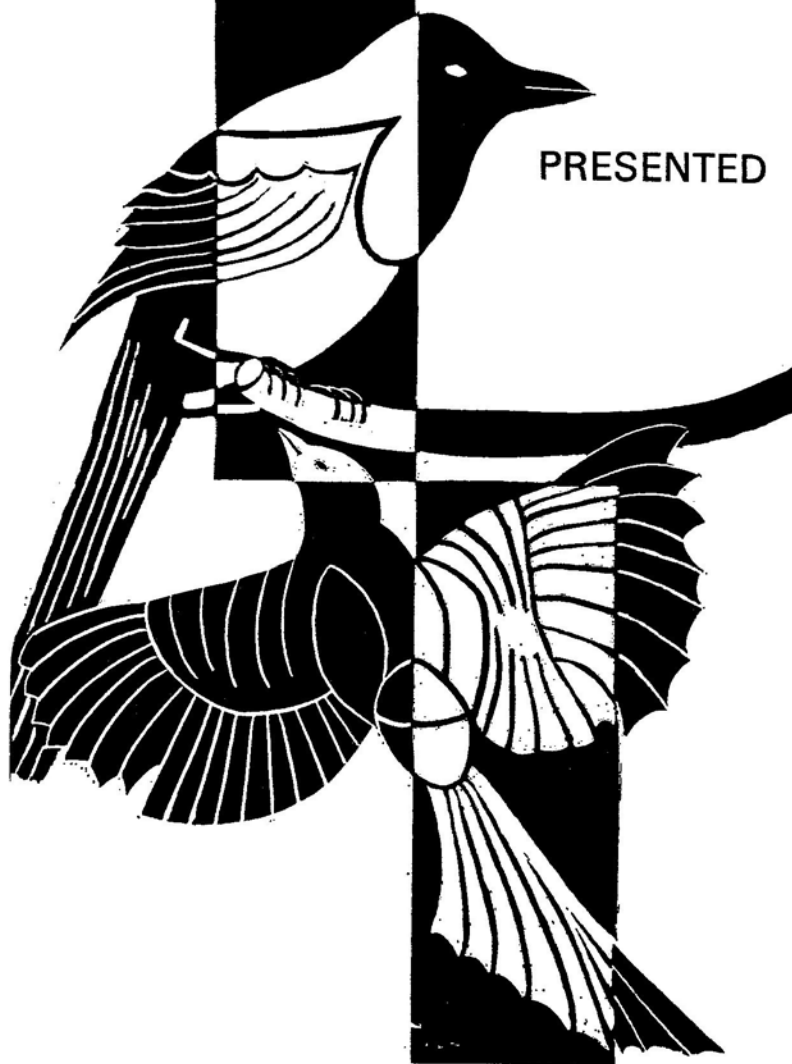


LUCKLEY-OAKFIELD SCHOOL

POT-POURRI

# LUCKLEY-OAKFIELD



*Book Plate by Susan Middlemist*

LUCKLEY-OAKFIELD SCHOOL, WOKINGHAM

SCHOOL PRAYER

Almighty God, in whom all wisdom dwelleth,  
we beseech Thee to guide and protect our  
School. Bless all its members past and  
present, all who teach therein and all who  
learn. We thank Thee for Thy gifts of  
friendship, happiness and knowledge, and  
pray that we may so serve our generation  
on earth as to be fitted for Thy eternal  
service in the life to come.

For Jesus Christ's sake,

**AMEN**

Luckley-Oakfield School was created by the union of two girls' schools, widely separated geographically but with many similarities of history, aims and ideals. They were both founded by devout Christian families and eventually given to the Church Society who amalgamated the two into one school at Wokingham in 1959.

### OAKFIELD

Oakfield is older than Luckley. It was in 1895 that the Bamford family took over a small existing school called Oakfield with twelve pupils, at Arnside in the Lake District. The two older daughters taught, while the youngest one helped her mother run the domestic side.

In 1898 'The Old Girls' Association' was started and the first school magazine appeared. The first Old Girls Re-union was held in November 1900 and regular Old Girls' Re-unions have been held ever since.

In 1903 the school was officially recognised by the Board of Education and also became a centre for the Cambridge Local Examinations.

Great interest was taken in the Boer War; some had brothers in South Africa and money was subscribed to relief funds.

School life seems very similar to that of today. All the subjects were taught - except Biology - though Botany was considered a suitable subject! The girls played tennis, hockey and cricket; they had swimming lessons in Kendal; they went on excursions; they had lectures on a wide variety of subjects; passed examinations; collected money for charity; sat through Speech Days, Open Days and Musical Evenings; played

cricket against a local boys' school - and WON! - and produced handcrafts ranging from water colour sketches to woodcraft.

1904 was an eventful year. The two elder Miss Bamfords married two brothers. The eldest, Miss Helen, married Mr. F.W. Gamble who later became an F.R.S. and they left the school, though they retained close ties with it all their lives.

Miss Kate Bamford married Mr. Herbert Gamble and he became 'Head of the Scholastic side of the school.'

By 1908, Letters from Old Girls all over the world are printed in the magazines. The range of professions was widening and there was an increasing number taking degrees, including Lyle Haigh, who studied medicine.

By the out-break of war in 1914 'New Oakfield' had been built - fitted with electric light! - and the school had taken over neighbouring houses to accommodate all the pupils.

Now the magazines record how old girls were taking their place in public life, both in various forms of war work and also in the professions and businesses. They also record the deaths of many husbands, fathers and brothers. In common with other schools the girls contributed to the war effort by knitting and fund raising.

In 1916 old Mr. Bamford died. He had been 'father' to generations of girls, and his influence had been felt throughout the school. He had that wonderful gift of making everyone feel he was interested in them personally.

In that year also, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Gamble moved to Surbiton and the youngest sister became Head of the school with much help and support from Miss Eacott, who had been both pupil and teacher.

After the war the variety of courses taken by Old Girls continued to widen and there is mention of a girl taking dairy-farming and agriculture at Reading University, and of Barbara Bliss who stood, though did not win, as Independent Liberal candidate for the Dover division. Later she stood unsuccessfully for Carlisle.

In 1926 Mrs. Herbert Gamble died and in 1927 an Old Girls' Scholarship fund in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Bamford and Mrs. Herbert Gamble was opened. The interest was to be used to help a girl from Oakfield School to pursue a further course of study.

In 1935 Miss Bamford and Miss Eacott both retired. Miss Bamford was a great headmistress. Perhaps her chief characteristic was her intense love of the girls, and her very real interest in them. She inspired in people the noblest of ideals of service for God and humanity.

All three Miss Bamfords worked selflessly for the good of the school and inspired members of the staff with a spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice.

A new era for the school began in 1935 when Miss Birnie Rhind took over the school and instituted many changes. Lacrosse replaced hockey - "it being more suited to their technique". The cricket team adopted over-arm bowling, which was a decided success once the number of wides and no-balls had been reduced! Later though, cricket was dropped to give more time to tennis, and Kay Stammers and Freda James came to coach.

The outbreak of yet another war in 1939 saw the girls helping with the war effort in many ways. Old Girls were actively engaged in war work. Dr. Winifred Porter was killed while on Air Raid Duty, and Joan Mortimer of the W.A.A.F. was one of the first three women to be awarded the Military Medal.

The 1942 magazine records good results in School Certificate examinations, the National Council of Domestic Studies, Housecraft exams, piano, elocution and Royal Drawing Society exams. French, Biology and Literary Societies were flourishing, and the number of hens, pigs and bees cared for by the girls deserved the name of 'farm'. Some girls were helping to look after babies from bombed areas in a nursery opened in Arnside.

This year also the school again obtained Board of Education recognition, presumably having lost it since 1903.

The final links with the school's beginnings ended with the death of Miss Millie Bamford on December 31st 1942.

1945 saw a major change in the school's fortunes. Oakfield had outgrown all its buildings and no more nearby houses were available for purchase. Moreover it could not meet the requirements for continued recognition, so it was decided to move to Underley Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale, the home of Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, where the dormitories and classrooms could be under one roof.

This was a massive undertaking, only made possible by the strength and organising ability of Miss Birnie Rhind. New heating systems were installed, four miles of electric wiring replaced, bathrooms installed, rooms redecorated and five tennis courts made.

The Old Girls contributed money to equip a library as a memorial to Miss Bamford, and also as a War Memorial.

In July 1949 Miss Birnie Rhind retired and the school was taken over by the Church Society. Miss Ethel Randle was appointed Headmistress (the first time the ownership of the school had been separate from the Headship). She became a member of the Headmistresses' Conference, i.e. the school became an officially recognised Public School.

"In 1952 the building was taken over by the Church Society and extensive repairs, renovations and innovations were achieved, but the school continued to give stability and security in a rapidly changing world, by continuing to further the development of each child and to include a spirit of reverence for God and tolerance for mankind. All true education is based on a knowledge of God. This is the connecting link that holds together Oakfield Past and Present." (Miss Randle 1955)

In 1955 the school celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with a variety of activities and a rather unsuccessful appeal for money to build an Assembly Hall. Eventually such money as was raised was used to convert two rooms into one instead.

A recurring comment in Miss Randle's reports is the need for more girls to stay on into the sixth form. It sounds a very familiar cry.

1959 was a momentous year. The Church Society had recently acquired Luckley School in Wokingham and they decided to amalgamate the two schools. Oakfield had the larger and more beautiful buildings, but Luckley was nearer to London with its picture galleries, theatres and concerts. Miss Randle, her deputy Head Miss Denning and Miss Prosser (Matron) came down with 55 girls and a convoy of removal vans full of furniture.

In her final letter to Old Girls from Oakfield School, Miss Randle writes "I am sure you will realise that the welding of Oakfield and Luckley into Oakfield-Luckley is no light task and will call for much goodwill and tact on the part of both staff and pupils of both schools. I know that everyone is determined to make a success of it".

Inevitably there were problems, difficulties and some ill feeling, but Miss Randle achieved the almost impossible and welded the two schools into one corporate body.

Her task was perhaps made easier by the fact that both schools were based on Christian principles and had similar histories.

## LUCKLEY SCHOOL

In January 1918 Miss Bertha Drake and Miss Ivy Barratt, who had been friends and colleagues at Mortimer House, Bristol, opened a small school at Southlands House, Southlands Road, Wokingham, in response to an invitation from local residents.

They moved to Luckley House near the end of October, and founder pupils remember having a very long summer holiday while the building was made ready.

However, they decided to celebrate the school's Birthday on November 1st - All Saints Day - "because it is such a glorious festival, and we felt we should like our girls to think of it all their lives as a day of joy".

Later, in 1953, the name changed to 'Founders Day' to be celebrated within the octave of All Saints, not necessarily on All Saints Day itself.

Throughout Miss Drake's life the Birthday was always celebrated with candles, cake, a party - and a school holiday.

Several members of the Drake family were connected with the school. Miss Rose was Housekeeper, Miss Catharine Head of Junior School and Miss Elizabeth taught Art.

Like the Bamford family several years earlier in Arnside, the Drake family wished to provide a broad based education, based on Christian principles, to allow the girls to develop their full potential and to make their full contribution to the community after school days.

Miss Drake's methods were considered unusual at the time; the girls were given considerable freedom of

choice regarding work and activities, and discipline was expected to come from within, not be imposed by the system. The character of Miss Drake was such that nearly all the girls conformed and worked to the best of their ability.

Arts and Crafts were an important part of the curriculum, especially as Miss Elizabeth Drake was a noted artist. Some older girls came in just for Art and Craft instruction.

Miss Headington vividly remembers such lessons, and her brother Mr. Nigel Headington remembers a the dansant given at the school in his honour when he first left school. (Their parents were friends and advisors to Miss Drake.)

The girls certainly did develop as individuals. There is no typical "Luckley girl" and they went on to a wide range of occupations, with a wide range of interests and life styles. Some had to earn their own living and found enterprising ways of doing so; others went on to further education, especially in Art; others became debutantes, married young, stayed at home to look after their parents, or departed to foreign parts.

They were given a very broad general education and attended lectures and courses in Wokingham, as well as hearing talks from interesting people on a wide range of topics in school. There was a lot of self-entertainment, especially plays, concerts, dances, fancy dress competitions and debates. Holidays abroad must have been quite an adventure, and the old magazines describe a visit to Paris in April 1923, and one to Belgium in 1927.

Sport was naturally an important part of the curriculum. Lacrosse and netball were played in the winter and a hard

tennis court was made in the hope of improving the standard of tennis.

In January 1929 Miss Ivy Barratt left suddenly and inexplicably, and the partnership was dissolved in the following July, but Miss Barratt continued to visit the school for many years until ill health prevented her from travelling very far.

On September 21st 1928 Luckley Junior School was opened with twenty small boys and girls, in a house on the Finchampstead Road. A long strip of land across Luckley Road was also bought "to prevent small houses springing up near the school". Major Baker (whose daughters were pupils and who still live near) and Mrs. Glennie (whose grand-daughter, Mrs. Pat Hays, is now Treasurer to the Old Girls' Association) were connected with this and various other activities to help the school.

By 1930 numbers were up to 68, and a large hall was built at the Junior School to cope with the increase. The main event in the Summer term was an outdoor production of 'Toad of Toad Hall' - still vividly remembered by those who were either in it or watched it.

The following year 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was performed - surely an ambitious undertaking. It is interesting to compare this description of it from the school magazine with that of one of the fairies produced later in this booklet.

"The Luckley garden is of course the most perfect place imaginable to stage such a play; just the right number of big trees and thickets where they were wanted. And the production was very good indeed. The small part of Hippolyta was admirably played, and the lovers reacted fairly well to the pranks played on them.

But the feature of the play that will live for ever in one's memory was the dancing of the fairies, the most exquisite thing in stage-craft that I have ever seen; not merely dainty and rhythmical, but instinct with such joyous vivacity that it seemed as spontaneous and natural to the dancing forms as growth is to the growing flowers".

In 1934 central heating was installed (how did they manage without?) and - wonder of wonders - electricity! This "would open up the possibility of a wireless installation, which is very tempting now that Dr. Vaughan and other educationalists connected with the B.B.C. are doing so much for the schools". A radio was eventually purchased with the proceeds of the summer play. It was fixed in the Hall and provided the school with lectures, concerts and Sunday services.

School plays performed out of doors were a feature of the summer term between the wars. The weather seems always to have been sunny, the setting perfect and the performance unparalleled. Miss Gurney and Miss Ford were the Producers, and dancing was an important part of the production. I am sure everyone who took part or merely watched has very happy and amusing memories of these events. I wish there was room to print all the cast lists and reviews.

However in 1938 a new note creeps into the Annual Reports. "We are finishing our bomb-proof shelter which was begun during the week of the Crisis. Wokingham is in a reception area so we shall dig-in and not have to consider moving". Fortunately the school was not commandeered and the number of pupils remained at 66. The shelter was furnished with electric lamps, comfortable benches and a gramophone.

On a more optimistic note, Woodlands and a Science Room were erected on the lower lawns in response to demands by the Board of Education.

During the war activities were obviously curtailed, though numbers remained the same. The news from Old Girls proves that they were all contributing to the war effort in different ways, and had little time to write letters or visit Luckley.

By 1944 Miss Drake is making "plans for when the war ends". She writes that the war had interfered very little with school work. For a week, when the flying bombs began, the girls used to go to the shelter at night, but fortunately they found that they were outside the danger area. Her only complaint was about the shortage of books and the problems of obtaining more.

In 1943 Dr. Edith Summerskill M.P., whose daughter Shirley was a pupil, presented the prizes and certificates. She chose as her theme "The Good Ship Luckley".

After the war pupils past and present were being exhorted to win the peace; to provide leadership, courage, and faith and uphold the principles of the school. "How will you use your gifts and training for the good of your fellow creatures when you return to civilian life?" asks Miss Drake.

In 1947 the school became a Private Limited Company, thus ensuring its continuity. Mrs. Galloway became Vice-Principal and a fund was started to raise money for a swimming pool!

Russian was studied in the VI form and was considered an important language for a few years. Academic standards were high and several girls went to Oxford or Cambridge.

Annual plays were again performed under the direction of Miss Hope, and a trip to Paris was organised in 1947. Visits to theatres, exhibitions and concerts became as numerous as ever and the weekly musical concerts at Wellington College were well attended.

News from Old Girls fills several pages of the magazines and makes fascinating reading, especially when the same names crop up over forty years with news of holidays, weddings, life in foreign parts, children and grandchildren.

In 1950 Miss Drake underwent hip transplant operations. She had suffered from osteo-arthritis since 1944 and had been in constant pain. She only taught small tutorial groups and Mrs. Galloway was acting Head, but she still retained overall control and kept in contact with all the old girls. The Annual Reunions in June or July continued to flourish with over forty 'girls' present each year.

In 1946 Mrs. Vera Inman arrived at Luckley to teach mathematics. She stayed for 21 years, and her article in the 1967 magazine describes most vividly the fortunes of the school during those years. It was a time of dramatic change; the end of Luckley with the death of Miss Drake and the beginning of Luckley-Oakfield.

#### "I Remember

Looking back over 21 years at Luckley

January 1946 - the war was over, but not rationing of food or clothes. How thankful we were to be living at peace. Wokingham had suffered but little, though London and other parts of the South East were badly blitzed. To have brought four children, then of ages ranging from 18 to 11, safely through was a cause of great thankfulness. Mrs. Galloway had been at the school for one term, Miss Evans was not yet known till the following September. Miss Drake could happily walk up the front staircase hung with

Miss Elizabeth's pictures, who was now living in a small house close by. Miss Catharine Drake was head of the Junior School, and Miss Cornish and Miss Callender arrived from London at the beginning of the week and stayed till the end. Music flowed from Miss Cornish's hands, and Miss Callender, whose brother started the Naval Museum at Greenwich, taught English. Mr. Verney taught Art and Miss Ford her dancing, and Miss Evelyn Hope arrived at that time, having evacuated from London to teach Elocution.

We used as Assembly Hall, Gymnasium and Dining Room an old hut of the 1914-18 war which was still standing, and stood for much longer! Miss Monk taught Gym. and Games, Mrs. Wrightson was Bursar and Matron was Miss Thomas.

Luckley was founded on All Saint's Day, November 1st, which was always the School Birthday, and on whichever day it fell in my early days there was always a lovely party with the appropriate number of candles, 27 my first time for Luckley was founded in 1918. A wonderful tea was spread and arranged by the Staff for the children in the Gym. on trestle tables lining three sides, with Miss Drake at the high table, and the girls filed in in pairs, beginning with the most senior who brought in the most junior new girl, and so on. They processed to the high table, bowed to Miss Drake and filed round to fill up the tables laden with food. It was said on one occasion that one child ate 19 cakes - there was a kind of competition among them!! On Shrove Tuesday there would always be a Fancy Dress Party, the juniors in the present Upper III Form, the seniors later in the Gym.

Time passed - Miss Callender had given up and was, after a brief interval, succeeded by Miss Howe, whose friend Miss Reynolds joined Luckley to help in the junior part of the School. Miss Catherine Drake had by now retired, and lived first at Farnham and then at Chetwode Rest Home, Wokingham, where she still is, as interested as ever in Luckley Old Girls and everything that goes on

around her. Still in the early days, a Swimming Pool was mooted. For a long time there remained only a hole that Mrs. Galloway had had dug - Galloway's Folly as it became known - for she herself christened it so! Then a parent, Mr. Axworthy, suggested a Dance, and with his help and that of a large Committee consisting of other parents, Old Girls, Reading and Wokingham people, I organised a Dance at California, attended by some 300 guests, most of whom danced to Tommy Kinsman's Band from 9 p.m. till 2 a.m. - a band most celebrated among debutantes of those days. Tommy Kinsman himself being there in person - an amazing gesture out of London. Tickets were bought, gifts for raffles poured in, and donations galore. Twenty seniors were to be allowed to go, and Miss Drake herself and Mrs. Galloway wished to be present. It was on a date in October 1957, just when Asian Flu was sweeping the country. I succumbed and had two or three days in bed getting on with the quantity of clerical work involved. Wellington College went down, as did Bradfield. The Luckley girls' partners were to have come from these schools, but in the end I had to find 20 partners individually, and the first Luckley girl had Asian Flu the next day!

My youngest son, Stephen, M.C'd the dance, two of my three others were also there, and of course my husband, many Old Girls, friends and parents. I had not told Miss Drake that there was a large flight of stone steps to ascend to reach the Dance Hall, but her wheel chair was placed at the bottom of the stairs (for she was by now an invalid unable to tackle stairs or much walking) and two of my sons just picked up the chair and carried her upstairs in it, much to her great amusement. A very happy evening followed and a clear profit of £225 was made. Since then a lovely pool has become a reality, much used and enjoyed by the girls, but never more so than in my last Summer Term of 1967.

I remember French Mamselles, Mlle. Appelle, Mlle. Galtier, with whom I still correspond, a wonderful production long ago of 'The Farmer's Wife by Miss Evelyn Hope, hot Speech Days in the old Gym, and so on.

In Spring 1959 Miss Drake gave Luckley to the Church Society, and a few weeks later she died, knowing that her beloved School was in safe hands, to be carried on in the way that it had begun. Mrs. Galloway, Mrs. Wrightson and Miss Thomas retired in July, and Miss Randle, Miss Denning and Miss Prosser came down from Kirkby Lonsdale with some 50 boarders from Oakfield, and Mr. Carr was appointed Chaplain of the new Luckley-Oakfield School, the girls still attending All Saints' Church. Miss Evans and Miss Cornish remained another year to help with the changeover, retiring in 1960.

Several new classrooms were built and a splendid laboratory, and the lovely house used only for dormitories and Common Room. Then one day began the building of the beautiful new Hall, incorporating a Memorial Doorway to Miss Drake and Miss Barratt, her co-founder, and including Miss Gurney, the music mistress from the school's beginning till Miss Cornish took over. Life was much easier then, for the old army hut was used as a dining room only. So they began to build over and around us till we had to be moved for the final stages of the completion of a much needed new Dining Hall block, comprising new classrooms, staff bedrooms and dormitories, formally opened on Speech Day 1966. Covered ways were built, so no longer necessitating the tedious changing of shoes between buildings, and Luckley Grange was sold.

I remember Miss Evelyn Hope's second production of 'The Farmer's Wife' to open the new Hall, this time on the lovely new stage, her production of 'The Late Miss Cordell', my own Folk Dancing at garden parties, and Hand Bells at Nine Carols Services, since replaced by a Nativity Play,

produced by Mrs. Finney and Miss Howe, with 'Papageno' and lastly 'The Mikado' by Miss Rowe and Miss Howe at the end of this Summer Term, achieving ever greater success and so bringing us up to date.

Since 1959 the fawn and brown of the Luckley uniform mingles with the lovely blue of Oakfield, and wishing to perpetuate Miss Drake's name, I suggested that the Bands became Houses of which one should be Drake House. Miss Randle readily agreed and said "We'll have Admirals" and now the girls belong to Beatty, Drake, Jellicoe or Nelson House, keenly competing for a wonderful house outing each term. On my leaving, Miss Randle kindly said I had loved and served Luckley (the school motto) and truly I shall leave a little bit of my heart always there, for it has been, and still is, a great school, and I leave it with lovely new buildings, numbers flourishing, some girls coming from every part of the globe, successes increasing in every sphere of activity from delightful girls in the hands of a most devoted Staff under Miss Randle's inspiring leadership." (Vera Inman 1967).

### LUCKLEY - OAKFIELD

Miss Randle's memories also cover these years. Her account of the move from Oakfield makes the whole affair seem a simple and straightforward business, but those who were there, or who have heard her talk of it know that it was a marathon task, only accomplished by Miss Randle's ability to move with the speed of sound between Oakfield and Luckley so that she was able to assist with the unloading of one convoy of vans and get back up to Oakfield to arrange the rest of the loading. For most of us, moving house with one or two vans is traumatic enough.

Miss Randle remembers :-

"In 1949 Miss Birnie Rhind retired and I took over Oakfield School at Kirkby Lonsdale. Underley Hall was a delightful house and there were endless opportunities for outdoor activities, but as the years went by the need for accessible theatres, art exhibitions etc. was a growing one. In 1959 Miss Bertha Drake, the founder of Luckley offered her school to the Church Society, the owners of Oakfield, and it was decided to combine Oakfield and Luckley.

In September 1959 the great move to Wokingham in Berkshire was undertaken. The removal firm estimated that there would be thirteen van loads to move. When I was sure we had already received fourteen or more and it was impossible to cross the old Luckley Gym, which was stacked with desks, chairs, tables, beds and books, I went back to Kirkby Lonsdale and reduced the rest to one load.

I was determined that we should open on the date advertised and the few of us there - Matron Prosser, two Swiss au-pair girls and I - worked like blacks to be ready. Luckily the weather was glorious and we always had tea in the garden before starting on our evening work.

The opening day went off very well. I had brought 55 boarders with me and there were about 35 Luckleyans. We had to turn all the downstairs rooms in the house into dormitories and build on additional lavatories and bathrooms, as well as putting up temporary classrooms.

The next day when the day girls arrived we seemed to have far too many pupils! Gradually they all settled down and it was not too long before all the rivalries were forgotten and we became one school.

Early in the term Miss Denning and I took some of the northern contingent to London, and what a day we had; visiting Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. We walked across St. James' Park to see Buckingham Palace and then went to a theatre at night. There was great scope for extra curricular activities, and I was lucky to have staff who enjoyed taking the girls out.

At Kirkby Lonsdale we had swum in a natural pool in the River Lune in our own grounds. We found the Luckley swimming pool much warmer - and free from eels!

One of the days I shall never forget was the day when Twinkle, my cat, was missing. Several of the girls came to tell me that there was a lot of black and white fur on the lawn. My heart sank because I knew there were foxes in the wood and that at night they often came to our dustbins.

So as soon as I could slip out I went to call him, but there was no sign of him anywhere. I went out many times that morning and every time I went out there were girls wandering about. It was always perfectly legitimate; it was a prep period, or Miss X had said I could come, or it was a practice time - and of course they had all promised to make up the work. It was quite amazing how many had a free period, and I thought that if an Inspector had dropped in, it would have been more than difficult to explain!

After lunch his Lordship - Twinkle - bounded in through the study window, tail erect and wanting his dinner. Twinkle was a great character and kept himself to himself. However, he soon discovered Chef and appreciated him as much as the rest of us."

The only really sad thing about these years of change is the decline in the Luckley Old Girls' Association. Instead of both Old Girls' Associations amalgamating, the Luckley one remained as a separate organisation and all the Luckley-Oakfield girls became part of the Oakfield Old Girls' Association.

This was obviously not an ideal arrangement as the Luckley O.G.s were not transfused with new blood each year, and the Oakfield O.G.s had little interest in Luckley School and naturally preferred to continue meeting in the North. Furthermore, the guiding light and mainspring of the Luckley Old Girls' Association was lost with the death of Miss Drake. Mrs. Galloway fought a valiant battle to keep the movement alive, but with dwindling money and resources the numbers fell. Old Girls' Reunions in London and Luckley were down to single figures in 1967. News from old girls was sparse and less interesting than formerly. Perhaps all our lives have become duller in recent years.

The Harrogate Reunions continued to thrive, and I believe they still meet regularly.

In 1969 Miss Randle retired after twenty years of service to the school as Headmistress, and the break with the past and the old traditions seemed complete. Miss Howe and Miss Denning retired at the same time.

The choice of new Headmistress was not a happy or successful one - following in the steps of Miss Bamford, Miss Birnie Rhind, Miss Drake and Miss Randle must have been a very daunting task. For a while the school seemed to lose its sense of purpose and direction, the changeover

of staff was high, and academic standards were not maintained.

Fortunately Matron Prosser was still around to give the boarders a sense of security with her unique brand of strong discipline and tender loving care. Neither germs nor naughty girls stood a chance. She worked selflessly and tirelessly; and her radar eyes missed nothing!

Then in 1970 Miss Howe came back as temporary Head, to be followed by Miss Rosemary Cooper in 1971, who set the school on its feet again, ably assisted by Miss Connie Hunter (now Mrs. Watson).

Unfortunately Miss Cooper resigned for domestic reasons in 1973 and Miss W.M. Cornish took over the reins. Under her direction the school has grown from strength to strength. In 1975 an Entrance Examination was introduced and the numbers taking it have more than doubled.

The Junior School was gradually phased out in the early 50's to allow room for the Senior School to expand, but the problems of replacing Woodlands and the old laboratories became acute. The maintenance staff waged a constant battle against squirrels, frost, broken water pipes, and decay. Laboratory space was crowded and opportunities for experimental work limited. Dark corridors were enlivened with attractive colourful work from the Art department, but remained dingy nevertheless.

However, in proof of the fact that the quality of the teaching is more important than buildings, academic standards began to rise again.

The Governors decided to sell another slice of land for building to raise money for a new teaching block, and eventually 11 acres of scrubland was sold. Happy hours

were spent planning grandiose schemes, and in September 1978 the dreams materialized, and Coggan House came into use. It was formally opened by Mrs. Jean Coggan, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, on October 27th 1978 - just sixty years after Miss Drake first opened her school at Luckley.

Coggan House has three laboratories, Cookery, Needlework, English, Geography, Mathematics and Art rooms, together with a small sixth form block. It is built in traditional style, with warm red bricks fitting in well with the older buildings, and making an attractive quadrangle waiting to be filled with colourful shrubs and flowers.

We think Miss Drake would be proud of her heritage. The School still attempts to develop the individual talents of the girls - not produce copies in a plastic mould. Art and Music still have an important place in school life. Visits to theatres, concerts, exhibitions, museums, zoos; talks and demonstrations at school and social links with other schools are as numerous and varied as ever.

The four Admirals still fight for supremacy on the Sports Field and to win the House Outing; considerable sums of money are raised for a variety of worthy causes, by a variety of ingenious means; and the sixth form still drink innumerable cups of coffee (though they introduced a modern note last year by inviting the Staff to sherry and Christmas cake!) In between all these activities, normal lessons continue, examinations are passed, and girls are prepared for future careers.

The aim of the school is to train girls not only to find worthwhile employment in this silicon chip era, but also to find joy and fulfilment in a rewarding use of the increased leisure time that is expected in future.

## THE SCHOOL CREST

I was asked to design a school crest to be situated above the entrance doors to the first phase of the new buildings.

This seemed to me to be a good idea, but the site did not suggest a crest of any size or importance. To the right of the doors was a plain brick wall giving much more scope and allowing the crest to be integrated with the design of the porch way. A stylised painting on a wooden board was decided upon, in the style of the memorial hatchments which can still be seen in some old churches. The colours - black, white, blue, olive green and gold. Basing the components of the design upon heraldry, I built around the shield and scroll basic to the school - acorns for Oakfield on an azure ground, with the motto AMARE ET ADJUVARE - 'To Love and to Serve'. Instead of heraldic lions to support the shield I used two magpies.

I have been at Luckley-Oakfield for ten years and there has always been a pair of magpies in the tall trees on the front lawns. There are several omens associated with the magpie, said to be the only bird which refused to enter the Ark, preferring to perch on the roof. It can be unlucky, depending on how many you see. The Germans say one is unlucky, two denotes merriment or a marriage, three a successful journey, four good news, and five company. The Scots put this into a little rhyme:-

"One means anger, two brings mirth,  
Three a wedding, four a birth,  
Five is heaven, six is hell,  
But seven's the Devil's ain sell"

If a magpie perches on your roof then it is a sign that your building will never fall down! It is best to treat the bird with respect. In some parts of Britain country folk take their hats off to the magpie as he passes, and give a little bow. I have tried to make the birds look alert, and to bring out the strong black and white pattern of their plumage.

The oak tree symbolises Oakfield, and also the growth of knowledge - 'Great trees from little acorns grow'. The book symbolises learning - the magic of the written word including the Bible, associated in this case with a Cross symbolising the religious foundation of the school.

May you always remember it with affection.

Jean Richards  
1979

A.F.L.O.S.

The Association of Friends of Luckley-Oakfield School was founded in 1974 under the guidance of Lt. Col. John Moore, the leader of the British Skiing Marathon team and father of Alison, who has also represented Britain in skiing competitions.

It is now a flourishing organisation holding regular social gatherings and money making activities. A Thrift Shop selling second-hand uniform is one of their most successful ventures. A Sponsored Walk and a large Fete also brought in quite a lot of money which has been spent on buying several items of equipment for the school. The latest gift is a much needed video tape recorder which is widely used; and next on the list is a computer so that computer studies can be part of the syllabus.

The Association is open to all those who consider themselves to be "Friends of Luckley-Oakfield".

### LUCKLEY-OAKFIELD OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION.

For several years, many people had expressed regret that there was no Old Girls Association. Both the Luckley and the Luckley branch of the Oakfield and Luckley - Oakfield Organisations had ceased to function.

In 1977 with the Diamond Jubilee of Luckley approaching, a small committee was set up to form a new organisation open to all Old Girls regardless of which school they had attended.

Advertisements were placed in The Telegraph on St. Valentine's Day asking anyone interested to contact the school, and an inaugural tea party was held at the school during the Easter Holidays.

Its success was almost entirely due to the superhuman efforts of Hilary White (nee Brown) whose telephone must have been red hot by the time she had telephoned every Old Girl she could trace.

The following year a luncheon party and A.G.M. was held at the school and the Association is now well established and ready to become more active. Plans are afoot for hockey matches, tennis matches and, of course, an Annual Reunion.

The first annual news letter was distributed in 1978. Obviously the great success of the "News from Old Girls" section in the old magazines was because people enjoyed writing to their old friend. There is less incentive to write to an organization, but everyone enjoys hearing about old friends and colleagues and the news letter is an excellent way of keeping in touch with, or rediscovering old friends.

## PEOPLE

### MISS BAMFORD

Of her friendship for the old girls I can hardly begin to write. Each one stood out as a personality, and her memory for little human details never failed. After thirty years she would still ask after the relatives we used to tell her about at dinner! I remember her love of young animals and anything small that grew.

We have always exchanged Christmas cards, and her's generally had a tiny bird or some other little creature in it.

She was intensely interested in life. The more adventurous her old girls, the more they pleased her. She loved to hear about exciting occupations that were alien to her own inclination.

Christine Scott  
Oakfield School Magazine 1943



MISS GLADYS NOEL BIRNIE-RHIND

Miss Gladys Noel Birnie Rhind was a fine figure of a woman, well cut tweeds with matching twinsets from the mills; pearl necklace - real; dangling ear-rings with fascinating oriental stones on the ends, a diamond watch on a lovely wrist that accentuated the hand in command; a strong pair of legs supported by high quality brogues, each flanked on its lateral border by a well groomed Sealyham, Solomon and Simon.

Her gait was pronounced, feet were always averted; hair was light brown, parted in the middle, falling on either side into two symmetrical waves which met up in a neat little bun at the nape of the neck. She did smile, she did have a sense of humour, although not compatible with mine. I never felt she had ever been a little girl and was quite sure she had miraculously escaped all the traumatic experiences of adolescence. I often wondered if she had the capacity to cry, or any other uninhibited emotions.

She did eat sweets - Elizabeth Shaw chocolates ordered from Harrods (we lived in the outback) and she did smoke Turkish cigarettes and drink the odd sherry. The Turkish brand were much to our advantage; the characteristic aroma travelled far and fast, giving ample opportunity for a speedy retreat. She was a Scots woman with a touch of the 'Miss Jean Brodie'.

Olive Scorer  
Oakfield

### MISS BERTHA DRAKE

Miss Drake was thirty-nine years old when she started Luckley School in 1918. She was already decidedly deaf and usually wore an odd shaped hearing device round her head. In later years this was exchanged for an ear trumpet!

She was obviously a kind and loving person, who inspired both affection and loyalty in pupils and staff. The younger girls found her rather awe-inspiring, but the older ones enjoyed her company. She was a truly cultivated woman, well read and interested in the Arts, Music and Travel, who did her best to kindle similar interests in her pupils.

Several girls stayed at school during the holidays, usually because their parents were abroad, and discovered that she could be a delightful companion. In spite of her deafness, she had the gift of reading aloud in a way that captivated her listeners. Even in old age, when she was stone deaf and crippled with arthritis, she remained a very vital person, interested in everybody and everything.

In her later years she was almost constantly in pain, but she never complained, or became demanding and irritable, and she continued to keep in touch with all her old girls as well as the ones still at Luckley.

On at least one occasion she fell during the night and waited and prayed silently until morning when she was found and lifted up again. A local physiotherapist describes her great courage and indomitable will, and remembers the difficulty of treating her knees and feet and shouting into the ear trumpet at the same time!

Pupils vividly remember shouting their Scripture homework into her ear trumpet on Monday mornings. Others recall the rather tuneless hum, which was a sign she was

in particularly severe pain. Another memory is of Miss Drake sitting in her wheel chair at the bottom of the main stairs, inspecting the girls before they went out to a Dance - to see if their dress was seemly and fitting for young ladies!

She was a deeply religious woman, who handed on her faith to all who talked to her.

In 1946, when she was sixty seven years old, she appointed Mrs. Galloway Vice Principal, and Mrs. Galloway slowly took over the complete running of the school, becoming Co-Principal in 1952.

In 1947 Miss Drake formed a private limited company (Luckley School Ltd.) so that the future of the school was assured, and then shortly before her death in 1959 she gave her shares to the Church Society.

She built the school on firm foundations and the 'rock of faith', which has carried it through the squalls and storms into the security of its position today.

### MISS ELIZABETH DRAKE

Miss Elizabeth was full of life and energy. She taught Art at Luckley in the early days and later as a practising artist spent a great deal of time in South Africa, coming back to this country from time to time to see old friends, visit the school, and arrange exhibitions. She was born in 1867 so was 51 when the school opened. Within five years she was in Africa. She was always referred to as 'the young pretty one' but was actually eight years older than Miss Bertha.

Elizabeth Drake is listed in the Dictionary of British Artists as follows:-

"Painter, miniaturist, lithographer and teacher. Studied Rochester and Westminster Art Schools and Colarossis Paris. Travelled in South Africa. Address Rochester Kent 1897, London 1904, Bristol 1909. Exhibited Royal Society of Artists Birmingham, Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, Royal Institute Painters in Watercolour, Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour"

In the 1923 Luckley magazine appears this account:-

"Miss Elizabeth has returned from her year's visit to S. Africa, and we are delighted to have her amongst us again in such splendid health and spirits, and after so successful a trip. She held an exhibition of her work at Ashbeys Galleries in Cape Town last March. It was opened by Lady Bentinck, and Prince Arthur of Connaught visited it. Miss Elizabeth is holding an exhibition in her new rooms at 'Farnleigh' Wokingham (near the station) during the last four days of term, but we shall not see all her S. African pictures for many of them were sold at the Cape, one even while it was being painted." Extracts from the Colonial papers will interest Luckleyans.

The Cape Argus said "Elizabeth Drake is both artist and craftsman. She has the quick imagination, delicate perception and outlook of the former; the love of detail and reverent worship of technique of the latter. Miss Drake works in watercolour and pastel. In delicate pencil she shows exquisite sketches of the beauties of architecture - old doors, gateways, a cottage facade, a crypt, a pillared portico or a corner of some oak-floored, oak-beamed room so one can sense the worn foot-places on the floor and the mouldy scent of the wainscot. In colour she loves to store up memories of grey stone, mellowed brick and deep timber. She has many English street scenes - glimpses of Cathedral spires above tiled roofs, quiet streets with crooked houses, bulgy windows - all reflecting the soft atmosphere of England. When she turns her brush to South African subjects, she is as successful - a warm glow replaces the damp softness of the atmosphere, deep well marked shadows replace the soft merging from light to shade."

The Cape Times - "The charm of Miss Drake's work lies in quiet restfulness. Her work is firm, crisp and clear, and her drawing admirable. Her pencil drawings are all that pencil drawings should be - firm, decisive, but with the delicacy of silver point work."

She obviously appealed to the nostalgia for the old country, and to the pride of achievement in the buildings and gardens of the new.

In the 1925 magazine is noted "We should like to congratulate Miss Elizabeth on her successful exhibition in London, at which Queen Mary showed her appreciation by purchasing another (that makes the fifth) S. African garden". And in 1927 "Miss Elizabeth held successful exhibitions in Capetown, Grahamstown, Johannesburg and Pretoria, where she sold a picture of the Union building to Princess Alice. She has travelled in Rhodesia, her description of the Victoria Falls has made us realize something of the stupendous

magnificence of this great natural phenomenon and we are longing to see her pictures of it. She is returning on the 'Windsor Castle' and hopes to be in England in April".

Entries in the Luckley magazines from that time onwards make reference to her trips to and from S. Africa, and of the many successful exhibitions she held. She appears to have stayed in S. Africa during the war years, and in 1948 Miss Catherine spent the summer holidays with her.

The last entry in the magazine was in 1955 - "Miss Elizabeth Drake died on January 20th 1954 at the Southsea house at which she had spent the last two years of her life. She was 87, but full of the keenest interest in her many friends and former pupils, to whom she was writing letters till the last days of her life".

Her friends speak of her freshness and charm, of her personality and tremendous zest for life; her pupils write of the fun they had in her classes and sketching expeditions, and what a privilege it was to have some of her water colours hanging in the classrooms. A few of her lovely pictures are still here, as Elizabeth left them to us.

Jean Richards  
Luckley-Oakfield 1979

- - - - -

Several other members of the Drake family were associated with the school at various times. Miss Edna taught for a short time before going to New Zealand and getting married out there, Miss Rosa was Housekeeper for some time until 1924, and Miss Catherine was Head of Junior House from 1929 until 1952, when she retired and went to live at Farnham.

## MISS IVY BARRATT

Miss Ivy Barratt was a colleague of Miss Drake at Mortimer House and together they started Luckley School at Wokingham. It was obviously a happy arrangement for a few years, but she left the school suddenly in 1928 and the partnership was dissolved. However, she remained a close friend to both Miss Drake and the school, and paid frequent visits until her death in 1957.

Frances Bellerby had been a pupil at Mortimer House, Bristol, and came to Luckley as a very junior member of staff together with Cicely Parsons, who was under matron to Miss Rosa.

In a moving obituary to Miss Barratt, Frances Bellerby writes "In that happy, barrierless community, Miss Barratt, I remember was often surrounded by 'little ones', small children immediately felt at home with her, pleased by that orderly precision which was an expression (never a restriction) of her essential warm sympathy and detailed interest. Not only small children; I recall my own faint surprise that anyone quite so keen on tidying-up (strewn handkerchiefs had no chance whatever with I.B. on the quiet march) should be so incredibly easy, and such fun, to talk to.

The lovely sympathy between I.B. and animals was significant in that gentle, strong welcoming nature. Whenever she stayed with me, my animals were glad. Even my most reserved and private cat lavished.

Luckley Magazine  
1957

### MISS EVELYN HOPE

Miss Hope taught elocution at Luckley-Oakfield from her evacuation to Wokingham during the war, until three months before her death.

Miss Hope learned her art at Sir Frank Benson's famous school, graduating to Mr. Oscar Ashe's management, with which she stayed for two years.

Sir Lewis Casson then engaged her for his Horniman's Manchester company, and she came with it to London, making her first West End success in the name part of Frank Stayton's play 'The Joan Danvers'. She stayed in the same theatre, 'The Duke of York's', to play Sally McBride in 'Daddy Longlegs', which ran for over a year.

From then onwards she played many parts in some of the best known West End productions. She played the title role in 'The Farmer's Wife' during the whole of its three year run in London. She acted with Sir Ralph Richardson and Herbert Lomas in 'Under the Table', a one-act play written by her husband, Mr. C.G. Magnus. She played in pantomime. She was the Fairy Godmother in 'Cinderella' at the Aldwych Theatre under Sir Joseph Beecham's management.

During the war she came to Wokingham, when her London house became untenable and she decided to leave the stage and devote herself to teaching dramatic art. In this she was most successful and inspired in her pupils a real love of the theatre.

At Luckley-Oakfield she has produced 'The Farmer's Wife', 'The Late Miss Cordell' and recitals by her pupils of extracts ranging from Shakespeare to modern plays. She was an actress to the end, and ten days before her

death she came to Mrs. Irman's party and was full of fun and quite her old self.

I know that she will be remembered with affection by her colleagues and many generations of old girls.

Luckley Magazine  
1967

- - - - -

MRS. GALLOWAY

Mrs. Galloway, B.A.Hons (Manchester) came to Luckley as a part-time teacher of French sometime before 1945, for in that year she started to work full time. Miss Drake thought very highly of her, and was perhaps a little in awe of her academic record. In 1946 she was made Vice Principal and eventually Co-Principal in 1952, though she seems always to have been overshadowed by Miss Drake, and left soon after her death.

She kept the Old Girls' Association going for several years, and is still always delighted to hear from past pupils.

## MISS M. CORNISH

During the war the music teacher came back to Luckley with a rather unusual habit. She drank several glasses of water at every meal, and was never without a glass beside her, either on her desk or near the piano.

Eventually the girls learnt her story. Early in the war it was decided to send a boat load of children to America and Canada, away from the bombing and possible invasion. Obviously they would need escorts and Miss Cornish volunteered; she was placed in charge of twelve small girls on the s.s. 'City of Benares'. All went well to begin with until the convoy was attacked by submarines, and Miss Cornish's ship was holed and sank. She helped to rescue children from the debris and then was directed into a lifeboat with several small boys and forbidden to try to find her own girls.

Then began the most terrible ordeal. The boat was over-crowded with the small boys, four British sailors, three other male passengers and about forty Lascar seamen. There was no room to lie down and very little cover. Sanitary arrangements consisted of a bucket, which had to be used for baling most of the time, and there was no possibility of any privacy. The children became ill and exhausted, and Mary Cornish's mouth dry and cracked through lack of water. In spite of this, she spent many hours every day telling stories to the children and keeping alive their will to live. She massaged their legs and arms to keep the circulation going. They all wore light clothing and were bitterly cold.

On the eighth day they were sighted by a destroyer and rescued. For her courage and fortitude under appalling conditions she was awarded the B.E.M.

Apart from this one life boat, only a handful of people were saved. It was a terrible disaster, and no more children were evacuated across the Atlantic in this way.

Elsbeth Huxley wrote a book about her, called 'Atlantic Ordeal - The Story of Mary Cornish', the proceeds of which went to the King George's Fund for Sailors. Her name is still remembered in Jersey, suprisingly, and she has an honoured place in the museum there.

Whether her need for a constant source of water near her was psychological or the result of damage to her kidneys is hard to say.

- - - - -

#### MISS FORD

Surely every woman who reads this - and probably some men too - were given dancing lessons at some time or other in their childhood by the redoubtable Miss Ford.

She was teaching at Luckley in 1923, perhaps even earlier, and was still going strong in Wokingham up to a few years ago, running Keep-Fit classes as well as taking dancing classes in schools.

Regrettably, she is now completely crippled with arthritis and has had to move to a nursing home in the West Country.

She was an excellent teacher and choreographer, and managed to turn the most awkward of ugly ducklings into comparatively graceful swans. Did she always whistle softly through her teeth when dealing with a particularly unco-ordinated pupil with two left feet?

I am sure many of you must have affectionate and amusing memories of her lessons. It was certainly a privilege to know her.

## SHANKS

An important addition to the life of the School is Shanks - Major Cruikshank-Drake. He is an Airedale, and quite a gentleman. Young as he is (his paw-mark in the birthday book says he will not be two until the end of April) he is learning some valuable lessons and showing many aptitudes. He knows now that one may not eat the improving covers of a 'North and Hillard' nor of a St. Luke during school prayers; and that all those who come into the drawing room are friends and may be ignored without fear that they will injure his mistress. He has found too that one's nose may not investigate a table top at meals in the Gym, but that it may poke without rebuff into any hands that lie on laps under the table. He thinks us a bit unsporting in the matter of lacrosse balls.

Luckley Magazine  
1929

- - - - -

## SIMON

My name is Simon. I am a small white Highland Terrier, the latest in a long line of animals who have ruled at Luckley-Oakfield. It is not a bad place to live, Chef sends up reasonable meals at regular intervals, I have a warm cosy chair to curl up on in Matron's flat, and I am regularly taken out for a good run round the hockey pitch.

I am a good watch dog with a noisy and persistent bark if I sight foreigners or need attention, and a few carefully placed nips with my excellent teeth soon earned me the respect I deserve. The thing I enjoy most, though, is escaping off on my own. I have a good run in the woods, chase any rabbits or squirrels who cut across my path and have a chat with the foxes (although they are not very friendly!) You should hear all the shouting and calling that goes on until I take pity on the searchers and trot back for a meal and a rest.

## P L A C E S

### ARNSIDE

The view from the dormitory window stretched over treetops, across the Kent estuary to Grange-over-Sands and on to Cartmell Fell.

The tide ebbed and flowed, sometimes the vicious bore wave rolled continuously over damp quick sands like an endless, unfurling rug. Terrible tales were told at night about its sinister force. There were exciting walks, a smugglers' cave, climbs up the Knott where you could see the Lake District peaks on a clear day. The flora was a botanist's paradise. Did I or my contemporaries really appreciate the scene? I doubt it; we were all too busy finding our feet, holding our own, deliberately getting into trouble for the satisfaction of getting out undetected, or seeing how far we could tantalize the teachers.

Olive Scorer  
Oakfield

- - - - -

### FAREWELL TO ARNSIDE

It was with mixed feelings that we received the news of our removal to Kirkby Lonsdale. We were all thrilled at the thought of moving to a place where there would be parks, beautiful grounds, swimming, skating and all kinds of new amusements.

But after the excitement had subsided we felt very sorry at the thought of leaving Arnside, where so many happy hours had been spent - the beautiful country - the lovely walks - the estuary.

We remembered the many pleasant sunny afternoons we had spent rambling through the woods or along the shore, the hours we had spent working in our form rooms, the evenings when in the sitting room enjoying ourselves, or in the Domestic House doing returned work, the minutes we had passed in the beautiful chapel with the sun streaming through the open windows. We thought of Haslemere where we used to have our lessons, and of Oakfield, and evenings in the drawing room.

Never again would we wake on a clear Spring morning to see the estuary sparkling in the early morning sun, the green hills beyond partially covered with purple heather.

We remembered the plays we had performed in the garden at Speech Day on a hot June afternoon, the concerts, and the lectures we had, the happy summer afternoons we had spent in the field playing tennis or sitting in the garden. Here in these pleasant surroundings we have spent some of the happiest parts of our lives.

Elizabeth Hodgson & Rosemary Wright  
Oakfield School Magazine 1945

Ed. Note: Rosemary Wright became a noted pianist. She won several prizes and awards, including a diploma at an International Piano Competition in Munich.

## UNDERLEY HALL, KIRKBY LONSDALE

In 1945 Birnie took a monumental step. She moved her school to Underley Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale. It was most ambitious and only a woman with courage and aptitude for administration would have embarked on such a venture. The first announcement caused great excitement, surpassed only by that which we experienced when we made our first entry into the stately home. It was set in grounds where rhododendrons and azaleas flourished.

From the front door you could look across parkland where finely bred horses grazed at leisure. At the rear, behind stables and coaching houses flowed the river Lune. Gone was the view of the sea and sand, but this setting was of equal beauty. When I look at old photographs I can never quite believe that a small part of my life was lived in such a place. Worst of all, I took it all for granted.

First exploration provoked great laughter. A large bathroom decorated with vivid wall paper - embossed Jacobean flowers interspersed by strutting peacocks. Another had a sunken marble bath surrounded by ornate tiles. Naked bodies took delight in sliding across wet tiles and diving in - or being pushed in. Needless to say, the bath was soon removed.

It was a sad day when plumbers removed the most regal toilet I have ever had the privilege to sit upon. It was the size of a kitchenette, papered in an outrageous shade of purple. At one end two stairs led to the magnificent throne, pure porcelain, decorated within and without in willow pattern. Many an hour I spent day-dreaming in that room, and then to come down to earth when I pulled a handle up from the floor and was flushed back to reality.

Olive Scorer  
Oakfield

## KIRKBY LONSDALE

We came to Underley at the beginning of October. It was twilight, and as the charabanc twisted along the drive we could discern, dimly, on one side green fields in which grazed numerous sheep, and on the other a mass of tangled shrubs and undergrowth. As we rounded the last corner we saw the Hall itself, a huge black shape merging into the surrounding darkness.

On entering we saw first the outer hall packed with innumerable trunks, and after we had made sure that our own were there, we wandered off to find our dormitories. At first the corridors seemed to form a labyrinth and we were always turning back finding we had taken the wrong way, but after a little while we soon woke out of this nightmare and could find our way around quite easily; when this happened the house seemed literally to decrease in size and become more compact.

One of the main attractions was the tower, we climbed up this to look at the glorious view of the surrounding country with its background of hills, the river gurgling down below us, and to look at the marvellous autumn colourings of the leaves. I think the trees were the most unearthly things I have ever seen; their colourings were fantastic, in the sense that if an artist had painted such a picture, the brilliant colourings would have been said to be unknown to Nature's spectrum.

How thrilling it was on the following morning to explore the house with all its nooks and crannies; to look over the grounds, and visit the games field; to find our form rooms - big bright rooms.

Then on Sunday we went for the first time to church in Kirkby Lonsdale. Its sombre beauty and stillness, which seemed however to be filled with voices of days gone by, were very awe-inspiring.

Pat Morris  
Oakfield School Magazine  
1946

## LUCKLEY HOUSE

This beautiful, mellow country house was designed by the famous architect, Sir Ernest Newton, as a small private residence. It was built in 1907 on the site of an earlier dwelling and is surrounded by graceful lawns; tall, well-grown, dignified trees carpeted with bluebells in spring; thick, secluding yew hedges and attractive stone walls and steps leading from one lawn to another.

It has the traditional English H-shape with sitting rooms at one end and dining room, kitchen and offices at the other end. Connecting the two is a wide corridor, an unusual panelled hall and a wide, shallow staircase to the upper storey.

The main doors are opposite each other at the narrowest part, and visitors to the rather imposing large front door with its curved and pillared portico see straight through to the stone-flagged courtyard at the back. (This yew-enclosed spot is a wonderful sun trap and much appreciated by members of staff in the good weather).

An interesting feature is the break with complete symmetry. The chimneys are off-centre, the small round windows are not balanced and the two wings are not the same size. This is partly because the arrangement of the rooms has been designed for convenience rather than appearance. This also gives the house a warmer, cosier look to counterbalance the stone pillars and the bold dentil course that supports the eaves.

The inside has the same quiet dignity as the outside. The fireplace in the hall is panelled in oak and screened from the passage way by an attractive oak panelled screen with leaded lights, containing a secret cupboard. There is an exposed beam with the date and inscription 'A.D.W. W.A.A.W. 1907'.

The fireplace in the drawing room (now the library) is in a pillared recess, lighted by a bull's-eye window. The overmantels here and in the hall have triple arches which were one of Mr. Newton's favourite motives.

An unusual feature for a house built early in the century is that it has been designed to catch the sun. Both the drawing room (now the library) and the dining room (now the staff room) face south and east, and the trees are sufficiently far away not to prevent any sun rays being concentrated by the bay windows in these rooms.

There are no cornices anywhere in the house, another unusual feature for the period, and perhaps this accounts for the fact that the costs were seven pence halfpenny per cubic foot!

It is sad that it was used as a private house for such a short time, but to many generations of school girls it has provided warmth, comfort, shelter, and its beautiful, serene elegance must surely have had a profound effect in shaping their tastes and attitudes.

A.E. Jeater  
1979

- - - - -

#### LUCKLEY

A certain blend of autumn smells has always shot me back to 1919: blackberries, woodsmoke, mist, wet bracken - and again I am new to beautiful Luckley and watching a squirrel streak along the gate in the quiet early morning.

Frances Bellerby  
(nee Parker)  
Luckley 1920's

## LUCKLEY PARK

The present Luckley building is a 20th century building, but the name has a very long history.

The earliest record we have of Luckley is in the Domesday Book. 'Lonchelei' (identified as Luckley) was owned by Miles Crispin. The previous owner was Wigod of Wallingford, who allowed William of Normandy to cross the Thames at Wallingford and march on London after the battle of Hastings.

In 1559 Richard Palmer (alias Underwood) yeoman, bought an estate at 'Luckley Green' called Redde Landes from John Crottall, another yeoman of Wokingham. A few years later he also bought 'Symonds Green' and the two properties became known as Luckley Park.

His grandson became a barrister and magistrate for the county of Berkshire and bought East Court at Finchampstead. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Bell of Wokingham.

In 1663 he sold  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres to the Henry Lucas trustees, who built Lucas Hospital, an almshouse for sixteen poor single men. Lucas Hospital is the finest building in Wokingham, a beautiful example of Jacobean architecture. The present Luckley building has many features in common with it and is thought by some to have been inspired by it, although it is on a much smaller scale. For many years Luckley School attended services at Lucas Hospital Chapel.

In 1664 Richard Palmer was taken ill en route to Wokingham and lost his way in Windsor Forest which covered all this area. As a result, he donated land to All Saints' Church, the rent of which was to be used to

pay the sexton to ring All Saints' largest bell for half an hour from 4 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily between September 10th and March 11th. "The mode of ringing the bell was to induce timely rest and early rising, and so that strangers and anyone in hearing would know the time and receive some guidance into their right way".

He died in 1670 and is buried in Finchampstead Church in a black marble tomb. His son left no children and eventually the estate passed to his cousin, Charles Palmer, who sold it. However it was bought back into the family by Humphry Fish, a cousin, and his son, Henry, took the name Fish-Palmer. He lived at Luckley House in 1728. After a couple of generations though the name became FYSHE-Palmer, and Charles Fyshe-Palmer was M.P. for Reading.

He was succeeded by Sir John Gordon Sinclair who sold the whole estate, including East Court at Finchampstead, to Mr. John Walter (owner of the Times newspaper) of Bearwood.

Other records state that the 1st Duke of St. Albans (Charles II's son by Nell Gwynn) resided at Luckley House from 1716 - 1726 when he was High Steward of Wokingham. There is no evidence that Nell Gwynn actually stayed there, but no reason to suppose that she did not.

The original Luckley House was situated very near to what is now Ludgrove School. It was totally destroyed by fire at the end of the last century and no trace of it remains. It is well documented on old maps, close to Trench's bridge over the Emm brook and near to Gorrick Well.

The original Lodge still exists on the Finchampstead Road. It is now a well maintained private residence.

A.M. Jeater  
1979

## GORRICK WELL

Up to the middle of the last century an ancient road ran from Round Hill, Crowthorne to Wokingham. It crossed the Emm brook at Trench's bridge near the original Luckley House, and a few yards to the east of the bridge was the famous Gorrick Well.

According to local tradition, Queen Elizabeth I visited it on three occasions in order to bathe her eyes in its healing waters. As she frequently stayed at Easthampstead, there is every reason to believe this story. Apparently she chose a quiet island near the well for the treatment, and had box trees planted round to give greater privacy.

About 1860 Sir Edward Walter who lived at Tangley Farm (later to be called Wixenford and now Ludgrove School) diverted the footpath away from the Well to the side of the railway line, and the famous old well was filled up. Later the box trees were removed, the ground drained and levelled up for the school kitchen garden. There is now no more trace of the well than there is of its neighbour, Luckley House.

## F O O D

Food seems an important aspect of school life, but I was suprised at the number of reminiscences regarding food. Certainly an interesting feature of Old Girls' visits nowadays is the way they all make a bee-line for the kitchen - but maybe Chef is the great attraction there!

- - - - -

The First World War made little difference to the routine of the school, but I remember hearing Miss Bamford telephoning to the grocer in the **early** days and apparantly being incapable of understanding that she could not have as much butter as she wanted!

The food up to then had been **really** good and even in the war it was as good as could be had, but I remember one term without potatoes (boiled rice is a **very** uninteresting substitute) and another term when there **was** no tea at breakfast time. We dug over part of the **hockey** field ourselves and planted potatoes at one **stage** in the war.

We rationed ourselves to two pieces of bread per meal and consequently went hungry. Not a **wise** practice for growing girls perhaps but at least **we** never put on puppy fat.

Phyllis Rawson (nee Batty)  
Oakfield.

## Midnight Feasts

A Midnight Feast involved a kindly kitchen maid who co-operated by taking one culprit's knitting bag, buying the spoils and furtively returning the bag to its owner. It also involved me - whose role entailed walking out of the dining room in easy casual style, then quickly snatching up a handful of butter pats from a stacked trolley. This was spotted by Matron's keen eye - "Open your right hand" she said. I slowly opened my fingers and exposed a greasy mound of mangled butter.

As a result of this operation, four guilty persons were ordered to sit on the school platform in front of the entire gathering. Birmie gave forth with considerable relish on the sins of gluttony, pilfering and depriving one's fellow men of their victuals. Then followed the punishment. The Head girl came on stage with great pomp, a large bread knife, board and two large catering loaves. The cutting ceremony completed, half a loaf was handed to each of us. We sat, chewed, choked and swallowed down to the last crumb. Since that day I have always had the capacity for eating enormous amounts of food at one sitting without ill-effect - due entirely to overstretching the gastric tract in my formative years.

Olive Scorer  
Oakfield.

## The Lost Cod

Before the 'Hut' was built, the dining room was in the main building. A mistress sat at the end of each long table and served the 'dish of the day'. On Fridays it was always fish. A large dish containing an enormous cod, complete with head and tail, was set down and divided into portions sufficient for those at the table. Needless to say, this watery dish was disliked by most, if not all!

One Friday while we were waiting in anything but eager anticipation, there seemed to be a hold-up, leading us to believe something was wrong. At last into the Dining Room appeared several large dishes which were set down in the usual way, but ..... they contained CORNED BEEF. The fishmonger had forgotten to deliver the cod! There was a stunned silence, punctuated by mummings of disbelief. Never has corned beef tasted so delicious since. I still remember that super meal.

Tailpiece - the cod arrived regularly from then on.

Madeline Dudley (nee Robinson)  
Luckley School  
1918 - 1928

- - - - -

As I have just celebrated my 64th birthday, my memories of school days at Luckley are growing rather dim. But I still vividly recall some exciting 'midnight' feasts. Strange foodstuffs eaten by torchlight in dark dormitories with much giggling and whispering - combined with real terror that Miss Drake or Miss Gurney would discover us! Luckily for us, they never did.

Helen Pizey (nee Field)  
Luckley School  
1925 - 1931

My special memory of Luckley is Cook's rice pudding and the gorgeous creamy underneath. The skin was always passed to me - yet I remained as thin as a rake.

Camilla Williams (nee Rose)  
Luckley  
1931 - 1936

- - - - -

### How to Beat Wartime Hunger Pangs

During my year in the VI Form I helped in the kitchen with the cooking and consequently had access to Cook's larder and store cupboard (now the staff cloakroom). Many an extra biscuit was stuffed up my jumper for my starving colleagues!

Most fun of all was making 'Ruler Cookies'. Tooth mugfuls of flour were carefully taken from the larder to the VI form room (now the library) and mixed with cold water to a very stiff dough. Lumps of this were stuck onto the end of rulers and toasted in the log fire which was our main source of heating in those days - delicious and very sustaining!

Shena Hathersley (nee Anderson)  
Luckley  
1941 - 1944

## Christmas Dinner

Impatiently we pressed our flushed faces against the gap between the doors. A gust of warm, turkey-smelling air hit our faces. We smiled appreciatively and stared longingly at the feast. This was it, what we had waited for and talked about for so long - Christmas dinner. At last the doors were opened, we stood motionless, in awe of the sight we beheld. The room was golden in the candle-light, fruits, nuts and flowers glowed in abundance - could this banquet really be L.O.S's dinner room? Eager shouts and nudges behind us pushed us into the room - the juniors, all beautifully dressed for the occasion, were longing to begin the feast.

After much giggling, pushing and shouting, we all stood quietly (!) at our places - waiting for the staff to come so we could start. Before long, chants of 'Why are we waiting' echoed through the room. It worked; the staff arrived and amidst cheers we sat down to eat ... and eat ... The atmosphere was charged with laughter and happiness, and the noise was incredible - everyone shouting to be heard above the joyful confusion. Suddenly the room was filled with raucous song as Chef's effort was praised with 'For He's a jolly good fellow' followed by the loudest noise ever heard as everyone banged their knives on the table in ... appreciation!

Christmas dinner at Luckley-Oakfield is something I will never forget, and words cannot begin to describe the wonder and happiness of it.

Amanda Brighton  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1979

## N O S T A L G I A

About 1913 electricity was installed. Up to that time we had oil lamps suspended from the ceilings of the downstairs rooms and candles in the bedrooms. The Head of the bedroom would collect the candle and carry it upstairs. We used to smuggle cream crackers from the supper table, and toast them over the candle on the end of a long hat pin.

Phyllis Rawson (nee Batty)  
Oakfield,  
1912 - 1918

- - - - -

### Things

Lessons in the lab, which was a badly converted stable, were very exciting. Believe it or not, between a few pranks, I did pick up some worthwhile facts. I discovered that rabbits' intestines measured around twenty-two feet after wrapping them round a chair back like winding wool; that dissecting the eye of a bullock requires more than two hands or it slithers off the block and rolls across the floor. Furthermore, you cannot see vascular bundles, xylem, phloem or parenchymatous cells under the microscope if the sections are cut like bacon slices. Miss Denning despaired, but remained cool under all adversity. On the few occasions when we have since met, she will insist that I was the one who put some nasty piece of mammalian viscera in her lab coat pocket. I hereby swear I never did it.

Olive Scorer  
Oakfield

(Now you know why there are backless stools in the lab,  
and Miss. Jeater has a pocketless lab coat! Ed.)

### Oakfield Pig Club

The Pig Club has continued its activities from last year. Last spring the club acquired four new pigs which aroused great delight amongst the younger children. Unfortunately the club suffered loss by the death of one of the pigs, but inspite of intermittent fears for the others, they were successfully reared and killed in the Christmas term. One of them was sold to the Government; the other two are in process of being eaten by the school. The meeting held to wind up the club's proceedings was a great success and the shareholders were very gratified to hear of the profits.

S.J.S. Shuttleworth (Sec)  
Oakfield School Magazine  
1945

-----

### The Unveiling of the Bamford Memorial Clock

On June 10th, I was very pleased, as Head Girl of Oakfield, to accompany Miss Randle to the unveiling of the Bamford Memorial Clock at Arnside. The weather was perfect for the occasion and a large gathering of friends and Old Girls, some of whom were at Oakfield fifty years ago, had collected round the clock which is situated on the Front.

Mrs. Helen Belfield (nee Bamford) Chairman of the Bamford Memorial Society, and Mr. R.S. Crossfield, Chairman of Arnside Parish Council, welcomed those present.

The clock was unveiled and presented to the Parish Council by Miss Florence Dugdale, an old pupil and former member of staff. She spoke of the gracious influence of the Rev. and Mrs. Bamford and their daughters, not only in the parish but through Oakfield School to the wider world beyond.

M. Thomas  
Oakfield School Magazine  
1951

### MISS BERTHA DRAKE

I am sure that everyone knows that Miss Bertha Drake, founder and Headmistress of Luckley for forty years, was very deaf. Therefore it was useless to knock on her sitting room door, one just walked in. She was quite often reading or working, but on sensing one's entrance she always looked up and with the most charming smile said "Oh there you are" as if you were the very person she was wishing to see, or that indeed, she had actually sent for you. Such a welcome never ceased to impress me.

Mrs. V. Inman,  
Head of Maths. Luckley  
Jan 1946 - July 1967

- - - - -

My most vivid recollection of Miss Drake is when we both finished up in the same nursing home in Reading.

Doubtless all old pupils will remember that when Drake was in pain, which towards the end of her life was almost continual, she would move about the hall on her sticks singing in a rather monotonous tone.

Imagine then, some two or three years after leaving school being rushed into hospital for an emergency operation for appendicitis, and as I came round from this, I heard quite distinctly this sound which had in earlier years been so familiar to me.

I must have gone off to sleep again and on reawakening there was the same sound still coming from the next room. When a nurse came in, I asked her who was the patient next door - and yes - it was dear old Drake.

A message was duly sent in to her that an old pupil was next door, and back came the challenge from her to say we would have a contest to see which of us would be well enough to visit the other's bedside first.

I was quite delighted to receive my distinguished visitor some two days later!!

Hilary White (nee Brown)  
Luckley

- - - - -

I also remember that Drako was extremely kind to me. At the end of my first term I was unfortunate enough to have 'flu. This meant I had to stay behind when everyone else went home for Christmas. You can imagine my misery and gloom. However, this was penetrated by Drako, who came every day to read to me.

Forty-two years on I can still remember the book - it was 'Sir Nigel' by Conan Doyle.

Elizabeth (Beth) Gosset  
Luckley  
1936 - 1940

I was at Southlands and then Luckley as a day girl and eventually a boarder until 1926. Southlands became a Boys' Preparatory School and my brother went there. Afterwards he went to the Luckley Junior School, across the road at Luckley Grange, run by Miss Catherine Drake. Later on, my sister Jane was under-matron there.

I have a very nice pencil sketch of the hall at Luckley by Miss Elizabeth Drake - such a lovely artist.

Unfortunately I have had two collapsed vertebrae and a few years ago I was forced to wear a steel jacket, until a polystyrene one was made for me. I am now very much better but still get a lot of pain.

The reason I tell you this is that when I was at Luckley it was discovered that I had curvature of the spine and I had to wear a jacket similar to my present one, but made of leather. It looked rather like a horse's saddle! I only wore it for six weeks as it rubbed my back raw.

My sister Jane tells me that it was in the stables at Luckley for some time after I left, and known as 'Mary's Ghost'. I wonder if it is still there?

Mary Dudley (nee Robinson)  
Luckley  
1918 - 1928

(Where exactly were the stables? Ed.)

(Miss Drake remembers how tall Mary was - she outgrew all the beds at Luckley!)

Standing outside Miss Drake's office, knocking on the little brass knocker (which I think is still there) and having to report bad work. I was usually given a psalm to learn - hence I now know most of them off by heart!

Now the happy memories - being one of the first to win all four colours for games - tennis, cricket, hockey and netball. And getting my gymnastics girdle - and also our yearly Girl Guide camp.

Elizabeth (Betty) Marjorie  
Belchamber (nee Coston)  
Luckley  
1919 - 1929

- - - - -

I was a pupil at Luckley in the days of Miss Drake and Miss Barratt. We had a system of Stars and Blots then, and I was always in trouble - collecting too many Blots and no Stars. Eventually I discovered that if I learnt a hymn and recited it to Miss Barratt I would be given a Star. Fortunately I could remember things for a short time fairly easily, so I would learn a hymn while eating my breakfast, cycle to school and search for Miss Barratt. I usually found her milking the goats. She would prop the prayer book on her knee and hear me recite the hymn, never ceasing for one moment her rhythmical pumping action on the goat. It was decidedly difficult to concentrate, as you can imagine, but I usually got my Star.

Betty Greany  
Luckley 1923

## Memories of Luckley School

I was very happy at Luckley. I loved the beautiful design of the main house and the lovely walks in the woods with the sun shining through the pine trees and silver birches.

We often used to have lessons out of doors in the summer, and at the end of my first summer term the school staged 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' with the woods as a backdrop setting. Betty Beatty was a very handsome and stentorian Oberon, with Joan Massie as a dainty Titania, and Betty Malim was a wonderful, perky and agile Puck. The 'lovers' were all very glamorous, with tall Pat Robert-son and blonde Deanne Duncan (they were inseparable friends), and I think Sheila Tudor and Beryl Baker as the other pair. I was a very tall and ungainly fairy in pink tights, and luckily my family who came didn't laugh at me!

I remember well the helpful religious discussions in Miss Gurney's room, and her long and endless walking processions when she took us to Wellington College to watch cricket.

There was a lovely homely atmosphere and Miss Drake's talks on our motto 'Love and Serve' were a tremendous help to me then and later on in life.

My daughter, Anne Reason, was very happy there, and it would be lovely if my little grand-daughter could come to the school later on.

Marion Blacker (nee Kinahan)  
Luckley School 1932 - 1934

My own special memory of Luckley concerns personal hygiene in 'prehistoric times' before the last 'war to end wars'. I distinctly remember two loos on the first floor (one is still in existence and should be preserved as an ancient monument). There was a chamber pot beneath each bed, emptied by unseen hands. A maid would appear in the dormitories at crack of dawn with two or three enamel jugs of hot water - for use with the china jug and basin and slop pail. Naturally the enamel jugs were apt to get knocked over by sheer joie de vivre, and in the Green Room which was just above dear Drako's sanctum, the water rapidly seeped through cracks in the uncarpeted floorboards and through her ceiling.

But 'mod. cons.' are not everything. We had a great time, super food, and got a good kick out of the occasional times we broke out and successfully got round the rather stricter rules, such as writing to a boy friend or even meeting one at the gate.

Mrs. Gerry Spriggs (nee Watson)  
Luckley School  
1933 - 1937

- - - - -

Adders in the woods; the certain conviction that on winter mornings the hot water in the can would be cold before I could wash; Drako's uncanny sixth sense whereby she knew everything that was going on in the school; the other certain conviction that, by the time I had thought of a good subject of conversation to shout into Drako's ear-trumpet at lunch time, the rest of the dining hall would have plunged into sudden, total silence; laughter, 'tooth-paste' buns and special stone-ground bread.

F.A. Robinson (nee Bourne)  
Luckley School  
1934 - 1940

During the time that I was at Luckley a small herd of pigs was kept at the bottom of the woods. Rumour had it that they were there to stop the railway embankment from catching fire, for in those days the woods extended right to the railway line. Perhaps they were merely there to provide bacon. Whatever the reason, they were certainly there, and lived in a beautiful hut in the clearing, known as the Pig Palace.

We loved those pigs. Not only were they fun to watch and scratch with a stick if the pig palace custodian would let us, but also (unbounded joy!) from time to time they escaped. A cry would go up "the pigs are out" and all the junior forms would leap up and join in the chase.

I have memories of us being very effective in our efforts, but goodness knows if we really were. In the same way that it was always sunny in our youth, so this glorious pantomime with the pigs is invested with memories of successful round-ups in the manner of the *Wild West*!

Elizabeth (Beth) Gosset  
Luckley School  
1936 - 1940

Luckley being a school with strong Christian traditions, Ascension Day was very properly a holiday. The morning was spent in church, but the afternoon was devoted to unalloyed pleasure.

We would all cram into a series of coaches, which were known by staff and pupils alike as the Kipper Cases. Unlikely though this sounds, the name seems fairly predictable when one remembers that the proprietors were the Herring Bros. of Wokingham. These would convey us to the Ridges, to our minds the most exciting part of the Berkshire Downs. Juniors could enjoy wild games in almost total freedom. Seniors could walk and talk and put the world to rights. The event was punctuated by a mammoth picnic full of delightful goodies. I do not remember that it ever rained.

Beth Gosset  
Luckley School  
1936 - 1940

- - - - -

Sitting doing A level art in the art room whilst everyone else was at Speech Day, singing 'Oh Brother Man' in the marquee outside - and for going 'out of bounds', often being banned outside from everywhere except the front lawn!

Jennifer Diana Coston  
(nee Belchamber)  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1960 - 1965

I belonged to 'Beatty' House and we never won anything! We always lost the inter-house matches and only once went on a house outing. Has any other house ever had such a record, and are Beatty still as bad? Can you tell me what they are like today? I would love to know!

Susan Cates  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1965 - 1974

-----

### The Luckley Ghost

In the middle of the night a friend and I ventured out into the corridor. Careful not to be seen by the eager eye of Matron, stealthily we made our way up to the bathroom at the end of new wing, knowing the terrible trouble we would be in if we got caught out of our dormitory after lights out. Closing the fire door as quietly as its squeaky hinges would allow we ventured into the loos.

As we sat quite contented that we had made it this far, we realized we had spoken too soon as then the fire door slammed shut, creaking threateningly on its worn, rusty hinges. Heavy foot-steps made their way towards us as we sat petrified, glued to the privvy seat. We waited as they got nearer and nearer until they stopped just outside the doors. This was it we thought, now we would hear Matron's voice booming out, telling us to go to bed or suffer the consequences! But as we remained immobile, the voice didn't come. What was wrong, had Matron lost her voice? No, impossible - Matron never lost her voice. Five minutes later I managed to squeeze out a little whisper, "Matron?" No reply.

My friend and I considered what to do next. At last we decided, on the count of three to open the doors together and run. The plan went accordingly and, at the same moment,

we slammed the doors open, shot down the corridor, practically pulling the fire door out of its sockets, and into the dormitory.

We recalled this incident to the flabbergasted form and suddenly realized to our horror that the footsteps had not returned from where they came!

We never did find out who or what was outside the loos!

Naomi Hutton  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1979



The science teacher was having trouble, shouting at the top of her voice to a group of mumbling, excited little girls. In pairs, we were to heat different chemicals and see their reaction. We collected a bunsen burner, thousands of test tubes, tripods, gauze and asbestos mats and the chemicals, and then were supposed to be listening to her instructions - all do's and don'ts. No one was listening, just excitement showing in their faces, three rows of gleaming eyes and shining teeth.

The old lab was an old room with shabby walls and ceiling, green pipes ran about the room and large windows with one side looking onto a thick blanket of forest; the other windows, some of them smashed and blocked up with cardboard, looked out onto the tatty back of the school.

Paula and I enthusiastically threw ourselves into the task of heating the chemicals and were somewhat disappointed when above the glowing bunsen they feebly fizzled. We weren't expecting this, so when the teacher's back was turned, we mixed the chemicals in a single test tube, multi-coloured powders and liquids were poured in with metal pellets and curls, and then we heated it. This was what we wanted, it bubbled furiously and smoked and smelt of bad eggs and changed colour and hissed and swelled and got hotter and glowed and ..... exploded!

We had a job convincing the teacher it wasn't our fault and she finally believed that the test tube must have been dirty and caused a reaction. So the shattered glass was collected from all corners of the room and guiltily hidden in the bin. The teacher then decided we should re-do the experiment for our results to be correct.

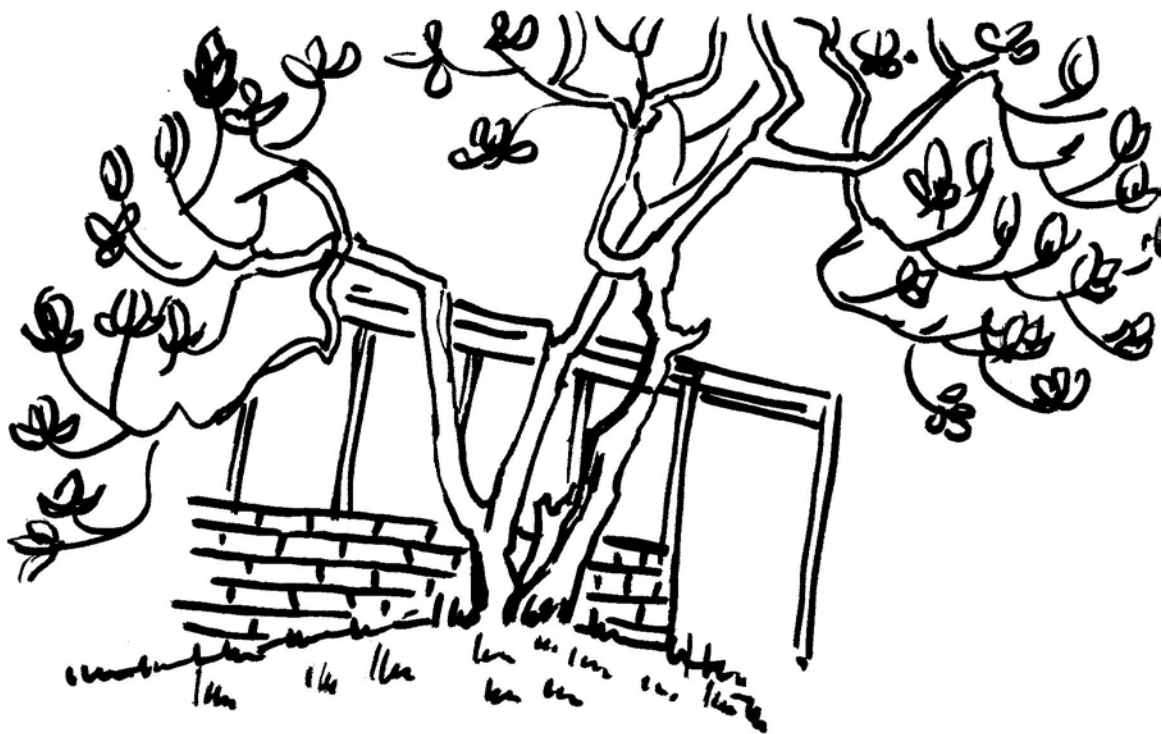
We had to re-light the bunsen so I came across the room with a light splint and turned the gas on but, the pipe of the bunsen wasn't connected and the gas pouring from the tap caught alight and sent a soaring line of fire straight

across the lab desk, it might even have gone further if Paula's pencil case and science book hadn't crossed its path. We all jumped back shrieking and left the fur of the pencil case fizzling contentedly, and the science book crinkling up at the corners to a dirty burnt brown colour. Finally order was regained and the little accident over with.

Funnily enough, we've never had chemistry lessons with this teacher since!

(Can you blame her! Ed.)

Lisa Williams  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1979



Andrea and I were walking on the ~~warm~~ grass of the hockey pitch in the lunch hour.

"I'm hungry" I said without thinking. This was a statement that automatically came to mind during some lunch hours as I did not like some of the dinners, and so sometimes came out feeling hungry. Earlier that day I had had a stomach ache and had not felt like eating anything.

"We can pick apples to eat" said Andrea. "There are a lot behind the tennis courts".

"Lead the way" I ordered eagerly.

We ran behind the netball courts and, hiding behind the green leaves of the trees, were some lovely green apples. First we looked on the ground for some fallen ones. Most of them were badly bruised.

"I can't find any good ones" I whined.

"I've found one" shouted Andrea from behind a bush, but when she picked it up, it was full of maggot holes.

"This isn't any good" said Andrea. "I am going to try to get some down from the tree".

The remaining apples were all high up, but we found a sturdy branch to knock them down. Little did we realise how the minutes were ticking by. I noticed some girls playing on the netball court and assumed it was still lunch time, and we both continued banging away trying to dislodge an apple.

Eventually, a terrifying thought ran through my head.

"Andrea, I don't think the girls on the netball court are practising; they are having a lesson!!"

We both rushed back to the main buildings. The garden was deserted and we became more and more frightened. Andrea had a Geography lesson and I was supposed to be in German. At Coggan House we bid each other 'Goodbye' and 'Good luck' and entered into our doom by way of the German and Geography doors.

I timidly walked up to the teacher and said feebly "I'm sorry I am late but ....."

"Yes I know, Darrin. That is quite all right and how are you feeling now?"

"Just fine, thank you" I replied, feeling very puzzled.

I sat down next to Rosemary who had saved me a place.

"What did Matron say?" she whispered.

"What do you mean?" I asked "I haven't seen Matron".

"Oh, I thought you had" she explained "I said that I thought that was where you were, as you were feeling ill earlier today".

What a fortunate solution to a difficult situation!

Darrin Harvey  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1979

(How many others have enjoyed those apples, either legally or illegally? Ed.)

Do you remember -

Mrs. Prier - and her red tunic and tights?

Mrs. Wyles - and her camping trips for Upper V after 'O' levels?

Mrs. Wyatt - for her sartorial elegance?

Miss O'Neill - witty and wise, friend and mentor, lacrosse stick ever at the ready?

Mr. Haytor - and his series of 'old bangers'?

Mrs. Coleman - and her wonderful stories of Africa in Morning Assembly?

Miss Denning - and her dissections of frogs?

Miss Hargreaves - and her finely tuned antennae which pick up all sounds?

Leavers' Concerts - Fiasco, The Boy Friend, Salad Days, the sadness of parting, the thrill of leaving?

Leavers' Dances - with the Hall transformed into a disco with the help of parachutes, half the garden, and Mr. Haytor? The awful embarrassment of those first few moments when the coaches disgorge a pack of unpredictable boys - your partners for the evening?

C.U. Weekends - Miss Kay, Miss Spear, Miss O'Neill, swimming, hiking, orienteering, praying, cooking sausages over bonfires?

Charity efforts - Staff hockey matches, 'Its-a-Knock-out'?

Fire Drill - especially the night time ones, just when we were warm and cosy in bed

- and the time the alarm was set off by workmen in the dorms smoking? Be warned!

Salamanca School - visits in the summer term from the girls living in particularly deprived parts of London?

Christmas dinner - and the noise of banging spoons?

Collecting the material for this little book has given me hours of enormous pleasure. I have been so busy reading old magazines that it almost never got written! I hoped to have more 'memories' to include, but I am sure these will bring back happy memories for you all.

If your favourite memories are not here, your favourite teachers not mentioned, your favourite incident not recorded - then the fault is yours. You did not send them to me!

Maybe this will spur you on to write a correction, or an embellishment. Please do write and your efforts will be included in the Old Girls' Newsletter.

I am most grateful to Mrs. Jean Richards for the drawings and other contributions.

Ann Jeater  
Luckley-Oakfield  
1979