

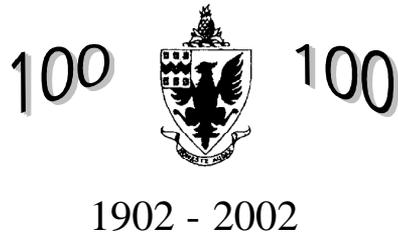
# Humphrey Perkins High School

**100 Yearson the Cotes Road Site**



By

JOHN HINDLEY



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To mark the centenary of Humphrey Perkins School  
moving to its site on Cotes Road, Barrow-upon-Soar

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# Contents

Head Teachers of Humphrey Perkins	4	
Foreword	5	
Introduction	6	
1902 - 1925	Mr R E Fernsby	7
1926 - 1929	Mr Keeble	15
1929 - 1955	Mr T G Wilkinson	18
1956 - 1960	Mr C Harris	40
1960 - 1973	Mr R Dunn	50
1973 - 1983	Mr F W Morris	56
1984 - 1991	Miss E Higginbotham	61
1991 - 1998	Mr T Riddiough	66
1998 -	Mr J D Edwards	68
Afterword	70	
Acknowledgements	72	



Mr T G Wilkinson



Mr C Harris



Mr R Dunn



Mr F W Morris



Miss E Higginbotham



Mr T Riddiough



Mr J D Edwards

## **Foreword**

At last we have the long overdue sequel to Bernard Elliott's fascinating book, "The History of Humphrey Perkins", and when better to bring the history of the school up to date, than in its centenary year. Former head of English, John Hindley, has met the challenge of this important undertaking and has completed the task in a matter of months.

With consummate care and sympathy, John has chronicled the history of a school that has been, and still is, special to so many people - pupils, staff, parents, governors and members of the community - past and present. With particular emphasis upon the closing decades of the twentieth century, and drawing extensively upon contemporary records and vivid personal memories, he has captured something of the rich tapestry of school life - the vision, aspirations, accomplishments, and sense of belonging that has been so much part of Humphrey Perkins. We are very grateful to him.

Credit must go also to Mike Neale, Chair of Governors, for the vision that set the whole project in motion, and to the governing body and staff of the school who have been whole-hearted in their support.

As the current Head Teacher, it is my privilege to invite you to read and enjoy, "Humphrey Perkins High school: 100 years on the Cotes Road Site".

Mr J D Edwards  
Head Teacher  
June 2002

### **Introduction**

If the original thirty three pupils who made the move in 1902 to the new school building on Catsick Lane could return to the site today, they would certainly recognise their school from the outside but they would be totally lost inside and would be amazed at how the school has grown and extended.

It is indeed an amazing story that an old-established but financially insecure institution originally created for the education of a small number of boys should have grown into the sprawling establishment catering for almost one thousand young people aged from eleven to fourteen that we know today. In addition, it is one of the largest employers in Barrow, with a multi-million pound budget.

Given the changes that have taken place in the last one hundred years, it would be a brave person who would dare to make any forecasts for the next one hundred!

The story of the school's history from the will of Humphrey Perkins drawn up in 1718 to the time in the 1960s when it was about to be incorporated into the Leicestershire Plan of Stewart Mason has already been told in great detail in Bernard Elliott's masterly *The History of Humphrey Perkins School* (1965, long out of print) and I am greatly indebted to him for much of the information contained in the first part of this book. I have drawn on a variety of sources, written and oral, for the period since 1965.

The plan I have followed is to use normal print when I am using my words to tell the story. When I am inserting documents and the words of other people, these will usually be in italics.

What sort of education was available in Barrow at the opening of the twentieth century when the reign of Queen Victoria had just come to an end? Open to everybody was the Board or Council School in Cotes Road, opened in 1880, which provided free education from infants up to the school leaving age of twelve or thirteen. There was also the Barrow Church of England School. If you wanted something different, something superior or more exclusive, an education which would continue beyond the normal school leaving age - and you were prepared to pay for it - there was the Grammar School of Humphrey Perkins, or other Grammar Schools in Quorn and Loughborough.

At this time few people availed themselves of the education provided by the Humphrey Perkins Grammar School: the average number on the register between 1880 and 1900 was 19, all boys, and these children came from Barrow and the surrounding villages.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the need for a new grammar school in Barrow became pressing for a number of reasons: the site the school occupied was hemmed in by other buildings and the churchyard; the existing building was out of date and inadequate to deal with the growing demand for secondary education; and the school faced strong competition for pupils from the Rawlins School in Quorn where new buildings had been erected in 1897 and girls allowed to attend in 1898. In

addition, the old school at Barrow was the subject of criticism by the annual examiner and officials of the Local Education Authority. Matters came to a head when the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, which provided financial help to schools for the teaching of science, art and other subjects, declared that it would withdraw its grant unless the governors took action to build a new schoolroom.

However, when the governors applied for permission to the Charity Commissioners, who held the purse strings, the reply was not what they expected for the Commissioners advised an amalgamation with the Thomas Rawlins School at Quorn. As we shall see elsewhere in this narrative, the presence of the school on the other side of the River Soar was to be a factor in the development of Humphrey Perkins throughout the twentieth century. Fortunately, as it turned out, the Technical Education Committee of Leicestershire was against amalgamation, the proposal was dropped and the governors were able to go ahead and search for a site for the new school. Eventually a site of 6 acres 2 roods and 31 perches with a frontage to Catsick Lane of 131 feet was purchased from the Woolley brothers who were local solicitors. The Charity Commissioners meanwhile were drawing up an amended scheme for the running of the new school, which cleared the way for girls to be admitted and girls' subjects introduced into the curriculum, and in August 1900 a new Head Master was appointed, the first non-cleric in the school's history. He was Mr Richard Ellison Fernsby and he was to remain in charge until 1926.

#### **Mr R E Fernsby**

The new school building was designed by Mr Barrowcliffe of Quorn, who was also responsible for the design of a number of other schools including the new Rawlins School at Quorn. The foundation stone was laid in July 1901 and an inscription recording its laying was later set into the gable where it can still be seen today (see back cover). Bad weather delayed the completion of the work and the building was not ready for use at the beginning of the Spring Term 1902 which had been the original intention. As the School had to move out of its old building by 1 January 1902 it had to spend the Spring Term in alternative accommodation - the church rooms.

Eventually on 1 March 1902 the School, which consisted of thirty-two boys and one girl, moved into the new building on Catsick Lane, although it was not declared officially open until 2 June. It contained two rooms, known as A and B, the latter being used as a science room and assembly hall. Adjoining this there was a house for the Head Master, containing a large dining room, drawing room, study, kitchen and bedrooms. This house remained the official residence of the Head Master until 1956 when *Maycroft*, the next house along Cotes Road, was purchased as its replacement.

*Log Book July 12 1902 S.H. Francis was awarded an Intermediate County Scholarship value £15 per annum. He attained first position among County Schools and in all England, gaining the highest marks yet reached in the examination.*

Events at Westminster were to determine the future development of the School. The Balfour Act of 1902 prepared the way for the Local Education Authority (LEA) to take over control of the school which eventually took place in 1910. The requirements of the Act meant that the school had to be brought up to the standard required by the Board of Education, the money coming from the LEA. Although the School's finances were precarious, operating each year with a considerable deficit, a new Science laboratory was completed in 1906, other improvements were carried out and the school was finally recognised for grant in 1907.

***Report of First Inspection by the Board of Education, March 1907***

***Assistant Staff:***            3 Regular            3 Visiting

***Scholars:***            68            36 boys 32 girls

*divided into four classes of 25, 20, 9 and 14 scholars*

***Previous years:***            1902    35            32 boys 3 girls

   1903    44            32            12

   1904    50            31            19

   1905    50            28            22

   1906    57            34            23

***Area from which drawn:***            22 from Barrow-on-Soar

   46 from other places in Leicestershire

***Class in life of fathers:***

*Professional, Independent, & c*            11

*Merchants, Manufacturers & c*            5

*Retail Traders*            17

*Farmers*            6

*Commercial Managers*            9

*Services (domestic & other)*

*Postmen & c, Artisans*            20

*The average age on entry appears to be just under 12, and that of leaving about 14, so that the average duration of school life has been about 2 to 2½ years. There is but one pupil over 16 in the School, but as several of the pupils hold pupil teacher scholarships, there is a prospect that a greater number in the future will stay till 16.*

*22 of the children come from Barrow itself, the same number from Sileby the next station on the way to Leicester, and the rest from neighbouring places including Quorn, from which there is one child.*

As the financial situation worsened, the governors asked for the School to be fully maintained and controlled by the LEA. This involved the drawing up of a new management scheme which raised the age of entry to nine and the maximum leaving



Front view of main building circa 1910



Front view of main building 2002



Quadrangle in the early years



Early classroom—now the Staff Room



1936 Rugby Team



1948 Soccer Team



1948 Netball Team

age to eighteen, and the School passed into LEA control in 1910.

The number of pupils had risen considerably from 24 in 1900 to 86 in 1910 when there were four permanent members of staff plus some visiting teachers. Additional buildings were required but these were not completed until December 1913. These completed the building we now know as Old Block. In June 1913 the School received a critical Inspection Report which commented unfavourably both on the work and general tone of the school. The Governors set to work immediately to improve the situation and a follow-up Inspection in June of the following year was much more favourable:

***Inspection Report, June 1914***

*There is distinct improvement in many directions ..... This improvement has been greatly helped by the enlargement of the buildings. The conditions of work are now far better and few county schools are more suitably housed. The greatest improvement noticeable is in the co-operation between teachers which was entirely absent a year ago. Generally in work and tone there are signs of a gratifying improvement.*

***Prospectus of The County Grammar School, Barrow-Upon-Soar circa 1913-14***

***Length of School Life:*** *The Governors will require an undertaking that pupils entering the School after 1st September 1913 shall remain in the School for not less than three years, after reaching the age of twelve years.*

***General:*** *The School buildings, recently erected, are well equipped, and contain an excellent Science Laboratory and a room for Manual Work.*

*The Playing Field, which adjoins the School, includes good football, cricket, hockey and tennis grounds.*

*There is a convenient train service from Leicester and Loughborough and the intermediate stations to Barrow. (The train service was to play a very important part in the development of the School.)*

***Subjects of Instruction:*** *Latin; French; English Language, Literature and History; Geography, Mathematics; Science (Chemistry and Physics); Art; Nature Study; Manual Work (for Boys); Domestic Economy, Hygiene, Botany and Needlework (for Girls); and Religious Knowledge.*

***School Fees:*** *The fees, payable in advance, are £1 3s 4d per term (inclusive).*

***Hours of Attendance:****The hours of School Attendance are: 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (in some cases to 12.45 p.m. and Junior Class to 12 noon); 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.(in some cases to 4.30 p.m.) Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.*

***Games:*** *Wednesday afternoons are to be considered a School period, being*

*assigned to games. Compulsory games may be arranged on Mondays after afternoon school for all who are not prevented by train service from taking part.*

***Street Regulations:*** *It will be considered irregular, and out of harmony with the tone of the School, for boys or girls to be out after dark without the consent of their parents and without a definite and proper object in view. Parents are asked to discourage also aimless strolling or standing about the streets as both undignified and harmful.*

As the Head Master did not have any clerical help he had to write all his own letters on official business dealing with all sorts of problems. Here is an extract from one written to the famous Director of Education for Leicestershire in February 1914:

*Dear Mr Brockington*

*The sheep belonging to the man to whom the grazing of the playing field is let, have broken one of the football goal-posts off at the socket and a new one will have to be made. I do not know whether he is liable for the damage. Perhaps you will be able to tell me. At any rate I suggest he should be written to and asked to contribute 5/- towards the cost of a new post which will amount to about 10/-*

*Yours very truly*

*F.R.S. Fernsby*

The finances of the School for the year 1913-14 include the following items:

Fees from pupils	£150
Teachers' Salaries	£707 (including £350 for the Head Master)
Books, Stationery, Apparatus, Chemicals, Maps & Diagrams	£36

The total expenditure for the School which had 71 pupils on roll at the time amounted to £1178.

At the outbreak of the First World War Mr Fernsby was on holiday in the Isle of Man from where he continued to write about school business to Mr Brockington in Leicester who appears not to have been impressed:

*Dear Mr Fernsby*

*...I hardly thought you would remain at the I.O.M. during the present crisis*

On his return the Head Master became the officer in charge of the newly formed cadet corps in the School. In the surviving documents there are few references to the war but in his report to the Governors in June 1916 Mr Fernsby observes:

*About 70 old pupils are serving in His Majesty's Military or Naval Forces. 2nd Lieutenant Richard (Taylor), 2nd East Yorks Regt, who was a pupil here for five years, was, I regret to say, killed in the trenches a few days ago. He was a universal favourite at school and also, I have heard, in the Army; another instance of self-sacrifice and patriotism on the part of one who as an*

*elementary school teacher can ill be spared.*

*Corporal C. Camp, 2nd Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, also an old boy, was wounded some months ago and made a prisoner of war.*

Five former pupils died in the service of their country: Bertram Hubbard; Alfred Perry; Alfred Pickard; Richard Taylor; and Wilfred Walker.

The war created a number of problems for the school: a number of pupils were withdrawn from school in order to work or because their family moved to a different area; there was considerable turnover of staff; the assistant master Mr Eastman was called to the colours in 1916; and the caretaker, Mr Langton, was called up in 1917 despite an appeal by Mr Fernsby to the National Service Department.

There were also problems with the train service, the school's lifeline. Mr Fernsby reports in January 1917:

*In order to meet the alteration in the train service I have arranged for school to close in the afternoons at 3.15 p.m. This arrangement was in vogue during the last few weeks of last term on account of the lighting restrictions. In the case of the morning trains there is scarcely any alteration. The dinner hour is shortened so that there is very little, if any, curtailment of the ordinary school hours.*

Later in the year there was a rumour that Barrow station was to close. The Governors were so alarmed that they were preparing to send a deputation to see one of the directors of the Midland Railway when news came that there was no truth in the rumour. The Head Master's report in June 1916 which lists the places from which the pupils came to Humphrey Perkins shows how dependent the School was on the railway:

*Pupils are in attendance from the following places: Barrow 24, Syston 21, Sileby 9, Loughborough 7, Burton on the Wolds 4, Leicester, Kegworth, Walton, Queniborough 2 each, Cotes, Ratcliffe, Seagrave, Stanford, Sutton Bonington, Thurmaston, Wanlip, Wymeswold 1 each.*

After the War the School passed through a difficult time. By 1921 it had been felt necessary to raise the fees to £10 per annum which resulted in a fall in numbers and in February 1923, which was the first time the School Certificate examination was held at Humphrey Perkins (eleven children sat and three passed), a full inspection of the School by Inspectors from the Board of Education revealed a rather sorry state of affairs.

***Report of Inspection, February 1923***

<b><i>Number of Assistant Staff:</i></b>	<b><i>6</i></b>	<b><i>Regular</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>	<b><i>Occasional</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Pupils:</i></b>	<b><i>59</i></b>	<b><i>28 boys</i></b>	<b><i>31 girls</i></b>		
<b><i>previous years</i></b>	<b><i>1917</i></b>	<b><i>84</i></b>	<b><i>36 boys</i></b>	<b><i>48 girls</i></b>	

1918	92	40	52
1919	98	46	52
1920	95	40	55
1921	80	35	45

**Areas from which pupils are drawn:** Barrow 28%  
Rest of Leicestershire 72%

*It appears likely that the raising of the fees and the competition of other schools, larger and better organised, have had a very appreciable effect. ... During the last three years one pupil has gone on from the School to a place of Higher Education.*

**Premises and Equipment:** *The premises provide classroom and sanitary accommodation which is of a very satisfactory character and is sufficient for the numbers present attending the School. The provision for teaching Art, Domestic Subjects, Woodwork and Gymnastics under cover is less satisfactory. The School grounds provide good playing field space... the School needs a better supply of books, both sets of books for class use and books for purposes of reference.*

**Staff:** *...the staffing of the School is distinctly meagre, and the many difficulties of conducting a small school satisfactorily with a severely limited staff are here exemplified. .... As there are, including the Head Master, but three members of the regular staff the School is divided into three teaching groups, Form V, Form IV and Forms III and II. The lowest group forms half of the whole school. ... it is regrettable that there is no instruction in Scripture or Singing to those not in the lowest teaching group ... The work of the school is of a moderate standard generally and has no outstanding feature.*

**Manual Instruction:** *... the subject appears to be made of real value. The workshop, some little distance from the School, is only moderately satisfactory, the arrangements for heating and ventilating it being quite poor.*

**Physical Exercises (Girls):** *The instruction is, of necessity, taken out of doors, as there is no indoor accommodation. The classes are taken on an asphalt badminton court.*

*A large playing field adjoins the School. It comprises a good level football ground, one hockey pitch, the surface of which is not satisfactory, and three tennis courts, one of which is in good condition .... good hockey cannot be played on a bad pitch.*

**General School Activities** *There is no school dinner provided, but a large number of pupils who spend the midday interval at the school eat their food under satisfactory conditions and proper supervision. The corporate life of*

*the School reaches only a moderate development, owing largely to the train and other journeys which most of the pupils have to make, but the pupils are keen in their school games and give a satisfactory account of themselves.*

**General Conclusions:** *The School is again passing through a difficult time and stands in need of all the energy and care which those who bear responsibility are able to exercise.*

Naturally the Governors were very concerned and asked for another inspection in twelve months time. In the meantime, Mr Fernsby and his staff worked hard to improve the situation, receiving some favourable comment in the 1924 inspection although it was apparent that there were still problems to be overcome.

***Inspection Report      June 1924***

*The general standard of work, though not by any means high, is certainly improving ... it is satisfactory to be able to chronicle improvement all along the line. Yet it will be some time before a satisfactory level of work can be reached.*

*The past year has been a year of steady work and progress, despite the fall in numbers. It seems likely that the School will increase in size next year, but it is hardly likely to be a rapid increase, and so far as Inspectors can see the School under the present regime is likely to remain small. The Head Master is nearing an age when retirement on pension is possible. Between now and that time he has it within his power by perseverance on present lines to make the School, if not prosperous, certainly efficient and to raise the standard of work to a respectable level. He will then be able to bring his long tenure of office to a close with dignity and without hardship.*

The Inspectors certainly gave a clear indication there of what should happen to the School but in their final paragraph they pointed to another possibility - with the school on the other side of the River Soar coming into the picture again.

*Meantime the Governors and the LEA have an important problem to consider: Is the present organisation of this school as a school for boys and girls that best fitted to serve the needs of the area? Is the present provision for the area, that of two small mixed schools within a mile and a half of each other the best provision for the area? The answer to these questions goes beyond the scope of this Report.*

Whilst the Barrow school had been suffering a decline, Rawlins had been growing steadily and in 1924 had over three times as many pupils as Humphrey Perkins. It had no interest in becoming a single-sex school or in amalgamating with Barrow. Accordingly the Barrow Governors passed a resolution that, having regard to the forthcoming change in the headship, the School should continue as a mixed school.

### **Mr Keeble**

In 1926 Mr Cyril Francis Allan Keeble, formerly Senior English & Spanish master at Sedbergh School, was selected from 213 candidates to become the new Head Master and take on the very difficult challenge of restoring the fortunes of the school. (*Note: In Bernard Elliott's book on the history of the Humphrey Perkins it is stated that Mr Keeble came from Roundhay School in Leeds. A history of Roundhay School contains no reference to Mr Keeble having taught there and in the Humphrey Perkins Log Book Mr Keeble has written in his own hand that he was formerly at Sedbergh. A reference to Roundhay has been added in brackets in a different handwriting.*) He was to stay only three years but his achievements were considerable: the numbers more than doubled to 88 and he succeeded in giving the School tone, tradition and character.

*Log Book 11 October 1926 I am optimistic as to the future. Normally, the leavers next Easter should not be many, and already I am hearing of entrants for next September. The signs of the breaking of the drought may as yet be no larger than a man's hand, but I am confident that, like Elijah, we may expect a deluge. The newly formed Humphrey Perkins Old Scholars Association should play no small part in this revival. Sixty old pupils attended the meeting here at which the decision to have an Old Scholars Association was made, and they have pledged themselves to do all that in them lies to further the interests of the School. We hope for a membership of between two and three hundred.*

Among Mr Keeble's many innovations were: the Founder's Day service; a distinctive school uniform which came in on 26 May 1927; the school badge; and the insistence that the School be known as Humphrey Perkins Grammar School instead of the Barrow Grammar School as the LEA referred to it. He also made many changes in staffing, introduced the prefect system and insisted pupils should complete a four-year course of study before leaving, with increased penalties for early withdrawal. During his time drama productions were staged in the church room at Barrow and in Sileby, although one night of the Christmas production of 'Trial by Jury' in 1927 was a washout because of the condition of the roads and fog.

A newspaper report which dates, it is believed, from 1927, gives some idea of the new-found confidence the school was showing:

#### **BARROW GRAMMAR SCHOOL SPEECH DAY REVIVED**

*The Chairman of Governors (Mr W.H. Wright, J.P.) said they met under favourable circumstances in the revival of the annual speech day ... he congratulated Mr Keeble on reviving the old custom .... they had a beautiful school and a first-class Head Master, who was doing his best to pull the school together again - up to now with a large measure of success. It was for the parents to do their best to help him in furthering the progress of the school by talking about it, of the education its scholars received, and of its beautiful and healthy position. The school was growing, and they wanted to get back to*

*the numbers it could accommodate, over 100.*

*The Head Master said their record was one they could submit without shame, a record of steady progress, both in the class-room and on the field. On their year's working the girls had certainly had the better of the argument. The boys were few in number and younger and smaller than other teams they met in cricket and football, but they had learned the invaluable lesson of taking a beating like sportsmen. The girls had proved no unworthy foes of schools of ten times their number, and in school they were at the moment the dominant sex. Judging from the entries for September the numbers were likely to be levelled up, and the girls would have to look to their laurels.*

*During the year the most visible sign of change was in matters sartorial. They had also seen the inception of the old scholars association, and had already 120 members. The introduction of the house system had made for keen rivalry in work and sport, and for a stronger spirit and comradeship and unselfishness in the school. The historic county names chosen for the houses - Beaumont, Grey, Hastings and Latimer - were in themselves incentive to high endeavour.*

Mr Keeble was keen on sport, carrying out improvements to the playing field and introducing rugby football, cross country running and swimming (using the baths at Loughborough). As the school lacked changing accommodation for teams and games, he launched a fund in 1928 for the building of a pavilion. Examination results improved and the school had a very favourable inspection in 1928.

<i>Inspection Report</i>	<i>November 1928</i>		
<i>Number of Assistant Staff:</i>	7	<i>Regular</i> 3	<i>Visiting</i> 4
<i>Number of pupils:</i>	81	40 boys	41 girls
<i>previous years</i>	1923 55	30	25
	1924 47	25	22
	1925 42	20	22
	1926 48	19	29
	1927 69	32	37

*The prospects now seem brighter than they have for a long time past.*

**Staff:** *The Head Master brings vigour and enthusiasm to his work. In many ways it has been a hard task to face. But the progress already achieved during two years of his administration is considerable and with the support of his Governing Body and the goodwill of the neighbourhood it is likely to be continued.*

**Premises and Equipment:** *A portion of the playing-field has been levelled since the last Inspection; so that one good pitch for hockey and cricket in*

*now available. This improvement however emphasises the need of carrying the work a good deal further; much of the ground that remains unlevelled is at present almost useless.*

*The recovery of numbers reveals the inadequacy of cloakroom accommodation; which is the more serious in view of the development of the games on more serious lines than formerly. The cloakroom shortage might be relieved by the provision of a playing-field pavilion, if this could be placed and designed with special reference to the needs of the School.*

*The lavatory accommodation for the staff is incomplete. (Whatever did this mean?)*

**Music:** *As recommended at the last Inspection, the lessons in Music have been extended higher up the School with most satisfactory results. Unfortunately the Visiting Mistress is now handicapped by a slight deafness.*

**Physical Education:** *The amenities for Physical Education lessons are not satisfactory. The asphalted playground is small and close to the classrooms; there is no gymnasium, nor any facilities for storing movable apparatus when not in use. As a rule the lessons are carried out in the field, when weather permits.*

**General School Activities and Corporate Life:** *All that was seen, both in and out of the classroom, suggested a healthy and easy discipline. The pupils themselves have begun to feel a proper pride in their school.*

*No clubs have yet come into existence. But on the games side there has been progress. Hockey, cricket and tennis are played on the pleasant field adjoining the school buildings. When levelling has been completed and a pavilion built, this side of school life will rest on a good footing, though it will still probably be convenient to rent a field for football as is done now.*

**General Conclusions:** *Situated where it is, the School must always remain a small one. But it has made a definite recovery from a period of depression and there can be no doubt that general public opinion in the area welcomes this recovery. There is much still to be done; but the outlook is promising.*

The view of the Inspectors that the School must always remain a small one must have been shared by Mr Keeble for in 1929 he resigned to become the Head of a larger Grammar School, Sir John Deane's, Northwich, Cheshire, where he built up another fine school before retiring in 1950.

#### **Mr T G Wilkinson**

Mr Thomas George Wilkinson became Head Master on 16 September 1929, a position he held until 1955, making him the longest serving Head of Humphrey Perkins in the twentieth century. He followed the lead set by Mr Keeble in seeking to improve the standard of work, tone and character. Bernard Elliott quotes the

words of Mr Wilkinson at Prize Day 1930 which seem to sum up his aims:

*They are taught to work, to play, to think of others; they are taught good manners and they are being led to follow a truthful, honest and healthy life. Everywhere we are trying to build up character.*

Amongst the New Head Master's early innovations were the installation of electric light throughout the school in 1929 and the installation of the National telephone the following year. Also in 1930 he replaced attendance on Saturday mornings with attendance on Wednesday afternoons. Under him sport flourished, the girls being particularly successful at hockey, cricket and tennis.

These extracts from a Prospectus which appears to have been issued in about 1930 give a picture of the School as it presented itself shortly after Mr Wilkinson had taken over:

*The present buildings into which the School moved in 1901 (sic) and which were further extended in 1913, occupy a charming site on the high ground overlooking Charnwood Forest. The classrooms are light and airy and there is an excellent laboratory for Chemistry and Physics.*

*Playing fields adjoin the buildings and pupils are encouraged to spend all free time in fair weather out of doors. Boys are coached in football (both codes), cricket and tennis, and girls in tennis, net-ball, hockey, badminton and cricket.*

*While swimming is not compulsory it is hoped that all pupils who are physically fit will take advantage of the facilities offered in the Summer Term. Opportunity is given to the boys and girls to attend on separate days at the Loughborough Baths.*

*The aim of the School is to provide a sound education on modern lines, as well as a mental and moral training that shall make for good citizenship. A high standard of the duties of citizenship is placed before the pupils, and the School is organised upon a basis of service, in order to realise, in the school itself, the ideals which are taught.*

**Curriculum:** *The subjects of instruction are Divinity, Latin, French, English Language, Literature and History (Modern European History in Forms V and VI), Geography, Chemistry, Physics, Art, Manual Work (Wood and Leather), and Hygiene, Domestic Science and Needlework for the girls. Physical Training is taken by all, and the girls are also taught Folk Dancing. Music plays a great part in the life of the School. The teaching has for its object the cultivation of a love for, and a knowledge of, good music. There is a small orchestra.*

*There is a convenient train service both from Leicester and the North, and the time-table is arranged to fit this service. Reserved compartments are*

provided. Assembly and prayers are at 8.50 daily and the hours of classes are 9.0 to 10.30 and 10.45 to 12.15. Afternoon school is from 1.45 to 4.

**Fees:** *The tuition fees shall be £3 6s. 8d. per term, which shall include stationery, the use of text books, and school games.*

**Dress:** *Boys attending the School must wear the School Cap and Tie. The Head Master would be glad if parents would encourage boys to wear grey flannel shorts or trousers with the School blazer, at any rate in the Summer Term. Girls must have the regulation straw hat for the summer and black velours for the winter, with the School band, and a gymnastic tunic. A pattern to which all blouses must conform can be obtained at the School. Girls and boys must be provided with light shoes, with a pair of stockings for wet mornings. A sweater is advisable for boys in the winter term and should be of the School pattern.*

**Meals:** *Pupils may order milk for the morning break, if parents so desire. They must bring their own mid-day lunch, but there is a gas stove off the Dining Room which is at their disposal. It is also possible to arrange for mid-day dinners to be supplied in Barrow (at the Boat House) for a limited number of pupils. A hot dinner may be arranged shortly at a fair cost. Pupils pay 1/- per term for the use of school crockery in order that breakages may be replaced without the cost falling on the individual.*

**Co-operation of Parents:** *The School is particularly proud of the good reputation of its pupils when away from the School, in trains or `buses, etc. The Head Master is sure that all parents will see that the leisure time of their sons and daughters, when not actually under school discipline, is so spent that this reputation is not endangered. It is inconsistent with the standard of discipline and good manners maintained in the School that girls or boys should be out after dark without the consent of their parents and without a definite and proper object.*

A Correction Sheet found with the Prospectus gave details of changes which took place later in the 1930s. A Summer Frock of Tobralco is worn by the girls to school design and pattern; the tuition fee has increased to £3 13s. 4d.; and a hot dinner of English meat and two vegetables is provided daily in the School Hall at a charge of 8d. per dinner or 5 dinners per week for 3/-.

*These dinners have given every satisfaction and are so popular that over 90% of the pupils take them. The Head Master dines with the pupils every day.*

For the hot mid-day meal system the School had cause to be grateful to the Head Master's wife for she was its supervisor from the outcome, with Mrs Langton as cook (Mrs Langton had taken over her husband's job as caretaker when he was called up in 1917. She served the School in various capacities until her retirement in 1948). Mrs Wilkinson was so successful in running the scheme that it made a small

financial surplus each year, part of which went to help the school with a small sum being given to Mrs Wilkinson as an honorarium. In one of the correspondence files from this era is a requisition for dinner plates, pudding plates, gravy jugs, vegetable dishes, fruit bowls and meat dishes, all bearing the school crest. One wonders if any of these have survived.

Some of Mr Wilkinson's entries in the School Log Book record the more unusual events of these years:

*June 5 1931 - bought Bechstein baby grand piano for school from an auction sale at Woodhouse for 40 guineas.*

*June 7 1931 - earth tremor felt at school*

*April 18 1933 - 18 go on tour to Belgium for 4 or 5 days under Miss Foster*

*July 27 1933 - school trip to Stratford Memorial Theatre - 35 people went to see 'Hamlet'*

*Feb 14 1934 - pancakes for 80!*

*Dec 9 / 10 1936 - thick fog caused postponement of Christmas Show - Friday's show over by 9.55 to hear farewell speech of Edward VIII*

In a document dated October 1935 Mr Wilkinson provided an analysis of where the pupils of Humphrey Perkins came from. There were 129 pupils on roll: 31 from Barrow, 3 from Cossington, 1 from Seagrave, 20 from Sileby, 1 from Walton, 2 from Burton, 39 from Syston, 2 from Queniborough, 7 from Barkby and Barkby Thorpe, 1 from South Croxton, 1 from Shepshed, 3 from Quorn, 2 from Thurmaston, 1 from Sutton Bonington, 2 from Six Hills, 3 from Loughborough, 2 from Leicester, 1 from Beeby, 1 from Hoton, 3 from Rothley and 2 from Kegworth. Over half of these must have used the train to travel to School, although it is reported elsewhere that the cycle accommodation at the School was inadequate as the number of pupils cycling to School was about 34 in the Summer and 24 in Winter.

Mr Wilkinson took up Mr Keeble's idea for a pavilion but proposed to add to it an assembly hall which could double as a gymnasium, plus a dining room, staff room and other small rooms. The old students were quick to support this financially, LEA support was also forthcoming as the number of pupils was again rising, and the hall was officially opened on 13 October 1932. In 1937 panelling was added and honours boards donated. The hall still finds use as a gymnasium although the pavilion has been converted to other uses.

The number of pupils attending the school rose steadily from 88 in 1929 to 151 in 1939 and 260 in 1945. One major building the school lacked was a purpose built library and in 1936 Mr Wilkinson appealed for funds for this to commemorate the 220th anniversary of the opening of the school. During the School prize-giving ceremony on 20 October 1938 a member of the Governing Body, Mrs Nivison

Cross, passed a note to Mr Wilkinson stating:

*I shall be pleased to give the Library - it will be The Francis and Sarah Ann Robinson*

The note is preserved in the School Log Book.

The local newspaper reported the event thus:

*There was a dramatic moment during the prize-giving at the Humphrey Perkins Grammar School at Barrow-upon-Soar on Thursday of last week. During the presentation of the prizes, Mrs M. L. Nivison Cross, one of the governors, handed a note to Mr T.G. Wilkinson, the headmaster, expressing her willingness to give a library to the school, to be named after her parents, 'The Francis and Sarah Ann Robinson Library.' The Headmaster at once made an announcement to the assembled scholars and friends, saying, "My dream has come true," and loud cheers followed. "This gift," said the Headmaster, "is beneficent, munificent and magnificent." A hearty vote of thanks was proposed to Mrs Cross, who has since had a letter of thanks from the County Director of Education, Mr W.A. Brockington, whose department will shortly get in touch with the Headmaster, for the purpose of getting on, as soon as possible, with the erection of the Library, which, to comply with the views of the Board, is to be large enough to hold a class of at least 30, and contain about 900 square feet. It will probably stand at the rear of the school.*

*Mrs Nivison Cross will always be gratefully remembered at the Loughborough Hospital, for she has endowed four beds in memory of her parents and her late husband, Mr Ambrose Wootton Cross. The women's ward at the Loughborough Hospital is known as 'The Mary Nivison Cross Ward.' Humphrey Perkins School is fortunate in possessing such a good friend.*

Construction began in March 1939, but the opening was delayed by the outbreak of war and did not take place until November 1939. A stained glass coat of arms commemorating the donation was placed in the bow window of the Library in 1964.

Incidentally, the prize-giving of 1938 was featured in some national newspapers, including the *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Mirror*, because of some remarks by the Headmaster on the subject of darts:

*In addition to table tennis, darts have been introduced, not because I want my boys to go out into the world well qualified to take their place in the dart teams of the local hostelrys, but because I think it is a fine game and gives wonderful practice in mental arithmetic.*

On a more sombre note it was reported at the prize-giving that two boys of 14, together with the Headmaster, had passed the examination for air raid warden, and the boys had already received their ARP badges.

During the 1930s examination results showed steady improvement and in 1935 for

the first time two Humphrey Perkins students gained places at university, followed by two more in 1937. After the war the trend accelerated with the first award of a place at Oxford University in 1948 and the first State Scholarship in 1954.

The cultural side of the School was strong. The Head built on the dramatic tradition started by Mr Keeble by producing plays himself for the School Dramatic Society in the years up to the war. A measure of the ambition of Mr Wilkinson and the Dramatic Society is that the Christmas production in 1938 was T.S. Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral', which was claimed to be its first production in Leicestershire. Societies were also encouraged by him, including the Literary & Philosophical and the Geography, and visits to places in this country and overseas took place.

A full Inspection of the School in June 1939 gives some idea of how the School had progressed under the care of Mr Wilkinson.

***Nature and Scope of the School:** The most gratifying feature of the School's progress since the last Inspection has been the steady growth of numbers from 81 in 1928 to 156 on 1 October, 1938. This expansion has been accompanied by a more than proportional increase in the numbers of the Sixth Form, which contained on the latter date 20 pupils.*

***Premises and Equipment:** The accommodation has been improved since the last Full Inspection by the addition of a hall-gymnasium and a wooden hut which houses a small Form as well as Handicraft equipment. Attached to the hall are a kitchen, boys' changing room with shower-annexe, junior girls' cloakroom, Masters' staff room, and a very small pavilion. Further improvements include the installation of electric light, the levelling of the playing-field, and the construction of new tennis courts.*

*... Even so, the problem of accommodation is far from being solved. There is no girls' changing room, and the girls have no facilities for baths after exercise. The floor and wall space available in the hall for Physical Training is small by modern standards and the use of this room for assembly, Gymnastics, Art, Music, Needlework, Cookery, and as a dining-hall for over 100 pupils was certainly not envisaged when the building was constructed. When financial circumstances permit, the erection of a new gymnasium with ancillary changing rooms and showers, or of a dining-room and kitchen (which might release the present kitchen as a girls' changing room) should be considered.*

*A more pressing problem ... is caused by the size of the laboratory. This room has no store or preparation room and is ... quite inadequate for practical work by Forms of 30. ... a considerable expenditure on scientific equipment is now necessary if this subject is to be properly taught.*

*The school has provided a wireless receiving set out of its own resources, but an episcopescope is badly needed.*

***Staff:** The smooth running of the organisation and the harmonious co-operation of staff and pupils are a testimony to his (the Headmaster's) powers of leadership. Attention is drawn to the Head Master's heavy teaching programme, which renders his duties of general supervision very difficult. It is felt that the provision of some form of part-time clerical assistance and the lightening of his time-table are highly desirable in the School's interests. The Senior Mistress, appointed two years ago, ... has established happy relations with the girls and works in complete harmony with the Head Master*

***Music:** The Head Master takes all the Music. He is a keen and a good pianist and singer. (That is exactly the way it was printed in the original report. One wonders what the missing word was.)*

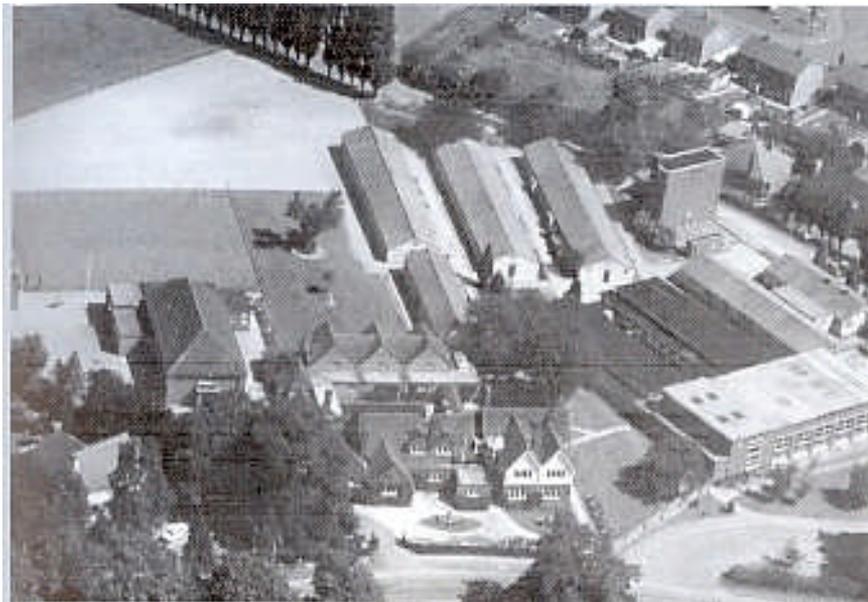
*... out-of-school activities are carried on by the Dramatic Society, which has a long record of successful performances to its credit, and in the winter terms by the Literary and Philosophic Society. In the summer a Swimming Club flourishes. Short expeditions to places of interest are made and it is hoped that a fresh start will soon be made with foreign journeys during the holidays.... Such activities are all evidence of a healthy school life, and much credit is due to the staff for its large share in furthering these ends.*

***General Conclusions:** The last ten years have seen steady progress in numbers, work and corporate activities. The pupils pass their days in the happy atmosphere of an organisation in which all are expected to contribute their share of service. While it cannot be said that real distinction is to be found in the work of any department, the general standard of attainment is satisfactory.*

And then, of course, came the Second World War. The main documentary source of information about how this affected the School is a set of minutes of meetings of Governors. The first reference came in October 1939 when it was reported that Mr J.R. Brown, the gardener, had resigned from his post to take up munition work. In February 1940 the war affected the train service and the Governors gave approval to the temporary alteration by the Head Master of the School time-table owing to the alteration in the train service which it was hoped would be returned to normal after about a month. The revised School hours were 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1.45 to 5 p.m.. In fact, the revised time-table continued until Whitsuntide.

The School Log Book also records how cold that first winter of the war was. On 5 January Mr Wilkinson noted that the temperature during the day was 27° Fahrenheit, falling to 11° overnight, and the River Soar was frozen. From 27 - 29 January snow lay to a depth of 3 feet, with a thickness of 4 feet 6 inches in the Quad. The thaw set in on Founder's Day (7 February), the river flooded and there was water on the hockey field.

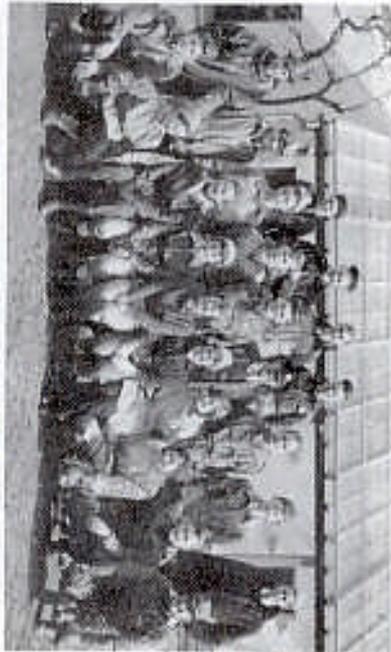
Also in February 1940 approval was given to the appointment of a part-time clerical assistant for the Head Master *as a temporary measure during war-time*. The person appointed was the Head Master's wife at a payment of £39 per annum. It seems very



Aerial View of the school in the 1950s



The swimming pool before it was covered



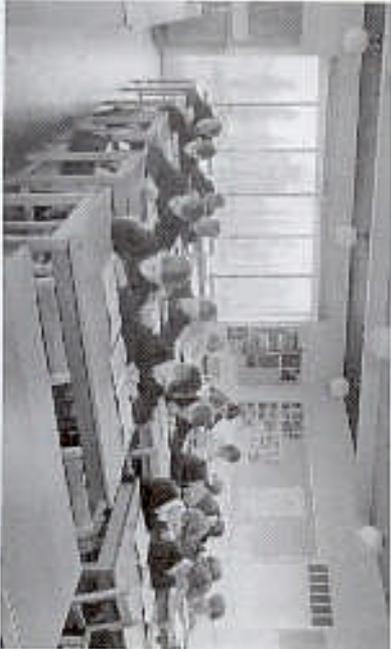
1956 Geography Field Trip



Orchard Block Terrace



Activity in Assembly Hall 1958



Classroom in Orchard Block 1958

strange to us that a Head was not considered to need a clerical assistant under normal circumstances, and we begin to have a better understanding of the many and varied duties he was called on to undertake.

In July 1940 it was reported that three evacuees had recently applied for admission and the Head had allowed them to attend the School with a view to enrolment from the commencement of the Autumn Term. In addition, a girl evacuated from Spilsby was admitted along with the two children of a man from Brussels who had come as a refugee to Syston.

The Old Students at their own expense blacked out one large room for play readings and cinema shows, and a letter was sent to every parent regarding the arrangements for pupils travelling home during an 'Alert'. In 1941 the School was adopted as a Rest Centre which meant that room had to be found in already overcrowded buildings for all sorts of equipment: 16 chemical closets and 2 kitchens took up half the smaller cycle shed.

Hot school dinners had been very popular before the War but a circular, which had to be sent to parents as part of a national scheme to ensure that children were well nourished during the war, made them even more popular. As a result 132 out of the 136 children who lived outside Barrow and seven out of the 21 who lived in Barrow took a hot dinner every day. The kitchen, originally designed for 40 - 50 dinners, was hopelessly inadequate and Mr Wilkinson commented in his report:

*I leave it to your imagination to visualise the difficulties of Mrs Langton and her assistants (four in number) working in a kitchen 18 feet by 10 in which there is a sink of ordinary suburban size. There is no storeroom accommodation and in these times food often arrives in bulk and has to be stored.*

In July 1941 there were twelve evacuees on the School roll. During War Weapons Week £1573 was invested through the School National Savings Association. In addition, owing to the lack of transport swimming at the Loughborough Baths had to be discontinued. Mr Wilkinson reported that this loss of swimming 'was a serious war casualty'. School games were not suffering although transport difficulties led to the curtailment of fixtures.

Twenty-five boys were engaged with local farmers and put in the following time during school hours:

Mr Mason, Six Hills	156_ hours	cleaning ground
Mr Clemerson, Barrow	80 hours	singling beet
Mr Barker, Seagrave	80 hours	weeding charlock

The total amount earned was £6 11s 11d which was disbursed among the boys. The Second, Third and Fourth Form boys did school gardening on Fridays instead of their discontinued handicraft, the produce going to the school dinners.

A member of staff, Mr Daniels, was called up to a commission in the RAF. Meanwhile, in July 1941 the School Air Training Corps numbered 24 boys with Mr Wesley as Acting Flying Officer in charge of it. The attendance was reported to be splendid and some of the boys had put in more than 20 hours training above what was required.

At the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 1941 there were 8 official evacuees on the roll - 5 from London, 2 from Sheffield, 1 from Coventry - and 3 private evacuees. Mr Wilkinson reported the best ever Oxford School Certificate results as regards percentage of passes and quality, and this in spite of the fact that the Maths and Science teacher had left in the middle of the year, and for two months the school had worked two periods a day less owing to the black-out.

The average percentage of pupils taking hot dinners during the year 1940-41 was about 92% and 21,000 dinners were served. The profit per dinner worked out at .158 of one penny and this resulted in a credit balance of over £50. When War Weapons Week came along, Mrs Wilkinson invested in War Loan £60 from the accumulated surplus on dinners. Mr Wilkinson stated in his September 1941 report:

*I know the Governors are always lavish in their praises of my wife but I think this year she has excelled herself. In spite of rationing difficulties, the extra numbers, the enormous amount of extra secretarial work owing to food control, let alone the planning of menus which can only be decided upon from day to day, she and the cooks have been able to maintain their high standard of catering and I can safely say that there was not one faulty dinner out of the 21,000 served.*

*The rules for blacking-out the School circularised by the Director would, I think, leave too much for Mrs Langton to do as there are no less than 58 windows to black-out at the end of each day and to 'white-in' each morning. I have therefore delegated the blacking-out of the classrooms, Hall, changing rooms and Handicraft room among the staff and the 6th Form. This has been in progress a week and seems quite satisfactory. Mrs Langton is responsible for her own kitchen, the cloakrooms, corridor and Girls Offices.*

During the war Mr Wilkinson performed the sad duty of recording in the School Log Book the names of a number of former pupils who had died on active service. He also included poems he wrote in memory of three of them which were published in the local press. It is believed that the families were presented with copies of the poems written on parchment. Here is one of them:

*In Memoriam*

*Arnold Ernest Davies, R.A.F.*

*Humphrey Perkins School, Barrow, 1932 - 38*

*He lived many hours in a single hour,  
And crammed into his shortened span*

*An Odyssey which well might flower  
The bud of youth to make a man.*

*He left his Midland market-town  
And heard the tide up Fundy roar;  
He saw the Trade-winds bending down  
The palms on blue Miami shore.*

*And in the summer sun and rain  
When Moray Firth with beauty fills,  
Air-borne he saw below again  
'The Spey in her enfolding hills'.*

*His torch of life to one clear end  
Was held as one would hold a flame;  
So clear and strong that it would lend  
A light to all who near him came.*

*In honour this young eagle died;  
Home they brought him to his nest.  
In pride he spread his wings out wide;  
In pride we'll fold them on his breast.*

8th November 1942 T.G.W.

In September 1942 there were 165 pupils on roll, including seven official evacuees, 3 boys and 4 girls. Of the 150 pupils remaining in school for mid-day meal, 148 were taking the hot dinner. Later it was reported that during 1942 a total of 66 pupils had been released for farming and 4 for weeding. 45 pupils did potato setting, 21 singling and hoeing and 57 potato lifting. Under private arrangement 134 boy weeks were worked during summer holidays.

Mary James (née Taylor) recalls her years at the School:

*My memories go back to September 1942 when I started in the first form, having passed the Annual Schools' Examination ... (known as the scholarship) at the tender age of 10 years and 1 month .... I was the youngest pupil in the whole school which then had just 150 pupils. There were 40 of us in the first form at that time and I believe that we were the last single form entry as the following year there were enough admissions to split the entry into two forms - forms 1A and 1B.*

*In the winter the girls wore black velour hats with a red detachable hatband bearing the school badge, and in the summer the same hat band adorned a panama hat. A navy pleated tunic with white shirt blouse and school tie, black stockings and sensible black shoes were worn, topped for outdoor wear by a regulation gabardine mackintosh and school scarf which was usually had knitted. In the summer the girls' uniform consisted of a brown checked gingham dress with the school blazer bearing the badge on the pocket. Later on, the rules were changed to allow pupils to wear dresses of checked gingham in their house colours.*

*Boys wore grey trousers (and at that time the younger boys wore short trousers), a black school blazer and cap. It was a school rule that the cap should be worn at all times on the way to and from school, although when out of sight of the Head's study window some brave souls stuffed the cap into a pocket or satchel.*

*One of the idiosyncrasies of T. G. Wilkinson was that whenever he wanted to attract somebody's attention if they were on the field and out of voice range, he would put his fingers to this mouth and emit a piercing whistle. There was no excuse for ignoring his summons and woe betide those who did!*

*As I lived at that time at Barkby the mode of travel to school was by train. We usually cycled to Syston where we left our cycles at a friend's house, and caught the train at about 8.15 am to Barrow. From the station we all walked up the path along the top of the embankment now called the Rookery path, and on to Cotes Road and up to school. At night we did the journey in reverse catching the train at about 4.10 pm, unless one had to stay later at school for things like games practice or worse still, detention. On those occasions we caught the train at 5.30 pm.*

*A rule at the school was that everybody had to donate, on the first day of every term, one shilling which was known as the library shilling and this money went towards the upkeep of the library. ... I remember that no-one was allowed into the library in their shoes, as the floor was made of polished cork tiles, and as a consequence there were always many pairs of shoes in the tiny vestibule while the pupils within were in their stockinged feet.*

*Some of the members of staff I recall ... were Miss Walker who taught us French, her sister Miss Marjorie Walker who taught History and died suddenly at a young age, Miss Evans - Science, Miss Towle - Biology, Mr F.B. ('Bug') Wesley - English, Miss Partington - Needlework and Miss Monk - Art. There was a preponderance of women teachers as many of the men at that time had been called up to join the forces.*

*Most children partook of the school dinners, cooked on the premises by Mrs Langton and her kitchen assistants which cost 2s.6d. a week in 1942. At a later date they actually went down briefly to 2s.1d. which amounted to 5d. per day or in present day currency 2p. For that we had a 2 course meal which was not exactly exciting but which provided a reasonably nourishing meal that supplemented the rations everyone was allowed at home.*

*Everyone in the school belonged to one of the (then) three houses named Grey, Beaumont and Latimer after local historical figures. Later as the school grew bigger Hastings was added. One inter-house competition which took place annually was the Singing Shield, in which members of each house formed a choir and practised three set pieces which were judged by a panel of staff on a set day. The responsibility for organising the choir and the pianist*

*accompanist and taking the rehearsals was the duty of the House Captains and there was great rivalry during the competitions.*

Agricultural work and hot dinners were the only items connected with the war to appear in the reports of the 1943/44 meetings: the School was used as a Harvest Camp for five weeks in August 1943 by a contingent of the Girls Training Corps and a contingent from Market Harborough Grammar School. Because the new apparatus and utensils ordered for the kitchen did not arrive until December the School had to have two sessions for dinner until the Autumn half term, with 188 out of the 194 scholars on roll taking the hot meal. The Head Master was pleased to report that, "*all the children now enjoy a certain amount of raw vegetable served with every meal*"! It would be interesting to know what led to this item at the Governors' Meeting in February 1944: *It was resolved to support the Head Master's action in placing Dances out of bounds for pupils unless accompanied by their parents.* In the summer of 1944 arrangements were being made for two more Harvest camps, each lasting two weeks during the Summer vacation, one organised by the Barrow-on-Soar Girls' Training Corps and the other by Lutterworth and Market Harborough Grammar Schools.

In February 1945 it was reported that the numbers in attendance of 231 still included 7 evacuees. An Old Boy, Lieut. W.F. Yates was awarded the Military Cross and 13 Old Boys held commissioned rank in H. M. Forces. By July of that year when Mr Wilkinson was writing his Head Master's report for the Governors, he was sounding rather tetchy, not surprisingly given the problems of running a school in war-time when pupil numbers had increased by over 50% but this had not been matched by an increase in accommodation:

*I don't know whether it is the cumulative effect of the war or whether there is something wrong with the Wolds but three of the pupils from that district have been so ill that they have been away in one case for a year and two for a whole term ..... The staggered holidays have become staggering holidays in their import. From June 30th to the end of term (School finished much later in July in those days) 32 pupils will be away for a week or a fortnight and already some have asked to be released from school at the beginning of next term. (The School was not due to open until 18th September as it was again to be used as a Harvest Camp.)*

*If this grows, as it is likely to do, public examinations will have to be taken in the Christmas term and the July month set aside for all those subjects and activities we should like to enjoy if there were no public examinations in that term.*

Seventy or eighty former students served in the forces, twelve of whom died for their country. A war memorial panel bearing their names was placed in the Hall in 1947 and a war memorial seat, inscribed with the initials of the fallen, was erected under the walnut tree outside the pavilion.

In following the details of the School's involvement with the Home Front some items have been missed from the general history of the School. It is now time to return to those. In 1943 the numbers in attendance were such that the School had to become two-form entry for the first time in its existence: Form 1a had 34 pupils and Form 1b 35. In comparison, the Second Form which entered in 1942 had 39 pupils. The Head Master pointed out what the consequences would be as the 1943 intake moved through the School during the next few years: new accommodation was needed - and quickly. A request was put in for a prefabricated hut to provide two additional classrooms and these were in place for September 1944. And it was reported that Mrs Langton had resigned her post as caretaker at the beginning of June 1945, having served the School for thirty-five years.

Towards the end of the War important legislation was passed in the form of the Education Act of 1944. This was to bring about significant changes at Humphrey Perkins. One provision of the Act was for the abolition of all fees in LEA controlled schools from 1 April 1945. Another was that henceforth admission to the grammar school was to be by selection, the 11+ examination.

The Act also raised the school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen but the implementation of this was delayed until 1947. As a consequence of this, 52 children who had attended the unreorganised all-age schools in the district moved to Humphrey Perkins in 1947 as there was no room for them in their own schools. This introduction of 'modern secondary' children, which is how they are usually referred to in the official documents, was the start of the bi-lateral organisation at Humphrey Perkins School. A complicating factor at this time was the decision of the Governors of the Rawlins School in Quorn that it should become a grammar school for girls only. In 1950, when the number of these 14+ children had risen to 119, the scheme was extended to children aged 13+ bringing about a further increase in numbers.

The increase in numbers in the grammar school and the post-war influx of the modern secondary children meant that even more accommodation was needed - quickly. 1946 saw the start of the erection of a new prefabricated hut to accommodate two laboratories and a storeroom, although these were not completed until September 1947, the facilities for the teaching of Science in these rooms following in 1948, such was the shortage of materials in the post-war years. A new dining hall and kitchen, begun in June 1946 and constructed along the same lines, were opened in the spring of 1948. This was the age of the HORSAs which also provided accommodation for the modern secondary children. New blocks containing toilets, showers, changing rooms and cloakrooms followed in autumn 1949. Accommodation must have been an ongoing nightmare for the Head Master. In 1947, for example, he was expressing his concern whether any heating would be available in time for the Modern School Side buildings and being reassured by the County Architect that some method of heating would be available. At the same time the Head agreed to make his own dining room available as a male staff room owing

to the lack of suitable accommodation in the School.

There were happier moments amid the stress and strain. In July 1945 Mr Wilkinson reported that for the first time in the history of the School there was a pupil who was intent on becoming a doctor. She was about to take up a year's pre-medical course at Leicester University College, and a slightly younger boy pupil shared her ambition.

*It is a sign of the times we are living in that the pupils who are leaving this July are generally aiming higher than a clerical career. Three are going in for teaching, three for nursing, one for Domestic Science, one at a School of Therapy, one as a radiologist, one for medicine, and at last one for the Church,*

As the Autumn Term opened in September 1947 the numbers in the School reached record levels: 322 pupils on the Grammar School side (144 boys, 178 girls); 52 on the Modern School side (23 boys and 29 girls). The Head considered the time had arrived when he should have a full-time clerical assistant.

Barbara Metherell (née Hird) writes:

*The winter of 1947, my first at the school, was a very cold one and large amounts of snow fell. The school boilers burst and we had three weeks 'holiday' until they were repaired, which was great because we could spend our time sledging!*

*T.G. Wilkinson was also the Head when my two sisters, who are 10 and 8 years older than me, were at the school. When my second sister was there, the Head had got from us one of our dog's pups, who he called Spud. Soon after Spud joined him Mr Wilkinson told the school at assembly that he puppy had behaved 'like Shakespeare's fourteen pools' all over the study. In later years, when I was there, Spud was said by TGW to be the only dog to receive a GCE and when Spud died he was buried in the bit of garden just to the right of the main school gate if one stands with one's back to the school.*

*I remember Mr Wilkinson with great affection. He was, I believe, a warm-hearted man. I remember one day he was sitting on the RAF memorial seat, built round the walnut tree, just chatting to a few of us and asking us questions and if we gave him the correct answer, we were given a walnut. Another time he was sitting at my table for lunch when he suddenly asked those of us who were on the table to stop eating for minute and listen. When he asked us what we could hear, we all said, "Nothing," and he informed us that that was because everyone was too busy eating to talk because they were all enjoying the food so much. The main course that day was Mrs Cook's speciality - Cheese pie, which was really just mashed potato with grated cheese mixed in, topped with more grated cheese, which made a lovely crisp topping and was always served with beetroot.*

*We also, I think perhaps twice a year, towards the end of term had a general knowledge quiz, which was a mixture of things about the school, like how many*

*green bottles are there in the eaves of the old school roof; (I think there are eight); how many poplar trees are there round the bottom of the school field (32); the meaning of the school motto, honeste audax - honourably bold or nobly daring; the meaning of the RAF motto on the memorial seat - dulce et decorum est pro patria mori - it is sweet and right to die for one's fatherland. In addition, there were general knowledge questions of things outside of the school. I can't remember them now, except for some reason, the question 'What is Hansard?'*

The School had now grown to such an extent that the Head Master had to announce to the Governors in January 1948 that the Hall would no longer be able to hold all the scholars and parents for the annual Prize Day. In addition, the question of playing fields and asphalt playgrounds was becoming really serious as the children had nowhere to expend their energy when the grass was wet. Six Lower Sixth Form boys had transferred from Rawlins School, Quorn and a further 28 pupils had joined the Modern side. It was reported from the Modern side that 95% of the girls and 70% of the boys enjoyed being members of Humphrey Perkins School and were in their way proud of the fact. One of their teachers said Modern A was the nicest and best behaved form she had ever had to teach.

The Head Master noted in his report:

*In order that my attempt at parity of esteem may be successful, the Modern girls must be in a position to learn to play tennis..... we ought to purchase 8 tennis racquets for their use.*

There were problems with the railway because of the growth of the School, the Head complaining about the inadequacy of the shelter accommodation at Barrow Station, and, following representations, an additional train was being provided in the afternoons, starting from Loughborough at 4.20 p.m. immediately following the express.

At their January 1949 meeting the Governors stood as a mark of respect to the memory of Mrs Langton, the former caretaker and Cook/Supervisor, who had died recently. Later old scholars contributed to a memorial to her, a brass plate on the door of the school kitchen bearing these words: *Through this doorway Sarah Langton served more than half a million meals to pupils of this school.*

One unusual feature of the School at this time was that its new practical facilities for Handicrafts and Domestic Science in the HORSAs were being used by pupils from other schools, a total of 85 pupils on Mondays and Wednesdays from Barrow Church of England School, Quorn Church of England School and Loughborough St Mary's R.C. School. And a Young Farmers Club had been created in the School.

There was bad news on the staffing front in the Head Master's report in October 1949:

*No applications have been received for the additional post advertised at 1/6d*

*per hour for 15 hours a week to clean the new Sanitary Blocks. Rather than the Blocks should stand idle, the children are at the moment cleaning them in children's fashion. I don't know how long the parents will stand for this ...*

*Bound up with this question is the new Fuel Chamber. Both caretakers being of mature years refuse to embark upon a project which calls for specialised knowledge and intelligence, and the agility necessary to climb a forty foot perpendicular ladder.*

Class sizes were also concerning Mr Wilkinson: there were only three classes below thirty with the remainder varying from thirty-two to thirty-eight.

*When one considers that we used to think in term of twenty-five for a Grammar School Form and anything over 30 had to have a special dispensation from the Inspector, it shows to what lengths we are sinking.*

The Head Master was also concerned about the Sixth Form results, pointing out that only by a generous staffing ratio for the Sixth Form and a proper home for them can real Sixth Form work be done. There was, however, one bright spot in all the gloom: Derek Whittington of Sileby became the first pupil in the history of the School (not a son of the Head Master) to go to one of the older universities (Oxford).

There were problems with the site where the new buildings had been completed. There was no fencing, one dustbin had been stolen and the canteen floor almost ruined because of the cinder paths leading to it.

It is instructive to look at the School's finances for the year 1948 - 49. Out of a total expenditure of £17,005 teacher salaries amounted to £11,430, Clerical Assistants £83, Books £429, and Stationery & Materials £801.

By February 1950 because of the increasing numbers an additional bus from Rothley to the School had been chartered at a cost of £1 10s a day, and the first seeds of the next major extension to the School were being sown as Governors were considering the possibility of acquiring the Nursery Gardens and Orchard adjacent to the School owned by Mr T Gillott and rented by Mr Measham who would be giving up the tenancy on 25 March next. The site contained 7.083 acres which was slightly larger than the site of the original school purchased at the turn of the century. The School certainly needed it as news came later in the year that the 13-14 age group in the Mountsorrel and Quorn Senior Schools was to be transferred to Humphrey Perkins in September, bringing the number on roll to 499, a new landmark. In addition, the Barrow Senior School wished to send its pupils in the 13-14 age group but this request had to be turned down.

The LEA purchased the extra land in May 1950 but there followed a frustrating delay before the Minister of Education allowed planning to begin in 1953 prior to the start of building in March 1954. This was to be the Orchard Block, a two-storey building containing six general classrooms plus specialist rooms for Woodwork and Metalwork, for Art & Craft, for Needlework, and for History, Geography and

Science. At the same time a new assembly hall was to be built next to the sanitary blocks and canteen. This would allow the foyer of the hall to be used as an extension to the canteen, and the changing rooms in the blocks to be used for both P.E. and plays. The estimated cost of the two buildings was in excess of £77,000.

It was around this time that the Beacon Field on the other side of Cotes Road was purchased to be used as playing fields, although the pitches were not ready for use until 1953. Another sign that the School was expanding came in July 1951 when the first Laboratory Assistant was appointed and the following year came moves to change the status of the School to that of a County School. This was necessary because permission had to be sought to enlarge the School to provide additional accommodation for 360 children. Where would all these children come from? It was the completion of the provisions of the 1944 Education Act with Humphrey Perkins taking from its feeder schools all pupils at the age of 11, having first divided them into Grammar and Modern from the results of the 11+ examination.

In 1952 the 13+ pupils from Barrow Church of England school moved on to Humphrey Perkins for the first time, the number on roll passing 500 for the first time at 529, and it was in this year that the School used for rugby and football the playing fields adjacent to Quorn Hall Hostel by arrangement with Loughborough Training College for Teachers. 1952 also brought the sad news of the death in October of the Deputy Head, Mr F.B. Wesley, who had served the School well for 24 years but had been ill for some time. Donations came in from present and former scholars towards a Frank Wesley Memorial Prize for English.

Examination results were very good this year with six excellent Advanced Level candidates and 59 out of 62 candidates obtained certificates in the new Ordinary Level examination. Fortunately we have Mr Wilkinson's speech which he delivered at the annual Prize Distribution in November. Let him tell us about the new examination and a few other things besides, remembering that he has been Head Master of Humphrey Perkins for twenty-three years, has seen the School safely through the Second World War, and seen its numbers grow from 88 to 529, so he can be excused if he goes in for some straight talking:

*I think it was two years ago when I said that this new examination would enable pupils to do as much or as little work as they pleased, and in the sixty-six successful names this year, there are some pupils who have scored as few as 45 marks, and some as many as over 500! That is why I have only awarded prizes to those who have passes in five subjects or more at the Ordinary Level.*

*But even there we can find some anomalies. There is a pupil among those 66 who has passed in all six subjects, but when he or she writes accepting the invitation to be present tonight, I find that he or she cannot spell 'speech', 'parents', or 'Governors'. It may be a General Certificate of Education but it is not a certificate of 'general' education, and for a boy or girl to receive these coveted parchments without passing in English or Arithmetic appals me.*

*In an old-fashioned Victorian melodrama, called 'The Silver King' by Henry Arthur James, the chief character says something like*

*"O God turn back thy universe and give me my yesterdays."*

*I would say that for 80% of our educable children we might well apostrophise the Deity and ask, "Turn back this educational joy-wheel and give us the three R's again."*

It is very much in keeping with the times that the Head, after mentioning the achievement of one girl pupil who gained a County Major Scholarship, devotes a lengthy paragraph to the success stories of individual boy former scholars, before devoting a much shorter paragraph to the achievements of the girls:

*Of the girls I don't hear so much. They become successful nurses, university students, teachers and hockey players. And they make charming brides. This I know well because I was honoured twice this year by being asked to propose their health at their wedding receptions.*

Mr Wilkinson reserved his closing remarks to the subject of television in the home, a subject of much debate at the time, when only a few families possessed a nine or twelve inch black and white set:

*Let me say 'straight-the-way' as they say in Leicestershire, I don't want it in the school. ... it is something that cannot be avoided, and its impact is going to be terrific, especially with the Coronation in the offing..... I would say that an educated man is among other things a well-informed man, and in my 61 years I have picked up a few crumbs of knowledge. But since I have had a TV set I have picked up at least half a loaf which the proverb tells us is better than no bread ..... To people living in rural areas TV can be a Godsend. You need not worry about its influence on children. It should of course be rationed for them, just as you would ration port at Christmas, but when I think that in this village, where I understand there are about 240 television sets, on a bleak November night you can make your first acquaintance with a play by Ibsen, you can sit down at Claridge's and watch a mannequin parade, you can learn of the latest developments in science and medicine, you can be bored or beguiled by fripperies or tripe, but you will be thrown into the hub of things instead of vegetating on the verge. And you won't be in the dark either. All these stories about wasting time - wide-eyed children going to bed late - are not true in a sensible home*

Strong words, which I believe found their way into some of the newspapers.

For a pupil's view of TG at this time we turn to Stuart Liquorish who was at Humphrey Perkins from 1953 to 1959:

*Every morning the pupils would gather for assembly in the School Hall, which doubled as the gymnasium. The staff would then file in and take their seats on the stage. When everyone was in place the deputy headmaster Mr Marshall,*

*known to one and all as 'Masher', would nod to the Head Boy who would run to the Headmaster's residence, the house which forms part of the old school, to inform him that all was ready.*

*Mr Wilkinson would then make his entrance, sweeping majestically down the hall past the rows of pupils standing in hushed reverence in the body of the hall, mount the steps leading to the stage and with a crisp nod to the staff take his place behind the large oak table positioned centre stage.*

*This performance never failed to impress me as a young pupil, the Headmaster's gown billowing behind him as he strode past us, although the magic faded slightly on the occasions when he overslept and there was a long delay before the Head Boy returned with his charge.*

*Mr Wilkinson was extremely proud of the school, with very good reason. He was very insistent on us always behaving correctly and was a stickler for correct uniform. At one morning assembly he was lecturing us on the evils of wearing the latest fashion, lime green socks, which admittedly did look rather out of place, when he became aware of some disturbance amongst the assembled ranks. He was clearly perplexed until he remembered that he himself was wearing a pair of vivid yellow socks clearly visible through his open sandals. He did have the grace to smile but he didn't relent, we were expected to do as he said not as he did.*

1953 - Coronation year and the purchase of a Union Jack for £4 19s and a forty foot flag pole from the Forest of Dean for £10 10s. The planting of twelve pink chestnuts and twelve flowering cherries on the new playing field. Three extra days holiday - the first three days of Coronation Week. The Education Committee decided that each school should be given a book about the Queen or the Royal Family; a Coronation Vase made in the Loughborough College of Art; and the remainder of the Coronation Fund used to give each school a worthy gift. Humphrey Perkins was allotted the sum of £30, which the School decided to augment from its own funds, to commission a piece of sculpture which could be placed in the Quadrangle. The work was commissioned from a student from the Leicester College of Art.

The first ever Athletic Sports Day on the Beacon Field took place on Saturday 18 July (Sports Day usually took place on a Saturday to enable as many parents as possible to attend.) Mr Wilkinson made an amusing reference to the new field in his Annual Report on Prize Day when he welcomed a new member of staff, Mr Cardy who had come to teach Mathematics:

*Note only has he brought to the School a wealth of mathematical experience, but he is also an expert in the procurement and disbursement of a comestible known as ice-cream. We make no apology for selling it as I understand our lollies do not contain lead, their sticks are useful for lighting fires or pipes, and ice-cream itself contains riboflavin. What I may say later on may give my pupils food for thought but from what I can see at the Tuck Shop they mostly*

*have thought for food. You will be pleased to know that out of the profits since last March we are going to buy a pair of ornamental iron gates for the new Beacon Playing Field.*

This is one of the very few references to that venerable institution, the Tuck Shop, which has contributed so much to the life of the School both socially and financially. I am sure past and present generations of pupils will always be grateful to the members of staff who gave up their breaks to run it and their spare time to make sure that it was stocked.

In his report Mr Wilkinson also mentioned other highlights of this year: the magnificent performance by the Dramatic & Musical Society of the new opera, *The Great Bell of Burley*; week-long visits to Paris and Snowdonia; and the staking-out of the new classroom block.

There is also a reference in the Head Master's report to the Governors in December of this year to a boy called Haslam who had been transferred to the School during the year largely because of his ability to play a musical instrument. The story of David Haslam is a remarkable success story in itself but it is important in another way because of the effect it is said to have had on the thinking of Stewart Mason, the then Director of Education for Leicestershire. An account of this appears in *Stewart Mason: The Art of Education* by Donald Jones, Lawrence & Wishart 1988. According to Jones, this one particular event had an influence on his thinking about the abolition of the 11+ examination and the move to comprehensive schools. Somehow Stewart Mason got to hear of David Haslam who was in a low stream of a secondary modern school in Loughborough. When the school acquired a collection of musical instruments and David Haslam was allocated a piccolo it was discovered that he had a very promising musical talent. Under normal circumstances he would have left school at fifteen and that talent might have been lost, but Stewart Mason and Eric Pinkett, the Music Adviser, decided that they had somehow to keep him at school until he was seventeen or eighteen when he could go on to one of the music colleges. They found the solution in Humphrey Perkins because it was a bi-lateral school with Grammar and Modern sides on the same site. At the end of the year David was promoted to the Grammar side, he became the top of his form, passed a number of subjects at 'O' level, had a year in the Sixth Form and won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in 1957 where he studied flute and piano before going on to become first flautist with the Northern Symphonia Orchestra, and eventually an associate conductor for Rudolph Schwartz. Stewart Mason is reported to have said: "*I began to realise how often kids can totally change at puberty, and how many late developers there are. I was convinced that somehow we had to get rid of the 11-plus.*" Ironically, this would lead eventually to the end of Humphrey Perkins as a Grammar School - but more of that later.

In September 1954 Mr Wilkinson reported that there were 517 pupils on roll, 350 in the Grammar School and 167 in the Modern Department. The examination results had been excellent: 11 pupils were entered at Advanced Level and 10 gained a

Certificate; 56 candidates out of 61 obtained certificates at Ordinary Level. The construction of the new assembly hall led to proposals being put forward for a car park and a good 'pull-in' for buses on Cotes Road because of the problems with buses on the narrow country lane which it was at that time.

And so we come to 1955, a momentous year, the end of an era for Mr T.G. Wilkinson retired as Head Master after serving the School for twenty-six years, exactly the same length of time as Mr Fernsby. Unfortunately the new buildings were not complete in time for his retirement but the Head was still working on the details of some of them - for example, the installation of an outdoor clock on the Hall to be visible from the Beacon Field, bearing the letters HONESTE AUDAX in place of numerals on the dial.

Humphrey Perkins owes a tremendous debt to Mr Wilkinson and to his wife for we must forget the role she played in organising school meals and acting as a clerical assistant among many other things. From being a small one-form entry grammar school it had become a strong bi-lateral school of over 500 pupils, attracting much praise for the way it had carried out what was called the bi-lateral experiment of having a grammar school and a modern secondary school operating side by side.

At this time, however, there were clouds on the horizon, not exactly storm clouds as yet, but the possibility of problems to come. There were proposals to build a new County Grammar School at Birstall and concern was being expressed that new buildings for the Loughborough College School (subsequently Burleigh College) might cater for some Soar Valley pupils, leaving Humphrey Perkins as a small grammar school with a much enlarged modern side. And there was the problem of comprehensive education and how Stewart Mason and Leicestershire Education Committee would deal with it.

#### **Mr C Harris**

Following the long reign of Mr Wilkinson Mr C. Harris stayed for only four years before leaving to become Head of Guthlaxton in 1960. During his short stay, which began in January 1956 after Mr Marshall, the Deputy Head, had held the reins for a term, Mr Harris was responsible for a number of innovations, the most important of which was the ending of the segregation of the Grammar and Modern children into separate departments. This integration was commented on favourably by inspectors in 1957. He also introduced the practice of 'fast streaming' which enabled bright children to take 'O' levels at the end of four years schooling (instead of the usual five) thus allowing them to spend a longer time in the Sixth Form. This began with the top ten scholars in the School and was extended to the whole of the top stream in the Grammar intake (34 children out of 69).

In his first report to the Governors in February 1956 Mr Harris was able to report a further significant increase in the size of the School for there were 668 pupils on the roll, 335 in the Grammar school and 333 on the Modern side, and 33 children had left at Christmas which meant that the new peak of 700 on roll had been reached at

the beginning of the Autumn Term. The reason for the increase was that with the availability of Orchard Block, Humphrey Perkins was able to take all the pupils in the catchment area of the Modern side at the age of eleven, the Grammar side continuing to draw on a much larger catchment area.

Major changes were under way concerning the buildings of the School. Because of the availability of the new classrooms in Orchard Block, including a purpose built Art Room, it was possible to convert the old Art Room in Old Block, which was originally a laboratory, into a much needed Music Room. The purchase of 'Maycroft' for the use of the Headmaster and his family made the School House part of Old Block available for the use of the School, providing accommodation for: a Housecraft flat; careers Library and Interview Room; Devotional Room; two Sixth Form rooms; a Prefects' Room; Headmaster's Study; and a store room for text books. - although it took some time to have these changes made.

By October 1956 Mr Harris was able to report that the Assembly Hall was in full use by the School and was completely furnished with curtains, and the School roll was up to 743, with the Modern side at 376 having overtaken the Grammar School side which numbered 367. Of the 743 children 630 were provided daily with School dinners and the Head Master was putting forward a scheme for the purchase of an amplifier, microphone and loud speakers for use in the new Hall and dining room. This would enable lunch time gramophone concerts to be held and would facilitate control of the Dining Room when announcements had to be made.

Mr J.C. Shirley Scott, a teacher at the time, recalls a Dining Room incident:

*In the late 1950s when Miss Edwards was the Cook Supervisor, the four week cycle of menus included on the fourth Wednesday cheese pie and beetroot followed by prunes and custard.*

*There were seven 'characters' on my dinner table placed there for obvious reasons ready to eat what was described as 'driving a car with your foot on the brake and the accelerator at the same time'.*

*The first course disappeared as usual in record time but all bar one refused the prunes and custard. In fact, the one ate the whole bowl-ful, 112 prunes audited by Mr Marshall and sent to the Times Educational Supplement and the Guinness Book of Records. Unfortunately neither considered the matter worthy of publication!*

*However, when the lad returned to school the following Monday no one asked him for an absence note!*

A very significant event took place in the Spring Term of 1957. The Head Master reported to the Governors:

*During the last month of the Spring Term the School carried out an exchange of pupils and staff with the Cours Complémentaire of Marans in France. Ten*

*pupils and one member of staff went from this school to France, and an equivalent party came here and lived in the homes of those who had gone to France. In each case the pupils were absorbed into the school and followed nearly the same timetable as the rest of the school. This was the first time such an experiment had been tried in the County, and it was a remarkable success from every point of view. We hope to repeat the exchange at a similar time next year. (In fact, Mr Harris joined the exchange party himself on its visit to France which took place in February 1958.)*

In a further document, believed to be produced for the Inspection of the School later that year, the Head added:

*The presence of the French pupils in the School stimulated interest in the language and in all things French to a remarkable degree. This was further increased by the visit of the Head Master of the French School - who spent two days at the School - and the presence on the staff of a French Mistress, Mme Patrouilleau.*

*The real value of such an exchange is not easy to express in words. Much of it is intangible and long-term in nature. But all those who either took part in the scheme or in any way helped it are convinced of its value. It should be added that in both Schools the foreign pupils were completely absorbed into the life of the School - one French boy even playing for a Junior Football XI.*

The Marans connection is still going strong in 2002, so strong, in fact, that Marans is now the official twin town of Barrow and many long-lasting friendships have grown up over the years as a result of these exchange visits.

Mr Harris also contributed a report on the School Clubs and societies which were both numerous and strong at this time. They were:

**Angling Club** founded September 1956 under Mr J.A. Sanderson;

**Art Club** meets every Friday afternoon after school with both Art Master, Mr Pick & Mr O'Brien;

**Campanological Society**, founded 1951, under the guidance of Mr Scott, Miss Mason & Mr Payne, change-ringers meet on Monday lunch-time, hand-bell ringers on Wednesday lunch-time

**Chess Club** meets Thursday lunch-times, chairman Mr Payne;

**Dancing Club**, founded 1945, meets after School on Mondays to teach the rudiments of ball-room dancing, open to members of the Fifth & Sixth Forms, Miss Burtenshaw & Mr Payne give instruction;

**Geographical Society**, founded 1949, President - the Head Master, largest in School with 50 - 100 members, meets monthly on Tuesdays after School for lectures etc., organises visits and an annual Field Week for up to 20 pupils to such areas as Malhamdale, Snowdon, Keswick, Tal-y-Llyn;

**Gym Club** has been in existence for 10 years, is divided into 4 sections which meet separately on 4 lunch-times, Miss Burtonshaw, Miss Warren, Mr Payne in charge;

**Handicraft Society** meets every Tuesday after School using the Woodwork and Metalwork rooms under the supervision of Mr Crump & Mr Marriott, average attendance about 30;

**Junior History Society**, founded Autumn 1956, weekly meetings at lunch-time, monthly visits on Saturday mornings, excursion in Summer Term, Mr Elliott in charge;

**Scientific Society**, meetings held at lunch-time and after School, some visits, also a Junior Chemistry section, all under the supervision of the Science staff;

**Student Christian Movement**, founded by the Head Master in Autumn Term 1956, meetings fortnightly after School on Fridays, membership confined to the upper part of the School, an off-shoot studies New Testament Greek under Mr Scott;

**Mixed Voice Choir**, meets weekly, large in number, gives a concert or an opera once a year, provides music for Speech Day & special occasions, anthems for some assemblies, appears in functions at County level as required;

**Junior Choir**, usually about 40 members of both sexes spread over the first three years, performs at Junior Speech Day, provides descants and suitable songs for assemblies, performs at School concerts;

**House Choirs** compete for a Singing Shield, each House running a four-part choir;

**School Orchestra**, small but enlarging as the School buys more instruments, performs for Speech Day, concerts, special occasions and some assemblies.

And, of course, there were the usual School sports teams for both boys and girls. It is interesting to note that the School used to play Rugby exclusively on the Grammar side and Soccer exclusively on the Modern side.

*It was felt that there was room for both games in the School and that the only practical way to play both was to allow a term for each. Three years ago (i.e. 1954) the change was made with pleasing results. The standard of Rugby has not suffered visibly and the standard of Soccer is rising slowly.*

Mr Harris had some very clear-cut opinions about what the function of a bi-lateral school should be and these were set out in his background document for the Inspection. It is useful to quote them here at some length for the picture they give of the School at a very important stage of its development during the twentieth century and for the light they shed on the subsequent development of education within Leicestershire. The bi-lateral scheme at Humphrey Perkins was, after all, seen as a very important experiment by the County Education Authority.

*One interpretation of the term 'bi-lateral' is to have what is, in effect, two*

*small schools, completely separate entities, sharing the same buildings and to some extent the same staff, but segregated in all matters affecting curriculum, tradition and even uniform. Such was the interpretation which obtained in the early years of the bi-lateral character of this School. It was, of course, largely forced upon the School by the age at which the 'Moderns' were transferred. They arrived later - at 13 or 14 - and stayed for only one or two years. It is remarkable that they were absorbed into the School as well as they were.*

*There was a Modern Department and a member of staff who acted as Head and was virtually Head Master of the Modern School, being responsible for discipline, curriculum, interviewing of parents and so on. School uniform, which encourages, was not insisted upon and consequently the 'Moderns' in many cases were set apart in appearance as well as in other respects. Forms in the School were labelled 3A, 3B Grammar and 3A, 3B Modern etc. The curriculums were quite separate and the only activity in which the two sides met was in games.*

*Cross-transfers between the two sides did take place but almost all were in the nature of relegations from the Grammar to the Modern side of pupils who had failed to maintain the standard of work required. The difference in curriculum militated against Modern pupils being transferred to the Grammar side although one or two did take place.*

*The opening of the new classroom block in January 1956 and the simultaneous entry to the School of **all** children at the age of 11 plus enabled a different interpretation of the term 'bi-lateral school' to be attempted. This consists, in brief, of throwing the emphasis on the word 'school' instead of the word 'bi-lateral'.*

*It emphasises unity instead of division and it recognises that the bi-lateral school can only begin to succeed and progress from the moment it begins to belie its name - from the moment, in fact, when the two sides fuse to form one School.*

*Such an interpretation is based on certain beliefs.*

*The first of these is that selection at 11 plus is not completely and absolutely valid - that it is not possible to divide children at 11 plus into Grammar and Modern with only a very small margin of error. The second is that there is no such child as the 'Grammar' child or the 'Modern' child but merely children of differing and varying abilities and aptitudes. The third belief is that while it may be necessary to segregate children of the same School into different groups on the basis of ability for work purposes, there are a multitude of activities - each forming a vital part of School life - in which they can meet on terms of equality or in which the balance may even be redressed.*

*Such are the assumptions which underlie the system on which the School is at*

*present working.*

*All children now enter the School at 11 plus and become members of the School. All without exception wear uniform and all participate equally in all School activities - or at least have the opportunity of doing so and are encouraged to do so.*

*So far as academic work is concerned the practice of 'setting' across a year means that transfer from one group to another can take place easily .... As many things as possible which tended to divide or emphasise the difference between the two 'sides' have been relinquished. The abolition of the terms 1A Modern and 1A Grammar in favour of 1R, 1S, 1T etc. was done not with the intention of deluding the children themselves - even were that possible - but simply because the former nomenclature tended to set one group apart from the other. This can be as much in the eyes of the staff as in those of the pupils. There is a distinct tendency to expect a lower level of performance from a form which is labelled 'Modern'.*

*This leads to an important point - that a bi-lateral School must be more concerned with maintaining standards than probably any other type of School. There can be no compromising on this point. All those pupils who pursue a course leading to the G.C.E. must aim at the requisite standard, and concessions to the less able should be in terms of the number of subjects taken - not in the standard reached. This particular School possesses an advantage over the comprehensive school. The strong 'Grammar' nucleus already existed and is being maintained. Well over half the School is following an academic course and the 'pull' is, therefore, upwards instead of downwards. I believe the maintenance of the large 'academic' intake to be vital to the success of the bi-lateral school.*

Here we must pause and take into consideration an important fact about the intake of Humphrey Perkins at that time: the 'Modern' and 'Grammar' intakes came from different catchment areas. The 'Modern' intake came chiefly from the villages of Barrow-upon-Soar, Quorn, Seagrave and Sileby, and consisted of all the children from the Junior Schools in those villages who failed to qualify to attend a Grammar School. The 'Grammar' catchment area was three times as large and extended throughout the Soar valley from the villages of Birstall and Sileby at one end to Loughborough at the other. It included all the following villages: Birstall, Syston, Queniborough, Thurmaston, Thurcaston, Anstey, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Rothley, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Sileby, Barrow-upon-Soar, Loughborough, Wymeswold, Burton on the Wolds, Walton on the Wolds, Seagrave, Hoton, Newtown Linford, Cropston and Barkby. The children from those villages who qualified for admission to a Grammar School could choose between Rawlins Grammar School and Humphrey Perkins if they were girls; and between Humphrey Perkins and Loughborough College School if they were boys.

Mr Harris went on to mention the wide range of ability within the School and pointed out that despite this disparity in ability the School had rapidly become a united whole, the general good standard of discipline being perhaps illustrated by the fact that no detention class had been held in the School for many terms. He also drew attention to the close relationships between the School and the home, pointing out that the institution of Parents' Evenings, where attendance was very high indeed, had done much to strengthen the interest of parents in the work of the School. The attendance of parents at Speech Day and dramatic and musical productions was only limited by the accommodation available. In addition, Sports Day was held annually on a Saturday afternoon to allow parents to attend, over one thousand spectators having been present on the last two occasions. Sports Day also provided an opportunity for parents to walk round the School and certain exhibitions were arranged for their inspection. And all this despite the isolated position of the School, the inadequate train and bus services (and, of course, a much lower level of car ownership).

With the wealth of musical talent in the School at this time, it is not surprising that an opera, Benjamin Britten's 'Let's Make an Opera', was chosen for the first production in the new Hall at Easter 1957, the producer being the Head Master. This was followed by Handel's 'Messiah' in 1958, Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas' in 1959 and Fauré's 'Requiem' in 1960. This artistic success was matched on the academic side with Annette Prince winning the first State Scholarship in 1956 and many pupils going on to universities and places of higher education.

One topic of concern during 1957-58 was the Grammar school intake from Sileby because 28 pupils from that village had qualified but only 3 had actually taken their places. This was because they received free travel if they went to Quorn or Loughborough, but the 3-mile limit for free travel meant that most of those opting for Barrow would have to pay for their own travel. By the summer of 1958 this problem had been resolved and the number of new Grammar pupils from Sileby rose from 3 in 1957 to 17 in September 1958, when there were 844 pupils on the roll.

One of the new pupils in September 1958 was Norman Meeke who was to return fifteen years later as Head of Boys PE and is still there in 2002. He recalls his first day at the School:

*I awoke early and having washed got dressed in my new school uniform. Grey shirt with black and red diagonally striped tie, short grey trousers, long grey socks, shiny black shoes and my school blazer - black with the school badge on the breast pocket. My father walked me to school that day across the 'slabs' from Quorn, up the jitty by the railway line and up Cotes Road into the school premises. There seemed to be so many people, lots with 'new' clothes on and we were soon taken to the Hall and sorted into form groups.... Everybody was new to me as I had recently returned from Australia and had not been at primary school in England for the last three years.*



Marans visit 1959



Horsa Huts (courtesy K Thompson)



Mr Dunn with senior pupils 1973



*I remember the grass tennis court, which was sited where the Humanities Block is now, and having learnt to play tennis whilst in Australia, I wanted to play on it. I was soon put in my place and told that it was only for Staff or members of the Sixth Form. Of course that was one very big difference - I was to stay at Humphrey Perkins for seven years from year 1 (7) all the way to the Upper Sixth (Year 13).*

*The main playground was much as it is today, with three netball courts on it, and my friends and I used to get here early in the morning or rush out at break and lunchtime in order to claim one of these courts as our soccer pitch. We always played with a tennis ball and I often wonder if that made us more or less skilful than the youngsters of today. Another game we used to play was 'Hot Rice' in the summer when we were allowed on the grass. This involved a tennis ball again and the one who was 'on' had to run about trying to throw the ball at one of the others hitting him below the waist. When 'caught', the person had to help the one 'on' to catch the others but from then on you could not run when the ball was in your hand. Again did this make our throwing more powerful and more accurate than those today?*

*Prefects would be recognised by having a white stripe incorporated into their tie. Some of the older pupils would have a white braid sewn onto the edge of their blazer and this meant that they had earned their school colours for one of the sporting teams. I was already very keen on sport and could not wait to take some braid home for my mother to sew onto my blazer. (I did not know how fiddly and difficult this was, and my mother did not thank me when I eventually won my colours for Rugby and Athletics*

One of the major events of 1958 was the official opening of the extensions to Humphrey Perkins which took place on the afternoon of Monday 3 March. The extensions were declared open by C.H. Wilson, Esq., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. A handsome souvenir booklet was produced for the occasion, which contained some excellent photographs and a brief note about the sculpture in bas relief by Peter Peri on the south wall of the Orchard Block which represented a group of children watching a flight of birds. The booklet also pointed out that three and a half acres of playing fields had been provided to the north of the new block.

As the School approached the new academic year of 1959-60 the Head Master was very much concerned with the problems of numbers, class sizes and accommodation. He reported in February 1959 that the forecast for the number on the roll in September was over 900. There were already thirteen forms of 36 or over, one form having 41 pupils. One unusual item from the Head Master's report was that a metal object fell from the sky on the morning of 27 January onto the roof of one of the prefabricated classroom blocks. Fortunately it struck one of the reinforced concrete rafters and embedded itself in the reinforcing rods. Nobody was hurt.

There were some items of good news at the June 1959 Governors' Meeting: the Education Welfare Committee had decided to establish a school crossing at the junction of Cotes Road and High Street, primarily for junior children but it would be of great assistance to pupils of Humphrey Perkins; Mr A. Ball had been appointed caretaker from 13 May (and was a very good servant of the School for many years); and it was hoped to start work on additional Science accommodation early in 1960 to be sited near the Orchard Block and these laboratories were being planned as a whole block to replace eventually the HORSAs huts. (We shall see later just how long it took for the HORSAs huts to be replaced.)

Reference was made earlier in this account to dark clouds gathering on the horizon. The time has come to look more closely into those clouds and how they were threatening to affect Humphrey Perkins School. One was the construction of a new Grammar School at Birstall; the second was Stewart Mason's plan for the re-organisation of secondary education in Leicestershire which was already being implemented in some parts of the county. Originally the Education Committee felt that there would be enough children to fill the Birstall school without depriving existing Grammar Schools of their supply of children. It was then decided that Birstall would be one of the new Senior Grammar Schools under the Leicestershire Plan and its associated High Schools would be the Stonehill School in Birstall and Hamilton School, Scraptoft. The remainder of the Birstall area, including Roundhill, would provide the grammar school entry to Humphrey Perkins, along with other Grammar Schools. A complicating factor was the Boundary Commission examination into the boundaries of the City of Leicester and the County of Leicestershire, one proposal of which was to transfer Scraptoft into the City of Leicester and if that happened it would deprive the Birstall Grammar School of half of its pupils. To make good the deficiency it would be necessary to bring in Roundhill as a contributory High School. At the same time there would be a shortage of High School or Secondary Modern places in the Soar Valley area. It looked as if one of three schools - Humphrey Perkins, Rawlins, or Loughborough College School - would have to become a High School. The Director felt that Loughborough College School would have to remain as a Grammar School because of its location and either Rawlins or Humphrey Perkins would have to change. Humphrey Perkins already had approximately three fifths of its intake as secondary modern pupils, and the type of accommodation they needed, and was therefore the more likely proposition. If this was eventually decided it would probably be necessary to detach Mountsorrel from Stonehill to Humphrey Perkins, which in due course would balance the grammar school element as it disappeared.

The above matters were discussed at two special meetings between the Director of Education and first, the Governors, secondly the teaching staff of Humphrey Perkins in April 1960 because Mr Harris had resigned to take up a post as Head of Guthlaxton School, a Senior Grammar School in a reorganised area of the county, and questions were being asked about what sort of situation the new Head Master would have to face.

### **Mr R Dunn**

By a strange coincidence Robert Dunn, the newly appointed Head of Humphrey Perkins, was Acting Head of Guthlaxton at the time, and so the two men changed positions in September 1960. There is no doubt which of the two had the less enviable task. Mr Dunn faced a very unsettled and unsettling future because staff, pupils, parents and governors were uncertain about what the future held for them. Nevertheless, he had to get on with the job of running this very big (over 900 pupils and 43 staff) and successful School.

Incidentally, one of Mr Harris's last actions was to present the School with a beautifully bound Honours Book for the recording of important achievements by members of the School. It really is very impressive and so too are the achievements but unfortunately the records end with the entries for 1965 - 66. Each year begins with the names of the Head Boy and Head Girl, the captains of School teams, the Victor and Victrix Ludorum, the winners of State Scholarships and other important scholarships (e.g. P. Newbold, Open Scholarship to London School of Economics), members of the National Youth Orchestra, and so on. There follows a list of achievements of Old Students, usually the award of university degrees.

One of Mr Dunn's first projects, presented to the Governors in October 1960 just over a month after he had taken up his position as Head Master, was the provision of a swimming bath at the School in which voluntary effort would play a large part. The Governors were keen on the idea from the outset and wanted it to go ahead *'whatever the future of the School.'*

It would appear that uncertainty about the School's future was having some effect on staff morale and turnover for in September 1961 there were nine new members of staff. A number of changes were taking place or being planned. It looked as if the long awaited bus bay would soon be making an appearance, and early in 1962 the long disused boys' lavatories near the School entrance were made into a tuck shop, the work being carried out by the boys themselves under the supervision of the Handicraft staff, and paid for out of Tuck Shop funds. Improvements to the Music Room, which had once been a Science laboratory, were also finally under way.

Progress continued to be made on the Swimming Pool project with a total of £800 already received in cash or promises towards the School's share although the original rough estimate of £4,000 for the total cost was already being revised upwards. A Garden Party was being planned for May as one of a range of fund-raising efforts.

The Head Master's report to the Governors in June 1962 contained a number of important items. The exchange with Marans involved eleven pupils who spent a month at the French school, followed by the French pupils spending a month at Humphrey Perkins. Six members of staff would be leaving at the end of term. John Stein had won a scholarship tenable for three years at the Royal Academy of Music and the Sir John Caird Travelling Scholarship worth £500. The Bus Park was under construction. As for the Swimming Pool -

*I would like, on behalf of the whole School, to thank all the Governors for their interest and support - especially on the bitterly cold day chosen for the Garden Party. In spite of the weather, it was an outstanding success. The pool will be used for the latter part of the term. Certain donations which have been promised, have not been received, but including these promises, we now have a total of £4,325 14s 0d. The School is continuing its money raising efforts.*

Whilst all the debate was going on about the future of Humphrey Perkins, the next significant event was that children from Mountsorrel became part of the intake. This happened for the first time in September 1963.

One unusual problem which came up for discussion in 1964 concerned the dates of school holidays. It had been traditional for Humphrey Perkins to finish for the summer quite late in July and return in September but changes in the pattern of both national and local holidays meant that the School would have to make changes to fall into line. It was recommended, therefore, that starting in 1965 the School would close for the summer holiday at the beginning of July in line with the new dates of the Leicestershire holiday fortnight.

Among the other changes which took place in 1964 - 65, one involved the Staff Room which was transferred to one of the classrooms in Old Block, which is where it is currently situated. Mrs Nivison Cross, who had donated the Library just before the War and who now lived in Scotland, arranged for a stained glass panel of a coat of arms to be installed in the Library bow window to commemorate the Robinson family. An additional hockey pitch was created behind the Orchard Block using land which had previously formed part of the Rural Science area as that subject had been discontinued.

In these days we are accustomed to pupils passing large numbers of subjects at 'O' level. It is interesting to note that the Head Master in reporting on the examination results gained in the summer of 1964 stated that 115 candidates took the full 'O' level examination, obtaining an average of 2.48 passes. In addition, some 40 candidates were retaking subjects in which they had previously failed. At Advanced Level 58 candidates obtained 92 passes. He also reported:

*This year a new examination is to be launched - the Certificate of Secondary Education ..... this .. will satisfy a long felt want .... it has many novel aspects, not the least important being that the pupil's classwork and school record will count towards success in the examination. We hope to present a few candidates next summer.*

The Swimming Pool was being well used during the Summer Term 1964 and until the end of September with approximately one hundred children being taught to swim in that time. The School had built two changing rooms - it must be remembered that the pool was an open air one. A garden party was held in the summer, raising over £700 which had cleared the debt on the pool.

One unusual item also in 1964 was that the Senior History Master, Mr Bernard Elliott, had written a History of the School and an estimate had been received for printing 750 copies and binding only 600 of them. This gives some idea of how scarce these books must be. The advice must be - if you possess one, look after it!

Throughout this account of the last 100 years a number of references have been made to the importance of the railway to the School. In 1964 British Railways proposed to withdraw some railway passenger services between Loughborough and Leicester and this would mean the closure of the station of Barrow. It was resolved to express to the Transport Users' Consultative Committee the regret of the Governors at these proposals which they deplored since some 221 pupils from Sileby were travelling daily to the School by rail and if the passenger services were withdrawn it would mean the hire of a number of buses if indeed they were available for this work.

A sad event during 1965 was the death of Mr T.G. Wilkinson. The Head Master reported that the Old Scholars' Association wished to place a memorial plaque in the School Library and proposed to hold a memorial service.

Staff turnover continued at a high rate with ten new names joining the staff in September 1965, to add to the eight who joined in September 1964.

The time has now come to relate the final events in the struggle to save Humphrey Perkins as a Grammar School. The Governors put up spirited resistance from the very outset, backed up by the support of parents and former students who showed that the School was very dear to them. The Director of Education came to Barrow in January 1961 to inform the Governors that Humphrey Perkins was to become a high school. Such was the strength of the opposition, led by Mr Farnham, a School governor, that it took the County Council until November 1962 to secure the support necessary to approve the plan of the Education Committee. Immediately the Governors resolved to inform the Minister of Education that a dispute existed between them and the Local Education Authority and to ask the Minister to resolve this under the provisions of Section 67 of the Education Act, 1944. The Minister was also asked to arrange for a local public enquiry on the matter and to receive a deputation from the Governors. Matters proceeded very slowly as statutory notices had to be issued in connection with the proposed changes to Rawlins School and it was not until November 1964 that a letter was received from the Minister of State in the Department of Education, Mr R.E. Prentice, inviting the Governors to send a deputation to see him. In March of the following year the Minister decided in favour of the Authority which meant that Humphrey Perkins would become a high school from September 1967, bringing to an end a history of over two hundred years as a Grammar School.

Whilst the future of the School was being decided elsewhere, Mr Dunn and his staff had to get on with the business of keeping the School running although this cannot have been easy. Since the start of the problem in 1960 staff turnover had been high

and there had been a reduction in the Grammar intake. There was a further problem ahead in that the Grammar School with its Sixth Form pupils was staffed more generously than a high school would be and there would have to be a reduction in staff numbers (from Head + 43 to Head + 32 according to a discussion paper from a Heads' meeting in 1966).

The Head Master had not lost sight of the fact that 1967 would mark the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Foundation of the School and he asked that the event be marked by making an effort to raise money towards providing a roof for the swimming pool. During the summer holidays the pool was open to pupils on Wednesday afternoons with Staff volunteering to supervise, a small charge being made for the Roof Fund, and another Garden Party was being organised.

Numbers in the School were falling with only 799 on the roll in September 1966, and the Sixth Form reduced to 44. Thirty two of the Sixth Form pupils who left in the summer of 1966 went on to higher education establishments. Examination results showed that standards were being maintained even though the number of candidates had fallen: 79 took 'O' level with an average of 2.47 passes; 49 took 'A' level, obtaining 87 passes, an average of 1.8. 60 candidates took the new Certificate of Secondary Education examination with a total of 152 passes.

During this school year preparations were being made for the major changes due in September 1967 when education in the Soar Valley area was to follow the new Leicestershire Plan. It was estimated that the number of pupils would fall below 700 with a consequent reduction in the number of teachers. The catchment area would be restricted to Barrow-upon-Soar, Sileby, Quorn, Mountsorrel, Seagrave, Burton on the Wolds and Wymeswold; no longer would pupils from Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland attend Humphrey Perkins. In the summer of 1967 16 teachers left and there were 3 new appointments.

The number of pupils on roll in September 1967 was 633, 358 boys and 275 girls, with nine forms in the new first year intake. As the school leaving age was 15, 3rd Form pupils could transfer to Rawlins only if they intended to remain there for two years, otherwise they had to stay at Humphrey Perkins. The transfer figures for this year were:

3rd Form	108 pupils (64% of the total) transferred to Rawlins
4th Form	81 out of 142 transferred
5th Form	29 out of 64 transferred
6th Form	30 out of 36 transferred

64 children in the 3rd Form elected to remain at Humphrey Perkins and leave at the age of 15.

The final set of examination results for the School were in line with previous years: 60 candidates took 'O' level with an average of 2.5 passes while 25 candidates achieved 39 'A' level passes, an average of 1.6. A fête raised £400 for the Swimming

Pool Fund which stood at £1297.

The year of change and upheaval continued with the decision of British Rail to close the stations at Barrow-upon-Soar, Sileby and Syston, thus ending the long connection between the School and its railway lifeline and increasing the number of school buses that had to contend with Cotes Road. In addition, Miss Walker, the Senior Mistress, announced that she was to retire at the end of the school year after 31 years of service. By June of 1968 the roll was down to 613 after the Easter leavers had departed, but the annual exchange visit to Marans still took place, pupils from Barrow spending a month over there before the French children came to Leicestershire. At the end of the summer term 9 teachers left.

In September 1968 numbers recovered a little to 685 with 74 in the 4th Form. 61% of the previous year's 3rd Form transferred to Rawlins. There were 10 new members of staff including Mr M. Morley. Discussions were taking place with Barrow Cricket Club about the possibility of the Club sharing the School's pitch (although these were eventually to come to nothing when the Club found a new home at what is now its present ground). It was resolved to proceed with the erection of a framework and roof for the swimming pool using the money in the bank, which stood at £1418, and £400 of development bonds.

Two hundred and fifty new pupils started school in September 1969 bringing the number on roll up to 738, the boys still outnumbering the girls by 412 to 326. This time there were only 41 pupils in the 4th Form as the number of pupils transferring to Rawlins and thus committing themselves to a two-year examination course rose to 74%. There were 8 new teachers bringing the total to 34. Although planning approval for the roofing of the Swimming Pool had been granted, the projected cost had increased to £2775. In February 1970 Mr Dunn reported that the roofing had been completed and it was hoped to complete the walls in the near future but there was only £300 remaining in the account including a £25 windfall from Ernie! Mr Dunn also reported that the School had had to close for half a day because some staff were on strike. This is believed to be the first reference to such action taking place.

At the June meeting of the Governors it was reported that the School had received a grant of £3500 towards the enclosure of the Swimming Pool, and a Sponsored Walk had raised a further £1300 for the Pool.

Numbers continued to increase with 782 on roll in September 1970 and 6 new staff appointed. A reflection of the acceptance of the major change in secondary education that had taken place was the announcement that the Humphrey Perkins Old Students Association was to combine with the similar association at Rawlins and would henceforth be known as the Humphrey Perkins and Thomas Rawlins Old Students Association. The first annual dinner was to be held at the King's Head in Loughborough on the 6 November 1970.

The eleven new members of staff in 1971 included Mr P. Cameron and the number of pupils increased to 834 with the girls outnumbering the boys by 419 to 415, the

first time this had happened for many years. The growth in numbers meant that a room in Orchard Block had to be used as a second Music Room., and Mr Dunn was warning that the School would be needing extensions in two years time. The much needed extension to the bus park was completed but there were complaints because it had reduced the staff car park.

At the Governors meeting in February 1972 Mr Dunn reported that Mrs B.E. Turner had joined the School as part-time Laboratory and General Assistant - the same Mrs Turner who retires as Bursar in the summer of 2002! The Community Council of Barrow-upon-Soar was pursuing the possibility of a gradual increase in the use of the School for community purposes. Finally, the Head reported that he hoped that the enclosure of the Swimming Pool would be completed that term.

At the beginning of the Autumn Term 1972 Miss D. J. Heslop took over from Mrs Arthur as Senior Mistress, a post she was to hold until her retirement in 2000. Among the other new appointments were Mr M. Keeley who was to teach Religious Education at Humphrey Perkins for over 20 years, and Mr J. Maden, a former pupil, returning to teach Science. The retirement was announced of Mrs E. M. Housley after 25 years as Canteen Supervisor. Mr Bernard Payne, another former pupil, was leaving after 17 years to teach at Rawlins. And Mr Dunn announced that he would be retiring as Head in 1973. In fact, he had already purchased a house in preparation for his retirement which meant that this year for the first time since 1902 the Head Teacher of Humphrey Perkins would not be living on the premises. It was proposed that *Maycroft* should be let out for a year. The work on the Swimming Pool was behind schedule but a Sponsored Walk had raised £1400 for the Swimming Pool Fund.

#### **Mr F W Morris**

Mr Dunn took the School through the difficult transition years from being a bi-lateral school with a grammar school tradition to being a Leicestershire Plan high school for pupils aged 11 - 14, although there were still some pupils completing their 11 - 15 education in the School when he retired. Mr F. W. Morris was the first Head of a school that catered only for pupils aged 11 - 14 and he succeeded in moving the School into a new phase of its history by first of all emphasising the community role of Humphrey Perkins and then by making radical changes to the organisation of the School.

Also joining the staff in the Autumn Term of 1973 was Mr Norman Meeke who remembers:

*Also starting on that day was Mr Cooke who ran the school Cross-Country club for many years and was very successful. He later replaced Mr Print as Head of Maths until Mrs Kirby took over the role in later years. Mr Cromwell joined the staff in the mid 1970s and put on great musical extravaganzas, sometimes with choirs of 150 or more pupils and lots of staff involvement.*

Mr Morris recalls his time at the School:

*I can still recall the grilling which all candidates received from the Governors' interviewing panel. This was in the School Library, the cork floor of which was probably the most highly polished I had seen since my army days. The only other thing I recall of that day was the kindness of Mr Bob Dunn, the retiring Head, who welcomed me warmly - and then allowed me to make one telephone call to my wife, rather like an arrested felon!*

*What then was my first impression of HP? One of size, I think, coupled with the feeling that the School had developed piecemeal, as the local situation demanded perhaps, resulting in a great variety of styles of building on a large site ... Staff and pupils obviously had lots of walking to do!*

*There were some 830 pupils in the School with 44 teaching staff, supported by a huge range of secretarial, ancillary, caretaking and kitchen personnel. It would rapidly grow. There was a fairly obvious sense in the place that this had been an all through Grammar School of some note, and that many people thought that the Local Authority had been misguided in choosing to change HP in the late 60s into a High School for 11 to 14 year-olds. This was confirmed when I eventually read through all the accounts of the turmoil of that time. Perhaps this would be the greatest challenge for the new Head?*

*I certainly felt challenged when I walked into the Hall to take Assembly on that first day. I had been collected by the two Deputy Heads, Mr Marshall (known as Masher) and Miss Dorothy Heslop, from my room and escorted in silence in via the back door. I was shown towards the large chair, the 'throne', on the stage, sat down, and promptly hit my head on the back of it. I immediately glanced down at the endless rows of pupils, standing in tightly packed rows at the back, expecting some reaction, but there was none. They hadn't noticed - or was discipline that good ...? The only thing that I recall was that a member of staff was prowling around the rearmost ranks, nipping trouble in the bud, no doubt. I found out later that it was Mike Morley.*

*One of the pieces of advice given to me at Shepshed by the Headmaster, George Mallory, was never to take a decision in a corridor. This made little sense to me until early in my first month I did just that and all hell broke loose. The reason for this is that I had promised the staff that nothing would be changed without full consultation; I was then approached by a senior member of staff, in a corridor, and asked quietly and ingenuously if a certain loosening of the tight streaming in part of the new First Year would be possible. I agreed - and reaped the consequence! I had said one thing and done another! It took an emergency staff meeting, and some back-tracking, to heal the wounds. This was not to be my only mistake in ten years!*

*One of the things I was unhappy with was the school uniform. I had a particular aversion to the girls' grey cardigans. (At a school concert which I attended the term before I took up my appointment, the girls' choir featured; I made a silent vow that*

*the cardigans would have to go!) Eventually a more colourful scheme was arrived at, with red Simon shirts being a feature, I seem to remember. Various combinations of clothing in the school colours were possible; all our clever schemes, however, came to naught when the LEA banned school uniform in all schools. This was not the only time when the council chamber's dictates interfered with us and with what we were trying to achieve. It was a sign of things to come.*

*Within a fortnight of starting my headship, I was visited by a Reverend Norman Peck, who, I gathered, had something to do with a local Community Association. It soon became clear that my attitude and intentions towards `outside' use of the school premises were being sounded out. I think Norman was quite pleased with what he discovered. I'm afraid the Hall floor was not going to remain highly polished for much longer! That, and the swimming pool, were going to be my two main `selling points' for community use of the premises. In the fullness of time, the Community Association became an integral part of life at HP, and by our joint efforts we were able to build up to be the largest community centre in the area, with many, many organisations and individuals making full use of the premises. Not that it all ran without a hitch - just ask the indomitable Betty Turner, who together with Norman Meeke, seemed forever to be on site, sorting out one problem or another. And the caretakers never knew what had hit them! (I note from the log book that the Director of Education, Mr Andrew Fairbairn, had laid down a challenge to us to show that Barrow needed community facilities. I am sure that he was delighted that we rose to that challenge.)*

*The swimming pool looms large in my memory. There always seemed to be a problem with it. Poor old Arthur Ball toiled like a demon to maintain it in working order; he was the only one who knew all its diabolical idiosyncrasies! Throughout all his time looking after it, through all the problems of paint-peeling and the installation of lighting, the measures necessary to permit public use, the delicate balancing of chemical elements in the purification processes, Arthur once reluctantly told me that he had just one secret dread, which he experienced daily, and that was of coming in one morning and finding a body floating in the water! One particular problem happened when we noticed that the water level was dropping rapidly. We were losing water almost as quickly as we were hosing it in. In fact I expected half of Barrow to float away; I waited for complaints but none came, so lips were sealed - rather more effectively than the pool. We eventually found out that the water was leaking through the joints in the concrete base and sides.*

*One winter evening, walking between Orchard Block and the School House, I spotted a figure flitting about in the dim light near the tuckshop. Getting nearer, I was able to see that a lad was going in and out, stacking boxes of goodies on the ground outside. There go Roy Print's profits, I thought, so I shouted at the lad, he turned, tossed a box towards me and fled. I was left standing there, holding a box of cheese and onion crisps! I'd had a chance to see his face and the next day, with Alan Blackburn's memory to help, I was able to identify the youth, who had left us a*

*couple of years previously. He was nabbed.*

*While I was living at the School House, there were odd incidents in the grounds in the late evenings and at weekends, which prompted me to rename Cotes Road as Lovers' Lane but I won't go into those here! The situation of the House was ideal at first when we were setting up community involvement, but it became a little wearing. I could see a potential problem out of every window! I remember one Saturday morning, when I would enjoy a lie-in, my wife answered the door to an official from one of the football clubs using the pitches. He had some minor problem which he wanted me to solve. When he was told that I was still in bed, his reply was, "But it's 9 o'clock!" I began to feel it was time to live elsewhere. My wife also had to take some very strange phone calls on our extension line. On the first occasion that she received a bomb scare she dragged me back from wherever I was playing cricket; most displeased I was!*

*Time and space demand that I have to select just a few of the many, many memories I have. Perhaps the one which is most significant is the working towards a restructuring of the School's teaching and pastoral organisations. It took a long time and many meetings. (Anyone recall the Pink Folder Brigade?) We even had meetings about meetings ... Then there was the founding of the PTA, with not a few teething problems there, the visits to Year Assemblies by those splendid former cricketers Conrad Hunte and Brian Boobyer and of course the first, and consequent, Sponsored Walks. What a feat of organisation those last events were - and still are, I believe; everyone involved and a wonderful spirit abroad. Who can ever forget Bob Cromwell's musical productions. The first, **Birth of a King**, was especially memorable for me and for many other people too; it was a thrill to be involved. Then there were the early morning staff briefings, just like Hill Street Blues, with revolvers replaced by knitting needles.*

*I am surprised, leafing through the log book, how many interruptions we had to normal routine; we had to close for whole or full days for all sorts of reasons: national fuel crises, burst pipes, (there were 21 mobile gas heaters in use at one stage), teacher union action, snow and the inevitable floods. How Stuart Nobles loved taking those phone calls from the bus companies, such as, 'If we don't come in ten minutes, we won't get through at all!'*

*Stuart featured again with his version of Trooping the Colour in my last few days when he marched the whole school population in good order across the football pitch in front of Orchard Block, then they left turned and arrived for the school photograph! What a sight it was and what emotions it produced.*

*Perhaps the most memorable feature of my time is the vast array of skills and personalities at HP, not only amongst the staff but amongst the children too. I could devote a lengthy article on this subject alone. Suffice it to say that I feel privileged to have been part of it all, to have - hopefully - contributed in some ways to the life of the School and of the community. But it doesn't half make you*

*tired...*

At the start of the school year 1974-75 there were 853 pupils on the roll. This year saw a number of important events. The governing body of the School was re-constituted, as a result of which two parent-governors joined the board: Paul Berridge and Joan Shaw; and the first two teacher-governors: Mrs K. Hutchinson and Mr M. Morley. In January the inaugural meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association was held at which Mr Alan Howe was elected Chairman, Mr Malcolm Smith Vice-Chairman, and Mr S.J.I. Nobles Secretary. The Christmas musical production was Mr Cromwell's 'Birth of a King'. The School was still in a state of flux with ten staff leaving at the end of the Summer Term.

During the summer of 1975 a double mobile classroom was installed behind Old Block to be used for the teaching of English, the first mobile the School had had. It was presumably another temporary measure but it has proved as temporary as the HORSAs huts, being still in use in 2002. A sign that the School was moving away from its grammar school past was the decision to phase out Latin and offer German in its place.

Numbers were rising, reaching 921 in September 1975 with a teaching staff of Head plus 46. One unusual event was the granting of leave of absence to one of the PE teachers, Mr Peter Booth, so that he could play cricket for Leicestershire during the Summer Term.

September 1976 saw the formalisation of the change of direction of the School when it was given Community Centre status. The records for this year mention two very important long-serving members of the staff: Mrs Betty Turner became Senior Clerical Assistant on 1 September and Mrs Jenny Volans joined the office staff on 5 January 1977. They will both be fondly remembered by the thousands of children who have passed through the School since that time. This school year also saw a successful sponsored walk to raise funds for a minibus.

The number of pupils on the roll remained fairly settled at 913 in September 1977, having been 916 in 1976. The summer of 1977, 15 August to be precise, saw building work begin on the first phase of the new Humanities Block, and the new term saw a change in the timetable organisation from an eight- to a six-period day. By September 1978, when there were 906 pupils on roll, the first phase of the Humanities Block was complete and was quickly named 'The Ritz' by the pupils who were not used to classrooms with carpets and curtains. Work began on the new Community Centre building next to the foyer, but the start of phase two of Humanities, which included the conversion of rooms 29 and 30 in Orchard Block into Housecraft rooms, was delayed, not being completed until March 1980 instead of the hoped for date of September 1979.

The academic year 1979-80 saw the beginning of the implementation of Mr Morris's major organisational change in line with the Declaration of Intent he had made on becoming Head: a change to mixed ability teaching in most subjects. Hitherto,

teaching groups had always been organised by ability - there had been a strict hierarchy of classes - 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D etc. - although more recently these had changed to three broad bands - A band, B band and C band. One factor which had made the change possible was the improvement in the provision of learning support for Special Educational Needs. Later in this school year there was a re-organisation of the School Meals Service which meant that children were able to purchase separate items of food, including snacks, instead of the standard pre-paid main course and sweet. This was also the year that the cricket-loving Mr Morris was able to announce with delight that the School had been allocated one of two artificial cricket pitches given to the Education Authority by Leicestershire County Cricket Club.

1980-81 brought about a large increase in the number on roll to 953 but this was also the year when major cuts in educational spending were demanded by the government of the day and despite appeals to our then MP, Mr Michael Latham, some ancillary staff lost their job or had their hours reduced. This was also the year when the word 'microcomputer' appeared in the minutes of the governors' meetings for the first time.

By September 1981 numbers had increased again to 971. Fortunately there had been some slight relaxation of the financial restraints which had brought about an improvement in the pupil-teacher ratio, enabling two additional teachers to be employed. Another sponsored walk took place, raising £4000 towards the replacement of the Hall curtains and other improvements to the Hall. The last of these walks, in 1979, had raised money towards providing lockers for the pupils to store their belongings in instead of having to carry them round with them all the time.

Pupil numbers continued to rise in the following years, peaking at 997 in September 1982 with the School bursting at the seams, the HORSAs huts having to continue to be used to the full although they had seen better days. The end of this academic year 1982-83 saw the resignation of Mr Morris as Head of Humphrey Perkins.

#### **Miss E Higginbotham**

From September to December 1983 Miss Dorothy Heslop was Acting Head of the School pending the appointment of a new Head. As the bulge years were over this was the beginning of a difficult time as pupil numbers started to fall and teacher numbers had to be reduced accordingly. The number on roll was down to 927 in September 1983 with a larger fall to 845 the following September, and this was the challenge to be faced by the new Head. Miss E. M. Higginbotham, the first woman to be permanently appointed to the post in the history of the School.

Liz Paxton (formerly Liz Higginbotham) writes:

*I suppose that every headteacher would say that their period of tenure was at least interesting and possibly historic. The period from 1984 to 1991 was undoubtedly*

*both. Within education we saw the introduction of the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools. Locally we celebrated 250 years of Humphrey Perkins High School in 1985 with a village festival. On the ground old buildings disappeared and new ones were built.*

*To start with education ...*

*The early 1980s were an exciting time. HMI had just published their Nine Areas of Experience which offered an exciting way of planning the learning of young people, especially 11 to 14 year olds, as they made the transition from primary to secondary education. I found that many of these ideas were being put into practice at Humphrey Perkins. Pupils wrote wonderful stories and poetry. Even in antiquated science labs practical, investigative science was the order of the day, and displays in the Humanities Block made one feel part of the age being studied - whether walking through a stone age cave complete with cave paintings or a second world war air raid shelter.*

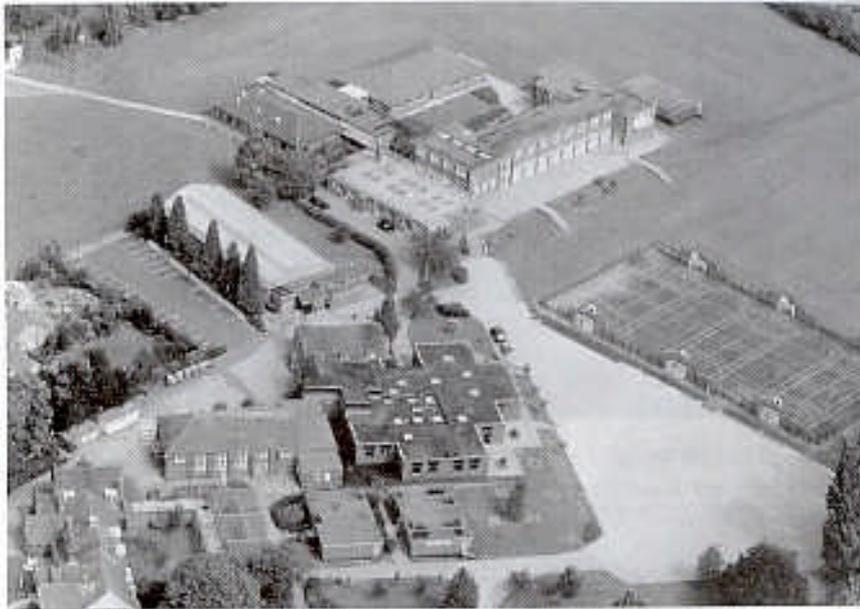
*1986 and 1988 saw the passing of two important Acts of Parliament which were to change schools radically. The first brought about changes in the way schools were governed and paved the way for local management. The second introduced local management, the National Curriculum and national testing. I remember us ploughing through document after document as we tried to come to terms with programmes of study, statements of attainment and ten levels of attainment. All schools were encouraged to produce development plans and to prepare for the delegation of budgets, including delegation of responsibilities for personnel and premises. I like to think that we at Humphreys were at the forefront of these developments.*

*Talking about premises ...*

*The facilities and accommodation were transformed during the 1980s. HORSAs huts were demolished and a new Science block built. The HORSAs dining room and kitchen were both replaced - not without some trauma. Can you imagine over 700 children being provided with lunch in four HORSAs hut classrooms while the old dining hall was being demolished and rebuilt? Builders hit a water main and a power cable within the space of a few days and rain regularly produced a quagmire. The new dining hall cum drama studio was a real bonus once the new servery had been adapted and the acoustic screen replaced - kitchen and drama sounds competed for a few weeks!*

*It sometimes felt as if the whole place was a building site. We certainly kept our building inspector and contractors busy - swimming pool repairs, re-roofing Orchard Block, floods in the cellar of Old Block and in the Library etc, etc, etc.*

*Another building addition was the Youth Club which the Community Association had just finished renovating as I started at the School. The opening of the Youth Club on the school site did not meet with universal approval but it soon became*



Aerial photo taken in 2001 showing multipurpose Sports Area, Science block , Humanities, new car park as well as the older buildings



2002 Learning Resource Centre – the classroom of the 21st Century



Multipurpose Sports Area



Pupils using the Library in 2002



Students using computers in 2002



Invitation to Centenary Reception

*apparent that it was meeting the needs of young people in the village and in the School.*

*Community Studies became part of the curriculum not only through school subjects but also through a community service programme for 14 year olds. Years later both former pupils and members of the community have spoken about the things they did together at playgroups, at the Bishop Beveridge Club and elsewhere in the village.*

*The first Barrow Festival was held in 1985; it became an annual event for about 10 years and vestiges of it remain today. The festival was born out of a sharing of ideas at a Community Association meeting about how we could celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the School in the village. The anniversary was marked by a village exhibition using material borrowed from Leicestershire Record Office, the local history group and from members of the community. We exhibited history in the making through displays of the work of many village organisations. There were activities for people of all ages during the week which culminated in a gala day, the centrepiece of which was a festival of running, the 'Barrow Runs', a one mile fun run around the school field and five and ten mile runs for serious runners. Thousands took part and large sums of money were raised for charity and for the School.*

*It is more common today for children with special needs to be educated in mainstream schools than it was in the 1980s. We supported parents in their fight for their Downs Syndrome daughter to be educated at Humphrey Perkins. Not only was she successful here but she went on to success at Rawlins, at a Further Education College and to an independent life. Both staff and pupils learned so much from her. Her success was published in a book written by her parents while she was still at Humphreys. We shared in their pride in their daughter.*

*When I arrived on my first day as headteacher I discovered a new brass plate had been put on my door saying 'Headmistress' - not the title I would have chosen but I never commented. While I always signed myself 'Headteacher', being first and foremost a teacher, I was and still am proud to have been the first woman to lead the School, although my deputy, Dorothy Heslop, led it successfully before and after me and on occasions since as Acting Headteacher.*

We return now to the main narrative to provide additional details about the period from 1984 - 91. Among the innovations during her first months in the post were the creation of a democratically elected School Council which produced its own newspaper and ran a lunchtime disco among other things, and the first informal summer concert of music and drama - the start of 'Bits and Pieces'. In addition, in January 1984 Barrow Youth Club opened in a building specially renovated for the purpose, one of the old horticultural buildings behind the swimming pool. And computers were brought into use in the school administration for the first time.

The Science extension was opened in November 1985, the Library was re-furbished, a new Music facility established in Orchard Block and a Computer Room

established in Room 47. Three blocks of the HORSAs were demolished at the end of April 1986 although rooms 6 and 7 were to remain in use for a little longer. An additional headache at this time was the closure of the Gym because of a problem with the floor.

Pupil numbers fell dramatically from the peak of 997 in 1982-83 to 767 in September 1986 and 723 in September 1987, with teacher numbers falling in line and Humphrey Perkins becoming officially a re-deployment school.

January 1988 brought a change in the School hours which became 8.40 a.m. to 3.00 pm. Despite the concerns about the need to reduce teacher numbers, the year continued as normally as possible, with visits to Aberglaslyn, Paris & Normandy, Switzerland and Marans - and a lively after school visit to a venue closer at hand - Rollerworld - and another Sponsored Walk took place raising over £4000. There were problems about keeping the School clean with first a freeze on cleaning jobs, followed by a reduction in cleaning hours.

The Autumn Term of 1988 saw numbers fall to their lowest level at 701 but it was also a year of much activity as the Maths and Science departments received their National Curriculum documents and started to prepare to implement them the following year. The money raised by the Sponsored Walk enabled rooms in both Old Block and Orchard Block to be carpeted. The budget for the year 1987-88 topped £900,000 - how long would it be before the million pound mark was reached for the first time? There was better news about pupil numbers for 1989-90 when the first year (sorry, Year Seven) intake was expected to be in the high 260s, and preparations were made for a ten-form entry. There was more good news when the Second Year soccer team were joint winners of the Leicestershire League Cup.

267 new pupils in August 1989 brought the number on roll up to 713. This was a busy year as the Head Teacher put in a bid to change the status of the School to that of a Community College, Maths and Science National Curriculum came on stream (with English and Technology preparing for their turn the following year), and the buzz words in education were 'development plans' and 'LMS' (Local Management of Schools), where schools took responsibility for the whole of their budget. The strong management team at Humphrey Perkins saw the School safely through all these headaches.

The following year brought with it two different sorts of upheaval for the School. The first was when the subsidence problems in Old Block worsened and room 6 had to be closed; and the second was when Miss Higginbotham announced in November 1990 that she was to take up a post as a General Adviser with the Education Department of Leicestershire County Council. It was agreed that she could take up her new post at the February half term, and once again Miss Dorothy Heslop took over as Acting Head / Warden for the inter-regnum period, with Mr Robert Cromwell taking over her job as Acting Deputy Head. Whilst the search for a new Head Teacher was going on, the school budget reached the million pound mark for

the first time, and there was an innovation in Drama when in June the English Department used the Drama Studio for an in-the-round production of Joan Lingard's 'Across the Barricades', performed by Year Nine students. This was the precursor of what afterwards became the Year 8 play, performed in-the-round usually in March.

### **Mr T Riddiough**

The next seven years were led by Trevor Riddiough who, at 35 years old, was the youngest Head Teacher in Leicestershire. He was also one of the youngest members of staff at the school at the time! Trevor came to Humphrey Perkins with extensive experience of community education having worked as deputy head in three other community colleges in the county.

When he took up his new post in August 1991 to be greeted with the good news that numbers were up - to 761 - and that there was to be an inspection of the School by Her Majesty's Inspectors from 14 - 18 October. Schools are now accustomed to being inspected at regular intervals under the OFSTED system, but in 1991 OFSTED had not yet come into being. Humphrey Perkins had not been inspected for a long time and this inspection turned out to be one of the last carried out under the old system by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The change-over to OFSTED followed close on the heels of this inspection and was perhaps the reason why the publication of the inspection report did not take place until November 1992. June of 1992 found the Year Nine students at Humphrey Perkins taking the Pilot Standard Assessment Tests at the end of Key Stage 3, tests which are now such an important part of school life.

Mr Riddiough summed up the situation in these years thus:

*The nineties were relatively uneventful, and were characterised by the reductions in education budgets caused by the 'cuts in education' coupled with significant increase in pupil numbers. This was a difficult situation to manage creatively. Teachers who left could not be replaced. There was, therefore, very little staff movement and hardly any new teachers joined the School during this time.*

The School was about to receive community college status with associated funds and facilities in 1992. The funding for this was withdrawn at the last minute, but that did not mean the end of community education for the School. Simultaneously, the main education budget was cut year on year. Class sizes increased, workloads increased, as did pupil numbers. The School experienced massive growth in pupil numbers as its popularity increased and by 1998 Humphrey Perkins had reached its maximum capacity. By this time parents had to live in the catchment area to guarantee a place at the School, and many parents moved into the area in order to ensure a place for their children. The School quickly became oversubscribed and was by then bulging at the seams. New buildings were planned for 1999. Changes to the catchment area of the School during this time brought Woodhouse Eaves, Swithland and Cossington within the boundaries.

Community education developed under the watchful eye of the Community Association and extensive programmes were planned and delivered in pre-school, youth work, adult education and sports groups. These programmes became self-funding and this led to some interesting developments. A mini bus was bought from community funds to enable community groups to travel more widely. The School was officially twinned with the Maurice Camel School in Marans to coincide with the two villages twinning. A floodlit pitch was provided for school and community use on the playing field. A full-time community tutor was appointed to co-ordinate many of these activities. This added a new and exciting dimension to the work of the School and more and more pupils became involved in the life of the local community as well as in the School.

The chief worry of the spring of 1993 was how the School was going to cope with an expected budget shortfall of £40,000, but the main event of the Summer Term was the retirement of Mr Roy Print as Head of Mathematics after thirty-four years teaching at Humphrey Perkins.

The number of pupils was increasing - up to 760 in August 1993 and 1993-94 was a Sponsored Walk year, the sum raised this time amounting to £5727. A decision was taken not to administer the Key Stage 3 Standard Attainment Tests during the Summer Term which also saw the resignation of Mr Robert Cromwell, the popular Head of Music whose concerts and musicals had been such a feature of his over twenty years service at Humphrey Perkins. Mr Cromwell was taking up a new post at New Parks School in Leicester. The School was saddened this year to learn of the death of Mr Arthur Ball who had been first Assistant and then Head Caretaker for many years before his retirement after which he had continued to serve his School by looking after the Swimming Pool.

By the Autumn of 1994 concern was being expressed about the need for additional buildings as the number on roll reached 768 with a Year Seven intake of 280. In the Spring Term there was a serious problem when a cut of 2% in the budget was proposed by the County. An innovation in the Summer Term was the first 'Take Our Daughters to Work Day' in which many pupils participated.

The academic year 1995-96 brought the School's first OFSTED inspection which took place in March 1996 but before that Mr Ian Martin produced 'Carol' which he followed up with a visit for the cast of that show to the Barbican in London to see the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of 'A Christmas Carol' after which they met and interviewed one of the actresses, Polly James. OFSTED came and went, the inspection week coinciding with the English Department's staging of 'The Bonny Pit Laddie' as the Year 8 play, and the number of pupils continued to rise to over 800. The outcome of the inspection? It was summarised thus in the Governors' Report to parents: *The report recognised Humphrey Perkins as a place of good learning and opportunity, a friendly place of respect and responsibility where problems are dealt with firmly and fairly.*

1996-97 was another Sponsored Walk year with the proceeds of over £7000 being invested in IT equipment as the School made ever greater use of computers. By the Autumn of 1997 there were 837 pupils on the roll and plans were being made for an eleven form entry in 1998. Discussions were taking place about refurbishing some teaching areas and building additional classrooms. This was the year when Mr Riddiough announced his resignation in order to take up a post as Senior Adviser with the newly formed Nottingham City Education Authority. His departure at Easter saw Miss Dorothy Heslop take over as Acting Head for the third time.

Mr Riddiough summed up the situation on his departure:

*By 1998, then, the financial situation had improved and the extra buildings that were planned ensured that more creative provision could be made for the pupils. The extra pupils brought additional funding and this meant that additional teachers could be appointed. Class sizes could also be reduced. Funding became available to fund curriculum developments such as the computer suite. For the first time in eight years departments had increased their budgets. The School was set to enter a new era.*

An unusual development in 1998 was the sale for housing of some of the School's land adjacent to the Community Centre car park. The money raised from the sale would fund the provision of a replacement car park adjacent to the Swimming Pool and the remaining proceeds would be used either to fund an all-weather sports pitch or provide match funding for a Lottery bid for a sports barn.

#### **Mr D Edwards**

The Summer Issue of the PTA Newsletter reported the appointment of the new Head thus:

*On the evening of Thursday 14 May 1998 the full Governing Body ratified the appointment of David Edwards from a very strong field of candidates. Mr Edwards is currently Deputy Headteacher at Ash Green School in Coventry. He started his teaching career as a Music specialist at Gateway Boys Grammar School in Leicester which became Gateway Sixth Form College. With subsequent appointments at Beauchamp Community College in Oadby and Ash Green, he has covered the whole secondary range. He has considerable experience of using his musical interests both in the community and in joint ventures with primary schools.*

*Mr Edwards has played a major role in turning his current school from a failing school to one in which students and staff now take great pride. Humphrey Perkins has no problems of that kind, although there will be substantial changes in the next few years with capital building works to accommodate the expansion of the school. The Governors believe that Mr Edwards' personality and abilities are ideally suited to these challenges.*

The same issue of the PTA Newsletter also contained a page reminding parents that

as from 25 August there would be the introduction of the new school uniform comprising: grey or black sweatshirt (plain or with Humphrey Perkins logo); polo shirt or shirt with collar in black, grey or white (plain or with Humphrey Perkins logo); grey or black plain trousers or skirt; black-dark footwear with flat, low heels.

The first stage of the building expansion - the provision of a double mobile - coincided with the arrival of the new Head and discussions were quickly under way concerning a new teaching block, to cost nearly £400,000, containing new Science labs and Maths rooms, with other changes to the existing buildings. The predicted increase in numbers was already showing itself with 881 pupils on roll at the beginning of the Autumn Term. (A strange feature of the school numbers was the imbalance between boys and girls - 483 boys and 398 girls.) One innovation this year was the first meeting of the Humphrey Perkins Parents' Forum which was successful, resulting in the decision being taken to hold them three times a year.

In Autumn 1999 the timing of the School day changed, starting ten minutes earlier at 8.30 and the afternoon ending 10 minutes later at 3.10. Another innovation in September was the introduction of a Home School Agreement for the new Year Seven pupils. This was another Sponsored Walk year with the sum raised topping £10,000 for the first time, and preparations were being made for the return of the OFSTED inspectors in March 2000, exactly four years after the first OFSTED inspection. This Millennium Year was quite a year in other respects too. In June Miss Dorothy Heslop retired after twenty-eight years at Humphrey Perkins; another retiree was Mrs Marie Slater who joined the staff in 1981. Mr Mike Morley reached the East Midlands final of the Lloyds TSB Teacher Awards Competition and received a special teacher award.

In September 2000 with 940 pupils on roll (the imbalance mentioned earlier evening itself out with 482 boys and 458 girls) mixed ability teaching was replaced by banding / setting in all teaching groups. Work was proceeding on the the Sports Hard Play area which was ready for use in March 2001. Stuart Nobles reached the national final of the Teacher Awards Competition and received a special award for his lifetime achievement in education.

And so, finally we come to the end of the journey and the year 2002. This year has already seen the opening of the Learning Resource Centre with its banks of computers and will see in the summer the retirement of a number of long-serving members of staff, among them Deputy Head Teacher Stuart Nobles, Assistant Head Mike Morley and School Bursar Betty Turner, who between them have clocked up almost one hundred years of service to the School. It is, indeed, the end of an era but the end is also the beginning of a new era, the beginning of the second century of Humphrey Perkins on the Cotes Road site. Can it possibly contain as many changes as the hundred years that have just ended? Only time will tell.

## Afterword

*Finally, there are some features of Humphrey Perkins to which I would like to pay my own tribute. The first is the governing body of the School. Looking through the recent reports of the governors, I have been reminded that the work they do is voluntary. In fact, there is a note in the Annual Governors' Report to Parents: 'Governors at Humphrey Perkins receive no expenses, all their work is voluntary and unpaid. No claims for meals or travel have been made'. Elsewhere in the report there is a summary of what the Governors have done: 'The full Governing Body have met five times since the last report. Five subcommittees have continued to deal with certain specific areas. Governors have been involved in school life by visits, staff appointments, attendance at school functions, attendance at staff training days, visits to departments of the school and in fund raising. Meetings have been held with the local community to discuss specific areas of concern for the school. They have attended courses and meetings to further their knowledge and skills in order to be able to contribute more effectively with the development of the school. Governors have met to review and evaluate:*

*Key Stage 3 Assessment results  
the Curriculum Review and Key Stage 3 structure  
attendance  
the School Development Plan and Budget Allocations  
strategic planning  
OFSTED Action Plan*

*Humphrey Perkins has been fortunate in having had so many loyal and hard-working governors during the past century.*

*The second feature, which follows naturally from the first, is the loyalty of so many people who have given so much of their lives to the service of the School. A school is many things - we normally think of it as pupils and teachers, pupils being fairly transitory in an 11-14 high school. Many teachers have given 20 years of service and more to Humphrey Perkins; some have spent their entire working life at the School. In addition to them, we must remember the loyalty of cooks, dinner ladies, caretakers, clerical staff, cleaners, groundsmen, technicians, ancillaries and other workers for whom the School has been their life.*

*Talking to a number of parents of former pupils recently, I have been reminded of the important role the School has played in the lives of their children. I have been reminded of the lasting friendships made there and of how well the School built on the good foundations provided by its feeder junior schools before passing its charges on to the Upper School for the final years of their secondary education. I have been reminded also of the very large numbers of students going on to universities and completing not just first degrees but*

*Masters degrees and doctorates - numbers that the Headteachers of Humphrey Perkins Grammar School could never have dreamed of!*

*Being at Humphrey Perkins for me was like being a member of a very big supportive family and as I have read through minutes, reports, log books, personal reminiscences and other documents in compiling this history of one hundred years, I have come to know that this is how it was for so many other people as well. I have been very impressed by the pride and affection with which so many people have written about their School, and I, too, am proud that I and my two sons, who both attended the School, have been able to be part of the Humphrey Perkins story.*

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank the following people who have helped me to tell the story of the last 100 years of Humphrey Perkins: Dorothy Heslop; Wynn Morris; Liz Paxton (formerly Higginbotham); Trevor Riddiough; David Edwards; Nigel Payne (Clerk to the Governors); Betty Turner; the staff of the Leicestershire Record Office and Modern Records Department of Leicestershire County Council. I wish also to thank all those members of staff, past and present, and all those former pupils who have contributed memories and reminiscences—I am sorry that I was not able to use all of them; to have done so would have required a book twice the size!

My special thanks to Dr Mike Neale, the Chairman of the Governors, whose idea this was and whose technical wizardry, enthusiasm and energy have enabled me to complete this book. Any errors that remain are my own.