NEWS

Harrogate Heritage

Historian's article looks back on the growth of town's private schools

Malcolm Neesam
news@harrogateadvertiser.co.uk
@HgateAdvertiser

For almost twenty years from 1995, the eminent local historian Malcolm Neesam contributed a series of remarkable articles to the Advertiser, initially under the headline 'Bygone Harrogate' and later using the title 'Our Heritage'. In association with Harrogate Civic Society, we are proud to republish a selection from the series. The views expressed were those of the late Mr Neesam at the time of writing and do not necessarily reflect the current view of the Advertiser or Harrogate Civic Society.

This article was first published on September 20, 2012

I have no doubt that an interesting and rather lengthy book could be written on the subject of Harrogate's schools, both private institutions and those established under the state.

I offer this suggestion to any student looking for a suitable subject for a local history dissertation.

The occasion for this thought is the anniversary of the opening of Queen Ethelburga's College in September 1912.

The new college had been introduced by the Woodard Corporation, which had been founded to further the work of Canon Nathaniel Woodard, a remarkable Church of England priest who established no fewer than 11 schools to provide education for the struggling middle classes.

One of these establishments was Lancing College, founded by Rev Woodard in 1848.

Canon Woodard coined the provocative but nonetheless astute phrase "...till the Church educates and trains up the middle classes, she can never effectually educate the poor...", which at a time of rigid class distinction had a socially significant message.

Canon Woodard, born in 1811, came to possess strongly evangelical sympathies, and after obtaining a curacy in Bethnel Green, went on to work at St Mary de Haura Church in New Shoreham, where he was struck by the poverty and ill-education of some of his middle class parishioners, many of whom appeared less well educated than their employees who had been educated on the parish.

Sustained by his strong Anglo-Catholic sympathies, Canon Woodard left a wonderful legacy of schools, for which he received the admiration of men such as William Ewart Gladstone and Matthew Arnold.

Although Canon Woodard died in 1891, his work was carried on by the Woodard Corporation, who decided to build a new school at the thriving spa town of Harrogate.

Harrogate had experience of private schools within its bounds, one of the most famous of which was the business at Grove House, which was acquired by Barbara Hofland in 1809.

This school seems to have been set up for the convenience of long term visitors to the spa, who visited Harrogate more for the fashionable society and gambling that was rife in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

> *Private schools began to mushroom in Harrogate after the opening of the first rail-way links in 1848.*

In a letter of May 1809, Barbara Hofland wrote to a friend in a Sheffield school that she intended to charge her customers the same rate as her predecessor, Mrs Addison, namely 35 guineas a year per child.

Private schools began to mushroom in Harrogate after the opening of the first rail-way links in 1848.

In 1873, a private school was established in the two large terraced houses at the north eastern junction of Queen's Road and Cold Bath Road, named Western College.

There was the High Harrogate College opened in the old Dragon Hotel in 1868, before relocating in West End Park in 1882.

Largely at the behest of Richard Ellis, the Ashville estate of 29 acres was purchased for £5,800 by Methodist Trustees.

This included a mansion house, which became the seat of Ashville College, which was opened on July 17, 1877 by Ellis who was the trustees treasurer.

The mansion in which Ashville established itself had already served as a school, as in 1873 it had passed into the hands of Rev Stephen Ward, who used it as a school for "young gentlemen".



Queen Ethelburga's as seen in 2012 at the time of Mr Neesam's article.

In 1875, Rev Ward moved his school to Harlow Moor Road, where it received the name of St George's.

These were important steps in the history of the town's educational facilities.

It may therefore be seen that Harrogate's fame as a health resort on the bracing Yorkshire moors made it a popular site for a new educational establishment, and the Woodard Corporation's decision to build there was not unusual.

The name of Queen Ethelburga's came from Queen Ethelburga, a Kentish Princess who was a practicing Christian living in the seventh century.

She married King Edwin of Northumbria and took her Chaplain, Paulinus, to convert her new husband and then to introduce Christianity to the North of England.

The Duchess of Albany was the widow of Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold.

The splendid new building on Killinghall Moor was opened by the Duchess on September 27, 1910, and served its purpose - apart from a brief interregnum during the Second World War - until 1991, when the college moved to Thorpe Underwood.

Today, Queen Ethelburga's celebrates its centenary as one of the nation's top private schools, with an enviable history of academic success.

A note from Harrogate Civic Society: This weekend marks four years since Malcolm's death. He left behind an astonishing body of work that we at the Harrogate Civic Society are determined should be preserved and enhanced for the benefit of future historians and, indeed, for the benefit of anyone who cares about Harrogate.

Not long before his passing, we discussed with Malcolm and the Advertiser republishing at least some of his articles.

Many of Malcolm's articles dealt with the history of the town, exploring the people, places and events that helped to form the Harrogate we know today. At other times Malcolm concentrated more on contemporary issues.

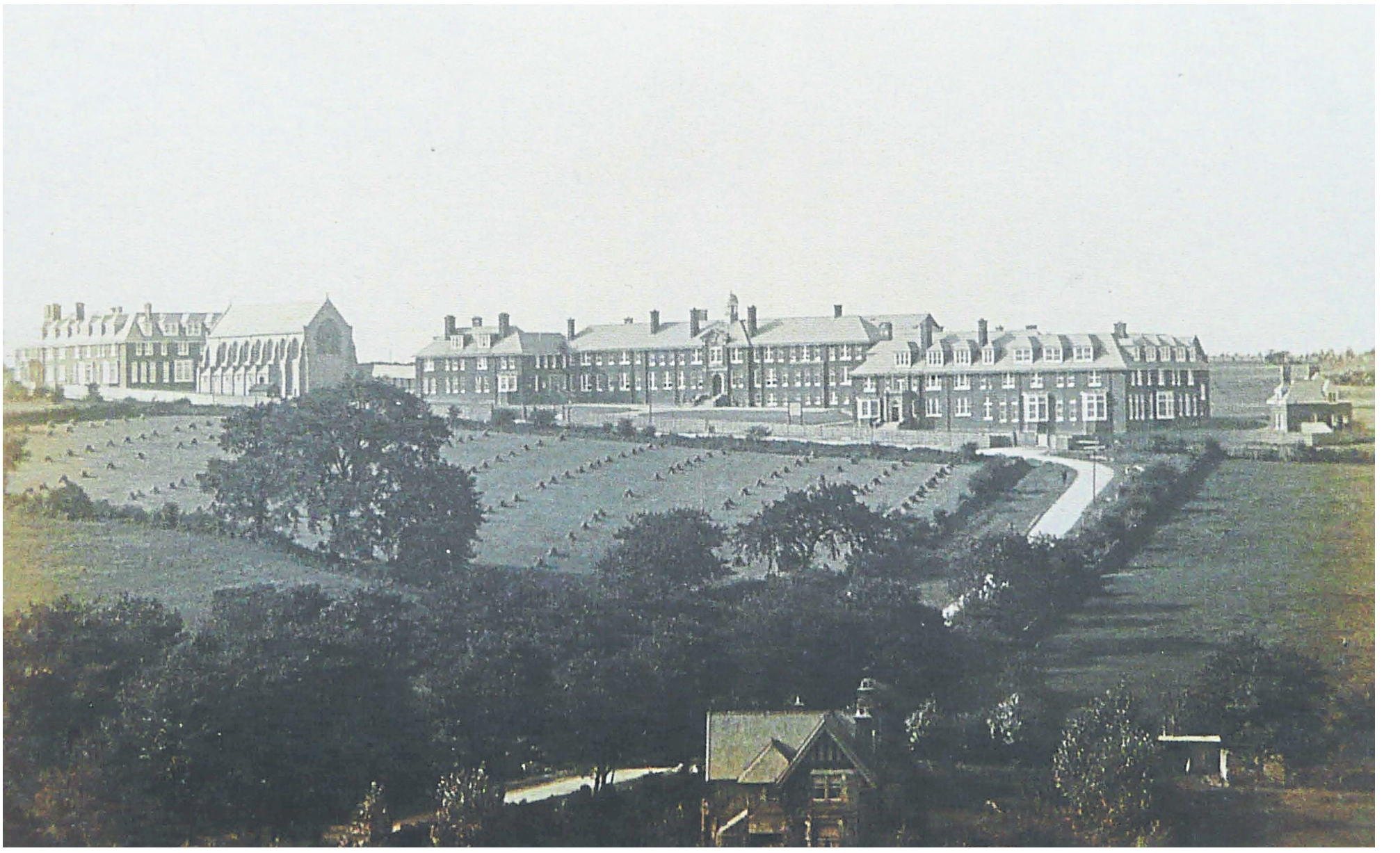
While acknowledging that Harrogate could not stand still, he was convinced that change should always be tested.

In September, the first republication of Mr Neesam's articles appeared and this today is the third.

We are grateful to Malcolm's family for their approval, to Simon Kent (closely involved with securing Malcolm's legacy) for his work researching and preparing the articles for reprint, for the advice of historian Paul Jennings and to Graham Chalmers and his team at the Advertiser for their support and encouragement.

We hope you will enjoy reading (or in some cases rereading) these irreplaceable snapshots of history.

If you are able to add to our knowledge, or wish to know more about our work, contact us at: history@harrogatecivicsociety.org



Queen Ethelburga's c.1920. Below: The Duchess of Albany arriving at Harrogate Station.



Our Heritage

A look at yesteryear of a spa town

With **Malcolm Neesam**

acknill.news@ypn.co.uk

The growth of town's private schools

I have no doubt that an interesting and rather lengthy book could be written on the subject of Harrogate's schools, both private institutions and those established under the state.

I offer this suggestion to any student looking for a suitable subject for a local history dissertation. The occasion for this thought is the anniversary of the opening of Queen Ethelburga's College on September 1910. The new college had been introduced by the Woodard Corporation, which had been founded to further the work of Canon Nathaniel Woodard, a remarkable Church of England priest who established no fewer than 11 schools to provide education for the struggling middle classes.

One of these establishments was Lancing College, founded by Rev Woodard in 1848. Canon Woodard coigned the provocative but nonetheless astute phrase "... till the Church educates and trains up the middle classes, she can never effectually educate the poor ...", which at a time of rigid class distinction had a socially significant message.

Canon Woodard, born in 1811, came to possess strongly evangelical sympathies, and after obtaining a curacy in Bethnel Green, went on to work at St Mary de Haura Church in New Shoreham, where he was struck by the poverty and ill-education of some of his middle class parishioners, many of whom appeared less well educated than their employees who had been educated on the parish.

Sustained by his strong Anglo-Catholic sympathies, Canon Woodard left a wonderful legacy of schools, for which he received the admiration of men such as William Ewart Gladstone and Matthew Arnold. Although Canon Woodard died in 1891, his work was carried on by the Woodard Corporation, who decided to build a new school at the thriving spa town of Harrogate.

Harrogate had experience of private schools within its bounds, one of the most famous of which was the business at Grove House, which was acquired by Barbara Hofland in 1809. This school seems to have been set up for the convenience of long term visitors to the spa, who visited Harrogate more for the fashionable society and gambling that was rife in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In a letter of May 1809, Barbara Hofland wrote to a friend in a Sheffield school that she intended to charge her customers the same rate as her predecessor, Mrs Addison, namely 35 guineas a year per child.

Private schools began to mushroom in Harrogate after the opening of the first railway links in 1848. In 1872, a private school was established in the two large terraced houses at the north-eastern junction of Queen's Road and Cold Bath Road, named Western College. There was the High Harrogate College opened in the old Dragon Hotel in 1868, before re-locating in West End Park in 1882.

Largely at the behest of Richard Ellis, the Ashville estate of 29 acres was purchased for £3,800 by Methodist Trustees. This included a mansion house, which became the seat of Ashville College, which was opened on July 17 1877 by Ellis who was the trustees treasurer. The mansion in which Ashville established itself had already served as a school, as in 1875 it had passed into the hands of Rev Stephen Ward, who used it as a school for "young gentlemen".

In 1875, Rev Ward moved his school to Harlow Moor Road, where it received the name of St George's. There were important steps in the history of the town's educational facilities. It may therefore be seen that Harrogate's fame as a health resort on the bracing Yorkshire moors made it a popular site for a new educational establishment, and the Woodard Corporation's decision to build there was not unusual.

The name of Queen Ethelburga's came from Queen Ethelburga, a Kentish Princess who was a practising Christian living in the seventh century. She married King Edwin of Northumbria and took her Chaplain, Paulinus, to convert her new husband and then to introduce Christianity to the North of England.

The Duchess of Albany was the widow of Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold. The splendid new building on Killinghall Moor was opened by the Duchess on September 27, 1910, and served its purpose – apart from a brief interregnum during the Second World War – until 1990, when the college moved to Thorpe Underwood.

Today, Queen Ethelburga's celebrates its centenary as one of the nation's top private schools, with an enviable history of academic success.

Above - The Duchess of Albany arriving at Harrogate Station. (S)

Below - Queen Ethelburga's today.

Above - Queen Ethelburga's, c. 1920

Like us on Facebook and GET £5 to spend on DRINKS WITH EVERY TWO-COURSE EVENING MEAL
Valid after 6pm, one voucher per person
Offer ends 30th September
01423 536606
www.jakeanthony.co.uk
KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE NEWS HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA WWW.RIPONGAZETTE.CO.UK

