

Life at Matlock College (i)

Edited by George Wigglesworth



This is an attempt to collect together enough material to outline the history of the college and to give some flavour of the life there. I am grateful to the many people who have helped, including those who have trawled their memories to recount some anecdote to bring to it a personal

flavour. It is perhaps noteworthy that most are of social moments! That, however, probably reflects the happy atmosphere so many experienced and the acceptance of the courses devised for their professional training. Factual information is intended to be accurate. However it depends on memory or dates from printed sources and the latter don't always distinguish between authorisation, building commencing and the completion of buildings or between advertising, recruitment and arrival for the course.

I am indebted for information come by in various ways too numerous to list. Jean Lambert's thesis was a mine of precise and comprehensive material for times before 1972. Margaret McAdams and David Whalley made available a treasure trove of student magazines. In the early years they had varied titles, Neriad, Mosaic and, once, The Peak. Most recently it was 'Matlock Musing' and this is available for consultation on disc at the Derbyshire Local Studies Library although publication has now ceased after twenty seven editions. It contains numerous photos and both short and lengthy articles on a broad range of subjects connected with the college and Matlock

George Wigglesworth

Rockside Hydro	Residential/teaching	Wellington St.	1945
Chatsworth Hydro	Residential/teaching	Chesterfield Rd/Wellington St.	1946
Rockwood	Residential	Cavendish Rd	1957
Stoneycroft	Residential	Cavendish Rd	1959
Westlea	Residential Block then Art	Chesterfield Road/Asker Lane	1960
Westlea stables	Diploma (Slow Learners)	Chesterfield Road/Asker Lane	1960
Wesleyan Chapel	Closed Circuit TV studio	The Bank	1966
Sherwood Hall	Recreation/bar/teaching	Drill Hall, Chesterfield Rd.	1966
The Rowans	Principal's House	Cavendish Rd	1968
Oldhams Hydro (Woodlands)	Students Union, Curriculum Studies Centre	Wellington St.	1975

Existing buildings

Art & Craft Block (became Ed Tech and Language Lab 1971)	Chatsworth site	1955
Arts (C) Block (History, Geography & Education)	Chatsworth site	1958
Gymnasium	Chatsworth site	1963
Science and Maths block	Chatsworth site	1964
Staff and Students' residences	Cavendish Road/Wolds Rise	1966
Cavendish Sports Pavilion	Cavendish Park	1967
Studio	Adjacent Chatsworth Dining Hall	1967
Music block	Cavendish Road/Wolds Rise	1968
College Hall:- Dining rooms, kitchen and bar	Wellington Street	1970
Curriculum Extension to Science Block	Chatsworth Site	1976

New buildings

Following the end of the second World War there had been a national search for suitable houses, airfields, anything which might be used for the emergency training of teachers. In Derbyshire the Hayes at Swanwick and the American Hospital at Sudbury (now an open prison) had been considered. In the event a college was founded on Chatsworth and Rockside Hydros in Matlock. The latter, although bought first, needed more alterations having been an R.A.F. hospital during the war and Chatsworth (C&A Modes wartime Head Office) was therefore the first building used when a hundred students were admitted in 1946.

Rockside was in fact purchased for £30,000 on 18 Dec 1945 (£1 in 1945 = £ 30 in 2007), Chatsworth for £17,000 seven months later, sixty of the students being housed in the hotel at Lilybank in the interim. Rockside was initially furnished following a meeting approving the expenditure of £23,000 and minuted on 25 Mar 1947. Growth of the college was by a combination of adaptation and re-use of existing buildings together with new purpose built facilities. The original Science and Geography Block was built for a tender of just under £4,000. The purchase of Cavendish playing field was authorised in the summer of 1947. Both new and resurfaced tennis courts feature in the minutes.



Miss Skittery (PE)
 Miss Saville (Art)
 Miss Oakley (Divinity)
 Miss Knight (Junior Education)
 Miss Murray (Maths & Infants)
 Mrs Brown (Art?)
 Miss Wood (Librarian)
 Mrs Westbrook (PE)
 Miss Fowler (Sec Education)
 Miss Allen (Principal)
 Miss Briscoe (D.P., Eng Lit)
 Miss Dawson (Biology)
 Miss Campbell (History)
 Miss Chelton (History)
 Miss McAdams (Geography)
 Miss Silverthorn (Craft & Eng)
 Miss Palmer (Music)
 Miss Lewis (Rockside Matron)
 Chatsworth Matron

Staff 1949

“The first students were a hardy lot, because the early part of 1947 was remarkable for the heaviest snowfall within memory. For weeks on end we looked out on deep snow which completely covered hedges and indeed stone walls and signposts, and came halfway up telegraph poles. There were drifts round college over twenty feet deep. It was miraculous that food (which was still rationed) and fuel reached us.”

Gladys Allen (1946 - 1967) in “Matlock Musings”

“I remember the occasion when the Derby College women invited our first intake of men to a dance and the Chatsworth students came to dinner clothed in black.”

Norah Oakley (1947 - 1967) in “Matlock Musings”

Initially the Principal was Miss Gladys Elizabeth Allen, born in June 1902 in West Ham. She became a First Class Honours graduate in Physics at London University and subsequently taught at Roedean before the war eventually being headmistress at Merrywood G.H.S. in Bristol. The college was run in the manner of many women's colleges of the times. She assumed parental responsibility for the students. For instance, initially both lunch and dinner were formal, dances were chaperoned by staff. The introduction of male students (many of whom had served in the forces) and a growing proportion of male staff coincided with the disappearance of the latter.



Chatsworth

I was resident in Chatsworth for two years and one of the duties was to patrol the corridors at 10pm and make sure that the girls were all in their rooms. When the men arrived, the duty meant that you had to see that the girls were in, the men out. (It was at that point that I asked if I could be non-resident.) In Miss Allen's day, the evening meal was formal. Students went into the dining room and stood at their tables. The resident staff assembled by the lift at Chatsworth and waited until Miss Allen (and Mademoiselle) appeared and then we all entered the dining room. After saying Grace, we all sat down and the students were not allowed to leave until Miss Allen had gone.

Connie Dove (1957 - 1981)

As well as dances in Rockside there were more formal balls at Christmas and Commemoration at the "Pav," Matlock Bath. Students visited Loughborough, a PE and Technology college as well as the Brush Co. Apprentices' ball. I wonder how many spouses are engineers? It was the period of authority and austerity after the war and when the age of majority was twenty one. Miss Allen allowed two visits home per term as well as half term but also looked very favourably on Youth Hostel weekends for students to experience the beauties of Derbyshire. The ethos is perhaps illuminated by the authorisation of the purchase of a Union Jack, eighteen dozen pairs of cutlery for fish, £10 on Table Napkins and a butter-pat maker. Students brought sheets, pillow cases, quilt, table napkins and serviette rings. They could however put out one pair of shoes to be cleaned by the night porter.



Snow from Rockside

I had a short walk from Rockside hall along the path to the dining hall with lovely views of the countryside including that of Riber Castle out of the windows. Meals consisted of a hearty breakfast, coffee and biscuits mid morning, lunch, afternoon tea with sandwiches (including dripping sandwiches which were ignored by many students) and then the evening meal.

Clal (née White) Wahlich (1971 - 1975)

College personal tutors were introduced in 1968 and there was to be a counselling service. Medical supervision, initially by Dr Souter then by Dr Wilderspin, was also important for routine ailments. But also catching and transmitting TB was then and as now important issue. Matrons and sick bay featured large. In fact student say a spell in sick bay was something to be avoided at all cost and sickness was seen as no reason for failure to catch the coach for teaching practice. One new member of staff recalls matron tapping her wrist watch to reprimand her for being late and the offer of sciatica as the reason was met by a statement that the only treatment was to remain active. Subsequent matrons were all much more sympathetic!



Bedroom

For my first two years as a student I lived in lodgings down in the valley and was faced with a steep climb up Matlock Bank every morning to attend lectures. Coming from Hertfordshire, I wasn't used to the hills. My most vivid memory was when the River Derwent burst its banks in December 1965 and the valley was flooded to such a height that the goal posts on the Matlock Town football pitch were completely submerged. It was impossible to leave Matlock to go home that weekend

Pat Hey (née Wilkinson) 1964-67

Miss Pilkington, who is remembered by many, was the Principal's Secretary, her appointment being made permanent on the 23 March 1948. Miss E Briscoe, was the first Deputy Principal, appointed on 22 June.

Initially almost all the students were in residence but shortly the growing numbers required some to be accommodated in "college approved lodgings". Later there were some day students living in their own homes. The relationship with the town was notable. The domestic staff were very skilled and loyal, many having been involved with hydros. The ancillary and secretarial staff identified closely with the work of the college. In life outside college the landladies took a close interest in their students. For the younger generation the students brought a liveliness to the town going beyond the Duke and Gate public houses. There were the dances, the Rag and its raft race, the present day festivity continuing the tradition.



Rockside Lounge

I was 2 years ahead of my boyfriend and was studying Infant Education with Miss Dibb while he was in Main Course Biology in the adjacent prefabricated hut. When we thought the lecturers were not looking we waved to each other - how romantic! Then Miss Dibb pulled down the blinds. It was also less hazardous than his visits to the Rockside 3rd floor via the outside drain pipe.

Rosemary (née Little) Helliwell (1960 - 1963)

Students who “lived in” will no doubt be interested that 32 double beds were converted to single, 100 mattresses were bought for £2 each (“they served for a long time” I hear the cry). When new beds were purchased for Rockwood students were not allowed to sit on them! A contract for catching cockroaches, rats and mice was placed. Provision of adequate fire escapes was a concern but who was to use them and to go in which direction was not made clear. Drain pipes also served. A signing out and in book, together with male visitors being restricted to the lower lounge in Rockside, no doubt influenced the use of the fire escapes.



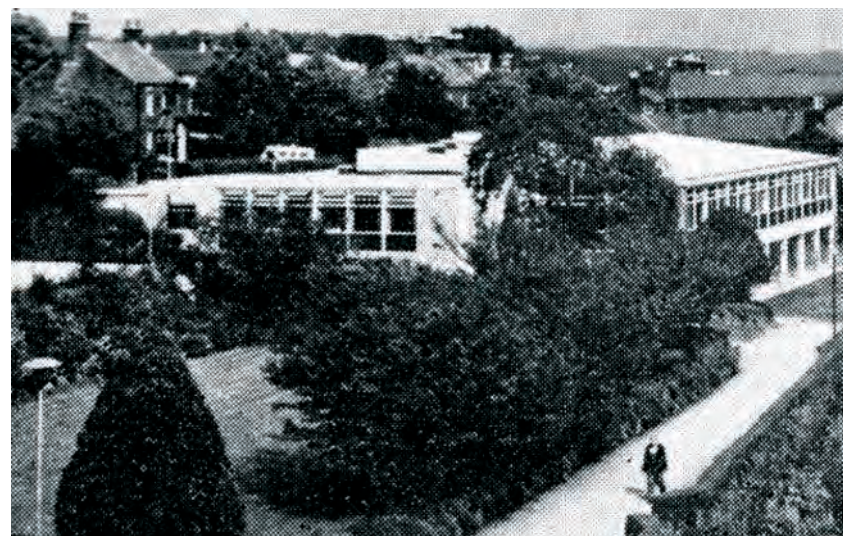
Teaching Practice with ‘less able’ children

Even before the days of ‘Health and Safety’ we would have fire drills. To evacuate the end of the short corridor in Rockside there were a series of trap doors in the floors of the end room, connected by fixed vertical ladders. This eventually opened out through a door onto Rockside Steps, a public pathway. The students would have to then make their way up to Cavendish Road and assemble on the ‘Top Lawn’. By the time those on the third floor had got there, everyone else had gone back in!

Helen (née Hill) Burpee (1975-79)

Various educational necessities feature in the original purchases:- a Banda duplicator (4 colours!), Film Projection Screen, a twin motor playing desk for records, percussion band instruments, two grand pianos and a viola (which latter cost £8).

Signs of the times are reflected in reference to the purchase of material to make curtains for Masson Wing of Rockside if it was coupon free. The planned renovations would not require “restricted materials”. Rockside’s electricity required conversion from 110 volts to 240 and the girls were not allowed to bring their own electrical gadgets, even wirelesses!



College Hall

My most vivid memories are of the social events especially the Victorian Christmas party. This was a splendid affair, when Chatsworth Hall was transformed by the Art department using colourful and imaginative decorations, and the staff joined in the theme by dressing up in appropriate clothing which covered the military, as well as various levels of social strata. The boar's head was brought in with great ceremonial and the night ended with dancing. For most members of staff this occasion is an abiding memory. There were also staff activities to recall, like croquet on Chatsworth lawn at lunchtime and the badminton evenings in Sherwood hall and Chatsworth gym.

Judy Hubbard (1965 - 1983)

The first “Commemoration” (at that stage “Opening”) which was to become a yearly event was addressed by Sir Charles Morris on 6th May 1948. At first the college concentrated on initial training of teachers. This developed with the introduction of men students and the national pattern was lengthened to be a three year course. Eventually staff meetings were replaced by an Academic Board following the Weaver Report with some, a minority of, elected members of staff together with three representatives of the student body. In 1972 the Governing body included the Principal and two members of the Academic Board together with the President of the Students’ Union. In 1966 the main subject range was widened, for example Outdoor Education became part of the women’s PE course.



Art on Teaching Practice

Matlock College is the only place where I've played croquet. The lawn in front of Chatsworth Hall provided an ideal setting for what I soon realised was the most delightfully malicious and competitive game that I'd ever played, a very different sport to its 'Alice in Wonderland' image. The staff formed a club and on one occasion played against a team from the County Hall. My last act at the college was to defeat the Principal (a mean player himself) at croquet .

David Hey (1967 - 1969)

From 1967 the college was formally associated with the London Urban Studies Centre in East London which served as a residential and study centre for teaching practice in London. Eventually in 1972 a four year B.Ed. degree which included teacher qualification was offered, being validated by Nottingham University (alongside the certificate). It had the possibility of an honours award and the certificate was eventually dropped. The students’ studies involved a Main Course, The Theory of Education and Curriculum studies which are about the process of teaching related to the age range it is proposed to teach. The students had twelve weeks of "School Practice".



Junior Field Club at College

I wrote for “Matlock Musings” during my first vacation at Matlock “with Derbyshire’s Youth Orchestra practising ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ below me and scaffolding being busily erected outside my window, I’d much prefer to be with the ‘Matlock College Moroccan Expedition’ which is now (I hope) working hard in the Dades Gorge area.”

Robert Clayton (1967 - 1976)