

OTHER MALTON SCHOOLS 1830 - 1958

The modern day Malton School is a true comprehensive school, and as such traces its history not just through the grammar school. Of course its grammar school roots have a well documented history through *The Maltonian* magazines, and the numerous photographs and postcards which survive help to paint a picture of life in the school over the years. The magazines are fully of happy memories, with pupils writing and remaining in touch through the Old Maltonians Association for many years after their departure from school.

Of course the grammar school served only a relatively small, select number of pupils in Malton and Norton: the majority were catered for elsewhere. Most pupils generally left school at fourteen; their memories are sometimes bleak and rarely fond, painting a picture of make-do provision in less than satisfactory buildings and conditions. The senior school in St Michael's Street was the main provider of secondary education in Malton until 1958. No good photographs of the school have surfaced, and few of its pupils or staff. This chapter attempts to piece together its history from what documents and photos remain, and the memories of staff and students, though first it reviews the background picture from which it emerged.

MALTON SENIOR SCHOOL
Also called the National School
One of two pictures sent in by Alf
Williamson in 2002, via his grandson
John Newton who was at the school at
that time.



EDUCATION IN ENGLAND 1700 - 1944

Until the nineteenth century there would have been little formal education for girls, or for boys who did not attend the grammar school. 'Dame' schools existed but varied greatly in quality. Some of the women who ran the schools were little more than child-minders, sometimes not fully literate. Girls would practise the skills of cooking and needlework, whilst boys often simply copied letters onto slates without any real knowledge of their meaning.

Parliament gave its first grant to education in 1833 and after 1839 a system of pupil teachers was established, syllabuses were drawn up and examinations organised.

In 1861 a commission reported that although 97% of children attended school, only just over 5% did so after the age of thirteen. The reason was that schools received no financial grants for those over twelve years old. At this time there was some emphasis on the education of the poor, but little was done for those with slightly more wealth.

The Education Act of 1870 established School Boards, which were to aim to educate all children aged 5-13, but education for those aged over eleven wasn't made compulsory until 1893; the age being raised to twelve six years later. The School Boards were replaced by Local Education Authorities in 1902 and in 1918 the leaving age was raised to fourteen.

MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL

A class photo from the 1930's—a picture passed on by Tony Kirby following an article in The Dalesman





THE SCHOOLS

Old Malton 1910. "Schools" is clearly plural on the card, but I am not sure which buildings are schools apart from the old school with the clock tower.

A postcard loaned by Alf Williamson

Until 1926 the education of older pupils was often carried out in the upper classes of elementary schools, but from that time secondary education was established for all aged over eleven.

In 1936 the first ideas of multilateral or comprehensive education began to appear. The 1944 Education Act clarified the terms primary, secondary and further education. Secondary education was to be carried out in one of three types of school: grammar, technical and secondary modern.

THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

From 1698, with the establishment of the SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), charity schools began to develop and by the middle of the eighteenth century over two thousand existed throughout the country. They taught religious education, reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, spinning, knitting and gardening. 'Schools of industry', which existed in some areas, taught basic reading and number, but their primary concern was to give training to boys and girls in crafts such as printing, sewing and carpentry. (Key skills and vocational education is nothing new!)

The Sunday School Movement, founded by Robert Raikes, aimed to educate those children who were in employment for the remainder of the week. In 1803, the Sunday School Union was formed and such schools grew rapidly; many of their teachers being volunteers.

In 1811, Andrew Bell, an Anglican, founded the National Society, with the aim to 'Inculcate the Christian Catechism of the Church of England.' In 1814, Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, founded the British and Foreign School Society, which had similar aims for Non-Conformists. As a result, Monitorial Schools developed rapidly - so named because monitors (senior pupils) taught juniors, often by rote.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Malton had one of the oldest Catholic voluntary schools in the country. In 1837, when the catholic church was opened in Wells Lane, a school was attached. The first building measured only twenty-eight feet by twelve feet, though a permanent school was later built behind the church. By 1854, the school had benches, but only three maps and twelve slates for the use of the thirty pupils. At the end of the nineteenth century the school contained children from other denominations and had two teachers and a 'monitress'.

Inspectors' reports were not always favourable: 'Order is good but more individual effort on the part of the children is desirable' and 'children in the upper forms do not think sufficiently for themselves.'

The school served a wide geographical area; pupils coming by bus from as far as Stamford Bridge. It continued in various forms until plans to close it were made known in 1944, when forty-four children were on roll; only ten of these were of secondary age. In 1950, the head teacher said that the education of the senior children was suffering because only two teachers were employed. A request for the appointment of a third teacher was made, with the alternative suggestion that older children should go to St George's Secondary Modern School in York.

The suggestion that pupils should go to local authority schools in the town when they reached the age of eleven were opposed and demands were repeated that a new school should be built, but it was pointed out by the local authority that it would not be possible to build a secondary school for the needs of fifty children. As a result, plans for a new infant and primary school went ahead, whilst older pupils were to go to the new county secondary school in Malton, or travel to York. It survived, using various accommodation, until moving to the new St Mary's School on Highfield Road in 1965.

Below:

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Carpenter's Yard, Malton. Prior to demolition c.1986

A photograph by Sid Woodhams, loaned via John Dunstan



THE BRITISH SCHOOL

In 1813 a free school was founded in Old Maltongate, which catered for just over two-hundred boys and in the same year a school for one hundred and seventeen girls began just off Wheelgate. The first British school was founded in 1827 in Old Maltongate. It offered schooling for boys from the age of six. By 1858, of the one hundred and fifty five pupils, twenty-two were aged over twelve. Fees were 2d. a week and the subjects taught were holy scripture, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography. Another British school opened in Old Malton, which had between eighty and ninety pupils.



Left:

GREENGATE SCHOOL

Greengate School shortly before demolition (late 1950s). A photo loaned by Des Reed in 2002.

Below:

SCHOOL LANE

The stone foundations of the school are still evident today, and the street sign indicates the building's former status.

The brick part of the school to the rear still stands, and is now Hall's plumbers

GREENGATE SCHOOL

In 1874, the Malton New Wesleyan School was opened, initially with premises in Saville Street, in what became the site of the Sunday school of the methodist church. Access to the classroom on the first floor was via a dangerous external staircase and classes were often interrupted when the premises were needed for church activities.

The master who saw the move to Greengate was James Sadler, who was appointed in 1880, and who remained head teacher until 1921. It is said that the school owed much to his pioneering spirit and it was generally regarded as a happy place. A library was opened in 1886, open evenings for parents were begun and a branch of the Penny Bank was opened in 1891. The following year pupils were allowed to write on paper, with the aim of getting rid of slates. Older boys were taught shorthand and cookery classes started for girls. In 1913, Mr Metcalfe, who also taught at the grammar school, began woodwork lessons.

Extra curricular activities flourished: violin lessons were available; swimming classes could be had at the cost of one farthing per session; a football team was formed; and in 1920 money was raised for a girls' hockey club.

It was during Mr Sadler's headship that the school was handed over to the North Riding education committee in 1903 and, as a result of further reorganisation, Greengate became a primary school, with secondary pupils transferring to the National School in St Michael's Street. It continued in this guise until the late 1950s, when there are stories of parts of the building falling down when children were in school. Some children transferred temporarily to the new County Modern (juniors 3 and 4), until the new primary school was built on Highfield Road.



**MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL
(MALTON SENIOR SCHOOL)
1830s - 1958**

There are references to a number of National Schools, established by the Church of England, in Malton: one was founded for girls in 1813 in Wheelgate, whilst there is a reference to another in Old Maltongate in 1823. A further development took place between Greengate and Old Maltongate whilst another in St Michael's Street was rebuilt in 1857 as 'a good stone building' and this continued in use until 1958. The school was administered by the National Society under the control of the Anglican Church. In the twentieth century the school passed into the control of the North Riding, but continued to be known as The National School of New Malton. It finally closed on the opening of the County Modern in 1958, when the pupils transferred to the new school. The building was subsequently demolished, and the new library was built on the site.

The provision of schools in the Malton area, established by the religious bodies, was considered adequate, so no school board was established as a result of the 1870 Education Act, indeed such a foundation was considered to have been an unpopular move.

The school had four classrooms downstairs, an upstairs 'science lab', and two playgrounds: the one for the girls was at the front of the school in St Michael's Street, and that of the boys could be reached from either Wheelgate or Yorkersgate. Woodwork classes were held half a mile away from the rest of the school, in the Assembly Rooms in Spital Street. Physical education was performed in the playground, whilst football was played at Peasey Hills.



MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL
The best picture I have of the school building in St Michael's Street. The new library was built on this site. I presume the picture was of the fine horse, not the school!
Photo by courtesy of John Stone



Molly McKie (Molly Skelton), a former pupil who returned as a member of staff in 1955, remembers that 'as girls' PE lessons, or drill as it was known then, were held in the playground, they often attracted an audience of passers-by in St Michael's Street. The bookies next to the yard frequently swelled the ranks of observers.'

CLASS III

November 1952

A picture loaned by Barbara Medd.

Mr Lever is with the group on the left.

Mr Grice is on the right.

Molly recalls that the male staff often played football with the boys in their playground, which was a public thoroughfare, the goals being painted on the walls of the methodist chapel. The playgrounds, often muddy in the winter, had bike sheds and outside toilets which, in time-honoured school-pupil tradition, were also used as a smoking area!

Molly describes the classrooms as being

a dreary brown and cream, with windows so high that there could be no outside distractions. When I was asked what colour I wanted my room decorated (that is, light or dark) I said bright and came back to a room with four blood-red walls. This even then was known as a very disturbing colour and all I could do was to swamp the walls with lots of visual aids and pupils' work, which was considered a very modern approach in those times!

The school had an allotment in California Gardens, between York Road and Castle Howard Road, and weekly visits were made by 'chosen' pupils. Such visits were popular, as lessons could be missed!

THE STAFF

In 1905 the headship was offered to Edgar Hallam, who was to spend thirty years at the school. Doreen Vickers, his niece, provided the school with a copy of The Memorandum of Agreement signed when he took the post. It says that 'Mr Hallam should instruct pupil teachers and give Religious Instruction, under the direction of the Local Managers.' He was to be paid £160 a year and annual holidays were 'to be no less than eight weeks a year.'

Mr Hallam was to appoint several other staff who were to give many years of service to the school and who figure in so many pupils' memories of the school. Miss Longster, remembered by Fred Preston as Black Bess; 'Dickie' Thurwell and 'Bertie' Lever. When he retired in 1935 Mr Hallam was presented with a book, the title page of which bears his name surrounded by two hundred and eighty four dots; this being the number of subscribers. A note explains that Mr Hallam

wherever he goes, as indicated by the points North, South, East and West is surrounded by the thoughts and good wishes of these people.

MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS 1933

*Cookery teacher (name unknown);
Miss Evelyn Longster, Miss Frost
Mr Wilkinson (woodwork), Edgar
Hallam (Head); Bertram Lever, Dickie
Thurwell*

In fact he stayed in Malton and remained crucifer at St Michael's Church until he was ninety-six. He died two years later. Mr Lever succeeded him as head teacher, and following that, Mr Terry temporarily, then Mr Withers.



Other teachers at the school included Mr Eccles, who provided swimming lessons for students in the grammar school as well as the national school; Mrs Harrison, class 1 and girls 'drill'; Reg Waterworth, year 1 and scripture; former grammar school pupil Brian Goforth, who came from the forces to teach year 2, art and PE; Mr Sargent and Mrs Hall. Others are mentioned in the memories below.

The teachers' lot in the 1950s was not an easy one. Teachers broadly speaking took their class for all its subjects, except some specialities such as games or woodwork. They did not have free periods or marking time, except when the head teacher took the whole school in the hall for singing. Once again some memories from Molly McKie:

We occasionally had other classes to take and had to exchange lesson plans so that we knew what our individual classes were doing. Our weekly diary of work was handed to the Headmaster. Classes were often forty plus in size. In my student days in Sheffield my smallest class was fifty two and the largest was 64 strong!! One weekly needlecraft class had ninety, yes, *ninety*, girls in it

Terry Pallister remembers the staff in his time (1951-4):

Miss Garbutt taught the first year. Miss Ramsbottom was year two and PT for girls, Mr Grice (Coggy) year three and PT for boys, Mr Terry year four. Mr Grice taught year three in the upstairs classroom, which was designed as a laboratory with bunsen burners (never used) and taps and sinks at the desks. The only experiment I remember was to show the effects of magnetism using iron filings. Mr Grice was a member of the town cricket team and he used to take every opportunity to practise his batting. During most lunch hours and mid morning breaks he would have a never-ending stream of pupils bowling at him, using a stool for wickets. Woe-betide any boy who was unfortunate enough to bowl him out.

Former pupil Barbara Medd, who wrote to me in May 2002, remembers Mr Lever with some fondness:

Mr Lever was the head master - we moved up to the senior school with a little trepidation, as we were told he was very strict! I found him very fair. He knew everyone by name, and always had the time for you. He had a lovely singing voice, so singing lessons were special. The other teachers were Mr Grice, Mr Terry, Miss Garbutt, and Miss Ramsbottom.

Of course memories do vary – Terry Pallister has differing recollections:

The head master was Mr Lever. He would do the administration, fill in for absent teachers and give special classes for backward pupils as required. He had a musical background and if he didn't like the sound of the singing during assembly he would keep the pupils practising for hours, totally ignoring the need to do the scheduled lessons. During these sessions we were kept standing and some children used to faint. This provided some relief for others to carry them out for fresh air. This was short term however as the teachers would always send us back. Mr Lever's love of music however fell short of providing any musical instruments, apart from a piano, which the pupils weren't allowed to touch.

SCHOOLDAYS—BEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE?

A memory of the harsh conditions in the school during Mr Hallam's headship comes from Fred Preston. Because of the inefficient stove in the middle of the room, in winter pupils had to wear their coats throughout the day. Heating, or the lack of it, features in many memories. Barbara Medd remembers that 'the school was heated by an old boiler, which let us down more than once - so we got a day off school.' Richard Weatherill remembers the old buildings were cold, there was a strong smell of sulphur from the stoves, the clinkers being raked by the older boys. Ron Wheatley remembers that during the war supplies of coke sometimes ran out, which led to lessons being cancelled. He also remembers the double desks, and the instructions on the correct use of the ink pens: 'A thick line up and a thin line down'. Writing was made more difficult by the poor quality of the paper, which led to the ink spreading, as on blotting paper.

MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL c.1951

Back row: Mr Lever, P Hird, D Whaley, D Annis, C Barker, D Banks, D Pennock, R Yates, R Tindall, A Bottril, P Laverack, A Rains

Middle Row: G Taylor, B Long, H Burdett, B Cass, J Rawlings, P Hargreaves, A Nicholson, M Howe, A Kendal, E Robinson, B Johnson, C Render

Front row: A Lothrington, J Atkinson, D Lyth, M Pollard, S Lamb, S Dale, J Simpson, E Davidson, J Cook, A Abby, M Inman

Names and picture supplied by M Harrison, Norton, June 2002

Another memory is that many children attended school in wooden-soled clogs, bought from Mr Shaw in the Shambles - resulting in a great deal of noise in the school. Joan Harrison remembers the noise making teaching difficult at times, because as there were only wood and glass partitions between classes 1 and 2, 'noisy neighbours could be a nuisance.'

Each year a week was spent potato picking. All pupils, boys and girls, from the age of eleven, were given yellow cards which were divided into twenty squares - each representing half a day. Farmers were supposed to tick off the sessions worked on the card, but many didn't, so the children would get more time out of the classroom. Potato picking brought 4/- a day and pea picking brought 7/6 a bag.



MORE MEMORIES

Terry Pallister remembers his time at the senior school from 1951 to 1954, and the rose-tinted spectacles are certainly not evident. He is firm in his belief that pupils got a raw deal:

To say that it was a failing school is to give it more praise than it deserved. We didn't do homework. We had no extra curricular activities. We didn't have any playing fields. What sports equipment we had was in very bad condition. One classroom had climbing bars and ropes but we were not encouraged to use them. No coaching was given for any sporting activities. The few textbooks we had were printed in the early part of the century and very few ever found their way into the hands of the pupils. When they were issued we had to spend the first few hours of the subject making covers for the books and we were not allowed to take them home. We didn't do foreign languages or science and technology. We were allowed one library book a week. History was '1066 and all that' at its worst. Lessons progressed at the rate of the slowest pupil.

It seemed that the school's purpose was to keep children off the streets until they could be put on the labour market at age fifteen. I suppose it must be placed in the context of its days. We were the children born prior to world war two, a generation of teachers were lost in the conflict.

A common initiation ceremony of the time reputedly involved being pulled between a telegraph pole and the chapel wall - a very narrow space - and then the victim was held round a tree while others tickled them.

The school population did vary, on two counts noted by former pupils. Terry Pallister remembers Coopers Travelling Amusement Fair, which had its winter quarters in Malton; this provided an influx of different children for a few months. 'How I envied them their exciting lifestyle.'

During the second world war, when evacuees came to Malton, lessons were temporarily suspended until their future education could be sorted out: each group of pupils were to attend for half day sessions. Ron Wheatley remembers that the new pupils came from Middlesbrough and Hull and they mixed well with the Malton children. During the war, gas masks were tested in a gas-filled room in an old cottage in Greengate, and if they were found to be not working were tightened to improve their efficiency.

Services were held in the church, which was also once used for a project to work out the building's height with the use of a theodolite, though cheating took place when choir members knew the way to the top of the tower and dropped a measuring tape from the top.

Caning, sometimes for the whole class of boys and girls, was common; the punishment being inflicted on the hands.

FIRST XI 1958

Coach: Stan Grice

Back row: Keith Thompson,
Mike Thompson, Raymond Milson,
John Clarke, Roy Foster,
Brian Nolan

Front row: Michael Cockerill,
David Abbey, Terry Smith,
Brian Lowson, Tony Bayes
Names and picture supplied I think
by Brian Botterill in 2002, who
recalls "Red tops, black shorts,
undefeated in league and friendlies"



SCHOOL DINNERS AND TRANSPORT

Ken Foster, who lived at Old Malton, remembered how difficult it was to run to and from home at lunchtime. For those who did not go home, George Brewer remembered:

Dinners were in the hall, brought from where they were cooked - I think near Greengate School. I remember Sidney Sewell's mother was a dinner lady, I can't remember the others. I enjoyed school dinners. We always had a bottle of milk, sometimes two as some people don't like milk.

As for transport to and from home, George remembers waiting for Exley's van outside Bradley's outfitters in Wheelgate, possibly the same van noted by Terry Pallister:

A few pupils were brought in from the outlying farms and villages by a small van, which had been fitted out with seats. The van was also used to deliver school meals around the district. A lot of pupils cycled to school, leaving their bikes in the sheds in the boys' yard.



Left:
NETBALL TEAM 1958



SCHOOL TRIPS AND EVENTS

Every year there was a school journey, using Hopes' buses, for over a hundred children. As Mr Wilkes had an interest in geology, many visits involved observing rock formations and pot holes at such places as Brimham Rocks and Aysgarth Falls. There was a high educational content on such visits; the pupils were only allowed one hour of 'free time', which was usually spent buying sweets, chips and souvenirs. Fred Preston remembers going on a trip to Scarborough 'by special train.'

Local trips had a savoury flavour to them, as venues included Swinton Grange pig farm, another pig farm at Knapton, and the Bacon Factory. In a different vein a visit to Malton Fire Station was a regular fixture.

Another annual event was the Christmas concert which was performed for parents. Each class made a contribution: a play, recitation or folk dance. Productions included *The Pied Piper*, *A Mayor's Mistake* and *Cabbages and Kings*. As well as concerts, dances were held for the pupils.

Gladys Aylward, the famous missionary in China made famous by Ingrid Bergman in *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, once visited to give a talk on her adventures and experiences.

Sports days were held at Malton cricket field, and latterly at Malton Grammar School.

CABBAGES AND KINGS 1957

Cast:

King Corum: *K Stolting*

King Dorum: *J Biggins*

Prince Toro: *R Craggs*

Peter Simple: *K Waudby*

Servants: *P Oxtoby, D Warwick*

Official: *T Ellis*

Queen Maldara: *G Barker*

Princess Ardita: *V Ashcroft*

Fairy Godmother: *M Harrison*

Photo loaned by Margaret Harrison in 2002



**MALTON NATIONAL SCHOOL
1951**

Back row:

*David Lund, Dennis Wardell,
Brian Tyreman, Brian Burdett,
Leslie Craggs, Joe Twamley,
Brian Simpson, Derek Kilvington*

2nd row: *Peter Smithson,*

*Brian Gibson, David Blades,
Colin Johnson, Julie Bradley,
Margaret Brooks, Isabel Medd,
Donald Atkinson, Leslie Parsons,
Brian Gibson*

Teachers: *Mr Lever, Mr Terry*

Front row: *June Bows, Anne Cope,*

*Jean Wray, Margaret Kelly,
Dorothy Read, Peggy Heseltine,
Kathleen Inman, Shirley Grayson,
Joyce Carr, Jean Wilson.*

*Names and picture supplied by Isabel
Monkman, May 2002, and Jean Freer,
December 2002*

THE NEXT PHASE

As the 1950s drew to their close, Malton National School pupils looked forward to a new and exciting development beyond the grammar school on Middlecave Road. The move to Middlecave brought mixed reactions: there was a certain nervousness, partly because there would be so many pupils from other schools, but Richard Weatherill was much impressed by the new facilities: ‘A proper gym, proper wood and metal workshops and greenhouses.’ And George Brewer remembers the change:

There were three football pitches, and an Athletics track, and a super gym for PE on the doorstep, not forgetting the showers. Also a proper laboratory for science, a garden on site instead of a two mile walk away. And proper cricket pitches.

Some of the teachers went with their pupils to the new school – Stan Grice, Reg Waterworth and Molly Skelton.

The next chapter in the history of secondary schooling for the young people in Malton offered so much more in so many ways.