

# **Phil Walton**

## **Buglawton Boy**

**Early years Between 1948 - 1963**



*“I left school age 14 with happy  
memories, no qualifications, friends  
for life and a bible”*



## Phil Walton – Buglawton Boy

### Introduction:

Having been involved in family history for most of my adult life I decided that it is time to record my own impact, small as it may be, on this planet. I was uncertain how to start and was helped with a suggestion from a friend - Nick Rushbrook. My initial plan was to copy Nick's idea – that is, using an A4 format produce one page of text noting key events with a facing page of relevant photos for every year. I have followed Nick's example but only in part. Nick produced his record for his own family and also kindly presented me with a copy of his final book. He had carefully woven into his history relevant local and national significant events, this I found very interesting and so concluded that I would try to provide additional information about the local area and other people that I was in contact with at the time of certain of the events.

### Page

#### 1) Infant years:

i. My Grandparents	2
ii. Buglawton in the 1950s	3
iii. 1948 – 1952	10
iv. Other memories of Early Years	13

#### 2) Buglawton School Years

i. 1953 – 1958	15
ii. Buglawton Junior School	21
iii. 1959 – 1960	23
iv. Social Change in Buglawton & Congleton	

#### 3) Congleton Years

i. Secondary School	26
ii. 1960 – 1963	34

#### 4) After School – The following pages are not included in this “early years” copy

At the time of writing all pages can be found on [www.waltonsfamilyhistory.co.uk](http://www.waltonsfamilyhistory.co.uk) or from Phil Walton

i. 1964 – 1969	36
ii. Radway Green	36
iii. Messing about with cars	46

#### 5) Gas & Water -

i. West Midlands Gas	48
ii. Macclesfield and District Water Board	55
iii. Marriage and family life	59

**Acknowledgements:** - I thank the many people who have helped me with my research – I have tried to include names wherever I felt appropriate. Apologies to anyone that I have missed. I take full and personal responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies.....Phil Walton.....December 2024

## My Grandparents:

Information about my maternal grandparents is second hand as both of my mothers parents had died before I was born, Eliza (nee Knapper) in 1938 aged 59 and James in 1940 aged 70. In addition to my passed on Mothers memories I can also call on my extensive family history research. My mother was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1919 in The Lord Nelson pub in Brook Street Congleton. This photograph is taken at the front of the former building with James sitting in the front of the Charabanc on the right hand side. And below is a photo taken at the time of my parents wedding in August 1940 when Dad was on leave from the army. They married at St Stephens, Congleton and the group photo is taken outside of 115a Astbury Street Congleton where Mum lived. In the wedding picture left to right Cissie Thorley (nee Knapper) (Ada's Aunt), Ruth Walton (nee Holland, Harold's mother), Nancy Walton (Harold's sister), Harold, Ada, Julia Yates (Ada's sister) James Yates (James died two months later). It

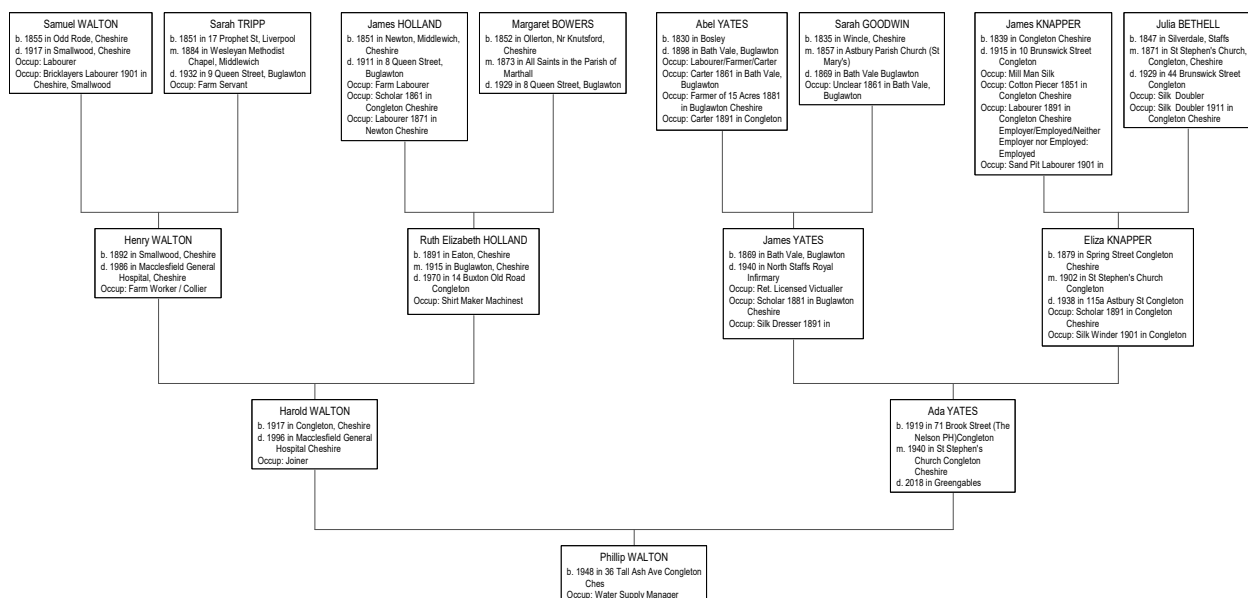


might be that Henry Walton (Harold's father) took the photo, so the two added photos Henry with his dog (called Nigger, which in those days would go unnoticed) and a portrait of Eliza Yates (nee Knapper) Ada's mother.

James Yates was the Lord Nelson landlord until the mid 1920's when

the family moved to Biddulph and became the landlord of The Swan on Biddulph High Street, this building does still exist. Henry Walton was born in Smallwood and left school aged 12 to work on a farm, he later became a coal miner and later for a long period was a driver for Congleton Co-op.

Henry Walton's father (Samuel) was a wheelwright and in his childhood spent a number of years in Arclid Workhouse with his brother and mother following the death of his father George. George was a canal boatman. George died in 1855, one month before Samuel was born and two days after his leg was amputated after becoming caught in the rope attached to the horse pulling his canal boat. George's wife Sarah (nee Tripp) originated in Liverpool and moved to Cheshire after giving birth to an illegitimate baby. Sarah had also spend time in the workhouse (Liverpool in her case) during her childhood, her father worked as a Rigger on ships. My mothers paternal grandfather Abel Yates was a carter with his own business and her maternal grandfather James Knapper had various manual jobs including Plate Layer and Millman (silk). I would not be writing this if they hadn't succeeded in overcoming the many hard times they suffered. They are all worthy of recognition.





## Buglawton in the 1950s

Most of my childhood memories are set in Buglawton. Here are a few facts about Buglawton during and before I arrived. Completing this record has increased my understanding of the local area. People I knew during the 1950s have shared their own thoughts and memories of the time, There was a lot of change at the time,. To understand what was happening I have copied before and after maps for the Buglawton area. The four early maps are reproduced with the permission of the [National Library of Scotland](#). I did not set out to write a history of Buglawton – the changes at the time did impact those like myself who were around at the time. There does not appear to be a definitive history of Buglawton. I have though referred to a very good booklet produced by the late Peter Boon which is available in Congleton museum – it is called “Buglawton”.

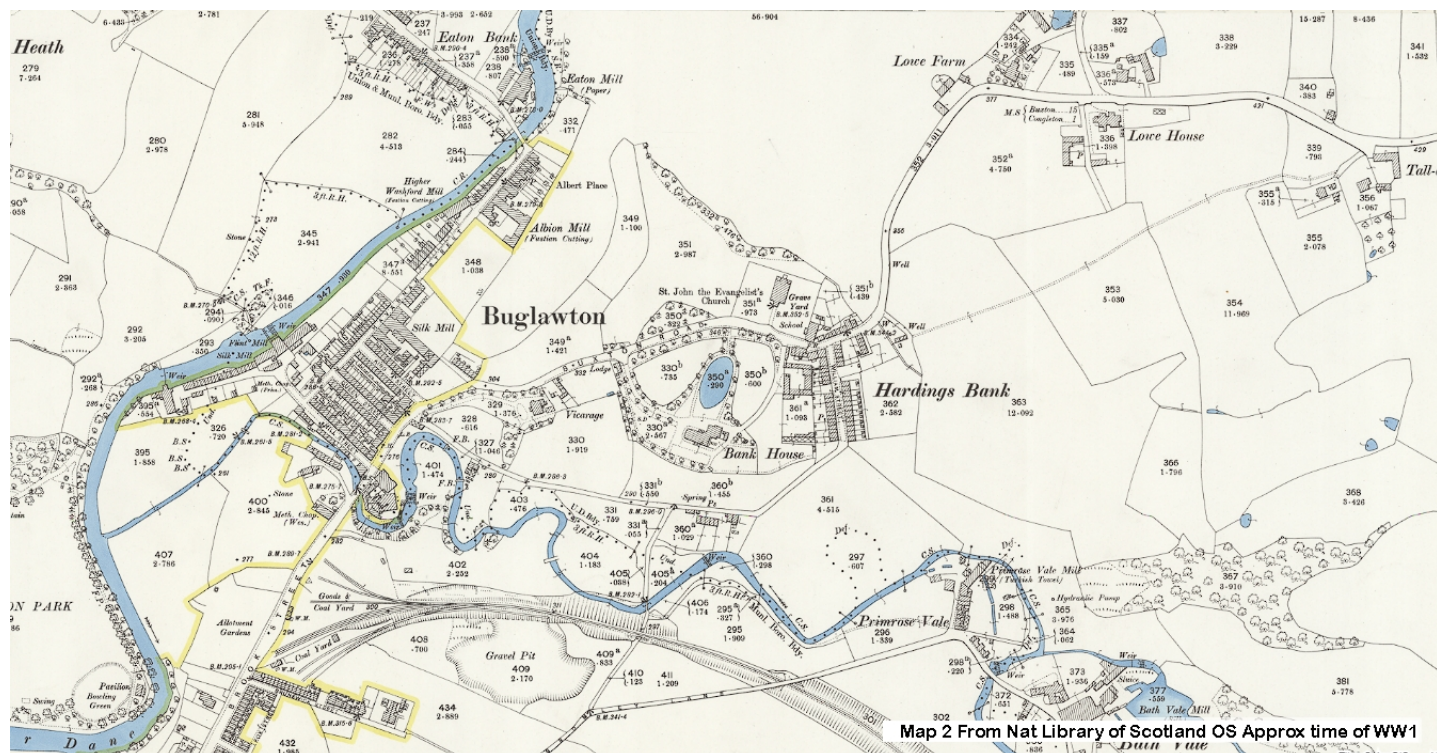
### The Maps:

1. Map 1 is the late 1800s – the population of Buglawton fluctuated between 1500 and 2000 with most houses being close to the River Dane in lower Buglawton - Mill Street, Queen Street & King Street (locally know as Bottom, Middle & Top Street), Havannah Street, Eaton Bank, Bridge Row and Dane Row. A second group of workers cottages at Hardings Bank close to the Church and convenient for the mills close to Dane in Shaw Brook.
2. Map 2 is from around the time of World War One – hardly any change from the first map but showing the rows of cottages in much better detail. Up until 1936 when it became a suburb of Congleton Buglawton was an independent Urban District, with most of the population in the industrialised area close to the River Dane..
3. Map 3 is the late 1940s – Some cottages are now being demolished. My father lived at 7 Queen Street until it was demolished in 1937 his family moving to Kingsley Road in the area always known as “Tin Town”. High Low Avenue (1919) and the top part of Tall Ash Avenue (1924), were similar new post WW1 council houses.
4. Map 4 moves us onto the late 1960s – there was continued rapid housing development. . The Buglawton Council Estate was built between 1956-58, with the Buxton Road bypass completed between 1954-56. Many private houses were built after this including the “Star Homes” development behind Tall Ash Avenue in 1961. It is interesting that the “BUGLAWTON” name has moved higher up to be close to the Church and new estate.
5. Map 5 is a current (2024) online aerial view. Buglawton is now very urban but still has rural surroundings.

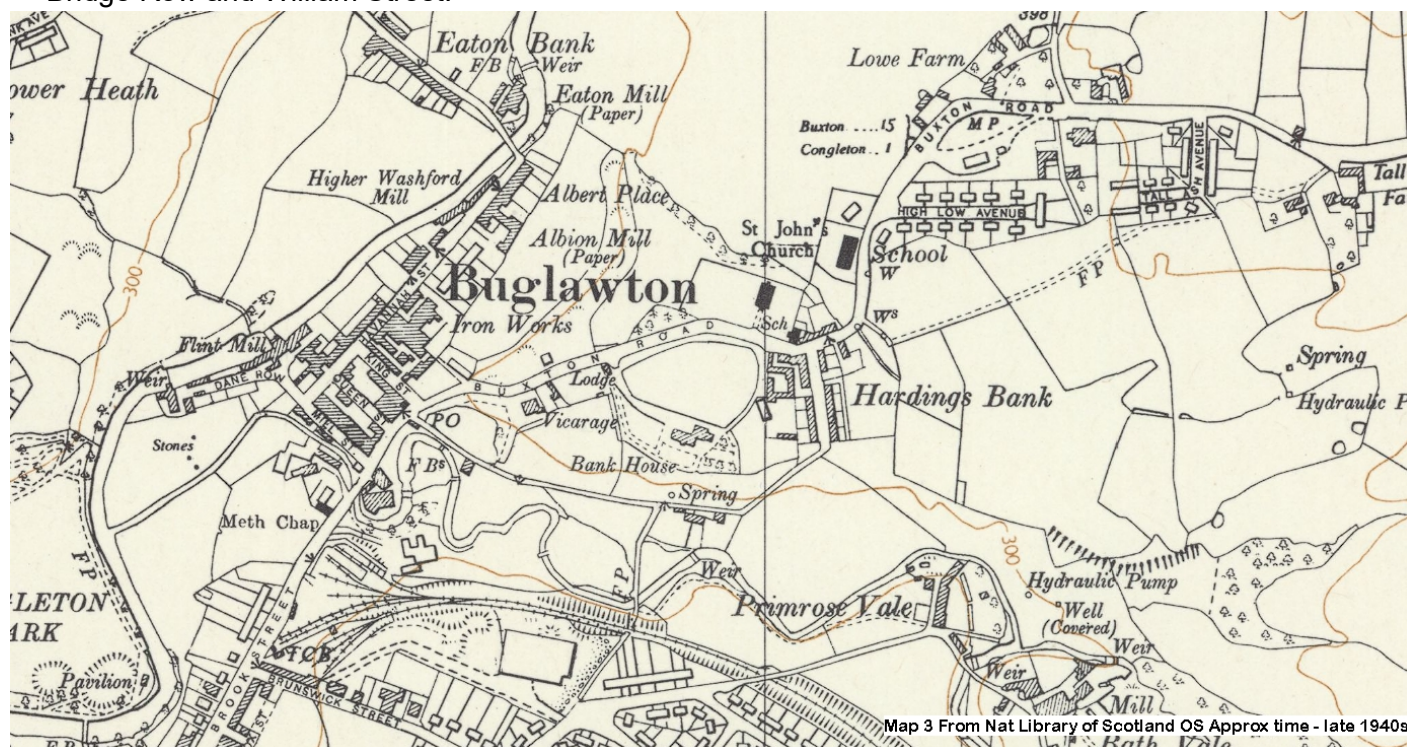


Map 1 From Nat Library of Scotland OS 1250 based on 1873 surveyy



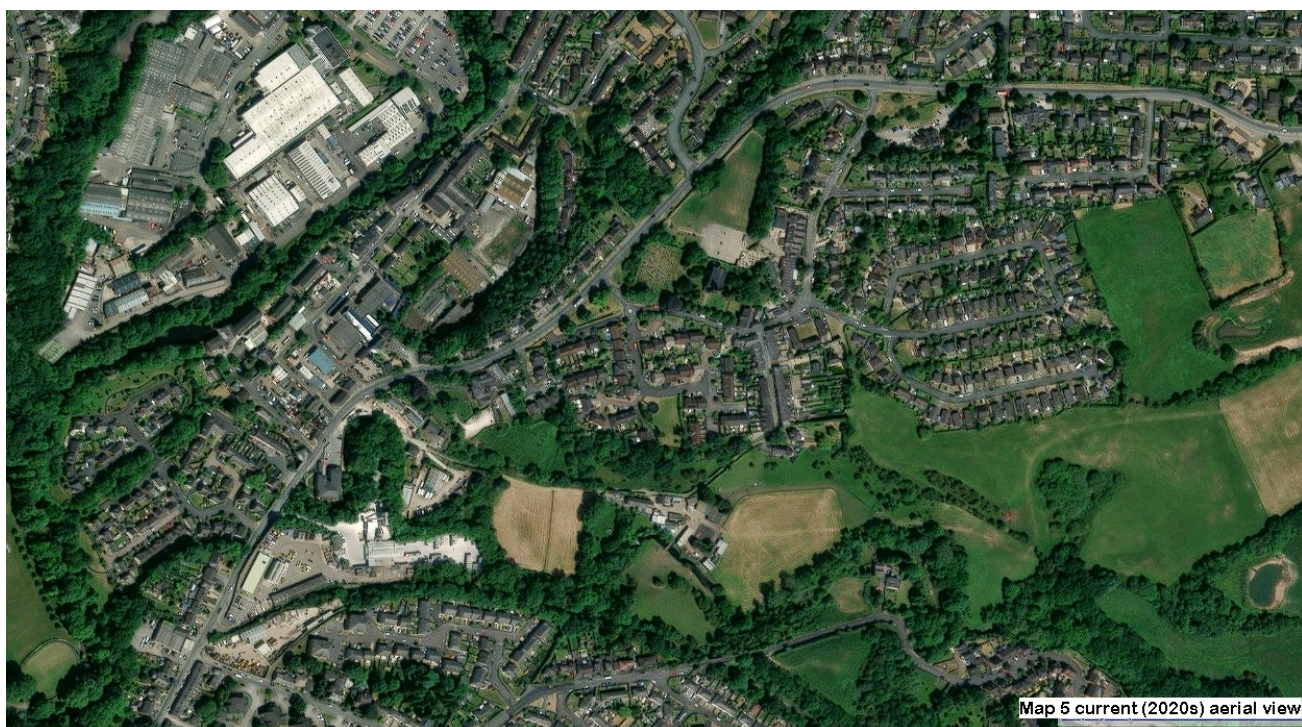


The map (2) above shows the main areas of population when my father Harold was born in 1917 (he was actually just about on the map in Brook Street Congleton, next to what in 2024 is Throughgoods shop). Two years later my mother, Ada Yates, was also born close by in Brook Street at the Lord Nelson Pub at the corner of Brunswick Street (next to the end of the mineral railway line). They met for what may have been the first time twenty years later at Congleton Fair. In-between these years Harold had moved to Kingsley Road (previous page) Ada had also moved as a small girl with her family to another pub (The Swan in Biddulph) with her family. What is most striking to me now (it wasn't then) is the speed of change in moving people from the old village centre in Lower Buglawton to new housing both council and private on both sides of the Buxton Road bypass. Not much of the older housing has remained, the most notable seem to be Bridge Row and William Street.





Map 3 above is included to show where the first council housing appeared between the two world wars – High Low and Tall Ash Avenues. The detailing in this map is not very good, map 4 below is much clearer with the disappearing houses in Lower Buglawton being evident. I have clear memories of the Newsagents (Hardings?) and Oliver Rutlands next door. The Co-op at the bottom of Queen Street and the Post Office at the bottom of King Street. There were shops in Havannah Street and near to Brook Street Chapel. Along Mill Street were Denham's chip shop (I was often despatched there by my mother to buy wet fish which was also sold there), the Labour Club and Staffordshire Knot pub. I can't recall ever going further along Mill Street in my younger days so never ventured towards Washford Mill, Dane Row (if it was still there) or the Primitive Chapel (the Pigeon Loft – which I didn't enter until 2022 when it had become a welcoming cafe). The reopening of the Throstles Nest (much loved by my Grandfather) is one of not very many welcome changes.





## Buglawton in the 1950s



**Our Playground** – the main map shown on here is dated around 1950 – superimposed (faintly) is the current road layout (2022). Buildings that existed in the early 1950s are in darker print. Note: 1) the darker print for the earlier council house building – Brunswick Street area (Tin Town), High Lowe Avenue, the top of Tall Ash Avenue, 2) The older part of the village Mill Street, Queen Street, King Street (Bottom, Middle and Top Streets), 3) The “Buxton Road” bypass.



## Tall Ash Avenue

I was born and lived at 36 Tall Ash Avenue for 24 years when Kath and I married in 1972. The first 24 houses (without a hipped roof) and closest to Buxton Road were built in 1924, a further 10 houses were added just before I was born in 1948 (we were the first family to live in number 36) these houses have a hipped roof. There is one more house on the photo below (number 38), this was build in what was the garden at number 36.



My recollection of names of people in the newer houses at that time are:

- 21 – Bosson – Gordon and Mary with their children – Gordon, Doreen, Alan and Christine, born in later years were Dorothy and Maureen.
- 23 – Skellern – Cyril and ? With their children – Carol and Pat, born in later years Susan and Stephen
- 25 - Boston – Bill and Barbara – Peter the eldest child was born in 1950, in later years Pamela and Robert. Eric and Maureen (nee Jervis see number 9 below) moved in here when the Bostons moved to Havannah Lane. Children Mark and Susan.
- 27 – Lucas - Archie and Laura - The mother was daughter to “Adderleys” who lived at number 26 – note that Google has attributed incorrect numbers here, number 28 is correct so work back. Margaret (maybe) Christine and Michael was born in 1950.
- 29 – Moses Jack and Ivy.
- 31 – Tristram – Probably Alf and Louie With their children – Cyril, Alf, Duggie &, Lottie. Roy Houldsworth added - *locally in the lower village of Buglawton we all new Alfred as Alfie Kettle his grandparents brought him up to help his parents as the Tristram Family was quite large. Alfie was cousin to Sandra Kettle they both lived in Havannah St*
- 30 - Morris – Harold and Phyllis (says CheshireBMD) Children Carole & Robert.
- 32 - Dixon – Frank and Nancy with daughters Catherine and later Marilyn
- 34 - Batson – Claude and Hilda with daughter Norma.
- 36 - Walton – note that there was no 38, that was then part of the garden to 36
- At the bottom of the Avenue, there are now garages – in 1950 this was the “Cow lane” which can be seem running down to Buxton Road. The bungalow near to Buxton Road was not yet built the edge of Davison’s farm house can be seen half way along the lane.
-

Information in this book also recalls other names from Tall Ash and close by so below are my best recollections of our other neighbours. My thanks to Jennifer Tonks(Hewitt) for her help with the following. In addition to the image above it is also worth referring to the older map on page ? To start with firstly carrying on up the avenue from 21 (Bosson)

- 19 – Prince – Charlie lived here – I have no knowledge before the early 60s when he married Mrs (Jessie) Redfern who had previously lived close by at number 11 and was a widow. Mrs Redfern's children Lessie and John also moved at this time.
- 17 – Holland – these names are taken from the 1939 census so may be incorrect.
- 15 – Swindles – I only have a vague memory and according to the 1939 census their names were probably Wilfred and Annie.
- 13 - Barlow – Arthur and Elsie according to the 1939 census with two children. The Hewitt family moved here probably in the late 50s. Mr (Lionel) and Mrs (Rosa) and children Jennifer, Dianne, Walter and Carol
- 11 – Redfern – see also number 19. Mr (John) Redfern sadly died in 1962.
- 9 - Jervis Mr Leonard and Mrs Harriet – they had one child Maureen who married Eric Foden see number 25.
- 7 - Carlisle – according to the 1939 census George & Sarah, I know of four children Russel, twins Janet and Janice and Denise.
- 5 - David and Ian Cunliffe lived here with their mother. Ian was a year or two older than me and David was a couple of years older than Ian.
- 3 – Pickering – the house is on Buxton Road – I can't recall any names
- 1 - Harding – also on Buxton Road and I can't recall the names.
- 2 – Griffiths – I recall the children here were much older and the family owned or bought the piece of land between that house and Tall Ash Farm – previously we had played there.
- 4 – Egerton - my good friend Robert lived here with his mother Maggie, Mr Egerton had sadly died when Robert was quite young.
- 6 – Williams – Mr Horace and Mrs Lauretta and son Stuart who was wicketkeeper for Congleton Cricket club, Stuart also once told me that he was an original member of Buglawton Wolves football team along with Cyril Tristram (see number 31).
- 8 – Washington – I seem to recall it was Jack or that Jack was the brother who lived in William Street, the daughter – a few years older was called Susan from memory.
- 10 – Ken Frost – this name is on the 1939 register.
- 12 – Mrs Phylis Lesley (Martin Dale's Grandma)
- 14 - Mr & Mrs Frost – they had a son Steve.
- 16 – Dawson - Mrs Ada , children Craig, Rita and Kevin.
- 18 – Turner – Mr Turner was know as "Padge" and was the Waterman for Congleton Corporation – when I later worked for Macclesfield Water Board I came across old records referring to Mr Turner. He had two granddaughters at Buglawton School when I was, Jean and Ann McDougal (check spelling) – Ann was in the same class as me.
- 20 – Frodsham – I recall Mr Frodsham and his son Sammy – Sammy worked at the sand quarry in the fields behind Tall Ash Avenue. One day he was completely buried in sand and was eventually dug out. It was reported in the "Chronicle" that if Sammy hadn't been so exceptionally strong he would not have survived.
- 22 – Camm – Mr Bob and Mrs Ethel – I recall Mr Camm he worked for the railway at Crewe Works.
- 24 – Wakefield - there were three older children living here
- 26 – Adderley – See number 26 above. Also one of the sons (Harold) was my cousin Irene's borther in law – he married Alan Bells sister.
- 28 – Turner – I think there were four children - all older – I recall the daughters having friendly boyfriends who played football with the local younger boys (us) when visiting (courting) the Turner girls. I also recall that during late October and early November it was possible to buy fireworks from the Turner's back door!

Back to Buxton Road and turn left – opposite Havannah Lane there was a farm house (Little Lowe) and part of a very big old house (The Lowe) now called Holmhurst. On the left when leaving Havannah Lane was High Lowe Farm.

- Holmhurst – Leech's – Albert and Eve (aka Mama) Children were Leslie and John. I delivered milk for Albert for many years, he was great to work for although he didn't rush

things and spent a lot of time talking to his customers. So much so that we didn't complete the milk round until 2 pm some days. I recall that some days we didn't actually start delivering until after 8:30. A highlight was the early call to Thomas Prestons paper bag factory where we took milk into the onsite canteen. John Leech tells me that the supervisor was called Mrs Sant. A lovely lady who always offered us toast or bacon butties. There was a constant stream of people from the shop floor or office popping in for a chat and snacks. It might be a memory that softens over the years (like schooldays) but it did strike me as a friendly place to work.

- Little Lowe Farm – William (aka Bill or Ludo) and his wife Nellie - Children were Thomas and his elder sister Margaret. Williams father also lived with them – he visited us regularly at number 36 regularly – originally from the lake district he had many stories to tell.
- High Lowe Farm – Cyril and I can't remember his wife's name, they had four sons Cyril, Alf, Ray and Kenny.
- Lowe Farm – this was on the opposite side of the Havannah Lane to High Lowe Farm, this must have been demolished around the time that the new Buxton Road was built bypassing the Church and Hardings Bank and accommodating the construction of the new housing estate.



**1948**

I will start with the words I put together following after the sad death of my big brother Dave with memories of my early years still fresh in my mind. I was proud to be able to share these at Dave's funeral – here they are:

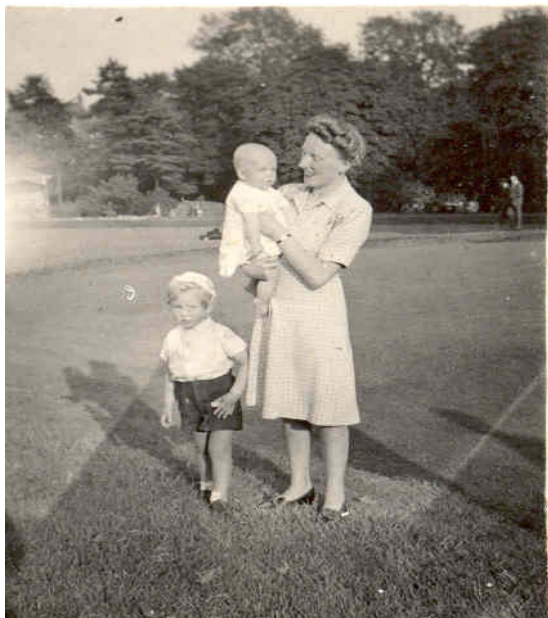
*"There were three "Walton Boys" sons of Harold and Ada – Dave the eldest was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1944 - his mothers 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was war time, Dad was overseas and did not see David until he was 14 months old.*

*Mum, Dad, Dave & Ray moved to Tall Ash in 1948. A third baby was due and Mum was desperate for a girl and had already decided on a name – Jenny – unfortunately I arrived.*

The other thing of note is from one of our childhood friends Tom Davison. Tom lived at Little Low Farm which was connected to Tall Ash Avenue by a lane that lead from the farm to fields behind our house and was used by Tom's dad (Bill also known as "Ludo") who would use it to take his cattle to the field. We called it the "cow lane".

Tom has told me on more that one occasion that on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1948 he knocked on the door of 36 Tall Ash Avenue to ask "can Dave come out to play?" However, the door was answered by my mothers sister "Aunty Julia" who told Tom "Oh no, we have to be quiet Mrs Walton has just had a baby". Tom was shocked by this news and immediately ran off (down the cow lane) as fast as his little legs could carry him to impart this news to his mother (Nellie).

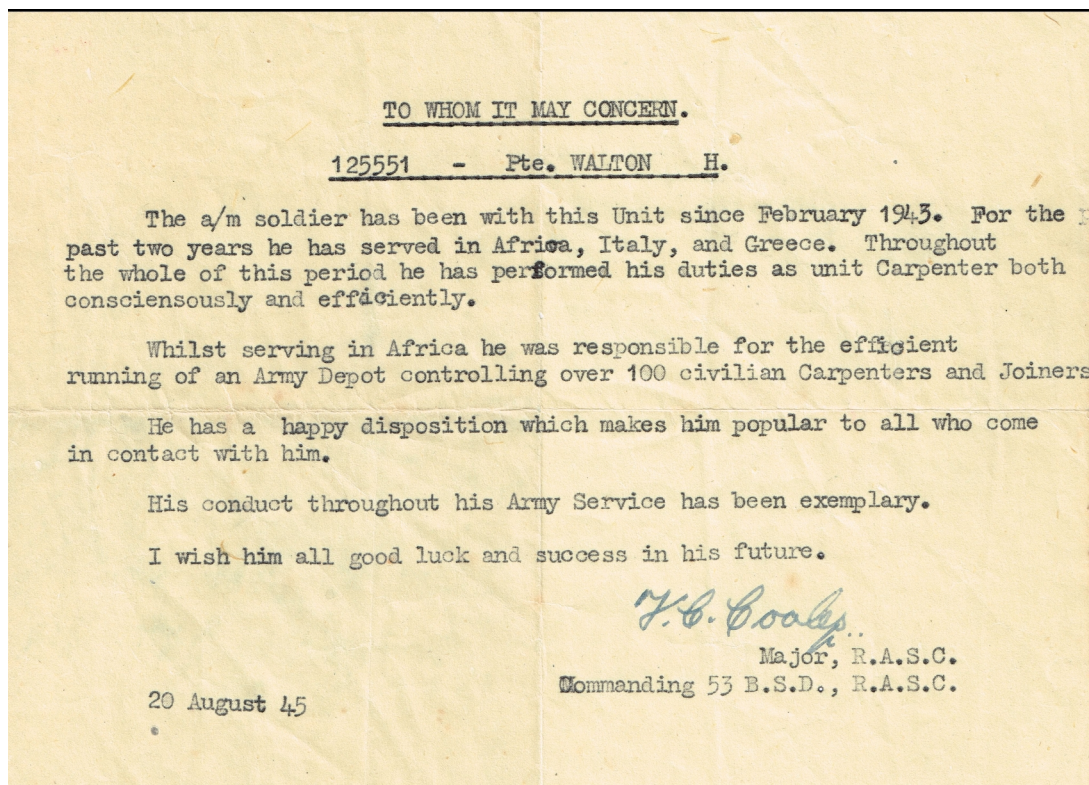
There aren't many photos of the time, the one on the left appears to be in Congleton Park. Definitely Mum and definitely David. The baby is too close in age to David to be Raymond, it looks as though it is cousin Irene (Kennedy as was) which would place the photo in 1946. The photo on the right is the earliest I have of Tall Ash. It could be me as a baby with Ray standing with either Pam or Irene (our two cousins). Hilda Batson in the background who lived at number 34. Ray was born in Knowlton House, Parson Street, this was always thought to have been before the move to Tall Ash, this would date the right hand photo as early 1948 and the children as Phil, Ray and Irene.



**1949**

Once again I don't have any memory of this time. As a family we must have been settling into Tall Ash, getting to know the neighbours. There were a lot of new families moving into the new houses at the same time and most of the mothers at that time were stay at home housewives. I only ever recall Dad working for the council and assume he was at this time and started with the council on leaving army service.

The reference below from Dad's commanding officer would be helpful in finding a job.



Two early photos of the "Walton Boys" on the right in the garden of 36 Tall Ash Avenue and below with Tom Davison in the field behind our house. The field was farmed by Tom's father.





## 1950

This would be settling down time in Tall Ash and me being in awe of my older brothers.

## 1951

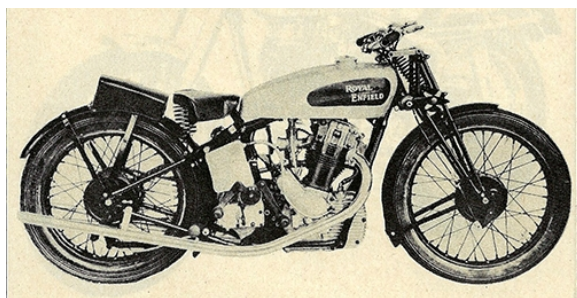
In 1951 Dave would become 7, Ray 4 and myself 3 years old. So only Dave at School, Dad at work and Mum run of her feet, as she would no doubt be justifiably saying. The photo below could have been in 1951 or maybe 1950. It is at 23 Royle Street Congleton the home of our cousins Pamela and Irene.

## 1952

The first thing to come to my mind is the birth of Kathleen Mayer – but lets not get ahead of ourselves.

Dad was driving to work at Bromley Farm (the Congleton Council maintenance depot) on an Auto cycle. It would have looked something like the “James” one below, or it may have been a Hudson. In more modern times it would be called a moped – it was started by peddling as you do on a bicycle which started the engine. If there wasn't enough power to get up a hill more peddling was required. Some time later than 1953 this was replaced by a “proper” motorbike – my memory says it was a Royal Enfield, like the black and white one below, but I can't be sure. The most vivid memory I have is riding on the back seat, like the one in the photo and the inside of my leg touching the hot exhaust and removing the skin from the inside of my right leg.

The photo on the right is Harold with his sons standing in the garden at the side of 36 Tall Ash c1953.



## Other Memories of Early Years:

Most words on the following two pages were put together by Dave, Ray and myself for our mother's Eulogy.

### Early Years

*Tall Ash was wonderful – not many toys but it didn't matter as we were outside most of the time and in wide open country spaces, see the map on page 8.*

*Games took a lot of the time – they almost always had a competitive edge to them usually organised by Dave as the senior brother.*

*Football and cricket of course depending on the season. It was all very innocent yet when I was putting this together with Ray's help the list included learning to play both poker and roulette, also using knives and guns. In our case the "poker" learning was from a book and it was a toy roulette wheel - no money changed hands – you have to remember this was the heyday of "cowboy" films – where everyone played poker and wore guns.*

*Games also replayed incidents in World War 2 which was still fresh in grown ups memories. Toy guns, especially those that fired rolls of caps were precious and sought after. It was Dave that had the "real" gun, it was actually a .177 calibre air rifle – not especially dangerous but to this day I find it hard to comprehend how Dave convinced Mum and Dad that it was a good idea to give him a gun as a present.*

*Of course cowboys also had knives – they used them for "whittling" and carving things into trees. As well as "whittling" we used them for games like "split me" – the skill here was throwing with the handle so the sharp end entered the ground in a position where your opponent's foot couldn't reach without them falling over.*

*Our athletics track was a small field at the bottom of the bank behind our house – it belonged to "Davison's farm" and Tom Davison was Dave's partner in setting up the events. Dave was kind enough to let Ray and myself have an advantage in recognition of the age difference, although the advantage was never quite enough for us to win any events.*

*From our garden you could see the Biddulph Valley Way train line (still in use then as a mineral line) and watch the steam trains travelling between Biddulph and Congleton taking coal into Brunswick Wharf in Congleton. It was probably just one trip in each direction each day. There were old sidings and a disused rail loop that connected the main line to the mineral line with all sorts of old railway "stuff" to play with. Close to the main line, was a railway bridge crossing the Macclesfield Canal, and close to the railway bridge is a wooden footbridge that lead to a path towards the Cloud. One of Dave's favourite claims to fame was taking on a dare to walk across the footbridge – not on the wooden deck but along one of the handrails – yes I'm sure he did it even though the rail was only about 80 centimetres wide (3 inches) in the 1950s.*

### Cousins

*We had two cousins. Pam and Irene Kennedy they were the daughters of Julia (mum's sister) and George. We were of similar age and have maintained close contact throughout our lives.*

*Pam recalls day trips on Bostock's buses and frequent Christmas time visits and parties. They would sometimes walk from (their house) in Royle Street to Buglawton through the park. Opposite the Brook Street entrance to the park, where they would have exited, was Holloway's shop. It's easy to imagine*



*the excitement of the young girls selecting a “family block” ice cream. This would be wrapped in newspaper for the journey to Tall Ash where we could have ice cream at home, when domestic fridges were a dream in the future. The sisters also visited sometimes during school holidays as their parents were both working. They especially liked collecting the hen’s eggs from our chicken run and collecting soft fruit as we had raspberries, gooseberries, black and red currants. I was certainly in favour of this as it meant they were less jobs for Mum to task me with. A few years later Irene was a regular visitor to Tall Ash with her soon to be husband Alan Bell, Irene would attend to Mums hair and Alan would play table tennis with us boys.*



## 1953

I would almost certainly have started school in 1953. The infant teacher at Buglawton was Miss Taylor and the headmaster Mr Pedley. It is likely that there were 3 school intakes at the time – September, January and following Easter. It was normal to start in the term that you became 5, so in my case it would have been following Easter or if not then September when I would already be 5. There was a change that affected the class I was placed in. On the earliest photo I have from my school days I am with children who would later be in the year above me. I was told that sometime in the fifties the year group that you were placed in changed from September to August to August to July, so at that time I was held back. It later changed back to September to August (which it currently is). I was only moved once and that was in my early school years.

My Mum became a dinner lady at Buglawton but I am unsure of when she started. I did not enjoy the school dinners and probably took sandwiches. The dinners were prepared in the “central kitchen” this was the Senior Girls school in New Street Congleton. The food was then placed in large insulated aluminium containers for transport to other schools. I believe it was “plated up” at the receiving school. Mum did bring home left overs some times, mainly puddings from memory, I didn't like those either! I think Dave and Ray did like them as they did keep on coming.

The class photo shows me with children that I always thought of as “the year above”. Except next to me on the front row Stephen Biddulph and Alan Shufflebottom also David Davenport on the back row.

In addition to myself the other “Tall Ash” children were John Redfern, Pat Skellern (if it is her) Ian Cunliffe, Christine Lucas and Catherine Dixon. Missing who I would have thought would have been there are Robert Egerton and Christine Bossons. After writing this I have spoken to Christine and she located a photograph which was the year before the one below.

The date of the photo is more likely to be 1954 or even 1955. The photo on the previous page was taken from an area where air raid shelters, from world war two, were still there in the mid 50s. The photo contains my dad fourth from the left. Probably taken late 1920s not long after the school opened.



When I showed the previous photo to Allen Brown he produced the photo below. He confirmed that the boys that would later be in the same class as us were the older one i.e. Shufflebotham, Walton, Biddulph more details follow later.

**Photo below from Allen Brown who provide the names**





## 1954

At this time all three Walton brothers would be attending Buglawton School and Mum would be a dinner lady there. Out of school time would be spend together and with local friends. So together with photos on the previous pages most are on here. Some are taken outside – others like Dave's class below were taken in the school hall. The outside photos had a surround and fold over cover which indicated that they were taken during the coronation year (1953).





1955



I recall going to Brook Street Methodist Chapel Sunday School around this time with my older brothers. There were two classrooms downstairs and a large room upstairs. Play's were performed in the upstairs room and my brother David recalled that middle brother Raymond had a significant role in one play and featured in either a report or a photo in the Congleton Chronicle, to date I have no confirmation of this. The chapel was situated in the dip of Town Bank and Church Bank – a substantial building which was a formerly a school that my father attended before Buglawton School was opened. The History of Congleton by WB Stephens records that the Chapel was built in 1835 and in 1851 recorded

150 attending Sunday School in the afternoon and a further 20 in the evening also *"Another Wesleyan Chapel which developed as a day school was Brook Street, it opened in 1869. There were two classrooms downstairs for infants and a large room upstairs for older pupils. Brook Street continued as a day school until 1927.....A general inspection of premises was ordered in 1908 ...As for Brook Street 'the managers cannot be recommended to spend money on this school' As late as 1949 'Brook Street Sunday School was pressed into service to take overflow classes from St Stephens and St Peters primary schools'".* I feel I can compare Brook Street with Buglawton School which was obviously more modern albeit – when I first arrived the lights were gas not electric and up to when I left the toilets were uncovered and "across the yard" – actually across the playground.

The photograph below is probably out of sequence – it's matches the earlier two taken in the Hall at Buglawton School – likely to be 1954.





## 1956

Holidays were either a day trip to the seaside or in good years a week in a Boarding house in Blackpool. The first one we stayed in Mum and Dad bought food and the people in the house cooked it for us. It was smallish house and the three boys shared one bed. Later it was a larger “proper” boarding house, I believe it was in Shaw Road. It was usually on a full board arrangement so we would go back to house in the middle of the day for dinner, (not lunch), then we had tea at around 5:30 in the evening. Bostock’s buses took us there as they went every Saturday morning and returned with the previous weeks holiday makers later in the day. The journey could take up to five hours as there was no motorway and the numerous town centres were all blocked with people going to the seaside! The photo here which would have been in Blackpool was probably taken in 1956.



It was around this time that I had my tonsils taken out at Congleton War Memorial Hospital. After I was admitted I was checked by either a doctor or nurse, I can’t remember who exactly. What I do remember is my response to the question they posed “what are you in here for?” I repeated what my mother had told me “you are going into hospital to have a tooth out”. Immediate reply “oh no you are not your are having your tonsils out!”. Hospital stays were much longer in those days and I did question my Mum when she visited apologising for the confusion she said that on my return home I would find a new Noddy book! I was happy with this being a big fan of Noddy & Big Ears. On my arrival home my disappointment was intense – no Noddy book! Can’t actually remember why probably couldn’t find one or no time to get one with all the hospital visiting.

I should not complain, it was brother Ray who had most hospital visits and accidents. Some of Ray’s memorable accidents and illnesses, I can’t quantify the years:

1. Time in an isolation hospital while very young. Best remembered for Mum’s regular repeated story “*he went in with lovely curly hair, they cut it all off, he never had curls again and he didn’t recognise me when he came home*” Ray recalls “*I went in with whooping cough and then caught scarlet fever in the hospital (it may have been the other way around though)*”.
2. Being hit by an axe held by brother Dave – he was chopping at a tree at the time, a lot of blood but probably not worthy of a hospital visit.
3. High jump in Davison’s field behind our house. It would have consisted of two posts pushed into the ground with string tied across. No sand pit so great care to be taken when landing. On one particular occasion Ray tried to break his descent by holding out his arm, it was his arm that broke. I can recall vividly him walking up the garden path saying “I think I have broken my arm” holding up his left arm confirmed his view as it showed a ninety degree bend halfway between his wrist and elbow. Fortunately Mr (Gordon) Bosson who lived across the road was around at the time and was able to drive him straight to the War Memorial Hospital in his Ice Cream van.

This photo (from Google) is of the War Memorial Hospital taken in the mid 1950s.



## 1957

In 1957 I became 9 nine years old so would have been playing with many of the local children. A bit before this I recall that I spent most of my time with Peter Boston who was younger than me probably by one year. I would have played with other children from the lower part of the Avenue most of the time, there were many of a similar age. I can recall going into the houses of Lucas's directly opposite us where Christine and Michael were closest in age. Peter Boston was next door to them. I have a memory of calling for Peter when my elder brother Raymond was sitting the 11+ exam, Mrs Boston (Barbara) responded to my knock on the back door by asking if Ray was with me and I responded by saying "no he's sitting today", which implies that the school closed except to those taking the 11+, this does seem strange. A very short memory but it is one of so very few! Peter and I played "gates" football, that was two opposite gates on the road were goals – there were no cars around. The goals would be Lucas's and our gate or Peter's and Batson's gate. Claude Batson did not like the idea as he was very particular with his garden which was always in pristine condition. It was probably the football that introduced us to Robert Egerton who lived at Number 4 (I think he still does) and the three of us did spend a lot of time together.

I started piano lessons at an early age – probably around 7 years old. Initially with Miss Pickford who was already teaching my brother Dave. She lived in Wilbraham Road or Borough Road. She married Gordon Waller (an architect) in 1958 and decided to give up with her piano teaching, initially she continued with David only as he was at an advanced stage with his exams. I was able to carry on as "Dave's brother!" this continued for a few years and then I was taught by Mr Dixon initially he lived in Hightown and later in an old peoples bungalow on Havannah Street Buglawton. In the early days I walked from Tall Ash via Tommy's Lane to Miss Pickford's parent's house where she gave her lessons. One week there were some older children who made a joke about my "piano case". It was close to the bridge over Tommy's Brook and I was advised that my case was to be thrown into the brook!. I turned tail and ran home. The following week I set off as normal and when approaching the bridge the same group of older children were still there. Also walking from the other direction was my Grandad - he asked if this was the group that had accosted me the previous week I replied "no not them" probably saving face. I was not troubled again. My daily 30 minute piano lesson at home earned me the nickname Ping Pong, this was later changed to Pongeye which stayed with me throughout my schooldays, I don't like the word "hate" but I did hate that name and the need to not respond to it in a negative way – the consequences would not have been nice.

## 1958

Outside of school and in addition to piano lessons I attended Sunday School at St John's Buglawton and around this time and was starting confirmation classes one evening in the week. I did this with Robert Egerton, we were confirmed together. Once confirmed we agreed that we would attend communion at the early 8 am service where there were no hymns – a quick half hour service. This suited us as a new youth club was planned and attendees were supposed to attend church at least once a week.

At home I was expected to start a part time job and was delivering milk to people in Tall Ash Avenue. I used a hand cart or trolley – something else that I wasn't happy with but kept quiet about. Albert Leech (the milkman) left the milk in crates at the end of Tall Ash Avenue, I pulled the trolley up to the top of Tall Ash, loaded up the crates and set off down the road. This was seven days a week. I was very pleased one day that the trolley was broken and I therefore I couldn't complete the daily delivery again. Later the same day my dad with pride told me that he had saved the day and repaired my trolley, I didn't like to complain so carried on as normal – I don't know whether or not my disappointment showed. One Sunday morning I arrived at the end of the road with my empty trolley just as Robert Egerton turned the corner ready to go to the early church service, he was a little early but his face did show disappointment that I hadn't yet completed my deliveries. I quickly made the decision – church first, milk second. This wasn't well received at home where my parents were convinced that I had the time to deliver the milk first and had let my customers down. Rob Egerton and I did spend a lot of time in "House's field" especially playing football – Mr House (Cyril) understandably didn't like us in his fields. Once when we in his hay field (through the gate and by the sand quarry we "ducked" into the hay so he couldn't find us. We also played in the quarry. Sam Frodsham who lived in Tall Ash Avenue worked there and survived an accident where he was completely buried in sand, his strength saving him.

## Buglawton Junior School

### School layout:

Looking at the school from above on a modern Google Map below. There are 7 gables in the photograph facing the road. Originally there was no access to the school from the front. There was a boys access on the left hand side and a girls and infants access on the right hand side. Classrooms were accessed from the rear either from the Hall or corridor. The rooms were (I think) from the right hand gable:

1. Infants – Miss Taylor – there was a sandpit outside with railings around next to the road.
2. Mrs Pedley – the first class after infants was the headmasters wife, divided room in gable 1.
3. Mrs Farthing – was the wife of Tom Farthing one my secondary school teachers – gable 2.
4. Mrs Glover – rather stern I recall – she sat behind a high desk like a lectern – gable 3.
5. Mrs Dixon – she lived across the road and facing the school in High Low Avenue – gable 4.
6. Mr Pedley – later Mr Ball, Mr Pedley probably spending more “headmaster” time – gable 5.
7. The boys cloakroom – gable 6 this entrance gave access the headmasters office and to the hall. The photo on the following page shows my father Harold in the garden of the school, this would be shortly after the school first opened in the late 1920s, before this date Harold attended Brook Street School. The boys entrance can be seen in the background. No doubt the girls wouldn’t be allowed in the garden. When I attended there were air raid shelters in this area, the area is now covered with additional classrooms. The “Girls & Infants” entrance is also still visible on the opposite side of the building.

The playground area was split with iron railings down the centre, girls and infants one side and boys on the other side. The toilets were against the wall opposite the school hall (literally across the yard). these were uncovered (apart from the cubicles), the urinal was against the wall facing the Hall, this meant that boys facing the urinal would say “*see how far you can wee up the wall*”, the object being to get right over the top of the wall on onto the playground.

The earlier photos taken from inside the school hall looking towards double doors that lead to the corridor towards the boys entrance. The single door was the access to Mrs Dixon’s classroom. I believe that lighting in the school was by gas when I arrived, electric lights being installed soon afterwards. I can’t recall the heating but don’t think it was open fires, although they were probably fireplaces in each class room, I think there was a solid fuel boiler and radiators.



The following photo is a good indication of how the School was in the 1950s. It must have been taken shortly after the school opened. It is looking towards the Boys entrance in what was then the garden and before the second world war air raid shelters were built which were still prominent during my time at the school. The garden is now covered with additional classrooms.





### Sportsday:

Two more pictures from Allen Brown - team photos from the School Sports of 1960 when Buglawton Boys were champions. I do have a happy memories of this occasion, Allen was boys captain as seen in the photos of just the boys and then the whole team.



Boys photo - Back Row – John Green, Alan Fowell, Phil Walton, Alan Shufflebotham, Malcolm Gregory. Next Row – David Fowell, ? Howard, Chris Booth, Dave Davenport, Peter Hopkins, John Barton, Mark Barton. Next Row – Martin Dale, ?, Colin Brown, Allen Brown, Peter Boston, ?, ? Bantik. Front Row – Roger Mellor, Phil Gooders, Freddy Cotterill, Walter Hewitt, David Cotterill.





Extra names for the Girls & Boys Photo. Back Row - ? Nixon, Dianne Turner, Jane Pedley, ? , ? , ? . Next Row ? , ? , ? , Caroline Houldsworth, ? . Next Row – Anne Yoxall, ? , ? , Sandra Green, ? , Pat Lowe. Front Row – Jenny Dale, ? , ? , ? , ? .

### **1959 – including what used to be called “Pen Pics” in Football Programmes**

At the start of the day in junior school we were required to recite our names in date order and the teacher used this to record with ticks in the register. I can still remember the call for the 13 boys – Shufflebotham, Walton, Biddulph, Beech, Davenport, Brocklehurst, Green, Brown, Fowel. Shaw, Hopkins, Webb, Harrop. I didn't have any special concerns at primary school and don't recall any issues with others in my class. So in age order excluding me:

- Shufflebotham (Alan) - for a time my closest friend. He lived in a bungalow on Weathercock Lane close to the row of cottages and near to the weather vane at the junction of Crouch Lane. I recall walking to his bungalow to visit/play – it was a long way for walk as I was probably 9 or 10 at the time. I didn't walk along the road so must have walked over fields and then over the Canal foot bridge. I believe Alan and his family moved to Biddulph Park around the time we transferred to secondary schools. I also believe his family owned and ran a corner shop on the road junction at Biddulph Park. A small shop and I have no recollection of ever going in it. If ever I travel through the crossroads I still think of “Shuff”!
- Walton
- Biddulph (Stephen) – I lost touch with Stephen when we went our separate ways, Stephen to Sandbach Grammar and me to Congleton Boys Secondary. I can only recall meeting him once – outside Astbury St Mary's Church following the funeral of David Davenport – see below. I was talking to my old friend Robert Egerton and also Philip Davies another old Buglawton friend – one of them said to me “you know who this is don't you?”. With my terrible memory for faces I had to be informed that it was Stephen – we exchanged a few pleasant words – it was good to see that he seemed fit and well.
- Beech (Alan) – I'm struggling with this name – I think there were two Alan Beech's – one is on the photo above and lived in Timbersbrook whereas the one in my class lived initially near the “Finger Post” at the junction of Buxton Road and Middle Lane and then later on St John's Road, I believe he was part of a large family. I am not confident with this memory.
- Davenport (David) – another close friend at Primary School. I recall Dave being very lively and with a wonderful singing voice. After going to our separate secondary schools – Dave was another pass (selection!) we still kept in touch as we both attended Sunday School at St John's in Buglawton. I recall Dave saying to me on many occasions “when are you going to pass to go to Sandbach so that we can go to school together?” My reply was “well I'm taking the 12+ exam, if I pass I can transfer” and later “I'm going to take the 13+ exam



and if I pass I can transfer". I didn't pass (was't selected) from either of them. On many later occasions I met an ever cheerful Dave when we would recall our younger days. One of Dave's good friends was Rob Barker who I met a few times in the Blue Bell pub in Kidsgrove, on one occasion I saw Rob and he explained that Dave was very poorly, it was not long after that Dave sadly died.

- Brocklehurst (Jeremy) – seems to be called Jerry these days although I always think of him as Jeremy which must have called him at Buglawton school . He was another happy one always telling jokes. I met him at a beer festival in Congleton Leisure Centre, unable to recognise him Kath spotted him when Kath had worked with his mother in Woolworths she had talked a lot about Jeremy. He has helped me in recent years when I was working on 6 Ivy Gardens. Jeremy did a lot for Congleton Town and lives in Astbury Street. Further information from Allen Brown – Jeremy (locally called Jezza) lived on Havannah Street and his family ran the Throstles Nest pub for many years. Allen recalls staying there as his father (also Allen) was a good friend of Jeremy's father.
- Green (John) – was I believed called "Johnny" or "Basher" Green and was what was then known as "cock of the school" – in our final year in Buglawton. John was another 11 plus pass and I can't recall seeing him again after Junior School – Allen Brown tells me he emigrated with his wife and children to California in the US they had kept in touch, John worked in the mining industry. John is another one who is sadly no longer with us. Allen also recalls that John lived on Havannah Street across the road from Sandra Kettle who lived next door to Malcolm Gregory.
- Brown (Allen) – of my former class mates Allen is the one that I have been in the most contact with since leaving Buglawton. I was in the same class as him at Secondary School. I wasn't sure where he lived, Allen has now confirmed *"I originally lived on Havannah Street, my Dad, also called Allen, was friendly with Jeremy Brocklehurst's dad (Cyril) and helped out at the Throstles Nest, I also spent some time there, we moved to Craig Road when the new estate was built"* . Allen was a keen footballer after school years and being of the same age in future years I still see him as he lives close to me – I would bump into him occasionally and can recall when the fair was in town, various pubs and the Majestic Cinema in Macclesfield.
- Fowel (Alan) – Alan was also in the same class as Alan Brown, Eric Shaw and myself at Congleton Boys Secondary. I recall he did "pass" the 12 plus examination and transferred to Sandbach for the second year at secondary school. I think he lived on St John's Road and was a Stoke City supporter and I have vague memory of talking about this in later years.
- Shaw (Eric) – Eric also went to Congleton Boys Secondary School and was in the same class as Allen Brown and myself. I recall him living in a house near to the former Lord Nelson pub (where my mother was born) at the bottom of Brunswick Street. He invited me and I think the rest of our class to his birthday party one year – this was very unusual at the time as birthday parties were usually small family only occasions. There was a problem though and at the last minute it was called off so I never did get to go to a kids birthday party (except family ones). Allen Brown adds – Eric also lived on Clayton Avenue and worked with him for a time when Eric worked for Bel Industries. I believe Eric has always lived in Congleton and have met him a few times over the years – I can recall in an off licence and at the War Memorial Hospital.
- Hopkins (Peter). I recall that Peter lived on Eaton Bank which can be approached by foot only over the River Dane bridge on Havannah Street or by vehicle from Macclesfield Road via Jackson Road. Peter's parents had a Mill at the bottom of Town Bank and Church Bank, I think it made paper bags. The Mill later become Congleton Engineering and is now housing. Peter went to Sandbach Grammar and I came into contact with him later when I was a student at Crewe Further Education College, it was when I was completing my HNC. I believe he was working at Foden's as a Student Apprentice and was therefore selected for HND at Stafford College , however Peter decided that the HNC would be best for him.
- Webb (Bryan) I think it was Bryan or Brian, apologies to him anyway as Robert Potts (who went to St Stephens school) told me that he was in the same class as we were in Secondary school and his signature inside of the cover of my leaving bible seems to confirm this, I also have a faint recollection of him.
- Harrop (John I think!) I think he lived in the Bromley farm estate or Tin Town area. I have a memory of meeting him many years later while we were both waiting for cars at Burns

Garage in Canal Street. I also have a memory that tells me one of his children lived next door to my son James in Obelisk Way sometime in the 00s.

### **1960 - Year of the 11+**

Oh dear! – that didn't go down at all well. My memory tells me that we took the 11+ exam in February. I recall completing some preparatory work as one of the oldest in the school and being confident with IQ type tests I wasn't too concerned.

I can recall the day that the results arrived in the post. In those days the post was always on the doormat when we woke up. The letter indicated that I was "selected" for Congleton boys – I hadn't been selected for Sandbach grammar – it didn't say I had failed but everyone knew. No one said "where have you been selected for?" it was always "have you passed?". Mum was disappointed but didn't make a fuss other than confirming that the new bike was now definitely not going to happen. On arrival at school it was all that everyone could talk about. I was still confused especially when finding out that out of the 13 boys in my class 6 had passed, an excellent pass, rate (grammar school selection) for the school, and were going to Sandbach Grammar School, the rest of us to Congleton Boys Secondary. This was a very high percentage of passes – from memory five of those that passed were Shufflebottom, Biddulph, Davenport, Green and Hopkins I can't work out who the sixth was so maybe it was only five. When I arrived home there was an anxious atmosphere waiting for arrival home of Dad from work, he wouldn't know the result until he was home as he had left home before the post arrived on that day. I do have a clear memory of Dad's response he couldn't hold back his feelings it was along the lines "three of you, we've done our best, and you've all failed". It certainly stuck in my memory.

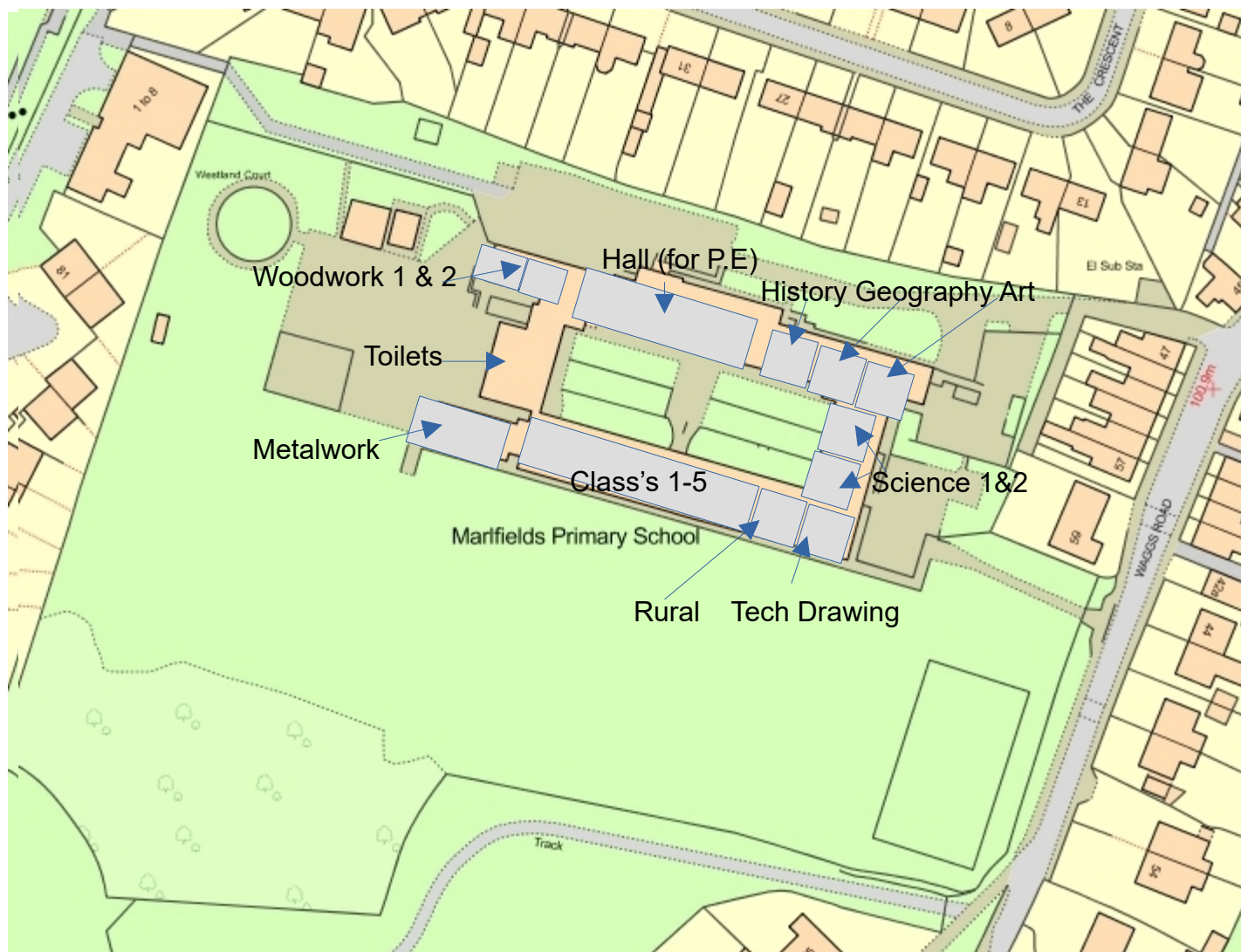
I was happy at Buglawton School, the work wasn't difficult, no homework – in fact I had no homework set for me during my entire time in junior and secondary school days. In addition to "sports day" mentioned above the other main highlight was playing football against the other primary schools – home games were played on what was then the Buglawton Wolves pitch just off St Johns Road, there was no grass at Buglawton School, the field between the school and the A54 was then farmed by Bill Davidson (or maybe he just used it for hay. We were allowed to use it I recall on occasions but it would be just roughly cut grass. St Stephens and St Peters and possibly St James away games were on Hankinsons Field adjacent to Congleton Park. We would walk to Hankinsons field, when we played Mossley school we caught the Biddulph bus at the bottom of Park Lane and got off at Mossley. Their pitch I recall was also in a small field somewhere close to the school. Fred Whitehurst has confirmed that the Mossley pitch was on Copper Hill Road and there were slots in place to allow the temporary installation of goal posts for the inter schools games. All of the four games we played were against Church of England (C of E controlled) schools as Buglawton was the only primary school in Congleton controlled by the local authority. Also I have a memory of playing football at Danesford School on West Road. This was a boarding school operated by Manchester Education.. I may be confused with timing and this could have happened when I was at Waggs Road School.

## The Congleton Years – Secondary School

**1961 -62**

### Waggs Road Secondary School

The build up to secondary school was underwhelming. My brother Ray's contribution to this was to pass on his thoughts of his two years there. Two "stories" that stuck I recall was his advice to keep quiet and out of the way to start with because sometimes the "big" boys liked sport which included arranging themselves in two lines and forcing the new ones to run between the lines while receiving kicks and punches from either side. Also if your "upset" one of the "big ones" they gathered coke (in those days this referred to coal with the impurities burnt out – it was rough coal with holes and sharp edges), the was placed on the victim's back under his vest before he was pushed to floor on his back and rolled around. Of course none of this actually happened, there were the usual school bullies but most boys were able to form self support groups that looked out for each other.



There were four school years at what were then known as either Secondary Modern or Secondary Technical Schools, these were designed for those not "selected" for Grammar School i.e. failures. It was and still is a common misconception that the School I attended in Waggs Road was called "Congleton Secondary Modern School for Boys". It was actually called "Congleton Boys Secondary School" as it fulfilled the roles intended for both "modern" and "technical" schools. The first two years were streamed into four classes with the final two years streamed again into four classes but separated into two "technical" streams, a "rural" stream and a "practical" stream, these names give an idea of what the thinking was behind the teaching in preparation for boys going out into the world at the age of 15. I believe that my three years (and only three years) did prepare me for the outside world. Homework was unheard of and maintaining discipline was the greatest concern with most of the teaching staff.

To satisfy my curiosity regarding the origins of Waggs Road school I referred to the “History of Congleton” by W B Stephens – his chapter on education refers to 1920 when *“The Board’s statistics showed that Congleton was in a most unfortunate position. They were almost at the bottom of the list judged by the amount they spent on education per child. The level of elementary education was so low as to be hardly compatible with the Board’s requirements. Three of their school buildings had for years been in a most unsatisfactory condition”*. Stephens goes on to say *The council agreed to build a new school at a cost of £27,000:00 to take the children from Wagg Street and Brook Street, both long condemned*. The new school was built in New Street. *In 1930 the council put forward a scheme for the construction of another senior school and the reorganisation of the non provided schools as junior schools. The Churches were loath to give up their senior departments but after protracted negotiations they agreed. A new Boys Senior School opened in Waggs Road in 1937, and the New Street Council School became the Senior School for Girls*.

Waggs Road Senior Boys School was twenty four years old when I arrived. Our first form teacher was Albert Bayley, the classroom (form room) was Science Room 1. I recall that Mr Bayley was introduced to us as the first “old boy” to return as a teacher. The school could not accommodate all of the sixteen classes although a quick count of my own recollection of the classes seems to indicate that there should be enough classrooms. It was complicated though as woodwork classes were split into two and metalwork was split into two (with Art being the other half) as extra supervision was required for practical subjects. This was sensible as it was then “proper” woodwork and metalwork with the associated sharp tools and hot metal working, good preparation for later years. In order to accommodate the shortfall in classrooms Wagg Street schoolrooms were used for two classes – this is the same Wagg Street school that was reportedly long condemned in the 1920s. In fairness there was nothing wrong with the buildings which are still in use today – the problem in the 1920s was trying to fit 296 pupils into a schoolroom with room for 180. A further complication was the six day timetable, so week 2 start with day 6 and week 3 started with day 5. One year after I left in 1963 a new much larger school opened in Box Lane. Waggs Road School was closed and reopened after a complete refurbishment (including removing the large side to side slope on the football field) as Marlfields Primary School.

I was able to leave school at the end of my third year at secondary school aged fourteen. While I was at primary school old photos suggested I moved school years (stayed where I was) around the age of seven. At some point the start date of the academic year was moved from the beginning of September to the beginning of August (it must have changed back again soon after but those of us who had moved stayed where we were). I changed my year group as my birthday is in August and I became one of the oldest in my year rather than one of the youngest. This must also have happened to Alan Shufflebotham who was older than me and in the same class. So at the end of the school year in 1963, when I was in the third year, I was fourteen but would have been 15 when the next school year started so I could just leave.

The words above might suggest I wasn’t happy at school, this isn’t true. There was no stress, the school work was not difficult and I can’t recall any pressure to succeed and we had fun. Towards the end of year one and year two I attended on a Saturday morning to take the 12+ and 13+ “selection” tests. I failed these also, correction – I was “not selected”. I believe that Alan Fowell was selected from the 12+ test.

Other memories of Waggs Road School that I believe are worth recording, I will leave out the Teachers names.

1. The school canteen was in a separate building close to the road entrance. There were two sittings to accommodate all the pupils. We had a main course and pudding. A single teacher was on duty inside the building to maintain discipline. We sat along either side of long tables on benches, once sitting we had to remain seated unless collecting our meals on a self service basis. Boys on one side of the table collected the main meal for himself and the person opposite him. Boys on the other side of the table collected the pudding for himself and the boy opposite him. One particular teacher was unpopular because he did not allow any conversation within the canteen. Anyone speaking would be punished. On one particular day I spoke to the boy opposite me when he departed to collect our puddings

- “please don’t get me any custard”. The strict teacher heard me speak and told me that after I had completed my meal I was to stand outside his classroom until the end of dinner time when he would punish me. It was a long wait as “dinner time” was one and a half hours. While waiting at the door several older boys asked me what I was doing standing there and when I told them they all advised me to clear off because the teacher would forget. I was unsure about this so decided the safest action was the long wait. On his return the teacher asked me what I was doing there – he did seem to have forgotten. When I told him he took me into his classroom where the pupils were waiting so that he had an audience to witness his two strokes of the cane to each of my hands. It hurt.
2. During all of my schooldays all pupils had free school milk which everyone was expected to drink. It was stopped in 1971 by Margaret Thatcher who was the education minister at the time (Thatcher Thatcher milk snatcher!). One day I was with a group of boys who were throwing stones towards the bottles (they were delivered in one third pint bottles in metal crates) some bottles were smashed as a result. A teacher observed this and sent everyone there to wait for the assistant headmaster who would punish us. In our defence I recall one boy stating he did have a stone but it just slipped out of his hand – in reply the teacher (torturer?) said “oh dear my hand slipped as he brought his cane down onto the boys hand, he seemed to think this was very funny. When it was my turn my defence was that I was only standing watching and should therefore not receive any punishment. It was clearly time for another funny comment as I was advised that I was bigger than most of the boys throwing stones and therefore should have stopped them, so another dose of the cane followed.
  3. I was obliged to wear short trousers when I started the school, one by one boys would turn up in long trousers looking very pleased with themselves now that they had grown up to long trousers. As I was one of the tallest in the class this was embarrassing. I believe that the short trousers continued until my second year, I can’t remember exactly when but I can remember that when I finally got long trousers there was only one boy in my class left in short trousers, thanks Jimmy Barber, Jimmy though was one of the smallest in the class.
  4. I couldn’t swim. Rob Egerton was a good swimmer and was regularly at the local outdoor swimming baths with many of our friends. As time went by I found this more embarrassing, secretly blaming my piano lessons for getting in the way. It was difficult to learn through the school as the baths only opened for a couple of months before the end of summer term. We had a lesson once a week and each week when I returned home from school the first thing my mother asked me was “can you swim yet?”. As I had been self consciously splashing around in the 3 foot end it wasn’t going to happen, I can recall a teacher telling us non swimmers to hold onto the side and kick our legs but it all very half hearted. One week I arrived at school with my towel and trunks and Kevin O’Reilly who was in my class was upset because he had forgotten his trunks. I told him not to worry he could use mine. So I became the one who had forgotten the trunks. Kevin was supposed to return the trunks to me before we went home, it didn’t happen for some reason and the next day he announced that his mother would not allow him to return my trunks to me unwashed because he had used them, he would return them after his mother had washed them. This left me the problem of finding a different excuse each night when my mother asked me for my trunks. I finally learned how to swim in my 30s – see 198?.
  5. There was a mad professor type schoolteacher. Very nice man but unfortunately couldn’t control a classroom. A group of boys in our class sat at the front and no doubt picked up some scientific information. For the rest of us we played a shove halfpenny game (or our football version of it) on the desks at the back. There was also bullying and I recall on one occasion we forced a boy into the glass cabinet at the back of the room and turned the gas on. I have always been ashamed of this event although I am confident that we would not have harmed anyone. It is though an example of what can happen without adequate control. The same teacher had a Vauxhall Cresta car. The boys in the final year were “allowed” to use this car which wasn’t very old and to drive it onto the football field. Throughout the year bits kept disappearing of the car – it was “flashy” car with American style design.
  6. Teachers didn’t always get their own way. Another old friend Fred Whitehurst reminded me recently of one teacher who decided he would cane a boy who was probably what in those days was called “cock of the School”. We were all in awe of him. The pupil refused to be caned and took the cane from the teacher and broke it over his knee. My memory tells me

that the cane was actually cut into small pieces by the pupil but that may have been a separate incident. A difficult situation for the teacher – it wasn't always easy for them.

7. I believe that the culture at the school had been deteriorating for some years and was self-perpetuating. My eldest brother Dave who had just left the school (transferred to Sandbach Grammar School along with 5 others from his class) as I started had attended in a school uniform (some boys in the later photo of a trip to France (twin town Trappes) are wearing the school blazer. Also in Dave's final year there were prefects, head prefects and a head boy. My memory is that all this had disappeared, most boys wore ties and were smartly dressed, this was probably due to dutiful parents rather than dutiful teachers. There were some though who wore denim trousers and jackets. One senior teacher visited the Railway Inn every lunchtime. He had a very red face and always returned sucking a mint. I can't recall any out of school activities. At the end of each school day with no out of school activities or homework marking many teachers had left the school and were driving past pupils before they had walked to the main gate. The photo of Dave's final year is what I believe was a rare school photo, some of the boys (Dave included) have a school badge on their jackets and also prefect type badges. Dave gave me the names for this photo a few years ago he had apparently been in contact with Clive Wright who clearly has a good memory.
8. My final teacher comment. The worst bully. In our geography class the teacher always dictated notes from a text books. We were tasked to simply write down his dictation, that was his teaching method. However, presumably for his own sport, he would dictate at a faster and faster pace while carefully watching the class to see who could not keep up. Eventually he would stop and ask one of the struggling pupils to read what he had written, if it was wrong the pupil was accused of not paying attention and punished. I think he hit the pupil with a pump which was always considered to be a lesser punishment than the cane.
9. My final school comment. Relaxed rules and a ninety minute lunch break allowed for unrestricted excursions. One such excursion I and others, who I recall included Rob Potts , Dave Hancock, Derek Cooke and Dave Cotterell, took us to Woolworths first to seek out the mother of a friend from the school year above (Steve Morrey) who's Mum worked on the biscuit counter. Steve's garden adjoined Rob's garden so Rob knew Steve's mum very well. Our request for a bag of broken biscuits resulted in a large bag of, not very broken, biscuits at a very low cost. On to the band club in Worrall Street next where the Steward was the father of one of Rob Potts's other neighbours - Graham Wassel also in the year above us. Rob thinks Graham must have been with us, certainly on the first visit. We were therefore able to enjoy a game of Snooker at a very low cost. To this day I still like biscuits and I am still rubbish at Snooker.
10. Allen Brown recalls enjoying his time at the school, especially the sports and the four house system (Georges [red], Davids [yellow], Andrews [blue], Patricks [green]). Years 1&2 and 3&4 played each other at football, school sports day was always looked forward to. I was happy for Allen to remind me that was was good at high jump. His recalls though that my landings were "awful (like an earthquake)". I recall one teacher pulling me up about this and insisting that I jump with the "scissor kick" method not my preferred "western roll", this seriously affected my performance (the landing was into a sand pit). Allen adds that In the 4<sup>th</sup> year (I had left) there was a school captain (Steve Foster) and Allen was "Georges" house captain tasked with team selection for sports day, with this mind he was allowed to enter any class and request the teacher to allow a boys attendance. There were also football and badminton matches against other schools. Allen partnered Fred Whitehurst at badminton. Allen correctly points out that these were out of school activities. At the end of year four Allen along with Steve Foster, John Buckley, Kevin O'Rielly & Chris Jacob transferred to Sandbach Grammar school (my big brother Dave had done the same 4 years earlier). It didn't work out for Allen though – in his words "I hit my rebellious period"!



There weren't many photos taken at the school at the time I was there. The ones following are:

1. A photo of brother Dave with his final year class. Note the prefect badges, these were abandoned soon afterwards I suspect they created more problems than they resolved.
2. A fabulous photo taken on a speech day, there are also images of a report referring to this event which was is from the Congleton Chronicle, under the headline "Boys look forward to lap of luxury"
3. The teachers, photo taken about the time I started. This is taken from a book by Joan P Alcock – Images of England - Congleton
4. Finally – the inside pages of my leaving bible.





A section of the crowd of pupils who were present at the ceremony.

## LAST SPEECH DAY IN OLD PREMISES?

WHAT may be the last—or at least, the next to the last—Speech Day in the present Congleton Boys' Secondary School, before the school moves into the new building at Box-lane, was held before a large gathering of pupils and parents on Monday. They heard the headmaster (Mr. H. Shanassy) describe the new school as "the lap of luxury," and compared with the present cramped accommodation, the description seemed to be no over-statement.

There was one familiar face missing from the proceedings, that of the chairman of the governors, Ald. W. H. Semper, who is in hospital, and his place in the chair was taken by Coun. A. Pollard. He congratulated Mr. Shanassy and his staff on their work and thanked the parents for their co-operation, for, he said, the success of a school depended on the way the influence of parents influenced the school itself.

The guest speaker was the Rev. E. Lincoln Minshall, a Congleton man who is now Superintendent Minister, Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

Mr. Shanassy's report reflected the school's varied activities, particularly in sport. He reported during the year he had had fewest pupils since the school became a four-stream one; this was

caused by a low birth rate in 1950-52, and an increase in grammar school places, but the fall was temporary, as primary school figures had shown. Speaking of the new school, Mr. Shanassy said it should be ready for September next year. "In addition to having a form room for each group—something we have never had—it will have a wide variety of specialist rooms, including our workshops, two for wood and two for metal, two art and two craft rooms with a pottery bay, separate rooms for geography, technical drawing, rural studies, music and a large, fully equipped gymnasium," he told parents.

### ALL FOUND JOBS

During the year's staff changes they had lost Mr. Wigglesworth, Mr. Williams, Mr. Moore, Mr. Morris and Mr. Field, and were pleased to welcome Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Cookson, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Kirkham.

All 152 boys who left school secured employment, three boys in the fourth year were transferred to Sandbach School, three boys entered full-time training in college of further education, and many boys were granted release from school for further studies. Mr. Shanassy reminded parents that boys could stay on at school beyond their legal time, so that they would see the rush for jobs; if a suitable vacancy occurred later,

then they could leave school immediately.

### NEW EXAMINATION

About examinations, Mr. Shanassy said 1962 was the last year the school could enter boys for the Pre-craft course examination of the U.L.C.I.; 33 were entered, and 11 obtained first class certificates and 17 second class, one boy, Alan Billington, obtaining an award of merit with an average of 90% for the four subjects. This certificate was the first rung of the ladder towards technical qualifications. During the year they had devised a Macclesfield and District Regional examination, which covered all academic, as opposed to practical, subjects.

The headmaster spoke about the various school clubs, and thanked the staff for giving their time in organising them. He also thanked the canteen staff and caretaker for their service, and paid tribute to the governors and to Mr. H. L. Morris (education officer).

### A REAL MAN

The Rev. E. Lincoln Minshall had the boys enthralled with his witty, yet profound address. He told them: "If you did not manage to get into the grammar school, it isn't the end of the world or your education. You can still go places. With such facilities you can rise to the top of an academic career. Of course, it will mean a lot of hard work."

Amid laughter he said: "You may be late starters. But don't be too late!" He recalled his own school days when he attended Wagg-street and New-street schools. Although he was among the "duds" he learnt to be a man, which was the most valuable lesson any boy could learn.

"What is a man?" Mr. Minshall asked. One could not answer that by finding out what he was made of, his origin or what he was worth. A man was someone who could be trusted and depended upon. "If you cannot be trusted, then the world will write you off," he said.

He spoke of the quality of being loved and living for others. The quality of being good—which was not effeminate or did not mean being "square"—was the quality of a real man.

Unless this country finds the vision of what it is to be a real man—and that means morally clean—it will go to the dogs. A large number of babies are being born out of marriage. This

kind of community is the way to decadence," he concluded. Earlier, the choir, conducted by music master Mr. A. Dale, had given an excellent rendering of "Let my people go" and "Dry bones." The verse speaking choir, led by Mr. T. Farthing, was word perfect in "Inversnaid" (G. M. Hopkins), "The grape gathering" (Mona Swann) and "Reynard the fox" (J. Massfield). The pianist was Coun. G. A. Ball.

### PRIZEWINNERS

Mr. Minshall presented the prizes, as follows:

First Year One: 1st form prize and maths, Edward Hurst; 2nd form prize and English, Stephen Hibbert. Two: 1st form prize and maths, Ian Stanway; 2nd form prize, Robert Sproson; English, Robert Barker. Three: 1st form prize, Brian Dale; 2nd form prize, Philip Buxton; English, Stuart Webb; maths, Brian Banks. Practical: 1st form prize, Michael Lacey; 2nd form prize and English, Frank Pointon; maths, William Stanway.

Subject prizes: History: James Hibbert. Geography: Martin Tomlinson. Art: Derek Gavin. Science: David Broster. Rural Science: William Higginson. Religious Knowledge: Paul Evans.

Second Year One: 1st form prize and history, John Buckley; 2nd form prize and tech. drawing, Stephen Foster; English, John Thomas; maths, Alan Robinson. Two: 1st form prize, John Daniels; 2nd form prize, Robert Hiscock; English, Paul Dale; maths, Barry Shenton. Three: 1st form prize and English, Martin Cunningham; 2nd form prize and maths, Duncan Cope. Practical: 1st form prize, Jeremy Brocklehurst; 2nd form prize, Keith Woolf; English, Stephen Pedley; maths, Kenneth Pass.

Subject prizes: Science: Michael Greer. Art and Woodwork: Alan Bell. Science: Christopher Jacob. Rural Science: David Townley. Religious Knowledge: David Booth.

Third Year One: 1st form prize and religious knowledge, Philip Simcox; 2nd form prize and Geography, Graham Buckley; maths, John Gorman; English, David James. Tech. B: 1st form prize, John Heath; 2nd form prize, Clive Heather; English, Michael Worthington; maths, Peter Eaton. Rural: 1st form prize and maths, Dennis Bowyer; 2nd form prize and rural science, Garry Joynes; English, Robert Minshall. Practical: 1st form prize, Brian Wassall; 2nd form prize and maths, David Lucas; English, Robert Weaver.

Subject prizes: History: Robert Dale. Art: Peter Beard. Science: Graham Dingle. Metalwork: David Worth. Woodwork: Stuart Hibbert. Tech. Drawing: Jeffrey Goodwin.

Fourth Year: A: 1st form prize and maths, Alan Billington; 2nd form prize and English, Roger Hollowood. Tech. B: 1st form prize and maths, Alex Shield; 2nd form prize, Raymond Walton; English, Keith Galley. Rural: 1st form prize and woodwork, Malcolm Mitchell; 2nd form prize, Stuart Taylor; maths, John Harding; English, Michael Hughes. Practical: 1st form prize and English, John Beech; 2nd form prize, Philip Brown; maths, Alan Townley.

Subject prizes: History: Russell Davies. Geography, Peter Bowers. Art: Michael Clarke. Science: John Minshall. Tech. Drawing:

The Chronicle, Friday, 24th May, 1963

### Boys' School looks forward to "lap of luxury"



I was sent the speech day photo some years ago by Martin Tomlinson, together with some names. Various other people have helped with the names including Allen Brown and Graham Cheetham. Subsequently I found the "Chronicle" report that applies to the photo. Note – my brother Raymond arrowed.

(Chronicle photo: 472/63)

David Birchall. Rural Science: Brian Foster. Religious Knowledge: Alan Whitter. Metalwork: Keith Jones.

Special prizes. Attendance: Allen Yates (100% attendance for 4 years). Music: Jeffrey Goodwin (who has been accompanist at Wagg-street Assembly for 3 years). Geography: Frederick Yates.

Jeffrey Goodwin (school captain) presented Mr. Minshall with a wooden fruit bowl made by the boys of the woodwork department, and proposed a vote of thanks, which was seconded by David James.

Afterwards parents toured an exhibition of work and couldn't have failed to be impressed by what they saw. In the art and craft sections, there were paintings, woodwork, pottery and metalwork on display and a large canoe perhaps attracted most interest. In the rural science room, there were day-old and six weeks-old chicks, goldfish and examples of leaves. Also on show was a large map showing Cheshire schools with Young Farmers' Clubs. One pressed a button and a light on the map showed where the school was situated.

The following morning, the boys had a chance to see their own exhibits in full for the first time, as did the staff of Congleton Grammar School for Girls.

**Speech Day Photo on the previous page: Rows 1 – 8 all second year**  
**1st Row** – Dave Minshall, Paul Bailey, Peter Dawson, ?, Alan Parker, Keith (Sid) Buckley, Stanley Procter, Stephen Jarvis  
**2nd Row** – Donald Venables, J Nixon, Peter Clowes, Paul Foster, Michael Lambert, Clive Ball, John Roberts (owned Bike Shop opp Grapes, Graeme Cook, ?, Michael Hulme  
**3rd Row** – Ian Pass, Raymond Morris, Christopher Topham, Philip Dale, Brian Dale, Frank Burgess, Anthony Whitmore, Raymond Mellor, Colin Brown, Timothy O' Reilly  
**4th Row** – Roy Bentley, Frank Pointon, ?, Robert Sproston, Keith Higginson, Stephen Hibbert, Alan Pemberton, Martin Tomlinson  
**5th Row** – Michael Lacey, Stuart Webb, Kenneth Holding, Philip Patmore, Brian Leese, ?, Robert Cunliffe, Desmond Davies  
**6th Row** – Ian Stanway, Robert Barker, David Broster, James Hibbert, Neil Aherne, Terrence Brown, Brian Worrall, Paul Jones, David Cotterill, Kenneth Billington  
**7th Row** – Richard Bloor, Graham Cheetham, Stephen Holland, Chris Booth, Martin Steele, Alan Crankshaw, Christopher "Sammy" Shone, Roy Woodward, Roger Mellor, Walter Hewitt  
**8th Row** – Raymond Vallenti, Peter Thorley, Trevor Park, Freddy Cotterell, ?, ?, John Buckley, ?  
**Now Third year boys Row 9** – ?, Alan Robinson, David Morris, Chris Jacob, Phil Walton, ?. **9th Row** behind me with glasses Roger Howard.





I did convince myself that there was little attempt by staff to arrange any out of school activities. Clearly this was not the case, it is/was my slanted view. The above photo shows a group of boys who visited Trappes (Congleton's French twin town). I am assuming that this would be in 1963, there is a mix of school years. For example three who have helped with my memories are on this photo John Redfern was one year group older, Jeremy Brocklehurst the same year and Graham Cheetham one year younger. The photo is taken looking towards the row of classrooms 1-5 from the central area of the school

(known as "The Quad"). In the centre of The Quad was a pond and my memory told me that Roy Bentley (also on the photo above) actually dived into the pond one day, Alex Smith (also on the photo) confirmed this commenting "Roy was giving a demonstration of how to dive in at the swimming baths". When I showed the photo to Jeremy Brocklehurst he recalled he also went on a holiday to Norfolk with the school. The photo on the right also seems to be from 1963/4 and shows a group of boys



visiting what will be their "new school" at Box Lane. Waggs Road continued in operation for one more year after I left, so my class mates who completed their fourth year also never got to attend Box Lane, I am assuming that they didn't get to go on the above visit Box Lane when the above happy bunch did as they would leave school before the move.

John Murray who is regular attendee at Biddulph History meetings also gave me a positive view "*I always found the teachers fair but strict – there was an assembly every morning in the Hall which also doubled as a gym. We had a 90 minute lunch break... could walk into town mainly to view the 'talent' on display from the Mill girls.*"







Phil Walton

Buglawton Boy

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