

# BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

*Edited by Peter Bowbrick and  
Morwenna Griffiths*

Ruddington Village Museum  
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Dr Barbara Cross came up with the original idea, set up the project and got it off to a flying start.

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# INTRODUCTION

This book, and its companion volume, *Girls' schooldays in Ruddington*, provides a vivid picture of being a schoolchild in Ruddington from early in the twentieth century to the 1960s and 70s. The oldest ex-pupils are in their early 90s. The youngest are still in their 40s.

Over 40 men and women were interviewed (22 men and 20 women). Their stories bring past times to life. In the years after the First World War, the girls walked to Shaw Street to learn to boil and starch the washing—mainly handkerchiefs! There was a garden for the boys during the Second World War where they grew vegetables and kept rabbits. Milk was a halfpenny a bottle (0.2p) and both boys and girls were knitting scarves and balaclavas for the troops. Others had memories of the cold baths at Highfields and the terrors of the Eleven Plus.

The two books provide a colourful picture of how national educational changes were experienced locally. For instance, we hear how curriculum changes placed new demands on schools. Cookery lessons used to be all-day affairs for the girls. Boys used to be taken out of school by local farmers to pick potatoes. All that had gone by the 1960s. There were changes too in out-of-school activities. Television arrived, and transport to Nottingham became easier. During the second world war children were taught in the Chapel as well as in their classrooms, as the village accommodated evacuees from Nottingham and Birmingham.

The project was funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Barbara Cross instigated the project using the network she had created during her doctoral study, *An Historical Investigation of Girls' Educational Experiences in a Village School 1863–1969*. (It is available in the Nottingham Trent University library.) Barbara Cross and Peter Bowbrick carried out the interviews. Morwenna Griffiths had overall responsibility for the project and, with Peter Bowbrick, edited the books. Interviews were carried out with ex-pupils who still live locally and who agreed to take part. Care was taken to ensure that the memories of the ex-pupils covered the whole period up til the closure of the school.

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Difficult decisions had to be made when editing the books. There are so many interesting, touching, shocking, funny stories in the interviews that choosing which ones to include was very hard. It was also hard leaving out some wonderful stories of adult life, for instance of experiences in the war. The books could have been much, much longer! The full original interviews can be both heard and read. The interviews recorded on discs, with their transcriptions and with copies of photographs and other documents, are kept in St Peter's Rooms for anyone to access. Transcripts are also kept in the Local Studies Library in Nottingham.

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# PAST TIMES IN SCHOOLS IN RUDDINGTON

In his will of 1641, James Peacock gave a tenement and adjoining cottage for the purposes of a free-school, and money for the appointment of a school master. This was to be a free-school for the education of scholars, including younger children starting school at about six years old. It became known as the Endowed school. The term 'scholars' at that time was used for both boys and girls. Both sexes attended the free-school. Education was free, except that payment had to be made for books, and a contribution made for coal.

In 1845 a Government Commission into the condition of the Frame-work Knitters reported:

There is a free-school, an infant-school, a large Sunday-school in connexion with the Established Church, and Sunday-schools in connexion with the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Baptists. There are also various dame-schools in the village, and an evening-school for girls, belonging to the church school. A girls national-school was attempted to be established a few years since, but failed in consequence of the parents refusing to allow their children to attend unless they brought their seaming with them; as this would impair the efficacy of the school, it could not be allowed, and the school was turned into an infant school. The free-school is for boys and girls, open without expense to all the children of the parish. They are admitted at six years of age. The school is at present attended by 116 children, of whom only 26 are children of frame-work knitters. These are generally removed when they get about seven years old, and put to seaming and winding. The infant-school is attended by 148 children, of whom 59 are from the families of 41 frame-work knitters. The Church Sunday-school is attended by 101 girls and 86 boys, 42 girls and 46 boys being children of frame-work knitters

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The original Endowed school building eventually fell into disrepair and was rebuilt on The Green in 1976.

The Infants and Girls school, now St. Peter's Rooms, was built in 1852. It was opened as the infants and girls school in 1863. Boys left at the age of seven to go to the school on The Green. Girls continued to be taught at St Peter's until they completed their education. In 1969 the boys school merged with the infants and girls school to form the St. Peter's Junior C of E Controlled school. For a time the schools were administered by the then boys school headmaster, using the existing buildings. The school later moved to the buildings on Ashworth Avenue, which were previously occupied by the Girls Ruddington County Secondary school.

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# FIRST DAY

My grandma started to take me up in a pushchair, in an old pushchair, to school. Make sure I got into school. Only for a couple of months or so. Until I got used to it. Because I was the only one, and there was nobody to play with down there.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I started school in September 1935. That was at the St. Peter's Infants School. Miss Attewell was the teacher. She was, I don't say elderly, but she wasn't a young girl. I don't know whether she was a Miss. We went into her class to start with and I remember in the corner there was the big dolls' houses – three or four foot, I suppose – they always used to make for the new starters, on the first day. The boys and girls. Well, they're only five aren't they? I suppose that was to break you in, the first day or two. If you were upset about something, I suppose. Well, there was toys in there.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

There was a Mrs Rackham, who used to live on this estate and I got into trouble with her. She wasn't a very popular teacher. When we moved to the boys school, I remember my first day, I followed her up the cinder path shooting peas from a peashooter at her hat! She had a hat with a feather in. Of course, she reported me and I started off with getting the cane on the first day!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

We had the first year at the girls school which is St. Peter's Rooms now. And I went there when I was five; I didn't like it so I went home! My Mum had to bring me back!

*George Gregg b 1936*

Everyone started in Miss Attewell's class and she was very welcoming when I got there. We had slate boards to write on and we had plasticine. I can remember learning the alphabet. She had picture cards round the

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room. C for Cat and all that sort of thing – all around the room. With pictures on. Capital letters and small letters.

*David Chapman b 1936*

We started school at the Ruddington girls on Church Street, which is now St. Peter's Rooms. I hated going across. We only lived across the road from there, but they tell me that I cried and showed off no end because I didn't want to go to school.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

The first day I went to school, the buzzer went at 10 o'clock and I thought it was home time. But I didn't go home. I went down the allotment on the Loughborough Road. We had an allotment there with 120 hens on it and a load of land. My Dad would find me there at 6 o'clock at night. I was happy down there. I used to spend all my life down there, apart from when I was at school.

*George Dring b 1942*

My first day at infant school I was took into what was the dining room. For me it was an enormous hall. And I sat next to this girl.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

It was a shock, my first day. The first time I ever went there, it was a medical. My very first day was a medical. And that scared the pants off me! Definitely because it was the whole wild fear as it was in those days. I can remember my Mum taking me there and having a medical. It was a doctor. I can remember the chap, so it must have been the doctor.<sup>1</sup> I started the following week. It was definitely a mixed class. There were girls there.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

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<sup>1</sup> In those days male nurses were very rare indeed, and female doctors were rare.

# MOVING UP

I suppose at that age you didn't miss the girls. Not at eight. You probably thought you were better off without them!

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

I went to the school which is now St Peter's Rooms. Then I went to the boys school on the Green after that, when I was seven. I stayed at the same school from seven to fifteen.

*George Dring b 1942*

I started at what used to be called the girls school and is now St. Peter's Rooms which is the Parish Offices. Both are Victorian schools and the girls used to stay there all the way up, primary, junior and secondary. But just after I left the boys school they built a new school in Bridgford. In fact I watched them build it because it was right next door to the school I was at. And then all the secondary school went to The Luttrell School so then it was only primary and junior, in both of the schools. But the boys used to go from the girls school after two years; they used to go from the girls school to the boys school. So you were something like seven when you went to the boys school, a big shock!

*Andy Green b 1944*

I went to three schools in Ruddington actually. I went to the junior school or infant school when I was 5. And then I went to the junior school until I was 11. And then I went to what was then called the Ruddington County secondary modern, from when I was 11 to when I was 15. So, there was three schools. So I had all my education in the village.

The girls stopped in St Peter's, because there was only two infant classes. They stopped down there and we just progressed onto the corner on the Green there. So it was a bit of independence and we got rid of the girls. So it was good, it was good. And of course there, we met other people because there was a few people came in from other surroundings.

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It had a bigger catchment area than St Peter's. I don't know whether it was a few people joined us from other ages or moving into the village. When I went down to the secondary modern, when I was 11, that'd got a greater catchment because that'd pick people up from Bradmore, Bunny and places like that, that hadn't got a secondary school, but they'd all got a little junior school up to 11.

*Paul Foister b 1951*



# CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND TEACHING METHODS

## ST. PETER'S SCHOOL

You'd got to watch your Ps and Qs, or they'd soon pounce on you. There was all the marching in, in lines and that in the morning. Ten to nine, so that everybody would be in school for nine o'clock.

It was the girls school in the infants and I suppose I had a bit of help because I'd got two sisters a bit older than me. They was already there, so they'd be looking out for me. You'd got the old A, B, C all round, pinned up round the walls. Had a music lesson, singing and that. Then they'd be telling you a story. You'd be beginning to learn some of the letters. You went up into the next class. We was there two years, you see. You'd got a lady teacher again. They was all ladies at that school.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

With Miss Attewell, it was only the alphabet. A, B, C, and things like that. We did a few tables with Miss Attewell. Yes, about the two times table. I've got memories of playing the drums, the glockenspiel, and the tambourine. I remember learning to read, but I picked it up very quickly. I was a little bit slower at learning to write.

She was a little bit disastrous Miss Rackham was, but I suppose she was good at heart. She was quite strict. After coming from a baby class that's when you met life in the raw. It was far more advanced than the baby class.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

The only thing I can remember about that was playing triangle in the band. As a five year old in my first class.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

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Well, we used blackboard and chalk, the first lessons. We didn't use a pencil. Little individual blackboards. You could rub it out.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

You played a lot of games in the playground, organised. Ring a ring of roses and all that sort of thing – child games.

*David Chapman b 1936*

Before you left there, you were expected to know off-by-heart your twelve times table. So, one times one and so on, and two twos are four, three twos are six, four twos are eight, five twos are ten. You had to go through all that lot. Twelve twelves are a hundred and forty-four. You just knew that. That was expected. You knew that before you went on to the boys school on The Green.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

We used to go on nature rambles, where Elms Park is now. The teachers tried to get us to remember all the names of the grasses like Crow's Foot. Flowers as well. We did go down Western Fields as well

*David Chapman b 1936*

You had to learn to spell. I remember you had to learn to spell policeman. Then you had to recite your tables. That was all at the girls school before I was seven.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

They had a school orchestra at the girls school. I had a drum. They read the music out on different colours for the different instruments. So you had your own colour and when your turn came round you'd hit the drum. I always used to want to have a go at the drums and I never seemed to get a go. I always got the triangle!

*Andy Green b 1944*

The Headmistress was called Mrs Hamilton-Jones. And she was a dragon. I mean she was a real, real dragon! She was a very difficult woman. You didn't realize she was very ambitious – obviously not for people like me at infants level.

I was only about four and half. But I was reasonably all right. I could read, so I had to sit at the back of the school when they were trying to teach

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CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND TEACHING METHODS

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some of them at the front to read. They'd sit their favourite pupils at the back. My second oldest friend and me, we used to sit with the daughter of one of the teachers. We used to sit together. All three of us used to sit together at the back. There used to be a little knot of the brighter ones.

*Andy Green b 1944*

I enjoyed art because we used to go up to the prefabricated part on The Green at Ruddington for painting. To this day I still paint. I even paint local scenes of Ruddington which sometimes takes me back to when I was at school. It was something that carried on from my Father who was very artistic, a landscape gardener. His father was a landscape gardener, so the artistic side of it carried on.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

In that first year, was a guy called Ian Forman and he'd broken his arm within a year. I still remember him in a plaster cast. He died of leukaemia. I remember the teacher telling us that he'd died, to this day. We were either six or seven, but I still remember. I remember him dying. It's just a strange thing really. Even though it doesn't affect you then, you remember it thirty years later.

We were told about Aberfan when we were at the infant's school. The mudslide in Wales, in the late sixties. The mud from a mine heap slid back on the village over a school of children. And the thing was, we were children of the same age. They would have grown up to be our age. There were 300 or something. I don't know. A massive amount of children just died.

One day they took us to the library in Ruddington, so just a quick walk. This was in the infants. We were introduced, I thought it was to a woman author, and yet I'm sure we were talking about *Stig of the Dump*.<sup>2</sup> Which is a famous book. A children's book. Well it's one that I was certainly familiar with in the sixties. It was on *Jackanory*.<sup>3</sup>

Only once was I ever dragged to the Headmistress's office. She was my auntie, so it wasn't too bad.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

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2 *Stig of the Dump* was an adventure series on TV about a boy who lives in a house, and a girl who lives in a dump. Clive King was the author of the book.

3 *Jackanory* was a children's TV programme.

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I remember the railings! That kept you in! Where my family lived, it was only five doors away from the school. So I have a strong memory of being able to sneak out, behind gates, and sneak myself all the way across the pavement without anybody seeing me. Below the small wall that was there. Then my Mum getting hold of me and bringing me back!

We would have to lay on the floor and imagine colours or things that we did. We had to lay down and imagine scenes and imagine that we were there, and then act them as fast as we can. Like walking through a forest or something like that, through a field or something, or imagine the sky with the clouds going by and stuff. It's more play in the infants.

We had sports. Just mild athletics, running and jumping, and bean bags sort of stuff, throwing or whatever. It was just all hard-standing. There wasn't any grass then. It was all tarmac and concrete so if you fell over you knew about it. The memories of St. Peter's are all play.

I do remember doing PE and having to have the PE bag in the cloakroom. If you didn't have it then you had to have hideous, either navy or dark green, knickers. You just didn't forget your stuff because that's what you had to wear otherwise. This was doing PE in the big hall where the bi-fold doors go back.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

I've found that you learnt more because you played more. The only time you stopped, well every so often, you're sitting in a corner like this on your knees or bottoms and the teacher would sit on a small chair, for story time, and you listened. Occasionally a kid would rant and rave because they didn't want to sit down, or it was too long sitting down, so the teachers quietly said, 'Shut up while I'm reading.' But it was nice.

I had a little cat called Sooty, not a small cat. But every day when I went to school he would follow me. He would literally go into a classroom and sit by me, and I wished he would do my work for me! And teacher would say, 'Look Andrew, can you take your cat back home with you?' So I had to carry him back. This went on and he even went, when I moved to the junior school, he still went to the old school. Teachers were bringing him back and saying, 'Look, your person's not here anymore!'

*Andy Gough b 1961*

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## BOYS SCHOOL

Well you were all in the same class. You was in more or less your year. Even when I left there was one or two who could barely read. I can still remember them now. Without mentioning any names, there was one or two of fourteen who was still struggling to read. So everybody wasn't equal. I don't know why, we all had the same thing.

At that time, there was three leavings at school. Some left at the end of every term, so some left at Christmas, Easter and then the July. In my case, my birthday is mid April and sometimes Easter falls early or late. That year it fell slightly earlier, and I had to go back. My birthday was about the Tuesday when we went back to school and for the sake of a couple of days I had to go 'til the August. So when we did start back after the Easter in the top class, as you might call it, there was only two of us left! So for that term, three months, we did very little work. We went with other classes, but we was out on the garden and doing things like that. That kept us occupied but not particularly normal school work!

Class numbers were well in the thirties usually, but in the last year, in the last three months, there was two in our class. When we got the report, I was second in class. Number in class – two! Doug Kirkman was the other one.

I suppose as long as they kept you occupied from nine to ten to four, they did the best they could.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

These are the sort of things: reading, recitation (how about that for a word!), writing, dictation, English, composition, arithmetic, mental arithmetic, scripture (whatever that was!), science or nature, geography, history, drawing, handicrafts and physical training. In the class in 1941, there was thirty-six in a class.

Look at the tatty way that these reports were prepared. You had to do it yourself: to draw it out yourself. Then you had to put your own marks in afterwards. War-time economy, it is. Position of third in class of thirty-eight I think it says there. 'He loses marks by fits of carelessness or the result might have been better!' And yet I was still third, so gosh knows what the rest were like! And the rest, another one here, 1943. Standard 5b, I think it says, so there must have been more in there. Position in class, second, out of only twenty-two. So we must have gone down in the

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numbers, which would have been the time prior to me going off to grammar school.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

I was told by my parents that I'd got to stand on my own feet when I got to the boys school. The boys school had a bit of a reputation that it could be a bit rough there. I escaped when I was eleven.

We used to have jumble sales every so often, in the school, on a Saturday. I don't know what it was in aid of. They were very big jumble sales. We had a Christmas party every year. In the big room. And we had films, during that. Games and films. Everybody enjoyed that, because it was the end of term. We made Christmas decorations. To take home, and for the school. Chain garlands and garlands – some of them were very cleverly designed. Easy to do.

*David Chapman b 1936*

The classrooms were able to have shutters between the one, two, three. So you could have three classrooms, all made into this one big room. And every classroom communicated one with the other. Mr Marshall was the headmaster. He had a desk in the middle there, near the fire, and smoked his pipe all the way through. All the way through the day. Nobody ever said anything. He would just get on with his job and smoked. He took lessons as well. In those days it wasn't purely administrative.

You had a class in there, a class in there and a class in there. There'd be three there and then there was another one in another class, that made four. Then you'd have another one, Standard Five. Probably six teachers and the Headmaster. You were well served with teachers. The other thing was, if one teacher was off for any reason then they could open up the classroom and that teacher taught, they'd be about thirty odd in each class. He could teach the whole lot of sixty, in two rooms you see. Or Mr Marshall himself would come and teach.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

When I was seven I went up to the boys school and started in Miss Eaton's class. All sitting at tables. Miss Eaton divided the class into sections. If you were in the top section you sat up in one row of desks and then the bottom

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CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND TEACHING METHODS

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section sat in the other row of desks. Depending on which row you were in, whether you were in the top section or the bottom section. I'd assumed it was by intelligence.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

The ones that couldn't do it very well, they did get picked on by the teachers a bit. They got shouted at a little bit, I'm afraid. There was only three of us that were a reasonable level, and there were quite a number that were OK. We got left alone really. Well, not left alone but we didn't get picked on. You just did your work and that was the end of it.

There were some teachers were better than others. Some recognized that there was a lack of ability there and just passed over them quickly. What they probably ought to have done was concentrated on them.

*Andy Green b 1944*

All the way through you was in a house. You were assigned to a house. There was four houses. There was Southwell, which was yellow, Sherwood, green, Trent which was red and Castle – that was blue. So you was always in a house. If you got any house points or things like that, they went in your favour but also contributed to the house. Also sports, any achievements you got, it all went to the house. At the end of the year, they was all totted up and the house would get a trophy for the best all-round achievements or sports. We had to sit in the four rows in your house. So if you got awarded for anything, it was straight-forward for the teacher to put it into the log for the house point.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

All my time at the primary school, I remember it being a time of fun and play. There must have been work involved in there somewhere. There had to be. It isn't fixed in my thinking of that time

*Richard Smith b 1953*

It was a bit daunting really. If you look at the building for a start. Big sort of Victorian place, very high ceilings. The reputation it had as well. It had a reputation of being very, very strict. Which was proven for me. It was. The

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way the teachers treated you. They had complete control over the class through, not violence, but through the threat of punishment.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

As we moved into the junior stage, we started to be separated according to ability. We would be sat with about six to eight others on a large table, rectangular square tables, each three or four tables placed together. So instead of everybody facing the front, we were all facing inwards. There'd be five or six of these table groupings in the classroom. There'd be 35 kids in a class. Something like that. I was on the top table, so we would be working at a different pace to children on another table with differentiated work, with extra help being given to the less able and the advanced tasks given to other people. The brighter ones received more attention. But perhaps that's human nature on behalf of the teachers anyway.

My penultimate year I was moved up a year. There was half a dozen of us moved into the final age group of junior school. We all repeated our final year. Because you had to be 11 to do your 11-Plus.

My father was interested in our education, though he was from a very ordinary background. Having said that, most of the other children who I sat with were from very middle class parents, most of them in the professions. Whereas the bottom table was very much the children of the farm labourers.

Lessons were strict but I remember them being fairly relaxed and friendly as well. The balance was right.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

In the junior school, we used to do topics quite a lot and produce booklets. So we did topics for instance on Greek Gods, on Romans. Also topics that you wanted to do, like football or whatever your favourite sport was at the time. It's just a method of being taught history and things like that. It would take a week I would say. Things like furniture. So you'd learn about different types of furniture, Edwardian. It was all about drawing and writing and being able to articulate it on paper, in the written form.

We used to have reading cards, where the cards would prompt you to read and you'd have to answer things. It would take you a long time to get

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through a set of colours and the colours would be graded on difficulty. You'd look around the room and see if anybody was on aqua.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

### **Morning Assembly**

All the boys managed to get into the big room for assembly, easy. There's not many there. Not many boys at all. It was a village. Top class would be between seven and eleven boys, the oldest, from thirteen/fourteen, and there would be about twenty in the other. There was nowhere near over sixty. Fifty at the most.

When the bell rang you all had got to be in line, to get in the school. Soon as you went there in the morning you had assembly. They always read a prayer. And a hymn. I had to go to Sunday School, too, in the morning and afternoon, every Sunday. All the boys. Everybody done it, the girls as well. That was law that was: you got to go to Sundays.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

There was an assembly. Mr Marshall took it. Mrs Benton played the piano. And we sang a hymn. Very often it was 'New Every Morning is the Love'. And we sang it – in not a very enthusiastic way, I'm afraid!

Mr Potts, the Vicar, came in once a week. He gave us a talk and there was a bit more – perhaps a bit more religious fervour in the assembly when he came.

There was always a rush to get there before the bell stopped. You didn't want to be late! I don't know who rang it. It put panic into you wondering whether it was going to stop before you got there. There was one occasion when I used to go on a bike and I gave a lift to another boy, on the crossbar. We were just in front of the Methodist Church and he went and put his foot in the spokes. We both went over the crossbar and he landed on his chin and damaged himself – I wasn't quite so bad! Rushing to get to school that was. We were both late.

*David Chapman b 1936*

We used to have to go down to the main school for morning assembly and of course when you're nearly fourteen, going on towards fifteen, your voice goes. So the Headmaster came round. Marshall came round. 'Shut up you, you're out of tune.' When we got to our own class, we said, 'Well, it's not right. We'll not bother going to assembly if we can't sing.' We thought, 'Well it's one way

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of getting out of it!' He agreed with us Mr Strickland did. He said, 'I quite agree with you.' He was that type of person you respect. I think you showed more respect for that type than anybody else. He said, 'Right we'll have it in our own classroom.' Which we did. But all he'd got was a tuning fork. He used to hit that on the desk and we'd sing! Well the first morning, the back door that connected to the girls cloakroom suddenly burst open and Mrs Greenwood, was the teacher there, come flying in. She says, 'Mr Strickland what on earth's happening?' He said 'Well it's morning.' 'Oh' she said 'I thought you was murdering them!' Of course that amused everybody then! After that, we joined the girls and we all had a morning assembly and the two senior classes for the last few months of school. But we thought we could get out of going down to the main school, because nobody liked going down there.

*George Gregg b 1936*

We always used to have to line up and it was a matter of like they did in the Army, where you spaced yourself out by putting your arm out to your partner's shoulder. Eyes right and space out. Then we could just right turn, not a military thing but just wheel off and walk neatly into the school. I suppose all the male teachers would have been in the Army and it was just a way of getting everybody lined up and looking smart.

In the main school, the three classrooms were next to each other. There was a partition between, a concertina partition that used to be pulled back every Friday morning for a common assembly where we used to join together all the classes. Every morning, we used to have prayer or something like that, and a little bible reading or something, only for a few minutes to start the day.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

We went down to the girls school for big assembly/sing-a-long, every week or two, not a lot. They must have, in turn, come up to us. But rather strangely I don't remember that. All I remember is going down to them.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

### Keeping children down a class

They had a policy in those days of keeping people down. Certainly at the boys school they did. A lot of people stopped down. They had Standard One. Standard Two and Three for some reason was a combined class. They just split Standard One up when you went up to Standard Two and Three. Standard Two were perhaps the less bright ones and Standard Three were the more bright ones. It was based solely on exam results because we used to have three exams a year in those days. I went on holiday in the middle of the exams I got, I think I got, 49 out of 50 for both exams. But I only took two exams, and they put me in Standard Two because I'd only got 98 marks. But I'd got them out of a hundred! I'd only done two exams. Everybody else had done about six and so of course I was in the bottom part of it. The average didn't seem to occur to them! My Mother was horrified. She thought it was terrible.

For a while I sat next to a lad who was a bit backward. He couldn't really talk. But he was a lot bigger than me. That is one of the problems.

One pal of mine, he used to live opposite and was my oldest friend. He's still in the village. I still see him. He was born in November and he was always in a class a year above mine. He was dying to sit next to me at school. He said, 'I'm going to stop down next year so you can sit next to me.' This was Standard Five which was the last Standard before you became seniors, secondary, because it was still a secondary school at that time. It was after that, you went to Standard Six which was 11 plus failures, which was virtually everybody. He actually stayed down in Standard Five and I came up from Standard Four, and I sat next to him and he thought it was wonderful.

After about a week they said, 'Green, come into the next class.' They was only divided up by a partition. We thought, 'God what have we done?' Because there was a great policy of putting the fear of God up you, even though you'd done nothing. We'd won a competition, Cadbury's essay competition. They said, 'Right. Green and Perfect in there.' We thought we'd done something wrong. We thought we were going to get clouted or something, because they clouted you fairly regularly there! I'd won this thing and this other lad, Edward Perfect, had come second. A national competition, a Cadbury thing. I got eight bars of chocolate, something like that. All we'd done is listen to this bloke spouting. I couldn't much remember what he said now. I just wrote it down. But they said, 'We want you in there,' and

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we thought, 'What have we done now!' and they'd stuck us up a class! They'd advanced us a class. So I was telling William about it. If he'd just gone up as normal I'd have sat with him anyway! I don't know whether he really tried to stop down. I only sat with him for about a week. I thought it was wonderful!

In Standard Six, the lad I sat next to left school. He was fifteen. I was ten when we first started. He was fifteen in the term after we finished that year. I was ten. He was fifteen. In the same class.

It shattered them. I do remember one lad crying when he was told he was staying down. It happened at grammar school just the odd time. We had one lad in our fifth form, it was his third year. Third year of fifth, he was two years older than us! I think this lad that stayed in fifth year didn't do very well, even though. I'm not convinced that it does them any good, because they didn't have things like special measures in those days. That was a special measure wasn't it? It does your confidence. Well, it would.

*Andy Green b 1944*

### Classroom monitors

We used to have to go round and collect the milk money because we always used to have the third of a pint of milk. It was a ha'penny a bottle. We used to have to take tuppence ha'penny on Monday morning. Probably one or two got it free but in the majority it was a ha'penny a bottle.

On a Monday morning, I had to go around the classes collecting the National Savings money. For every sixpence<sup>4</sup> you put in you got a stamp. When you got thirty stamps, well, fifteen shillings<sup>5</sup>, you got a certificate. So after the teachers collected the money in, it was my job on a Monday morning to go to the Post Office, take the money, and get the appropriate number of stamps. Come back and put in the books.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

We used to have these small bottles of school milk; they were about a third of a pint. We'd have a crate of milk brought to the classroom, and one of us would get called out to dish the milk out to various people. When it came to the last bottle of milk it was only half full, so being the gentleman that I

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4 2.5p

5 75p

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am, I gave the one that was half full to myself. I got commended with the teacher for doing that.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

We used to take it in turns to sell packets of crisps at dinner-time. We'd take it in turns to man the stall with one of the teachers. It was still pounds, shillings and pence, so we had to be able to add up. A more mature pupil, the last year or two in school.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

Good thing I like milk and always have done. It provided me with a job later on. I was milk monitor when I was in the fourth year at school. We used to have to take the milk down in a cart, which had four or five crates of milk, down to the other part of the school in the morning. I think I did it to get out of lessons. We had to keep a book and I seemed to be doing a lot of monitor jobs then. I used to make the teachers' coffee in the morning as well with somebody else.

Whether I was doing much work at school I don't know because I had all these little jobs on the side. A friend of mine was doing weather monitor and I was his assistant. There was something outside to check the rainfall, wind speed, barometer. It was just a case of making notes each day and what was happening with the weather. Mr Hall, whose class it was, was very keen on that sort of thing, making charts for the back of the classroom.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

We used to have monitors quite a lot. There was a milk monitor. There was the blind monitor, so you would pull the blinds down. There would be an ink monitor.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

I'm not one for writing so I got made milk monitor, or if it was a painting class I would always put the paints out. I got the easy job!

Free milk. Until Thatcher took it away. She's got a lot to answer for! You handed the milk out, then you would have your own milk. Then you would go round collecting the empties, take them outside and stack them outside ready for the next morning's delivery. They would take the empties

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but leave another batch for you on your break time, which was ten o'clock, something like that. That was all the way up to junior school.

That would have been half an hour a day used as cheap labour. Get a tick: 'Miss, can I have a tick because I was milk monitor?' But it was nice.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

## DISCIPLINE

Clouts at school was a ruler, a flat ruler, round back of the head, back of your neck here. It was a ringer that were. 'Do this!', 'Do that!' If you slipped up on your lessons, sums and that, and times-tables, you got a clout.

The teachers would come and bang your heads together if you started arguing. They was allowed then to do it.

Mr Teager was not a bad chap he wasn't at all. He was very good. He tried to knock it into you. As I walked across there the other day, school kids, there was girls, probably fourteen, fifteen and lads the same age. The lads gets on the bus before the girls. Now we didn't. We let the girls get on the bus before we did. All these things were knocked into your head.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

In the writing classes, I made a fool of myself actually. I wrote my name down and I spelt it wrong. My name is spelt WIGHTMAN, as in the Isle of Wight and I put WIGTH. The teacher pulled me up in front of the whole class and said, 'He calls himself Wighthman now.' They all roared with laughter. I remember that seventy years later.

They'd got different methods of punishing. One had got the bamboo cane. I had that several times. One had a tawse, a handle thing with three leather straps on. Mr Teager used to carry the school door key in his pocket. It was a big heavy key, and he used to clonk you on the top of the head with it. Never to any great degree, but you'd be doing something and he'd come behind and bonk you on the top of the head with it.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

If anybody did misbehave, eating in class or even speaking in class, you got the cane. The teacher at the time gave it. It wasn't necessary to take you to the Headmaster. When it got more female teachers then it was the Headmaster or the males that did it. They got the nifty way of bringing it down

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quick and back up again so if you didn't move your hand quick you got it both on the top and the bottom of the hand! The majority of lads, you knew your place. I mean, there was no backchat or anything like that. And if you was caught, well bad luck. You went out, had the cane and sat back again.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

It was pretty hard because the cane appeared. There were several occasions when I got the cane, having to stand up in front of the class, and hold your hand out, and whack, whack, whack, by whichever teacher it was!

On one occasion I spilt some ink over somebody! And I know I got six of the best, six whacks on the cane, on the hand! The day I passed the scholarship, I'd be eleven, and I still had the whack! Because I was so overjoyed and I did something, but I was dragged out in front of the class and whack, whack, whack! But it did me no harm. I never felt any upset over it at all!

Some of the teachers at the grammar school were very good. Some of them were very harsh. The cane was there. If they thought you'd done wrong, whether you had or you hadn't, that was that. You got corporal punishment. I did get it from the Headmaster on one occasion. You bent over the chair and that was it, on your backside. But during the class times, you'd get a rap on the knuckles if you did something, or you'd get the solid hard rubber of the board thrown at you. There were one or two times when pupils used to stand up and protest the punishment! I remember that.

It didn't do any harm, not to me anyway. That was your punishment and that was it and you didn't become aggressive to the teacher again. You may have thought, 'Well I don't really like him much,' so you'd keep out of his way.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

We used to have a blackboard, marked out in G and B, which stands for Good and Bad. One of the pupils was called out to the centre of the class, and had to write who he thought was good and who was bad. Those that were good went home a few minutes earlier. He made the decision. But then you had your favourites, your best mates! Yes, anyone that you didn't like you used to put them in the bad column. We used to think it was a position of power!

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

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And one method we used to try to prevent the pain from having the cane was to rub walnut juice on our hands. That was supposed to cure it!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

For cheek. Being cheeky. The simplest thing was have to go and stand in the corner. You could have the cane from Mr Marshall, sometimes Mr Saxton. It was in front of the whole school. Miss Eaton had a cane but I don't think she used it. She just threatened! I think they all had a cane, each proper issue. Education issued, weren't they?

Parents turning up to have a row with the headmaster. When they'd been a caning. They didn't have an office so it was in front of everybody. They were ushered out as quick as possible when that happened!

*David Chapman b 1936*

Well I suppose, you see you never seemed to get anybody causing trouble at school in our days. You'd never cheek a teacher off, or anything like that.

*George Gregg b 1936*

There was a slipper; that was the discipline. If you misbehaved you were bent over and given a sharp whack on the backside, with a slipper, and it hurt! So that kept control, I don't think there was anything else. That was it. There was no detentions, or suspensions, or anything.

The worst thing that could happen to you was to be sent down a form. They sent you down a form if you were really bad and made you sit with the year before for a while. You always came back, but that was humiliating!

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

You got the cat from one teacher in Ruddington. It's a leather strap. It's illegal. It was at the time. I think you've got about six strands on it. You put your hand out and he whips you with it. You get a rash on your hands. I had the slipper a few times, for talking mainly. That was normal that was. You used to go out in the front of the class and bend over and get the slipper.

There was a teacher in the Luttrell; he used to throw the rubbers that you used to wipe the board down. This is weighing, what, half a pound anyway? Six inches long with wood and felt. And it hurt if he hit you on the head with it.

*George Dring b 1942*

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I'd done something I shouldn't have done, and the teacher asked me to stay behind and I did get the cane. There was a big door, a big wooden door. It sticks in my mind now. I can see six deep of pupils, my friends, who were peering in this door. There was quite a big glass panel and all my friends, all their heads were just in there. They must have been piled on top of each other, just to see what was going to happen to me.

I think that was very unusual. I don't recall people getting the cane much. I think we were a pretty well behaved bunch. I think they were generally strict. So I remember it as being a happy, secure existence.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

I can certainly remember the classes with the Headmaster because that was a class I dreaded. He was very, very strict. Very strict. And he used to pull boys up to the front of the class by their ears if you were talking or doing something you shouldn't.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

I was slipped once. I remember a teacher drawing a carrot on the bottom of a plimsoll, drawing it in chalk onto the slipper and it being left on the seat of your pants. I don't recall any canings. Possibly I was a good boy. I don't recall being in fear of the cane. The punishment I recall more vividly was the rap across the knuckles with a ruler.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

Every time a teacher took us for a lesson, they were in full authority and with full respect from the children. But there was no fear either. It was just a great friendly atmosphere at Ruddington.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

At junior school you got the cane, slipper, but that's all. If you rattled the teacher's cage too many times you were sent to the Headmaster. The Headmaster at the junior school was the only one who would give you the slipper, and if he wasn't there, occasionally the Deputy. But that was on the very rare occasion. This was purely for misbehaving, not malicious. Taking the mickey out of the teachers, taking the mickey out of other pupils. They beat me. I had one slipper from a female teacher. I think I

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was not doing what I was supposed to have been doing because I can't remember it. I must find out who she was because I would love to take her to court now!

Hanging behind one teacher's desk was a cane, but he never used it. The first day you'd come into a classroom, this particular teacher would stand to one side, point to this cane and say, 'If I have any unruly behaviour, I'll get this cane off this wall and give you ten of the best.' But I never saw it come off the wall.

There was a male teacher that always shouted. I can remember sitting in the front, getting a bit annoyed because I felt that he was shouting at me, but he was shouting at everyone. My excuse was, 'Oh, those people at the back can't hear!' That was at the lower junior school.

There was a lot of authority for prefects, but not in the sense that they would be classed as bullies now. Well the ones that were taking you up to the headmaster's were officially prefects, doing it officially, and sometimes they would do the punishment as well. Caning. In junior school. But mostly it was the slipper. By the time I got to the fourth years, I was dishing out orders for the lower ones! They would have been nine or ten when they were prefects allowed to slipper you.

It was like a social class difference between classes, between the upper class of the fourth year, final year and the lower class. It was like going up two steps. I was made prefect at the junior. It was nice, but I had trouble saying what I wanted to say. So most of the people got away with what they were doing.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

## THE NIT NURSE

The nit-nurse came round. I can remember that. I don't think I ever got nits. We had to go through the inspection though. Some boys had impetigo fairly regular, including me. And you'd turn up with purple patches the face, the stuff that you had to put on.

*David Chapman b 1936*

# REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

## St Peter's school

The headmistress was a Miss Hand or Mrs Hand, I don't know. You always used to say 'Miss' to a teacher; didn't matter if they were married or not. Not long ago, I went up to the school for garden bags. A woman, lady, come to the door with a vacuum cleaner in her hand. She told me who she was. I didn't know. I just says to her, 'The last time as I come in here I come to the stick!' To Miss Hand! That's right, she'd dish the stick out.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Miss Attewell lived to a good age. She lived at the very top house at the top of Wilford Road. Easthorpe Street. She retired during the war. But she lived for a long while afterwards. She was very nice that I remember.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Miss Attewell was very, very caring and thoughtful. I liked Miss Attewell. My parents knew her as well. She only lived just down the road from us.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

I liked Miss Attewell. I wasn't so keen on any of the other teachers. Miss Rackham was at the infants. She was a little bit on the fierce side. She was the one who kept order, I think. I think there was a Miss Waterhouse, was the headmistress at that time.

*David Chapman b 1936*

I was fortunate that I had an aunt who lived with us as well as my Mum, and they used to read things to me. So before I went to school I could read a little bit.

We had a teacher there who was Mrs Murphy, who was quite strict. She went round the class and had us reading bits and bobs and I found that very useful. I enjoyed reading ever since. Mrs Murphy had the cane always on the piano in the room where she was. For five-year olds. There was no

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messing about at all in those days. The headmistress was Miss Waterhouse who had her hair done in a roll. She was tall and always dressed in black. She was a commanding presence. No nonsense in the school.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

I suppose Mrs Hamilton-Jones was a dragon, but to kids between five and seven she wasn't all that much of a dragon. I know she upset my sister terribly. She was terrified of her.

*Andy Green b 1944*

### Boys school

In the boys school the first class, that's Miss Eaton. I was seven. When you got to about nine, you went to Mr Connop's. From there to Mister Saxton, and then to the headteacher, Mr Teager. He was the headmaster. Mr Teager used to live next door to the boys school.

We called all the men teachers, Dad. Dad Saxton or Dad Marshall, for instance. Well it was just a nickname, that. We never called him that to his face. I mean all teachers had nicknames don't they? But all ours were Dad or Daddy and all the ladies were Polly!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

### Mrs Eaton

Miss Eaton, that was the first one. When I was seven. We started learning tables. Everybody had to learn their tables, and know them. Six sixes, 36. She'd just jump on you from the two times table to twelve.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

The first teacher was Mrs Eaton. She used to come from Bridgford on the bike. We would be pushing one another over as to who was going to carry her bag into the school. She probably took homework home to mark. She was very nice and she could keep you in order. She could be a bit nasty, a bit sharp, I suppose, but in the main, she was all right. I can remember us all sitting on the top, because you'd got desks with two to a desk. And her sitting there, reading a story to us.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

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REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

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With Mrs Eaton, we was called to arms, many times a day, to keep us disciplined and quiet. It generally worked. Mrs Eaton had her little primus stove where she used to mash the coffee, or the hot milk. She used to do it on top of her desk. She used to do it whenever she felt like it I think. We didn't have our music practice with Mrs Eaton, although she was very good on the piano. She was a good teacher and she had plenty of patience. It was quite a happy class really.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

At seven we went to the boys school, to Miss Eaton's class. She was very nice. She'd got a way with a stick though. She used to throw it at you. It was only a short stick with all little knobs on it all the way round! We used to have some laughs about it though. Not at the actual time, but afterwards.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Miss Eaton. She took the younger ones to start with. She was likeable but everybody respected her. She had a loud voice and a broad Nottingham accent and wouldn't stand any nonsense. Most mornings she sent boys on an errand to fetch her a cake from Horspools and whoever went, there was always a ha'penny change and you were allowed to keep the ha'penny. She was very fond of sponge sandwich.

We grew kidney beans in jars of water. Carrot tops on saucers. This was all in Miss Eaton's class. We got wartime propaganda from her. She had a drawing of Hitler that she held up in front of the class and then she pulled it open and it turned into a pig. I think she'd made it. Rather clever it was.

*David Chapman b 1936*

There was a teacher there, she must long be dead now, bless her, Mrs Eaton. She came from Nottingham. Always with a bag in her hand. She was again a strict disciplinarian. She had a cane made out of a gnarled thing, made out of a branch of a tree, and she was very good at rapping your knuckles if you did anything wrong. She did do that. She was very strict, but again she was a good teacher and you learnt.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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Recruits coming up from the girls school (that's where boys were taught up to the age of seven) were introduced gently into the regime by being placed in the care of Miss Eaton, the only female in the school. Initial misdemeanours in Standard I were dealt with by a high velocity piece of chalk aimed with a precision which only comes after years of practice. Persistent offenders could expect more severe punishment in the form of a flying board rubber, aimed with just the same accuracy. Board rubbers consisted of a strip of felt glued to a hefty piece of wood. There was very little trouble in Miss Eaton's class. No-one went home and complained. You just hoped that your mum wouldn't notice the red patch. If she did you were in trouble again – when your dad came home.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

They did have a little old lady teacher called Mrs Eaton. Ma Eaton, we used to call her and she was there all the time I was at the boys school. She was the only lady teacher.

*Andy Green b 1944*

When I was at Ruddington Endowed, a teacher had just retired, the year I started before, who taught my Dad. Her name was Mrs Eaton.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

### Mr Teager and Mr Connop

Teager was always dressed up, collar and tie. He'd got the cane. He was the headman with the cane, he was. He had no office. He used to use his desk. Behind his desk he'd got one or two cupboards and that was it. That was his office.

Mr Connop, the most smartly dressed man I've ever seen. And Mr Saxton. They'd got ties on, cravats, and they used to walk straight up, they was really clever. I'd got holes in my jumper, patched up.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

Mr Teager, he was the Headmaster. Everybody liked him.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

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REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

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Mr Connop went in the Army. He fought in the Far East against the Japanese. I think he was taken prisoner of war, but he survived. Mr Connop was a very fair man. If he punished you, you deserved it.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

Mr Teager and Mr Connop both went in the forces.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

### Mr Saxton

Mr Saxton, he didn't go to the army. He stayed on behind as a school teacher. Mr Saxton was a bit harder. People didn't like Mr Saxton.

I only saw one of the teachers once really lose his temper – that was Mr Saxton. He was the one who had the long bamboo cane and it used to really hurt. He used to leave it on the front row of the desks. He'd loop it over there and it actually got stuck in the ink well of the pupil who was sitting there. He was getting quite angry with this pupil, Olly Peachman. He'd done something very silly. The teacher, Mr Saxton, pulled this cane up to hit him with it and it pulled the ink well out. And the ink went all over his trousers and he really got it. It was awful watching him hit this fellow on the shoulders with a cane. It was terrible. Doing that to him, these days he'd have been put in prison. I'm sure he would. But it was horrible to watch him doing it. Then he calmed him down and afterwards, him and Mr Connop got together and these little third of a pint of milk that you used to buy. There'd be little dribs and drabs in the bottom and they collected all these little bits of milk and started trying to get this ink stain out. And they never did. He had to go home with this ink all down his trousers. He used to catch the bus. He lived somewhere in Nottingham I think. Never get away with it these days.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

Then you went into 4 and 5. The teacher's name was Saxton. He was a notorious one. He was the one that had done all the slapping and the bumping and the banging. He was a young man, and everybody was afraid of him! Yes he'd hand out the treatment. Give you a swipe at least. Everybody feared him.

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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Sacko he come from Kimberley every morning. He'd got to come into Nottingham and change buses. He came on the bus and then he'd have to get a bus to Ruddington as he used to be there afore 9 o'clock in the morning. Every morning. I never knowed him to be late. But whether Mr Saxton thought about me, because Mother died over me and so it was grandma that brought us up. Whether he could sympathise with me, but he actually asked me if I wanted a job when I come to leaving school. I come out of his class, and he got me a job at Colwick bridge builders, in the drawing office. But of course, Colwick was a million miles away to Grandma. So I didn't go. Most blokes, they're surprised when I mentioned that about him.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Mr Saxton, he was a very good Geography teacher. Very strict but fair.

He used to take charge of all the film shows at Christmas, Mr Saxton did. We used to have an annual film show, in the main hall at school. Every Christmas, which was quite exciting to us. Laurel and Hardy and all sorts of things. I don't think we had a lot to entertain us in those days. The films and the projectors were hired from someone up Carlton Road. After Christmas he had a little magic lantern show across in the Methodist Hall just across the road. Just for the class. It was about Switzerland and the Alps, postcards from the Alps and things like that. He used to travel a lot before the war.

We used to listen to the radio in Mr Saxton's class. He used to tune into BBC and we'd listen to the radio, do various lessons from the radio. He had a gramophone on top of one of the cupboards.

Apple trees were along the top of the garden. As you went through the shed to the garden, apple trees were on the left, at the top. Then all the other garden was in patches, in different patches. We used to have different gardens. We grew vegetables and we used to sell the vegetables. We used to grow all types of vegetables, carrots, beans, everything. Mr Saxton did most of the selling.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

The Deputy Head was Mr Saxton. We used to have sport at school and we used to have to go up to the Recreation ground. Unfortunately, Mr Saxton,

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he was very proud of his highly polished brogues so if it was muddy we very often didn't used to go!

Mr Saxton used to teach Geography, which wasn't a very popular subject for some pupils. So one way we used to divert him from the subject was to mention mountain climbing and walking in the dales and off he went! That made the Geography lesson a lot more interesting.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Mr Saxton, Sacko! A bit physical. With a stick and his hand. And I didn't get on with him at all.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Then we went into Mr Saxton's class and he was vicious he was! Board rubbers and everything at you. This would be about forty-four before Mr Strickland came.

He used to pick you up with your ears and all sorts he did, and drop you. He got severely sorted out by one or two of the mothers. Not the fathers. Mothers always sorted everything like that out. He'd picked this boy up, with his ears and dropped him, and he'd suffered with his ears or something. So she came over and sorted him out! Chased him round the playground! With a carving knife! Oh it was vicious. Nobody bothered. I think one of the other teachers went out and helped and then I think Piggy was the Police Constable come and took her, but never did anything about it. 'Now come on,' and off they went. Towards the end of the war Mr Saxton vanished. He went off. We don't know what happened to him. He just wasn't there.

*George Gregg b 1936*

## **Mr Marshall**

The next Headmaster was a Mr Marshall. W. E. Marshall. I don't know why, but I've got those initials stuck in the back of my mind!

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

You was quite up in the world if you got to Mr Marshall's class. You'd be fourteen, coming up to fifteen then. Mr Marshall was a good teacher. He used to teach bookbinding and things like that. He was quite good on that.

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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He came from Bridgford. Mr Marshall did know quite a bit about painting and art. I did used to like to do that.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I used to like Mr Marshall, the headmaster, because he was a gentleman, I used to think.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Mr Marshall was the headmaster. He smoked a pipe. He smelt of tobacco and he was always feeling in his jacket pocket to make sure the pipe wasn't smouldering. I don't remember him having a room. He just had a big desk in one of the classrooms. Mr Marshall had a car, which was a Singer. Everyone admired it. We used to stand round admiring it.

*David Chapman b 1936*

We'd got into a bit of bother. Marshall was the Headmaster at the time, and he got us and caned us. He really used to hit you. Of course you never told your Mum when you got home that you'd had the cane, or else you'd get perhaps another whiz! We lived in Woodley Street in those days. You had a bath in front of the fire, in a tin one. My Mum seen these marks on my bum. 'What's them?' I said 'Oh I had the cane.' 'When did this happen?' I says, 'Oh, three days ago,' and the marks are still there you see.

So unbeknown to me she come up to sort the Headmaster out. And I had a grandstand view, because as you go in the school, the cloakroom was there and then there was a big door and that led into the main school. When the Headmaster came out, the door was left open, so the lads were all sitting there and could see everything what went off.

He upset her because there was two families of Gregg in the village, and he told her she wasn't me Mother! She got him and shook him because she was a well built lady in those days. He used to have a row of pens in his top pocket and they all fell out and she put him on the floor and stood on him! And she says, 'If you hit any more of my children,' she said, 'I'll come and sort you out again.' And my younger brother he could get away with murder!

Years later I was working at the garage and the boss came to see me. I should think I'd be seventeen, perhaps nearly eighteen. 'Oh,' he says, 'I met your old headmaster last night.' 'Ah no', he says, 'He hasn't got a very good

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opinion of your family. He says they're not much cop are they?' My boss come and told me that. What really turned me against Marshall was him trying to turn the boss against me. My boss didn't believe him you see, but he come and told me about he did. The boss did. He was a gentleman.

He was a person that you'd never forgot because he'd got awfully brown teeth. He used to smoke a pipe I think, and he'd got horrible brown teeth! But somebody brought him, John Dring, I think brought him to the village to the Conservative Club a few years ago now. He said, 'Will you come down and meet him?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Why?' So I told him. I said I might bop him one or run over him! I said, 'No I wouldn't like to meet him.' I always said if I ever seen him walk across the road I'd run over him!

*George Gregg b 1936*

### **Mr Hall**

We had Mr Strickland. Mr Gregory came, and Mr Hall. They was different, I think they'd all been in the RAF. What Mr Gregory and Mr Strickland said, Mr Hall had been quite a hero in the RAF but he never mentioned it. But he was very pleasant. I only had him for about the last six months of the schooling there.

*George Gregg b 1936*

And then you went up to another class, Mr Hall I remember, who'd got a very light voice and they called him Whisper Hall.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

Mr Hall used to have a size 12 plimsoll. If you didn't behave, he used to have what he used to call a lurgy list on the blackboard. If you did something, he'd write your name down and that was it. But if you did something that he thought was good and you deserved merit, and your name was up there, he'd rub it out. It was a good system. So again, if you did something silly, you'd be back up. By the end of the week, you'd got to try and get your name off. Because on a Friday, he used to get this slipper out, and he used to get the chalk and put a D on it. Then he used to whack you across the backside with this slipper, and of course everybody went home with a D.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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I enjoyed my childhood, despite of Mr Hall. I mean Mr Hall was just something that was there and everybody accepted it. It's only when you look back at that and think what an ogre he was, you just think, well, you shouldn't have had to put up with things like that really.

When I'd been in Mr Hall's class I thought he was a good teacher. I think he was a bit unfair with his punishments sometimes but I think it was just his way. But he did hold a class very steady and he put a lot of effort in as well.

The slipper was quite predominant really. I had it several times off Mr Hall, who was a very strict teacher. In fact all the way through the Ruddington boys school, Mr Hall's name was mentioned as the ogre. He was the teacher in the last year at school. 'Mr Hall will sort you out.' He was very, very strict. He used to dish out the slipper and the cane. The slipper: he could give you the slipper for something like forgetting a decimal point. We were the sort of change over years really, going from pounds and pence, decimalisation coming in '71. So we had to get to grips with it. The change of currency: we went from pounds, shillings and pence which were in units of 12 and 240, if I remember rightly. 12 pennies made one shilling. 20 shillings in a pound. So there were 240 pence in the pound. But decimalisation was all on the base of ten, which is much easier to count. But when you're brought up with 12 pennies to a shilling, it all becomes a bit confusing when you're a child. So he used to put a point on the slipper, if you'd forgotten it and make you bend over and whack it onto your shorts. Much to the amusement of the rest of the class of course. So I had that once or twice with Maths not being my best subject.

Mr Hall used to play cricket with us every morning without fail. We used to have the class register done in odd numbers and even numbers. It was odds versus evens cricket match every morning break. We used to take it in turns to bowl from one end and Mr Hall always bowled at the other end and your wicket was a dustbin. We used to take great delight in bowling, trying to bowl you out and making as much noise as you could on the dustbin.

He didn't run. Mr Hall never moved. In fact if you threw the ball to him, he'd stick his hand around his body and if it didn't hit his hand, you'd have to go and throw it to him again or pass it to him. You never knew what sort of ball he was bowling at you: will it be a tennis ball or a cricket ball?

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

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REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

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Mr Hall used to amongst other things, take us for PE and football. Jack Hall was a respected teacher. There's always one that you don't say anything to and cross his path. He seemed to be one of the older teachers in the late 60s and he used to take us for football. He always used to kick downhill, so we'd have to go to Elms Park for the football in the lower field. We'd have to walk together all the way there. He always used to kick downhill, so when we swapped teams at half time, then he would swap teams as well. We'd all chase the ball round, follow it round and he would be kicking it. When we left school and we went to the next school, everybody would keep talking about Jack Hall and his antics for things like that, so he was quite popular.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

We had this coal bunker, backing onto The Green, and we used to throw coal over the wall, on to The Green! And there was about four of us doing it and unfortunately we all got caught. This particular prefect caught us and he said, 'Right, I want you in. Come with me. I'm going to take you to Mr Hall.' Because it could have been nasty: we never knew who was walking across below. We all lined up. I was the last because I was the youngest. It got down to me and he looked at me and he says, 'You don't really want the slipper do you?' I was absolutely, I think, my face was as white, thinking, 'What have I done? I'm going to get the ...' In your brain you're thinking, 'What's he going to do? How many slippers am I having? Is he just going to do it over my trousers or on my bare bum?' He looked at me and he said, 'From the look on your face I'm not bothering to do it because you've had it and I'm not going to put you through it again. All I would say is, don't do it again.' Which I didn't!

*Andy Gough b 1961*

## Mr Gregory

Mr Gregory when he came, he was great. Mr Gregory used to take us for football. I understand he was a very, very good hockey player. No we didn't play hockey, no. It was just football for the boys and cricket in the summer months.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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I liked the History, because it did Richard the Lion Heart and all that sort of thing. It was Mr Gregory that took us for that. He made it interesting.

*George Gregg b 1936*

Pope Gregory we called him.

*George Dring b 1942*

Mr Gregory ended up with Headmaster at the school down here, the modern school. He could only have been just over thirty when he was teaching us there but he seemed ancient! Really ancient!

*Andy Green b 1944*

### Other teachers

After they went, we had quite a few. We had one more man teacher, a Mr Frettingham. I used to also go to the Baptist Sunday school and he used to come occasionally as a lay preacher from Bridgford and then suddenly he turned up as our school teacher because he was an older person. I don't know how old he was but he was too old for military service.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

Mrs Holmes used to live at East Leake, and she came to school on the bike. She had a big sit up and beg bike, but she was a very gentle teacher, a very nice teacher.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I was in Mrs Benton's class. Quite advanced in the school. She used to take you through music and singing. I got the blame for acting about and this time, strangely enough, I was innocent! She sent me to see the Headmaster, which I didn't go and I tripped over the school bell and everybody went home five minutes early! But I never did see the headmaster, Mr Marshall: I didn't see I should get the blame for something I never did!

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

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REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

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All the teachers used the stick for discipline at the boys school. But one teacher, Mrs Benton, she never used to use it much. Very, very seldom. She was a more elderly person who'd had a family and she was probably more caring for the children. The discipline was done by talking to you. I think she got a lot of respect. She did from me anyway. She could talk to you.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Mrs Enever. She was my favourite teacher. She seemed to take an interest in me. She gave me reasonable reports. Here's a good one: 'David is working well and making a great improvement. W. Enever.' 1944. I was nine. She wore treacly smelling perfume! Her husband was in the army in India. She gave me all the stamps off his letters, Indian stamps. I've still got them. That's what got me started on collecting stamps, Mrs Enever. She was always talking about her husband and what he was doing in India and all that.

*David Chapman b 1936*

Mrs Benton was Standard Two. She lived next door but one to us, Mrs Benton did. She was a good teacher too, one of the best you could ever have really, with a marvellous way of being able to describe things to you. She'd perhaps go to Castleton in Derbyshire and she could describe wonderfully when she'd been underground to the mines and that sort of thing. She'd got beautiful writing on the blackboard. She'd got lovely handwriting. She was teaching all the time to write in this sort of particular way. I found her fascinating as a teacher. You learnt a lot from her.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

There was one called McQuinn who was Standard Four who was a bit cool. He'd got a strap. If somebody used to do something really bad he'd strap your hand.

*Andy Green b 1944*

Mr Bilson was the musical one that played the piano at assembly. He was a terrible show-off but when he was showing off his nose used to twitch like this! Andy Green b 1944

The Headmaster was very approachable in the junior school – at that time it was Mr Holloway. He was a well-spoken and stately man and it was really nice to see him. But we very rarely interfaced with him, probably

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## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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because he was the Headmaster. I can't remember seeing much of him, but when I did, I was impressed.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

Miss Gimson was a very young teacher who taught us French and we'd never believe we would be learning a foreign language. This was the third year I think, when we were 9. She would say, 'Qu'est que ce? C'est une maman', 'Qu'est que ce? C'est une orange.' She would be holding up these cardboard cut-outs. It didn't get very difficult but we loved it, speaking a foreign language.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## WHAT A TEACHER REMEMBERS

Mr Gregory, former Headmaster of St. Peter's Junior School, Ashworth Avenue at East Leake.

### **A teacher's career**

Teaching was the only way I could progress my education. I didn't get an 11 plus place and there was a system in Rutland that if you opted for teaching at the age of fourteen, you could go onto Open Centre School and do a further three years there. Take your School Cert and then a year of pupil teaching and then into teaching. The system was that at seventeen you did a year's pupil teaching. I skipped that and went straight to college at seventeen. I left a year early from College to join the air force. But they still gave us the two year certificate.

I arrived in 1946, just come out of the air force. I was a two-year trained teacher, and that's it. Could have been for secondary, or junior. It could have been for either. I left in 1956, because they were decapitating the school. They took the top classes off so the boys only went there to the age of 11. In other words they were starting at the secondary modern school. I thought my career might be in juniors. I went into West Bridgford South County School, did two years there. I started applying for headships and eventually got the job at Haywood. There was a big gap there. I left for thirteen years and then I came back to Ruddington.

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## REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

Mrs Eaton. She took the ones that came up from the infant school. Later on in teaching I had men teachers taking seven year olds and I had lady teachers taking eleven year olds. I'm not very sexist about those sort of things. In fact when I first arrived, I joined the School Masters Association and there was different pay scales in those days for men and women. When the NAS voted to retain the differential, I resigned from the NAS. Because the lady next door to me, Mrs Benton was a damn good teacher. She was a better teacher than me when I started! I couldn't see why she shouldn't have the same money as I was getting.

### **The school**

It gradually grew in size over the period that I was there. The bulge: the birth rate. Oh, within the school, it was tight. It was definitely tight. You were cheek to jowl. There was about fifteen inches between the old lift up lid desks, about fifteen inches between them that was all. But, it kept them sitting in their places! They weren't hanging about. They got on with the job.

The number of boys grew, so they put the prefabs up then. And we took on more teachers. It got to the stage where the Head wasn't actually responsible for a class.

### **Woodwork, arts and crafts**

The woodwork shops opened up when the prefabs were built. And Ford came there. He took classes from Gotham and Bunny as well. Boys came in from there on the bus to do woodwork. Just for Ford.

I was also interested in Art and Craft. We used to go on courses in August in those days, in your own time. That was a two week course and I arrived to do a Woodwork course and was told that they weren't enough people to do a Woodwork course. Would I like to do the Clay work course! And I said, 'I don't think so, thank you very much.' They said, 'Well why don't you try it this morning. We're playing cricket this afternoon!' I said, 'You're on!' So they put some clay in my hand in the morning and I was hooked completely, absolutely hooked. I've been working with clay ever since. I introduced Pottery. They still do it.

I was hooked straight away. Later on, the authority gave us a kiln. I introduced it as an after-school club. They made all sorts of things. Little

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## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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thumb pots, slab pots, coin pots and then moved onto animals and things like that. All sort of things. It was surprising the boys who came. These sort of roughie toughies, they turned up for the pottery class. The Head teacher used to come. Old Wally Marshall used to come.

### Games and activities

Being a young teacher, I started a football club and was head of an area football club set-up so that we could visit other schools. I set up a cricket team and I helped to start an area cricket set-up. Then I set up athletics there, and again we had an area athletics association. So all these things appeared over about the next four or five years, and of course the boys loved it.

We played away games. I lived in West Bridgford. I used to catch a bus. If it was away games, I would catch a bus from West Bridgford into Ruddington, pick the boys up, take the bus back to West Bridgford, and then take the bus out. Most of them went out towards Radcliffe, so I'd take the bus out to Radcliffe, or Bingham. With the team. Play a game. Catch the bus back to West Bridgford. I wouldn't leave them on their own to travel on the bus to Ruddington. Take a bus back to Ruddington with the boys. Take the bus back into West Bridgford. Dashed to my digs and picked my football boots up, and played football in Derby!

It was not just the eleven. I was very keen that they should all partake. So that when we took them to have our games hour or whatever it was, up at the playing fields, I didn't just let the eleven play and be the favoured lot. I made them all mix in together. And play. And we had a little house system so they could play games within the school.

There were no PE facilities: just the playground. So I established myself with the local authority with the P.E. advisor as somebody who was interested and we started getting equipment, so that I could do reasonable P.E. out in the yard.

I used to take them swimming as well! That's another sporting activity which was introduced and I can remember doing swimming exercises on the tables! I used to lie them out on the table and they would practice their strokes! Then we'd take them down to Highfields Swimming Baths, in the University. In the open air. Take them down to that. Starting in the Summer term which could have been May, early May! And you would take thirty boys down there and expect them to get in the water! They weren't

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REMEMBERING THE TEACHERS

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very keen, some of them! But, we used to get a bus to go there. So that's something else which started.

The big deal of course was sliding in the winter! They used to create wonderful slides in the school playground because it's got a bit of downhill there. Down from the loos towards the Green. You could start at one corner, get a nice long slide down here. I was very keen on snow and slides and things. So we used to go out and slide as well, Harry Strickland used to go out. Fred Boney nearly burst his spine on it. He went straight up in the air, and! He was off school. You couldn't keep me off it! It was good fun. But of course we had winters in those days.

In those days, as far as we were concerned, we did arithmetic. And the arithmetic was all work-based. It was all stuff which you were going to use whatever you were. You were going to use it for area, for measurement, for weighing. Whatever you did you were going to need arithmetic. It was measuring, which they were going to use. They were going to be builders and plumbers, and brickies and so on. So it was a hands-on thing. They were using their hands. And they were being asked to measure.

The class teacher was the best thing. Still is, I think, actually. To have a group of children who are of mixed ability and mixed types, some weak, some strong, some bright, some not so bright. And get them all to work together and gel together. And recognise, that he was going to get all the Maths answers right that I'm going to find difficult. He was good at writing stories but I was lousy at it. He was a good footballer but I'm not that good. But you could still get them to gel and work together.

The discipline was there, there's no doubt about that and they knew they'd get a wallop if they didn't perform. But it was not harsh. And of course the more you give to children the more they will respond. If you give plenty. They're not going to play you up.

Children would sit in gloves sometimes. If it was very cold. If it was very cold. I mean, you did keep the classroom warm, but we used to stand up when you couldn't go out for PE. We used to stand up periodically, and do some exercises at their desks. Without knocking each other to bits! You had to get them warm.

We took a party to Belgium. Secondary schools were doing it and old Wally would say 'Well, why can't we go?' So we went, took a bus, and we stayed in a small seaside village and did bits of viewing round about. The

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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boys loved it. Just a week, just a week. Our boys were under control. All the other schools, you'd never seen such a shambles in all your life! Secondary schools. We had decided to keep ours in, after a given time, seven o'clock. They were on organised activities all the time. They were never let loose. And the streets were full of youths all over the place, completely undisciplined. Ours weren't. That's the point. They enjoyed themselves, they had a good time. The coach driver said he'd never had a set of children so well behaved. We used to take the money during the year. They would bring a bob a week or something like that.<sup>6</sup> They had to make some sacrifice as parents always do.

We also took them camping. Camping equipment started to appear, around about 1948, '49, in the authority. They set up a permanent camp up at Thoresby, which had a small hut which was set up as a kitchen. It had got an open range and you bunged the coal in. And it had about four or five old-fashioned ridge tents, regular army ridge tents. I seem to remember they put some decking down on the floor of those. We took about thirty odd boys.

The next year we took the big adventure of hiring the authority equipment and we found our own campsite. Old Wally Marshall went round in his car and he found Grinley on the Hill, down by the canal. I went up with him then to suss it out, to see whether it had got all that I needed, like water and those sort of facilities. We had a week up. Harry did the cooking and I organised the activities. And Mr Henshaw he did some sort of natural activities. Very enjoyable, that was. We took an advanced party, some of the boys that I thought could get the work done. Went up on the Friday and put the tents up and dug the loos and set the kitchen up, those sort of things. And then the others arrived late Friday afternoon. So we did those two camps.

*Jack Gregory: Teacher 1946–1956; Head Teacher 1969–1974*

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<sup>6</sup> A bob was a shilling.

# SUBJECTS

## ENGLISH

Mr Teager, the headmaster, used to read us a book called *Doctor Dolittle*. He used to pronounce it. You should have a comma there and that's a full stop and all that business. To read properly. When you pick a book up you just go rrrrrr don't you? He taught you the stops: how to read properly. Poetry, poems: oh dear, I've had the cane a time or two. Well, he used to give you – I'd only be about ten. That one of:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend ...

It's a long piece to learn and you'd got to get it right or you'd get – I still remember it. I can and all. I had it knocked into me.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

You used to have a lot of spelling checks as well and you'd be expected to spend hours learning poetry. Then have to get up and say it, to make sure you had learnt it. That was just to keep you quiet, at times.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

You had teachers who taught. They would tell you things. They would read things. In the boys school, at some point in the week, when you were doing English for example, you would have to number your paper, say one to twenty and then spell words that were given out by the teacher, Mr Gregory. He would spell acquaintance, and all these sort of words which to eight and nine year olds as we were then, were quite big things. But it made it stick in the mind the way he did it, because paraffin was used, paraffin was a word, and so on. And you learnt how to spell all these things. 'i before the e except after c.' That was drilled into you as well.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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## HANDWRITING

It was a pen and ink in them days. You wasn't allowed to use a fountain pen. You could buy them from Woolworth's in them days for sixpence<sup>7</sup>. In fact there's one upstairs, a fountain pen. You were classic if you got one of them.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

It was all pencil. The time I touched my first ink pen was in the fourth year of the school, about 10 or 11. You'd just got your first nib and your first pen. Just to get us used to the world of ink. Oh, a bit of a shock. It was a bit more difficult for me because they had to get me set up because I'm left-handed. Of course all the nibs were then designed for right-handers. The slope of the nib was always leaning towards the right-handed person. But once they got me sorted out with the nib, I was away. We used to do competitions like Brooke Bond and people like that. And I won a prize one year at that handwriting.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

Very embarrassing at the end, making you use a pencil. You could be the only one in the class. We weren't allowed to use biros at first. Because those early biros used to leave big blotches everywhere and they also occasionally exploded in your pocket. I've ruined many a pair of trousers with a biro. We used ink in the secondary school because I can remember doing italic lessons, which is fountain pen. We didn't use dip pens. I can remember seeing the well of the desk. They had been used a few years before because they were covered in ink. I don't know when they stopped using those.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

You weren't allowed to use ink pens until a year in the school, which would be the third or the fourth, which is aged 9–10 or aged 10–11. Dip pens: there were no cartridges, you would just have to keep dipping and writing with them. We weren't allowed fountain pens, I think. Anyway I don't think my parents would have bought me a fountain pen.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

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## THE LIBRARY

Mr Bilson was put in charge of the reference library which was quite an event. They had a few books in a cupboard and they started to buy reference books. They called it The Reference Library, and Mr Bilson was in charge of that. He used to get us to ask him questions that he felt sure he could answer by reference to the books. Being young lads we'd ask all sorts of odd things that weren't in the books anyway! Which upset him. We didn't have a book in the house. I can remember being quite surprised one day when I walked into the library and found you could actually get books out. There was two of us went and they let us have books to take home which was quite a surprise. I didn't realise that. I started getting books to read, mainly science fiction at that time.

I read a lot of comics. I think my cousin used to have *The Eagle* and this girl used to have *The Knockout*, I used to have *The Lion* and I think *The Beano* and *The Dandy* when I was younger. *The Rover* was more of a reading book, weren't it? It used to end with the picture cartoons, but obviously there was a lot of reading in that, so I think that helped my reading. *The Rover* was mainly football stories. *Hotspur*. There was *The Wizard* as well. But they tended to be more pages of reading which I didn't take to so much as the cartoons. Occasionally I saw an American comic, because, my Father's auntie lived in Canada and we had some relatives in Ireland as well.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

## ARITHMETIC

I used to enjoy lessons anyway. I used to like tables. I still go on tables now, six eights are forty eight and things like that, straight away.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I always used to like sums. We used to have mental arithmetic as well and I quite liked that. Well, if you're good with anything, you like it don't you?

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

The school made the groundwork for me. For doing everything, hasn't it? Especially the arithmetic bit, because when you went in the line that I was

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going in you're on the rule all the while, measuring and doing your sums. I've used them every day.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Mr Saxton'd sit marking the books during the lesson. He'd put ten sums on the board for you to do. When you'd done you'd have to sit like this, with your arms folded. One day he was there busy marking and looked up and saw I was first: I'd done my sums you see. 'Sadler you've done!' he said, and some funny bits, taking the mickey out of me. I wasn't the brightest, by any means. 'Oh you've done all this. Come on then bring it here – bring it out.' And the first one I think it was wrong. You see he'd put a cross. I suppose his pressure was coming up and anyway he marks the rest on them and they're all right! So he says, 'Let's see, you've gone wrong in the first one.' He'd got a book where the answers were at the back of the book, printed. It was wrong. It was the printing that was wrong, not me. Whether that changed him towards me, I don't know. There was never any weakening of him with me.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

In our extra years they really didn't know what to do with us. I was in Mr Marshall's class. They used to send various boys out, to measure the Village Green, and we used to measure all the various angles, but I don't think any of them were quite the same measurements! It used to pass the time on.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I was pretty good at arithmetic, I used to like it. It was something that used to appeal to me. I just used to like doing sums. Sums on paper. I used to like mental arithmetic, but at that odd occasion you'd get asked a question and because you couldn't think of the answer straight away, you used to, well shall we say, get the teacher a bit uptight and probably the stick used to come out. Tables from two times to twelve times. You never forget them, not even to this day!

*David Stevenson b 1934*

When we were in The Meadows, all the exercise books were cut in half because of the war. You had to fill every line so when you had maths and you had adding up you couldn't put them in columns. You had to put them

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in a line. I learnt to add up across, this number, plus this number, plus this number and across. When we went to Ruddington, they put their numbers in columns which was quite something for me. Because I was adding up across I was a bit of an oddity. I remember it being pointed out that, 'Alan does it like this.' They showed all the class that I was doing mine across. But we had to write to the end of every line. If you were writing to use the paper up, if you were writing along you had to hyphenate it to make sure you filled every line on the page, because there was no paper!

We learnt quite a lot, because when my Mother had a lot of problems, medically, I was sent to live with my cousin who lived in Beeston for six weeks and I had to go to school there. In the arithmetic class the teacher gave everybody a book and you had to open it at a certain page and do the sums that were on that page. When you'd done it you had to take it up to the teacher for marking. It was shillings and pence add-ups, which I'd done a long time before. We were doing divisions and multiplications, so I did these very, very quickly. I went to the front and the teacher marked them, and they were all right. I went back and I got nearly to the end of the book in no time as I'd done it all before. So the teacher said, 'Well I've not got another book, you'd better and sit at the front and mark the books of the other pupils.' For me, it gave a good judgement on the quality of education at Ruddington school.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

### Technical drawing

We used to do Technical Drawing with the headmaster, Mr Marshall. He was getting us used to using instruments, like the t-square, set square, compass and things like that. It was only basic, and all he was doing was drawing patterns on the blackboard. We had to follow on a piece of plain paper. It was line technique, dark and light and shading. He used to do that with us once a week and I really used to enjoy that.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

And I wasn't particularly fond of Technical Drawing. I was no good at it. I mean what sort of Technical Drawing can you do when you're 7?

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

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## HISTORY

And History. Oh aye, you'd got to learn because he'd got a cane there and he used to knock it into you. Battle places. 1066 and all that.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I was in a little play at school for history. I was cast as the king's defendant in court and it depended on me whether he lost his head or not. I'd either got to say yes or no. And I said the wrong thing at the time and that put paid to him.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

I don't think we were taught history as a curriculum; this is what you'll teach them. It was these topics. We learnt about the Greeks. We learnt about the Romans. We didn't learn about the war, either of the wars, until we went to comprehensive school. We went up to 1914 up to Sarajevo and the commencement of the First World War.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## GEOGRAPHY

We used to do Geography. In them days they used to get the map out, show you the map, and all in the red was supposed to be under British rule. We had half the world, the Empire. You got India. You got Canada. It was a vast place.

Where you got tea from. You got oranges from here. In them days when you looked at a map you'd think, 'Cor it's massive!' Since you've grown up you're in Spain in two hours now and in them days you used to go by boat. Six days to America on board a boat. Seven hours by plane now.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

Saxton, Geography was his pet. That was his thing. He was a Geography specialist. And he used to do a lot of walking. He was a younger man. He was younger than the others. So he used to do a lot of walking in Derbyshire. I can remember him speaking about the Lady Bower Dam. What they used to do, we'd ask him a question, ask him something about Derbyshire. No matter what he was on about, if he was on about South Africa, or America.

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He'd get carried away. And all of a sudden look at the clock, 'Oh it's lunch time!' He'd fall for that as soft as grease! I don't know whether the penny ever dropped for him.

Well, to be honest, at school I used to enjoy looking forward to getting out of it. I got decent at Geography, the last year that I was there. I come top in Geography. That was Mr Saxton's pet thing. He come in with a sheet of paper, with his list, that he'd marked them. Of course he petted me up: I'd beat his goody goodies. The clever ones you see. I was top of the class and he says, 'Well Sadler's the top out of a very poor lot!'

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Geography I used to like. You used to have a globe in the class and pick out different countries and what they did in that country. Get to know the capital of a country. You learnt what the industry of the country was. Might have been a country that's just got rice fields, or sugar. And drawing maps. You often used to draw maps of the world or a map of England. And have a questionnaire come out. If it were the British Isles, can you put where different towns are on the map.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

## ART

Mr Teager was very good at drawing. I got a little bit of talent for drawing but I never followed it up in those days. Since then, I've had a go and found out I can still draw but I can't put paint on, not very well anyway.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

I used to sit in church and instead of listening to the boring sermon by the Reverend Mr Potts who was the vicar then, I had a sketch book and I would sketch the parts in the church.

The school encouraged my drawing. Very much. But I never had formal teaching. Never have, only at school, whatever was taught at school in the Art class. In fact I was looking back at these reports: drawing, I had twenty-four out of twenty-five there so I must have been pretty good at that time, but here drawing was twenty-three out of fifty! So I improved. But that I just loved to do all the time and it was always pencil or pen and ink.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

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I had a friend, Fred Pettit, who was brilliant at making models out of balsa wood and things like that. He was never to be seen without a pen knife and a piece of sandpaper. He was so good that Saxton used to buy them off him. He used to get him to make them. Spitfires, anything to do with the war really. Mostly aeroplanes, but he didn't use to use a plan or anything. He just used to do it from memory. He was whittling away, and any bit of wood he would get a penknife out! He did it in his own time.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Across the entrance hall from where our class was, there was the art room. It was a new development, this art room was. We used to go in there and do little bits of pottery, thumb bowls. Everybody used to make a thumb bowl and then everybody used to make a little animal or something. There was this little kiln that we used to have to put them in, and paint them the next week. We used to do a bit of painting. It was just pastel paints or something like that, nothing posh.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

We did do some pottery at Ruddington school. In Mr Hall's class we used to do pottery and slip moulds where you pour the watered down clay into a plaster mould and it settles and leaves the clay on the outside of the mould.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

## SCIENCE

I remember seeing a Bunsen burner at school once: I didn't know what it was. They showed us one or two little things but we never did any science classes or anything like that.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

I can't remember taking Science. Or if we did it was only very basic. I can't remember there being any scientific equipment there.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

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There was no Science Lab but they used to do Elementary Science. Talked a bit about electricity and things like that. No Bunsen burners or anything like that. No, none at all.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

We used to go on nature walks down by Fifty Steps. You go by the Western Fields between Ruddington and Clifton. There was a railway bridge that had fifty steps. Between the village and there was open fields where there are all houses now. We used to go down there and teachers used to tell us about nature: a nature walk.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

We had to take a plant or example of a flower for some schoolwork. I forgot and went into somebody's garden and took some marigolds into school.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

## DRAMA

We would put on a play at Christmas. I can't remember the roles I played there, whereas I can at the secondary modern school. But we would have a drama lesson. We used to go up to a drama lesson at the prefabricated part of the school, just up off The Green there.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

We had great acting and used to do a Christmas show. In the late sixties we did *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. That was one that we did. Amahl was this little boy who was visited by the three Kings and so that was a nativity type play that we did. That was good fun. Primarily because I was Amahl, so I loved it. We performed that at the Church in Ruddington. That was good. I really enjoyed that.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## MUSIC AND DANCE

We didn't do any music. There was one of the teachers who used to play a violin and he used to do that every now and again, when we used to

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have the main assemblies on a Friday. We had a bit of singing, with the piano. Not serious, no studying of anybody. We used to have a piece of classical music played to us, while everybody was getting together on the morning when we had the assemblies, while the partition was going back. We used to have a bit of open discussion, or the teacher used to tell us who it was, what it was representing. A bit of history, but that was about the depth we went to of our music. You probably had something like *Peer Gynt* or something like the *Nutcracker Suite* and things like that, classical music. It would be on a record player, on a gramophone. A 78: the record turned at 78 rpm and it would last for three minutes. Then you had to wind the gramophone up and do it again. And he used to put that there but there was nothing else apart from that. There was no recorders or anything like that.

In the winter months, if the weather was bad, they used to teach us to dance. They used to put us in the hall, put a record on, and the headmaster and another lady, probably a secretary or something, would teach us how to do the old traditional dances: the barn dance, the Valeta and all the progressive dances. Gay Gordons and things like that. When it first started, you was a bit, 'I'm not getting into this. It's a bit ... I want to go and play football.' But we ended up enjoying it. The trouble is in our year, the ratio of boys to girls was a bit off. So you ended up with something like 15 boys and 10 girls. You had the choice. The boys used to sit in this side and the girls this side, and they'd say, 'Take your partners for the Valeta.' You had to make your mind up then whether you got up quickly and went to get a girl of your choice, or you sat back knowing that there was only 10 girls and 15 boys and you wouldn't have to dance. The teachers used to get wise to this. Then it would always be, 'You five, up first and get a partner.' But I can still remember to this day, when I do go out on a few social functions around Christmas, it still comes into play. I might have cringed at the time but it was good.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

At times we was given the opportunity to take our own records into school and play them. From time to time, at Christmas time and things like that, where the actual lessons or the programme of lessons that we did didn't go to the normal.

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I had a recorder. The recorder was the instrument that most people were encouraged to have and learn. I think the more wealthy pupils were given the opportunity to bring in something a little bit bigger, a flute or even on the odd occasion an oboe, but it always tended to be the wind instrument. We used to sing, but it's the recorder that I remember because we were all encouraged to have a recorder. For quite some time, that was the subject matter of the music lesson.

We did do a lot of singing. We used to have a service, then we'd have the register and then we'd have a sing-a-long. I remember also the teachers asking us, in the lessons, to nominate a hymn or tune that we could all sing in the assembly. The individual classes were asked, or the pupils were asked, to nominate a tune. Not a pop tune but a hymn or at Christmas a carol that we could sing in the assembly. The teacher asked me one morning in front of class 'Smith, what tune would you like to sing on the next assembly?' I dropped my Hs, I never pronounced my Hs, and so I said 'Oly, Oly, Oly, Sir', and everybody picked up on this! It was very funny. The whole class burst into laughter.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

Music and movement. Moving in time to the music. It was recorded on a tape recorder from the BBC and that would form the basis of a number of the PE lessons. The tape recorder was a very large contraption, at least 18 inches by 12, with two big reels of tape which the sound would be recorded on. Crackly. The radios weren't that clear anyway then.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

I'm now in two bands musically and I love playing music and I love listening to music but I don't think we had the best opportunities to learn music until we left that school.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## GARDENING

There was a school garden over the wall. Behind the toilets. Still belonged to the school. We used to do gardening when you got into Mr Saxton's class, when you was about eleven. Perhaps it would be about 20 gardens on it, not big gardens. We'd just take seeds. Of course everybody had a garden

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then, all the dads. We used to cadge one or two carrot seeds and things like that and one or two potatoes. You were allowed on there about once a week for about an hour. That's all you was there for. You couldn't go on by yourself, in case of anything happening to you. We had potatoes, carrots, swedes, because they used to be a lot of swedes go in your pot years ago to fill it up. We would bring it home. You'd got to take your own spade.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

As you go down Asher Lane where the school was and the playground finishes, it was a piece of land between the end of the playground and the first council house. On it now there's either two or three houses been built. So it was a fair sized piece of land, and well we just used to grow all the vegetables and dig and that. We kept rabbits as well. But the gardens, it was just like a big allotment, and they used to keep us busy out there.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

There was no woodwork classes. No metalwork classes. That's why you done the gardening bit. They was probably tutoring us for the farm or a gardener. There was a lot of gardeners in the village in them days.

Mr Saxton was in charge of the gardens, when I was in his class, class five, and the next two years. And he'd say, 'Can I ask Sadler? I want him on the garden.' So I would go with this teacher, on the garden, only him and me, and what we were doing was tying tomato plants up and so on. The National Health hadn't started then and the proceeds were sold for the hospital.

There used to be King's Restaurant in the Square. Well the Kings lived at Ruddington up Easthorpe Street, what's the nursing home now. He used to grow, say celery, and they'd have it all. But I suppose that's how it is, it didn't matter how it went so long as they got the proceeds. That's what it was all about.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

When we had to stay on at school for the extra year, we spent an awful lot of time on the garden, because they didn't know what to do with us.

I do admit to taking one of the apples, not off the tree, a fallen apple. It was only natural that we had the odd carrot and things. But what we didn't realise that this exercise was to test our honesty. The village policeman, we

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used to call him Six Foot of Misery at the time, but he was just a normal policeman doing his duty. He was watching, from somewhere, what we was doing on the gardens, the Officer saw me take this apple off the ground and I think one or two of the girls and lads had apples off the trees. I had the pleasure of having a visit from the village constable, luckily when my parents were out. A bit frightening from a young lad's point of view, but it did learn us a lesson. They was watching us on the garden. My scrumping days was only a fallen apple. But it could have saved a fallen mind, I think.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I was sent to squash caterpillars. They used to grow marrows. Huge. Squashing caterpillars had put me off anyway, but now I'm quite keen. I've got an allotment!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

As you got older, especially the last two years, you did gardening. That was great. The gardens was at the back of the row of toilets. They was all numbered. It was so many pupils to each plot. At a guess, about a hundred and fifty square yards. At a guess.

There's quite big plots. And one of the specialities was growing celery. They didn't do it like they do today. They used to dig a trench and put the celery in, used to blanch it with newspapers and gradually fill it in. Then it used to be cut and washed and we used to sell it to pupils whose parents wanted fresh celery. Potatoes, cabbages, lettuce, beetroot, the lot. All for eating. You must remember it was the war years or coming to the end of the war years. People was growing their own vegetables because they were scarce. This was the dig for victory campaign.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

And towards the end, they introduced something else, where it was a cheap way of getting some unused ground cleared. We split up into groups of three or four and we had this patch of land to make a little garden out the back of the school. We just had to take tools from home, and clear the land. If we could get hold of any plants or things like that, it was to our benefit. We did that towards the latter end before we finished. So that was

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something different, something different. I think we used to do that if it was too bad or too wet to go and do sports.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

### Rabbits

They also kept rabbits then, during the war, on the garden bit. There was outside toilets. There's a beech tree there. It's there now, because I see it when I walk by. You went in this doorway, through here to the garden you see. Where that says store they used to keep the tools. That's where they had the rabbits. They put them inside, They'd be thirty. You'd go round collecting food for them, dandelions and so on.

I suppose they sold them off, killed them and they used to do fur gloves. That was the skins. They'd do them up strapping them on a board. The boys didn't kill them. What they used to have is a piece of wood, plywood or something, and you'd put this skin, stretched it on there. And then you'd sort of cut the inside of the flesh away, furry side in and fleshy side out, and put saltpetre on to cure it.

They used them for making gloves. Everybody used to do it. I don't know whether they went in the village or the teacher would sell them.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Mrs Enever kept rabbits in hutches in the school playground and along the top of the playground near the old trees. They was called Ermine Rex the rabbits. She had the pelts, the furs. She used to dry them. They were made into gloves and things like that. And the meat could be sold.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

## CRAFT

### Bookbinding

I can't remember doing bookbinding or anything like that.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

We made books at school, when I got with Mr Marshall. I was putting some titles in gold leaf on the cover. To do this we had to have an open gas

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fire to heat these tools. The end of each tool was shaped like a letter of the alphabet. Then we put them on gold leaf and transferred it to the book to make the title. It was quite a dangerous exercise actually. I was with Ron Brewitt at the time. I made such a good job of this but what I didn't realise that I was doing it on the back of Ron Brewitt's book! We'd got the books mixed up. On the back of Ron's book and I should have been doing it on the front of my book! I had a bit of a rocket for that, but it came all right.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

Mr Marshall was very keen on bookbinding. We had to stitch pages together in the correct manner, with cotton, and he came and inspected them to see if we'd done them right.

*David Chapman b 1936*

Mr Marshall was all right. I can remember doing book-binding. You'd be twelve, thirteen – your last year. You'd got to bring an old book from home. And we'd do it up, re-binding it. Anyway, he'd asked them all to bring a book to be done, an old book. I asked Grandma when I got home, got to take a book to school. Well, the only book she'd had is a prize from the Chapel. So I takes this book for my work for in the lesson for when we was going to have to do it. He sees the title on it, and it was a girl's book! I didn't realise. Any road, Marshall could be nasty. 'Eh have you read this book?' 'No Sir.' Anyway he goes back, he's walking back to his desk and all of a sudden he turns round and he flings this book at me! If it had hit me it would have knocked me through the wall! And he was mad. He was chewing about it, because he was grumbling about it, and he says 'If you want a reference, ever want a reference don't come howling back to me.'

Anyway we done the book, we had to do it, and done that. Funnily enough, I got a job, went for an interview at the Brush at Loughborough, as an apprentice. I'd got to get a reference from school. So I had to go back one day and go and see him. Probably it was never in his mind what he'd said but it was in mine! But he was ever so nice, couldn't have been nicer.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

When you bind a book there's a special knife that cuts the edges of the pages afterwards. It's not like a guillotine; it slides backwards and forwards and

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slowly works its way through the pages. They managed to get one of these. They decided that everybody should take to school an old book which we completely stripped down, took the backing off and all this separate folders of pages. We re-stitched it all and glued the back, and made a cover and we did the edges with this machine. And made a real good job of bookbinding we did as well. I think the teachers they hadn't got much equipment and they seemed to be on the look-out for interesting things to do.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

### Woodwork

There was no such thing as woodwork or handicraft. No none of that.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

Woodwork. Well that was quite good, Mr Ford. I'd be thirteen I should think. It was built soon after the war. We had a room full of benches and bits of wood and planes and everybody got their own bench. Everybody made things. Yes, toast rack and lamp and then you could turn the lamp up on the lathe.

*George Gregg b 1936*

If we cut ourselves during woodwork, we were bandaged first and then slipped, the logic being that if we had done as we had been shown, we wouldn't have cut ourselves in the first place. I have completed many DIY woodworking projects since then and I have never cut myself.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

### Motors

They lacked a bit on technology because the primary work for us when we left was obviously building and woodwork and things like that, we didn't have a lot of facilities for that.

I remember making some small electric motors with small things on cardboard. I think there was only about two of us in the class who could get this right, winding the coil around the little arm. That's the nearest we got to modern technology.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

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One project, I don't know what sparked it off, but we were in Mr Gregory's class and we had to take a tin can, a cork and some copper wire. We flattened the tin cans and cut little shapes out of them with tin-snips. We assembled them together and made an armature for an electric motor and then we wound the copper wire round. The ends of the wire were set into a little piece of cork and then a magnet. We made electric motors. And we were only, what, ten, I should think. Little boys cutting up tin cans, it wouldn't be allowed nowadays. You could cut yourself. We didn't have any gloves or goggles.

One experiment: we all had to take a battery. We decided we wanted to know what would happen if we connected all these batteries up together to a little bulb. We spent ages trying to get them all. We piled them all up on top of one another and we got a piece of copper wire from the top, from the bottom to the top. We were all holding these batteries and it took ages to actually make the connection. I remember the teacher didn't stop us, which he could well have done. He just watched us and suddenly there was a big flash of light and this bulb exploded.

In the top class, which I never went to because I left, they had an old car in the yard which they used to work on. The lads used to work on that, this car. One of the lads which I used to go to school with, now owns a garage in the village, so obviously it did him some good!

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

## PE AND SPORTS

### Football, cricket and rounders

We did have a games afternoon. Sometimes we would go up on the recreation ground playing each other. I only remember one football match that we played in with an opposing school. We played Gotham one day and I was given my shirt to play in on the Friday night and I was that proud, I actually went to bed in it. I didn't want to take it off. We had amber and gold striped shirts and the old lace up, the old fashioned things. I put it on the Friday night and I wouldn't take it off again until after we'd played. And I played in it the next day but that's the only time we ever played in a competitive sort of way. That's one, only a friendly against Gotham school I think.

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They didn't encourage any sport really. I can't even remember playing cricket. Only, in the summer we played on the Village Green, and we had what they used to call them stinkers, great big poles from the sewers to let the gasses out. The bottom part of one of those was curved. That was the wicket on the Village Green. We'd play with a tennis ball and bats and things like that. We did that sort of thing but we hadn't got a school cricket team. As I say, we only had that one football match whilst I was at school. But there's no other things like that at school in my day.

We played on the Village Green. We would always assemble on the Green or go to school early. I used to get into awful trouble with my step-mother for playing football in my shoes, kicking the toes out of my shoes, she used to say, but it never stopped me. One of the ways of punishing me at home – they never used to hit me: it was a waste of time hitting me because it never used to hurt me really. But they used to stop me going out to play at nights and then they found an even better one than that. They hid my football boots. But I'd got a friend who'd got two pairs, so I used to borrow his and play.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

Well, of course there was no facilities at the boys school for playing football and cricket, not on a proper scale. In fact we didn't used to play that much at all because by the time you'd walked from the school, up Kirk Lane to the playing fields at Elms Park, and walked back, there wasn't much time to have a proper game of football. So it only happened once or twice a year. And the same with cricket. So the rest of the time it was just in the school-yard and it was probably rounders, or that kind of game. The Green wasn't a green. It was just ash. So it wasn't really fit for running about on and that. We used to play on it but not as part of the school. And people who lived at that end of the village would probably play, but it wasn't nice grass like it is at the moment, to run about on!

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

For football we'd perhaps play Bunny school. Local schools, only one or two matches. Ruddington had got the advantage in numbers over some of the other villages like Gotham.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

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We used to go to the playing field once a week to play football. We used to go up The Green. Somebody used to keep some goats on the way to the playing field. We used to go past these goats. They used to smell terrible! But I did score a goal for the team. I was standing talking to the goalkeeper at the time – of the opposite team! So I was quite near the goal mouth, and I just happened to score a goal.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

We had sports days up on the recreation ground on Loughborough Road. The teams at the boys schools was red, blues, greens and yellows. I can't recall us having a name to the teams, just the colours. Between the different colours. I was in the Blues. One of the best! Because I used to like sport and athletics. We won quite a few things. I don't think you got anything as such as a prize. You just got so many points for your team. You never got individual prizes.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

We'd got quite a good football team as well, the boys had. We used to play Radcliffe-on-Trent boys, Bingham boys, West Bridgford boys. And ourselves. That made five teams which was in the Rushcliffe area. Saturday mornings. Bearing in mind we didn't get a special bus for events, you used to have to go on service buses. If you was playing at Bingham you had to go to town and get the Bingham bus to go out to Bingham. And come back dirty.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

We played cricket and football as well at school. Not for no teams, just at nights and a little crowd. You got one afternoon if the weather was all right. The whole class went. You'd get so many balls each. Everybody got a go.

*George Gregg b 1936*

And I was also in the school football team. We played football up on the rec. We had to walk far up, up to the playing fields and play football and then come back. We played against other schools, and we played sort of internally. They didn't have actually houses in the school but they had The Reds, The Blues, The Greens, and The Yellows. When we did PT we used

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to have to line up in the teams and we had coloured braids. So there was competition between those four sets of people.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

This sports field was probably half a mile to a mile away. So they didn't do a lot of it. They didn't get a lot of sports at all. Not big enough: village schools aren't big enough really.

*Andy Green b 1944*

The facilities were lacking for sports and things like that: limited space, equipment and things like that. We used to do rounders and things on the school premises. But we used to go and play football once a week on the recreation ground on Elms Park. It was a bit of a trek. You used to have to get changed at your desk, because there was no changing facilities, and walk all the way up to Elms Park to the public playing fields up there. My football boots weren't much to be desired. They were the old leather ones, where they used to have the old leather studs in and you used to have three tacks. You used to be able to tack them in yourself. You used to have to just knock them in yourself. Sometimes, if your boots were a bit worn, the tacks used to come through into the soles. And the leather around the tacks would wear, leaving them like spikes and if you tramped on somebody you'd spike him with the nails. And very often, because of the walk from there up to the playing field, you'd lose one of the studs.

So we used to have to go up there to play football. And of course football in winter was very cold and there was no showers, because they always used to do it last lesson. When you got back to the classroom, it was just put on what you want to and go home. Half the time, your hands were so cold, you couldn't even undo your bootlaces.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

We went up to the main park, at Elms Park, to play cricket because we didn't have the room to do things like that. We played with a hard ball. We had a teacher who would throw the ball hard at you, to make you alert. We'd be loitering about in the field, and he would throw the ball over, and I remember it being hard. We had to change. We weren't asked. We was

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told who would be taking the gear up, especially the cricket because there was quite a lot to take up. You had your pads, and your bats and balls, stumps and things of that nature. But I remember the joy of that because I like sports. And I also liked the idea of getting away from school! It was almost like you were just going away. I was very keen. My Father was a big cricketer, so we was very keen on sports.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

Sport was on the playing field at the back of the school. Playing rounders. Using apparatus as well as the conventional game of rounders: going from one base to another, having to go over apparatus as well. If you could hit the ball onto the road, it gave you a little bit more chance to get up and over and further round the bases.

Also playing football on Elms Park. I remember playing in goal for the school team. The old horrible woolly jumper the goalkeeper wore, like a round-neck, polo-neck. My kit bag, sports bag, was a small old suitcase, which children wouldn't be seen dead carrying anymore.

We had football boots with the old leather studs nailed in. The stud was moulded into a round cylindrical shape and then a nail was driven through the top of the stud into the sole of the boot. And as the boots became a little bit older, the nail could be felt through the sole of the boot. And not only were the studs made out of leather, the footballs in those days were truly made out of leather. They were heavier, and as they got wetter they got heavier still; the water was absorbed into the leather. Little boys found it difficult to kick the ball over great distances.

Blowing up the footballs – they had a separate bladder inside, like a balloon only made out of thick rubber. You pumped it up with a bicycle pump, and then tied it with a piece of string. The football itself had to be laced up. Like a shoe, but with a special lacing tool. Then tie some special knot to hold it in place. Occasionally the bladders would burst or lose pressure and the teacher would have the task of unlacing, and replacing the bladder.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

And then for field exercise we went where the houses are now, or the terraced houses, and that was our play area, on grass. It had a jumping pit

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and that was it. You couldn't fit a football pitch on, so when we wanted to play football we trundled all the way down in a snake, class by class.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

### Swimming

In the latter year we went swimming once every fortnight. To the Portland baths and just inside the Meadows in Nottingham. You'd got to have fourpence<sup>8</sup> to go. Without your money they wouldn't take you, because we used to catch the bus.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

We also did swimming classes at school. We used to go to Portland Baths. When you got in the top class, we used to go on a Thursday morning, after playtime. We would all troop down and get on the bus and swim there and then come back at lunchtime. We had about half an hour in the baths and I learnt to swim on that. Then up in Yorkshire, where we used to go to where my stepmother came from, they'd got a swimming pool there, and I was allowed to go swimming there on Saturday mornings. I learnt to swim at a very early age. There was always somebody there teaching us or telling us what to do. It was always very cold. That was the only problem. They didn't used to have heated swimming pools in those days.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

We went with the school which was a complete waste of time because they took us to Highfields Open Air Lido, which was absolutely perishing. Out of all the people that went I can only remember one person ever learning to swim, because it was so cold. You just couldn't stand it in the water. I remember Mr Bilson used to take us. He used to stand on the side in his suit and tie and tell us how to swim, but he never went in the water!

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

There was no sports facilities at all. We went once to Portland Baths while I was at school. I taught myself to swim when I was thirteen. The reason I

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taught myself was that I had a German pen-friend, and he sent me a diving mask. Quite a bizarre present really because I couldn't swim at the time. It was that that got me the confidence to stick my head under the water. Eventually I taught myself. I'm not a great swimmer, no. My Dad can't swim very much. My Mum never learned. A lot of people didn't. A lot of people couldn't swim.

*Andy Green b 1944*

We went swimming in Portland Baths in the Meadows. That was the day we didn't have a school lunch and Mum would pack me up with a lunch. So we'd have our lunch on the bus coming back. I don't think we paid; the swimming lessons were provided for everybody. I also went to the same baths in an evening with the cubs and the scouts. My memories are nothing to do with the swimming, but of the sweet shop immediately outside of the swimming baths.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

They used to take us to Portland swimming baths. We used to get the bus in the morning to take the whole school. For sure, I remember that, learning to swim. It was quite an old Victorian bath so you had all the cubicles down the side of the pool. We would get changed in there. Then you would go and do your swimming: certificates or whatever. That would be, say, one hundred metres. I don't remember how much we actually did it, but I remember going there and learning to swim.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

## SCRIPTURE

When you was a nine year old, the local vicar, Reverend Potts, came round. You had to read a passage out of the bible to them. I would think the majority was up to the standard. He would then come back a few weeks later and present you all with a New Testament. That's what I've got here. It says, 'This is to Certify Grenville Pearson was able to read the scriptures at the age of nine years, signed by Reverend Potts, the vicar. March 1938.'

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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The only other person that used to come in was Mr Potts, the Reverend Potts, the village vicar. He used to take us for English Church History. Well it was about religion really. You can see the religious programmes from all over on television and they're quite interesting, but that wasn't. Whether it was our age or not, I don't know. He used to write two boards of writing down and you used to have to write it all down. It was boring. English Church History, I think it was called.

*George Gregg b 1936*

There would be hymns and such. They emphasised that quite strongly in those days. We weren't really churchgoers, although my Father had strong beliefs. There was quite a big emphasis on that at school. They asked you what hymns you would like to sing. So they liked to involve you rather than just putting in there and saying, 'Well, we'll sing this now.' So at least they felt that they're getting some input back from the pupils.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

When we went to the comprehensive school, there was a Mr Eagles, who was the Deputy Headmaster and he occasionally would take us for RE. My personal beliefs aside, he was superb. He made the subject sing. He was an amazing man to be able to be a Deputy Head of a school that size and still have the people like him all the time. It's just the opposite ends of the spectrum really.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## SCHOOL TRIPS

We went to see a film at the Tudor Cinema but unfortunately when we got there, there was a power failure. And we sat there in the dark, all chatting away, making a hell of a noise. I can't remember the film.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

There was school camps that we went on. The first camp I went onto, we went to Thoresby Park. The Major Oak, they got us all in there, because in those days you could go into it. It was hollow inside and we got the whole class in. All the camp in there, about thirty of us inside it! And then they took us then to the pit, Thoresby Colliery and I refused to go down. No

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way was I going in that cage and going down the pit. Two of us wouldn't. The others all went down the pit with the teachers and we went off round the top for the workings with one of the younger deputies there. These old boys said, 'What are these two doing?' He said, 'They won't go down the pit.' Every one of them said, 'You're sensible lads.' Every one of them told us we were sensible. We got black, going round the workings, where they hold the coal. Those that came up from down the pit were spotlessly clean! But I wouldn't go down.

We went for a week. We was living in tents. There was the main marquee where we had us meals and then there was ordinary ridge tents. They used to sleep six. These were the heavy, heavy canvas. There was none of this lightweight stuff they've got now. You put a groundsheet down. Everybody had got a beret in those days. And shorts. We were setting up the tents ready for the younger ones to all come, and the local farmer's son whose land we was on came over, and he said, 'Are you all right?' 'Yes,' and he gave the teacher a couple of rabbits. Mr Gregory promptly did them, cooked them. We had rabbit. It was gorgeous!

*George Gregg b 1936*

Half a dozen of us went off to Twycross Zoo, about '65. We all had our name badges on, on our blazers, in case we got lost. The one that I've got, the names are written on the back of the photo. It's one of those if you write them on when you take the photo, it's no good doing it later. But I don't recall any other visits anywhere.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

We went on a trip to London once, which was absolutely astounding, the fact that we'd been to London. So we went to a trip to London, which for us was amazing that we were going to London as a child. It was my first visit to London. I would be 9. I know there was a picture of me in Trafalgar Square with pigeons on me. And it was fantastic! That was a great day at London.

Once when we had an assembly for our year, the teacher said 'Hands up all those who have been on a train,' and I didn't put my hand up. I'd never been on a train. Probably half of them put their hand up. A few put their hand up and had never been on one but wanted to say they had been on

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one. One of the teachers was quickly scribbling the names of those who didn't put their hand up. All those that hadn't put their hand up, myself included, we were took on a train to Newark. Is it a Cathedral at Newark, the big church there? Just on a train journey there and back. It just goes to show, honesty sometimes is really worthwhile. It was really fantastic! Just a day out on a train and we'd never done that. As 8 year olds, it was brilliant, that was really good.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

# THE BUILDINGS

## HEATING

When you was in top class, Mister used to say 'Just go down and check the boiler and throw a couple of shovels full of coke on.' Sometimes when you had a load of coke on with a lorry, it wouldn't all go down the hole, so you'd got about three of us shovelling it in. Shovelling it down the hole into the boiler. I used to enjoy that. Be away from lessons wouldn't it? Yes, that was a perk.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I know that during one very cold winter we used to ask for the cane to warm our hands because there was no heating at times. For school you were dressed up. There was a time when they'd abandon school altogether.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

There was heating in the school, sort of central heating, but every classroom had an open fire. You're in this room but when the fire went down obviously it got colder but you dressed accordingly.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

You just got frozen. I can always remember being cold. Even in the classroom, it wasn't all that warm. The windows used to get misted up, because they were just metal framed. The heating in the school was just one big home fire. I can see it now, a big range that was enclosed with a big guard round it, a coke-burning stove. Coke? It's a by-product of coal. Where they used to take the gases out of it and what was left, like a clinker. It was a fuel that was developed from coal. For natural gas, they used to use coal for producing gas and burning, and it was a by-product from that. That's where you used to get your bitumen and tar from as well, and creosote, going back years.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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And I mean it was cold in the winter because they only had two thirds radiators and again they were cast iron. I can remember sitting there huddling.

It was cold, because sometimes the boilers wouldn't come on, or someone had forgotten to put a little bit more coke in. The caretaker, I'm not saying that he did it deliberate, but sometimes, you felt that he was doing it deliberate!

In winter we wore a red polo neck jumper, or T-shirt rather, long sleeved. A grey jumper, either a V neck or a total collar. Then we had a scarf on and thick coats and that was in the winter, with long thick trousers. That was to go to school. Inside the school it would be, 'Take your coat off,' and sit in with your jumper until it got warm and then took your jumper off. Sometimes it warmed up.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

## TOILETS

There was four toilets at school and the others for the men. For lads there just used to be a trough to wee in. Proper flush toilets.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

If you went to the toilet you had to ask permission. You'd got to do that. Sometimes you were not allowed to. You'd got to sit tight until you were bursting as it were! The toilets were absolutely abysmal, and they were across the playground. You had to go out in the freezing cold, and race across the playground to the diagonal corner, right in the corner of the premises. If you wanted to go to the loo number twos, then of course you went into another lavatory, which was open at the top anyway. To the rain!

There was a high level cistern the usual chain pull. They must have kept them clean somehow, but they were smelly.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

In winter the whole lot froze solid with predictable consequences when a school-full of little boys was turned loose after free school milk and a long lesson. The word awash comes to mind.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

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THE BUILDINGS

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You had to go across the yard and you were allowed three pieces of paper, and that was it. If you wanted to go to the toilet, you had to put your hand up. 'I want to go to the toilet.' They'd give you six pieces of paper and that's it. That shiny Izal paper, which the wife calls skiddy paper. Which slipped.

*George Dring b 1942*

The toilets were the other side of the playground. They were outside toilets. We used to try and urinate as far up the wall as we could. There were some cubicles but just a long corridor past a little sort of outbuilding. You certainly wouldn't want to spend long in the toilets in the winter because they were actually open to the elements. There was no roof on the toilet, not in the urinal, I think there might have been over the cisterns. Flush toilets with the big cast iron cisterns in there with chains.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

The toilets were outside and the urinal was open and it was just a trough, so you had to open it and it relied on the rain just to wash it and flush it, you see. That was the only thing that cleaned it. There was a couple of WCs next door to it, but I don't think many people ventured into them. I never did, because there was always a big gap under the door. If anybody was in there, they used to rattle the handle. It was a bit of a torment.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

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Composite Default screen

# BULLYING

I don't remember any bullying or anything like that. Just the school fights and all that which you always got. I can't remember anything else between the big ones and the little ones. When we got more of the lady teachers, the Birmingham ones, I seem to remember that they used to walk around the playground more. Before they came, I don't think so. Probably the men didn't think it was their job to thump them!

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

In my early days there, we used to get involved in the usual rough and tumbles and a bit of, what today I'd call bullying. To me it wasn't. One lad tried to bully me and I suppose I was about ten I think. I just belted him one, smack on the nose and he never did it again! And that was it. I wasn't a bully myself. I wasn't a gang leader, wasn't involved in that. I had my own personal pals there.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

Anyone who was disabled or slow learning had a hard time. I can remember feeling sorry for them. Sometimes, well, very often, there was bullying from some of the boys. Also the teachers tended to lose their patience with them. Anybody like that, I'm afraid.

*David Chapman b 1936*

The odd balls really got bullied. A lot of the lads at this school were big and not a lot between their ears. Most of them were all right. They never used to particularly bully me. I got roughed up a little bit because we'd passed the Eleven Plus, and of the three of us that passed I was by far the smallest. One of them was a big lad, so he was exempt from it really. He knew them. It didn't happen very much, just occasionally. Nothing of any great significance. It was worse when I was at grammar school. There was just odd periods, but again that never lasted long. I suppose you look back at it with rose tinted glasses, don't you really? Because it's not happening to you now.

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At the time it might have been not very pleasant. But it was nothing that would make me think of committing suicide or anything like that.

*Andy Green b 1944*

At the junior school we heard all these stories of when you get to secondary school, they bully you because you're first years, put your heads down toilets and what have you. But nothing like that happened, obviously.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

I was worried when I first went to the junior section with the older boys picking on the younger ones. Because I was tall for my age, they'd pick on me; they thought I could cope with being roughed up.

There was bullying. Mainly pushing and shoving. But I coped with it. Those of us who went to school in West Bridgford were ostracised by those who stayed and went to the secondary modern in the village. Traveling back on the bus was sometimes unpleasant because the bus from West Bridgford would travel past the secondary modern school and boys would get on and we'd all be on together. I remember when I was 11 and 12 being glad to get off the bus. It was mainly name calling, occasionally punching.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

## DYSLEXIA

I'm dyslexic. I wasn't found out until I was at senior school at the age of thirteen and nine months, which is a very bad age to be diagnosed. They really prefer you to be diagnosed between the ages of six and seven. The teachers were friendly, both infants and junior school. They didn't push you. They were more relaxed. If you didn't know how to write you didn't bother writing and you got away with it. I think that might have been a downside. But when you're six, six to eight, you take the teacher's word for it and your parents' word for it.

I had speech therapy as well, because they thought that that was my problem. While I was a youngster I'd never spoken until I was six and a half. But when you've got a sister who knew everything and was older, she was, always, say if I started saying something she would clock on and, 'Oh Andrew wants another cup of tea.' I just got used to letting her do all the

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talking. Then when my sister left and got her friends, I had to defend myself so I spoke. But not very well.

I had a teacher called Mrs Fisher, and she would take me to one side and do my literacy – writing and reading – a little bit extra for me to catch up on everything.

We had one teacher at St. Peter's, which was a beggar. He was a real nasty piece of work. Not in the sense that he threw things, though occasionally he did lash out. He wasn't aggressive. What he did was – I had it again, at People's College – while he was writing with his right hand, he would have the blackboard rubber in his left hand and rubbing out what he had written as he went along. Well, he was taking the people who were quick writers, he was taking their level or speed. Those people who were slow on writing it down, was lagging behind. If you didn't keep it up between his hand doing that and the blackboard following it, you shot it! He could be doing it deliberately to be awkward. You could hear him say, 'If you can't keep up with my right hand you should get the ability to quicken up.'

There was another one, dyslexic. He was slightly older than me and he was diagnosed pretty early on. His parents and my parents got talking that there was something wrong. Doing handwriting and being sent back and saying, 'This is a load of rubbish, can you please do it again?'

When I went to Rushcliffe Comprehensive school we had a link course and they took over the whole pre-fab site of the lower school of St. Peter's. They did away with the canteen. The workshop with mechanical engineering was one end and electrical engineering, and a car mechanic. So the mechanical was like metal work with electrical and in the other place the kitchens were. I loved that because it was all hands-on. When my parents went to the parents evening one of the teachers said, 'Your son won't get any qualifications. I would advise you to get him with a hands trade. He's got no ability to write or read because of the problem.'

The teachers let me down but there's nothing you can do, because most of the teachers then wouldn't understand what it was. When Mrs Fisher came, that's when everything clicked in. She helped me a lot because that's what she used to do. She was a remedial teacher. Those days it was classed as an idiot teacher, for the idiots and the slow people.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

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Composite Default screen

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND THE 11 PLUS

The brainy gang – there was about five in the top class, and they were brainy, in fact three of them passed the scholarship and went to a school in West Bridgford. I didn't pass it. I always came about fifth in the school.

Even if you passed the scholarship, unless you'd got the money to go to Nottingham you couldn't go. There was those better off. They'd got two brothers older than them at work so that made it better, more money going in the house. You didn't pay for your education then but you paid to get there. No free buses in them days. My wife she passed the test at Wilford school and she couldn't go to the other one because she couldn't afford the uniform. I mean, a hat in them days, I can remember, because I wanted a hat for school, it was three shillings and sixpence<sup>9</sup>. Couldn't afford that. That was a fantastic amount.

We had, well not uniforms, but they used to like you to go in a cap with an orange ring round it that was the school one. And a tie. Stitch a badge on. That's if you'd got a blazer. Any coat or jacket you used to put the badge on because you couldn't afford things like that. Well keep plimsolls on all day and shoes special. Anniversaries at Chapel used to get a new suit then. You were posh in a new suit. Oh aye. Flittermans and Harrisons, bottom of Hockley they used to sell all school things. Your parents, they used to save up for that. They used to put sixpence a week in a pot, ready for things like that. For the anniversary. Well, you got that for the anniversary and after that you could wear it Sundays or for going to Nottingham for four to five months. Then after, it was, 'Wear it for school.'

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

We never had any scholarship exams, as far as I know. People did go from this school up to Bridgford school or the grammar school, but my parents never considered that. They wanted me working as soon as I was able to get out of school. My stepmother came from the Yorkshire

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<sup>9</sup> 17.5p

## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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mining district, she was a very, well, I used to reckon my parents were communists, but once I got to know a little about politics in later years, I said that my parents were definitely communists. She wanted me working as soon as I was able to, to earn money for the family, well for her really.

You would do an exam. I think I could've got in but they wouldn't let me go. There was a chance of me going to Bridgford grammar school but I would probably have been a white-collar worker. It was out of my step-mother's class that was. She wanted me as a working lad. In fact, she once told me off when I was a school kid for cleaning my fingernails. 'You always want dirt in your fingernails,' she said. 'It proves you go to work properly.' Very much working class and socialist she was. That's the reason I never went to grammar school. Had I done so, I'd have probably have gone in for teaching. And I did get an opportunity to go into teaching when I was leaving the Air Force, but I'd already got one subject, physical education, and that counted. I could have gone to college, as a mature student to a college down in Richmond or Twickenham, somewhere down there. I would've only have had to study for the other subject. I'd have probably have chosen geography or something like that. But it meant being on a low wage for about three years while you're doing that, the mature student thing. I gave it up in the end and went to the Post Office. I did 15 years at the Post Office and then took retirement.

I didn't start educating myself really until I was 40. I mean, there was no O Levels or A Levels around when I was a kid. In the Air Force, I got the choice of a chance of doing a little bit of education. So I used to study and I got myself several O Levels, just for the sake of having them really.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

The arithmetic was very basic. In the early part of '39, it would be I don't know April/May time, five of us went to the West Bridgford grammar school, to sit for the Scholarship. At that time it was mainly paid and there was only twenty or thirty places for the whole of the county, scholarship. And there was five of us went. I was one of the five. There was only one lad, Ivor Dickens, who passed. The rest of us didn't. Some of the questions, I remember was algebra. We'd never seen algebra at Rudd school. That was

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at eleven year old and it was one of the questions so obviously some schools were far more advanced than we were. Even up to the age of fourteen, I don't think we did much algebra. They stuck to the multiplication and decimals and fractions and that. They kept it to the basics.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

There's a few of them, they passed their, some exam wasn't it, and left school about the age of 10 or 11. I didn't take the exam. I never did do. They used to go to Bluecoat school. Well that's church, isn't it? Certain people as I know that went there, and they were church related. One or two went to West Bridgford. But they'd only be about one go each year. I can remember there was two twins there, as lived down the avenue there. They used to go there, to that West Bridgford.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

I'd be ten, ten plus, nearly eleven. It was a pretty formal exam in its own way. You'd got to get your head down and do it with the teacher watching. I don't know if all the boys were allowed to sit it. I don't think so.

Despite the fact that you'd passed an exam you had to pay, unless you had parents without any means. There must have some sort of means test. Your parents had to make a contribution to your term fees. You could pay to go to grammar school, people who didn't pass the exam, if the parents could pay completely. Certainly my parents had to contribute. I've got the certificate in my file upstairs, with Dad's signature and how much he agreed that he would pay. So many guineas.<sup>10</sup> The receipt is written across, a sixpenny stamp. You had to put a receipt and stamp on it because it was a tax to government, receipts.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

I was sort of an average at school. I generally used to finish above half way in the class, but as I was considered to be quite good at art, I got recommended to go to an Art School. That's where I spent the next two years from when I was thirteen and a half. I was recommended, but I had to take an exam.

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<sup>10</sup> One guinea was 21 shillings or £1.05. There had not been a guinea coin for well over 100 years, but legal bills in particular were often expressed in guineas.

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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In those days it was rare for anyone to go to University. The only one I can remember was a lad called Jeffrey Hooks. It was quite a thing in those days. A very clever lad.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

I was as keen as possible to get away from that school. My Uncle went to West Bridgford grammar school and I fancied going there. I took the exam twice and failed. I could have done with a bit more encouragement really, but I suppose with the large classes they couldn't manage to do that. With a bit more, I might have got through to the grammar school.

*David Chapman b 1936*

I don't know whether I even took the Eleven Plus or not. Even this twelve-plus, I wasn't told what it was. There was six of us taken out and put in a class and they said, 'We want you to do this test.' Once I got to grammar school I held my own quite well. When I left I went to College day-release and, in fact, I did very well. I went through the old ONC and the HNC and I went onto take the Institute exams, the Institute of Metallurgists. So looking back, academically, I did very well later. I used to teach at Derby Tech College.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

At the girls school, everybody was terrified of Mrs Hamilton-Jones, but she was very ambitious. She got a lot of girls through the Eleven Plus as opposed to the criminal that was Headmaster at this school, the boys school, who got virtually nobody through. There was three of us at our year that got through and that was absolutely unprecedented. I don't think they'd ever had that. There was three of us got through the Eleven Plus, three boys, and nobody else. There was nobody the year before I don't think. Criminal. Dreadful. Absolutely criminal. The girls they used to cram them for weeks and weeks before, with all these exam papers, went through them. Their average was between ten and twelve got through out of probably thirty odd. I think one girl actually got the High School. There was only about six out of the county used to get there, free. But the boys you were lucky to get any of them through because you didn't get any tuition at all, just didn't do it. The first thing I remember about the 11 plus

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was, 'Here you are lads. Do these.' I mean my Mother was horrified when I came and said, 'Oh I've done these nice little papers, all printed and quite nice, quite easy really.' That was the Eleven Plus. She was horrified, because they didn't give you any tuition. There are many lads still in this village, who given a bit of a push from him, would have got through to something.

I think he was just bloody idle. I think he was just taking his money.

I left and the rest of them carried on. I've still to this day not got any idea why they called that Standard Seven and Eight. There were a few in it, but the photograph I've got there seem to be some who were way older than me! Way older and they were always Standard Six.

*Andy Green b 1944*

Doing the 11 plus was a very traumatic time. I failed it and I went down to the secondary modern. I'd got grades and the reports at school indicated that I shouldn't have any problem with it but I just fluffed on the English on the day. It wasn't as if you got any special teaching or training for it or to prepare you for it. And as I say, I failed it.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

Through your schooling, especially in the latter stages of your primary school, you do note the people that are doing well. Sometimes you looked up to them, without consciously thinking, 'They're doing well, they're probably working harder than I am.' I was probably more interested in getting out there at dinner times and trying to get my army to defeat Mr Rudd's army. I was very lackadaisical so I haven't got any great vivid memories of the importance of those exams, the Eleven Plus, at the end of the primary school.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

I can remember taking my 11-Plus and the exam, sitting there thinking that seemed incredibly easy. Checking through what I'd done and finding that I'd got two pages stuck together, so I'd missed two pages with five minutes to go. I tried to rush through those questions and I failed the 11-Plus. So then I went to Ruddington secondary school and I re-sat the 11-Plus. You could after the first year. I passed and went to Rushcliffe

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grammar school only for the secondary schools to be shut a year later. Everybody joined at the grammar school anyway which then became the Comprehensive. But my mother still maintains that I went to Rushcliffe because of my ability on the violin because they fancied having me in the school orchestra. I can't remember learning anything specifically for the 11-Plus. They said, 'Oh you've got an exam.'

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

The 11-Plus was an exam that was taken by all the children, round about the Christmas period, with a maths paper and a lot of multiple choice questions. To me, it was very much common sense.

I don't recall having specific instruction at school on how to sit the exam or how to pass the exam, the 11-Plus. However, my father was aware that there were publications with past papers and sample questions, and we did sit at home on many, many occasions going through previous examples of 11-Pluses. My father was clued up and he was keen for me to pass and go to the school in West Bridgford. The alternative to passing the 11-Plus would have been going to the secondary modern school in Ruddington. This was something that we would sit and do at home. It gave me an advantage.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

## SECONDARY SCHOOL

I was only twelve when I borrowed my Dad's bike to ride to Wolverhampton to see my grandparents. That was sixty miles. So, when I went to school in West Bridgford I went by bike. If it was bad weather then you'd get on the bus. I rode with friends. One of my friends who was my best man he was always there as well. It was mainly the two of us.

They had a big gymnasium which you'd never had experience of before. They taught sports which you didn't have during the war at Ruddington. Games day, you had to do it. I was in one of the teams, in the Rugby team there. I was also good at throwing the javelin.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

The Art secondary school was on Clarendon Street. The standard of education at Ruddington was just basic. When I went to Art School I was thrown in the deep end because a lot of the lads that were there had taken algebra and geometry and things like that. So I started from scratch and they were already well ahead. It was very difficult because the teacher had started off by assuming everybody had done this, that and the other. And of course everybody hadn't. We used to do half a day at Art or metalwork or whatever, and the other half was a lesson.

Well there were boys and girls at the Art School, but the classes weren't mixed. The classes were kept separate. I think the girls would have probably been a steadying influence! The lads were always called by their surname and the girls were always called by their Christian names! I was always Murdoch at school.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Then they gave me a place at People's College, Technical School. I was pleased about that. I was 11. The letter came only about two days before the start of term so I got very excited about it. It was for the building industry. I think I was one of the first ones to start at the age of 11 rather than 13, and I think they regarded it as a successful experiment. We did lessons in brickwork and plumbing right from the start and metalwork

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and carpentry, right from the start, age 11, which I think was a very good thing.

It worked out all right. I went to the People's College. I didn't get a qualification because I left on my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. I specialised in metalwork in the end. There was a school leaving certificate. I got merit, I think, in metalwork. But I wanted to leave because I was offered a job. I went to be an apprentice organ builder. Well, there was a workshop in Nottingham which was a branch of a London firm, Henry Willis and Sons. Somebody pointed out to me, an advert in the paper, that this job was going. So I went and applied for it and got the job. Which meant I had to leave school on my fifteenth birthday.

*David Chapman b 1936*

You either passed the 11 plus or you stayed at school at Ruddington and then left at fourteen but it became fifteen in those days. When you'd passed your Eleven Plus. If you passed it, you went to West Bridgford grammar school. Those who, if you like, wanted a trade and that sort of thing, or go into the local factories and whatever, would stay on.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

I stayed in the boys school until I was nearly 15. It was the Luttrell School. I spent less than a year at it. When we went to the Luttrell School, we was making shelves and things for the school itself. It wasn't even finished. There was no playing field or anything. It's now South Notts College.

*George Dring b 1942*

The lads if they did get to a grammar school used to do all right. Can't say they were all brilliant but there was one of us got a First, one of the three of us, and I ended up a qualified accountant. You got there on merit. You got there because you were capable of doing it.

*Andy Green b 1944*

We used to have all the traditional things like sports day down there. Then, it used to get a bit more classy with the old discus and javelin. They came in and we had the long jump and high jump pits. The girls used to play tennis. From where we'd come from to that, it was like going on some

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sort of pleasure park. In the hall, we had climbing frames and ropes, big mats that you could do all your gymnastics on. Really good.

The girls had got a fantastic needlework/dressmaking area. They used to go up there once a week and then they had a purpose built cookery, home crafts they used to call it, downstairs, where they had an area set out into little zones, like little kitchens where they used to go and prepare the food. They used to have to take all their own ingredients in. And Miss Horrocks was the cookery teacher. She used to go through all the basics with them. At the end of the school terms, we were able to do that and join them, after the exam period. They'd let us join them and cook with them, with the girls, and we used to have a meal together, something that you'd prepared together. It was good that was.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

I remember my closest friends, all moving up to the secondary modern school in the village at the same time. It was quite a sad period. I was sad to leave there. And very nervous about going to the other school where we was the youngest pupils with much older.

It's true to say, from a personal point of view, my actual development at school was in the secondary modern school. My first year at secondary modern wasn't very good but thereafter it progressed to being second in class and Head Boy. I went on to become a successful accountant.

My report the first year was not very good. I think the words were, 'Spends too much time in a daydream,' and to be perfectly frank with you it was because I larked about too much at school. Not to any great degree where I was in trouble or anything stupid like that, but I just didn't take schooling seriously. I do remember bringing it home that night and my Father not being very happy with it. It's almost like heeding the words of my Father and also starting to mature a bit. After that I looked upon it as a challenge. I wanted to do well. It was all down to hard work. Not necessarily being brainy. In other words, taking more time to do your homework, making it good rather than just rushing through it. Taking pride in my work as well. I always look upon that, after my second year at secondary modern school, putting that effort in. I remember putting the effort in.

In those days the report that you got gave you a position in class so you could always use that as a yardstick. In very rough terms, my first year I was

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probably twenty third out of twenty six. The second year thirteen out of twenty six. And after that it was like third or second out of twenty six.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

A bit of a mixed-up education really.

I can remember that one year at that secondary school being quite enjoyable. Sports were good. Then I got whisked away from all that to the grammar school. In hindsight, it did me more damage really because they were at a completely different level to me with most things, especially Maths which wasn't my strong point anyway. From there onwards, I just lost the plot with Maths. It was only one year as a grammar school for me. That one year was down at the annex of the grammar school. This annex was just for that year, the one in West Bridgford. It was a very similar school to the Endowed boys school, same sort of building, Victorian job. So the only thing we went up to the main school for was sports. I enjoyed it. The comprehensive. The new boy again. By then I was on the third year, which is when you are building up to do your GCSEs and start thinking about what subjects you wanted to do. That was in the third year. Then it's the fourth year when it starts splitting Science up for doing Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

I picked it up from there. I've never been a great academic anyway. I think I had the ability but not the willpower. I was very keen on Biology and Chemistry and took to them with great gusto when they started. I did well with those. When it came up to GCSEs, well I got eight, I got eight GCSEs, which is quite a lot in those days. They were graded. A, C and D, were passes. I didn't get any As but I got three Cs, I got History, English Language, English Literature, General Studies, and the three Sciences.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

West Bridgford was just changing from grammar to comprehensive. So the children from the villages all took the 11-Plus, whereas the children from West Bridgford all went direct. So grammar school children comprised half of the year and a full comprehensive intake the other half of the year.

It suddenly changed into a comprehensive. The children from Ruddington secondary modern then all were transferred to West Bridgford.

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By then I had my own circle of friends mainly based in West Bridgford, I played sport, and I played rugby at West Bridgford. From then onwards I stopped mixing really with children from the village. Friends from Ruddington had drifted. A good friend had come to Nottingham High School so we lost contact and another two good friends from the junior school had moved away at 11, so I needed a new circle of friends anyway. But, practicalities of friends in West Bridgford was, get on my bike and cycle to see them, or walk or run. It's about three miles. I'd often walk home after school because I'd missed the school bus or stayed behind for something. It was often just as quick to walk home or run home than wait for the next bus. It was mainly downhill on the way home, so a lot easier.

The Barton buses had a gangway down the side of the bus, with a long seat rather than two separate seats. One long seat would take four people or five people. But it would be a Trent bus that would take me to school in West Bridgford.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

We went straight to a comprehensive school. Which was in my case West Bridgford Comprehensive, which luckily for me, the year before had been a grammar school anyway, and so was still prevalent with grammar school teachers and the ethics of the grammar school, which was great. I loved it, absolutely loved it. School for me was great. It was fantastic. I loved it.

I didn't have the opportunities that some had, like they went on skiing trips or they went on Geography field trips, and they had exchange visitors. My family just couldn't afford anything like that. But I never knew I was missing out. That was the thing. In those days, you didn't know because there wasn't so much peer pressure from a materialistic point of view. You never felt bad about that, nor that you were missing out that much. It was just how it was.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

That was the last year that you were in the junior school. After that you moved to the senior school which, for me, would have been the secondary modern. We were due to have the 11 plus and we were all getting built up for it, but our particular year is the year that it finished in this county. So to our relief we didn't have to take it. Consequently we never went to the

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secondary modern neither because that's when it changed over to being comprehensive. We went to either Rushcliffe or the West Bridgford school. So we were the first year who didn't know what was coming – where you would normally have your eldest brother telling. It was completely new and quite un-nerving, definitely.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

The county, or the bright spark at the government, decided to change the grammar school, and it became a comprehensive. That got closed and everyone thereafter, went to either Rushcliffe or West Bridgford and St. Peter's moved down to Ashworth Avenue.

*Andy Gough b 1961*

## LEAVING SCHOOL

After they left school people got jobs in the village mostly. Or Players, and Boots. You'd got to pay for transport. It used to be two and sixpence<sup>11</sup> a week on the bus, five ups and five downs. No preparation for it at school. None at all. Only that you'd call the boss 'Sir.' You couldn't just say, 'Oh I'll not do that.' The boss used to say 'Do that!' and you done it and no arguing.

I went for a plumber for the first six months or so, and then Middleton Transport bought a place in Ruddington. They bought where the Village Motors is, after this here farmer finished. He had all old cows, horses and such like. The man said 'What do you do like?' and I says, 'Plumbing.' He says, 'How much is he paying you?' I said, 'Seven and six a week.' He says 'I'll give you ten shillings. I'll give you a note.' A ten shilling note, god blimey. You were well in. That was rich. That's when I started Middletons. I went right from there, right through the war, finished, went back to Middletons and I finished. Then I went to British Gypsum for twenty two years, down the pit at British Gypsum. Three jobs since I left school.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I left school at 14, when they broke up for Christmas. I left school on the Friday morning and on the Sunday morning I was at work. My parents made me go out to work. I could have gone to grammar school but they didn't want me to do that, or at least my stepmother didn't want me to do that. She wanted me earning money and that's what I had to do.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

In 1942 I went to work in Nottingham on Castle Boulevard, Oscrofts who were the Vauxhall Bedford agents, and I remained there for thirty eight years doing various jobs, starting as a mechanic and finishing up as a manager of the car and light vans. I was made redundant after thirty eight years. I went to another place for two years and again made redundant. Finally I got a job, for the last ten years, at South Notts College instructing

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<sup>11</sup> 12.5p

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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and working with their disabled students in the 16–19 year old age group. Well, generally assisting in the class with the teachers. I didn't do any actual lecturing. When it came to Sports, we used to take them all over, even abseiling down the Albert Hall from the top piece right at the Albert Hall, near the Playhouse. We abseiled down there. We took them all over.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

I should be sixteen when I left school, nearly. I did coach-building at Brush. They was all wood, buses was, in them days. Then the all metal sort had come in. I went on the railway in the garage, working on vehicles, you see, on motors, lorries, cars and whatever. When they privatised us and I got made redundant at 52, I bravely took myself to night school. And I started working for myself. But only for me. I carried on with that job until I was 70.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

I took my School Certificate. I got the usual matriculation exemption as it was. Then I had to take an exam at school to join the Civil Service. Because the jobs in '48 were fairly limited and because I had an artistic bent – I was always good at Geography, drawing maps – I applied to become a Planning Assistant. Which meant that I'd have to go and live in London. And the news came through. I said, 'I've got this offer to go to London to be a Planning Assistant in the Land Registry.' Three pounds a week out of which to pay eighteen shillings for my dinner, bed and breakfast. A pound went home to Mum because you always did that. You always sent her some. And the remainder<sup>12</sup> was mine to get to and from work!

Walking to the job because I couldn't afford threepence, the old threepence on the tube from Knightsbridge to Covent Garden. So I had to walk. If the weather was lousy then I'd find the money. Eventually I got a cycle down there because I was always a great cyclist, so I could then ride to and from work.

I had eighteen months I suppose and then Mister George the Sixth said, 'We want you!' You report to 9TRRE. That was it, the Ninth Trained Regiment Royal Engineers camp near Farnborough. So I had three years up there with them and then another five years in the Territorials after-

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<sup>12</sup> i.e. £3.00 less 90p and £1 for his mother.

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wards, you had to do. It was confirmed. You probably wouldn't know that, I don't know. I thoroughly enjoyed it except for one thing: I didn't go abroad with them!

But I was a cyclist, a racing cyclist. At weekends, I'd get a weekend pass. I'd ride home on my bike. On a thirty-six hour pass you could get home and spend a few hours at home and ride back! From there to here. Yes and I used to do it regular.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

I went as a coach-builder to Henry Street in Nottingham. I was joined later by John Wilcox who was in the school, behind me. We used to build buses. After a year I left and went into the electrical trade. I did have one or two other jobs and I did the National Service.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I was reasonably good at English. My spelling was all right. So when I left Art School my name was put forward as a prospective employee of the printing industry. I became a compositor. I liked that. Of course later on it all changed and became computerised and all the rest of it, and plate making.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

The change in leaving age occurred before I was fourteen when they moved the leaving age to fifteen. I was caught for an extra year which didn't go down very well with a lot of us, but still.

I was pleased to leave. I wanted to get out into the big wide world as you might say. Age fifteen. I wasn't disappointed when it come to the Friday and you went in to see Mr Marshall and he shook you by the hand and said, 'I wish you all the best' in whatever you was going to do.

I always wanted to have a small holding or something like that. In them days my parents didn't think there was stability in it. They wanted you to go somewhere and get a wage, well, where you was guaranteed a wage. My Dad and my sister always worked at Boots and my Dad got me on at Boots. Which was a steady income. If you was truthful, it wasn't my choice. Dad got me in at Boots and you was on guaranteed wages which you couldn't guarantee in some jobs at that particular time.

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I worked in the picture framing department. I was there nearly thirty nine years. In the same department. Until I got made redundant. They closed the department down eventually. At that time, we went to Boots College one day a week, for further education, between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. That was interesting because there was a science lab. I'd never been used to a lab with instruments in doing Science. No facilities at school.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

You went to the Youth Employment Officer back of the cricket ground, on Fox Road, Mr Smallbone. You went to see him and he rings up for your interviews. He sent me to Hooleys first for an interview but I didn't get that job, because I was too clean! They said, 'Oh no, he's too clean.' If you went somewhere for a job you went dressed up and that. Then he got me an interview with Hopewells of West Bridgford. We went to see them. Dad took me, went to see him. Got the job and I stayed there for fifty-one years!

I didn't do exams until I went to college. The motor trade, when I started work. I was an apprentice so you had to go to college, one day and one night a week.

I did motor technology. Motor engineering and technical drawing and this, that and the other, we did. Technical drawing: we used to do that. When we started at day-release you did it. It was at People's College we went to.

I went in the army for two years, National Service. Volunteered for it. I did volunteer for Australia, for Woomera in Australia, the atomic station. But I was turned down because I was too important in the workshops. Some of the lads came back from there and they'd had a brilliant time. I suppose no-one had realised the dangers that they'd been in from the radiation.

*George Gregg b 1936*

When I left school, I went into Co-op shoe repairs. I was there for three years. After that, I went into Engineering. But as I didn't go into Engineering until I was 18, I was behind because I had to have an apprenticeship. I was doing night school then, until I was 21. I was too late to get the

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qualifications. When I went to the Brush at Loughborough, I couldn't get day release, so I couldn't take the exams. Apart from that, at the Brush I was on shifts. So I had to pack up college altogether. I missed three years; I was too late to take the apprenticeship.

The school was not much help: I went to the Youth Employment Officer or something. They got me the job at Co-op.

*George Dring b 1942*

I left at 16. I took an apprenticeship. I went to Brush in Loughborough. It was called Brush then. It was a proper apprenticeship. There was a purpose-built training centre built. It was built in a quadrangle. They had a main lecture hall, office, administration block and they had a machine shop, which had lathes, capstan lathes, drills and things like that in it. Next to it, they had a welding shop, which speaks for itself. Then they had a fabrication shop, which was for forming tin shapes, just a manipulation of sheet steel. And then they had a drawing office and an electrical shop. The electrical shop, where you did panel wiring and wiring motors and looms like that. Each one had got a dedicated lecturer/teacher there. We did block release then, not day release. We did block release. We did nine weeks at work and nine weeks at Loughborough Tech for the first year. Blocks like that. So you really got into the practical and theory sandwiched together. The theory was intense because you had nine weeks solid, so you was able to get to grips with it, rather than on the day release, which came years later, where it was more difficult to apprehend it, because you've come straight from work. I did a five-year apprenticeship. I was fortunate because one of the guys I was at school with also went there, so we used to travel together and work together. So I was with him from when I was five to when we finished our apprenticeship at 21.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

I trained to be a teacher, then went down to London to train to teach and ended up teaching in Nottingham. Turned full circle.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

I started mechanical engineering, but that didn't work out right, because in industry you get the nasty people and the friendly people and I got a nasty

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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foreman. I was on a milling machine and we had a capstan on the bed, which allowed you to make a square peg out of a round bar and the foreman wanted to get me to do the four sides. So he asked me, 'What would the centre be? From the centre, I want you to do this and I want you to do that, so work out how far you want on this.' So there's me, clicks my brain on gear, and I worked it out. All right it took me a bit longer to work it out but I worked it out and I told him. He said, 'No, you've got it wrong. You want it this height. This is the measurement that you want.' At that age, sixteen, you really want to show the foreman that you can do it, that you know a bit about the world, whether you did or didn't. And I said it again, 'This is what you want,' and he kept saying 'No.' In the end he did it and, I'm not joking, he was an inch off the mark. He said, 'All right then, show me your method and your position of it.' I turned the table back to the centre line and did my calculations and moved it on, and literally it was the exact measurements that he wanted that he couldn't get. From that day on, that foreman had it in for me. I'm sure of it, because I didn't last long!

Then I went to college, Brackenhurst College, to do amenities, horticulture there. Then went on to the nursery. That lasted a year and a half, and it was great. It was a nursery and you were doing deliveries for them, setting out the deliveries, because it was a wholesale. You didn't need to write because the owners did that part for you, so you got the list in the morning, what plants wanted to go on the back of the van to get delivered by somebody.

*Andy Gough b 1961*



# BREAK TIME

## ST PETER'S

At the top of the playground there's a wall, drops down onto the road. It must be about six foot high. I used to drop down there, run across the road, because there was a little tuffee shop there. And if you got a ha'penny, half-penny to you, oh, you'd get there, you'd get all sorts with that. There was a little shop there: Mrs Buttery the shop on Asher Lane. If they caught you, they'd play up hell with you because they'd say, 'If you drop down there and break a leg it's my fault.' We still used to do it when he wasn't there. So does everybody else. You always done something what you shouldn't do.

You used to play on the village green. It was ashes then, so you had to wash your feet every night before you went to bed. We had plimsolls – like a trainer, only half a shoe. When you'd been playing football on The Green, or cricket, your feet was black.

Football or the cricket, was just playtimes, dinnertime. Mostly football. We hadn't got bats, balls stumps and that. We couldn't afford them. For stumps we used to have an old lamp-post, things like that.

Well the school yard, in the girls school, was all the way round the school. There were railings all around there and there were gates at the front of the school, the ornate bit. You went up the steps to the school there and through doors. You could also get in round the back, but there were tall gates there as well. So you were all enclosed at playtime and very often, in those days, because there were no refreshments in schools and that sort of thing, parents would come at break time and perhaps bring them a biscuit or a sandwich, whatever they could get. Then the children would then all go home for dinner, or lunch as they called it.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

## BOYS SCHOOL

We collected cigarette cards and played marbles. Especially if you got some like blood alleys, nice coloured ones. What games did we play out of

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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school? We played such things as whip and top, marbles, conkers obviously in season, and even the other games, whip and top. And hoops or an old tyre running up and down the street. But even marbles and conkers and that, they seemed to be a season for them. I mean you didn't play them all the year. I don't know who decided. Obviously conkers when they was in, but for the other games I don't know who decided it was time to play, but you didn't seem to play them all the year. You just seemed to have a season for it!

I remember the Diablo, but I don't think that was played much by the lads. I don't think the lads played it. Same as skipping, I mean, occasionally the lads would get drawn in, but it was mainly the girls skipping.

When we was playing with the cigarette cards, I mean one of the games then, apart from collecting them, we used to do flicking them and that. Well you'd stand some against the wall and you'd hold the card, like that, and flick it and try and knock the others down, and things like that. I don't know why, but that was just one of the games.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

We used to have this slide from the old tree right down to the entrance to the school at the back entrance to the school. Peter Bedford fell down and broke his shoulder but he was all right today so it couldn't have been that bad.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

On the way to school we used to play marbles along the gutters and perhaps buy a carrot from Jack Cross's green grocers, or liquorice sticks – horrible. Sometimes we used to buy yeast from Horspools the bakers.

Quite frequently, there used to be a quarrel at school and they used to arrange a fight, and it all used to take place on The Green. Out of the school. And during the day they'd perhaps get cold feet about it and try their best not to go ahead with it, but others wouldn't let you because they were looking forward to watching. Scrap on! And we used to get round you, hardly any room at all to fight anyway. Plenty of offers to hold your coat and hold your glasses! And then quite often it was broken up by a lady called Madge Leivers. She lived at the top of Kirk Lane. And she used to come along and break us up, saying, 'There's enough fighting in the world

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BREAK TIME

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without your lot!' So then we used to just move down to the spare bit of ground at the end of Clifton Road!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Oh rum-stick-a-bum. We used to be between five and ten boys to each side. You used to have one boy standing upright against a wall and the other boys used to get, like into a scrum, like that, in between the other chaps' legs, in a long line. And the other side used to jump onto your back. The idea was to get as many people on one person's back until they collapsed! They couldn't take the weight and that was Rum-Stick-a-Bum! We used to say, 'Rum-Stick-a-Bum, Finger or Thumb, or Rusty Bum'! And used to shout that out: 'Rum-Stick-a-Bum, Finger or Thumb, or Rusty Bum', it was up to you. One of the persons who was bending down to come up with the correct answer – whether you were holding up your finger or thumb – so they could have a go at jumping on somebody else's back. Well they couldn't see it because, well we couldn't see it because we was looking on the floor and they was on your back.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Game playing in the playground during the break times. Some of it was very rough. You were expected to take part in these games and learn all the rules. There was one called Hot Rice. There was a lot of playing of snobs. The girls too. To be anybody you had to be good at snobs. And the older boys. In their eyes if you were no good at snobs you were not very good at anything. Some of them were brilliant at it. Playing it all the time.

After we'd turned out of school, in the afternoon, there was very often fights on The Green between two boys; it was a regular occurrence that was. They'd start fighting and, I think, a circle of boys would gather round them to see who came off worst!

*David Chapman b 1936*

A bucketful of water thrown across the yard late at night by one of the caretaker's sons froze solid during the night and made a marvellous slide the next morning. In fact, the creation of icy slides was developed into an art-form over the years. Some were so good that they had to be officially

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closed down. Since they all ran down hill and ended at a brick wall, they could become too good for safety.

Another memory which is still vivid in my mind concerns a poor young lad who pushed his head between the school railings and couldn't get it back out again. His panic was not at all alleviated by his (so called) friends telling him that he would have to have his ears cut off. Eventually the village fire brigade arrived and, with the helping of a liberal spread of soap, extricated the poor unfortunate – with his ears still intact.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

I'm taking my class register for the afternoon and I came to 'Burton?' No reply. I asked 'He was here this morning. He's not here?' 'No,' they said, 'he's outside. His head's stuck in the railings!' And he was! I went outside and there he was with his head stuck in the railings! They'd left him there and come in! We had to get the blacksmith to get him out.

Either an accident or they'd given him a push because he was not one of the boys as it were. He was popular enough, but he wasn't part of the gangs.

*Jack Gregory: Teacher 1946–1956; Head Teacher 1969–1974*

Do you know what tally-o is? Well you used to have two teams, one team used to go and hide and the other team had to find them and grab hold of them and count up to a hundred. I used to love that because they used to run away and you'd got to catch them. I just stayed behind them all the time until they was exhausted. I used to love running. I used to run everywhere.

I used to run round that perimeter in my lunch break, round the old ministry. It used to be training for the cross-country race. We started on a run around the perimeter round the ministry depot, and back by way of the playing fields on the Loughborough road and Elms Park. So we only had 20 minutes before dinner time. We had a cross-country race down to 50 steps. It's an old railway bridge. We had a race down there once and the old pier was all flooded. Oh, lovely! There was a cross country race through the flood water in the field before the Fifty Steps bridge and over the bridge.

*George Dring b 1942*

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BREAK TIME

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And he was great that guy was. His name was Mr Hall and he used to play with us every lunch, every break time. We used to play tip it and run cricket in the playground. He used to bowl all the time. He used to stand there bowling. They used to bring him out his cup of tea in the playground whilst we was playing and he'd carry on bowling. And he really did used to participate and apart from keeping an eye on us, he enjoyed it.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

We used to play football. It was not as common as today, but we were very much into it. I was always quite tall so I suppose it's almost like some of my friends used to look on me as a leader. There used to be another person there who was pretty much the same so we were like two gangs. We'd play war games. I remember using the little supports all round the school for hiding.

We'd play war games. It was where one would be defending. We used to build a wall at the far left hand corner of the school. We would toss up who has the defending, who has the attacking scenario. We'd use all the bits around the school. It was really just enacting the films they had at that time, like *The Alamo* or things of that nature, or *Custer's Last Stand*. We took note of what we saw on the television. I most definitely did, and being a typical Leo, I always portrayed myself as a leader of an army. It was all bang, bang, but nothing really violent or vicious. We never hurt each other or anything like that. We'd get participation of about twenty, twenty pupils on each side at some times.

If we weren't doing these games or playing football, then you could have a little clique of your friends. We'd have a certain section of the perimeter of the school, of these little support extensions that came out all round the school. We used to have one or two arguments because somebody would come out and say, 'Oh you're in our little patch now!'

*Richard Smith b 1953*

We just used to play in the playground. Conkers were a big thing when conkers were in season. Conkers are horse chestnuts. When they were ripe we used to take great delight in throwing sticks up into the trees trying to get the biggest conker down, which is like a big nut. You take it home, drill a hole through it, put some string through it and then play conkers. If I get

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## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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the rules right here: three hits each and whoever broke whoever's conker was the victor. And if that was your first victory, your conker would become a oneer and then another consecutive victory, it would become a twoer. And if somebody beat you with a oneer, then his would become a threeer if he takes yours off of you.

We used to play British Bulldog. I didn't understand that really. It was quite dangerous. Two teams bashing at each other and you had to get people onside. That's as far as I know in British Bulldog.

We also had some wickets painted on the walls. There was obviously the football. They had a very crude climbing frame which was probably just four steel bars into the brickwork in the school. I can remember somebody falling off that one day and cutting their head open. On the tarmac, the old playground tarmac. Well you'd be careful not to fall over, obviously.

I can remember swapping cards in the playground as well, cards from sweets and things like that. I think it was when *Batman* first came on the television. I can remember swapping Batman cards. You used to collect various characters and try and get the full set. The idea was to try and get a complete set, but obviously you had to buy the sweets in the first place to get it which meant getting your parents to buy them which wasn't always wanted.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

There was a big tree right next to the toilets and David Collier decided to clamber up this tree to get a ball back and he fell down and landed on his chin. We didn't have an ambulance but the teachers looked after him when he'd split his chin.

The walls of the toilets, the outdoor walls, we used to get there early and then at playtime we used to play squash with a football or, usually, a tennis ball. You'd each take turn and you had to hit the wall and whoever couldn't hit the wall from the previous shot was out.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## SCHOOL DINNERS

It didn't bother me at all, school. When I'd got into the swing of getting up in the morning and going to school and coming home at dinner time, and have your dinner, and that was it.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

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BREAK TIME

The war was when they started the dinner. They used to have that room for dinners, so they'd have to clear the table. I never stopped dinner. Grandma were at home. She would want to do the dinner. Looking back, they could have been starting giving dinners out to kids as were under-nourished or whatever.

They were all within walking distance. The only ones that were a long way as I can remember would be up at The Grange there. There was three lads who's lived there as would walk down to the village. Then there'd be them up at the other top end of the Leys, up where the trains are.

I always went home because we had an hour and a half. There was very few who did stay school dinners actually.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

They used to bring the dinners in a van or summat.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

We used to traipse across to the Church House for the school dinners. One week the girls would go first from the girls school and then we would go first the next week. I thought they were very good. They were served up by various ladies in the back. The teachers would sit on a private table of their own. There'd be Mr Eaton, Mr Marshall, Mr Saxton.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

We used to go up there. Where the framework knitters place is, Starlight rooms for school dinners. There used to be this awful smell of cabbage. They used to deliver them in these big aluminium containers. It didn't help when we used to find caterpillars in the cabbage! I had to have school dinners because there was no way I could get home.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

School dinners I always remember because we had to walk about two or three hundred yards away on a prefabricated part of the school. I don't always remember stopping for dinner. It was quite rare for me. I lived not far away. I did have dinners but it was always pretty basic, fish fingers and chips or something of that nature. I don't think it all revolved around so-called fast food.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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Oh the dinners. I remember the food being plentiful. Certain teachers would come up to school and have dinner. They used to get a big portion for their table and then they would then distribute it out to whoever wanted it. I always liked my food so I was a bit of a bad influence on people there. But, no I remember the food being good. We had a dinner and a pudding with water and that was it. I remember the teachers being very pleasant.

Well I thought it was really good. In fact a lot have said that they'd like to recreate the menus if we could, me and my wife. And I think there's a market for a book. Some of the things that we used to have at school: Manchester Tart, another thing is shortbread. You can tell I've got a sweet tooth. The dinners were proper dinners. They seemed to make their own salad cream which was particularly nice. They seemed to make everything. I don't think it was bought in. If they made a pie, it was made on the premises. I remember there being a lot of cooks in the school kitchen even though it wasn't a big school.<sup>13</sup>

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

I thoroughly enjoyed them the school lunches, plenty of them, served in big green earthenware, Denby-type pottery dishes. My recollection of school lunches was a very positive one. Good old wholesome British food. My mother actually worked in the kitchens. And we had Christmas puddings with sixpences wrapped in kitchen foil.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

We used to have the food brought out in big silver containers and served by table monitors to us. And all I can remember is there used to be a sixpence<sup>14</sup> or three-pence in the Christmas pudding. I did enjoy the food. Although in saying that, by the time I got to the junior school, my parents would give me food money on a daily basis so I don't think we paid up front on the Monday, we just paid it on a day-by-day. I ended up then, perhaps going to the chip shop or going to a café on Wilford Hill. Why I did this I don't know. I just decided to opt out for a short while, before I was brought

13 In the mid-1960s I interviewed a local authority buyer, who had responsibility for school meals. The receipts were all rated according to their calories, fat, protein and starch. The schools had to serve so many Class A meals and so many Class B meals in a week. P.B.

14 2.5p



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BREAK TIME

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back into the fold again for school dinners. It was good. The food was always good there, and the puddings were to die for. Treacle pudding and the rice pudding with jam, a little bit of jam in the middle. We loved things like that.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

And then we would all pile up to The Green, the pre-fab one, for your lunch. I never used to go home then, I think my Mum would be working then, so I would stay at school all day, just stay there without getting away. School lunches were pretty hideous as you are aware I think. My biggest memory is the glasses and the jugs that you used to get them in, aluminium. Used to be like a red, or a green, or a blue aluminium thing and the tumblers.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

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# ATTENDANCE

A lot of them just skipped school but you couldn't just skip school then because if a policeman saw you!

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

Only time I played truant was at Ruddington school. One day with a friend of mine, Tony, and we decided not to go to school one day. We decided to go playing down in the Fairham Brook at the bottom of the garden. But I had a third friend who was a good friend, Gordon Marriott. He told on us, snitched on us. That's one of the times I got the cane, at school, and then I got the same cane because a letter went from the school to my Mum, my parents, and I think my Dad gave me a whack. I think they sent a note back so that doubled the punishment. My Mother was very good, she was not a hard taskmaster, but she was a good disciplinarian and you knew where you stood!

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

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# HOME LIFE

My Dad worked at the Wilford – we used to call it the clay hole, the Wilford Brick Company. Thirty-five shillings<sup>15</sup> a week and the rent. The house was one and eleven pence, one shilling and eleven pence<sup>16</sup> a week, rent. And the house has been sold recently for sixty eight thousand pounds! Now reckon that up.

The house where we was, the end house on Savages Row. It was a brick and wood and in the summer when you got the heat on the wall – it faced east – all the boards used to crack and all the paper used to crack. You could sit and hear the paper cracking, splitting because of the boards inside. The toilet was outside. You got to go across to the toilet. No double glazing, no electric, only gas.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I didn't get pocket money at the end of the week. My stepmother was very short of that sort of thing. If through the school or through any other way, we were asked to go potato picking or potato setting, things like that, I used to be sent there. All the money I got, all the money I earned, fourpence an hour or sixpence an hour<sup>17</sup>, she took off me. I very rarely got anything back. But I learnt from those things. I learnt how to keep a house clean and things like that.

The eldest of my three stepbrothers, he was ten years younger than me and I brought him up more or less. I was his carer and his keeper. School holidays came along and I'd always got him in the pram with me on school holidays. We used to go down the fields down Clifton way and if I could get his pram into the fields I was okay. I used to take him with me and we used to make campfires and have a bottle of cold tea and some sandwiches and things like that for the day. I learnt how to change his napkins and warm his milk and look after him. It stood me in good stead later on in life when I had my own daughter.

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15 £1.75p

16 Nearly 10p

17 Between 1.5p and 2.5p

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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The roads were pretty clear then. You didn't have to worry about pushing a pram down the road. We used to spend a lot of time down the lane here. About 200 yards down there, there's a little stream across the road. We used to call it shipwash. It was sheepwash really. They used to wash sheep there in the olden days apparently. We used to play around there, round that little area, beyond, just off the road. Or we'd go down towards Clifton and over the railway bridge, then over Brook Hill and turn right into the field there and there's a brook there.

The General Strike, 1926. I can't remember it, but I was there. I was taken round on my father's shoulders. I was only 2 years of age. But apparently I'm sitting on his shoulders, marching in the protest strikes and things like that.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

Grandma couldn't read and write. You couldn't go to her for owt. Not for writing.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

Dad was a salesman, a traveller, for Hoovers. When he took a Hoover into the room he demonstrated it and then sold it and then had to maintain it. He was one of the best. I've still got one of his cups that he won as an award for the best salesman in the region, or whatever it was. It's not marked, but it is. I can always remember going to an awards ceremony, as a youngster of about seven or eight, I suppose.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

Father was very ill. He had perforated ulcers and all sorts, and he had to pack in the farm. He worked, during the war, for Jardines in The Meadows. Bomb filling and that, and then he ended up on the ministry up here. In the stores on the ministry, in this factory there. Father didn't have much to do really with the family. Mother was the boss. She organised everything.

My younger sister she was very good at baking, so she used to do the baking and this, that and the other. Boys wasn't allowed in our days, to do the washing up or anything like that. Or anything to do with cooking or anything like that.

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The only thing the boys was allowed to do was chop the firewood or we used to go sticking or coaling. If you walked along the railway track, you could get a bucket full of coal in about hundred yards. It used to fall off the steam trains, didn't it? It was highly illegal but we used to do it! Not too dangerous. The steam trains you can hear them coming miles away, couldn't you? And then we used to go wooding, down the hedges, any rotten wood you could get and then get it home, saw it up for firewood.

I've never known even my sisters have to do washing the clothes. Mother did all that because she would never have a washing machine. We wanted to buy her one. The reason was she'd took my younger brother to hospital with a broken arm and the nurse says, 'I'm ever so sorry but you'll have to wait a bit. We've just had a lady come in. She's had her arm in a washing machine and it's rather a mess.' My Mum seen her. She says, 'If that's washing machines, I'm not having one!' And that was it. She would never have a washing machine. She worked with the dolly. Dolly tub and the ponch. The one that you bumped it up and down. It was like a spade and with a lump of wood on the bottom and that was it. She always managed it.

After the war, they built what they called airy houses – because the wind used to blow through them. That was the main reason. We moved from Woodleigh Street to Elms Park and that was the best thing that ever happened I think, because Elms Park was a brilliant place to live. The people that lived there, all your friends and everything. As I was growing up there it was really good.

*George Gregg b 1936*

You never hardly ever saw a banana or something like that. You were very lucky at Christmas if you got an orange in your stocking. Very often they were hand-made toys and that sort of thing. I suppose it was bleak in those days, but you got through, you see. It was part of life as far as I was concerned. You didn't know any different.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

I went to school in The Meadows area. There was some really poor families down there, with very little. Some of them didn't even have enough clothes to go out in. But my Father worked. Boots Pure Drug Company

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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had a warehouse in The Meadows and he was a security guard. So he got this house, it went with the job. It was only just round the corner from where he worked.

Then we moved to Ruddington. What happened, my grandfather lived in Ruddington and my Mother's sister was single, with a child, which was unusual in those days. My Mother's sister got married so we swapped houses. She went to live in the house we had in The Meadows. I don't know quite how they arranged it because it was a Boots house. We went to live with my Grandfather and by doing that, moving into Ruddington, we were then on the council house list. In 1953 we actually got a council house in Abingdon Drive. By then I had a brother.

We used to live at 53 Wilford Road, which was the old marl pit. It used to be called the marl pit. There was no electricity, and you had to stand on the table to light the gas. Turn the gas light on, stand on the table, and then light the mantel. The cooking was done on a range, a fire, with an oven at one side. They did have a gas stove in the kitchen but a lot of the cooking was done by the fire. There was an oven on one side of the fire. You'd get the heat from the fire, and there was a grid that you could drop down over the fire and there was also a hot plate at the side of the fire. And every now and again you used to have to clean all this out, and rake out the ashes and then black lead it. You used to use some sort of black, on a brush. You used to have to polish it all and get it shiny: black-leading. My Grandfather used to have herrings which you wrapped up in wet newspaper and throw them on the fire, and before they caught fire you used to take them out and they were cooked. The wet newspaper used to steam the herring. Then you could break it open. It was all cooked and steaming hot inside.

We used to have a candle to go to bed with and also a warming pan which was a big brass pan which you used to put ashes in from the fire, in a pan, with a long wooden handle. And then go and put that in the bed and warm the bed up before you. Because, in the winter, upstairs was like a fridge. There was no heating upstairs. So once you got out of the main room it was icy cold. The beds were really viciously cold, and you used to go and warm them up with this warming pan.

And also there was the old hot water bottles, a stoneware bottle with a cork in, that was filled with hot water and used to warm the beds. In the morning you used to have ice inside the windows, frozen solid. Going to

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bed in the winter was quite an ordeal. It was really viciously cold once you got out the main room! And getting up, even worse!

My Grandfather's brother used to breed rabbits to show. There was quite a number that didn't come up to standard and he used to give me two and I used to have them in a hutch in the garden. I used to feed them on a mashed up mixture of potato peelings, tea-leaves and oats. When they were big enough my Uncle used to come and rabbit chop them dead and then they used to go in the pot and then we used to have two more baby rabbits to start the whole process again. So I grew up with sort of eating my pet rabbits which sounds terrible. But it was a fact of life. That's what we did, and we didn't used to give them names, so! My Granddad used to relish eating the brains out of the heads!

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

We had 120 hens and a lot of land and I used to spend a lot of my time down there. We had half an acre, or something like that. Then we had another part with a load of vegetables on and a greenhouse up there. I used to go round with my Dad when I was a bit older selling all his produce. I spent an awful lot of my time doing the garden, the allotment and delivering it and sorting it all. So that didn't leave much time for playing football. Not a lot. I used to play sometimes of an evening.

We never had a car. So I went on a pushbike delivering it to customers. I used to pushbike from the allotment to Bunny with a bag of shallots. And two, four, eight bunches of onions tied on the handlebars. I used to pushbike to Bunny and Bradmore to deliver them. There's a hill between Ruddington and Bradmore. I used to be bow-legged.

I had a sort of working childhood, really. I used to spend most of my time down the allotment. Spending all my free time helping my father garden. Or delivering it.

We had a cultivator. Petrol. Not a tractor. It's got an engine. You had to be very careful how you started it up. Because you'd pull this rope with a handle on it and if you didn't do it properly, it kicked you one. You could actually break your arm. It'd got two handles to steer by, and you had to walk behind it, but it was very powerful. You could plough with it. You could level the ground out with it. You could pull a roller behind it. Well, as I say, you could fit ploughing attachments or rollers or what they called a

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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harrow, which is spikes coming down to level the ground out. It was very useful but it was very dangerous. It's hard to keep it going straight because the ground's uneven. One day, one of the wheels went down a hole. My Dad tried to stop it swinging him about and he twisted his knee; it was never the same after that. It used to come out of its socket every once in a while.

We were poor. I never used to earn money, did I? I tell a lie, my Dad used to give me half a crown<sup>18</sup> a week for doing the allotment. I used to save two bob and buy some sherbet lemons for sixpence<sup>19</sup>. I saved it. I can't remember what I bought. I think I just used it at holiday time.

Well we moved house on Boxing Day 1947 and my Dad hired the coal lorry. We went from 50 Ash. We went from there up Elms Park with all the furniture on the coal lorry. The road wasn't even made properly then. Well, transport was pretty short then. It was just after the war, wasn't it?

That was the year they had the floods in Wilford. They always used to have floods there. In 1947 they had a really bad flood. They'd got the boats to rescue them from the bedrooms.

I had a Francis Barnett motorbike when I was about 16. You don't know Francis Barnett do you? It was a 250cc motorbike but it had a two and half gallon tank. It had a massive tank. I used to come off a few times. It was a British made motorbike. It was a Francis Barnett. There's also a James, which is a similar make and there used to be a BSA of course. BSA Bantam – a lot of my mates had those at Elms Park. I don't know anybody who actually died but I know one or two that got very badly injured. I remember there was a mate of mine called Tarzan Gregg, we used to call him Tarzan because he used to be like a monkey: he climbed in the trees. As I says, he went on the back of Patrick Middleton's motorbike once, and they both came off at Clifton. Middleton wasn't bothered about Tarzan at all. All he was interested in was his motorbike.

*George Dring b 1942*

We lived on what would be a modern estate then. The houses were newly built, so I would think most people had a washing machine. We didn't have any central heating. We had a gas heater at the top of the stairs and a

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18 12.5p

19 2.5p

gas heater in the kitchen. It was sort of a form of central heating. It was a wall-mounted heater with a gas flue at the top of the stairs, which had to heat all the bedrooms. I can remember rushing to it in the mornings to get changed before my sister got there. We had one downstairs in the kitchen. We had an open fire in the lounge. It was a gas heater with an electric fan at the top, throwing heat out that way. I can remember waking up all through my childhood in the winter and there was frost on the windows. Inside.

I don't think we had a TV until I was 7. It would be a black and white one. I remember being very excited when we got a colour TV in the early seventies. My clear recollection of TV was watching the World Cup in '66 on a black and white TV. I remember watching snooker in black and white. Pot Black. I can remember that because I was a big fan of snooker. Trying to remember which colour was which.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

We were relatively well off. My grandfather had been a miner, North Nottinghamshire. Like a lot of miners at the time, he said, 'My sons are not going to go down the pit.' So my father had an apprenticeship at the Royal Ordnance factory throughout the war years. He was too young to be enlisted, so he'd be helping to make guns. That's the job he would have been doing when I was born. Whilst it wouldn't have been the highest paid job, there was stability.

The garden that we had was three quarters turned over to produce: a small lawn, a large expanse of potatoes and carrots and onions, plus fruit trees and gooseberry bushes and blackberries and rhubarb. Fairly self-sufficient in terms of produce. I can't work out how my father had time to mend cars and keep a garden tidy. As I got older I was the digger. The soil in Ruddington was very clayey; so it was hard work.

I didn't go into town, not unless I was with my parents. Mum bought clothes for me. And there was never any need to go into Nottingham. Shoes, yes. We would go by bus. When I was very young, it was getting the train from Ruddington to Nottingham, but that service would have ceased in the mid '60s. And then it was a Barton bus.

We had a car. Possibly because Dad could maintain one and knew how to keep it on the road, not because we could necessarily afford one compared with other people. He was very good with his hands and that's

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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how we managed to keep a car. For many years we had a Morris Oxford, a big rounded shaped heavy car with a long bench seat, with a column gear change that came off the steering wheel. No seat belts. Whenever Dad had to brake heavily, it was a case of put his left arm across my chest to stop me going through the windscreen. The signals were what was called trafficators. They looked like little semaphore arms that would come out the side of the car, to turn right or left.

We had a caravan at Skegness, from the age of about five, mid '60s to early '70s. Our own static caravan on a caravan site, quite a small one. We'd travel there by car, and go for weekends or summer holidays. That would be where we'd spend our holiday. I remember my parents being quite proud when they sold the caravan that they sold it for more than they bought it for. From then onwards we had a touring caravan. That was our holidays. I have a sister who's two years younger, so there'd be four of us there. Rather cramped. After the age of 10 or 11, I wanted a little bit more freedom, not being confined to a caravan. I remember going off for walks by myself to get away.

I had a crystal set that dad had made me. A crystal set was a radio made out of reels of copper wire wound round a drum with all sorts of valves like small light bulbs. This didn't have a battery. And father had rigged up the aerial in the loft. It wasn't a conventional aerial like you'd have for a television now. The aerial was made up by long pieces of wire wrapped around the inside of the loft. So the more wire there was, the better the signal. Most of the parts were made from ex-Army surplus equipment. I had a pair of headphones; I could listen to Radio Luxembourg<sup>20</sup> late at night when I should have been asleep.

Apart from that, we had a very big radio that was two foot wide, a foot tall. It didn't play records. I don't recall having anything to play records on in the house until at least 11 or 12. We had classical music at home, but again that wouldn't have been until we had a record player. We had some on tape. Mainly we'd have heard it through school or at the church.

We wouldn't have had a colour television until I was 10 or 11. It was small black and white sets before that.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

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<sup>20</sup> Radio Luxembourg was the only station that played pop music.

# VILLAGE LIFE

Always, always more girls in the village than boys. Always. The girls school seemed pretty full and the boys school, well, not many at all.

When we got into the top class, we used to have a smoke. There used to be about five of us. At dinner time, doing your errands for your elder brother or sister, nip to the shop and fetch them something. My Grandma used to say, 'Nip and fetch me this,' and Uncle used to say, 'Nip and fetch me some cigarettes.' Well, if he gave you a shilling, for twenty cigarettes you got a ha'penny change. You'd put that in your own pocket because he'd forget about that. We used to go up the village and opposite the chemists there used to be a barber and on this barber's pole there used to be a cigarette machine. Put tuppence in, two pence in, you got five Woodbines and two matches. So our gang used to light up and walk across The Green like we owned the village! Not every day; probably once a month or something like that when we had the money.

Mister Coker the barber. There was no styling then: just sat down, and *bzzzzzzzz*. That was it. Cheerio.

There wasn't many activities at all, at school, because the teachers used to leave, get on the bus, and go. They lived in Nottingham and Kimberley, the teachers. Once they'd gone, that was it. You'd got to make your own entertainment. Only the farms and doing this and that and then you'd got one or two errands to do for Mum and Dad.

We used to go what you call cow tenting. You go to a local farmer and you used to take these cows from where the village motors is now. He's only got about 10, 12 cows in there. We used to take them up Flawforth Lane – they used to eat all the grass on the side of the road, because Flawforth Lane was just a cart track. There's nobody got a car in the village. Two doctors had got a car and one or two had got them down Manor Park. That's all there was, so about five cars. My Gran used to shout, when I was going to school, 'Keep off the horse road!' so that I didn't get ran over by the horse and carts. Anyway, cow tenting, you see, the grass side of the road. I used to bring them back for milking about 1 o'clock and he sometimes gave you sixpence or a shilling<sup>21</sup>. If you'd got sixpence on a Saturday, you could go to

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21 2.5p or 5p

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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Nottingham on the bus. Fourpence return, into the pictures for tuppence and back home again, for sixpence.

We used to go with the farmers, singling and chopping turnips. Say you got a row of sugar beet, you just go along with a hoe and take so many out. Make a space between them because otherwise they'd be overcrowded. That was singling. Potato picking, in them days you used to follow a spinner. It used to spin all the potatoes up and you used to go picking them. Nowadays it's all done by machinery. It picks it up, washes them and bags them and all sorts. Sometimes you got two shillings<sup>22</sup>.

We used to go there, hay making and picking sheaves of wheat up and stacking them. They used to pay you for that. I think the most I've ever earned for all day Saturday and a Sunday and at night, was about five shillings<sup>23</sup>. Everyone used to go. I mean there was farms all over then. From down there, where that brook is down there, it was all farmland. This was all farmland, where we're sitting here.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

You used to have a lot of snobs, and you played marbles coming home. I used to have to come from The Green. You could play marbles coming down this road, in the gutter. All the way from up the village and right down, because there was no traffic. The busiest part then was traffic going down to the station, say to Clifton Lane, Station Road as I call it. That was quite busy with the horse and cart.

They used to bring cattle up and down this road every day, up to the farm, every morning. In the winter time when the darker mornings was here and they'd be taking them up to The Grange to Shelton's. I used to go to work on my bike and I'd be weaving in between the cows! I remember when one swung its tail and knocked me off me bike!

When school was on The Green, I used to sit just inside, and the lorries was going by all day. They wasn't big lorries. They'd only carry a couple of tons. The teacher was at the other end. He'd be talking and you couldn't hear a thing.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

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22 10p

23 25p

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Across the road from the school there was the blacksmith's shop which was a source of entertainment. Near the blacksmith's shop there was also a crisp factory. One of the old framework knitting shops at the back of the blacksmith's, they'd set up a crisp factory. And you used to be able to go and buy a bag of bits, which was all the greasy little bits that had been scooped out of the pans after the chips. Because we were so short of fat we used to eat these congealed masses of little bits of potato, dripping in chip oil! You could buy a bag for a ha'penny. So you'd buy a bag of these bits, and then go and watch the blacksmith while we ate them. Shoeing horses, or making gates, or whatever he was doing. That was quite exciting because there was some big shire horses used to go. He used to put the shoe on hot so it burnt an impression into the hoof to fit, and there was piles of smoke and then there was the old forge and bashing the steel and sparks and all sorts of things. That was good.

There's an old chapel on The Green. Once a week or once a fortnight they had a picture show. Movies. It was about a shilling<sup>24</sup>. We used to go there and they used to show a film. That was quite popular, although the quality of it wasn't particularly good! It sometimes stopped well before you got to the end of it, and if it stopped for too long it burnt a hole in the film! So on the screen there was this picture. It suddenly stopped and then if it stopped too long a little brown spot came and it gradually spread and it burnt. Because with it being brown it was in colour which was something that you didn't have. You didn't have colour. There was a big cheer went up as the whole picture disappeared in, and it burnt!

Twenty or thirty years earlier it would have been celluloid film, and highly inflammable!

We had a radio of my Grandfather's, because we lived with my Grandfather. That had an accumulator battery in it which I had to take up to the garage, for re-charging. A square glass container. We had to carry this accumulator up to the garage for re-charging. You had to be careful not to spill the acid down your trousers. It was in a glass container. Obviously it wasn't plastic then. So it was in a glass container with a metal handle on. I used to take it up to the garage for re-charging which they did. It used to go back inside the radio after.

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24 5p

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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I remember television first starting and Grices on the hill, on the top of Duppen Hill they had a shop where they started to sell televisions. They used to have one in the window, and on the way home from school we all used to gather outside in a big crowd watching it! You couldn't hear it. You could just see the moving pictures. We used to stand all peering in the window watching this television. No matter what was on we used to watch! Black and white, about a nine inch screen, I should think. Later on there were several around, but this was before anyone had one. I didn't know anyone with a television at that point.

The coronation would have been 1953, so it was before that. By the coronation there was a number of people with televisions. My auntie had one. I didn't see the coronation. There was so few televisions that there wasn't enough to go round, even for going round to see, sitting on somebody else's. I remember it, but I can't remember being particularly interested in it.

We had a television after I went to grammar school, so it was after '54, it must have been '55 or something like that when we first had our television. And I remember adverts starting because that was quite a novelty. There was one for Murray Mints that was very popular at the time. When we had our first television at home there was more than one channel. We didn't have it when it was only BBC. There was two channels. I remember watching adverts from when we first had it.

Past the school there was a road to the MOS Depot, the Ministry of Supply Depot. After the war they were selling off a lot of surplus equipment, all sorts of things, motorbikes and tanks and cars and all sorts. Often there used to be a massive vehicle that someone had bought, come down past the school because that was the only way out of the depot. We used to run and have a look at that. I remember one chap, he must have bought an old motorbike because he came down on it and he stopped outside the school and everyone went to look. It stopped and he started it up again and it shot from under him! And he was in the road with the motorbike and all the school was watching him. Oh dear, he was embarrassed about it!

Before Clifton Estate was there, it was all open moorland and we just used to go off, two or three of us in a group, and go for hours, across the moors, down Fairham brook, and fishing, and bird nesting. At night times as well. We used to spend many hours wandering across the fields and

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VILLAGE LIFE

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collecting birds eggs, that we shouldn't do now. In the evenings in the summer, we used to go off and come back about eight o'clock. As long as we were back for eight o'clock your parents didn't worry. There was no awareness of danger. I mean the worst that could happen, you got your feet wet in the brook. You got in trouble for that when you got back, if you got your shoes and socks wet. But that was about the worst thing you could imagine.

I never heard of anyone coming to any harm, but of course once you got out of the village there was no-one around anyway, you didn't see anyone, you were on your own and there was a lot of open space that no-one was there.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

When I was 16 and still at school, I bought a Lambretta, a motor scooter. It was a 150cc motor scooter, Italian. It was an old one because I couldn't afford anything. I used the money I'd saved up on my paper round. I just wanted something to get to work and back on. Everybody had got them in them days because it was the days of the mods and the rockers, where the rockers used to have the oily, greasy motorbikes. Because this is in mid-sixties now, coming into the flower power days, where everybody used to be wearing parkas<sup>25</sup> and going to festivals at the Isle of Wight and things like that. I was only 16, so I was a bit too young for that but it was happening around me, the flower power days.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

There was a lot of time just spent walking round the streets. We always tried to look cool and tried to impress the girls but certainly I didn't.

Generally, everybody around where we lived, all the houses and the families, we all got on so well anyway. I think most of them had children all growing up at the same age, which was quite remarkable really. It was just a nucleus of people within say a five-year age range and lots of them.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

The colour television was the big thing I guess. I remember the first one I saw and that was walking down Elms Park. We came down and we saw

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25 A kind of jacket that was worn by the mods who rode motor scooters.

## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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this colour television through the window. We were all sort of peeping. I do remember being at the junior school and going to one of the teachers to watch the moon landing in 1969. We all went to her house to watch this on the television. People walking on the moon!

My Dad used to have a lot to do with a farmer who lived up Asher Lane. I do remember driving the sheep through the village on foot. We used to get up early on the Sunday and fetch all the sheep down and guard them all through the village.

We could play all over. Up the mid to late sixties. You could play out quite easily. At a very young age and also through our early teens, eleven, twelve, we were always out until quite late really. Whether we should have done or not, I don't remember, but we were out quite late. I remember going down the Moors, down the fields, that was probably an hour or an hour and a half walk away. You just went and got yourself lost for the day and that was it!

I can remember Saturday morning films. It was just mainly the serials and a few cartoons thrown in. It was more *Superman* and a hideous family serial that we used to see on a Saturday, early morning. They used to get you singing. A serial that you follow through, like *Superman*, and then you'd carry it on the following week. *The Lone Ranger*. That was one of them.

Then the football took over every morning on Sunday mornings. There was a wealth of football teams, always, in the village.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

## CHILDHOOD SICKNESS

In '41, '40, somewhere around there, they had all this diphtheria, quite a lot of it. I remember us going there, the whole school, and I got three milk jars, one for each sink and you got the purple stuff for gargling with.<sup>26</sup> I suppose that was to prevent it.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

I was the eldest. The eldest in the family. I was the first survivor of the family. I had two elder brothers but they both died. The fatalities in those

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<sup>26</sup> Permanganate of potash?

days was quite bad. They never mentioned things like that much. I just knew that there was two elder brothers and I think they died, I think at birth, because Mum was in hospital. I was born in July and she was in hospital from June so she was in quite a long while. Because I've still got the cards upstairs that she had when she was in hospital, from her friends.

*George Gregg b 1936*

I suffered from asthma and I can remember walking to that school with a smog mask on. 1963 was a bad year for smog. With living in Clifton, the coal fires were quite predominant, so it was quite a smoggy area. The doctor advised my mother to give me a smog mask and I can remember going to school in that. Smog? Smog's the effects of coal fires in areas that burnt coal and coke because a lot of houses burnt it then. It was the pollution that affected asthma sufferers like me. In a bad winter it would have kept low under the level of the cloud and the fog and it caused breathing difficulties. Funnily enough, my asthma went when we moved to Ruddington. I've had the odd attack since but generally it went.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

## GAMES AND SPORTS

Come home at lunchtime. I'd run home all the way from the school, right down to the bottom of the village here, We lived just in one of those houses across there for a long time. At playtime, we'd only have about a quarter of an hour and we'd go out and kick a football around or cricket again. Back in the afternoon, we'd assemble back in the afternoon for the afternoon class after lunch and we'd play football or cricket on The Green. Then at night time we'd go up on the playing field and play football or cricket. Cricket mainly, because at night time in the winter, you couldn't get on the playing fields at all really.

The Ruddington football team. When I became older, I played mainly during the war and after the war. I played for Ruddington for quite a while at football. Then I went playing semi-pro football for the mining districts and the County, Sutton in Ashfield way. I used to get paid for every match I played in, so I didn't mind what they called me.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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You used to go on them Nature Walks, down Western Fields. They've built all the houses in there. You even went sledging there. There was only a bit of a dip. We used to go at the back of Wilford Hill, where the spinney is. There's an old road there. It's what they call the old London Road. Where they used to drive cattle through. It's still there, back of the cemetery. Wilford Hill. And there's two spinneys, and of course we used to go sledging in there. You'd be up there, in them days. The sirens would go at night and it would be moonlight. With snow on the ground, it's like daylight.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

One or two formed a football team on this estate. It started off on that field actually, one winter, there was about a foot of snow, and we sort of cleared a football pitch and Charlie Rebel came along and saw us and thought we deserved some help so we formed a team. It went on, well it still exists in one form, and it's sort of amalgamated with one of the Ruddington teams.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Right into my teens I used to play for the village side. Even after I'd left school. There was three of us out of the Ruddington boys school. We represented the Rushcliffe County schools. So we'd got quite a good side. And we carried on playing football when I went to Boots. It was five teams. Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, that's what they was called. We had a big Sports Day on Lady Bay Boots ground, once a year. We always did well there. We'd got a strong side again. I was fortunate they'd got a strong side.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

Old-fashioned metal skates. Well they were roller skates. You didn't have a blade. You had four wheels. You used to fasten them to your shoes. You had to tie them onto your feet. They had the little leather piece that came across at the front and you'd tie them onto your shoes, on top of your shoes. They had a bar thing in the middle. They were adjustable. You adjusted the length of them, so they lasted you for years. Four wheels. I don't think I ever had any. I used to borrow other peoples' sometimes but I was never any good at it. You just used to keep falling off the things.

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I used to play football. I'm not very big but I used to love it when it was wet. You'd do a sliding tackle and push them down like skittles. I used to love it.

*George Dring b 1942*

Each year in the village, they used to have an annual sports gala, fete, on the recreation ground. And there used to be certain events for boys, 7-8s, 60 yards sack race, things like that. The girls would have egg and spoon races and different categories. So you used to apply to go into them and at school, like the boys school and the girls school, they used to have all the heats. So that on the day of the sports day, everybody knew who was in the final. In the village, there used to be a grocer's shop owned by Mr Cox, and he used to have in his window the two weeks before or a week before, all the prizes that was for the events that we was participating in. Boys, 11 year old, 100 yards, and there'd be first prize, an Airfix kit, second prize might be a bag of sweets. So you knew what you was competing for. I can see everybody now just standing outside Cox's window, looking in and saying 'I'm going to win that. I'm going to win that.' If they got through to the final, through the heats at school, it was even better, because you knew you'd got a better chance.

And it was the same for the girls; they were doing exactly the same thing. So the heats were done at school and we used to go up there for the finals on a Saturday afternoon. There wasn't only just us. There used to be a long distance run round the perimeter, four and a half miles. There was that. There used to be a Mums' race and Dads' race, that they could just compete with each other. I think it was a good social day out for the village. It was good, very nice. Just attached to the school, because the school did the preliminary work. The scout band used to start at the Nook, outside the church, and march up there with the scouts.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

I'd be 13 before I was going into town by myself. I didn't go by bike. Not to town. Too dangerous or I would think it would be. I think my parents wouldn't have let me. Whether it was or wasn't, I don't know. I don't think they would've liked it.

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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I'm an outdoors person. If I was at the junior school, I used to disappear for days on end, well not days on end but I used to disappear all day. Ruddington wasn't as big as it is now. We used to go on bike rides. We used to go to all the surrounding villages, Bunny, Bradmore. In fact we used to go out driving with my mother and father to some sort of far reaching places and I used to say, 'I've been there on my pushbike.' And they were amazed how far we used to go. This was going on the A60 and the country lanes where you wouldn't let your children ride nowadays.

I think everybody on our road, probably 13 houses on the road, I think most of them, 80% of them, had cars. This was Rainham Gardens in Ruddington, in a cul-de-sac. I think most people had cars.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

There was the cycling proficiency test, where we would stay after school to learn to ride safely. My certificate was presented to me by Terry Hennessey, who played for Nottingham Forest at the time. He played for Wales and lived in Ruddington, and he came into school to present the certificates.

There were a number of the Forest footballers who lived in Ruddington at the time. Peter Grummet played in goal; Henry Newton was at centre forward but had also played for England. I was playing football with a friend of mine and we accidentally kicked the ball into his garden. So we were able to go round and knock on his door. He showed us his England caps, so it was worth it. The footballers then lived where everybody else lived. They lived in the same style of house that I did. Where I lived, it was a relatively new development. This was Brookside Road. Two or three lived on that road. For the footballers it was the newest accommodation available in Ruddington at the time. Subsequently a number of them moved to newer houses off Musters Road. Today they would live in a big house cut off from the rest of the public, wouldn't they?

*Martin Smith b 1958*

I was going to watch football, Nottingham Forest, when I was 10 by myself. So that was my first match, January, 1970. I was catching the bus when I was 10, to football. And when I was 11, I was going into town with my friend and just looking around. Occasionally we would buy a pop single

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if we were lucky, if we'd saved up enough money. They were quite expensive then.

Football wasn't that expensive, the cost to stand. It was probably a working class sport anyway. It was extremely cheap. My parents gave me the money and they wouldn't have minded.

The players were not multi-millionaires. They were heroes though. In the junior school, when I went home to see my Grandparents at lunchtime and I came back afterwards, I saw one of the footballers, Ronnie Reece. He was a Welsh international and he played for Forest. As he was backing out he saw me with my red and white scarf and my red and white hat and I just looked at him in awe. This is very bizarre because this shouldn't happen, but he said, 'Would you like a lift to school?' and he gave me a lift to school. I got out of Ronnie Reece's Ford Capri or whatever it was in those days, hoping that everybody would see me at school, but nobody saw me and if they had, they probably wouldn't have recognised him anyway. But that was a fantastic time.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

Two of my friends were from a Catholic school, but we used to meet out of school hours and we'd play at the local football, for the local football teams. We used to have a manager that basically ran and set everything up and did the whole thing really. Each year we had a shield competition against this team from Carlton, which used to go either way. It always used to be quite late I think. We always used to have three legs and finish up at the park, Elms Park, the top pitch. A good team. But a lot of the lads from the village they were all part of it. Really good.

We did the orienteering courses and things like that, and we actually won a national one. Our particular group won the national orienteering. You're dropped in a wood and you have map references where you have to get to two different points. And these particular exercises when you got to the point, you'd have a task to do, as in, you may have a river to cross and a piece of string and a raft, and you had to work out how to get you and your team across the river by using the things that they give you. Different tasks. This particular event that we did, we did in Sherwood Forest. Well it's called Shadow and it's a national event where you have either youth or scout groups or adventure groups go. A team from each area would go and represent you.

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## BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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We did it for two years running. The first year we did it, as I say, it was done on a night in Sherwood Forest. It lasted for eight hours throughout the night. There wasn't any moon, or moonlight rather, or anything. The first time we entered it we came fourth and then the second year that we entered it we won it. You were taken out by truck, an army truck. They gave you your map reference where you were. Then you had four sectors with something like, I think, four events to do in each. So you had two hours to do each sector. You had to work yourself out, from each point and then do your task and then go to your next map reference and find it all out in the dark.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

## CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND CAMPS

### Scouting

We had a Boys' Brigade in the village. That used to be above Maggie Cross's shop. It's still in the village, the shop is. We had Boys' Brigade, and Lifeboys in the same place. We had a carnival once, a carnival band, but it didn't last long. This was an after school thing. Keep you off the streets.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

We used to go with the scouts and in the field around there we used to collect bunches of nettles: hang them up in this barn and that was it. I never knew why we collected the nettles and I never knew what happened to them after we collected them. Well, someone obviously came and collected them after they'd dried, but I never knew what that was for. I never did find that out! So whether it was for some thing medical.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

Many of the wartime evacuees helped to reform the cubs and the scouts, so I was a forerunner of the first Ruddington scouts and stayed with them for thirteen years and went right through the whole lot. One of my best friends, Tony, Tony Armstrong, whom you can't contact because he's no longer with us, he and I were the closest of pals ever. We were always together whatever we did and both he and I were the first King's Scouts in those days, which we achieved by the time we were, I don't know, thirteen

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or fourteen, or fifteen, or something like that. From my point of view, the scouting side of it, was the greatest benefit I ever really had because we went through and did all the scouting activities. I went through it all.

What was the benefit to me, is that it made me very durable and an ability to look after myself. Particularly when I went to London at sixteen to be amongst more grown people, more grown men as well, because I lived in a room with three other chaps. Prior to going there I'd been given the task of taking a group of us, which went in the paper when we came back. They were doing an extract on bygones, so I sent it up to David Lowe, at the *Evening Post*. This was 1948. I was the Patrol Leader, to go to the Jamboree in Scotland, where we met Lord Rowallan, the Chief Scout, in those days, in '48. I've still got all the gen on that. We'd been to London before. I had with my friend, because there was an award ceremony at Windsor Castle on St. George's day for King's Scouts. I've still got all the logs there from the First Ruddington which he and I used to do.

When I went to London I also then joined the Second Thirty-first Kensington and that very first year I was part of a mass of boys into what was then Ralph Reader's *Gang Show* in the Royal Albert Hall. I've still got the programme and that was absolutely incredible! I was a tree and I was an Indian! You had to make your own clothes and everything else. That was just quite outstanding!

It was entirely separate from the school. It was run by a Cub Mistress. I got thrown out the first week – went back the next week – because I must have been naughty. I did something. I don't what I did. She said, 'Don't you come back!' I went back next week and there was no problem. I was there! I carried on and even to this day I've still got my original, there we are look at that! That was the first enrolment form.

Happy days! But what it did for me was to teach me the benefits of having to stand on my own two feet and not be pining to go home and this sort of thing, because there were so many other things to do – and also to survive in London. When I went from London straight into the army, I went into the Engineers, and that was a great time from my point of view. Because all the pioneering work and things you do in the Engineers, such as bridge building and railway lines and blowing them up, boating and this sort of thing, all to do with Sapper training. I came out tops. I was teaching the Sergeant how to do lashings and shear legs and things like that. He'd

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say, 'Are we going to do this?' I'd say, 'No you don't. Let me do it!' That's all because of that. I just found that it was so worthwhile. I became Scout Master eventually when I went back out, after the army. We went to the jamborees and church parades and everything else like that.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

I went camping with the scouts. The war hadn't finished when we went to the first camp. Went with the scouts to Mappleton, near Ashbourne. And if I remember correctly while we was at camp, the VJ Day, Victory in Japan.<sup>27</sup> We was camping at Mappleton, a little village just outside Ashbourne. That was with the Ruddington scouts. A Mr Bramwell, who was the Scout Master. Nothing to do with the school, the scouts wasn't.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

I was in the scouts as well. We used to go to Bunny with the scouts usually. Camping, cubs and scouts, just on Bunny, on Bunny Lane there. We used to have a push hand-cart that we took all the stuff on. Down the main road, the A60, well there was no cars was there?

*George Gregg b 1936*

I was in the cubs because we used to live not far from the village hall where the cubs met. There was a chap called Mr Bachelor and another chap called Mr Simpson. Mr Bachelor was the Akela. Mr Simpson was Bagheera or something like that. I joined the cubs as soon as I was able to, old enough. I was very keen on the cubs and I became a Sixer. We went off to camp a few times, and but then I got old enough to go into the scouts, which I didn't like. I didn't like the scouts for some reason, probably because I was in charge in the cubs and then when I went to the scouts I was at the bottom of the ladder again, so I got pushed around a bit! So I didn't stick the scouts.

Camping was with the cubs not with the school. It was nothing to do with the school. We collected all the gear together I had got and then we all got on the back of a lorry. And I remember going to Langar once. It wouldn't be allowed now, but we all used to load all the stuff on the back of

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<sup>27</sup> Either 15 August or 2 September 1945.

a lorry and then sit on the back of the lorry and go off! We used to collect everybody's gear with a handcart, around the village.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

I was a boy scout. I was in the scouts from when I was about 11 to when I was about 18/19, the First Ruddington. I didn't join the band. First Ruddington Scouts: that's when they had the scout hut built, just to the bottom of the village, just as you're going out, near the brook there. It used to be initially above the shop on Kirk Lane. That's where they used to have it. There's a little sweet shop, I think it's now a carpet shop, next to the *Bricklayers Arms*. Above there used to be the scout hut until we had that building built. Oh I mean, scouting, I loved it. As I say, I was there from 11 to 18. It was a continuation from school because everybody went and joined it, because there wasn't a lot of activities in the evening in the village. The youth clubs hadn't started as such. They started when I was at my secondary school, so we used to go to scouts on a Monday night. I used to help take the cubs. That was on a Tuesday night when I got a bit older. We used to go to camp two or three times a year. We had a permanent campsite at Widmerpool.

When I was about thirteen, fourteen, we had to do what we called the first class hike. You had to hike for two days and stop out under canvas at night. I know it now like the back of my hand, when I am talking about Bradgate Park and up there. My uncle dropped us off, a colleague of mine, a friend, John Kirby his name. We got dropped off on a Saturday morning, somewhere we'd never been. It was only 15 miles from home but it was foreign to me. We started this walk that was given to us by the scoutmaster. We had to find somewhere to pitch a tent. Everything you had to carry with you. We had to pitch a tent and ask permission and all this and did everything by the book. We had to record it, the distances, the map references, the compass directions to put in a log, and then stop overnight, cook everything you wanted to do and walk back. It was a circular tour. We ended up back in Nanpanton. I got picked up and took back, and we had to fill a full report in.

Relating to today, if my son had said, 'I want to do it', I'd have been a bit reluctant. But in them days, it was an easier life. Whether I was a bit naïve and wasn't aware of what was going off around me, but I always found I

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was a bit secure. Perhaps it's coming from a small village. I knew everybody that I went to school with or went to scouts. A smaller community.

So that was a venture in itself, that was, that first class hike. East Leake Scouts was very well organised. One year they organised a camp to the Lake District and the scoutmaster was very friendly with their scoutmaster and he asked if anybody from ours wanted to join them. Three or four of us joined the East Leake troop and we went to the Lake District one year. I'd be about fifteen then, sixteen. That was a great adventure because they were all older guys. You got a few more activities. We was making aerial ropeways, and canoeing and things like that.

When we went to our permanent campsite at Widmerpool, you relied on parents. Parents with cars or vans or anything like that. My father had a couple of work colleagues who had a van. My Dad would borrow the van and take some of us. A few of them would go out in cars, which would take the kit and a few would go out with parents in their cars. I always used to go with the scoutmaster. His name was Jack Hall, great friend; unfortunately, he's not with us now. And we used to go to the corner shop near the scout hut, we didn't bother going to any supermarkets or anything like that. He always used to sort us out with our provisions. I can always remember Jack negotiating with him, 'It's for the scouts.'

We used to take all the food and we used to go to Widmerpool. It was open fires, cooked everything on open fires. There was no calor gas or anything then, all open fires. The trouble is, it was a nice field, so we used to have to take the wood with us, because there was nothing to utilise. It was in a field. We didn't want to damage anything, so we used to take all our timber, so you knew it was dry. We used to put it in plastic bags to keep it dry. I know it's a bit of a cheat.

We used to camp there and put the tents up. But a few of us used to have a paper round in the village, delivering morning papers and evening papers. Of course we used to go for the weekend camping, so we used to do the Friday night papers. And then Saturday morning, the scoutmaster, bless him, he used to get up and take us all back to Ruddington so we could do our paper rounds. Do your papers like, then meet back and he'd take you back to camp. It was nice of him to do that. Because it wasn't very nice for

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Jim Butler. He used to own the paper shop. For half a dozen people to just say, 'We can't make it tomorrow Jim,' wouldn't be very nice.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

I remember the cubs and scouts making carts and racing them down the hill. A soap box with pram wheels attached. Like a go-cart without a motor. And getting on a slope and seeing who could get down the quickest. The road going off towards Clifton, and turned left just past the station. It would be a road that wouldn't be used very often. Mainly going off the farm it was. I didn't get selected, but the quickest ones on the cart were then selected to represent the cubs or scouts in the National Soap Box Derby.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

I remember skipping cubs one night to watch Manchester United in the European Cup Final against Benfica and we were told we'd got to go to cubs and I just thought no way am I going to miss a European Cup Final. I don't like Manchester United, but that's neither here nor there.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## Youth clubs

There wasn't a social club really. We used to go to the Chapel on The Green. It's big iron gates on it now. There used to be the cinema there. I think it was either threepence or sixpence<sup>28</sup>, something like that. Not much. We used to go in there. That was the closest you go to the pictures you see. They were proper films.

*George Gregg b 1936*

The youth club was absolutely packed. There was a waiting list to get in. We used to play table-tennis and snooker and things. Towards the end of the youth club we did start taking records in, and had a record player. There was Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard. It had just about started then.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

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28 2.5p

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There was ultimately a village youth club which was non-denominational, started by one of the policemen actually. I would think it would be about 1960. It was started by a young policeman who caught a girl and a lad in a compromising position and decided that they needed educating! I said they probably know it all by now. He started it up in the co-op Rooms. It was just a room that they'd got above the co-op and you could have dances there. We had my friend's birthday party there. I never went because I was in the church youth club.

That was the church youth club and we ran it on our own largely. We did have the odd battle with other people that wanted to come in. You were supposed to go to church to belong, as most of us did.

With leaving the village to go to secondary school you do lose contact with some of the lads you were in the class with. Also the girls: you lose contact with some of the girls that you were at the infants school with. You don't grow up with them. Whereas the other lads that you went to the secondary school with, you did keep contact with them. Consequently very many people who were either slightly older or slightly younger than me, you tend to not really know them very well. Even though you've lived in the village and known them all your life, because you didn't go to the same school with them.

At the grammar school there one or two girls I never got to know who they were! In five or six years I was never in the same class, and there was no other means of contact. You didn't do PT with them. You didn't do games with them.

*Andy Green b 1944*

There was a youth club started above the Co-op. That's when the 45 records came in.<sup>29</sup> People used to take their records that they'd bought that weekend, and share it with everybody. We used to go up there and the girls used to dance in a corner – there used to be a table tennis table that we used to play with. And there used to be a little quarter size billiard table.

I think the girls and boys started to mix when we started to get to like thirteen, fourteen. That's when the attraction between boys and girls started to get noticed, when you get to secondary school. I started my school life off mixed, five to seven. Seven to eleven it was just boys. Then

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<sup>29</sup> 45 rpm records, much smaller than the 78s, but also played for about three minutes. The 33rpm 'long playing' records were about 12' in diameter.

when I went down to the secondary school, it was mixed again. So, you'd got to start getting used to girls in the class again, from when I was 11 to when I was 15. The girls used to come to youth club with us and you grew up together. And of course, they were in the same street, same neighbourhood. And of course, having a younger sister, who had friends, they used to be coming and going all the time.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

Well they used to have a youth club but I didn't go to that. I did go to start with early on but there was quite a bit of trouble there and I didn't go after that. Well, fights, plus with being a bit younger than the others, I didn't really like it. So I stayed away from that and never went to the youth club again. I remember going earlier than that. I can remember going from when I was about 11. It was aimed at 14 year olds.

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

There were youth clubs. There was one that was held by one of the churches, one of the peripheral churches, so it wasn't a mainstream. That used to take place in the Village Hall but I only went, say, three times before we found we'd got other things to do. I only went because there was a girl there that I fancied. I wasted my time. She didn't fancy me, but there you go.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

We had the youth club; You could stay until you were twenty-one, which most of us did.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

### **Church clubs and societies**

I went to a Baptist Sunday school. That's on the hill, what they call Grice's Hill. The vicar used to come around about twice a year and just have a word with you. But in them days there were these lay preachers. There was quite a few of them about. Not vicars, they used to do it on a voluntary basis. I can remember only going twice to St Peter's Church. Just on special occasions. And I can't tell you what they was for.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

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I went to the Baptist Sunday School. Everybody in the village had to go to Sunday School in those days. You went in the morning and in the afternoon. You never got an option. You went, and that was it! I've still got some of my books that I got as prizes from school, Sunday school, for attendance. You used to get a prize at the end of the year. In the morning it was just ordinary church service, chapel service and then in the afternoon you split up into different classes and you got taught by different teachers. When you're twelve, thirteen you don't want to be going to Sunday School, do you?

I went with the Baptist Chapel the first time I ever went to the seaside. I went on the train to Skegness. We went by train from Ruddington station to Skegness. We'd never seen the sea before. It was bitterly cold but we must go into the sea! We took our swimming costumes with us. We went prepared! One of our lads had got one of those costumes, knitted by his mother, but I was fortunate and got a proper one. The gentleman who was looking after us, Mr Mann, he was a brilliant man. He got about six of us, and he says, 'Quick! Get warm! You're going blue!'

*George Gregg b 1936*

I used to go on a Baptist Sunday school outing every year, usually to Mablethorpe or Cleethorpes. Mr Saxby used to collect money for weeks before so that we could all go.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

## PASSING THE TIME

We were great outdoor guys and the parents never used to bother. We were always off places, and even as a lad of nine or ten, we were all together. We'd go across the fields. We're down in the woods. You'd got to be coming back in time for tea, but that was it. We were always up the trees, used to make rope swings and everything else to go from tree to tree. We were real Tom Sawyers. Not Tom Brown's schooldays and that boarding school thing, but Tom Sawyer was the thing. We used to think about what we can do, Where can we go next, and what can we do? Not mischievous at all, no, no.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

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There was lots of farms and we used to spend most of the time on the farm, when we was out of school. We'd just go. We weren't playing or working. We were just making a nuisance of ourselves. They used to like us there. We'd help a little, but we weren't committed to it.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

I used to like pottering around in my Dad's shed, doing a bit of carpentry. In war years, you couldn't get wood. We used to go down to the co-op and see if you could beg or scrounge an old orange box. We used to get an old orange box and try and make something out of the timber. We used to make trolleys out of old pram wheels and that! To shove your mates around. Used to have some fun with those! That and sledges during the winters because we used to get some hard winters. At High Hills. It's no longer there now because the A52 up at, where Wheatcrofts used to be, near Nottingham Knight, that's cut it in half. We used to go up there sledging.

Out of school hours, we played fox and the hounds, cross country. We used to go all the way around the village and up Flawforth Lane, across nine stiles, back down the park, the spinney. We used to go all over. Through the Manor Park if you dare. That was out of bounds, or they tried to make it out of bounds. But boys being boys, we used to defy that and see how many could get round the Manor Park. The people in the Manor Park as we used to call it in them days, they were snobs. So it was a challenge to get around the Manor Park.

As you got a bit older, after you'd left school, you used to go down to the village round The Nook, to Mrs Gregory's Fish Shop, on the corner of Church Street. We used to congregate there and get a couple of pence of chips or something like that. There was three fish shops in the village then. I can just remember four fish shops in the village, but then there was three. We used to congregate there.

We always used to have snow fights. Different gangs of lads and girls used to mix in, and it was good clean fun. The Ruddington bus used to stop where it does now on Church Street and the teachers from the boys school, got no cars, they used to catch the bus there. The queue often used to stretch down from the War Memorial down to the gates of the Church. One day when the snow was on the ground we snowballed all them in the

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queue! Well you can imagine where most of the snowballs went, where the teachers were standing! They got quite a pasting of snowballs. Of course we was all dragged, the next morning, before Saxton, and Mr Marshall, because they said that we'd put them through the houses, we really hammered them with snowballs. They picked out certain people as the ringleaders as you might say, but we was all in it together.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

When we was seventeen and a half, you liked a pint, but you couldn't get served in Ruddington. Because everybody knew you! So we used to bike to Gotham. We could get served at Gotham. The Gotham lads used to come to Rudd and we used to pass them!

*George Gregg b 1936*

I used to live up Elms Park and I used to run down our garden and jump the fence and I'd be on the playing field. I used to run everywhere, when I was a kid. I was talking to somebody the other day, and said that her mother was talking about me. She said the thing she remembered about me, I never used to open the gate. I always used to jump it. Even when I'd got my best clothes on I used to jump the gate. I used to be a bit fitter in them days.

We used to have dens down the back field, used to dig a hole in the ground, put some wood across, some sheeting, then put some wood over the top of that, branches over the top of that to camouflage it. We used to have a den down there and take some sandwiches and a cup of tea down there, and a flask. But they weren't so strong that you could walk on them. A bit dangerous. It took a lot of work. It'd be about three foot deep, and about six foot long, about four foot wide. Comfortable grave size.

We was down the timber fields and there was a load of bees there and in them days, I'd got some hair. This bee went in my hair. I was batting my hair, and my friend Tarzan was rolling on the floor laughing at me. I got the last laugh. It left me and stung him. I thought that was funny. We was down the back field once and there was a wasp's nest, so I got the bright idea of setting the wasp's nest on fire. I got a wasp down my neck; it stung me twice on my neck and once on my belly and everybody was rolling on the floor laughing their heads off.

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VILLAGE LIFE

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Every autumn time we used to set the back field on fire. We used to be able to control it like. One day it got a bit out of hand and one of the lads got on his hands and knees and prayed to God for rain. We couldn't put the fire out for laughing.

*George Dring b 1942*

One boy was a clever lad, a very clever lad, but he was always a bit of a greaser. It's like they see it in the film *Grease*. Well, a bit of a teddy boy. With the trousers and the jam sandwich shoes and the slipped back hair, the DA at the back – you called it a duck's arse haircut. I saw him about three or four years after we'd left school and I didn't recognise him then. He'd smartened up a lot. He'd got glasses on. He was working in an office. All his working life he worked for the Pru. He was telling me how much he hated the grammar school. 'Load of snobs,' he said.

*Andy Green b 1944*

I was in the village choir. I used to enjoy it; I was in the choir from when I was 11 until about fourteen, fifteen. Church choir, the St Peter's, Sunday mornings, two services.

*Paul Foister b 1951*

My friends and I would go for a nice bike ride around the perimeter of Ruddington, never too far. I suppose we were young anyway. I remember getting my first bike at quite a young age. My Father worked on the Ordnance Depot and so we could buy a bike relatively cheaply, ex-services bikes. They were quite cumbersome and some large. Being very tall for my age, I could ride a relatively big bike. Very much out of control. I do remember once riding into the back of a car which was stationary! Because it was so hard, I was looking down at the pedals, but we couldn't afford proper bikes in those days.

The road went around the perimeter. It was called the Perimeter Road. It went round the ordinance depot. So it was relatively safe and was a nice bike ride, two or three miles. We used to do that.

I don't recall being allowed into town whilst I was at the primary school. Not until I was twelve. I never had the inclination to ride into town on a bike. Probably thought it was a little bit too far, never felt secure enough to

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cycle into the centre of town. So I never did that, never. Never thought, 'Why can't I do that?' or, 'Why shouldn't I do that?' It was just something that would never have crossed my mind.

These places were almost unknown to us in those days because we didn't have a car in the family. So never too far afield with the bike. We'd go off track a little bit, off the perimeter road in Ruddington that led down into the moors between here and Gotham, or Ruddington and Gotham. That was about as far as we got. In those days it was a much smaller world we lived in, without cars and public transport. Very, very much your village and what you did round the village.

It was the train journey to Mablethorpe for a week or a few days and that was it. Outside of that we never really got anywhere. We had a train connection to Nottingham Victoria from Ruddington. So if we went to Mablethorpe or Skegness we would catch the train from Ruddington, directly into the centre of Victoria Station, and then catch the steam train to Mablethorpe.

I was a very active train spotter. A few of my friends from the primary school used to come down and we would stand on the Fifty Steps at Ruddington. We'd have our little notebook and then we'd see the steam in the distance coming which was a great thrill. We'd take the number down of the train which did mean something in those days. We would have had a book which would then give it its classification. We had its number and we'd have a record, and those numbers would relate to a specific steam engine and type. On occasion a very, very famous engine or well thought of engine would come by and we'd be thrilled to bits. It was just like looking for a rare bird. We didn't know what was coming.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

Not a lot of cars in the village, not compared with what there are now. Those who did have a car would only have had one. As a boy, I'd be walking or cycling, mainly cycling.

We used to play in an old orchard and we built tree houses and dens made from corrugated iron roofing and planks of wood. It was a bit of waste ground really with debris from old buildings that we would make places to sit and talk in.

I would be attending choir practices. I eventually was head chorister at Ruddington. I was a member of the cubs and the scouts in Ruddington, so that was another evening activity. And in the summer months I remember going on my bike, bicycling around the depot. Going up there with boys and girls, all on bikes. I'm not sure what we did, but it was just nice to get away from home and parents.

Again, warm evenings. Fairham Brook was a place we'd visit. We'd go and take fishing nets and come home with jars of tiddlers. There wasn't enough water to swim in.

*Martin Smith b 1958*

I was a member of the church choir. It was a Mr Shepherd who used to take the choir. There used to be blue gowns and a cassock, the white thing that goes over the top. We used to get two shillings<sup>30</sup> for a month, if you attended all the Sundays in the month. But for a wedding we'd get two and six.<sup>31</sup> So when there was a wedding, it was just so incredible for us because we'd get more than a month's salary just for one Saturday or whenever it was.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

## Carol singing

We would go carol singing. There would be probably two or three of us, quite close friends, and we would be very familiar with the certain carols like, 'In the Bleak Mid-Winter' and 'Holy, Holy, Holy' and things like that. We would go out in the early part of the evening, probably some of us accompanied by an adult especially in the early years. We would go to the front door of a largish house and sing a carol. In most cases, the occupiers of the house would be in the hallway listening and they would then give us a treat, whether it was monetary or a bar of chocolate or something. I think partly because we enjoyed it, but partly because we wanted to earn a bit of money.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

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30 10p

31 12.5p

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## Halloween

Halloween; getting up to very minor mischievousness, by going round to someone's house and doing a trick or treat. That has survived till today because we get quite a few trick or treats, typically like tying a piece of thread to someone's front door knocker, reeling it to behind their front hedge, and then tapping it or pulling it, to tap the door knocker and then the person would come to the door and wondering, 'The door was knocking but no-one's there!'

*Richard Smith b 1953*

But that was minor. It was on the borderline of being acceptable. There was nothing malicious we did in any way that would upset anybody. It was almost half expected.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

## Bonfire Night

On the Green, every year they used to have a bonfire there. I used to have my own bonfire as well. You had a bonfire. We used to go round all the houses collecting paper and stuff. I used to have my own, latterly, up Elms Park and my bonfire was bigger than the ones that everybody else had collected. There's also a bonfire down the back field. But the one on the Green and the one down the back field often used to get set alight before bonfire night. We never found out who did it. We found out once that somebody up Elms Park burnt that one down the back fields, so we were going to beat him up. But his Dad gave us some fireworks as a bribe.

In some parts of Nottingham, all the different estates or different parts of the village, different streets, would try and set each other's bonfire off. Would I try and set somebody else's bonfire off? Would I do a thing like that? Me? We did once. It was 1956 actually. It was down West Bridgford. Some lads had built a bonfire near the school. And we burnt it. We put a match to it, before bonfire night. We crept along at night. They was giving us a load of aggro you see, so we went back at night and burnt their bonfire. Probably because I came from Ruddington. We went to school down there, you see. It was just a bit of local rivalry.

*George Dring b 1942*

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On The Green there used to be the big village bonfire. I remember walking to school most mornings, on that three weeks prior to bonfire night, and seeing that fire develop. I was always mystified how the bonfire grew from one day to the next, or one week to the next. I used to take great pleasure in seeing the bonfire build. I used to build my own as well in my spare time. We had a very large garden at Elms Park so we had a big bonfire. Bonfire night was a very exciting time for me. It meant being out.

We were very young, I can't remember a law where you couldn't go and buy them. But I definitely had access to fireworks. In the month prior to bonfire night, I would, with my pocket money, buy a few fireworks and build up a collection for bonfire night itself. I think the fireworks were smaller and cheaper to buy, so you could buy a nice selection of small fireworks with your pocket money. Typically you'd be able to buy a box of five or ten bangers, which was a very small firework that would explode. I think the health and safety side of fireworks in those days was incredibly lax compared to today. At a relatively young age we had access to fireworks.

I admit, me and my many friends, it was the thing to have a box of bangers on you. A banger would be probably two and a half, three inches long. Very thin and it would just bang. Out in the streets, there'd be a lot of children playing with fireworks, throwing them at you. The big treat was by inserting one in a potato, and 'litting' the blue paper off and throwing the potato in the air. It was almost like the equivalent of a hand grenade. Awful to think about it now, but that's what we used to do.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

## The fair

Thing you used to look forward to were the Wakes coming in July. That was the highlight of the year. On the old Green. Now the road goes through it and then there's a row of houses, on your right hand side. There's a bit of green there. On a Monday night, they used to have a greasy pole there. Put the leg of mutton on the pole, flagpole. Well it were mainly men went for it, not kids. It would be young chaps like.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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One of the big events of the school year was when the fair came. It used to be held on The Green, which in those days consisted of ash and cinders. It wasn't grass like it is now. There was an arc, swing boats, dodgems, cake walk, coconut shies, roll-a-penny. It was bigger probably than the one that they have now down on Wilford Road.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Once a year they had The Wakes. They were on The Green, outside the school, and we used to watch them assembling all the machinery. The Wakes children occasionally came to the school, and they were a bit of a curiosity. They weren't academically up to our standard. They were backward because they hadn't had much schooling with travelling round.

They always had a problem getting the children into school when The Wakes were there. Mr Marshall used to come out and pick someone out, 'Ring the bell! Then everyone had to come into the school. One day there was a lot didn't hear the bell. Mr Marshall said that the next day he was going to lock the gates and whoever didn't get in would have the slipper. So the next day the bell was rung and I don't think it was rung very loudly. There weren't many of us in and he locked the gate. Nearly the whole school was outside. So he lined the whole school up in a big line and he gave every teacher a slipper. This line went into the school and down the length of the school because in the school you could open the partitions and this line went right through. Each teacher was whacking, whack, whack, whack, whack. Nearly everybody in the school got the slipper that day for being late! But I was one of the lucky ones. I happened to hear the bell!

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

The fair wasn't on while the school was on. It started Thursday night. It'd be Thursday night, Friday night, all day Saturday and then Monday. Sunday dinnertime there used to be a service there, at the fair. I think it was St Peter's Church. They used to have a service there but I think they stopped it 20 years ago. The fair's about had it now. It was run by a firm called Cox's. They used to own the fair. I was talking to the son this year. 'Are you coming in July?' He says 'No way.' I says to him, 'How can you

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make any money?’ and he said, ‘We’re not. It’s dead now.’ They’re losing money all the time.

They used to have roundabouts and coconut shies and slot machines. Throwing the ball in the bucket. It’s nothing like what it used to be. It used to have dodgems, the waltzer, darts and picking the duck out the water.

I won a goldfish a few times. ‘Course they always died. One thing I did do once, there’s a big hard board with a picture on, and you’d got to kick this football through this hole and the ball just went through. I got it through one day. And you won the football. I mean it’s more or less impossible to do it but I did it. I won a tea set at the fair. For sixpence<sup>32</sup>. I gave it my sister for a wedding present. I can’t remember what it was on. I think I had to get a bull’s eye or something at darts. You had to get a bull’s eye and I got one and you could pick any prize. So I got this tea set.

And they used to have guns as well. You’d stick a cork in the end. There’s ones where you stick a cork in the end and there’s others where there’s pellets and you’ve got to shoot three little men down. They fall down. Those pellet guns used to have sights that wobbled a bit. They were offset. You got used to them. What you’d have to do was to make sure you got the same gun every time. But they used to wander a bit.

I used to like going round the fair under the waltzer, finding coins. Or when the fair’s finished, you’d go round finding sixpences and pennies and things all on the floor afterwards. Well, when you’re on the waltzer, you go flying round you see. It empties your pockets.

*George Dring b 1942*

There was always lots of excitement when the fair came. We would rush home after school and loads of us would rush down straight to watch the fair being built up, never mind to go to it. We’d rush and see it being built up and growing steadily and that was just so much excitement for us.

There were key rides that were expensive. My parents would give me some money to go. As a lad, I can’t remember if it was expensive or not. Certainly the Goose Fair was. I mean that was ridiculous. But The Wakes at Ruddington seemed to be fairly okay.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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## Music

They were the times when music was coming to the forefront. I remember The Searchers records being played. Once we was asked to get in groups of our own and go up onto the stage and ad lib with the group. They were playing the gramophone record and it was going up there and pretending to be the group.

I had one or two friends who had records, and so I would sometimes borrow my brothers' records and my friends would come round. I do remember going round to a couple of friends houses and listening to their records. We lived in an age where music was very, very much in the forefront of things.

From 1955 was Rock and Roll. Yes '61, The Beatles, The Beach Boys from the American side, which I remember being very keen on. Then the development of all kinds of music that came through around that time. Sometimes it's not talked about in the same breath as The Beatles and The Beach Boys. Even in the short time I was at the Endowed boys school I remember my musical taste developing from The Beatles, Searchers. At that point The Cream came in and the early Pink Floyd and such.

*Richard Smith b 1953*

In the seventies when I was in my teenage years, very few big named bands would be coming to Nottingham, unless they went to places like the Boat Club. You had to be 18 to get in. They were just bands that were emerging, even though Led Zeppelin and Yes and all these bands played there, they played there just as they were getting famous rather than when they were. I do remember Police played at Rushcliffe school in the late seventies and that was 30p to get in and I didn't bother going to see that. It was just before they became famous. When we wanted to see our great progressive rock bands and things in the mid-seventies, we would have to go from Ruddington to Nottingham on the bus, and then catch the train from Nottingham to Leicester. That was the only place that had gigs on, at De Montfort Hall. It was probably the late seventies before you started getting decent bands coming to Nottingham. I used to love that. That took a great part of my life, going to see bands once or twice a week. It was great fun.

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We loved it; I don't think money was an issue. I mean it was in the last two years before we did A Levels. That was the fourth and the fifth form and then A Levels. I used to work in a garage, filling cars up with petrol. Not mending cars but filling them up with petrol. So we got our money from somewhere. These days teenagers would see the bands that they like on the television all the time. But when we saw our bands, we'd only seen stills. It would be so exciting to see them in real life and moving around. It was a massive difference. The awe that struck you when they actually walked on stage was so vastly different. Before they had videos and things.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

### Swimming in the Trent

There was a couple of spots there where we could swim. We used to go there and have a campfire there and get the old bottle of cold tea out. We used to stay there all day long sometimes. On that one I'd always got my kid brother because I could get the pram in the field there. When my friends went roaming across the fields sometimes, I couldn't go with them because I'd always got this great big old-fashioned brown pram.

We'd go down the brook and swim. As I got older, we could go down the Trent. I used to go with my family. They used to have picnics down the Trent, at Wilford there, where the new Clifton Bridge is, all round that area. We used to go picnicking down there, go the whole summer. My stepmother used to cook the big joint of beef, and we used to go down and have bread and beef sandwiches. You could afford it in those days. My father was on a fairly good wage as a railway driver.

Labourers used to get 30 shillings a week, £1.50 a week. A skilled man would get £2.50 a week. My father used to get up to £4.00, £4.50 per week. But he used to like going to the bookies. I'm not saying we starved or anything like that but I was always hungry, a young lad dashing round all over the place. I was always hungry. I would always eat anything really. But we used to go down there and have a picnic. You used to have a piece of beef between two slices of bread and we used to carve it on the spot.

Stoney Hall was the spot for swimming. I never liked Stoney Hall because it was a bend of the brook like that, about this wide, and it was

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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muddy on the bottom. When you put your feet in the bottom, your feet went through about 9 inches or so of mud, and I didn't like that. You could imagine what is inside the mud. Horrible, I could never stand that sort of thing. Just about 50 yards away, where the brook went round that way, there was a thing we used to call Little Baths. And that was a pebbly bottom. It was clear. You could see your feet on the pebbles on the bottom and I used to like it there. Stoney Hall was about 4 foot deep. I would very rarely go in there and if I did, I would swim and come straight to the side and pull myself out again. Little Baths, you could swim up it a little bit.

I'd been swimming in the Trent a lot. When we used to go on these picnics with the family, and later on when I went with a gang of lads, opposite the Prince of Wales Farm before I was fully grown, you could walk across the Trent. It was a bit dangerous. I used to get up to about there in the water and you could still find the bottom with your feet. I used to often do that, not realising how it was dangerous, but people don't do it nowadays. And you could just about throw a stone from one bank to the other on the Trent, opposite the bottom end of Clifton Grove.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

We couldn't afford to go to the swimming baths. The nearest one was the Portland in The Meadows and the bus fare was threepence and it was fourpence to get in the swimming baths. Well, nobody had got any money, had they?

There's a little bridge over the Fairham Brook and that led you to the Trent. That's where we used to go swimming. In the Trent, all of us. There used to be forty or fifty people there. Men and women, boys and girls. Used to swim across the Trent, walk up the Trent and then come back down, swim down with the current. We were well out of our depth. Because we would swim right across. We had one or two near misses. One of my pals nearly got drowned. Got cramp, realised he was in trouble, and grabbed me. Tony Miles who was a few years older than us, he realised there was a problem. He jumped in and grabbed him, pulled him out and then I was all right. I could get to the other side all right. That was the closest, but I'd never known anybody getting drowned there.

*George Gregg b 1936*

VILLAGE LIFE

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Remember that we're five miles from the Trent and the Trent's not recommended to swim in anyway. It's quite shallow the Trent. You can actually walk across it. Wilford, well that's why it's called a ford. When it gets very low, the water's about three feet deep. At Wilford Church. Near Clifton you can walk across quite easily. You can almost paddle across it. There is a channel but not much of one, apparently. No, not swim in the river, although I've seen them diving off the suspension bridge. But that's five miles and in those days nobody had got cars. You could get a bus, but you'd be coming home sodden wet.

*Andy Green b 1944*

Walking down the stream, in the stream, in the summer. Going through tunnels in the stream and all sorts of things. Probably getting up to no good a lot of the time but nothing serious. I was always aware of the dangers of swimming in the Trent. My mother always used to tell me not to swim in the Trent because it had strong currents. If you stand and look at the Trent you can see them. You could drown. There's very, very strong currents in the Trent. I don't think it's polluted. I used to go fishing in the Trent. It's a very big river isn't it?

*Adrian Gooch b 1957*

I always avoided the Trent. With living in Ruddington we could walk down the railway lines, to The Moors, and through there there's a feeder brook which goes to the Trent. It starts off nice and clean before it gets to the Trent. We used to dam it up. It was quite a steep bank so we could get quite a little depth to it, so probably six, seven, eight foot in depth. Dam it up in the right places, and we used to travel down there and swim there. We fished there as well, but since then it's all been dredged out so it's not like it used to be. I used to travel down there and fish. Sometimes we'd go on the bus to fish in the Trent. I do remember going down there with a crap line and couldn't understand why I couldn't catch anything, but it filled the afternoon.

*Kerry Squires b 1960*

BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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## HIGH JINKS

When you got to Mr Teager's class, we used to go up to the Elms Park recreation ground. If you ran up before the teachers, there was an orchard each side the path, so you could pick apples. You got to be quick because the teacher was following you up. We used to run in front you see. Before he caught up with you. You'd got to eat all them before he came. It went from Kirk Lane to near to Loughborough Road, the orchard. It was a big orchard – two to three acres of orchard there.

This time of the year you'd get a couple of apples. On the way to school there used to be an orchard. I used to nip in there for a couple of apples. You thought it was really good if you could pinch a couple of apples or a couple of pears. The local copper used to catch you. He knew what you were doing. He knew everything. He knew what time you got up and what time you went to bed, he did, the local copper.

If a policeman's coming down that side of the road you'd got to walk on the opposite side of the road because he'd collar you for something. You'd done something wrong! Aye, he'd got everything weighed up, the old policeman. He knew everybody. And if he gen you a clout you daren't go and tell your Dad because he'd give you a clout for doing the same thing. You shouldn't have done it, so you got a clout from the policeman and you got from your Dad as well!

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

Our usual little gang wars went on between the lower part of Ruddington and those on the estate which is where I lived, in Ruddington new estate. Boys, mainly boys. They'd get together, eight or nine of us I suppose. There was always one or two bad 'uns amongst them, but it was the police who put it in order. They didn't have any messing about. The Sergeant then, Sheffield, who lived on the Loughborough Road, and his son was one of the worst of them because he was part of our gang, so! Those were the days!

They were not horrendous fights; nothing like knives and guns or anything like that. You might have just had the odd rough and tumble, but it was more intimidation. It was bully tactics that tried it on from time to time, but it never stuck. You didn't have an outright engagement. It was all

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good learning. It started to set you off on knowing more about life and what people were like

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

Of course, everybody knew the village policeman. Mr Goodman. He was OK. Bobby Goodman, we used to call him. And then there was Sergeant Sheffield. He used to have the big house on Loughborough Road, which was the Police Office. He was OK. I used to play with his sons as well. And Bobby Goodman well, he was a typical village bobby. He knew everybody, he knew all the lads by name.

I can't remember him ever prosecuting or taking anybody before the Sergeant or anything like that. He always used to have a word with you. Like playing football on the street, we used to play football on Easthorpe Street, at the top end, middle of the road! There was hardly any cars. You always used to keep a look out for the policeman, and shout, 'Eh up! The coppers are here!' We used to pack up playing football and wait till he'd gone.

Then there was another policeman at Bunny. Always used to ride a big 'sit up and beg bike'. A big Raleigh bike, handlebars up here. When it was the big snow in what forty six, seven, the big snow, massive drifts at the side of the Loughborough Road, we was out playing, at the top Easthorpe Street. This policeman was riding along Loughborough Road on his bike, obviously making his way back to Bunny. And we distracted him, and it was enough to put him off. He finished up tipping off his bike head-first into a snow drift! Aye, that was great! That made our day! Seeing this policeman with his feet sticking out of a snowdrift!

*David Stevenson b 1934*

It's the same with a policeman, the village policeman. If you seen him coming you scarpered even if you was doing nothing!

*George Gregg b 1936*

Oh dear, so we used to have a lot of laughs. I remember once when we was teenagers we were walking into Clifton. It'd be about 11 o'clock at night. A copper comes up. He said, 'Where are you going?' We said, 'We're going to Clifton.' He says, 'You're not! Get off back.' One of the lads said, 'I'm

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BOYS' SCHOOLDAYS IN RUDDINGTON REMEMBERED

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going.' He smacked him round the ear and said, 'Now get going back.' I think just because it was late at night and they didn't want us walking about the streets late at night.

*George Dring b 1942*

Occasionally we'd get into trouble. We would probably knock on a few doors or do very, very minor things. Most of our time we would still go scrumping and things like that. We would play football in areas that you're not allowed to play football. Even though there were three very good fields to play football in, or three recs as we called them, we still wanted to play outside our house.

*Jamie Colville b 1959*

And if you did a little bit of scrumping and you took the heat, and you got caught, you had to take the brunt.

*Andy Gough b 1961*



## WARTIME

There was one time, in wartime, when the clocks went two hours forward. Double summer Time. You used to come from school at quarter past three or something like that. So you was home before it was really black, dark.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

My Dad was away in the army and navy for four years. All during that time, me and my mother went to stay with my Grandmother and Granddad.

*David Chapman b 1936*

## FIGHTING

I left school when I was fourteen in 1938. I had a relation and he says – he was about five year older than me – he said ‘Aw, finish this war before you get in it.’ He was stationed, honest to god, he was stationed at Taunton, Somerset, for six years. And he never moved.

I joined up. I was six weeks in Ireland, straight away. Come home, sent to Scunthorpe. From there they gave us all shorts and next time I was in Africa. I didn’t come home for two years ten months.

The lads who was in the top class, who’d done well, when the war started, they’d only be seventeen. They was in the air force. They only went up two or three times in Spitfires. Dennis lasted less than four months. Terrible. Terrible.

*Arthur Foister b 1924*

I was 18 on the Sunday. I was in the Air Force on the Monday. I couldn’t get away quick enough. Actually, I’d tried to join when I was 17½. I gave the wrong age. I forgot to change it on my employment papers when I turned up for my recruitment and they said, ‘Well go away and come back in six months time. You’re too young.’ And my father, he tried to re-join around about the same time. His father served in the First World War for a while. He was an engine driver, so he was on a reserved occupation. That would be 1942.

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Arthur Foister's mother gave me a little present to go in the Air Force. She gave me my first razor, a safety razor, a little type that I still use now. I wasn't even shaving when I joined the Air Force and she gave me my first razor

I was a rear gunner in those days, Wellington bombers. I survived the war, thank goodness. Although I got shot down once, I managed to survive and I've lived to tell the tale. We got hit by the aircraft gun fire over the other side, and we brought it back on one engine and crash landed in England, in Lincolnshire. I was in hospital for a while. Then had to retrain and I ended up on the Squadron just before the war finished. I'd gone through from Wellingtons onto Halifaxes by then. Never flew in a Lancaster, but Halifaxes were similar to Lancasters anyway. I didn't do much in the long run. I only did two trips. One was not very nice. We came back on fire and we had to crash land it and I got very badly injured in the head and neck. That's why I am on crutches now. Though I did go back. I was back flying within a month, but in later life, these injuries, wounds and all that, have caught up with me. I ended up in hospital and it's a good job we did in a way because the time I spent in hospital retraining, other people I'd trained with were getting killed left, right and centre in those days. So I was very, very lucky. Eventually I arrived on the unit, on the operation unit at Drifffield, only a matter of weeks before the war finished. I just got one daylight raid. We didn't lose too many aircraft on that one. 45-50 men we lost on that raid and three of them were collisions over the target: the aircraft flying into each other. Out of every three rear gunners that volunteered in the Air Force, two died and one survived. So I was one of the lucky ones.

*Ken Wightman b 1924*

### **Air raids**

They used to have the drills. You also had to take your gas mask to school in your little box. Every day, supposedly. We used to have the alarms occasionally at school. If the alarms went, we all had somewhere to go. We had to leave school and those who lived in the vicinity used to go home. Others and myself who lived at the opposite end of the village, we were allocated a house to go to. I used to go to one of the houses on The Green, alongside

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WARTIME

the school. And as soon as the sirens went, you'd all go to your allocated house until the all clear siren went. It was just a lady who lived there

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

The first night of the war the siren went. I'd only be nine. The siren was across the road here. The one siren for the whole village. A couple of poles up and the siren on the top, like. Wherever you was you'd hear it. They built a few air-raid shelters on The Green.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

When war time came, it was a Sunday. I can always remember the lady leaning out of the fence and all she said to me, because I heard the sirens going, 'The Picts are coming!' I ran home. I said, 'What's happening?' And then my parents told me the news about the war.

We had gas masks so we had to take those with us to school. They showed us how to put the gas mask on. We built our own air raid shelter, my father and I. I was forced to participate in digging a hole in the back garden to stick this Anderson Air-raid shelter up. The back garden in Ashworth Avenue was not really long and my father decided to keep chickens. To the one side of that he cleared part of that away and literally only a matter of ten feet from the back of the house he decided to dig this hole to put the Anderson Shelter in. The Anderson Air-raid Shelter was sheet corrugated iron and it was all covered with earth and sods and whatever. It wasn't ultra deep, but of course as it went on we made it as best as we could in there.

On one or two occasions when it was obviously going to be pretty bad then we descended into this air-raid shelter. It eventually became full of water anyway, because unbeknown to us the houses at the end of Ashworth Avenue, like number two, four, six, were built on an underground rivulet coming out from the Fairham Brook. There was noise. There was a lot of bombing, around and beyond.

Always first thing in the morning, after night raids, we as boys were out there finding as much shrapnel as we could find: bits of metal and that sort of thing. It probably came from rockets which were fired at the incoming aircraft, because the rocket battery was built on the land alongside Landmere Lane.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

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When the war came we were just confused and nobody seemed to know any answers. Mrs Eaton's class had its own entrance built onto the school. While I was there they built a small porch; that was something to do with the war so we could escape the premises. The war was starting. They were building air raid shelters in the village. They used to put material on the windows to stop the flying glass. In Mrs Eaton's class, in the early days it made not a lot of difference to us. It wasn't until I got into other classes that we had gas masks to cope with.

We used to have air-raid practice and we were all allocated where to go and I used to go with a couple of other lads to my grandmother's house, which was on Distillery Street, quite near the school. My grandfather had plenty of apples and things so it was quite a good thing. My grandmother'd give us a drink. We used to get out of school for an hour or so.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

We used to have to have practices for sirens. All the children were allocated houses, safe houses, to go to. But after loads and loads of false alarms, we got fed up of going to the houses. So we used to go down Distillery Street and have a game of football!

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

Every time the siren went you used to evacuate the school. I went to an auntie's just the other side of The Green in one of the cottages. It was too far to go home. You was told by the teachers and your parents to get home as soon as you possibly could, because you never knew if you was going to have any aircraft attack or anything like that. Especially with the depot up the village that used to produce bombs, etc. You didn't know whether it was going to be attacked or anything.

I can recall the night of the Nottingham Blitz. When the sirens went we all used to get out of bed, go downstairs and the children, myself and my sister, used to have to go under the four-legged table! As extra protection! But the next morning Dad got up and got his bike. He used to bike to Boots on Station Street, in the printing. He was on his way down there and someone stopped him on Wilford Hill who knew him and said, 'Where do you think you're going?' He says, 'Well where do you think I'm going? I'm

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going to work.' 'I don't think so. Your place has been bombed. It's flattened.' That was the printing department on Station Street.

*David Stevenson b 1934*

I can remember the men coming round to stick netting on the windows, to stop the glass blowing in if there was a bomb blast.

We collected anything to do with the war, bomb fins, in the fields round about. You didn't have to let the teachers know about that. Pieces of shrapnel were very prized. There was a few bombs dropped around and a German plane crashed in the fields between Ruddington and Clifton. The kids were all down there the next morning trying to pick stuff up! A policeman trying to keep them away! Pieces of perspex were very prized, which would be an aeroplane window, bits of an aeroplane window.

*David Chapman b 1936*

### **Harvesting: Potato picking, beet singling, rosehips and nettles**

During the season we used to go out potato picking, probably end of September, early October. We used to have a week off school. They used to select how many they wanted. Then, 'Put your hands up who wants to go next week.' You'd go and you'd be allocated so many to this farm and so many to that farm. How many lads he wanted, you see.

We were paid about sixpence<sup>33</sup> an hour. So at the end of the week you got anything, a pound to thirty shilling<sup>34</sup>, depending on how many hours you were there. And also a few potatoes. You used to take your own bucket, and when you brought your bucket back you always got a few potatoes in it.

About June, we used to go out doing singling, sugar beet singling. That was hard work because you was on your knees virtually all the time. The farmer, the farm labourer, he would go along with his hoe and he'd chop out. There'd be a solid row of beet, just with the seed, and he'd chop it out so every four or five inches or whatever it was, he'd leave three or four where he'd chopped out. So you had to go along virtually on your hands and knees and pull the rest out and just leave the best one. So it left every four or five inches just one plant. That was a bit back breaking! That's

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33 2.5p

34 £1.50p

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right. It was about the same rate. But that was, I say, harder work than potato picking.

You'd spend probably a couple of weeks on both, a couple of weeks singling and a couple of weeks potato picking. When they wanted them, you see. Because term time wouldn't be 'til end of October really, half term then. They'd want all the potatoes up by then. And the other as well, which would be June. It would be after the Whitsun holiday.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

During the war we were sent potato picking. Also you were given the opportunity, instead of going potato picking as the war went on, to go and work for Harry Wheatcroft, budding roses. Planting the buds on the stalks for the roses and that was absolutely back breaking.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

We used to go potato picking. We got paid, but very little. We used to have a bucket of cocoa for our dinner! We used to like to get out of school. I remember collecting rosehips for the war effort, from the countryside, around the fields. We used to get bags full of rosehips. I think they made it into juice for children.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

To help the war effort we used to go picking rose hips to make syrup. Also on Sutton's Farm, down Flawforth Lane, we used to go potato picking or thinning carrots. Back breaking work that was.

*Ian Murdoch b 1933*

### **Waste paper**

I've got to tell you about the waste paper collection for the war effort. They took a tally. We had to take waste newspapers to the school and they must have taken a tally on what each boy took along because there was a series of badges. The more paper you took, the higher ranked badge you got. They had these metal badges, round metal badges. If you were really good you could be a Field Marshal and if you took a lot of paper, Captain. Mine happened to be Sergeant Major, the one I got. I can remember being

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disappointed because they'd run out of badges. When it came to my turn they'd run out of badges and I only got a paper one! A wartime cheap paper thing, with Sergeant Major on it.

*David Chapman b 1936*

## Evacuees

At the beginning of the war quite a few evacuees came from Nottingham. In fact we had one ourselves. But they only lasted a few months. In fact the one we had, he used to go home every weekend and come back. Then the Nottingham ones went back. Later on we had a lot of evacuees come from Birmingham. There was quite a few of those and they remained. Well they were still here when I left school which was 1942. They brought their own teachers with them. Mainly women. There must have been three, four of them.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

For a time we only went half day. We swapped, mornings one week and afternoons the next. The afternoons was a shorter period. Nine 'til twelve in the morning. And twelve 'til half past one, lunch. Half past one 'til ten to four.

Evacuees, we already had some the first week of the war, a few evacuees from Nottingham. But they didn't stop long. There was one or two that stopped and I think they must have perhaps been at relations. The Birmingham evacuees came the next year, '41. The housing officer knew how many was in the house. If you'd got the room, they'd bring the kids and give you two kids, or one. 'They're stopping here.' You couldn't refuse. They'd got to go somewhere. There was no argument. It didn't matter whether they'd end up Manor Park or here.

Mrs Genever come from Birmingham with the evacuees. They brought their own teacher. I'm only guessing, there were two hundred evacuees at that school. They were at the Baptist chapel. But in my days that was a big room and there was the wooden trestles, and you sat on a form. You got your book and done your lessons, writing lessons, and of course, the fun part was wobbling the tables, with the ink, if there was ink spilling it.

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The house up Manor Park. That was, girls and what they used to say, 'Oh them naughty girls. Perhaps not naughty in the sense as you think of as today's naughtiness. And they was Catholic, and they went to school to Baptist Chapel. Kept theirselves, like they do. If you was Catholic at Rudd school you didn't come in the morning to have prayers every morning. it was quarter, twenty past nine, I suppose by the time we'd done so they'd wait outside or get to school when they stopped praying. They weren't involved in it. I know that there was quite a few there, at this house, because I had the meat delivery job and I went there with the meat and they'd have a leg of lamb, whereas the others would have a chop! Well, they must big numbers to have had the rations. That's what I'm saying.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

There was an intake of about eighty fellows. Evacuees. And for a little while we had one staying with us. But he didn't stay long with us. Probably because Mother was working and we were limited on space.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

The evacuees coming was destabilising. It was a mish mash of things and that messed the school days up a bit. But after the war, after the evacuees stayed in Ruddington, they made their lives in Ruddington. There were some good lads among them. They all socialised and mixed in with us. It caused havoc at the time, you can imagine. There was different cultures and different ways of life, but we managed. We all mixed in. There was so many things happening then, that it was hell let loose.

Mrs Enever seemed to appear with the evacuees when the war came. I lived in the Church House in Chapel Street, and the buses used to arrive up there with the evacuees on. They came from the Birmingham area. Some came from the Nottingham area, and they was all given a meal and dished out to various families. My grandmother had one. She had quite a large house, my grandmother and granddad did. She had evacuees from Brick Street in Nottingham.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*



## Schooling in the war

When the lady teachers came, they got all the lads doing knitting as well, mainly scarves and balaclavas. They seem to be the main things that we did. These were for the troops. They used to supply the wool, we used to knit, and then they used to be sent off. They was for the army or for the forces. When war started, I was eleven. Most classes had a session set aside, like a normal class where you had an hour and a half of arithmetic. Well you'd have a session, an hour and a half, for knitting. I had a bit of trouble casting on and off, but once you got going – they used to keep you going! Soon as you'd finished one, you got another one to start! Some of the lads, they got quite good at that.

*Grenville Pearson b 1928*

They must have been having to bother about sharpening a pencil or something like that, wondering where's the next one coming from. Short of equipment, because of the war. The chapel, we used to go up. Downstairs during the wartime it must have been a first aid centre. But we went upstairs in the chapel part. You'd got the rows of seats with the hymn book ledge. So there we couldn't do no written lessons because there was nowhere to write. There was a stage at the front. That's where the teacher sat. What they done, they used to show some photos. He'd ask you to bring photos from home or cigarette cards, that sort of thing. They'd got an epidiascope thing as they used to show them on the screen. I suppose it were to kill the time. You couldn't do no written lessons. You would have debates. And they'd take you down the fields, nature walk. You'd got a lot of this.

Gradually, the evacuees went back, but they must have more or less doubled the school. Difficult for the teachers. So you could say for eighteen month or two year almost, of my age there was no schooling really because you was disrupted all the while. You didn't realise that that was happening. It's only when you look back and see what's happened.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

During the war years some of the lads used to go down and stoke the boiler. And that was a bit of an ordeal for them. It shouldn't be a nice thing

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for a lad to do, stoke the boiler. We did have a caretaker but he used to finish early in the morning. We had to stoke the boiler ourselves. Certain lads was given this duty.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

When we had the prayers, the Roman Catholics and Jews left the room. They must have had their own, I suppose.

*David Chapman b 1936*

Soldiers weren't very well paid. My Dad, he went out to Africa, what is now Sierra Leone sort of way, and came back with malaria and suffered that for the rest of his life, had bouts of malaria. But my Mother was at home all the time, and of course once she married she never went to work again. In those days my Dad had to, he felt, provide for everything, and brought in a wage and we lived on that. But I have known my Mother to be down to the last twopence<sup>35</sup>, old pence, on a Thursday before my Dad brought his wages in and crying because she didn't know how she was going to feed us except with bread and jam. By that, I mean absolute bread and jam, no butter, no margarine, no nothing like that. That's what we had to use for a meal because we were very poor in those days, as were most people in the village really.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

And my Dad was, with him being a security guard and a fireman as well, he was in a reserved occupation. So he didn't go into the services until I was about two or three. He came back when I was about five. Well it was a shock. I remember when he came back. I mean, I didn't know him at all. This strange man came in. I wouldn't have anything to do with him at all, and he was quite upset about that, and obviously he would be.

He'd been all over. He went to Israel, when they were setting up the state and there was a lot of problems there. Then he was in India for a while and he also went to Egypt and he was looking after the prisoners of war at one point. Then he came home and I think that, with him being missing for those crucial years, we were never really close after that, my Dad and I. We didn't fall out or anything, but we never really got close again, not like I

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was with my Mother. So I think that had a lasting effect with my Dad being away, just at those formative years really.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

## Rationing

Rationing was there to restrict the food that we had, or the type of food. It didn't make any difference because that's what we were used to. It became the norm. Father was sent away. He had to go, because he was not a well person, he had a serious illness. He went off to an ammunition factory somewhere, up in the north Nottingham area. Mother worked down at the lace factory, and she always made sure that we had got sufficient food.

Sweet rationing didn't mean a lot to me. I never craved. Prior to that, I was always looking for those very thin Cadbury's penny bars. Which was one of my delights! But as long as I had sufficient bread. Mother always found baked beans, and they were Heinz, believe it or not. They were always Heinz baked beans. We had an allotment and Dad grew all the usual vegetables and potatoes, and all that sort of thing.

The sugar ration was poor. Mother used to dose up meals with this glucose stuff which I hated. Eggs, we always used to get eggs because we kept chickens. If we were a bit short of other meat then Dad would go and find ways and means of getting hold of a rabbit!

When I went in '48 to London, I had a ration book. They would keep that in the hostel. When I came home to see Mum and Dad I used to ask for it back so I could come home and at least give them something out of it, so they could at least give me food from that as well. I've still got them somewhere. And the ID card I've still got those.

*Gordon Sanders b 1931*

Well everything was on ration of course. Sweets until 1953. I suppose I was fortunate. There was five of us, you see, so we got quite a good selection. We could get quite a few sweets. And I'd got a paper round, so you got a bit of money. Was it twelve shilling<sup>36</sup> a week which was, oh quite a lot. So you'd always got a bit of money. There was five of us and Mum would cut the Mars Bar into five pieces for the five children and everybody would get a piece! My

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youngest brother used to always chunter if he didn't get the end bit! Because that had got chocolate on! Instead of spending all our ration on one little bag of one kind of sweets, you got five little bags and shared them out.

*George Gregg b 1936*

There were one parent families when the men like my Father was away in the war. My Mother was left in those days, two lads. I've got another brother, but he wasn't born until my Dad came back. So they had to make do and mend in those days, and you went to school in what clothes you could. I, being the eldest, usually had the new clothes. My brother afterwards he had to have my cast-offs to a certain extent. That was the way it was in those days. You couldn't do anything about it.

We used to take the ration books and had the coupons cut out in the shops. I was allowed as I got older to take the book up to a little sweetshop up Kirk Lane and we had the coupons cut out there when we wanted a quarter of dolly mixtures or something like that.

Some of the older people relied on the parish loaf as they called it, handed out by the James Peacock Trust. Every Friday they were allowed to collect a loaf from the Co-op. They used to go through a window which fed onto the street and they would be issued with a free loaf of bread. That was baked in the back of the, the Co-op. The Co-op had a lovely 'Ruddington Co-operative Society 1860' in gold lettering and everything inside the shop. There was a drapery department and hairdressing above, and that was all done out in very light wood, light oak. In the grocery department there were marble counters in parts and that was all done out in mahogany, and quite ornate. People used to go to the co-op. They were registered there for their groceries and whatever. You could buy certain things from other shops.

*John Sharpe b 1938*

You never wasted anything. You always ate everything that was put in front of you. In fact, you could get in trouble for putting food in the dustbin. You were supposed to take it to the pig swill bin. Whenever my Mother put anything edible in the dustbin, she used to wrap it up in lots of paper so no-one would see it.

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It sounds disgusting but we used to have lard sandwiches, which I couldn't face now, but presumably because we were so short of fat, it seemed quite appetising at the time. We used to have lard with salt sprinkled on, on bread. We used to really enjoy it. In fact it used to be regarded as a bit of a luxury. West Bridgford which was considered to be the posh area, used to be called bread and lard islan', because they were better off than people in Ruddington, and it was assumed they had bread and lard more often than the people in Ruddington! Dripping was nice but we used to actually eat lard. I think you were so short of fat that anything with fat in it seemed to be good to eat.

*Alan Baseley b 1942*

We used to have 120 hens and you had to sell the eggs to the Government. Orders of the Government. You had to do that because of the War. It was still rationing in the 1950s. I used to take the eggs to my Auntie's on East Thorpe Street. I used to have two buckets full of eggs. I used to take them there every week. She'd give them to the Government. I don't know what proportion you had to take but you had to supply the Government with the eggs. But you could keep all you liked for yourself, providing you'd got some left over.

One day on the bend, there's the Ruddington Hall on the right hand side. Well we were straight across the road, and there's a slope like that. I was pushing my bike up this slope to get to the other side of the road and a car came round the corner. I was running backwards with my bike, and I'd got two buckets full of eggs. I fell over with the lot. Not many got broke actually.

We grew our own vegetables, and we also grew our own up at Elms Park. We had our own chickens, and eggs, and rabbits. My granddad used to have pigs.

Have you ever plucked a hen? You have to do it while they're still warm. You ring its neck and pluck it while it's still warm. You have to be quick though. My Dad used to wring their neck and I used to pluck them. He said to me one day, he said, 'Here you are, you wring this one's neck.' I wrung its neck and it got up and ran away. I didn't quite do it right. They talk about running like a headless chicken. You've seen that have you? The nerves just keeps them going. I've seen that a few times. As I say, I got this

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one, wrung its neck, threw it down, and it just got up and ran away. I didn't quite do it right.

*George Dring b 1942*

### **The Ministry of Defence Site**

You could play on the village green before or after school until they come and started the MOD place and they cut that road through. After that you wasn't allowed to go out there. There'd be traffic, lorries going in and out all the while. While they was working on the site, they'd be lorries going up and down all day. They didn't work nights. It was in the daytime.

I can remember being the paper lad. There was another lad and he worked for another shop in the village. There was only two. I don't know whether he was racing me, but one morning he must have crossed the road and finished up under the lorry. This was at seven o'clock in the morning. It didn't kill him, only injured him.

*Neville Sadler b 1930*

They started to build the site at Ruddington. Ministry of Defence. That was a major distraction and made use of technology which you'd never seen before, such as large excavators. Vehicles used to go past the school to go down to Leys Lane and that was great fun watching all that.

They had a lot of prisoners of war working on the site. They used to bring them down in lorries. We'd all be at the wall at the school and shouting things at them. We used to get lots of buses from all over Nottingham bringing workers down. Then they built the station, a private station for the Ministry of Defence.

*Phillip Matthews b 1933*

*Arthur Foister b 1924*  
*Ken Wightman b 1924*  
*Grenville Pearson b 1928*  
*Neville Sadler b 1930*  
*Gordon Sanders b 1931*  
*Phillip Matthews b 1933*  
*Ian Murdoch b 1933*  
*David Stevenson b 1934*  
*David Chapman b 1936*  
*George Gregg b 1936*  
*John Sharpe b 1938*  
*Alan Baseley b 1942*  
*George Dring b 1942*  
*Andy Green b 1944*  
*Paul Foister b 1951*  
*Richard Smith b 1953*  
*Adrian Gooch b 1957*  
*Martin Smith b 1958*  
*Jamie Colville b 1959*  
*Kerry Squires b 1960*  
*Andy Gough b 1961*  
*Jack Gregory Teacher and Headteacher*

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Composite Default screen