

1930's

Memories from Gwenda Powell (Lusted) 1935 - 1940

When my oldest sister Judith started school at Albion in 1934 I used to follow her to school each day and Miss White the infants teacher at the time got tired of sending me home each day so I was allowed to stay. I didn't remember this of course but my mother told me this was the case.

When I was in 4th class I had Miss North for a teacher and every month she would give us a test and the person who came top (as we used to say) was given a book prize. That year I won one for each month of the year and used to race home as fast as my legs would carry me to show my mother - I was so proud. I can still remember some of these books.

I remember the whole school walking down to Dr Garland to get immunized for Diphtheria, Scarlet fever and Whooping Cough. There was also a Polio epidemic and we had to stay home from school and the Education Dept. sent us lessons by post and we had to them at home.

I also recall on Empire Day, 24th May each year we were all given a cardboard flag to pin on our clothes and a bag of boiled lollies.

When I was in 5th class we had Miss Dodd. In those days if you finished your work before the rest of the class you didn't have extra work to do, so each day I finished my sums early and annoyed all the pupils around me so Miss Dodd made me stand on the desk. A folding glass wall separated 5th and 6th class so that Mr Cunningham in 6th class could see me standing on the desk and each day he saw me I got the strap. One day the strap hit the whole length of my arm so my Mother trotted me back to school and told Mr Cunningham off good and proper. After that Mr Cunningham used to give me jobs to do, running errands to other teachers, gardening and drawing etc. Also in grade 5 when we had all finished our work Miss Dodd would have spelling B's and we would stand 10 at a time on the platform and spell out different words. The winner of each group then competed against each other. I used to win these every time. They couldn't seem to trick me. Also we used to play Simon Says in wet weather with Miss Dodd. Another memory from 5th class was our poetry books. We would only be allowed to put poems in our poetry book that we knew off by heart. I had a book full of poems, lots I had made up myself and I was a real show off reciting those poems to the class.

When the war started in 1939 we were all given wool by the comforts fund to knit articles. One year I knitted 100 garments and the education Dept. sent me a special certificate. Of course lots of children started garments and couldn't finish them. So I also finished lots of scarves, balaclavas, mittens, greasy wool jumpers for the air force, khaki jumpers and many blue jumpers that children had started as well as lots of my own. I used to walk to school from our house in Forest street knitting and when knitting scarves I knew when they hung from my nose to ground that was when I was ready to cast them off.

I also have fond memories of the end of year concerts especially in 5th and 6th class. One year we did the "Umbrella Man", "Away in Yokohama which you know is in Japan", and my youngest sister Olive did, "Brian Rose Bud was a princess".

I loved every aspect of my school life, the sewing lessons, writing sums, spelling, mental arithmetic, drawing especially when Mr Cunningham would take us out into the garden and let us copy flowers & leaves, making scrap books out of brown paper. They were the happiest years.

I am 71 years this year and hope to make it to your anniversary in Oct.