

# 1951

The first Technical High School Badge



## Pioneers & Trail Blazers

**“My impression of Wymondham College was that it was a very black looking place, but I have since come to realise that it is not the buildings that make a place, but the people.” - Betty Watling, pupil, 1951**

The first pupils arrived at Wymondham College in April 1951. This was the ‘pilot course’ of 60 twelve - thirteen year old intrepid children who were selected to see if a boarding school could indeed be established on the site. With Dr JEG Moseby as Warden, and a small teaching staff, they were the pioneers of Wymondham College, nicknaming themselves the ‘guinea pigs’.

With hardiness to difficult conditions, and with versatility and spirit, these pioneers returned in September 1951, when there were now two full time schools on the site, with separate Heads and a largely separate staff. The Technical School led by Mr RV Metcalfe and the Special Grammar School established by the ‘Thetford Transferees’ and their Head, Mrs EJ Tebbutt. (see Eastern Evening News article) The schools had common uniforms, except for their badges and ties. Badges were embroidered in gold for the Technical School and in silver for the Grammar School. Also on the site were two groups who had already left school.

Girls on a one year Commercial Course and boys, housed at the College, on an Agricultural Course.

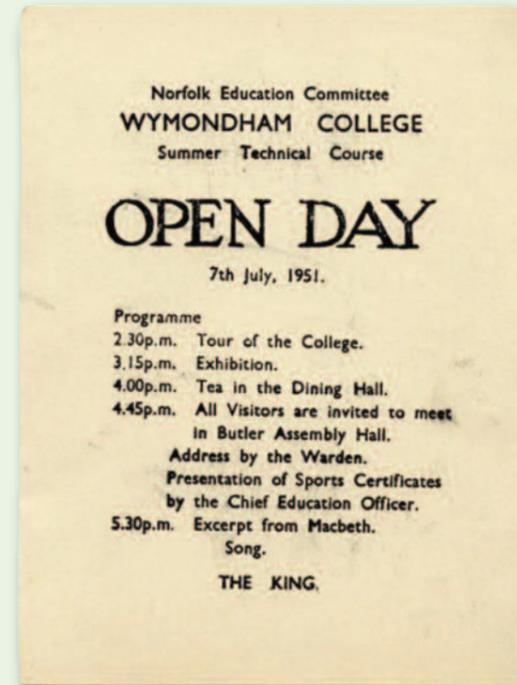
With Nissen Huts as the only buildings, by the end of 1951 they were the classrooms and sleeping quarters for about 300 young people and an ever expanding staff.



## Worldwide Events

- The United Kingdom begins an economic boycott of Iran.
- Winston Churchill is re-elected Prime Minister; his foreign minister is Anthony Eden.
- The new United Nations headquarters officially opens in New York City.
- The Festival of Britain celebrating regeneration of inner cities after the War opens. “A tonic for the nation.”
- King George VI opens London's Royal Festival Hall as a patron.

Wymondham College had existed for only one term when this Open Day was held. At that time there were only 60 students in the school (the Pilot Technical Course).



Grammar School Badge



## College Events

- The Pilot Technical Course starts for 60 boarding students
- The first Open Day is held
- The first Technical School and Special Grammar School students arrive, together with ‘Thetford Transferees’, first Commercial Course and ‘Agricultural boys’, totalling approximately 300 pupils.

# SCHOOL TO MOVE FROM THETFORD

*-To Wymondham*

The special grammar school which has been situated at Thetford for over four years is to be accommodated at Wymondham College, recently taken over by Norfolk Education Committee following the closing of the emergency teachers’ training college there.

A new technical school will join the special grammar school at Wymondham but both are to retain their separate entities although they will make joint use of some of the facilities provided at the college.

The special grammar school, which at present has 25 scholars in one course will eventually take about 80 children from various parts of Norfolk in three courses. Miss Joan Tebbutt at present headmistress of Thetford Special Grammar School, is to take charge of the enlarged school, which will be a boarding school. Children now billeted with families at Thetford will have to leave their temporary homes. On Wednesday Thetford people who have accommodated the children received a letter from Dr. Lincoln Ralphs, Chief Education Officer for Norfolk, thanking them for their assistance and telling them that the billets will not be required at the end of the present term.

There are three special grammar schools in Norfolk at Kings Lynn, Sprowston and Thetford which take children who have not gained admittance to the ordinary grammar schools at the usual age but who are considered to be able to benefit from a grammar school education. The course lasts for three years and at the end of it the pupils will take their general certificate of education in the normal way.

The first course started at Thetford four and a half years ago and some half dozen pupils completed it. The second course has another year to run and will be continued at the new boarding school. There will be advantages such as laboratories, lecture rooms and a library not existing at the Thetford School.

Eastern Evening News article from 22/6/1951

The first arrivals, Summer Term 1951



# 1952

## Worldwide Events

- Lotus Cars is founded at Hethel, Norfolk.
- King George VI dies.
- Winston Churchill scraps UK compulsory National Identity cards.
- The Great Smog - cold air traps dense coal smoke, causing a lack of visibility for four days and leading to 12,000 deaths.
- John Bamford, aged 15 years, rescues victims of a house fire and subsequently becomes the youngest person to have been awarded the George Cross to date.

## Open Day 1952

**On 26th July, 1952, we rose from our beds at an early hour, to a glorious morning, with the sun streaming through the windows out of a cloudless sky.**

We were all frightfully excited as it was our first "Open Day" at Wymondham College, and some of our parents had never seen it at all. This thought determined us to work hard to make everything look bright and nice.

It had been a hectic week, with no official time-table and girls and boys running in all directions, intent upon their own particular job. Some were making models, others were painting posters and maps of the site and some were painting the programmes for the afternoon's events. It was all very exciting and, rather miraculously, by lunchtime everywhere and everything was spick and span and ready for critical eyes.

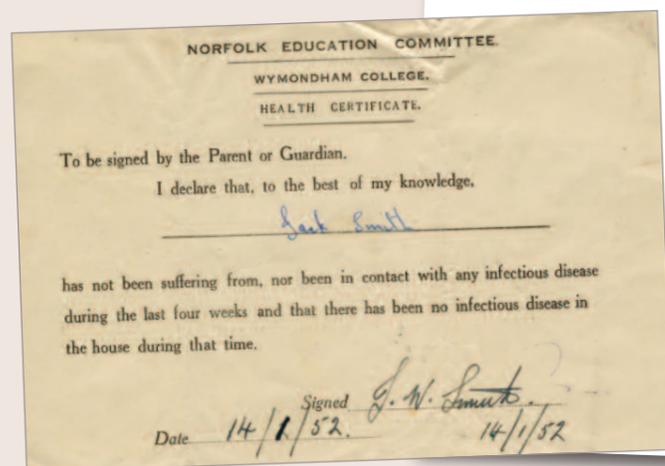
Our parents began to arrive about 1.45 p.m. and we assembled on the grass outside "Admin." Some of us were dressed and made-up in preparation for the "Merchant of Venice," the "Crimson Coconut" and the Operetta - "Boy Mozart" and the "Grand Cham's Diamond" which we performed before our parents during the afternoon.

We showed our parents round the College, inspecting books, models, specimens and taking them to the gymnastic display which was held on the gym field.

At four o'clock, tea was served in the dining hall at a small cost, and the exhibitions in the classrooms were closed at 5.45 p.m. After four o'clock our parents were allowed to treat us to tea if they preferred.

After our parents had gone (about 7 or 8 o'clock) we went back to our dormitories to tell our experiences and parents' opinions to our friends. We then climbed into bed about 9.30 p.m. very tired, happy but noisy girls.

*Brenda Broughton* (IV) (from the College Magazine, The Alliance, 1953)



*A Wymondham College health certificate*

## Harry Wymer

Harry Wymer, who as driver brought the first pupils onto the site. Harry was also in charge of the College cars and buses. Joan Sperring (nee Tebbut, first head of the Grammar School) recalls that:

"The College was very isolated then and there were not many staff with cars. The College had a bus and two cars. That was really amazing as one of them, you had to do certain things to in order to get it to drive. Harry Wymer, in charge of cars would come out to you and say very quietly what you had to do - but would ask you to please not tell 'you know who'. There were one or two members of staff who he didn't like and wouldn't tell them how to start it. You were honoured if he told you how to start it."

Here we see a young Harry and his 'assistant' in 1952 with the first school bus, outside the original garage, which stood halfway between where Lincoln and Peel Halls are now.



## On the death of King George VI

"You must be aware that 1952 was just seven years after the end of the war and the King was just another person who died. He died overnight at Sandringham and I remember being rather shocked when told at breakfast. The Nissen Hut Dining room was two Nissen Huts at right-angles to each other but joined at the apex where the head table for teachers and selected prefects was situated. It might well have been Dr J Mosby who announced the death and conducted prayers during which we stood for a moments silence. There were two official telephones on the College site at the time and there was no TV, clothing was still rationed and there were few facilities for transportation therefore little opportunity for manifestation of such mass hysteria as might be stoked by the media today. Such news was dealt with respectfully and quickly and then it was back to work. It really was a case of business as usual as far as I can remember."

David Spinks (1951-1955)

*The senior football team pose for a group shot*



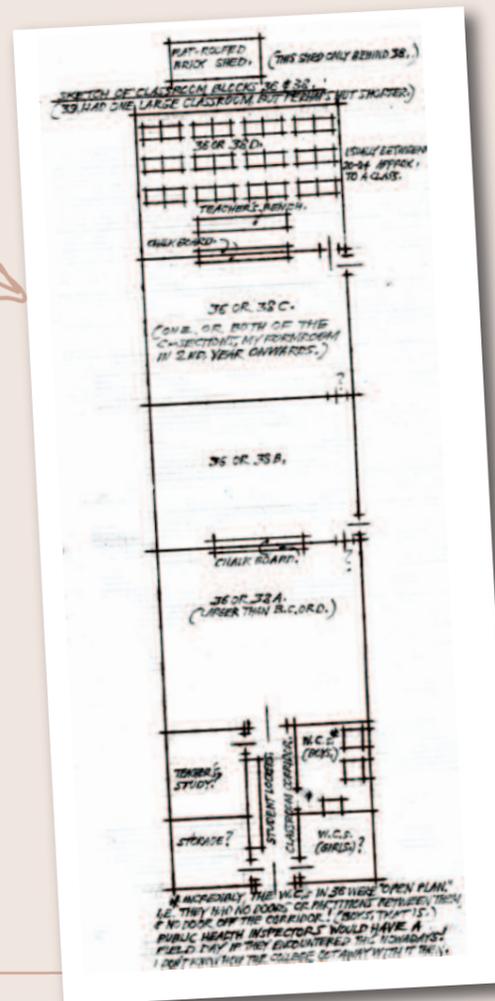
## College Events

The following Clubs and Societies were started in 1952

- Science Society
- Geographical Society
- Technical School Dramatic Society
- Grammar School Dramatic Society
- Debating Society (Grammar School)
- Art Club
- Choir (Technical School, started late 1951)
- The Madrigal Group
- Embroidery Club
- Girls Gymnastic Club (boys started 1951)
- Photographic Group
- Handicraft Club
- Dance Club
- Bird Watchers Club

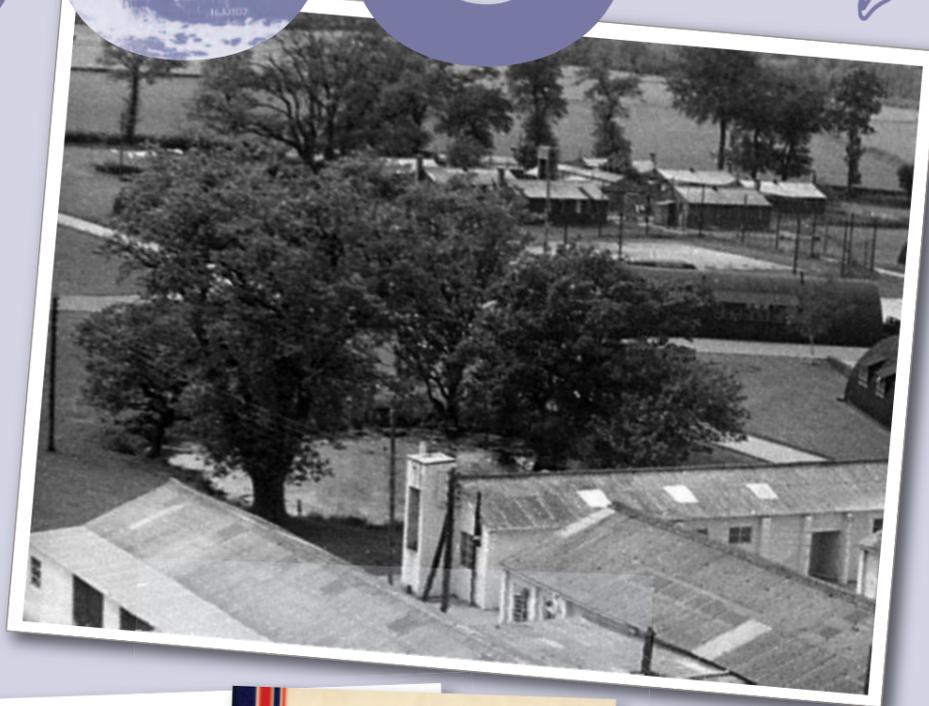
## Classroom Hut 38 Plan

Plan drawn from memory by Maurice Jackson



# 1953

Staff Houses and  
Tennis Courts ↓



## College Events

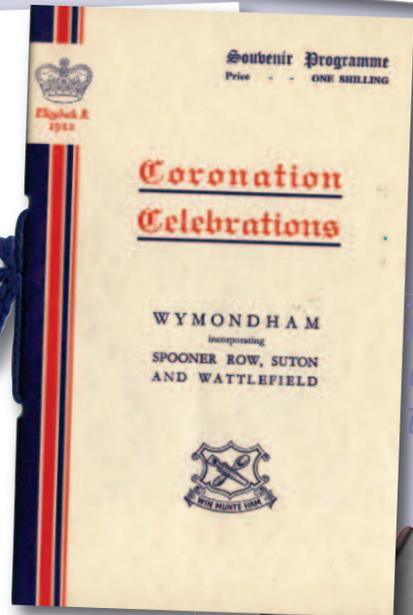
- Lancashire Fire Brigade (Volunteers) billeted at the College while clearing up after the East Coast floods.
- The House system (North, South, East and West) is introduced in time for the Athletics season.
- First publication of The Alliance - the school magazine for both the Technical and Grammar Schools.

## Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, 2 June 1953

"...the main school holidays were quite long by today's standards; two months in the summer, the other two, Easter and Christmas, a month each. But this was at the expense of very short half-term holidays (from 3pm on the Friday afternoon until midday the following Tuesday). One exception was made on the occasion of the Queen's Coronation. We were granted an extra day, would you believe?..."

Written by Maurice Jackson on [www.wcremembered.co.uk](http://www.wcremembered.co.uk)

A New Testament Bible was presented to all pupils to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. With students at home, only a very few would have seen it in Norfolk on TV other than a those who would have watched a very misty picture from some far flung transmitter. David Spinks recalls having a strong feeling about the Coronation and the Festival Of Britain (May 1951) also. "They both offered a brighter future and in spite of B&W Film and TV (where you could get it), it seemed to be a future in colour."



The New Testament Bible presented to all pupils ↓



## Flood and Fire

On the evening of 31st January and the morning of 1st February 1953, the East Coast of Britain suffered one of its worst tragedies when a disastrous flood caused death and destruction.

The combination of gale force northerly winds and tides 2.5 metres above high spring tide level caused havoc from Yorkshire through to Kent. When it subsided, hundreds were dead (65 in Hunstanton alone), approximately 30,000 people had been evacuated and around 24,500 houses had been damaged.

Fire Brigades from all over the country helped to pump out damaged properties and the College was temporary home for a Section of the Lancashire Fire Brigade.

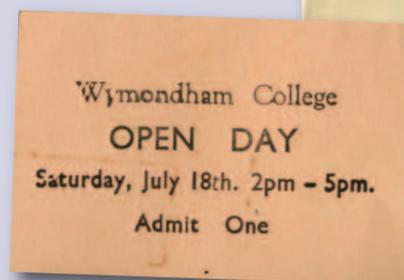
Joan Sperring (neé Tebbutt) recalls that these firemen had come down to help pump out water. Dr Ralphs was the emergency officer for the county and had offered to put them up in the college to live while they went out to various venues on the coast during the day to pump. They came back to eat and recoup for the next day. On the night they arrived having come over the Pennines in a blizzard, they drove onto the High Street ringing their bells at about one o'clock in the morning. They were promptly told to 'shut up' by the staff who were up, as there were four or five hundred children asleep who nobody wanted disturbed.



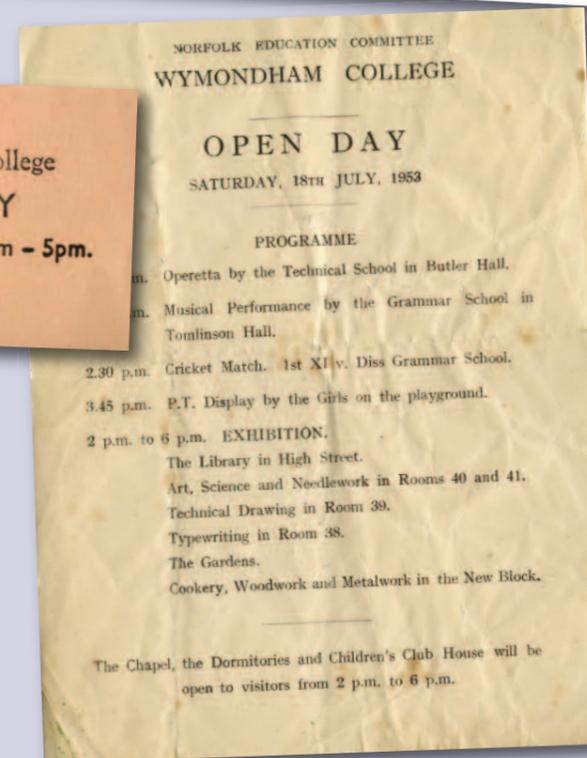
Lancashire Fire Brigade at the College

The students, according to Joan, took the new visitors in their stride for the weeks they were there, as they did with everything else. They would only worry about there being enough food!

At the end of their stay, the firemen did a wonderful display of pumping out the college pond and filling it up again. They also gave the gift of a Firemen's Bell, which is now in Cavell Hall.



Tickets and programme for 1953's open day ↗



## Worldwide Events

- Floods on the coast of East Anglia cause the death of 300 people.
- Frances Crick and James Watson of Cambridge University discover the structure of DNA.
- Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 2 June.
- Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay become the first men to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

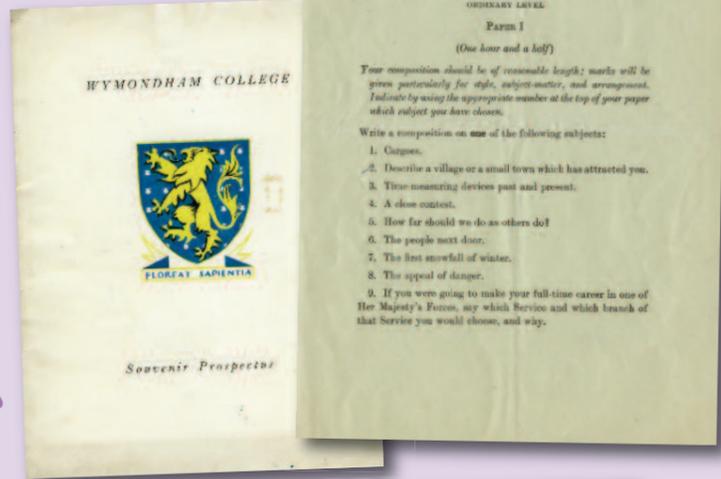
# 1954

# 1955

## Worldwide Events

- Anthony Eden becomes Prime Minister following the resignation of Sir Winston Churchill.
- Stirling Moss becomes the first British Driver to win the British Grand Prix.
- The first edition of the Guinness Book of World Records is published in London.
- Ruth Ellis (b.1926) is hanged for murder in London. She is the last woman to be executed in the United Kingdom.
- Lego hits the shops! Designed by a Danish carpenter who takes the name from the Danish, leg godt - to play well.
- Albert Einstein, German-born physicist and Nobel Prize laureate (b.1879) dies.

Show here is a souvenir prospectus and an English exam paper



## Foundation of Peel Hall

**The foundation stone of Peel Hall, the first of six permanent halls of residence was laid on 16 July 1955 by Mr Sam Peel, Chairman of the Norfolk Education Committee. The stone contains in its inscription that it "is witness of the faith and hope this county has in the future of Wymondham College."**

To celebrate the laying of the foundation stone, Mrs L Bushell, the College caterer, made a 40lb cake. It was decorated with the new College badge and carried a 'foundation stone' made of marzipan. The Eastern Daily Press (Monday, 18 July 1955) commented that "it was quite a day for the College catering staff. Apart from feeding the 600 pupils and over 70 men on a course, they served nearly 2000 teas."



## College Events

- Start of first academic year with a complete school from 1st Form to Upper VIth.
- RV Metcalfe assumes position of Warden.
- Technical High School and Grammar School amalgamation begins, leading to a unified Wymondham College.
- Foundation stone of Peel Hall, by Sam Peel (Chairman of NEC).
- Adoption of new College Badge, designed by Mr David Freeman. Art teacher.



- First public singing of College Song - words and music by Lincoln Ralphs.
- First all-ages rugby season, and Association Football's last season.
- Thorpe Grammar School (day) pupils begin tuition at the College while their school is being built.



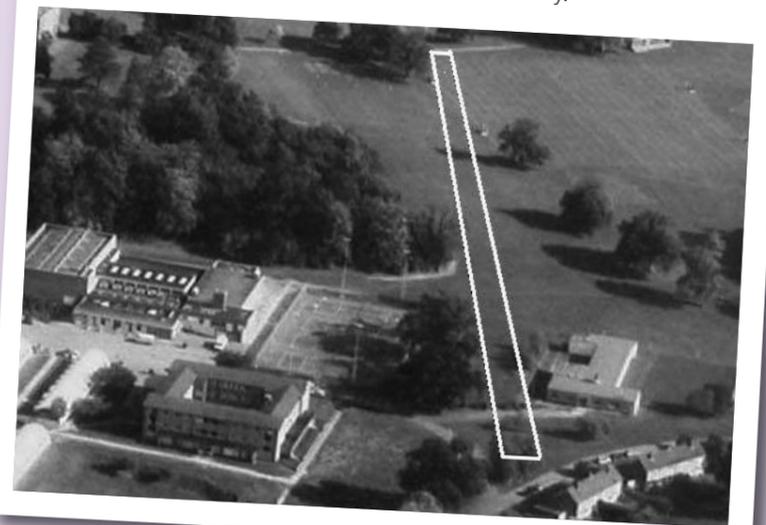
## Food for thought?

View from the water tower, over the garden which was worked by the students. This is now the site of the sports hall, swimming pool and tennis courts. The fruit and vegetable garden ran the length of the east side of the College, between the water tower and the southern end of the tennis hard-courts. This was an important source of produce for the school as well as being the centre of learning for agricultural science students.



## The straight 440

The first athletics track was laid out on sloping ground to the south of the present tennis courts. The upwards and downwards slopes did cancel each other out, however it was thought that the optimum performance could only be achieved on a level track. So when, in 1955, the College hosted the County Sports meeting, the visiting teams were astonished to find a quarter of a mile of straight track! Timing had to be achieved by triggering stop watches at the puff of smoke from the starting pistol; by the time the bang was heard, the runners were already well on their way.



The old-style Grammar School badge appeared on the front cover of The Rover comic number 1574 on 27th August 1955

# 1956

# 1957

## Peel Hall

In September 1957, the first girls from (North and South House) moved into their new boarding house - Peel Hall. One term later, East and West House girls were similarly housed in Lincoln Hall.

'As far as the girls in particular are concerned, their move into the new boarding houses will undoubtedly stand out in their memory. The move from temporary to permanent buildings cannot fail to make an impression upon pupils in a boarding school. For the boys, too, the present year will be a memorable one. With more accommodation available, it has been found possible to reorganise them on a house basis, and for the first time each house now has its own common room and preparation room.'

'At Christmas the girls entertained the boys in Peel Hall. This was a most successful evening and we hope this was the first step towards greater co-operation between the two sides of the House.'

Taken from the 1957 Alliance Magazine



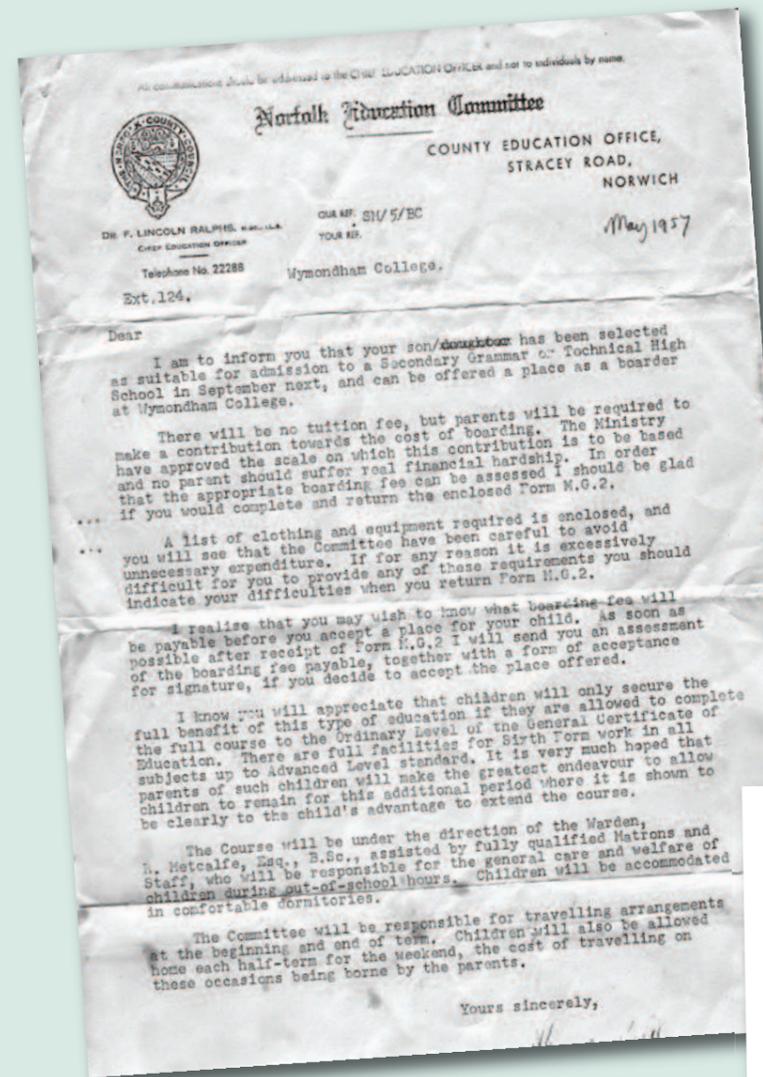
All of the refectory tables and benches were designed by Mr Mullenger, Head of Boys' Crafts, and were made, from oak, in the School Workshops by staff and students. He is seen here on the left with Dave Goman and Andy Seeley in 1952. The three were known as the Engineering Trio.

## Worldwide Events

- The Queen broadcasts the first Christmas message on television.
- Harold MacMillan becomes Prime Minister, replacing Anthony Eden, who resigns.
- Egypt re-opens the Suez Canal.
- The Treaty of Rome establishes the European Economic Community (EEC).
- The Soviet Union launches 'Sputnik 1', the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth.

## College Events

- North and South House girls move into Peel Hall.
- Use of the original Chapel ceases. Butler Hall is used as an interim facility until the new Chapel (Hut 35) is ready.
- School Orchestra formed, starting with violins.



Another milestone in the life of the College was reached this year. Among those leaving that July were the first pupils to complete a seven-year course extending from admission to the College up to the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education.

## Sporting activities

The land available to the College for sporting activities originally formed part of the Mid-Norfolk Golf Club. It was covered with several mature trees and many many stones. For the first pitches and playing fields to be laid out these needed to be removed. 'Stone picking duty' is remembered by many students of the time, and a good proportion of the trees also had to be removed. The largest trees were dealt with by lopping off all branches, then felling and, finally, the roots were blown up. Too much explosive was used for the stumps and large chunks of debris landed close to the spectators (Margaret Norton having the closest escape).

"I recall tree stumps being blown up in 1957 or so when they were making the sports fields bigger and better. We were kept away but the 'booms' were good." - John Chapman

"At the time of the explosion I (and many others) were standing up by the woods and a very large chunk of wood landed only a few yards in front of us." - Alan Sidell



Alan Sidell sitting on the huge chunk of wood

# 1958



## The Morley St Peter Kiln

**In 1958, workmen digging foundation trenches for Fry Hall came across two Romano-British pottery kilns. These two kilns were excavated at the time. During the excavation the side of a third kiln, which ran under a concrete path was exposed. Unfortunately the path was in general use at that time and could not be removed.**



In the summer of 1962 permission was given for the removal of the path and a team of amateur archaeologists from the College set to work. Work proceeded quickly and efficiently, and within the first week of the holidays the whole of Kiln III was exposed and recorded.

The late Mr. R. Rainbird Clarke, Curator of Norwich Museum, was then working at Hockwold and he called in on his way home on most evenings to offer advice and help, for which we were all very grateful. On the second Saturday of the holiday the trench was filled in record time and a message was placed in a bottle at the bottom of the kiln for the guidance or possibly confusion of future generations. Romano-British pottery kilns containing 20 Century glass are not often found!

Taken from the 1963 College Magazine.

## Speech Day

The College's first formal Speech Day took place in St Andrew's Hall, Norwich on the 21st of October 1958. The Guest of Honour was Mr Dean Acheson, previously US Secretary of State (1949 - 1953), who had performed the official opening of Lincoln Hall earlier that day. His presence reflected the historical links between the College and America, captured in the opening verse of the School Song.

## College Events

- East and West House girls move into Lincoln Hall. The 'Morley Hoard' of 885 Saxon silver pennies is found by workmen digging drains for new staff quarters.
- Thorpe Grammar School pupils depart for their new school.
- Construction of Fry Hall begins.
- Roman pottery kilns (end of 1st Century AD) discovered next to Tomlinson Hall.
- Hut 35 becomes second location of the Chapel.
- First Speech Day. Lincoln Hall opened officially by Dean Acheson (American Secretary of State 1949-53).
- First General Inspection of the College.

## The Morley St Peter Hoard

### The Anglo-Saxon Period AD410-AD1066

Early in 925 one of the former inhabitants of Norfolk wanted to hide his wealth. He dug a small round hole and buried in it a pot containing his treasure. But he never recovered it. Over a thousand years later, on Friday, 24 January, 1958, two workmen dug a trench to carry pipes to the first two staff houses then being built at Wymondham College. Unwittingly they had cut through the side of the hole dug 1033 years earlier.... One started to shovel the earth, and a shower of shining silvery discs 'like mineral water bottle caps' suddenly came to light.

The curator of the Castle Museum in Norwich and his team of archeologists, helped by two College Sixth Formers, Lionel Kett and Peter Guildford, both

members of the Norfolk Research Committee, sieved the earth and in all 883 coins were found and studied in the British Museum. The rarest were retained there. Most were returned to the Castle Museum, Norwich, where they are normally to be seen, with the pot, in a showcase in the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery. Exceptionally, it was decided to present six to the College.

The two workmen who were named as joint finders shared £2,700, the determined market value of the coins, as reward. One of them, who had been living with his family in a caravan, was able to buy a house.

Partly taken from the 1970 College Magazine.



## Worldwide Events

- Twenty-three people are killed in the Munich air disaster, including eight Manchester United football players.
- Demonstrators demand that nuclear weapons are banned, in the first protest march for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The march begins in Hyde Park and finishes in Aldermaston, Berkshire.
- The first parking meters are installed in Britain.
- The first life peerage is created in Britain.
- Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) is inaugurated in the UK by the Queen, when she dials a call from Bristol to Edinburgh and speaks to the Lord Provost.
- Gatwick Airport opens.



This photo was taken by Dave Turner from a vantage point up a tree on the edge of the woods. The Chapel (then in 35) is on the left and Peel Hall is in the distance over to the right. Note the immaculate gardens (which also covered the area now occupied by the Gym).

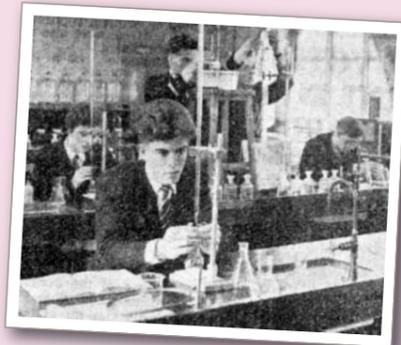
# 1959



Junior girls playing rounders



Hut at left is 17 (shortened to make room for the new building). Construction is almost complete.



Science lesson in the large Nissen Huts

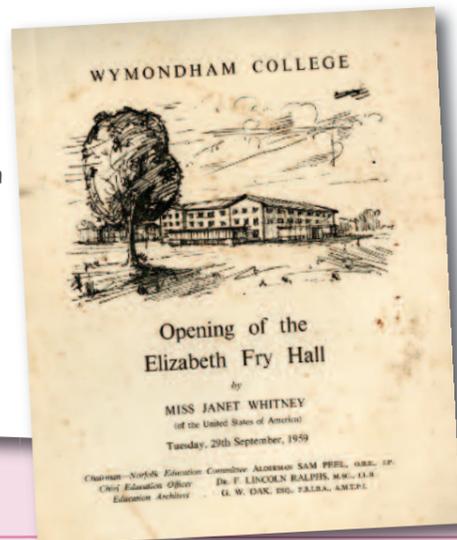


Orchestra rehearsal

## Elizabeth Fry Hall

Elizabeth Fry Hall was completed in 1959 and opened officially by Mrs Janet Whitney, an American biographer of Elizabeth Fry, on Tuesday 29th September, 1959. Mrs Whitney said that although Elizabeth was known for her work in the prisons, her primary interest was in education and "had she been here she would have been pleased with what she saw. The whole emphasis of her life makes it so right that you should use her name to dedicate your Hall."

In September 1959 East and West girls moved into Fry Hall from Lincoln, being replaced by North and South boys, with the excess boys forming an Annexe in the old North hutted accommodation. The most exciting aspect for many of the Lincoln boys was the close proximity to the girls in Peel! There was much ogling and posing.



## The Cricket Pavilion

It was Mr. Metcalfe's idea to give the old Mid-Norfolk Golf Club Clubhouse building a new lease of life as a cricket pavilion. This was done using the school's own resources - the usual pattern of things in those days. Staff leadership was split between Bob Mullenger, Andrew Seeley and Dave Goman, with the boys of the school utilised as their labour force. Work began in earnest after exams in the summer of 1958.

A brick plinth was built by the College's maintenance staff (over the winter of 1958/59) and the sections of the clubhouse were assembled on it, with the addition of an extra room to give symmetry to the pavilion design. Four benches, embellished with the College crest, were built in the workshops.

Mr Metcalfe's Speech Day report in November 1959 included "The Cricket eleven was able to use the

new pavilion, the golf house of pre-war days erected on the lane, although it still needs another coat of paint before the official opening next year. Our thanks are due to the staff, particularly Mr. Seeley, and the boys, who by voluntary effort made this possible and in addition helped with the laying of the new cricket square."



The first team photograph taken in front of the pavilion was that of the 1959 1st XI.

## Worldwide Events

- British Empire Day is renamed Commonwealth Day.
- Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba.
- The Barbie doll, created by U.S. business woman Ruth Handler, debuts at the American International Toy Fair.
- Two monkeys, Able and Miss Baker, are the first living beings to successfully return to earth from space aboard the flight Jupiter AM-18.

## The tuck shop

The School bus (aka the 'Red Devil') is parked outside the Tuck Shop. The latter vital facility was managed by 2 dear ladies, Miss Nichol and Miss Edwards; widely known as 'Shot and Javelin' because of their relative statures. A certain York Sixth-former would buy in stocks of chocolate bars during the week and then sell them, at a considerable profit, to starving Juniors returning from Sunday walks.



## College Events

- The first County Grammar School (day) pupils arrive.
- Elizabeth Fry Hall opened by Miss Janet Whitney.