



happy birthday!

HGS 125 YEARS - PART 1

125 Years of Heckmondwike Grammar School

You should be aware by now, that on 17th January the school will celebrate its 125th Anniversary. This edition of the Heckler has largely been devoted to this anniversary. Only a few staff in the school remember the Centenary celebrations in 1998 and things have changed dramatically since then, in so many ways!

Included in this Heckler are:

- A short history of the origins of the school
- An account of the 17th January 1898
- A tribute to Mr Cahill
- The first staff photo
- A selection of 'then and now' photos from around the school
- Notable alumni from the school
- An account of what the world was like in 1898

Date(s) for your diaries!

We plan to hold an Open day and exhibition on Saturday 1st July 2023. The school will be open to the general public to look around and visit our exhibition. We would really like current students, parents, governors and the wider community to come into the school and see how much has changed over the years. Mrs Whitelaw is in the process of inviting 'Old Scholars' to the event, but if you have a connection with the school, either currently or in the past you are more than welcome.

We hope to keep the exhibition running the following week in school – 3rd – 6th July 2023, to give current students the opportunity to further explore and it will be open to the public if anyone cannot make it on the Saturday.

The intention is then to have a permanent online exhibition, with objects, displays and accounts which will act as a legacy.

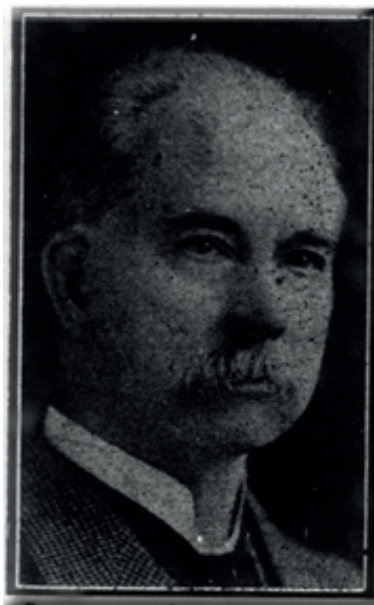
Since our last appeal, we have had numerous people get in touch with offers of help, artefacts and stories – but we would like even more. If you would like to be involved. Please contact the school via the following email accounts: jdunn@heckgrammar.co.uk and ecurrie@heckgrammar.co.uk

It All Began...

On what was likely a cold and crispy January Monday morning, specifically on the 17th of the month, around a thousand children, workmen, a few parents and many esteemed members of Heckmondwike's community descended on High Street. A momentous occasion was to occur, after five years of labour and heavy debate, the Heckmondwike School Board's new school was to be opened. The new school was originally very different to the one we know now, comprised of a secondary section (or 'School of Science') and a larger elementary section. It also had a different name, not Heckmondwike Grammar School, but rather Heckmondwike Higher Grade School



On the morning, children met in the school's playground and were allowed to undertake a good time of 'vigorous play'. Perhaps once worn out, they lined up and then marched into the Hall to the sound of "a rousing military march" played on the piano by one of the teachers from St James' School. As the Higher Grade School was to replace various inadequate schools across Heckmondwike, each school marched in proudly lead by their schoolmasters or mistresses. Most would continue to serve at the Higher Grade School. Furthermore, joining the children were the members of the Heckmondwike School Board, and its Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Attendance Officer, alongside the workmen and parents mentioned above.



Mr. Walter E. Clarke, Chairman of the School Board in 1898

One feels for the children as it was to be a day of speeches! First came Mr. Clarke, the Chairman of the School Board. The name will be familiar to many as he is the namesake of Clarke House. His speech started with an interesting point of how he anticipated this day would be emembered for a long time. By that I doubt he thought of the 2020s!

He then explained to the children why the school was built. He first stated that Education Department cared about health of the children alongside their education and therefore School Board was compelled to do something in improving the buildings of St. James' School and the Upper Independent Schools. Furthermore, the School Board was aware of the rise of secondary education abroad, alongside in towns such as Dewsbury and Batley, and how it aided children and gave them the best chances in life. He argued this would eventually seep back into the town and pay for the investment and the education that was to be provided. Ultimately, the Board did not want the children of Heckmondwike to be forced to take the 'secondary' positions in life!

Clarke then moved on and Mr. Robert Saunderson Cahill was introduced as Headmaster of the School. Described by Clarke as a 'genial, willing, and thorough' and also determined to do his best make the best of the opportunities he had in leading the schools. This description of his character would ultimately turn out to be a wise one. He then gave thanks to Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Smith Allat too, masters of the schools that were to be closed. Humphreys retired not long after and was described in very impolite terms by an old scholar but in all fairness, it is reported that he was a fan of using the cane!

Clarke summed up his speech by saying that now they had splendid new schools, with a fine staff of teachers, it remained in the children to do their part to make them successful. He believed everybody would feel proud of the schools from the ratepayers to the infant class.

This was followed by applause.

The School Board's Vice-Chairman, the Reverend E.

E. Jones, made remarks upon the rapid educational developments of the recent years and how the progress of the nation depended upon them. He pleaded to the parents to let their children take advantage of the school's classrooms which he saw as no different in beauty or facilities to that of the Sixth Form of Ruby University.

Mr Oldman, another School Board member, then arose echoing many of the points made prior. He emphasised the importance of allowing children to remain longer in school and expressed his hope that everyone would combine with teachers in making the schools a success. This was followed by cheers.

Hearty cheers were given for the new Headmaster and his assistants, alongside other long serving teachers for the School Board. The Heckmondwike Higher Grade School was then declared open, and the ceremony concluded with the playing of God Save the Queen on the piano. We must not forget that Queen Victoria was still on the throne in 1898! After this, the children were taken to their respective classrooms where their names were registered, and they were afterwards dismissed for the day.

Thanks to George Hall 13P1 for researching and writing this article

Sources:

Dewsbury Reporter – 22 January 1898.

Typed Account of the Day by an Ex-Scholar in 1970, located at Cleckheaton Library.

A Tribute to Mr. R. S. Cahill: Our First Headmaster



R. S. CAHILL, Headmaster 1886-1923

At the end of Christmas term 1923, Mr. Robert Saunderson Cahill retired as Heckmondwike Grammar School's First Headmaster. His final year saw him participate in celebrating the school's 25th Anniversary, so I feel it is right, 100 years later, to celebrate his life and lasting legacy at our school.

He was born in County Kildare, Ireland, on 4 March 1863, the son of Robert Saunderson and Martha Cahill. Mr. Cahill's father was in the army, serving during the Indian Mutiny of the late 1850s. He married Martha Aylward in 1862. Before Mr. Cahill's younger siblings were born, the family moved to Hull, where he spent most of his childhood. Not much is known about this period of his life, nor ironically that much about his education.

A Tribute to Mr. R. S. Cahill: Our First Headmaster continued

He was married to Phoebe Elizabeth Richardson on Boxing Day 1889 in York. At the time, he was working as a schoolmaster in Halifax. York would be a place he would eventually retire, and he is described as having an affinity with the ancient city. His favourite school outing was also reportedly the one to York!

He was appointed Headmaster on 15 November 1897 after an 'impressive' interview, the 1st out of 11 (and counting!). Prior to his appointment, he appeared to have been working in a school in Norfolk. The



One of the most striking things he did during one of his final speeches was to point at the War Memorial, which was then in the Swann Hall and asked all that followed to keep the Old Scholars' memory fresh by continuing to place flowers upon it as they had done in the past. The War Memorial may have moved and also changed over the years, but the names and memories of our Old Boys and Girls remain fresh and remembered to this day. See the piece on the life of Fred Sutton if you are unsure of this.

His retirement in York was deservedly a long one, and he never lost interest in the school throughout it. He appreciated any visits from old boys and girls. He died in his beloved York on 3

The beginning of his tenure can be described as unusual because he had no clear starting point to start from nor no predecessor to follow. In fact, during the decade beginning in 1900, the school's future was quite uncertain. First came the Cockerton Judgement, then allegations of unfair competition by Wheelwright School in Dewsbury. Next was the abolition of the School Boards, which then created the "Spenn Valley Question" that profoundly threatened the school's existence as a Secondary School. However, these issues were easily overcome with Mr. Cahill's leadership and aid from individuals like Samuel Redfearn and Thomas Wood.

Mr. Cahill was essential with his great ally, Mr. Walter E. Clarke, Clarke House's namesake, in setting up the house system in 1906, perhaps because he was keen on promoting sports and games in the school. He also took a deep personal interest in his students, constantly reminding them of the school's motto of 'Nil Sine Labore' and always looking for new ways to raise money for scholarships for them.

He then proudly, but with a twinge of sadness, oversaw the school's impressive conduct throughout the Great War. Old Boys, he knew as aspirational young students, went off to foreign lands to serve King and Country. He stayed on for five years after the War and unveiled the School's War Memorial. Soon he decided his time was up and retired at the end of 1923, aged 60, which was received with much regret but also an appreciation for all he had done for the school.

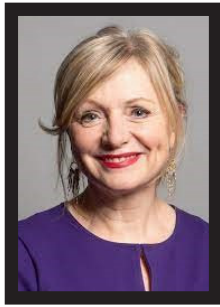


His retirement in York was deservedly a long one, and he never lost interest in the school throughout it. He appreciated any visits from old boys and girls. He died in his beloved York on 3 October 1949, aged 86, and was buried three days later at St Thomas' Church, York.

His spirit and love for his 'dear old school' remained until his death. As his daughter Lucy would later write, Heckmondwike 'was truly THE school to him'. We are all indebted to him and his commitment to ensuring the school survived its turbulent first 25 years. I am sure he would be as proud as we are of him if he could see his school thriving today.

George Hall

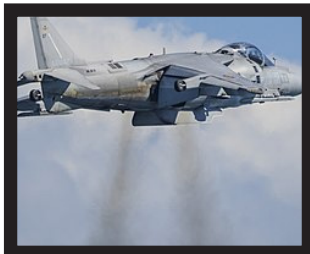
Notable Alumni of Heckmondwike Grammar School:



- John Bentley – retired English rugby union and rugby league footballer
- Tracy Brabin – actress, television writer, Labour Party MP for Batley and C:\Users\ecurrie\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\B444B4C9.tmpThe Origins of the School Spen 2016–2021, West Yorkshire mayor (2021–present)



- Luke Burgess – former professional rugby league footballer; older brother of Sam
- Sam Burgess – South Sydney Rabbitohs coach and former rugby league player

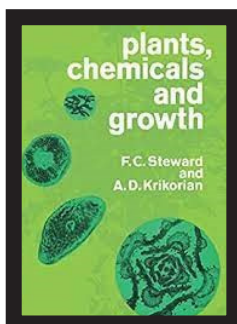


- Roger Burnley (born 1966) – businessman, former CEO of Asda



- John Fozard – late engineer, chief designer of the Hawker Siddeley Harrier from 1965 to 1978
- Emily Freeman – retired runner, 2008 Olympic relay team member, 2009 European Team Championships team member

- Andrew Gale – professional cricketer, former Yorkshire County Cricket Club captain (2016–2021) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heckmondwike_Grammar_School



- Sir Basil Houldsworth, 2nd Baronet – late Liberal politician and anaesthetist
- Sir Hubert Houldsworth, 1st Baronet – late barrister, National Coal Board chairman, and Liberal politician https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heckmondwike_Grammar_School



- Jo Cox, late Labour MP for Batley and Spenningsdale 2015–2016
- Kim Leadbeater – Labour politician and Batley and Spenningsdale MP (2021–present); younger sister of Jo Cox

Heckmondwike Grammar School – 125th Anniversary.

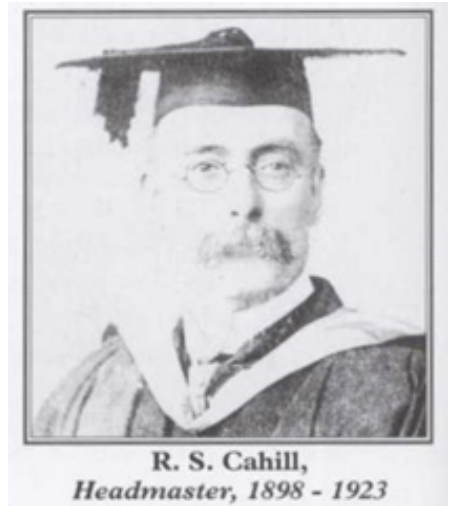
“On 29th January 1894, the Building Committee of the Heckmondwike School Board decided to erect a large mixed school to accommodate over 900 children.

A deputation from the Technical Instruction Committee, which carried on classes at the Mechanics’ Institute waited upon the Board and urged them to provide rooms which could be used for Technical Instruction. They suggested rooms for Art, Physics, and Chemistry etc.”

Such is the simple record of the scheme penned over 125 years ago by an enlightened & progressive Board who were determined to give every educational opportunity to the children of the district.

The building was completed by the end of 1897; Mr Cahill had been appointed Headmaster in November 1897; and on Monday, 17th January 1898, the new school was opened with an attendance of 907.

The opening of the school was recorded in the Dewsbury Reporter of 22nd January 1898



A perusal of the earliest annual reports (the first was for the years ended July 31st 1898) shows that the institution was known as the Higher Grade School. It comprised the School of Science, a Mixed or Standard School & an Infants School.



The Origins of the School

The evolution of the school can be traced back to Forster’s Education Act of 1870 (W.E. Forster Mr Stott, the school architect, with his family pictured below) which radically transformed the pattern of education throughout the country. There

was a demand for secondary education of a vastly different type from that provided by the ancient Grammar Schools. With the growth of industry there was an increasing demand for the teaching of new subjects, chiefly of a technical and commercial nature in line with the local economy. *The contribution made by Forster to education is still remembered in the school today with the ‘Forster block’ currently housing the History and RE classrooms.*

The Origins of the School continued



There was also a greatly increased demand for teachers in the new Board Schools and these would, of course, require secondary education. An increasing number of children were staying at school beyond the normal leaving age of 13 and education had to be encouraged for these children. Such schools became known as 'Higher Grade Schools' from 1880 onwards. It was from these beginnings that the Heckmondwike Higher Grade School was to evolve and it fell into a category described by the Royal Commission (set up in 1895 to examine secondary education) as being a school which taught from the lowest standards upwards, giving a further education of up to four years after the age of 13.

On 29th January 1894, the Building Committee of Heckmondwike School Board decided to build a large mixed school on the High Street to accommodate over 900 children. A deputation from the Technical Instruction Committee which carried on classes at the Mechanics' Institute called upon the Board and urged them to provide rooms within the proposed building which could be used for technical instruction, suggesting rooms for Art, Physics and Chemistry, among others.

The Board unanimously expressed its approval and it was because of their acceptance of the idea that Heckmondwike benefited by having a Higher Grade School. The Chairman of the Technical Instruction committee, Mr Arthur Anderton, subsequently developed close links with the school and one of the first five school houses was named after him.

Once the decision had been taken, plans for building and fitting out the school began. The architect was A.A. Stott of Bradford and the land was purchased from Sir Francis Powell,

also of Bradford. In 1895 tenders were sent out and accepted and in the following year, the School Board applied to the Co-operative Society for a loan of £14,000 for the purpose of building the school. This was granted, as were subsequent loans, amounting to between £16,000 and £17,000. The contracted builders were Thomas Horsfall & Co and the building followed in design the usual Board School pattern - a large hall, surrounded by classrooms. This design has been greatly modified over the years, but the original structure and buildings are still evident in 2023.



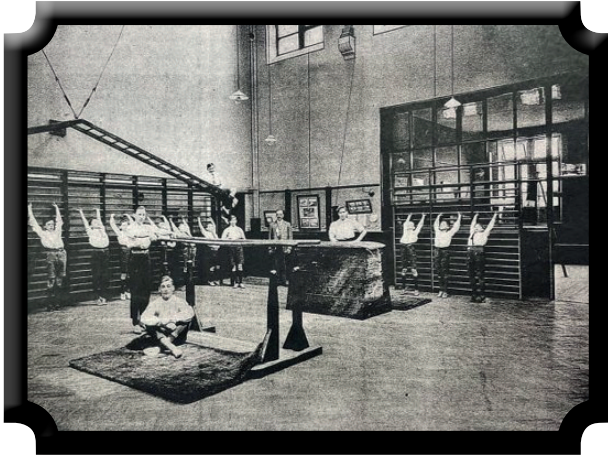
Mr Stott, the school architect, with his family

Over the years there have been numerous extensions and additions to the school buildings, here is the 'new wing extension' in 1931, which is now the dining room and art rooms above.



HGS Then & Now

Gymnasium



Sports hall being used for Covid testing!



Sports day



HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
SUPPORTERS AT INTER SCHOOL
SPORTS AT HECKMONDWIKE



Swann Hall



HGS Then & Now continued

Chemistry Lab



Now DT



Dining Room (Now Art)



Ariel View 1928



Ariel View now

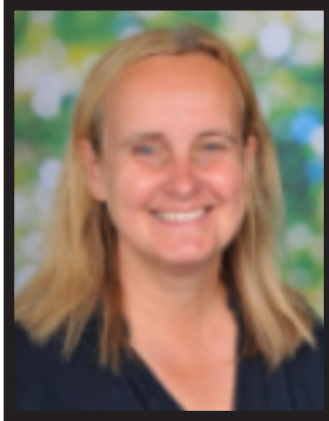


HGS 125 YEARS

The Heckmondwike 125 Committee

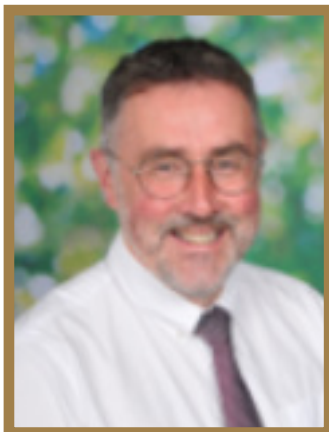
Staff members:

Our group is made up of members of staff, not just from the History department, but also former students, archivists and those with a vested and I George Hall (Y13)



Mrs Currie – has worked at the school since January 1996 and so was here for the centenary celebrations as well. Currently Head of History, she has enjoyed working with fellow staff and students on this project, researching the history of the school.

Mr Oxby – History and Politics teacher, who has been working at the school since 2008. Mr Oxby has held numerous roles in school, in charge of Progression and as Deputy Director of Sixth Form. He also lives in the local area.



Mr Currie – has worked at the school since September 1993. He is currently Head of Geography as well as Head of Clarke House. During his time at the school he has been involved in countless events, musical productions, trips and celebrations, as well as teaching thousands of students.

Mrs Doran – was a student at the school between 1983 and 1990. Returned to work here as a teacher in 1997 and currently teaches Business and Economics as well as being Head of Clarke House.



Mrs Whitelaw – Librarian and Subject Leader for EPQ. Mrs Whitelaw started working at Heckmondwike in and is very active as the school's archivist, keeping the records up to date and establishing contact with the 'Old

Miss Briggs – started working at the school in the summer of 2022 as a History and Politics teacher. She was previously a student in the Sixth form between 2010 and 2012 and also trained as a teacher in the school in 2016-17.



HGS 125 YEARS

The Heckmondwike 125 Committee

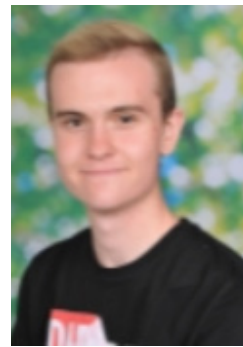
Student members:

The student group has been 'led' by George Hall who has done an incredible amount of work on this project, as well as in the local community as an archivist and genealogist.



As part of the research I have done, especially in relation to the First World War Memorial, I have found it very striking how similar the names of students were back over 100 years ago, compared to today. In the 1900s, there was a student

called 'G. M. Hall', and I can confirm that there is also currently a 'G. M. Hall' at the school! - George Hall



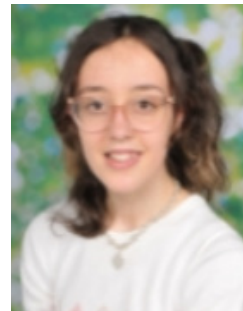
It's been interesting to compare the vast changes that the school has undergone with the constants that have hardly changed in 125 years. Whilst the buildings, teaching methods and surroundings have changed so much, the

core aim of the school to teach has been consistent. Overall it's been a really enjoyable process- Rowan Lightfoot



I have really enjoyed researching into the history of the school, the building, the teachers and in particular students. What I have enjoyed most has been finding out about the school community and the life of the students in the

past, in particular, involving the House System and extra-curricular events. It has really made feel honoured to be part of the school and to have contributed to its history in some small way - Martha Currie Year 13



I have found exploring the changes to the school site interesting, in particular looking at photos from classrooms in the mid-20th century and comparing them to classrooms now; though much of the structure remains the same, some

rooms are now used for an entirely different function. The DT rooms, for example, used to be Chemistry labs. Some features have remained constant, with many of the library tables and chairs being the same ones as were used when it opened! - Freya Thornton



Researching the history of the school has been an amazing process for everyone involved. It's a fascinating way to understand how the last 125 years have shaped the school as we know it today, and to see the

legacies it carries through families and the local community. My favourite part so far has been looking through old school yearbooks - especially finding members of staff as students! - Nancy Roberts

happy birthday!

HGS125 Pin Badge Competition

Founded on January 17th, 1898, this month marks the 125th year of Heckmondwike Grammar School.

Students in Year 7 engaged in the planning of a new competition to celebrate the anniversary. The competition, which was launched this week, invites students of all ages to design a commemorative pin badge to mark this monumental milestone.

Pin badges have played a major part in the school's history. Previously used to denote head students, house captains and other student roles, we award them today to celebrate academic excellence, achievement and contribution to the school's prestigious house competition.



A small focus group of Year 7 students worked together to formulate the finer details of challenge by establishing the rules of the contest.

The schools Head Teacher, Mr Roberts, shares, "It's incredibly fitting that our youngest students have contributed in devising a competition that will allow us to celebrate the long-standing history of the school. What a truly fantastic event for all of us to celebrate"

The competition will hopefully bring a wide range of wonderfully creative entries from our students. The winning entry will be selected by panel of judges before being professionally made into the commemorative pin badge. 2000 souvenir keepsakes will be produced and gifted to the students and teachers at Heckmondwike Grammar School.

Full details, including the templates can be found by clicking the link below

[hgs125 competition](#)

The winning entry will be announced in the Heckler in February. We wish all entrants the very best of luck.

WANTED

Donations of old GCSE/A Level revision booklets/guides by Monday 23 January. They need to be of good condition and applicable to the HGS syllabus.

**Please bring all donations to
Student Services**

Our student led Eco-Committee will be holding a secondhand revision guide bookstall - more information will be shared closer to the event.

Thank you

Diary Dates

Tuesday 17, Wednesday 18 & Thursday 20 January
Sixth Form Interviews JCC 4pm-8pm

Wednesday 18 January
Year 9 Food Tech Students -Foxes Biscuit's Trip

Wednesday 25 January
Year 11 & Year 13 Revision Event (during the school day)

Thursday 26 January
Year 8 Parents Evening - details to follow

Wednesday 1 February
Year 8 HPV Vaccine (Dose 1)
&
Year 8 History teaching groups 8.4 & 8.6
Holocaust Ctr Trip Huddersfield (during the school day)