

Matlock College in Retrospect (i) Edited by George Wigglesworth



Chatsworth

Foreword

Information about the work of the college is not easily available. This edition (i & ii) is intended to fill in some of the background of the life at the college detailed in the first booklet (Life at Matlock College) with emphasis on the academic and professional aspects by recording some personal thoughts of those involved at the time. It is therefore partial and incomplete, for instance no account of the various Slow Learner courses nor of Youth and Community is here. The general body of the booklet is put together by me and not expert. Attributed text has been written by those involved in their particular area but remains their personal view. Whether this will ever be superseded by anything at all is doubtful!

In retrospect one sees that a number of features marked Matlock out from other colleges, including those of the present day. Firstly students were for the majority of the time in small groups. This allowed them to be known well by a few staff concerned to help them to become as good teachers as possible. This contrasts with a present tendency to organize large groups where economies of scale might be achieved. However it is also true that the former pattern can be seen as paternalistic. Secondly the environment the college was in gave it a particular opportunity. The traditional subjects of, for instance, history, geography, biology and outdoor education were able to make full use of the environment and special groupings were formulated such as 'Science in the Social Environment' and 'Geography and Ecology'.

There were various innovations, some by their nature short lived, for example, the shortened courses referred to by Miss Allen, one of which, for those who had resigned from the Ministry, is briefly described by Andrew Bebb. The 'less able' featured as a full time, one year, in-service diploma course for practising teachers and later as a Main Course. There were also particular ways of slanting work in other areas. The Youth and Community course although it often seemed quite separate was an important part of the diversification. It is well worth reproducing Miss Allen's reminiscences of the college's early history, originally recorded for "Mosaic" and already reprinted in "Matlock Musings".

The photographs are from the prospectuses and in later years often taken by the Art department, the art work is often David Ainley's. As was the case in the earlier booklet I was dependent on all who helped and to my wife to whom, as always, I am indebted.

George Wigglesworth

Table of contents

		Page
Reminiscences	G E Allen	2
Teacher Training		4
Education	Peter Lindup	4
Professional studies		4
Main Course		5
Supervising Special Studies	Cyril Channon	5
Teaching Practice		6
The traumas of TP	Chris Helliwell	6
Assessment		6
The link with France	Brian Howitt	6



Learning to survey on Rockside lawn

The college was established in response to a national need to increase the number of places for teachers to train. Derbyshire Education Committee sought suitable properties in October 1945, not yet having decided whether to admit men or women. A name (Matlock College of Education) and its own sub-committee were approved in February 1946 although a metal sign at Chatsworth indicates it was for women. They advertised for a Principal at £800 per annum and confirmed Miss Allen's appointment in May 1946. She was a First Class Honours Graduate of London University in Physics. One of her first duties was to address a meeting of representatives of education in the county chaired by Alderman Gent and attended by Miss Calladine, a Matlock Infant School headteacher, and her assistant teacher Margaret Bowler who was later to be on the academic staff at the college. The first students were admitted in September that year. (More details are recounted in 'Life at Matlock College' see 'references' at the end.)

Reminiscences

G.E.Allen, Principal (1946 - 1967)
From *Mosaic* 18th August, 1967

"You have asked for some reminiscences of the past twenty-one years for the issue of the Old Students' magazine which marks the Coming-of-Age of the College. Some are unprintable, others are not for publication (if we are to keep out of trouble), and I am still left with a host of memories, grave and gay.

"If some of the student who entered college at the beginning in October 1946 were to come back now for the first time since they left in 1948, the most obvious changes would be the buildings erected or acquired since the early days. The town itself has grown and changed: there are no longer any Hydros. Smedley's is now the County Offices, and Lilybank is part of the Presentation Convent High School. Chatsworth Hall which received the first hundred students (all women) in 1946 has altered, and is surrounded by new buildings. Rockside, which was made ready during the autumn of 1947 for some of the second hundred students, has altered less, although there are a number of obvious improvements. During the last months of 1947 and the early part of 1948, Rockside was being cleaned, decorated and furnished, and the second entry spent several months at Smedley's Hydro and Lilybank Hydro before they were able to occupy their rooms in Rockside.

"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 stone walls and signposts, and came half way up telegraph posts. Indeed, there were drifts round college over twenty feet deep. It was almost miraculous that food (still rationed) and fuel reached us. Sledges were much in evidence and a few skiers found conditions much to their liking. Students who ventured out on foot had their adventures though no limbs were broken. We had to wait until 1958 when men joined the college and played soccer and rugby for the cases of fractured arms and legs.



Field work in a quarry

"I wonder how many of the first students remember the official opening of the college by Sir Philip Morris on 6th May 1948 as vividly as I do. It was a day to remember and Sir Philip spoke with characteristic eloquence and wit. Every year since then some distinguished man or woman has visited the college in May and delivered a Commemoration speech. All the first students were young and we had our initial experience of training older women as teachers between 1950 and 1952 when we had two courses of one year each for Uncertificated Teachers who had been teaching for a number of years in Derbyshire schools. Since then we have had a few of their sons and daughters as students. During the first ten years Matlock was full, and had no difficulty in filling all its spaces, though many colleges in the country were finding it impossible to recruit enough students. Then we began to hear rumours of a grave shortage of teachers which would afflict the schools during the nineteen sixties and seventies, and the seeds of expansion were in the air.

"The middle fifties saw the erection of the Art and Craft block at Chatsworth and the prefabricated building at Rockside which started off by housing the geography and history departments but was soon converted (in 1959) into Science laboratories. In 1957 foundations were laid for the lecture block at Chatsworth and the first of the smaller hostels (Rockwood) was purchased. Men students were admitted in 1958, thirty-five brave souls among 200 women, and lived at Lilybank. For some months before they came, it seemed their advent would not be very welcome, for quite a number of women students expressed the opinion that the whole character of the college would be changed (for the worse) and that the admission of men amounted to unwarranted invasion of a women's college. There was no lack of welcome, however, when the men did appear, and from the beginning the "mixed" college community was a success, more so as the number of men increased. No longer was it necessary to "import" young men from Loughborough as dance partners. Another fifty men entered college in 1959, and Stoneycroft was purchased and converted into a hostel so that men were housed there and at Rockwood and Lilybank. The lecture block at Chatsworth was completed and plans laid for a new Gymnasium. At this time, too, Westlea came on to the market, and, after conversion, provided another hostel for men students. It is interesting to note that in 1959 the college was still relatively small with 280 on roll.



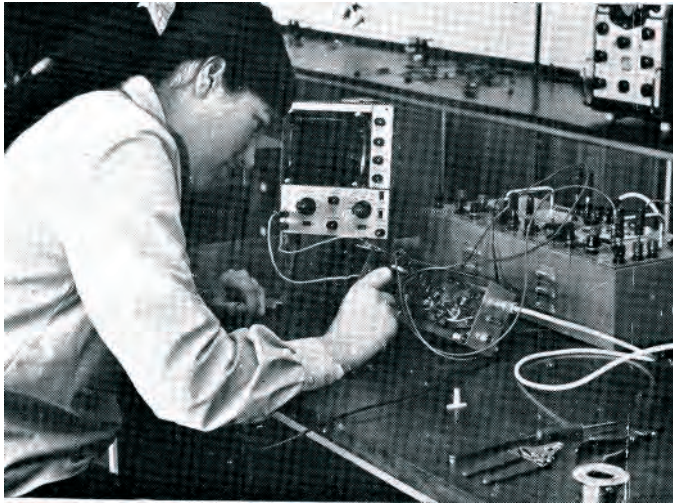
Stoneycroft

"A real step forward in the programme of teacher-training was taken in 1960 when the normal course became a three-year one. Older men and women with special qualifications and experience would be admitted to shortened courses of one year's or two years' duration, and the output from the college in 1962 was confined to mature students as the 1960 "normal" admissions did not qualify until 1963. Plans were being made during 1961 and 1962 for a new building at Chatsworth for Science and Mathematics and for new residential accommodation. By 1963 numbers had increased to 400 and the Commemoration Speeches in 1963 and 1964 had to be held in the Ritz Cinema as the assembly hall at Rockside was too small. The new gymnasium at Chatsworth was ready for use by Whitsun 1963 and was a very welcome and much-needed addition to college premises.

"From an entirely residential college with all students living in Chatsworth or Rockside, which was the policy for the first twelve years of the college's existence, the pattern had changed considerably by 1963 for, of the four hundred students, a fairly large number were day students living at home, and a third of the "residents" were living in college lodgings. Most of the day students were older men and women, married and living with their families within easy travelling distance of the college. With increasing numbers (nearly 500 in 1964, and 550 in 1965), growth was urgent and inevitable. The new Science and Mathematics block was ready by September 1964, the Drill Hall was bought, converted and renamed "Sherwood", by January 1965. Here the Education department functioned by day, and the College Club by night, with the large hall being used for games (basket ball, badminton etc.) and social events of various kinds, including dances.

"By 1965, plans were well advanced for new residential accommodation at Cavendish Park (on the site of the Barbecues!), the playing fields were enlarged, a Sports Pavilion projected. The Sports Pavilion became ready for use in 1967. It was pleasant to be able to have the Commemoration speech on our own premises again in 1965, 1966 and 1967 in the large hall at Sherwood. Another landmark in the programme of teacher-training was the introduction in Colleges of Education of four-year courses for the degree of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). The first degree students at Matlock started their courses in 1966 and it will be interesting to see how degree courses develop alongside certificate courses in the next few years. When the new residential accommodation (72 single study bedrooms) at Cavendish Park was occupied for the first time in September 1966 the college had grown to nearly 650, and another fifty students were admitted in January 1967. They came to take a special intensive course of eight terms, this being the college's offering to the plea (demand?) of the Department of Education and Science for greater output.

"As I leave at the end of the 1966/67 session I think of the students (nearly 2,500), who have passed through college in the last twenty-one years to take teaching posts in this country and abroad, and I remember with gratitude my colleagues with whom I have worked so happily. It is people who make it a college, not the buildings, and though the most obvious signs of growth are in buildings, the true measure of the first twenty-one years can only be made in terms of the men and women who have worked in college, training and being trained. My richest and happiest memories are of students and staff, and I only wish I had time (and space) to say "Do you remember So-and-So?"



Physics

Though there have been worries, anxieties and problems, there has been a great deal of happiness and satisfaction, laughter and gaiety, goodwill and friendliness. To sum it up briefly - never a dull moment. I close with best wishes to all past and present students and staff for the future, and thanks to all those who have made my years at Matlock so full of happy memories.”

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Teacher Training

These courses developed over the years as national plans were implemented and experience within the Institute of Education and the college grew. The two year course became three, the single sex college became mixed. Opportunity for graduate courses together with the opportunity for honours for some were soon followed by an all graduate intake to the profession. Education, Professional Studies and Teaching Practice and (other than for Post Graduates) Main Course were all important elements. The study of Mental Handicap which didn't have the link with a traditional school subject was listed as a Main Course.

Education

Peter Lindup (1965 - 1982)

“All students on entering Teacher Training had to study Education as a subject in addition to their choice of a Main Course. The students were randomly allocated an Education Tutor who would be "theirs" for the whole three years. In many cases this led to the growth of a worthwhile feeling of belonging to that group and engendered to a larger or lesser extent an appreciation of all those with very different experiences and knowledge through their Main Courses.



Study of contemporary documents

“Each Education Lecturer usually had 15 to 20 students in his/her group and they met 6 hours per week to study History of Education and Principles and Practice of Education as well as actual Teaching Practice. Those students who wished to specialise in Infant teaching shared two tutors who were specialists in that area.

“For the fourth Year in which students were studying for the B.ED degree the whole Education Course had to be more academic. To this end they had to choose an area of study from Philosophy of Education, Psychology of Education, Sociology of Education and pursue the choice at a deeper level.”

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Professional studies

This important area of work was intended to give as much help as possible in preparing students, not only for the first days on school practice but also in the longer term as they became practising teachers. The secondment of a practising teacher allowed a continuing contribution from those still active in schools.

This was to be achieved by courses aimed at teachers of the various age ranges developing from a series of day school attachments in the first year and subsequently twelve weeks of school practice. Within this course there were subject-orientated periods ranging from a more unified approach for those aiming at the First School, more wide ranging for potential Junior School teachers and a main and subsidiary course method for students in what were deemed shortage subjects. Students following the “Mental Handicap” main course had a professional studies course which related to the needs of such pupils. There was for all students a course in Basic Maths and one in English.

Students were in tutorial groups based on age range throughout the course and under the supervision of a personal education tutor. The aims were based on what were identified as the needs of future teachers the feeling being that feeling students should examine and come to understand what was known about the children they would teach. Appreciating the influences of the environment, particularly the home and school, would help to clarify their own objectives. There grew an increasing opportunity for specialisation through options and a special study.

Main Course

Main courses were often a continuation of the student’s sixth form studies. If they were to teach the secondary aged pupils there was obviously value in them having a fund of accurate facts and concepts to illuminate their own lessons. In Junior schools, and even Infant ones, subject matter was being enlarged and given a clearer subject identity, so even there a person with a specialist slant in addition to their general abilities was of value.



Art in school

Students could acquire something which went beyond ‘being a teacher’ to one also trained in a subject. In science, for example, a ‘special study’ was at least the one occasion when students could try to explore a situation when no right answer was obvious and see how difficult ‘real science’ was. As a result they could contribute within their school professionally as such a person but also they could be seen to make judgements based on evidence and considerations of alternatives, for example, thought to be features of the scientific mind. Other teachers would contribute other perspectives in other ways.

Main courses offered at various times included:-

Art	Biology	Chemistry	French
Geography	History	Mathematics	Music
Needlework	Physics	English Studies	Mental Handicap
Physical sciences	Geography with ecology	Human movement studies	
Religious and moral education	Science in the social environment		



Biology

Supervising Special Studies

Cyril Channon (1964 -1985)

“In my first years as a Biology lecturer at Matlock I remember supervising 3rd year Special Studies topics for several students. These were individual areas of study selected by students after discussion with their tutor.

One of my students, Rod F., was a caver and proposed to investigate cave life in the Matlock area. One of his investigations was in an old lead mine. One day he reported that there was a peculiar fungus growing on the rotting pit props, but every time he brought a specimen to the surface it collapsed into an unidentifiable blob. I suggested he took a photograph in situ, to which he said that he had not got a flash camera. I had! Would I go down the mine with him and take some photos?

“Duly kitted out we descended a very wet shaft and worked our way to the decaying wooden props. I was horrified. The sides and roof bulged ominously. The props crumbled easily to the touch. Never had I been so alarmed! I took the pictures and we quickly made our way out. I emerged a very relieved new Biology lecturer.”

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Teaching Practice

As well as observation in schools students did 12 weeks of Teaching Practice within the appropriate age range, usually in four week spells though the course. They had a timetable lighter than the teachers they replaced but one which grew. The school staff were a central influence in both the way they worked with children and the final assessment. The week before the full time practice allowed for preparation and seeking advice arising from the two preparatory visits. They had two supervisors from the college staff, one having a more central role. After the supervisor’s visits there were often follow up tutorials and these were often upon return to college.

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The traumas of TP

Chris Helliwell (1962 - 1965)

“I was doing school practice in a Secondary Modern boys` school in a mining village and the Math syllabus required me to do 'Logarithms' with this class of 15 year old, educationally-challenged lads. These coal miners` sons seemed more interested in the rain drops trickling down the windows than my lesson. Of course this was the very lesson that my supervisor chose to come and see! It says something about both of us that I have just reached retirement age as a teacher.”

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Assessment

There was always in mind the quality of the teachers we would produce. It started at interview of all applicants when two lecturers and often a school teacher would comprise the panel. I often said in summary I made sure I could teach them, that is to say they must have opinions but sometimes they might be changed. In addition I wanted to be confident that they would not bore children. We were always full to the Government’s imposed target and entrants had above the national average in entrance qualifications.

When school exam results were published we were able to make a final decision over places offered. In the early days the minimum qualification was 5 O levels. Degree courses required 2 A levels. Applicants rang or wrote. You could almost sense the results. For some students a college place was the height of their ambition. Others were happy to be able to say they had the results which were set by their intended university. There were those who had a college place in reserve for the eventuality which had come about that they did not achieve the university requirement. (Always to be remembered was the phone call from a father to say his daughter could not take up the place she had been offered as she had died in a car crash.) The college was able to use places not taken up, or from shortage subjects not filled, for allocating late applicants.

The main course and education courses (including ‘Special Studies’) were assessed by external examiners appointed by the Institute of Education at Nottingham University who validated all parts of the course. The three teaching practices were a very important show case of ability. As well as two supervisors from college there was again a team of External Examiners for the final TP. Overall the recommendations were passed to Examiners’ Meetings internally and to the one for one of the six or seven constituent colleges at Nottingham University. Relations with the Institute of Education there were always very good.

Students might withdraw for a variety of reasons, personal circumstances, the realities of teaching, inability to cope with study at this level. Some were asked to withdraw during the course for failure to match our standards, both social and academic. The final Teaching Practice examiners’ meeting gave long thought to potential failure taking into account the school’s opinion, those of supervisors and external examiners and there were various strategies. Maybe the failure gave no hope of improvement. Perhaps there was justification for an extension. In every case the first year of teaching at least was a probationary time which could be extended and the college could be involved. Whether full use of this was made is not obvious, sometimes ‘probation’ was never mentioned and seemed not to be a consideration. Nevertheless we thought we had been able to some extent to help students to become as good as was realistic. Overall slightly more than 80% of the students who arrived at the start of the first year qualified as teachers.

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The link with France

Brian Howitt (1967 - 1986)

“The creation of the French department in 1967 saw the College broaden its outlook. French assistantes became a regular part of the staff and not only could students now study French language and literature, they could attend courses at French universities and teach in a French school for a year. A link with Bourg-en Bresse enabled their teachers and students to study in Matlock and courses in English were run for delegates of the Bourg Chambre de Commerce. Unfortunately all this was wiped out when in the mid-80s the DES deemed that the study of French was irrelevant in the B Ed degree.”