

NEWSLETTER

Number 72

All change ...

Anne Silins remembers our past shopping experiences

Who remembers shopping with our parents, or for me as a young girl living in Appleby, shopping with my Grandmother to Leicester and to Burton on Trent. Those were really big days, a special day out. By far the most amazing part of those days was not endlessly trying on a Sunday-best scratchy, tweed suit, or even shoes which were purchased a little too big, but what I really wanted to see was the whizzing of the overhead, pneumatic tube system in the large shops. This pneumatic system had tubes going from the clerk's counter up to and over the ceiling and off to an accounting office somewhere far away. This was the way you paid for your goods in many of those large shops. I remember well the whoosh as a pneumatic cash tube flew over my head. Then on its return it landed with a



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metal 'ting' into a metal basket where our clerk would take out the receipt and our change, handing it to Grandma with great reverence. These cylindrical containers, usually referred to as carriers or capsules, were placed in the pneumatic tube, this saved time and

wear and tear on the clerk's feet. Far away in a central accounting office, the cashier spent their days. They received our bill and the money and returned any cash and the receipt. This unknown and an unseen person dealt with all the financial transactions for all the customers. This system also reduced the amount of work needed to keep cash registers filled with paper money and coins. If the shop was in Leicester where shops were multi levels, these tubes traveled up and down between floors to complete their task. So transfixed was I, that Grandma had to pull on my hand to get me moving. I would have stood and watched in amazement as those containers 'whooshed' around the shop like miniature trains if I hadn't been urged to move on.

The shops and their pneumatic tubes were a pre-digital marvel. By using compressed air and a vacuum system to fuel this mode of transport, capsules zipped around the shop as if by magic. This system was fast, secure and made for efficient transactions especially in a busy shop. They streamlined business and reduced theft. No credit cards to use in those days, just cash and rarely was it requested that our bill be settled and paid at a later date.

There were a few select shops where purchases could be put on your bill, on your tab, so to speak. For Grandma and me that was the shop of "Bellamy's of Burton on Trent". I was taken to Bellamy's to buy my Ashby School Uniform. This was indeed a special day of shopping for Grandma and me, an excursion. Grandma had used this shop for her four sons and her daughter's school uniforms many years ago. So she was known and usually greeted and asked to take a seat. Tea would be offered, but for this Grandma said, 'no thank you'. I knew the Tea Shoppe next door was where she had in mind for our lunch once our shopping was done. At this special lunch I was delighted to sit up straight and be on my best behaviour and I enjoyed that lunch very much.

These pneumatic tubes and capsules were widely used in British shops from the late 19th. Century to the middle of the 20th Century. Soon many more typical applications were adopted and the pneumatic tubes system was used in banks, hospitals and factories. At the bank in Ashby this system was an endless fascination for I was one of those children who couldn't take my eyes off the tubes. I fantasised about what it



would be like if pneumatic tubes were made large enough for people to ride in and I believe such devices have been thought of and yes, even tried.

Experimental systems have been attempted in the past for the use of this 'future' mode of travel. As early as 1908, Joseph Stoetzel of Chicago, built and demonstrated it by putting his son, Robert, into such a large tube and transporting the boy through that tube. It was for a short distance. At the end of his ride, Robert, said "Wheee, fun". However this was not to be – not yet anyway.



Resurgence has begun once again. In this 21st Century we are still enamoured with the idea of objects, animals and people being propelled through a pneumatic tube. In 2013 Elon Musk encourage scientists to develop such a transportation system. 'Hyperloop', a high speed, low-pressure system which could be described as a cross between a jet plane and an air hockey game, was tried. This was all done with little air resistance and little friction. His idea was to move passengers and cargo in pressurised pods through steel tubes at speeds of up to 700 mph. Musk's plan was to build tubes that would be mounted on pylons above ground. This he added would reduce land costs and in some designs the pylons would be covered with solar panels which would generate the power for his system. The set up cost would have been high and it would have, could have, and perhaps been susceptible to power outages and terrorist attacks. Som entrepreneurs are still considering such an idea.

I end by saying, such a mode of transportation could be in the future, I know not when that would be, but I am sure some men and women will develop such a 'mode' one day. Just imagine you could travel from Appleby to Ashby in a very short time.

Andrew Moore, our editor, recalls the same system in the Coop at Tamworth back in the 1950s. It was one of his earliest memories

Treasured Memories: Jack Smith

Jan Tallack shares her memories



We were absolutely delighted recently to receive a wonderful collection of photographs sent to us by Jan Tallack – a precious glimpse into the history of our school and the life of her father, Jack Smith, who served as headmaster during a key chapter in its story.

Jack Smith took up the role of headmaster at a pivotal time: shortly after the grammar school moved from its original home in the old village school buildings to its new premises. When he was first appointed and arrived to take up his post, he lived in lodgings with Mrs Ayre, a well-known and respected local figure, while settling into his new position and getting to know the school and community. It was the start of a long and dedicated connection that would shape the school for years to come.

Among the photos Jan shared, one stands out as particularly lovely: a picture of Jan herself, standing on the beautiful croquet lawn which her father had established and laid out at the front of the school grounds. That lawn became a well-loved feature of the school, a space for leisure, gatherings, and happy memories for generations of pupils and staff.

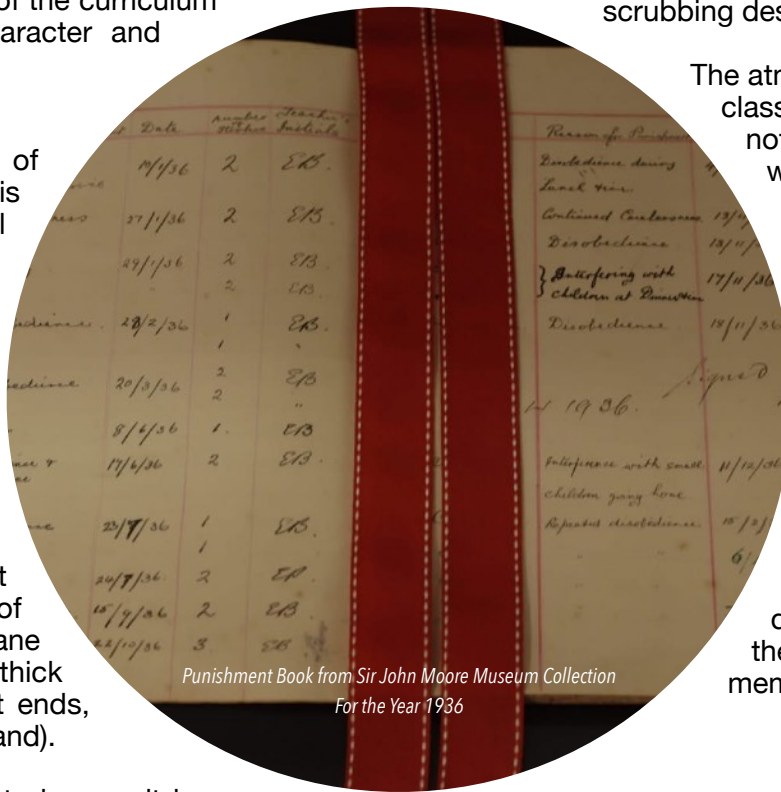
These photographs are far more than just images; they are windows into our past. They remind us of the people who built and shaped our school, the care and attention they gave to every part of it. We are so very grateful to Jan for sharing these treasures with us, allowing us to look back with pride and affection at the legacy her father left behind.

Spare the Rod

School discipline in Post-War Britain

In the 1940s and 1950s, the British classroom was a place of rigid structure and high expectations. For students attending school during and after World War II, discipline was not merely a set of rules; it was an integral part of the curriculum designed to build character and enforce social order.

The defining feature of school life during this period was corporal punishment. Most schools operated under the principle of *in loco parentis*, giving teachers the same legal authority as parents to administer physical discipline. In primary and secondary schools alike, the most common instruments of correction were the cane and the "tawse" (a thick leather strap with split ends, primarily used in Scotland).



*Punishment Book from Sir John Moore Museum Collection
For the Year 1936*

Infractions that would today result in a brief conversation or a "time-out" were then met with physical force. Being late for assembly, failing a spelling test, or talking in the corridor could result in several strokes of the cane across the palm of the hand or, for older boys, across the buttocks. The "whack" was often administered in front of the class or in the headmaster's office, serving as a visceral deterrent for bad behaviour.

Beyond physical pain, teachers frequently employed psychological deterrents. While the iconic "Dunce's Cap" was beginning to fade by the late 1950s, the practice of standing a child in the corner for hours remained common. Students who struggled with lessons or misbehaved were often made to stand on their chairs or outside the classroom door, facing the wall.

In many 1950s classrooms, left-handedness was still viewed as a trait to be "corrected." Children who naturally wrote with their left hand often had their hands tied behind their backs or were rapped across the knuckles until they switched to their right, a practice that left many with lifelong anxieties regarding education.

For less severe offences, the "lines" were a standard penalty. A student might be required to write "I must not talk in class" 100 or even 500 times. This was

often done during the lunch break or after school, depriving the child of their free time.

The 1944 Education Act changed the landscape by raising the school-leaving age to 15, meaning more teenagers were in the system than ever before. This led to a rise in "detention," where students were kept back to perform menial tasks, such as cleaning chalkboards, picking up litter in the playground, or scrubbing desks to remove ink stains.

The atmosphere of the 1940s and 50s classroom was one of "seen but not heard." Respect for authority was absolute, and a complaint to one's parents about a school punishment usually resulted in a second punishment at home. It wasn't until the late 1960s that the tide began to turn against corporal punishment, eventually leading to its total ban in UK state schools in 1986.

For those who attended school in the post-war decades, however, the sting of the cane remains a vivid, defining memory of their formative years.

The box in the corner

Eighty years ago this month

The first television licences were issued in June 1946, eighty years ago. When first issued they cost just two pounds.



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Sunshine and Stumps

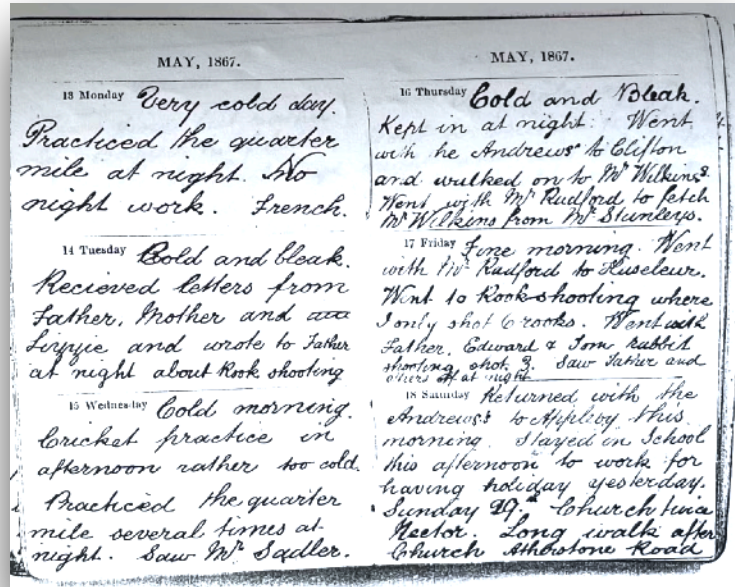
An imagined contest in Appleby Magna ... June 1867

Beneath wide, cloudless skies and a golden summer sun, the cricket ground at Appleby Magna presented a picture of English village charm this afternoon. Lined with hedgerows heavy with hawthorn blossom and bordered by rolling green fields, it was the setting for a much-anticipated encounter between the boys of Sir John Moore School and a team drawn from the village itself. The date marked the height of the season, and spectators arrived in carts and carriages, on foot and bicycle, eager to witness tradition and youthful energy go head-to-head.

The school side, aged between twelve and sixteen, arrived in neat cream flannels and navy caps, their bats polished and pads fastened tight. Under the guidance of Mr. Thomas Hale, the schoolmaster and team coach, they had practiced diligently after lessons throughout the term. Many had never faced adult opposition before, and there was a mix of nervousness and excitement in their ranks. The village team, meanwhile, were seasoned players—farmers, blacksmiths, shopkeepers and labourers, their attire a little more worn but their spirits equally high. They had played together for years and were confident of defending local pride.

At half-past two, the village captain won the toss and elected to bat first. Opening the innings were Mr. William Carter, the village blacksmith, and young Edward Banks, clerk at the local post office. The school boys took the field with discipline, their captain, fourteen-year-old George Bennett, positioning his team carefully. Opening bowler Arthur Holmes, a lean, fair-haired boy known for his accurate length, soon made his mark. In his third over, he clean bowled Banks, sending the stumps flying and drawing a cheer from the crowd. The village side recovered steadily, however, with Carter striking several powerful drives to the boundary. By tea time, they had reached 87 runs for the loss of four wickets.

After refreshments served by the ladies of the village, the school boys took their turn to bat. They faced strong bowling from the start, with the village fast bowler Mr. John Higgins proving difficult to score against. Wickets fell regularly, yet the boys showed great grit. Bennett, their captain, played a fine innings of 32 runs, mixing careful defence with well-timed shots. With only ten minutes remaining,



An extract from a diary of a former pupil at Sir John Moore mentioning Cricket Practice

the school side stood at 78 runs, needing ten more from the final over. Tension rose among the spectators. The first four balls yielded six runs, but the fifth saw Bennett caught at mid-off. The last boy to the crease managed to scramble a single, bringing the scores level just as the umpire called "Time".

The match thus ended in a draw—a fitting result for a contest played in such fine spirit. Handshakes were exchanged, and cheers rang out for both teams. As the sun began to dip low over the fields, players and spectators alike departed, talking eagerly of the day's events. For the boys of Sir John Moore School, it was an experience they would long remember—one that taught them skill, sportsmanship and the enduring joy of the game.



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Foundation Heritage
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THE NEWSLETTER IS
EDITED BY

Andrew Moore

Contact us via email

museum@sirjohnmoore.org.uk

