

Letter from one of our readers.

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Congratulations on publishing Oak Leaves. It was interesting and nostalgic. I was particularly interested in Barbara Barr's article on Gledhow School which I attended from 1944 to 1950. Gledhow was of course a small school. The classes were small - I would guess around 20-25 in each year, perhaps less, though 2 years were in the same room and taught by the same teacher. Obviously this made for good teaching, especially as both Miss Wilkinson and Miss Brown were good teachers anyway.

Miss Wilkinson, the head, taught the 9 & 10 year olds, Miss Brown the 7 & 8 year olds.

I got an excellent grounding in English, arithmetic, (including problems), history, scripture and music. More unusually and for me successfully, we were taught garden science and knitting, though only we boys knitted - the girls sewed.

The gardens stretched from Gledhow Lane to the toilets on the side of the playground opposite to St. Margaret's View. We gave up knitting on leaving Miss Brown's class.

The smallness of the school also made it a friendlier and more innocent place than a larger school. The 'facts of life' were learnt neither in the classroom nor the playground. We were however less prepared for the ruder, rougher, larger secondary school.

Miss Wilkinson was loved and respected. I cannot remember her using, or needing to use any violence. She has us listening to the radio and taking our own notes, a technique not used in the first five years at Roundhay, where notes were dictated. She taught a few volunteers Esperanto after school, I being one of them. In music lessons we sang classics like Beethoven's Violin Concerto and the Trumpet Voluntary; I do not know who made up the words, but I still remember some of them. My abiding memory of garden science is of carrying home my whole large lettuce crop at the end of term to a tactfully grateful if somewhat surprised mother.

Miss Brown was more conventional and old fashioned and did slap legs occasionally when deserved, but she also was an excellent teacher whom I remember with respect, if with less affection than her superior.

Playground supervision was non-existent. We boys thought nothing of climbing on the low roof if our ball lodged there, often behind the chimney, and I remember one lad climbing over the top, though I do not think he dropped to the ground on the Gledhow Lane side, it being much further from gutter to the ground. The pile of coke, all along the St. Margaret's View wall, was useful for climbing on at 4.0pm, preparatory to dropping down the other side of the wall, if, as I did, one needed a short cut home. Despite all this I cannot remember anyone being seriously injured on the school premises.

Apart from cricket & soccer we played a game called hot rice at a particular season. All participants started the game by standing in a circle, where upon the ball was bounced in the centre and whoever's legs it went through was 'it' and had to throw the ball and hit someone else. When he did so, the boy hit was on the first boy's side and cooperated with the first boy by passing and throwing the ball - not running with it, I think - until a third boy was hit. And so on until one agile boy was remaining, and therefore the winner. It will be noted from this description that boys and girls never played together. What the girls did in the playground I have not the foggiest idea - perhaps someone else's memory can tell you.