

Shared Moments: School Days' written by Maureen Kershaw

With most Schools being closed now and home schooling underway, my thoughts turn to education. School photos would come with the slogan 'Schooldays are happy days' - but were yours? I mostly hated it from starting at age 4 to leaving at 15. My Infants School was Brudenell and although I can't recall my first day, I certainly remember many others. There was no pre-school nursery or half-days in preparation, we just went for the duration. Mostly I screamed when Mum and I reached the School gate as I just wanted to be at home. I'd run out of the playground and chase after her - only to be taken back to School.

After dinner (it wasn't lunch then) I'd return to School where the afternoon would start with asleep on wooden folding beds. On each one was a number and a grey Army blanket. I don't think I ever slept, I couldn't see the point. Instead, my bed being next to the sand-pit enclosed by wooden fencing, I would constantly play with the door latch until told off by the Teacher. Any of my classmates who wriggled about had to stand on their bed and the Teacher would swaddle them with the blanket - don't think that would go down well today! When told to "wake up" we would fold up our blankets and camp beds, standing them up against the wall, behind a curtain. It was then story-time and we would scramble to get a good seat on the coconut matting - so rough and scratchy!

At some point there was the daily ritual of queuing up for a spoonful of cod liver oil, which was washed down with a small amount of National Health orange, the latter being the more favourable. Due to ill health during Infants School, there were gaps until Mrs Mannion's class, where most of my memories stem from. 'Sums' using silver metal counters kept in 4-Square tobacco tins. Drawing on blue paper similar to the bags which sugar was packed in - with stubby wax crayons. Wax polish comes to mind too and we would polish the wooden tables where we would sit for lessons. Three names come to mind from class, non-identical twins David and Anthony Callaghan and my favourite, David Barrett who emigrated to Canada.

Christmas was the best time of course with the big Tree in the Hall, the making of paper chains and cut- out lanterns. For the Christmas party we would carefully carry from home, potted meat sandwiches or a jelly/blancmange in a dish, with our name underneath. On to Junior School and it was the Annexe of Queen's Road County Primary. Such Annexes sprung up around Leeds, probably to cater for the all the Post-War children. A single storey prefabricated building covered with pebble-dash, with three classrooms, the middle one of which was used for Assembly and dinners. Miss Gill taught P.E. and always wore white ankle socks with white pumps. Miss Lamb who took Standard 1A 1, lived on Mavis Lane, Cookridge, though goodness knows why I know this. No knowledge whatsoever of lessons but I remember looking out of the window at a big house behind the playground which had lovely pale blue curtains in one window. On to Standard 2 and another annexe, this time a very old Church building, All Hallows Institute. The favourite Teacher for many, Mr Griffiths, would spit through his rapid Welsh accent. He stood for no nonsense and was known for this throwing of the blackboard rubber. When it landed across the classroom, being wooden and the size of a small scrubbing brush - we would all duck whether in its



range or not, but it was fun! He also used a ruler as a deterrent and anyone feeling the "thwack" on their upturned palm was certainly taught a lesson.

The only other All Hallows Teacher I remember was Miss Cohen, a small white haired and bespectacled lady who taught the girls Needlework. Miss Cohen would sit at her tall desk, the chair 'built up' with cushions. Cross stitch was worked on and when the fabric was distributed, everyone selected the primary colours, but not me. I chose a chocolate brown which I stitched with yellow and purple. Funny how those colours are still favourites of mine, but not worn together. Two memorable points from that year were a fire in the mattress factory next door which enforced a short period away from School and the other - the arrival of the Ryan Twins. The Singer Marion Ryan travelled around the Country and at the point of her Cabaret work in the Leeds area, her twin sons Paul and Barry were schooled with us. I think many were rather in awe of the boys. The only occasion I remember speaking to them was the day I took into School a glossy brochure of The Ten Commandments film (belonging to my Sister) with the boys asking to read it.

The next two years were spent at the 'big' School, Queens Road C.P. A typical old School building with stone staircases, draughty windows and bitterly cold and horrid outside toilets. We did at least have new brighter lights as electricians from Allenby & Stokell on New Briggate replaced the old ones with modern fittings. Classes averaged 40 pupils, but it was never too much for our Teacher, Miss Birkby. My sister had been taught by Miss Birkby nine years earlier and some of her traditions continued. I refer to Miss Birkby asking girls to go round to Edgar's Confectioners on King's Road for a brown Turog loaf. Each morning started with Assembly where we would sing 'All Glory Laud and Honour' - changing the words 'bless-ed trinity' to "Wakefield Trinity". There would sometimes be a thud as a child fainted - or worse. A Teacher would skuttle out to return with the Caretaker who would cover the offending floor with sawdust.

Following Assembly Miss Birkby would start with the daily spellings. Five words would be written in her beautiful handwriting onto the blackboard - each word having to be spelt out five times. There was never an excuse for mis-spelling 'Parliament' as we were instructed to pronounce the second 'a' - Parli-a-ment. School seemed more interesting in those years as I desperately wanted to pass the 11-Plus Examination. Occasionally we would have 'Films' and a TV on a trolley would be wheeled in. What the films were I haven't a clue.

Each year there would be the opportunity to take part in the School's team of English Country Dancing for Children's Day. If selected for the team, rehearsals took place in the Hall and a length of yellow fabric for our dress, plus a small amount of white for the collar and cuffs, and a paper pattern was distributed. The rehearsal took place on the Friday at Roundhay Park then on Saturday morning we would arrive at School, dressed ready for the dancing at Roundhay. We boarded the bus outside School very excited at the day ahead, until we collected the team from Quarry Mount School. I was mortified to find that their girls had to sit on our knees - and our pristinely ironed dresses! I did pass the 11-Plus for my School of choice, Thoresby High, but then it all went downhill.

Shared Moments: 'Graveyard Walk' written by Oliver Cross

Sometimes we like to spend our officially-approved daily exercise periods wandering through the disused St George's Fields cemetery in the grounds of Leeds University.

There are wide paths paved with the flattened common gravestones of people who died without having the foresight to make a responsible funeral plan and as a result are entitled to only one line of plain lettering listing their name, date of death and their age they departed this life, although 'departing this life' contains too many letters to be within the budgets of most of the cemetery's inhabitants.

Many of the deceased in the common graves, if they achieved adulthood, died in what we would call early middle-age, their 40s and early-50s. The more elaborate still-standing headstones, with big lettering and unnecessary wordage, are typically of people who died in their 60s or 70s and had occupations, such as victualler or merchant, that paid better than being an ordinary worker in a country built by workers.

I expect common people visiting common gravestones would have noticed this inequality in death but I shouldn't think it worried them. It was just how things were; there was no secret injustice to be discovered, everything was spelled out in stone, inevitable and unchangeable.

But big events do shake things up. I'm not sure that that the present pandemic is an event on the scale of the world wars or the great depression or even some past epidemics, but it will change things.

If I were of an age which would allow me to report back to you in 15 or 20 years time, I would be interested to see how many people still work from home, how much life remains in city centres, whether it's permitted to get mildly drunk in pubs - if there are pubs - and how many packs of dogs, bought to alleviate lockdown boredom, are now wandering the streets, possibly joined by liberated Llandudno goats and the odd stranded walrus.

It would be interesting to see whether we still rely on home deliveries and the army of low-paid, though very skilled, people who keep us fed, watered, furnished and amused but would mostly end up piled into common graveyards if there were still such things.

It's possible that the that the economic consequence of the pandemic, which are as yet uncounted, might bring about a realignment that makes the rich slightly poorer and the poor slightly richer, so the figures add up more sensibly. Don't wait up though.

Incidentally, the St George's Fields cemetery also contains the gravestone of the circus owner Pablo Fanque (real name William Darby) who died in 1871, aged 61, and should be remembered as a pioneering black entrepreneur but is in fact remembered for contributing a couple of lines to the to the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper album: "The Hendersons will all be there/ Late of Pablo Fanques fair, what a scene."

The joint gravestone also commemorates the tragic death in a circus accident of Pablo's wife Susannah, but it still never fails to cheer me up.



Poetry Corner

'I Must Go Down To The Sea Again' by Spike Milligan

The below poem is shared by Maureen Kershaw, which she says is one of the few poems she remembers of Spike Milligan's

I must go down to the sea again,
to the lonely sea and the sky;
I left my shoes and socks there -
I wonder if they're dry?

Spring Cleaning by Vivien Wade

It's time to do a spring clean
House cleaning in every nook.
I'll try to make this my aim today,
Though I would much rather cook.

The windows all need washing,
Some are apt to spoil the view,
And as there are just so many
They take too much time to do

The linen press is a disaster.
It stores more than linen inside,
Light globes, plugs and electric cords
Have become a good place to hide.

Cupboards need urgent attention,
They're in such a dreadful mess.
The thought of all that work today
Puts me in a state of duress.

Now when I think of the pantry,
That really puts me to the test.
So I'll boil the kettle for tea,
Then maybe start after a rest.

It's time to do a spring clean,
But I'm in the mood to delay.
Thinking about it's worn me out
I'll leave it for some other day.

Spring cleaning now is completed,
The house looks exceptional.
All the stress was taken away
When I hired a professional.

The Daffodils

by William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850)

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and
hills, When all at once I saw a
crowd, A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the
trees, Fluttering and dancing in
the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that
shine And twinkle on the Milky
Way, They stretch'd in never-
ending line Along the margin of a
bay: Ten thousand saw I at a
glance, Tossing their heads in
sprightly dance.

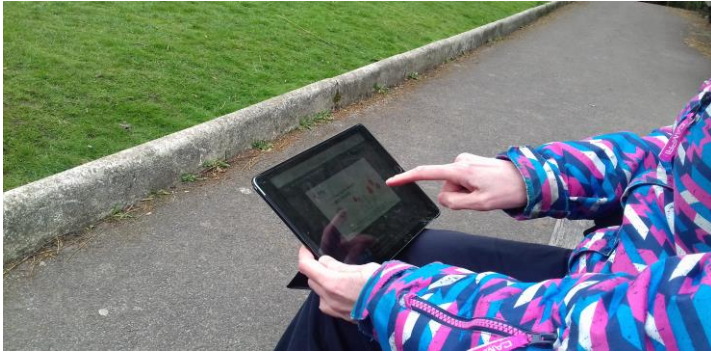
The waves beside them danced,
but they Outdid the sparkling
waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed, and gazed, but little
thought What wealth the show to
me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure
fills, And dances with the
daffodils.

PTO



Captured Moments



Computer sessions in the park; catching up online, shopping, paying bills and completing the census



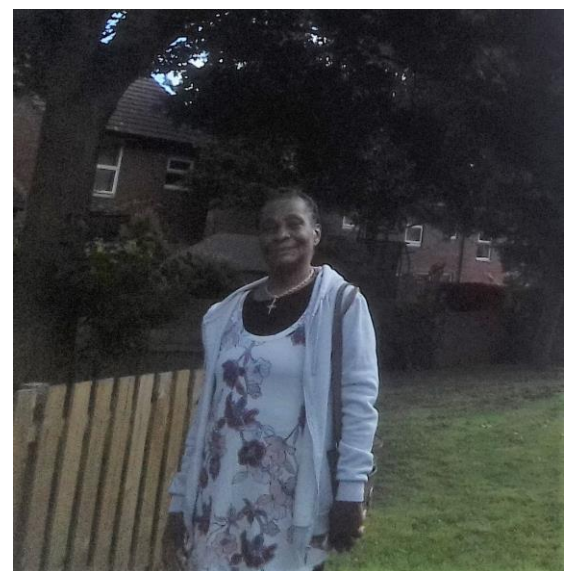
Covid Testing came to Little London Community Centre. It has now gone and we are hoping to be back there ourselves soon once open and we are given the ok to do so.



Catch up and walk together



It was a bitterly cold day but it didn't put us off our socially distant wellbeing walk and chat in Lovell Park.





Our social calls were brightened with a donation of flowers one week.

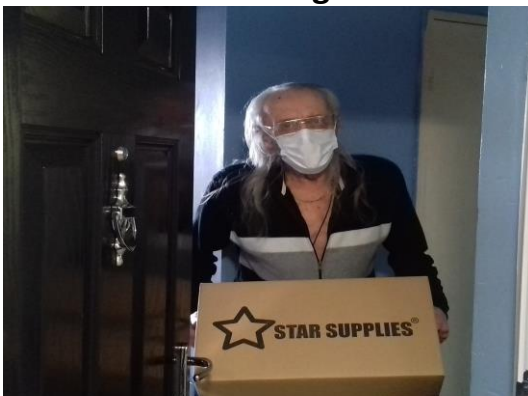


Another week it was Easter Eggs thanks to Notre Dame....



And another week it was Winter Boxes thanks to Seagulls.....

And then another week it was Fish and Chips door to door...



The move began in February 2021.



Brenda and Lisa checking out the new sign at our new base at 127 Woodhouse Street, Charing Cross, looking good!

Inside our new community space, which we can't wait to share with you (once safe to do so)



Creative touches being added 😊



First cuppa in our new abode, in new cups (thank you Maxine). Even the cups are socially distant.



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We have held some groups in person and online together thanks to technology, all within guidelines....



We have enjoyed online Bingo together

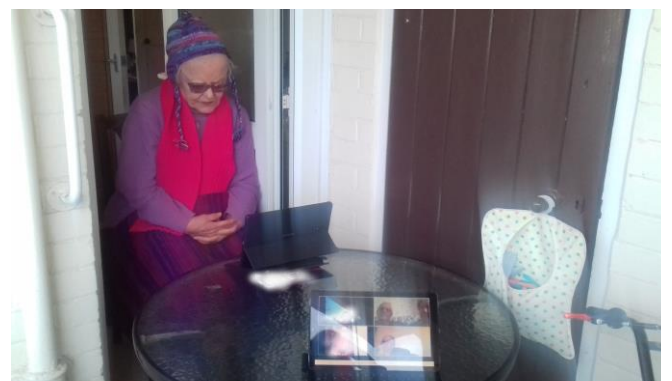


And one lucky bingo winner....



Weekly Elevenses at your door.

Walks together to Meanwood Valley Urban Farm



And online: connecting to one another

