

Memories of St Hilary's

Christine, who attended the school between 1947 and 1954, sent us this:

"As I remember, the assemblies each morning were special to me. Miss Hiorns led them, her prayers and short message were spiritual and guiding. We sang hymns - and I was in the school choir - led by Miss Tabb who played the piano. Here is a photo of the choir, with Miss Tabb at the piano."



Story time in Nursery - after lunch, I was asked to read to the little ones, who were lying on little camp beds covered over by a blanket. As I read, one by one they would fall asleep! The Nursery class was taught by Miss Knight, who also taught us needlework. I did win the needlework cup one year. Also my love of children remained and I trained as a sick children's nurse.

Talking in class - I think I was about 5 and we were told to be silent - I carried on talking and was told to stand in the corner with the dunce's hat on!

Greek dancing - we were taught by Miss Belairs. In the summer, we performed on the lawn for our parents. In the wings, we were secluded by a large weeping willow tree between scenes.

In my last term - 1954 - I was presented with the St Hilary's cup, it was such an honour.

My years at St Hilary's were the very best school years of my life, I was most happy there."

Mrs Alcock, our Head of Maths and Year 5 Tutor who has worked at St Hilary's for 25 years, shares the following:

"I seem to have had a number of incidents with birds while I have been at St Hilary's!

Shortly after I arrived at the school, The Hydestyle Wildlife Trust came to talk to the children in the hall. They had free flying birds and one landed on my head and tried to eat my hair!



More recently, while I was teaching in the now 3P classroom, a child said they could hear a bird in the cupboard behind my desk. Of course I didn't believe them and to prove it I opened the cupboard. There on the floor was a tiny bird! The window was open and I can only assume it had flown in. How long it had been there we will never know. The caretaker came to the rescue and set the bird free."

Former pupil, Denise, has sent us the following:

"I was at St. Hilary's from 1953, when my family moved to Milford near Godalming, to 1958. I remember the prayers and singing hymns every morning. When it was your birthday, you were allowed to choose a hymn for that day. As my birthday is in December, I always chose a Christmas song. Also, we had an important Christmas carol concert every year; we practiced for months beforehand, and the parents came to hear us sing.

I can remember Miss Hiorns telling us that she had been at the top of her preparatory school, and then gone into the first form at secondary school. Then she was Head Girl in the Sixth Form, at the top of that school, and went to the first year of University. Finally she finished at university, winning lots of prizes, and left to be "the most junior member of the faculty" at her first job as a teacher. I think this must have been our last year, and she was preparing us for leaving; going from the top form of St Hilary's to the youngest one in secondary school.

I do have a copy of "The way of poetry" by John Drinkwater, inscribed "July 1958. St. Hilary's School. Prize awarded to Denise Ginzler for verse speaking. L. IV", and it is precious to me. I still love reading poetry, and although I've never published, I have been writing all my life, and credit St. Hilary's with giving me a wonderful start in the love of books."

Elsbeth Logue attended St Hilary's from 1975 – 1979 and remembers the following:

"I was a rather overweight child (thankfully I lost the weight in the summer gap between first and second year at secondary school!) with a fragile family. Miss Rowan-Robinson and the staff there were amazing with me. I was allowed to help with sports teas and really included as a valuable member of the team for which I am forever grateful. The sports teacher really encouraged me in my swimming and tennis- I gained courage and self-belief through that.

This wasn't just a school it was a very kind, supportive mix of incredible people. I could have done without Greek dancing and lacrosse though!"

Elizabeth Carrel (nee Draper) attended St. Hilary's School from 1952/3 (?) through until 1962 and says the following:

"I loved it and have so many very happy memories of school life there.

The brown and yellow uniforms,

The wonderful climbing tree where we waited for parent pickup.

Assembly in the gym.

The Greek Dancing on the back lawns. The glorious weeping mulberry tree.

The school lunches which were a set meal. I can still remember what we had on each day as the menu was set for each individual day of the week!

I also still remember the names of a lot of the staff. Miss Hiorns and Miss Hills of course. Also Miss Knight, Miss Seratt, Mrs Hewitt, Miss Saunders, Mrs Norris and even Mr. Potter who was the groundsman/general handyman.

In summer term 1962, when in the Upper 1V, I won the House Poetry Prize, 'The Ambleside Book of Verse', a book I still have.

I also won The St. Hilary's Cup, which made me terribly proud.

I could go on and on! Lots and lots of happy memories.

I have lived in Australia since 1970 so sadly was not able to send my own daughter to school at St. Hilary's."