raspberries were the favourite crop because the girls were allowed to eat as much as they liked of what they were picking and, according to one of them, 'feelings ran rather high when we had to pull up weeds or pick potatoes'. However, they were paid for the work, and at least it made a change from lessons.

Above all the girls collected in cash or in kind, for charities: The Save the Children Fund, Earl Haig's Poppy Fund, Dr. Barnardo's, the Friendless Soldiers and Sailors, the Red Cross Society, the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey's Fund, Trimmer's Hospital, the Lord Mayor's Air-Raid Distress Fund, the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund, the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross Fund for Prisoners of War, Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund, the Friend's War Relief Fund, the Empire Day Tobacco Fund, the Sea War Libraries, St. Dunstan's, the Women's Anglo-Soviet Committee, the Baden-Powell Memorial Fund, the R.S.P.C.A., the Navy League Comforts Fund, the Stalingrad

Hospital Fund, Farnham's Y.W.C.A. Appeal Fund and the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund.

They also sponsored a small boy, Thomas Meggeson, whose father had been killed while serving in the Navy, and they 'adopted' a minesweeping trawler, the 'Milford King', to whose crew they sent sweets, cigarettes, magazines and what were described as knitted comforts. In October of 1942 two members of the crew, Stoker Bartlett and Seaman Haigh, paid the school a visit, bringing with them a model of the ship, complete with a silver barrage balloon. They ate dinner with the girls, attended prayers, toured the classrooms and demonstrated rope-climbing to the sixth form in the gymnasium.

Certificate And Sixth Form Matters

By this time, despite much coming and going, school numbers had risen again to 242 girls, and there was a sixth form of 19, four of whom were taking science and mathematics and six at least one science subject for their Higher School Certificates. Three girls had obtained Surrey Major scholarships in the preceding summer, but educationally in one respect Farnham still lagged behind the rest of the country. The percentage of special places allowed in state supported secondary schools had been raised from 40 to 50%; at F.G.G.S. it remained at 25% because, it was said, 'there are not enough children in the Elementary Schools of the District to reach the required standard'.

A year later the sixth form was in prospect of a sharp decrease because of the introduction of conscription for young women. A majority of the 25 girls in the Certificate Form in 1943 intended to leave immediately after their examinations in order to try and fit in some training before they were called up. Several of the most recent leavers had been just too old, according to the newly applied regulations, to go directly to a university, and were already in the Forces, often in Intelligence work. Other Old Girls had joined up very early in the war. Connie Manfield, after nursing in France and later in Nigeria, had died in 1942 when the ship in which she was returning home on leave was sunk by enemy action. So far as is known she was the only Old Girl of the school, in either world war, to lose her life on active service.

The Greycoats Leave

At the end of the summer term in 1943 school life took a big step back towards normal when the Greycoat Hospital was able to return to what remained of its London buildings—seven large furniture vans transporting its books and equipment. It had still to face the dangers of the VI and V2 rockets, but to the staff 'the reunion of the girls with their families in London was a compensation' for every difficulty.

Like other London institutions, the Greycoat Hospital School had had a hard time. (Miss Winters, still with the City of

London Girls' School, suffered the strains of responsibility for a similar double move, and her always precarious health was so severely affected that she had to retire prematurely in 1949 and led a semi-invalid life until her death in 1956). Miss Chetham-Strode returned to Farnham to give Speech Day address in 1947 and herself retired in 1949. The Foundation Stone of the Greycoats' new building was laid in 1954 and the completed building was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother ten years later.

A dozen or so Greycoat girls remained in Farnham, together with a few each from the repatriated Selhurst Grammar School and Lady Margaret School, their differently-coloured uniforms adding to the patchwork appearance already presented by the assembled Girls' Grammar School after years of shortages and clothes rationing.

The Greycoats also left, to commemorate their stay, a prize 'For Service To The School' and this, like the Mary Hughes Memorial Prize for Science was awarded for the first time at Speech Day in 1943.

A Return To Normality

Next year the girls had their first House Sports Day since moving to Menin Way, the choir won an award in the senior class at the newly instituted Aldershot Festival of Music and Art, and the school 'adopted' another trawler, the 'Darthema', in succession to the 'Milford King' which had gone out of commission. Parties went fruit-picking at 'Bron-y-de' again, and the Old Girls held a highly successful dance, a report on which appeared in their half of the magazine along with a letter from Doreen Willis, who was nursing in Italy. 'I have 166 patients' she wrote. 'Some are in a building and the rest under canvas. . . . There is no hot water, no baths, and sanitary arrangements are **not**.'

The school now had 15 full-time staff, compared with 10 at the time of the move (though it had lost Miss Andrews, who left to take up youth club work in 1943) and was offering 13 subjects at School Certificate level. The school committee continued to meet regularly—Miss King remarking that 'we are all democratic here: everyone wants a say in everything'—and there was some talk of founding a fifth House to accommodate the increasing numbers of girls in the school, nearly 330 of them at the start of the autumn term in 1944.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Restored to individual occupation of its buildings, the school had more freedom to plan ambitious activities and one of these was the production of its first full length play 'The Knight Of The Burning Pestle' under the direction of Miss Langden Davies. A Dramatic Society was formed, and auditions were held after the summer breaking-up ceremonies. Next term rehearsals began and the girls joined in all the exciting details of back stage

production. The scenery was hired from Robert May's Grammar School at Odiham and the costumes of the principal players were ordered from Wales. In the end these failed to arrive, and everyone was dressed in costumes and helmets home-made out of scraps. Mr. Avenall, the caretaker, adjusting the blackout to make the stage lighting more effective, fell off a ladder and injured his back, fortunately not seriously. A contemporary schoolgirl wrote 'After daily rehearsals for the past two months, the cast were thoroughly temperamental, loathed the sight of each other and detested the play, but when the great day came, were excited as much as everybody else'. The girls sold tickets and programmes and the production was received with great pleasure by its audiences as well as by the participants. Over £80 was raised, to be divided between the Dramatic Society's fund and a donation to the schools in occupied Alsace-Lorraine; two years later a letter of thanks arrived from M. Strohmann, Principal of the College Classique et Moderne at Pont à Mousson in Alsace.

The Literary Society had amalgamated with the Current Affairs group, and several girls joined the Council for Education in World Citizenship, while others belonged to Farnham's Youth Parliament. The country was already looking to a post-war rebuilding and not only in the field of international relationships.

Changes In The World Of Education

For several years the Board of Education, chiefly under the Presidency of R. A. Butler, had been considering proposals for changing the educational structure of the state system. A semi-secret enquiry amongst teachers and education officials, and reports of the Secondary Schools Examination Committee chaired by Sir Cyril Norwood, had resulted in a White Paper 'Educational Reconstruction', published in 1943. Mr. Butler, as he then was, introduced his Education Bill in the same year, and in August 1944 the Education Act became law.

As a result of this Act, the Board of Education was raised to the status of a Ministry and universal secondary education was introduced. (In 1944 only about one child in ten passed beyond the Elementary Schools.) Fees were abolished in all state secondary schools and a tripartite system of 'grammar, modern and technical' education was set up. One of the intentions of the Act's supporters was to get rid of the strain imposed on 11 year olds by a competitive examination designed to decide their scholastic futures. The three types of school were to enjoy parity of esteem and children were to be assigned to the school most suitable for their 'age, ability and aptitude' by a combination of tests, interviews and teachers' reports, so that the anguish of 'failing the scholarship' or the bitterness of being refused permission by needy or resentful parents to take it, would be done away with. The first Surrey Common Entrance Examination was held in 1944 and

after Easter in the following year fees ceased to be payable at the Farnham Girls' Grammar School, along with all other secondary schools, and there was no admittance to the school except by examination. There would be an end too to those sad little notes in the admission registers recording the early removal of girls from the school because they were judged to be 'unfit for secondary education'.

Speech Day in 1944 was an occasion for discussing the forthcoming educational changes, which had aroused much interest in the district, as indeed they had all over the country. It was also an occasion on which the school, as usual, provided some entertainment for the audience. Mrs. Philipson-Stow was moved by their efforts this year to remark on the value in after-life of knowing 'John Gilpin' by heart. . . .

The End Of World War ■■

Next year the blackout ended, the war was over, and there were holidays to celebrate Victory in Europe Day. The school magazine published at Christmas contained extracts from a letter written by Gertrude Schaffner, one of the recent Old Girls:

'I want to tell you that my sister and I have heard from our parents. They are both alive but they have lost everything. They are living with friends now after being separated for a long time, as my mother had to hide from the Gestapo. I do not really want to leave England but I hope that I will be able to help my parents a little, if only I am stationed somewhere near them.'

(She had obtained permission to go to Germany with the **US**. Civil Censorship Division.) The Schaffner family was eventually re-united and emigrated to the United States.

Post-War Moves

Within the next couple of years very many Old Girls were on the move. Those demobilised from the Services settled down to resume their old careers, to start on new ones, or to enter the university at long last, while the magazine reports give evidence of a fresh wave of emigration, as O.G.s travelled to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States, often with their new husbands, to found families and take up new lives all over the world.

The staff too underwent major changes. Miss Davies left in the summer of 1945 and went to teach in Altrincham, joining Miss Drought who was still headmistress there. After almost 25 years the school missed her sincerity, her idealism, her enthusiasm for literature, her hard work on behalf of clubs and the magazine; as Guide Captain she proved to be literally irreplaceable. After her departure, the School Guide Company had seven Guiders in two years, 'a record unbroken, I think' wrote one of the Guides 'even by the French Government', and it was eventually dissolved in 1948. The company had had a very successful life, several times

winning the Divisional Banner, the District Singing Shield and the swimming cup. The Guides hoped for a time that someone might still be found to lead them, and their colours and equipment were stored at the school for several years, but at last disappeared during some now forgotten re-organisation of cupboards.

Miss Davies' place as second mistress was taken by the formidable Miss Basford, an imposing and idiosyncratic character, one of those schoolteachers who are valued by their pupils as much for their personalities as for their teaching, as a source of anecdote as well as an object of gratitude. Generations of girls could reminisce happily about her fascinating lessons in history and geography, repetitive, discursive, fluent, invariably interesting, her very upright, sailing walk, her insistence on the rule against running in the school corridors, the oral tests in which she delighted, her love of ballet, her detestation of certain hymns, so that when she was called on to officiate at prayers a hasty rearrangement of the programme was sometimes necessary, the elaborate schemes by which she organized the claiming of places at school dinners, and her habit of disciplining an untidy hair style on a pupil with a piece of string (though the kind hearted Vera Allen, issuing supplies from the Secretary's office, would sometimes soften the effect of this edict by offering the culprit an inconspicuous length of black tape instead).

Only two years after Miss Davies' departure, Miss King herself left the school. She had joined her previous school at the time of its foundation and had seen it grow from 50 to over 300 girls, had spent an important and eventful decade in Farnham, and was now ready to embark on an adventurous redirection of her career. From Farnham she went to Woodbrooke College on a year's Research Fellowship, then to a University Education Department and after that to Madagascar for four years on behalf of the Service Council of the Society of Friends.

Miss King had been strict on necessary occasions, but her balanced and broadminded view of life had diffused an ease over the conduct of school affairs even in the most trying circumstances. A former pupil remembered her as 'gracious, charming and dignified', and her dignity was of the kind that does not need aloofness to sustain it; she would tell amusing stories as a distraction during air raids, or sit down on the grass to talk with the girls in recreation as naturally as she presided over more formal occasions. For ten years hers had been the personality through which the school saw itself embodied, and by which the younger girls at least formed their ideas of what a headmistress should be like. Inevitably some of them were disconcerted by the change of style as inevitably produced by the appointment of her successor, Miss Dorothea Margaret Inman.

First Years Under Miss Inman

Miss Inman, whom the girls first met on Founder's Day in

1947, had had a distinguished and varied career in education. She had taken a first class honours degree in Classics at Girton College Cambridge, and was a Cambridge M.A. and a Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London. She had been classics mistress at Queen Anne's School Caversham and at Oxford High School and had lectured in education at the Diocesan College Calcutta and at the Manchester Education Committee's Training College of Domestic Economy. The war years she spent in Egypt as headmistress of the English Girls' College Alexandria, returning to England in 1946. As she herself was later to record, she then nearly became an Inspector of Education, but eventually decided that she would rather be headmistress at Farnham instead, and in Farnham, as it turned out, she was to spend the remainder of her life.

Shy, rough-tongued and academically brilliant, Miss Inman had as an educator pre-eminently the quality of not talking and not behaving down to people. Her standards of honourable behaviour were not so much rigid as exalted, to the point where even the exercise of social tact could seem an unworthy compromise; understanding this stiffened one's own moral spine. It could be disconcerting to have a spelling mistake in an essay pounced on by Miss Inman as possible evidence that one knew Arabic; it also displayed the world of the intellect as a place both accessible and exciting. She never pulled her punches, but then, as she said to one of the girls 'It's something to be worth slating, you know'. She was quick-tempered, and quick to apologise as well, possessed both of humility and of a strong sense of humour, steadily and painstakingly kind to anyone in real distress or difficulty, and completely an intellectual at all times. Like Miss Drought she was not, for many people, easy *to* get to know. Yet in a sense stimulating them to make the necessary effort was one of the greatest services she performed for the girls she taught.

The small world of a provincial town must at first have seemed strange to Miss Inman, accustomed as she had been to the socially rather grand and cosmopolitan background of the English Girls' College, and during her early years as headmistress many war-time austerities remained in force to restrict life still further.

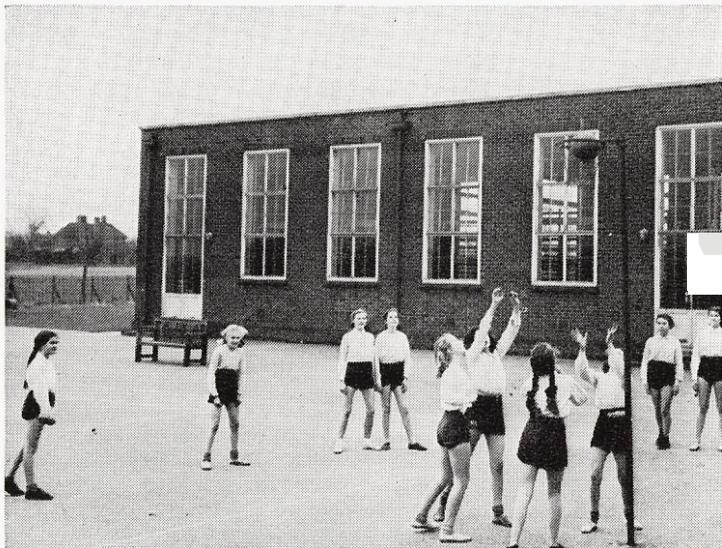
Food was rationed, and to supply the ingredients required for a domestic science lesson could be quite difficult, but almost all the girls now took the substantial midday meal, and free milk was issued in recess. Food was an important subject and contemporary magazine reports of school outings and occasions usually made a point of mentioning tea, chocolate bars or any other refreshments that were available.

School uniform was often makeshift; Stella Bolt (Davies) remembered arriving on her first day wearing a Tank Corps beret and a cut-down **R.A.F.** officer's greatcoat, each formerly the property of one of her brothers. Blazers acquired a mottled look from much wear, and were dipped in navy dye to make

them do for one more year, but as conditions grew easier it became possible to introduce modifications and gradually berets replaced hats, and the senior girls began to wear skirts and cardigans in place of gym tunics.

Transport difficulties existed too, and in 1947 the O.G.A. committee was enlarged to make a quorum easier to achieve in the winter months.

In spite of all these restrictions some of the customs of pre-war school life were re-established surprisingly quickly. In 1945 the school had welcomed the first of its French 'assistantes', Mlle Arbeit and in March 1947 school holidays abroad were resumed when a party of girls spent a week in Paris. Otherwise the unchanging sequence of gentle changes patterned the next few years and Miss Inman, as Miss Winters had before her, echoed of the school the aphorism about happy nations



Netball in the 1950s

Settling Down Again

The House system was suspended (and in effect discontinued though it had a brief revival in the early 1950s) and the girls devoted their energies to various clubs instead. The Current Events Group was most active immediately after the war, and the Science Society never really flourished, but the clubs for Music, Art, French and Folk and Ballroom Dancing were all more or less long-lived. The Dramatic Society was the largest club in the school, and its annual plays became major events in the calendar.

While the clubs did well, almost every editor complained of the few and poor contributions offered to the magazine, and charity collections were also disappointing. The fortunes of the Old Girls' Association began to fade a little too. There were 150 O.G.s at the January reunion in 1948, but dances could no longer be relied upon to be successful, and the netball team was disbanded for lack of support, although the O.G.A. continued to field a hockey team for a few years longer.

In 1948 Miss Wilson retired and several newcomers joined the staff. They included Miss Hair and Miss Chivers (later Mrs. Le Grice) who taught mathematics and incidentally introduced her classes to the pleasures of Dorothy L. Sayers' detective fiction. Miss Trew, the energetic new P.E. mistress, became famous for getting the showers working, with Miss Inman's backing, after a time when, for mixed reasons of prudishness and laziness, water had seldom flowed, and girls had seldom passed, through them.

It was also Miss Trew who organized the first Inter-form Athletic Sports, held on Founder's Day in 1949. Mrs. Walsh gave such an inspiring address at morning service on the same day that the school broke into spontaneous applause in spite of the religious nature of the occasion.

The Dramatic Society produced 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', its first play by Shakespeare, with great success. Publicity, including a banner strung across The Borough, and financial matters generally, were organized by Miss Hamel and Mrs. Dauncey (a superbly efficient Box Office manager) and the takings supplied a large part of the school's 50% contribution towards the cost of a new cinema projector.

And at last, 30 years after the abolition of Forms I and II and almost a decade after the disappearance of Form IIIb, the numbering of the forms was rationalized so that they began with I and I// and rose thus through the Vth forms, leaving the Lower VIth and Upper VIth as single forms at the top of the pyramid. Most girls still left at the end of their fifth year, after taking the School Certificate examination.

In 1949, 43 out of the **50** candidates passed their School Certificate and 8 out of 10 the Higher School Certificate examination. The following year was the last in which these examinations were held, the Ordinary Level and Advanced Level General Certificate Examinations taking their places, and the last School Certificate form celebrated the end of its exams by putting on an operetta 'The Secret Of The Sixth' with words by Elspeth Hutchinson (now Morley) and music by her brother Jeremy.

The Parent-Teacher Association was founded to supplement the Parents' Days, Open Days and headmistress's At Homes that had been held throughout most of the school's history and there was a General Inspection, the first for nearly 20 years. Both these events duly appeared in the Headmistress's Speech Day report for 1951, another great occasion, for it was then that the school celebrated its half centenary.



"Five Headmistresses at the Golden Jubilee Reunion 1951"
L. to R. Miss Williams, Miss Drought, Miss Inman, Miss King,
Miss Winters.

The Golden Jubilee

Celebrations had begun in May, when the O.G.A. held its Jubilee Reunion. This **was** organized by Marie Siggery (Barham) who was then the Old Girls' Secretary, and was a particularly splendid affair. It **was** attended by five headmistresses, and by the largest ever number of O.G.s. from every generation of the school's life. The Old Girls, jointly with the Dramatic Society, put **on** a performance of Clemence Dane's 'Will Shakespeare', and they presented the school with a silver rose bowl.

School numbers had already increased to the point where it **was** difficult to accommodate everybody who was entitled to **be** asked to an ordinary Speech Day, and in **1951** the hall was completely filled, while the first years, with their parents, 'listened in' at an overflow meeting in the gymnasium. **Mrs.** Philipson-Stow had been in the habit of likening the school, with its different constituent groups, to a three-legged stool and Miss Inman, reviewing its progress over the last **50** years, remarked that it seemed to have developed into something more like a Round Table, with governors, parents, Old Girls, teaching and non-teaching **staff** and the girls themselves, all contributing to its well-being.

They had contributed in kind as well as in service **on** this occasion; **Miss** King presented the school with a reading desk, and the P.T.A. gave vases from the School of Art for the form rooms. They also provided a tea for the girls after the Speech Day ceremonies. Even the town participated, the bell-ringers of the Parish Church turning out **on** the morning of Speech Day to ring a peal in honour of the Jubilee, while the school itself held a

thanksgiving service in the church.

There were the ordinary events of a school year to be reported on as well as half a century of history. The school had visited the Festival of Britain Exhibition at the South Bank, two girls had gone with the Surrey Athletics team to the All England meeting at Southampton, the buildings had been repainted and Miss Ramsden, after teaching mathematics at the school since 1929 ('worth learning' she would say to the unmathematical 'to get an orderly mind'), had retired to make friends with the birds in Wimborne, and to cultivate her garden (presumably one without wallflowers, vases of which had always been banished from the classroom while she was teaching).

Five girls had passed A Level examinations, and, after a lapse of almost 19 years, two State Scholarships had recently been won from the school. (In those days they were sufficiently rare for this to be quite a noteworthy achievement.) Paddy Down (now Spurgeon) had won a State Scholarship in French and an Exhibition to Girton in 1950, and in the Jubilee Year itself Agnes Jordan took a State Scholarship in mathematics. She was the eldest of three sisters, and the family set up what was believed at the time to be a national record, each in turn winning a State Scholarship in mathematics in each of three successive years.

Between Jubilees

With the celebrations over at last, the school entered on its second half century and for the next decade its life, as full of small events as ever, continued placidly without any major disruption.

King George VI died in February 1952, and the news was announced in the hall at lunch time, between sessions of the spring examinations. Mr. Avenall took a couple of the seniors with him to the Lying-In State and the next year there was an issue of coronation mugs and a day's holiday for the Coronation, followed later by a school visit to the cinema to see the film 'A Queen Is Crowned'. The Avenalls celebrated their silver wedding, Miss Fernley started the Bamboo Pipe Band, which appeared on television and remained one of the most active and popular clubs until she left the school, and Mrs. Philipson-Stow was succeeded by Mrs. Walsh as Chairman of the Governors.

Modern educational dancing entered the curriculum in 1953, and library periods were also introduced. The latter were organized by Miss Hair, under whose tuition the girls learned the arts of looking up references, making searches, and using the Dewey Decimal system of classification. The number of main subjects which the school could offer was increasing, if slowly, and by 1954 it could teach all its own mathematicians and physicists. (For the two previous years they had gone for some of their classes to the Farnham Grammar School where they were known, in compliment to the master who taught them, as Brister's Beauties.)

Founder's Day, celebrated at the school towards the end of the summer term, became in 1955 Foundation Day, celebrated at the Parish Church in September, and in the same year a quartet from the school won the top award in the Chamber Music section of the Woking Music Festival. In 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Avenall, who had been caretakers since the school moved to Menin Way, retired. There were a couple of suspected cases of tuberculosis, and the whole school went in a special train to Weybridge to be X-rayed. Miss Lee joined the staff, and her arrival allowed Advanced Level Geography to be added to the syllabus.

This was the year of the original Suez Canal closure, and the trouble between Britain and Egypt prompted Miss Inman, thinking of the fate of the English Girls' College, to wonder (prophetically, one may now feel) in her annual letter to the school 'what, besides a G.C.E., a girl ought to be able to take away from school and to keep even if the school she attended ceases to exist?' The answer, she thought, was eagerness to seek knowledge, generosity in helping others, and courage to speak the truth.

The Dramatic Society And The O.G.A.

By the middle of the decade the school had achieved both new stage curtains, and new window curtains for the hall. (To Miss Inman's relief; they had evidently been much on her mind.) The Dramatic Society had been a major contributor to the Curtain Fund. It was still in a flourishing condition and ready, over the years, to tackle absolutely anything, from 'Quiet Weekend' to 'Hamlet' to 'The Barretts Of Wimpole Street'. Miss Eggar, who ran the senior section of the society (with Miss Powell and later Miss Wilkinson in charge of the juniors) had a remarkable talent for casting plays, from the limited numbers available, so that appearance and manner should supply much of what acting ability could not, and additionally found, almost every year, at least one or two girls who could really act, to take the principal parts. Costumes became less of a problem as the society built up its own wardrobe, but there were always the difficulties of the stage itself to be overcome. There was no 'rake' and the acoustics of the hall were not easy for amateurs to deal with. Scenery usually consisted solely of the curtains, although for 'The Barretts Of Wimpole Street' an enthusiastic sixth form artist superintended the construction of four huge walls made from painted newspaper to frame Elizabeth Barrett's bed-sitting room.

The society offered openings for those with talents other than the dramatic—for prompters, stage managers and hopeful lighting experts as well, sometimes, as for musicians. On several occasions, too, its productions were joint ones with the boys' school, a popular collaboration that both cast and back stage personnel found stimulating.

The Old Girls' Association, though it too put on operettas and held dances and appeared to be very active, was in trouble throughout most of the 1950s. Only a few members took an

active interest in its affairs, and its funds were barely sufficient to support its share of the school magazine. Miss Inman tried to help, but a legalistic turn of her mind often allowed her to see only that this proposal or that would violate the rules of the Association, or the Education Committee's regulations about the use of the school. At one time there was even some talk of winding up the Association hut it had, and still has, a talent for survival. One good thing at least came out of its efforts to find new interests that its members might share; the attempt to form an Old Girls' choir failed, hut from its nucleus grew The Waverley Singers, who are still established in the town.

Numbers Begin To Increase

At the time of the Golden Jubilee there had been 320 girls in the school, and numbers did not increase much until 1958, although the proportion of girls staying on into the sixth form rose, less spectacularly than in many other Surrey schools, but still considerably. Some overcrowding was again inevitable, hut it was helped by the provision in 1959 of new laboratories, which were built on the grass recreation plot at the south-west side of the school, These were the gift of the Whitehouse Trust, and so a link with the school's past. Miss Galloway, who had been science mistress between 1908 and 1913, became Mrs. Whitehouse, and on her death left money in trust to improve the facilities for science teaching at the Mercers' School in London.



Science Laboratory, Menin Way

After the closure of that school, her widower arranged for the trust to be transferred to the Surrey Education Committee, and so it came to Farnham.

By 1960 the uniform was becoming more modern, the tie was on the way out (Miss Inman remarking that open-necked blouses had a much less Ronald Searle effect) and striped summer frocks could be worn in a choice of three colours. The building was redecorated, oil fired central heating was installed, and it was time to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, with a renewed summing up of the school's life and history, particularly over the last ten years.

The Diamond Jubilee

The distinguished guest at Speech Day in 1961 made the occasion more than ever one for reminiscence, for she was the same Phyllis Smith, now headmistress of the Ashford Grammar School for Girls, Kent, who had been the first Old Girl from Farnham to go to Oxford University more than 30 years before. Miss Drought, proposing the vote of thanks to her former pupil, said that it was 'like the fulfilment of a dream' to see her on the platform, and Miss Inman herself felt it to be a happy coincidence that the school had achieved a record number of scholarships in its Jubilee year. During the last decade, she reported, school numbers had increased to 380 girls, the number of those getting A Levels had increased from 6 to 33, the number going direct to university from the school had doubled, from 3 to 6, and the number going to training colleges had risen from 2 to 10.

Looking back on her own period of office at the school, Miss Inman recalled that in 1947 there had been only two married women on the teaching staff, while in 1961 more than half of them were married. As a natural corollary, the age distribution of the teachers was changing. Very few of them were in the later twenties, the thirties, or the earlier forties—these were at home, bringing up their own families—while older women were now being pressed to stay on after retiring age. (Miss Inman herself was to become an example of this: following her own official retirement she returned to the school for a while to teach classics part-time.)

The past and present staff of the school had undergone many changes, some of them sad ones, over the last ten years. Miss Wilson died in 1953, Miss Basford in 1955 while still on the school staff, Mrs. Golledge (the former Miss Bates) in 1954 or 55, Miss Davies after a long illness in 1958, Mrs. Sartain, the lively and charming senior mathematics mistress, in 1961, only a few weeks after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Miss Selleck retired prematurely in 1958 to care for a sister; Miss Phillips left in 1960, after 30 years during which she had had the unique, and probably unenviable, distinction of teaching every girl who passed through the school: Miss Wilkinson, who had joined the

staff in 1950, left in 1961 and went to Swaziland to teach in a school run by the Anglican Order of the Holy Paraclete. Her dog Joey, as well known about the school as she was, went to the Bletchley Teachers' Training College.

Only seven members of staff had, in 1961, been longer at the school than Miss Inman herself; they were Miss Allen, Mrs. Dauncey, who had come as a part-time teacher in 1939 and was now the deputy headmistress, Miss Edmonds, Miss Eggar, Mrs. Johnson, who taught domestic science, and Miss Minns and Mrs. Willis in the canteen.

Already, however, there were signs of another change, although this apparently had not occurred to Miss Inman when she reflected on the altering age pattern of the teaching profession. More and more often, women were returning to work after raising their children past babyhood. Mrs. Honick began teaching at the school full-time in 1961, and eventually became headmistress; Mrs. Le Grice returned to part-time teaching in the same year, and by 1973 was to be head of the mathematics department again.

Last Years Under Miss Inman

Phyllis Smith, in her jubilee address to the school, had suggested that the distinguished speaker for the year 2001, when the school would be 100 years old, might be one of the girls then sitting before her, and for a little longer the pace of educational life in and around the school did remain slow enough for this to be a quite plausible forward hope.

The last few years of Miss Inman's long reign now slipped peacefully away, if not in the literal sense quietly, for the school was extensively repaired and redecorated with much noise of hammering. A Film Society was founded, and in 1962 eight girls went directly from school to the university, six of them to science-based courses. One, Ruth Jones, was the first girl to enter medical school direct from F.G.G.S. since Miss Inman had come to Farnham—a reminder of how restricted the opportunities for women still were.

The winter of 1962-63 saw the hardest weather for many years; girls were allowed to come to school in trousers, snow lay for weeks on the games fields, and early closing of the school to allow for the curtailed 'bus services was common. Later in the year the choir took part in the May Festival, and at the end of the summer term, with the rest of the school, contributed to the Dramatic Society's production of '1066 And All That'.

Judith Whitfield ran for Surrey in the All-England Schools Championships, and in the same year, 1963, contributed an article to the school magazine. Entitled 'A Square Deal For The Not So Brainy', this article complained that those with slower brains got less teaching attention and were made to feel inferior. The author suggested that grammar schools should offer courses alternative to 'O' and 'A' levels, that everyone should go into the

sixth form, that 'unacademic girls may well be better leaders and should be given responsibilities', and that 'boys should be taught by women and girls by men; teachers and taught might then like each other better and be less sarcastic'. A footnote from Miss Inman commented that these views might be a good subject for a debate, but there now seems to be no record as to whether it was ever held. It would be interesting to know, with the advantage of hindsight, how many of those in authority sympathised with Judith's opinions at the time.

In 1964 Miss Inman retired, and with great good feeling, as she intended to remain in Farnham during her retirement, went off on a world tour which later became the subject of delightful lectures, leaving the field clear for her successor. She had served the school as headmistress for 17 years, longer than any other holder of the post, and was justly proud of this record. Another stage of the school's life was ending, and it entered now on a period of rapid change.

Modernisation And Expansion

The new headmistress was Miss June Elizabeth Sparshott, **M.A.** (Oxon), formerly head of the Ludlow High School for Girls. She represented in herself a break with tradition, being young, softly spoken and modern, and during her stay in Farnham she was to preside over revolutionary alterations in almost every aspect of the school's life. Fortunately she possessed in abundance both enthusiasm and efficiency. The governors found that 'she woke us all up with her purposeful liveliness . . .' while Old Girls, whose first experience of committee work was under the chairmanship of Miss Sparshott, did not realise until they joined other committees how rarely fortunate they had been in the possession of a chairman who could keep everybody to the point and get a whole agenda discussed, decided and minuted without producing any sensation of coercion or hurry, and all in less than an hour.

As for the girls, if they at first regretted that 'Jerusalem' was to be sung only at the end of the school year and not at the end of every term, and that the kitchen staff were no longer summoned into the hall to be thanked by a concerted thumping on the tables, they soon found these lost traditions to be only small details in a transformation scene.

Mrs. Honick introduced the 'new maths' in 1964 and at about the same time the history department under Mrs. Dauncey began working to a new syllabus which, with its increased emphasis on world affairs, its experimental teaching methods and the history conferences that were organised in conjunction with other local secondary schools, aroused interest not only amongst the girls but also in the outer world of education. The F.G.G.S. history department was soon recognised as being one of the finest in the country.

There were ambitious plans for a 'new look' magazine and the first number of 'Polyglot' appeared in 1966, but the enthusiasm of potential contributors quickly dwindled, and in 1968 and 1969 no magazine was produced. This led the Old Girls' Association, which had in any case been in renewed financial-cum-'political' difficulties over what proportion of the joint publication costs it should pay, to start a newsletter of its own, and this proved sufficiently popular to be continued even after 'Polyglot's' slightly enfeebled revival.

Sixth formers were allowed to wear their own clothes instead of uniform, and after 1966 the whole of the Upper Sixth automatically acquired prefectorial status and, with a kind of inner cabinet of two deputy head girls and two head girls, took a considerable share in running the school. It was at the sixth formers' suggestion that a School Council, on which the staff and all the forms in the school were represented, was set up in 1968. The Council overhauled the school rules, advised on School Fund expenditure, set up a committee which arranged for changing art displays in the corridors, and discussed the problem of time wasted at lesson changes.

Social Work And School Work

Increasingly, too, the girls were involved in a variety of community services, encouraged by Miss Sparshott who was herself actively interested in social work. Groups of them gave regular help at St. James's Home, Woodlarks, Trimmers' Hospital and the Farnham Training Centre, each form organised fund-raising for a particular charity and morning assemblies were conducted round the themes of world problems.

The Thanksgiving in the Foundation Day service, largely written by the girls, now held more references to the ancillary than the teaching staff, and yet none of this could be interpreted as a tilting of the balance away from the academic. Rather, it appears, the girls were learning to do more things at once and they did them in a more exciting way. Geography courses included field work and flights in chartered aircraft, there were courses in computer operation and educational cruises abroad and it was not unusual for girls to obtain nine or ten subjects at O level, where in the 1950s eight had been considered the upper limit of achievement. The range of subjects was increasing too, almost a third of the sixth form were specialising in science or mathematics, about the same proportion went on to university from the Upper Sixth and girls were planning futures, such as reading for engineering degrees, which would hardly have been thinkable a couple of school generations ago. Careers counselling was now a fully developed school service, beginning in the third year with a talk on 'weighing the evidence and self assessment' from the Youth Employment Officer, Mrs. McKerlie, and continuing through to a series of visits to colleges, laboratories and other

places of potential employment at the end of the first sixth form year.

The Farnham Girls' Grammar School also became one of the first Surrey schools to have a fully trained counselling service within the school itself, ready to help with the still manifold problems of personal relationships and the difficulties of growing up, and there were talks for the seniors on drug addiction and on contraception. It was a very long time since Miss Clarke had suggested to the governors that she should be authorised to hold a class in 'hygiene' for girls over the age of 15—but the same care for the girls' futures was manifest.

Circular 10165

All these changes owed something to an altered social climate, but also to a change in the structure of the school—and this itself had come about indirectly for social reasons. It had been obvious for many years that the Education Act of 1944 had not, after all, produced a scheme of secondary education in which all types of school were equally esteemed and the terrors of the scholarship examination consequently disappeared. Multilateral or comprehensive schools were proposed as a possible solution to the problem and the Labour government elected to office in 1964 was committed to the introduction of comprehensive education throughout the country. In the summer of 1965 it issued Circular 10/65 with the 'declared objective to end selection at 11+ and to eliminate separatism in secondary education'. The circular requested Local Education Authorities to submit plans for re-organising secondary education in their areas, and proposed six 'acceptable' forms of comprehensive organisation.

The Surrey Education Committee, in a Conservative county and hence subject to complex cross-pressures of party political allegiance, educational opinion and parental wishes, eventually decided on a system, actually a combination of two of the forms suggested by Circular 10/65, in which children would transfer from first to middle schools at the age of eight, to secondary schools at the age of twelve and finally to sixth form colleges at the age of sixteen.

It was apparently with the idea of making the change to this system as easy as possible that the authorities allowed the enormous expansion of the Girls' Grammar School, and especially of its sixth form, which took place during Miss Sparshott's time as headmistress. There were about 385 girls on the register in 1964, 407 in 1966, 435 in 1969 and of these, almost 100 were sixth formers who, because they needed to be taught in small groups, increased the pressure on space out of proportion to their numbers. Once again the school authorities were asking for mobile classrooms, and in the Old Girls' newsletter of 1969/70, Miss Sparshott detailed the efforts which had been made to accommodate this growing population: 'the old History and

English stock cupboards have been floored, lit and heated and are in use as interview, study and tutorial rooms; the stationery cupboard is an elegant careers room; the stair wells have become stock cupboards: the bicycle store is a music room; the cleaners' cupboard opposite the Chemistry laboratory is an auxiliary Art Room; the side porch is a music stock cupboard; the entrance hall is a common room. Any other conversion ideas would be welcome—we have even looked at the air raid shelters!

Departures

By the end of 1970, when Miss Sparshott left to become headmistress of Tile Hill Wood, a girls' comprehensive school in Coventry, the future of the two Farnham grammar schools had been decided—finally, as it proved, although the election of a Conservative government in the same year led to some expectation of a delay, or even a reversal of plans. The 'Farnham Herald' reported that the Menin Way buildings were to become a middle school, and that the two grammar schools would be united at Morley Road, and would be run as a combined secondary school and sixth form college, with no new entry to the former, until all the pupils had reached the age for entering on a sixth form course, when their joint transformation into a sixth form college would be complete.

The girls' school at least was already as much like a sixth form college as a secondary school of the old type. Some girls went regularly to Technical Colleges for classes, there were driving lessons out of school hours, and the sixth formers, again because of pressures on space, often went home for their study periods in the afternoons. Even the drink vending machines in the corridors, and the cafeteria type lunches, were symptomatic of the change. (Miss Sparshott, who had a sense of humour about her pupils, had remarked of these lunches that they offered figure conscious fifth formers the chance to ward off middle aged spread by choosing salad every day.)

Now, too, the hard core of older staff which Miss Sparshott and Miss Inman before her had inherited, the school's living traditions, had left for their own well-earned retirements, Miss Eggar and Mrs. Johnson in 1965, Mrs. Dauncey in 1966, Miss Allen, 'worn by winds and headmistresses' as Miss King had affectionately said, in 1968. Between them they had given over a century of service to the school.

The Last Stage

After Miss Sparshott left, the Surrey Education Committee was faced with the task of appointing a headmistress to a school of good standing, but one that was likely to lose its independent existence within a few years. It was not a prospect likely to attract many people, and both the staff and the governors

doubted whether such an arrangement could be a successful one. Some determination on their part was required, but they did in the end carry their point. The post was advertised, interviews were held, but no appointment was made and in the end Mrs. Margaret Honick, the head of the mathematics department and sixth form mistress, became first unofficially and then officially acting headmistress for the last years of the school's life. She was the only headmistress ever appointed from within the school itself—to avoid this had apparently been part of the Education Committee's policy over the years, and it was believed that senior mistresses might in the past have suffered disappointment because of it. She was also the only married headmistress the school ever had.

Mrs. Honick, disliking all the ceremonial trappings of being a headmistress, and with no real personal ambition to hold the position, proved partly for those very reasons an excellent choice for the post during what might have been extremely difficult years. This is not to suggest that they were easy ones, but the liberal atmosphere that Mrs. Honick had originally helped to create persisted, and the school appeared to the end as a living entity, with both a future and a past; someone not already well acquainted with it might, even given the will to maintain this identity, have found it impossible of achievement.

In the early 1970s the two grammar schools were beginning, tentatively, to draw closer together. Mixed hockey of a somewhat frivolous kind had been played for some time, and the sixth forms now held joint Liberal Studies classes. The Girls' Grammar School celebrated its 70th anniversary in 1971, and on Speech Day Mr. Paul French, then headmaster of Farnham Grammar School and Principal-designate of the Sixth Form College, addressed the school on the values of the comprehensive ideal and of co-education.

Winding-up

Celebrations for the 70th anniversary, since it was now expected that they were to be the last important ones the school would ever hold, were extended over two days, uniting the Foundation Day Service, an evening entertainment by past and present pupils, and the Old Girls' reunion, with an exhibition of photographs and souvenirs of the school's history, a fashion display by the girls, and an Open Day.

Miss King was the speaker at Foundation Day and the occasion wore altogether more the aspect of a harvest festival than of a funeral, and indeed there were still a couple of years of active preparation for the move to come.



“Presentation, 1971”

L. to R. Margaret Garner, Miss Sparshott, Stella Bolt, Mrs. Honick.

The girls began to go regularly to the Guildford and Surrey University Sports Centres, a piece of enterprise which contributed a few years later, to Farnham College's being able to offer 27 different sports *or* physical recreations to its pupils. And, a reminder of the smaller, quieter community the school had so recently been, the summer of 1971 saw the retirement of Miss Edmonds from the staff. Her meticulous care over rules and regulations had soothed the doubts of generations of uncertain little first formers and uncertain new members of staff alike, while she had won the deep approval of Mr. Betts the caretaker by her daily check on the time-keeping of the grandfather clock in the hall. For many of her pupils and colleagues, with the breaking of this link, going back to the West Street past, school ceased to be fully imaginable as the same place.

In 1972, the school reverted to its old custom of celebrating Founder's Day with a modified service at morning assembly, and it also had its last first form entry—the children who were doomed to be the youngest in the school for the rest of their secondary school lives. The 'Farnham Herald', doing a feature on the school, reported on its numbers, now 450, and its large catchment area, with girls once more travelling from as far away as Guildford, Camberley and Haslemere; most of these formed part of the considerable sixth form entry—girls with the basic

qualification of four 'O' levels transferring from other secondary schools. The 'Herald' reporter found the girls fond of the school on the whole, worried about the pressures of overcrowding and examinations, looking forward, generally, to the move to Morley Road.

The Move To Morley Road

At the end of the school year the first form, compiling a scrap-book called 'Goodbye to F.G.G.S.', took a survey of its own, and found opinions about equally divided for and against the change —though it should be added that most of those opposed to the amalgamation only thought that it was happening too quickly and that neither the buildings nor the people would be ready in time. Mr. Betts **did** think that boys and girls should be educated in separate schools, but at least one first former was ready to disagree. 'As men and women are mixed up anyway' she wrote 'and have to get used to each other eventually it is best to start early'.

For now the amalgamation, that had for so long seemed uncertain, was not only certain, but close. The **O.G.A.** committee held its last meeting in the staff room at Menin Way under the signed photograph of Thory Gage Gardiner and the painting of a cut melon, and then its first in the anonymity of a classroom somewhere in the depths of the Morley Road main building. The girls showed a hopeful inclination to spend the last week of the summer term moving the school's goods, but were foiled by the staff, who arranged that the summer holidays for pupils should begin a week early. The grand piano went to Morley Road, and the Honours Boards were stored there, the Old Girls' Secretary took the bundles of papers and photographs that still remained despite Miss Sparshott's tidying and the Miss Hughes' memorial sundial went to St. Polycarp's School, now in premises next to St. Joan's.

Yet it still looked for a while as though the pessimists were right and the Morley Road complex would never be ready for the start of the autumn term. It was already certain that some of the rooms at Menin Way would have to be used while its conversion to a middle school was in progress, and rumours even suggested that the girls' lavatories at Morley Road would not be completed in time—it was natural for someone to remark that from there to Menin Way seemed rather a long way to have to go to 'spend a penny'.

College And Main School

However, the new school did open successfully, even though some forms were housed in temporary huts; it was nearly 900 strong, with its pupils divided about equally between the sixth form college proper, and the so-called Main School of under sixteen year olds. Evening classes were held in the Menin Way

building during its making over and it was hauntingly advertised in their prospectuses as 'the Farnham ex-Girls' Grammar School'. Predictably there were reports that it too would not be converted on schedule, but once again these proved to be false, and the 'South Farnham Middle School' duly opened in September 1974.

Meanwhile the boys and girls, and the male and female staff, at Farnham College were gradually settling down together. (Even the O.G.A. and the Old Farnhamians' Association had a liaison committee.) The College had a bomb scare, and put on a production of 'The Devils' about which there was some controversy in the town. It had its first prize-giving and one student came back to receive her certificate in her wedding dress. The Old Girls held a wine and cheese party at Morley Road, complete with guided tours of the building by Mr. French. And in time, the 'Farnham Herald' ran another schools feature, this time on the College's first year. Farnham College was now a part of Farnham's present and future, and the Girls' Grammar School had become a part of its past.

Conclusion

That leaves the Old Girls, whom Miss Sparshott once compared, in the life of a school, to the nine-tenths of an iceberg that is hidden below the surface, What have they made of the chance that Thory Gage Gardiner set out to give them, three-quarters of a century ago?

Well, they produced a few doctors, enough nurses to staff a fair sized hospital, and enough teachers to staff several schools (also probably enough children to fill them). Among them were numbered a Dame at Eton College, a television actress, a dentist, an Army P.T. instructress, a cabaret dancer, a contemplative nun, a couple of vets, a psychotherapist, an ophthalmic optician, an inspector of factories, a lecturer in Turkish literature, a producer of religious pageants, a builder, a researcher into migraine, a ship's purser, the governess to a Spanish ducal family, a catering manageress and a space physicist. There are Old Girls to be found in every part of the United Kingdom, Old Girls moving with husbands in the Forces or the Diplomatic Service all over the world, Old Girls settled in Canada and the United States, Australia and New Zealand, France, South Africa and the Netherlands, Rhodesia and the Lebanon. And there are Old Girls who still live in Farnham, in the houses that they lived in as children and from which they went to school, a few yards, or a few miles, away from where it all began.

Then is that the end? To some people, yes, They wrote 'So the Old School is no more. Made me sad to see it go' and 'The building was important to me'. But not everyone has the same sense of finality. It was Miss Inman who as guest of honour at the final Speech Day in 1972, spoke of the formation of Farnham College from the two Grammar Schools as a marriage, adding with her characteristic dry humour the reminder that children

are never exactly like their parents. The staff at Morley Road found that they were creating a completely new school, but it was still from one of them that the Old Girls received some of their earliest 'relics' of the Castle Street days, passed on by a 'dinner lady' at the College. So from another point of view we may perhaps call this memoir not the end of the history of the Farnham Girls' Grammar School, but a contribution to the history of Farnham College, Part One.