

THE RAGLAN SCHOOL 1928-1949

21ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

A. J. Clay 1928 -1949 Raglan Girls' School Headmistress

Years hence maybe, when future generations of young folk peruse the annals of Raglan, 1949 will stand out as a red letter year, for it marks the schools twenty first birthday. The opening ceremony was performed on March 10th, 1928, by the Rt. Hon. Charles Trevelyan, M.P., supported by the Chairman of the Edmonton Education Committee, Councillor J. Reid, and member colleagues. Mr E.O. Taylor, B.A., was Director of Education at that time.

Thus, this spring, those of the staff who were attached to the school from the commencement of the first term (April 16th, 1928), will have travelled along and impressive span of years, rich in memories of early effort, interesting expansion and progress, during which a new and more vital conception of education has emerged. It has been their privilege to help mould the intellectual and moral fabric of the school during a wonderful period, remarkable for its ever increasing tempo.

The history of Raglan's development is inseparable from that of the surrounding district, just as it is also inseparable from that of the nation itself. In 1928, the school, then considered a very modern and somewhat revolutionary type of building, was most pleasantly located, for the vicinity was almost rural. A farm, one of the last within the parish of Edmonton, flanked its western side, whilst green fields stretched beyond the brickfields that bounded with the school on the east. From the classrooms along the east corridor, the Chingford Hills could be glimpsed through the haze of a summer day. But the builder had already reached the school's threshold. Manor Way and a few neighbouring roads were taking shape and, in bad weather, access to the school was a "major operation" and normal footwear out of the question. The grand old oak tree at the Wellington Road end of Manor Way remains to remind us that the school once stood in a "green and pleasant land." May it long remain a sturdy and friendly sentinel, for with the passing years it has assumed the personality of a kindly guardian.

A statistical comparison of the school THEN and NOW will provide interesting information:-

April 1928

The Raglan School was co-educational, and catered for children from the age of 5 to 14 years. It was administered by one Headmaster (the late Mr Henry Cowen), assisted by two senior headmistresses.

Miss A J Clay and Miss E Perry, to look after special needs of the girls and infants.

Total Roll – 320

Total Staff – 1 Headmaster, 10 assistants

The entire school was served by the present main building, less four classrooms which were added later to meet the needs of a steadily increasing school population.

January 1949

The school in its present form consists of three separate departments, each administered by its own Head Teacher. In addition there is a Nursery School which is attached to the Infants' School.

The Nursery School	Can admit 30 children, aged 3 to 4 years.
Staff	1 senior assistant, 2 junior assistants, 1 cook, 1 domestic helper
The Infants' School	Headmistress – Miss J Dean. 11 assistants

Total Roll	465 children 5-7 years
The Girls' school Roll	Headmistress – Miss A J Clay. 10 assistants and 1 domestic science teacher. 324
The Boys' School Roll	Headmaster – Mr J H Adams, B.Sc. 11 assistants 313

Today in 1949

Combined staff total	3 Head Teachers 36 assistants
Combined rolls total	1,102

Though relatively small, the school in its early stages was difficult to administer, inasmuch as the senior pupils were drawn from one Enfield and one Edmonton school, and the juniors from a variety of private schools with which the district then abounded. Moreover, a constant trickle of admissions whose ages bore no relation to their standard of academic attainment, made at the staff's task no enviable one.

One recalls how the first Headmaster and, in the main, his exceptionally young staff, worked with tremendous zeal and idealism to establish the school as a unit, to develop a sense of loyalty and pride in membership of the *new* school, and to lay solid foundations for all future educational and spiritual well-being. To this end the Raglan School badge and uniform were designed and adopted as an expression of the spirit of the school.

The school badge incorporates the arms of the Duchy of Lancaster to show the school's association with Edmonton, and the arms of Middlesex County Council, while two quarterings reveal the ideals of the Staff, namely the development of academic studies side by side with those of the arts and crafts. The motto "Sic vos non vobis" (Thus we (toil) not for ourselves) typifies the hope of the original and successive teachers to prepare their young charges for world citizenship.

It was inevitable that the rapidly developing district and consequent increase in child population should affect the School. Miss J Dean arrived on September 1st, 1928, to take charge of the Infants' Department, and the teaching staff was augmented from time to time. Additional accommodation for four classes provided a small measure of relief to the overcrowded school, until on May 1st, 1935, the Infants transferred to a new building which was erected to the south of the main premises, thus releasing them for the sole use of the Senior Mixed Departments.

In 1934, Mr Cowan left Raglan to take an appointment in another area, and was succeeded by Mr F E Geary, B.A. The years 1933-4-5 were characterised by heavy increases in the school roll, and in September, 1935 the "mixed" school became two separate departments, the boys remaining under Mr Geary, and the girls passing into the care of Miss A J Clay. However, in spite of separate leadership, the school remained unified. In March, 1941, Mr J H Adams, B.Sc. succeeded Mr Geary, who left to become Headmaster of the Higher Grade School.

Any disadvantage that has been felt by the use of one building by two separate departments has, perhaps, been outweighed by the fact that the corporate life of the school has continued for all major activities, such as sports, school concerts, etc. In this respect a close relationship, born of necessity, has provided unique opportunities for combined effort, a circumstance which will remove any sense of drastic change when the impending reorganisation of the Boys and Girls schools takes place later this year.

During the passage of years the school has developed as had been hoped. Reference to an old school concert programme reveals that when Raglan was ten years old, it was felt that the school "was standing sturdily on its feet." How much more true is this today, when Raglan has established a tradition of which the school and all connected with it are justifiably proud. Innumerable staff changes have taken place since the school's early years, and in this connection it may be interesting to note that of the original staff, only two remain – Miss F M Berry and Miss A J Clay, both of the Girls' Department. Mr E Eames, School Keeper, has also looked after the welfare of the school premises since the opening of the school, with particularly heavy duties during the blitz period.

From 1939 to 1949 the rhythmic working of the school was disturbed by the nightmarish interlude of the catastrophic World War, and whilst we would prefer to banish our memories of it to the depths of oblivion, some reference must be made to its effect on the school.

Perhaps it would be as well to read “our story” through excerpts from the school’s log book:-

28.8.39– staff recalled from holiday to instruct scholars re evacuation. Procedure in preparation for full rehearsal – also to register children of the school age and the “under 5’s” for evacuation
27.8.39 - School open 10am – 4.30pm for evacuation registration – skeleton staff on duty – rota.
28.8.39 to Full staff on evacuation registration. All gas masks were fitted
31.8.39 and replaced if necessary. Every member of Evacuation party labelled EDM.11 and given iron rations. All prepared for evacuation.
Party assembled at 9 am for evacuation.
State of party – 173 boys; 143 girls; 66 infants. Total 382.
Teaching staff – 36. Voluntary helper escorts – 36.
Roll called. Prayers were said by the Vicar of St. Mark’s Church.
10.30am Party left school premises to entrain at Bush Hill Park Station for an unknown destination.

This proved to be Diss in Norfolk. There the Raglan School Party was most kindly received, and eventually, after the last bus and car load of children had been despatched to billets, teachers, by then very weary, tried to accommodate themselves to strange surroundings and conditions, and wondered what the future held in store.

By the end of the first weekend the staff had located all children and compiled registers of addresses, etc., and it was then that we realised how completely the Raglan Party was disintegrated, for staff and children were scattered over 17 villages of the Depwade Rural Area, stretching from the Norwich boundary in the north to the Bungay district to the south. The difficulties of caring adequately for all the needs of the children in these conditions can be imagined, but the job was well and faithfully done through the almost superhuman efforts of the teachers and a grand team of helpers.

Before long a steady trickle of children was returning home, and it became apparent that the educational needs of pupils in the home district must be met. Accordingly, some teachers were recalled, and the Log Book records:-

12.12.39 - School open for registration of pupils for part-time instruction – children of 10 years or over to come to school for instruction on the school premises in parties of 25 only at any one time; children of under 10 years to meet for instruction in small groups in private houses.
13.12.39 - Part-time instruction began; staff – Miss Clay and three assistant teachers
12-17.12.39 Mr Geary and Miss Dean remained in Norfolk attending to the evacuated groups and school requirements there, and planning the release of more staff for the home school.
18.12.39 - Mr Geary, Miss Dean and some staff returned whilst others remained in Norfolk.

In January, 1940, air raid protection in the school corridors, was available for 850 (600 in the main building; 25 in the Infants’ school) and plans were made to re-open the school on a departmental basis, though it was not possible for all classes to attend for the full ten session. Staff and scholars were instructed re procedure in the event of air raids, with which we became far too familiar as the year proceeded. Frequent gas mask drill and air raid warning practices prepared us to meet the real thing, and a log entry for February 8th, 1940 reads, “Air Raid and Gas Mask Drill (Teachers and children wearing masks) for approximately 400 children was carried out; all were ‘under cover’ and roll checked by class registers in four minutes.”

Throughout the years of war that were to follow, school attendance and procedure underwent many modifications, but the children adapted themselves with a wonderful resilience and an inspiring confidence

in their teachers, and worked, for days on end, “under cover,” often in most trying conditions. For their calmness and courage no praise is too high; their morale and discipline remained steadfast.

During the summer of 1940 the intensity of the bombing occasioned a second school evacuation, though a much smaller party. Mr C Broad, then Senior Master, with a few members of the staffs of the three departments, escorted this party to the Llanwern district of Monmouthshire, and remained there for the full period of evacuation. A very successful “Evacuated Raglan” established itself in the Institute at Llanwern, where fortunately it was able to work as a school unit under the direct charge of Raglan School staff. Meantime, the home school worked as ably as the exigencies of war would allow, and so the tedious months, with flying bomb and rocket periods, dragged on until the most devastating of all wars reached its conclusion.

Memories of hectic days and “noisy” nights of fire-watching on the school premises, have now the quality of unreal dreams, but our cherished memories of fine lads and girls who were one nurtured within these walls will ever remain real.

1939-1945

The staff and present scholars pay grateful and loving tribute to all
RAGLAN OLD SCHOLLARS who gave their lives during
The war.
“THEY DIED THAT WE MAY LIVE.”

Apart from a few minor scars (school roofs well pitted by shrapnel, some broken window panes, and debris from an oil-bomb) Raglan emerged unscathed, in spite of the fact that some ugly incidents occurred in the immediate vicinity.

We are happy and grateful to report also, that all members of the STAFF who served in the FORCES, survived the horrors and dangers of War.

Previously reference was made to the new conception of education. The provision of Nursery Schools, a School Medical Service with its Specialist Clinics, Meals and Milk Services, provision of P.T. Clothing’s, etc. the institution of Juvenile Employment Bureaux, and class instruction through the medium of School Films, Broadcast Lessons, Educational Visits and School Camps during the lifetime of Raglan, testify to the arrival of the “new deal” for school children.

At all times Raglan has been encouraged in its endeavours by successive Mayors, Chairmen and members of Education Committees, Borough Education Officers, Headmasters of neighbouring Grammar Schools, and parents of successive generations of Raglan scholars.

We acknowledge with sincere gratitude, their friendly interest and goodwill. Especially do we thank parents for their enthusiastic support and unfailing co-operation in all matters relating to the welfare and general life of the school. The existence of a very flourishing Raglan Parent-Teacher Association is evidence of the friendly and virile relationship existing between home and school.

We are proud of the achievements of members of the Staff and of many scholars. They have carried the Raglan tradition into many parts of the world, and have enriched it by their high ideals and fine contributions to the Services, the Professions and to various fields of industry.

In conclusion I will quote from the preface of the 1935 Raglan School Concert programme, words which were written by the Headmaster, whose remarks are as apt today as they were then.

“The Raglan spirit is that which underlies that of the wholesome and friendly atmosphere of a good home. The aim of the school is to bring out the best in our children, to help them to function properly and happily as members of our large family, and to lay the foundations of a broad education which may form the basis of further development in other types of schools, or in the world itself.”

IN MEMORIAM.

Mr Henry Cowen, Headmaster, Raglan, April, 1928- May, 1934

Mr W V Royce, Snr. Asst. Master, Raglan, April, 1928-Dec 1928

Miss Ethel Perry, Snr. Mistress, Infants' Department, April, 1928- December, 1937