

Edenfield 1946 – 1958
School days



Edenfield School in April 1961. The children line up to have their photograph taken as the building celebrates its centenary.

I attended the primary school in Edenfield, which was a C of E school associated with Edenfield parish church just across the road. Opened in 1861, it replaced an earlier school situated in the church grounds. In 1951 it was granted 'aided' status which helped ensure it stayed open.

It was a small school with only two classes, Infants and Juniors. Each had their own class room, and the school also contained a hall, a dining room, and toilets cloakroom etc. Each also had its own playground, though they were linked.



Was this the whole school? I'm in the centre in the middle row. On my right is John Ramsbottom. Duncan Hamer is next but one on my left. No idea how old I am.



This was taken in the Infants playground.

Middle row from the left: Rosalyn Edmundson, Duncan Hamer, me, John Ramsbottom, unknown, Roy Tattersall.

On the front row at the right-hand end is David Slingsby, who had his legs in irons due to polio.

One of the teachers would be Miss Thompson, but not sure which.

In the background is Heycrofts, and on the right just above the wall hidden in the trees is Ashworth's house.



This photo of me is a school photo, but no idea how old I am.

The infant's playground contained an air raid shelter, a hangover from WW2, with its doors and windows bricked up. Don't forget that this was only 4 or 5 years after the end of WW2. The junior's playground was larger, with a toilet block in one corner. We used to play cricket in there up against a wall of the school, and if you knocked the ball over the wall into the field, it was 'six and out, or none and in'. Not sure how we retrieved the ball.

The school was heated from a coke stove located in the cellar. When the caretaker was in there feeding the burner, we used to go in and watch, but the fumes used to get on my chest and make me cough. The stove was used to heat water which fed the large old-fashioned radiators.

We had to drink a bottle of milk each day: I think they would be third or half pint bottles delivered in crates and left outside until we drank them. In winter when the crates were brought inside, the milk was frozen so we had to put them on the radiators to thaw out. The resultant milk was warm and I hated it as I thought it sickly. I've never liked warm milk since!

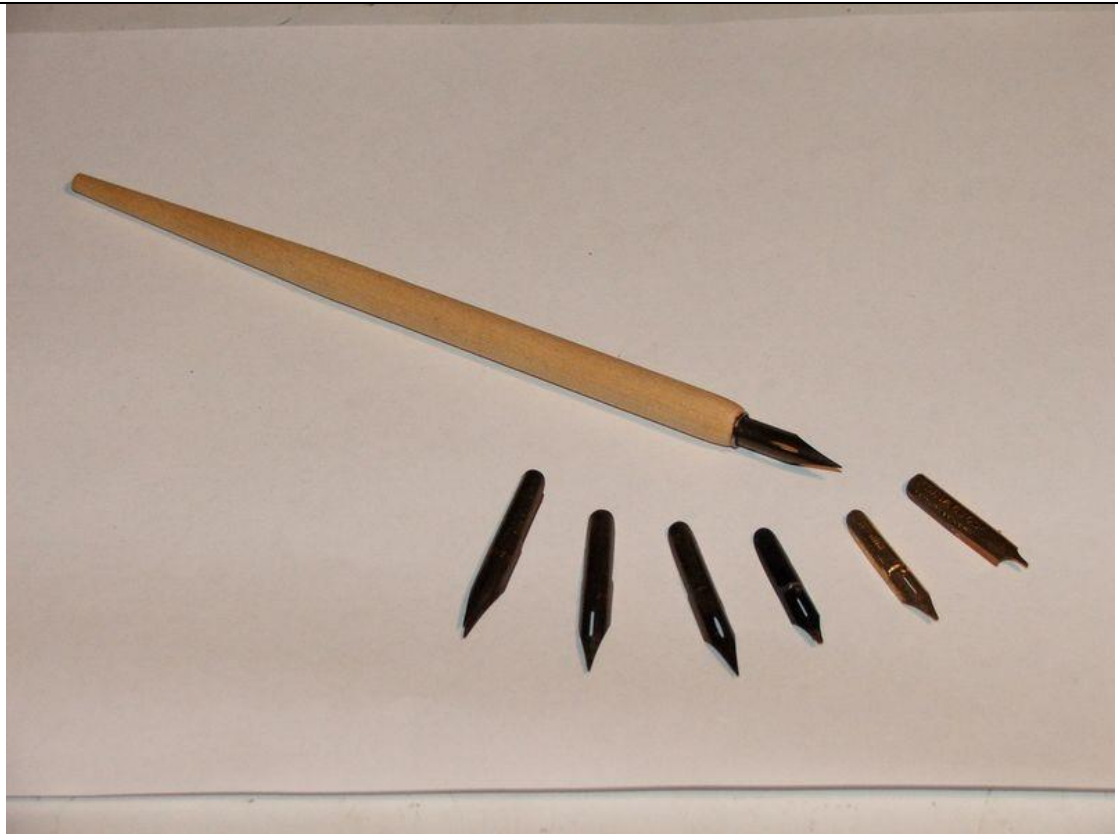
We had dinner at mid-day, it was never lunch. The food was cooked at Tottington School and transported to Edenfield in metal containers to keep the food warm. I assume both classes ate together, but not sure. Dinner ladies served the food, and we sat eight to a rectangular table. Mrs Sutcliffe supervised us with an iron rod: everything had to be eaten. I think I may have been a fussy eater, as there were many things I remember not liking and struggling to eat such as liver and kidney. I also struggled with salads as I can remember not liking raw carrot and raw cabbage. Puddings seemed to vary between rice pudding, semolina, and sago. I coped with semolina, but struggled with sago as it looked like frog spawn, and rice pudding as it had a thick burnt skin on it.

After dinner in the Infants class, we had to sit at our desks, cross our arms over each other, and rest our heads on them for a sleep. I can't remember ever sleeping. I can remember playing in the sand pit, but not much else.

In the Juniors class, there must have been three or four years in the one room. There were two desks together, in four rows of perhaps three or four in each row? Each desk had a lift up lid, and an ink well in the corner.



One job which we took in turn, was to be the ink monitor. This involved going round (each day?) with a supply of ink to pour into the ink wells. We used pens with replaceable nibs that I was always causing to cross: "Please Miss can I have another nib?"



Naughty boy alert! I can't ever remember being caned, or hit with a ruler more like, but I can remember having my mouth washed out with soap, which was horrible. I assume I must have said something rude or swore, but I can still taste it to this day.

I can remember health visitors coming looking for nits etc, but the strongest memory is that of being immunised, probably polio? We all queued up in the hall waiting our turn, and seeing the children before us coming out holding their arms and crying. We were dreading it being our turn.



I remember this occasion, but not what it was. A school play perhaps?
Back row from left: unknown, Christopher Marcroft (the vicar's son), Trevor Barnes? Duncan Hamer, Rosalyn Edmundson, John Ramsbottom, Geoffrey Higson? Robert Glavey? McDowell, unknown.
Front row from left: Unknown, unknown, me, Kathleen Earnshaw? unknown

I don't know whether there was a PTA or equivalent, but I can remember the school having social evenings. The parents would go into the hall for a whist drive. On each table, the winning couple moved up the room, and the losing couple down the room. The couple at the top of the room at the end of the evening won. The children went into the Juniors classroom for a Beetle Drive. You had to throw a dice, and the resultant number enabled you to draw a part of the body. Standard rules were something like - 6 for the body, 5 for the head, 4 for one of the two wings, 3 for one of the six legs, 2 for one of the two antennae, and 1 for one of the two eyes. You had to throw a 6 to start with the body. The winner was the first to complete a beetle, though I don't know how the overall winner was decided.

The school took the Juniors to Haslingden swimming baths to learn how to swim. The pool was opened in 1936, and closed in 2013. In 2020 they are up for sale. We travelled on a (service?) bus, and I liked to sit on the long seat at the front facing back. The baths became famous in the 1980's as this was where Peter Adamson, who played Len Fairclough in Coronation Street, was accused of molesting two young girls in the pool. He was found innocent in the subsequent trial, but it effectively ended his acting career.



Occasionally, we used to walk along Market Street to the playing fields to play football as part of our sports activities. The school also held Sports Day's there.

At the age of 11, the dreaded Eleven-Plus exam had to be sat, this being before the time of Comprehensive Schools. The exam would be used to assess whether you passed and went to the Grammar School, or failed and went to the Secondary Modern School. It was a cold wintry day when I caught the bus to Peel Brow School in Shuttleworth, along with lots of other pupils from the surrounding primary schools. I can't remember anything about the exam other than sitting in a large hall and feeling uncomfortable. I do remember feeling relieved but depressed when I came out. The results said that I and most of my friends had failed, and so we went to Haslingden Secondary Modern School. The only one of my friends who passed was John Ramsbottom, and he went onto Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, the school that Lynette attended having passed her Eleven-Plus. To say that this event left me with a sense of failure for many years of my life is an understatement. I'm sure Grammar Schools were great for many kids and gave them a real education, but for the others... 'well you've failed haven't you'.

Haslingden Secondary Modern School opened in 1915 as Haslingden Council School, with children starting there at the age of 5 and leaving aged 14. Some however became part-timers at 13 when they spent half a day at school and half in the local mill. This practice ended in the 1920's. In 1939, this changed when it took all the town's children from age 11, unless they were Roman Catholic. In 1944 it was again re-organised under the Education Act as a secondary modern school.

I was only at Haslingden School for one year, and part of one term, before we moved to Leeds in November 1958. I think on reflection it was a good school given its status, with its Head Clement Hill having a good reputation. I joined the first year in the top class, 1A, so that was something at least, with most of my friends from the Primary school going into lower classes. It was a co-ed school, but the boys and girls each had their own entrances and play grounds.

I caught a bus each day from Edenfield to Haslingden, which was only about three miles away. The bus passed an auction mart at Bent Gate just outside Haslingden, and coming home on some Thursdays they must have had animal auctions as farmers would get on the bus smelling of manure. We used to call it 'farmers day'.

The best thing about my time there was joining the school band. Cousins Clive and Roger were both members, with Clive on trombone and Roger on cornet. Clive was also in the school orchestra playing drums. I can remember going to his house 'to play out' and seeing him practicing playing using knitting needles on a cake tin. For many years after school, he played in a rock band, and he later told me that it paid for his house mortgage. Anyway, Clive suggested that I join the school band playing trombone which I did: my first introduction to playing an instrument. Great fun, though I'm sure I never progressed much in my short time there. We rehearsed at dinner time, and I brought the trombone home to practice and show what I could do to mum and dad. The first tune that I learnt the trombone part for was Sandon, the tune to the hymn 'Lead kindly light'.

My worst memory of my time there, apart from getting stich whenever I had to run in the cross-country race, was needing the toilet in one of the classes. It was after morning break, and I stuck my hand up saying "Please Miss I need the toilet", only to be told "No, you should have gone at break time". The results were inevitable: I weed in my pants. Talk about embarrassment, but I always made sure I went to the toilet every break time after that.



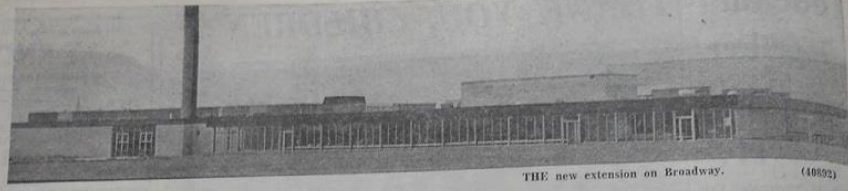
The playground at the rear of the school. In my days, the boys played on the right, with the girls on the left, separated by a fence.

Sports days were held on some playing fields on Broadway, but other than not winning anything I have no memories.

Advertising feature

THIS week the 1,250 pupils of Haslingden High School, formed by the merger of the town's grammar and secondary modern schools, have been settling into the new regime, guided by a staff of around 100. Together, they form the Valley's second comprehensive school, housed in modern buildings on Broadway.

And at the time of this important and indeed exciting venture, it is perhaps opportune to look back at the history of the two educational establishments that have come together in this way, a move that has involved months of complicated planning and not a few "head-aches."



THE new extension on Broadway. (16892)

Birth of a new school

The grammar school is the older of the two. It opened in 1905 in premises in Bury Road with about 80 pupils, and was then known as a secondary and technical school.

Night classes were held in addition to the day ones, and with King Cotton reigning at his zenith, textiles formed one of the main subjects for the night sessions, and there were looms in a basement room.

The opening was marked by a procession through the town headed by a band, and a souvenir programme described the building as "being in that style of architecture known as the Renaissance."

Expansion

Numbers grew over the years, reaching well over 200 in the 1920s, and this led to the need for extensions. For some years a wooden hut at the top of the boys' playground housed the two junior forms, and then, in the mid-20s, the school was expanded by the building of a ground-floor hall and four first-floor classrooms.

But the need for entirely new premises was apparent, and in 1939 permission was granted to build a school at Broadway. But as the result of the Second World War and subsequent restrictions, it took almost three decades before the new building became a reality. It was in September 1967 that the Broadway premises opened, and the Bury Road one devoted to other educational purposes.

Four heads

In 70 years the school has had only four headmasters. The first was the late Mr Thomas Smirk, who held the post from 1905 to 1926, and who placed great emphasis on the academic side. He was followed by the late Mr Alfred Lodge, who came from Omdale public school, and in his five-year reign instituted the "house" system and developed the sporting side. He subsequently moved to Dunfries, and after the war met an untimely death as the result of a road accident.

The third and longest-serving headmaster was the late Mr Arnold Weston. He served the school notably and faithfully from 1931 to 1964, retiring the year before the long-awaited move to Broadway.

His successor was Mr Richard Marshall, who has the distinction of being the last headmaster of the grammar school and the first one of the new High School. He was the subject of a "Face to face" article in this newspaper recently.

Long serving

Over the years the school

has been served by a succession of splendid teachers, and many of them spent almost their whole careers at the school. Outstanding among them are numbered Dr G H Tupling, Mr V G Walford, Miss M Morton, Mr E W J Moore, Mr J W Lewis and Mr N McTaggart, of whom one or two are happily still with us.

The school has always had a high academic record, with really excellent examination results, and generations of its pupils have gone on to make names for themselves in many walks of life.

And the achievements of the school and its many social activities have been recorded over the years in its magazine, "EX Moments", started by Mr Lodge. The title is Latin for "From the hills," and reflects the name of the four "houses"—Cribden, Musbury, Grane and Holcombe.

The last one records the fact that for very many years pupils from the Ramsbottom area attended the school, travelling by train first to Helmsford and then to Ewood Bridge station, and thence by bus to the school.

Council school

The other partner in the "marriage," the county secondary school, is ten years younger. It opened in 1915

as Haslingden Council School, and the arms of its E-shaped building housed respectively boys, infants and girls. Children started there at five and stayed until they were 11, unless they became "half-timers," which meant that at the age of 13 they spent half the day at school and the other half in the mill. This was a practice that lasted into the 1920s.

In 1939 Haslingden Town Council, then the local education authority, reorganised the pattern of schools in the town, and the council school became the borough's senior school, taking all children, apart from the Roman Catholics, at the age of 11. The other, smaller schools, became junior schools.

The hall and gymnasium were added that year.

Not enough

Then came the 1944 Education Act, under which the County became the education authority, and the school was designated as a secondary modern. This occupied two-thirds of the premises, the wing nearest Helmsford Road becoming the county primary school. Extra prefabricated

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 High School**

In 1975, a new school was opened on Broadway to replace both the grammar and the modern school, to form Haslingden High. The old school building is still there in 2020.