

**JEAN BRAITHWAITE (NEE) TAMBLIN**  
**1950 – 1958**

My first memory of my connection with PHS is the importance of getting there! Both my parents were teachers. My father taught at Devonport High School for Boys. My mother did not work full-time until I was well into my teens but did help out at Hyde Park School (which I attended) when the need arose. Both were anxious that I should pass the 11+ and that I should pass it well enough to get to Plymouth High (or, failing that, Devonport High).

I did and thoroughly enjoyed the whole time I spent there. I was 10½ when I started School. With only a two class entry there was certainly no excuse for you not to get to know and be known by the teachers! We had an extremely kind first year Form mistress (Miss Rickard) and our Form room was down in the basement of the old building.

Looking back, I suspect that the ethos of the School changed while I was there. My first headmistress was Miss Turner who must have been in her late fifties as she retired in my 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year (?). I remember Miss Turner as extremely kind (even when she had me in to her office to try and persuade me to live up to the promise of my 11+ !!!!!!!) There were several other similarly aged teachers. Later Miss Turner was replaced by Miss Miller and Miss Saville, Miss Godfrey, Miss Davies all retired.

We started French in first year, learning it phonetically. In second year the “A” class did Latin, and the second class German (I think it was as simple a distinction as that!) I had major difficulties with Latin but HAD to pass it at O level for the Universities I hoped to move on to. (I ended up at London University and for an Arts degree Latin O level was required.) I was so unsure of my ability in the subject that I had to learn our set-text off by heart so that I could be sure I could translate any passage on the exam paper!

PHS was far stronger on the Arts side than Science. We had the option of doing Biology or General Science at O Level. Most of the A class took General Science but it meant that we did not have a very good grounding in Chemistry and Physics. It must have been difficult for those who tried to do these subjects for A level (I considered it!)

We had domestic science lessons as a matter of course. These provided good foundations for both needlework and cookery. I think we did cookery in 3<sup>rd</sup> year and I am very grateful for the basics taught (particularly the importance of planning). One of my friends says that she still uses the book we had for these lessons!

We all had our own Form rooms and, within that room, our own desks. These contained the textbooks we were issued with and most lessons were held within this room. (Textbooks had to be signed and covered to keep them in good condition.)

The 1950s were still a period of austerity after the war and we had to be very careful with all the notebooks with which we were issued. Before we could get a new one the teacher had to check that every line had been used, and sign the book.

The School badge only involved the PHS part of the present badge. We had badges on our blazers and berets. (It was a School rule that you had to wear your beret while travelling/walking to and from School.)

We wore tunics when we entered the School but in 3<sup>rd</sup> year (or was it 4<sup>th</sup>?) were allowed to wear skirts. We wore socks until we were quite far up the School (even in to the sixth year?)

I think there were 4 lesson periods in the morning (40 minutes each) separated by one break. In the afternoon there were three periods. School finished at 4 p.m.

Homework was timetabled and insisted upon. In first year we were supposed to do about an hour (2 subjects). But this increased over the years until in 6<sup>th</sup> year we were expected to do something like 3 hours 4 nights a week.

State Scholarships were in existence. To attempt to gain one of these the pupil took extra papers when they were doing A Level. I am not sure what the point of this was (in spite of the fact that I got one), apart from kudos. It meant that our grant for University came from the State rather than the Local Authority. It was still means tested, but perhaps Local Authorities varied in their support? In my year 3 people got state scholarships.

Only a few stayed on to do 3 years in the Sixth Year, usually those wishing to try to enter Oxford or Cambridge. Competition was even fiercer then than it is now - there were 4 colleges for women in Oxford and 2 (or was it 3?) in Cambridge.

Every day was started (after registration) by assembly in the hall. The whole School attended. I think on Fridays the prefects were responsible for giving the reading from the bible and one of the Head Girl's responsibilities was to arrange a rota.

The hall (on the top floor of the old building) served as the place where we did gym, put on some School concerts and had assembly. In later years the School hired the theatre in the Royal Marine barracks at Stonehouse for School plays

Speech days were held in the Central Methodist Hall.

In early years our PE teacher was Miss Garner. We did gym in our navy knickers! Showers were not available. When Miss Garner retired Miss Macfarlane joined the staff. She was young and well liked and got on well with the Hockey and Tennis teams.

Our games field was initially on the Torr. The field belonged to the Farleys Rusks factory and I loved the smell of the baking rusks that drifted across the hockey pitches. (The site is now occupied by a Safeway supermarket.) I think games periods took a double period but a quarter of this would be lost as we had to be bussed from Plymouth High in one direction. I think Farleys built an extension to their factory and then we had to move to Efford for games. Although I played tennis for

the School I cannot remember where the courts were - in the Hartley area? Although there was a netball court (in the playground) I only remember playing once or twice.

There were some long-distance rail excursions that some pupils took part in. We went to Stratford to see a Shakespeare play and went up to London to see the Coronation decorations (1953).

There were privileges for the Sixth Form. While I was in the Sixth Form an alternative to the blue and white check dresses worn in the summer was allowed. This was a blue pinafore dress worn over the blouse and tie. The Sixth Form room was over the main door.

In the Sixth Form ballroom dancing classes were held for the girls of PHS and boys of Plymouth College (on Friday evenings?) The Head Girl/Boy and prefects of each secondary School also arranged social evenings/dances.

In my second year in the 6<sup>th</sup> the House system was introduced. I was elected as the first House Captain of Temple. You should still have the House shield which I and the other house captains gave to the School. (It was painted by the father of someone in the year below me who had been a sign writer in the Dockyard.)

Some time during this period Department Badges (little strips of the PHS ribbon) were introduced - for those deemed to carry themselves well. (The School must have become concerned about the slouches they were producing!) I am not sure that they were ever taken away from you once you had "earned" them!

1956-7	Prefect
	House Captain of Temple House
1957-58	Head Girl

Member of First XI Hockey and First VI Tennis teams (colours for both)

### After School

King's College London to read Geography.

1961 B.A Hons in Geography (with History subsidiary)

1962 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Univ of London)

1965 MA (London) - research degree. (Thesis: The problems of industrial location in Plymouth)

1965 Married. Moved to Scotland

Research Fellow on "The Tayside Study" in the Department of Economics, University of Dundee.

1970 First child born (2<sup>nd</sup> 1972) Course Tutor with the Open University.

Later on: Lecturer in the School of Town and Regional Planning, University of Dundee.

Took early retirement 1998.