Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College
The End Of An Era
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Catholic College
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A Message from The Bishop

The Church has always seen education as a priority. Following the restoration of the English and Welsh Hierarchy in 1850, the establishment of schools was even put before the building of churches. Many parishes in our own Diocese of Shrewsbury, have their origins in the parish school, with Sunday Mass being celebrated for the community in the school-church building.

This year we celebrate that for half century Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College has served the whole of Shropshire, offering a Catholic education and formation in the faith to generations of young people. As we celebrate these fifty years of education it is good to look back at the beginnings of the College. This is not an exercise in nostalgia but will help us understand the foundations of faith on which we now seek to build for the future.

I am delighted to commend this Heritage Book to you, and be a part of this year’s Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

With my blessing,

The Right Reverend Mark Davies
Bishop of Shrewsbury

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College
Mission Statement

The community of Blessed Robert Johnson College dedicates itself to embracing the values of the Gospel, celebrating the uniqueness and worth of every person, building relationships based on trust, love and justice, working together so that everyone can experience life in all its fullness.

“I have come so that you may have life and have it to the full.”
John 10:10
A Message from Mrs. Simmonds

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the closure of Blessed Robert Johnson School. Having taught here since 2006 it had become clear to me what a unique and special place BRJ is. I felt it was really important to record the history of the school so that memories would not be lost. It is from this need to preserve the heritage of the school that the idea of applying for Lottery funding in order to produce this book and film developed. It has been a real joy to work with past and present staff and students on this project. It has confirmed to me what a wonderful place BRJ is. It has been privilege to hear such amazing stories about past times at BRJ what an impact the school has had on lives. The project would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the pupils in the Heritage Team and the support of our Project Manager, Peter Ralley. I am sure that the Holy Trinity Academy will continue to build on the success and achievements of BRJ. As an inclusive Christian Academy Holy Trinity is well placed to further develop the strong traditions of love and respect that I have seen so clearly demonstrated at BRJ. Maria Simmonds

A Message from the Project Manager

It has been a mixture of sadness and happiness working on this project. Sadness as the whole reason for its existence is that the school is about to close. Happiness because I have had the privilege of being able to work with a very capable group of young people. We have learned is that this school means a huge amount to so many people and I see this echoed in other similar projects in which I have been involved. School is important to all of us and the years spent at high school are some of the most important and special. I envy you the chance to have this book as my school too was demolished some years ago, but in my case I did not have a chance to have a last look round or to share my stories for safe-keeping. So cherish this memento of your school. It’s not the whole picture, it isn’t meant to be. There are times you remember that others won’t. Events that are part of your time spent at this school. There have been thousands upon thousands of students pass in and out of these doors. Try to calculate the number of possible stories there could be! Above all make sure that you remember BRJ. If you do, it will always be there! Peter Ralley
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Chapter 1
ABOUT THE PROJECT
Students from all year groups in Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College (BRJ) and the Oscar Romero Sixth Form Centre combined forces in the creation of what we now know as the “BRJ Heritage Project”. Throughout the project we aim to preserve the past in order to sustain the future of BRJ.

Upon embarking on this project, we created a student statement (a short film) to submit to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in the hope of being granted the funds to design and make this book you are reading and the film you will already have seen prior to this, or will view once finishing this book.
Successful; obviously, the group were granted the funds, £25,000 to be exact and began spending the money on necessities as soon as we could. On the shopping list was a glorious MacBook Pro (loaded with the software to edit video and create this book) and an HD video camera with tripod in order to capture the moments we need to safeguard for the future. At the start of this project we were uncertain exactly what we would find and whether enough people would come forward to help us. We needn’t have worried as the school itself had a large number of photographs stretching back many years that were ideal for the project. The response to our open day was also heartening as we saw over 100 former pupils and teachers spending time talking to the current students about their time at BRJ. They too came with bundles of photographs, report cards and old programmes that have all become part of the BRJ archive.

We have had no shortage of people volunteering to be interviewed on film, not a natural state of affairs for many!

We would like to thank all former pupils and staff who have given their time so generously for this project. We are proud to be the last of a very long line of students who have been part of the BRJ story.
Meet The Team

I am part of the team because I want to be more involved with the school, working to preserve the special heritage of the unique school. Also by being part of the project, I’m able to learn new skills that I can use in my future. I feel it’s important that the heritage of the school is preserved as without us and our project, the numerous memories of the school in the 50 years it has been opened may be lost forever when the school closes. **Jason Quach**

I decided to join Heritage Group, so I could find out more about the history of my new school. Taking part has been great fun! I have found that since joining the heritage group, I’ve managed to find out lots of information. We have done interviews with ex-students and teachers, and current teachers. This helped us gather more information about the school, which we have used in this book. **McKenna Wood**

We had a specific day where many former staff and pupils came to give us information about their experiences at this school. I interviewed many people which allowed me to get an insight into the life of a BRJ student or teacher in the past years. The past of this school simply can’t be forgotten which is why we have a job to save this information and present it in a book and a film. **Fraser Sudden**

I am a part of the team because I think it is important to keep the memory of the school alive. I think it’s important because if we were not doing this project all the memories would fade out and be lost forever. I have taking part in the filming day and interviewing past staff and students. I attended the trip to the Shropshire archives to learn more about the school and I have continued to attend heritage club after changing schools. **Cameron Lamb**
Meet The Team

As well as the obvious advantages being part of the group has bought such as adding it to my CV, and UCAS application, it has been mainly to find out about the place I have spent the last 8 years of my life in. This project is important because without it, when the last years go through the school, their memories will be all that is left of the school. We need to preserve the past in order to inform the future.

Catherine Jones

I have been a member of the Heritage group since its formation in 2012, I liked the prospect of being a part of documenting the school’s history. From the project I had had the chance to learn about the BRJ site before the school was built which I found enthralling to research. The opportunity to partake in such an interesting project has truly been a privilege and I very much look forward to seeing the end product of all our hard work. Pheobe Barnett

I joined the project because I was intrigued to learn more about the school’s history and what the school was like in the past. I’ve learnt about how archives work and discovered that they are actually quite useful. What I found the most interesting was hearing all the different stories from past students and teachers. Some of them were really interesting and enjoyable to hear. Casey Rann

I joined the project to learn about the history of the school and to see how it has changed. I have learnt that the school has changed a lot over the years and that the uniform has changed many times. I have found it interesting that the timetable has changed a lot. I think the new school it will be a unique experience and it will be a new start for everyone but it is sad that this school is closing. Sean Radburn
Meet The Team

Hello my name is Abi. I decided to join the heritage team because I thought it would be good to preserve the history of BRJ so people in the future would be able to see what schools were like in 1963-2015. When I first joined BRJ I wasn’t particularly enjoying it but then I found why people said they loved the atmosphere. I think preserving the heritage of BRJ is very important because if we didn’t nobody would know BRJ even existed. Abi Watkins.

My name is Amy Adams and I chose to join heritage club because the people who were in it recommended it… I have been in this club since September and I am only in year 7. Heritage is important because without the book and film, the history will be lost along with the school. I have helped with the interviews, the making of the film and finally, I have written this, and other things, for the book! Amy Adams.
This award was made by
The High Sheriff of Shropshire
to
Mckenna Wood
of
Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College

This award recognises the commitment demonstrated by young citizens to their local community

Dated this twenty fifth day of March 2014

Diana Flint DL
High Sheriff of Shropshire
Photographs from our Open Day
Photographs from our Interview Filming Day
Publicity & Research

Above and left: One of our two interviews with BBC Radio Shropshire.

Below: One of our two visits to Shropshire Archives where we learned all about archiving and found some very valuable pieces of information.
Sherriff’s Award

High sheriff hands out certificates for courage and care

Young praised at awards ceremony

Report by Shirley Tart
shirley.tart@shropshire.gov.uk

A 16-year-old girl received a top honour for her bravery in helping and comforting a woman who had been attacked in a stairwell.

Lorraine Rawlinson, a student at Telford College of Art and Technology, was given The High Sheriff’s Special Award at an evening of success stories which highlighted effort, courage and care.

Diana Flint paid tribute to the county’s young people at one of her last official duties before she hands over the high sheriff’s baton to Robert Hodd who was also at the event.

“Of the things that I have supported during my year as high sheriff has been volunteering in the county and that is what so many of our young people have been doing.

This award was made by

The High Sheriff of Shropshire to

McKenna Wood

of

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College

This award recognises the commitment demonstrated by young citizens to their local community

Dated this twenty-fifth day of March 2014

Heritage Group
Byron Baille, Phoebe Barnett, Catherine Jones, Cameron Lamb, Jason Quach, Sean Radburn, Casey Rann, Fraser Sudden, McKenna Wood

As part of the Building Schools for the Future initiative, BRJ will be demolished and rebuilt in Priorslee as Holy Trinity Faith Academy. The Heritage Club was formed to document memories, events and significant moments which have occurred over the past 50 years, which would have been otherwise lost. The students, with the help of Mrs Simmonds, Head of History, applied for a Lottery Grant under the Young Roots scheme and received £25,000 towards producing a book and film about the college. The students appealed for photographs and documents from anyone connected to the college and held a Reminiscence Day with over 100 past pupils and staff attending. The students have held regular lunchtime and after school meetings and visited the Shropshire Archives to learn about Heritage, the work of the archives and collect information about the college. The students spent a day interviewing and filming past staff and students to catalogue their experiences.
Chapter 2
HISTORY OF THE BRJ SITE
Long before Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic High School (from here on in known as BRJ) was built on this site it formed part of the grounds of Apley Castle. The castle no longer exists except for a garden and some sign of the walls.

In 1317 Apley belonged to Sir Alan of Charlton and later to his grandsons Sir John Charlton and Thomas Charlton. In 1384 Thomas granted the manor to Sir John Atwood for life. Apley then descended from father to son until 1802. The estate passed from various brothers to sons and eventually in 1953 to W. T. Meyrick's son Walter James Charlton, who sold it in 1971 to Telford development corporation, the owner in 1981.

Apley Castle was built c. 1327 on or near the site of an earlier building. It included a 14th-century first floor chapel, of which a piscina and other features were in situ in 1981, and a gatehouse, and was walled and probably
moated. In the early 17th century the house was converted and greatly enlarged [regarded as the second castle], but it was partly dismantled after capture by royalist forces in 1644 and restored after the Civil Wars. A new house (regarded as the third and final castle) designed by Joseph Bromfield was built 1792–4 a little to the north-west, and the former house was converted into a stable block which remained in 1981.

The final castle was largely built of bricks created on site, and the resulting hole in the ground became Apley Pool. The small pool close to the south west former Lodge (which still stands) provided the water supply to the last castle. Gravity ensured the flow reached the upper floors. After 1856 St. John Chiverton Charlton had the woods extended, and created ornamental gardens on the north-west side. By 1900 avenues had been planted from the house north-east and south-east to the estate boundaries.

W. J. C. Charlton-Meyrick sold the house in 1954 and it was demolished c. 1955. The north-west portico was re-erected near Hodnet Hall in 1970. The Charltons, most particularly St John Chiverton Charlton, were heavily involved in the development of industry (mining, chemical production, etc.) throughout the east Shropshire coalfield and held interests in numerous commercial activities. They were also philanthropic benefactors to the people of Wellington and elsewhere in the area.
RULES to be ATTENDED to in the

SERVANTS HALL

No Brushing or Cleaning Clothes after the Hall is Clean'd up for Dinner, for each default pay 6d. nor to hang anything on the Pegs but Hats Do 2d. no Swearing nor bad words Do -2d. who happens to be Usher for the Hall & not got the Cloth all ready by 8 in the morning & 1 at noon & 8 at night Do -4d. Whoever spills any Beer or any thing else in the Hall Do 2d. no Quarrelings nor Fighting in the Hall Do f/2d. Please to Observe that no strange servant that is stopping at Apley to be excused any of the above Rules. All disputes to be settled by the Butler of the Family & if not in his Power by the Master of the House, the Money collected from the above Rules will be given to the Poor.

April 18th

Waste not to Day What you may want tomorrow
For by so doing you will bring yourselves to Sorrow.

1812.
APLEY CASTLE, WELLINGTON, SHROPSHIRE
(one mile from Wellington, and 10 from Shrewsbury).

First Demolition Sale

of a portion of the Mansion, including
10,000 sq. ft. of Pine flooring, 5,000 sq. ft. of excellent Oak flooring, 10,000 ft.
of Deal and Oak Timbers (in lots), 3,000 24-in. by 12-in. Blue Welsh Slates.

100 PANELLED PINE, OAK AND MAHOGANY DOORS

2 PAIRS OF FINE MAHOGANY DOORS

3 PAIRS OF HALF-GLAZED LEADED-LIGHT MAHOGANY DOORS

Pair of fine Concave Antique Sheraton Mahogany recessed Bookcases

Handsome Stone Staircase with 30 treads and risers, with mahogany Hand Rail and iron balustrade, Mahogany Sideboard, Bookshelves and Cupboards, Carved White Mantelpieces and Grates and 20 Pinewood Mantelpieces.

Electric Hanging Fitments and Wall Brackets, Porcelain Baths, Wash Basins and Earthenware Sinks.

Modern DOUBLE ‘AGA’ COOKER, 6-ft. by 26-in. by 2-ft. 9-in.

12 Garden Vases, Sets of Stone Steps, and quantity of Stone Flagging.

Handsome Stone Entrance Porch with 8 columns and Stone Balustrade above, and many other lots.

BARBER & SON

are instructed to sell the above on

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18th, 1955

commencing at 10.30 promptly.

Light refreshments on Sale day at reasonable charges.

On View, for three days prior to Sale, from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. By Catalogue.

AUCTIONEER’S OFFICES: Church Street, Wellington, Salop. (Tel.: 27 and 444),
also at Cheshire Street, Market Drayton, (Tel.: 2247).
The Area Just After World War Two

Following the end of World War Two there was a great need for new housing and a general improvement of the infrastructure as much had been neglected and damaged as a result of the war. However, due to the decrease in the availability of workers there was a need for migrants to fill these jobs. As the 1960s saw the ‘Windrush’ influx of workers from the West Indies, Wellington, and in particular the site on which BRJ stands, saw large numbers of Polish and other European Voluntary Workers (EVW’s) who were invited to come and work in the UK and help rebuild it.

Apley Camp - Post-war EVWs relaxing. The huts in the background are on the site of BRJ School.
Below shows the remains of these huts still in the school grounds.
The following maps show how the area immediately round the school has changed.
When the new school is built to replace BRJ it will cost in the region of £14 million. When the original school was built it cost a little over £155,000 which is equivalent to around £1,500,000 in 2014.
This seems to be a very reasonable price compared to the cost of building a high school today which typically costs around 15 to 20 million pounds.
Blessed Robert Johnson
Secondary Modern School
WELLINGTON

to be opened by
THE RIGHT REV. MGR. W. E. GRASAR, D.C.E., S.T.L.
BISHOP OF SHREWSBURY

On FRIDAY 26th JUNE, 1964
at 3 p.m.

The Staff

Headmaster:
MR. R. J. ANSLOW

Deputy Headmaster:
MR. S. M. TURNER

Mr. T. Barnwell
Mr. D. B. Corcoran
Mr. K. M. Fitzmaurice, B.A.(Hons.)
Mr. C. Fulford
Mr. V. S. Page
Mrs. M. Anslow

Miss G. A. Mulroy, B.A.(Hons.)
Mrs. L. O. Onions
Mrs. G. M. Powell
Mrs. B. Sankey
Mrs. V. M. Joyner, B.Pharm.
Mrs. C. E. Wright

Secretary: Mrs. I. M. Davies

Caretaker: Mr. E. Jukes
Order of Proceedings

1. Hymn: 'Come, Holy Ghost, Creator come.'
2. The Chairman will introduce His Lordship the Bishop.
3. The Blessing of the School from the Hall.
4. The Blessing of the Crucifixes.
7. Vote of thanks to the Bishop by Mr. L. Ross, F.C.A., F.C.I.S.
8. Vote of thanks to Sir Offley Wakeman by Rev. E. Coonan, L.C.L., S.T.L.
9. The Headmaster, Mr. R. J. Anslow, will invite the audience to see the buildings.
10. The National Anthem.

The School

This is the first Catholic Secondary Modern School in Shropshire and the boys and girls come from a wide area of Central and Eastern Shropshire. The main contributory schools are St. Mary's School, Shrewsbury, St. Patrick's School, Wellington and St. Peter and Paul's School, Newport.

The school is beginning to move into its full range of activity and life and the foundations are being laid for a broad five-year course: the variety and scope of the work will grow. More will be gained by the boys and girls who stay till the end of the fifth year and take advantage of the Certificate of Secondary Education which will be introduced in 1965.

The school was designed by Desmond Williams and Associates (Architects) Manchester, and building commenced in March, 1962. The building was completed for admission of the pupils in August, 1963. The total cost was £155,000. It stands in a site of 13 acres of parkland and provides accommodation for 300 pupils. There are plans for extension to increase the numbers to three form entry.

The structure comprises re-inforced concrete stanchions with pre-cast re-inforced concrete units. The roof beams are generally steel and the window units were standardised and virtually pre-fabricated. The roof of the main two storey block has hardrow slates and the flat roof is Nuralite covered. All the foundations had to be laid deeply and were re-inforced with steel owing to the bad ground conditions.

The very fine playing fields were constructed by Midland Gardens Ltd. and will provide very adequate facilities when they have reached maturity.
The opening of the school was not without controversy as parents were asked to pay for transport costs to school.
What was the world like when the school opened?

Left: Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life in prison.  
Below: Roald Dahl’s “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” was published, this is what the first cover looked like.  

Footballers were paid £50 a week (equivalent to about £700 in 2014) and a Manchester United season ticket cost £8.50

Below left: Peter Allen and Gwynne Owen were the last people to be hanged in the UK.  
Below: A loaf of bread cost one shilling (1/-) or 5p.
Above: James Bonds “Goldfinger” is at the cinema and its author, Ian Fleming dies in the same year. Right: The Post Office Tower in London is completed. Below” A house for £2,500.

“Match of the Day’ makes its first appearance, so does the popular soap opera “Crossroads” which was made in Birmingham.
Chapter 4
BEING A TEACHER
AT BRJ
BACK: Pat O’Neill, Alison Garbett, Brian Bates, Mark Akavanagh, Seamus McGinley, Ian Smith, Greg Mann, Dave Place, Shirley Barrett, Lyn Matthews, Chris Becker, Ros Roberts, Julie McGivern, Vicky Atherton, Margaret Lee, Adrian Pickles, Willy Trainor, Mike Turner.

MIDDLE: Ed Supple, Don Fear, Bob Ellis, Mary Roberts, Pam Weston, Mary Hughes, Martin Stamp, Dave Humphries, John Greenwood, Dave Cope, Anna Halliday, Helen Tedcastle, Andrea Savchenko, Jan Walker, Helen Taylor, Debbie Prigg, Sue Lyons, Di Whiting, Sadie Meehan

FRONT: Bob Bowyer, Marion Loew, Jayne Richardson, Richard Foxall, Lisa Armstrong, Anita Bodurka, John Marton, Austin Atkinson, Eleanor Liles, Mile Ion, Ann Banks, Maggie Burgess, Gill Bowyer, Penny McKie, Sue Butlet, Marie Copley.
Key to Photograph—Early 1980s

BACK ROW: Barry Haynes, Bob Ellis, Maureen Powell, Terry Cockett, Martin Stamp, Peter Walsh, Kevin Slater, Jonathan Walton, Dave O’Leary, Danny Makay.


SECOND ROW: Winnie Ryland, Bob Bowyer, Unknown, Steven Morris, Dave Plaice, Frank Stewart, Margaret Frain, Ian Smith, Theresa Collins, Helen Whatty, Marie Ivko.

FRONT ROW: Helen Taylor, Unknown, Andrea Savachenko, Marion Lowe, Pat Sheridan (Deputy Head), Bernard Price (Headteacher), Peter Regan, Sharon Moore, Amanda Purchase, Carol Brown, Sister Theresa.
Teachers’ Reflections

With the stereotypical view that the teacher is always right, this does not appear to be the case anymore. Teachers are always “open to new ideas and resources” (Dr Madeline Bell). Many of the teachers at BRJ whom we interviewed were also previously students and their experiences as pupils led them back to BRJ as a teacher, even having their own children attend the school! Since doing this, some of the fondest memories of many of the staff include how much you bond with one set of students over 5-7 years and then seeing their hard work pay off on results day, social events such as the Senior Parishioners parties, sports days and even Princess Anne’s landing on the school field.

When asked about major changes they remember the main points which continually appeared from a lot of the staff were the technical advances with the new iPads and active whiteboards which were only installed in the last 10 years, the curriculum changes and mainly, the buildings. For example, the staff room if you know the school currently, used to be a music room, and the current dance studio was the main hall.

These changes have been so significant and you would only really see the big changes having been here or seeing old photographs and maps which we have tried to provide you with in this book.

BRJ is always “contributing to a Christ centred community” (taken from the school’s previous mission statement) and so Religion and Religious education have always been taken seriously here.

For many teachers this is a reason why they have chosen to work at this school. “I am a Catholic personally so education in a catholic school made me feel at home straight away” (Margaret Lee) And also a reason why they feel safe here. “When having a bad day, as everyone does now and then, I always go back to what’s important…putting God at the centre” (Noreen O’Neill).

When trying to understand some of the teacher’s careers, a perfect thing we asked them all were their most embarrassing moments. After the common “I don’t know” comments, one that stood out in particular was that of a current teacher Julia Smith: “I have a habit of sitting on my feet whilst at my desk. It’s something I started to do at university and have never really stopped. One day, I had unknowingly been doing this to the point where my feet had gone numb and so when I stood up, I fell over. To make
it worse, it was in front of students as well!

To finish all interviews with teachers we asked them for a message to any former or current pupils and colleagues here are a few:

• “Work hard!” – Dr Madeline Bell
• “Work hard and enjoy!” – Julia Smith
• “You are all so wonderful” – Noreen O’Neill
• “Good luck with the new school” – Margaret Lee
• “Appreciate what you are given” – Gay Kendrick

Celebrating at BRJ

The Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College first opened its doors to students in September 1963.

It was officially opened on 26th June 1964 by The Right Reverend Bishop Graser, very near to the Feast Day on 29th June of the Saints Peter and Paul the Patron Saints of our Deanery.

It followed from this that we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the College on Friday 26th June 1989.

The day dawned with blue skies and sunshine the perfect setting for our open air whole college Mass. The celebrant was the Right Reverend Bishop Gray with a number of local clergy concelebrating.

The school band under the leadership of Greg Mann the Musical Director were sited underneath the beautiful oak tree behind More Block, and students and invited guests seated on the grass bank. It was a very moving occasion and good to see a number of ex members of staff come to join us in this special celebration.

The service was followed by a buffet lunch for staff and invited guests and for the students a day off timetable and a chance for all to take part in ‘It’s a knockout’ competition. The sun shone all day a celebration that touched many hearts.

So here we are twenty five years later and about to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the College, the final occasion we shall all come together on this site before the move to Holy Trinity Academy.
Lourdes

Located in the Pyrenees Mountain region of France, Lourdes is the home of one of the most important shrines in the Catholic Faith; the Grotto of Massabielle. Between February 11th and July 26th 1858 Bernadette Soubirous, a 14 year old peasant girl, experienced 18 apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the nearby Massabielle Grotto. During the 9th vision, an underground spring with healing powers was revealed. During the 18 apparitions, the Virgin Mary spoke to Bernadette suggesting that people visit the area. The response of was millions of pilgrims visiting Lourdes each year. Approximately five million pilgrims, many of whom are sick or handicapped, visit Lourdes each year. Many people believe that drinking the water from the Holy Spring and praying at Lourdes will heal them.

Lourdes 2008

The annual pilgrimage saw 13 staff and students setting forth to Lourdes with BRJ and the Shrewsbury Diocese. This year seemed much harder but more enjoyable then previous. It was the 150th anniversary of the Visitations and because of this many more VIPs attended and were therefore in need of our help. To coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Visitations at Lourdes and because of the College’s regular involvement with the pilgrimage – going back at least 25 years it was decided the College should have its own banner. It was designed and constructed by the college staff with materials from local companies, for which we are truly grateful.
Chapter 5
BEING A PUPIL
AT BRJ
Lower school

Starting secondary school is the scariest and most exciting thing in the average 11 year old's life. Throughout the years, BRJ and their running of the school has changed significantly.

The average day for the last 10+ years has been simple: starting school at 08:45 having registration, periods 1 and 2, break, periods 3 and 4, lunch, afternoon registration and then finally period 5 before leaving to go home at 15:15 (all lessons at one hour long). This was a normal routine, but from changes in staff and the afternoon registration has been removed and the day now runs as follows: Morning registration-8:45-9:15, period 1, break, periods 2 and 3, lunch and then periods 4 and 5, again finishing at 15:15.

Normally, if students are good in lessons, teachers reward the students with credits equating to badges which represented at the end of the year with badges relating to the number of credits achieved.

However, if you have misbehaved you are given a ‘negative’ which is also recorded on E-portal. Detentions are also common aspects of punishments. They can last from 5 minutes during break, up to an hour after school.

This method is fairly new to the school (only coming into play in 2006-2007), prior to this, there was a process which previous students and teachers may remember as pink slips and green slips which would be allocated for good and bad behaviour.

As a large reward for the entire school if particular standards are maintained, during the end of the summer term in previous years, permission is given for the entire student body to go to Alton Towers. This privilege can be taken away for those who for example, have not behaved appropriately during the year.

As with any form of education, homework is a vital part of the schooling system. On a daily basis you are given about one piece of homework a day from each subject. But as you progress through the years you are given larger amounts of work for completion, but despite the larger amounts of work you receive, as you move through key stage, the number of subjects that you study reduces. First with options for GCSE (8 subjects – 5 core,
3 optional) and then again to a more specific range at A-levels (6 subjects – 4 optional, 2 core).

School day trips and residential trips have become something of a rare occurrence in the last few years only now taking part for compulsory purposes such as gallery visits for Art, the Geography fieldwork and data collection in Year 11 and Sixth Form, the RE Treat days in Year 7 and to see an occasional show at the theatre for dance or English or the Skiing Trip in Austria for PE.

Whether this is because of budget cuts is unknown but to reminisce, those attending the school before 2009-2010 will remember visits such as the annual French Exchange and the trips to Arthog in Year 8 as well as those already mentioned.

**Sixth form**

Student life is always eventful. Having left the restraints that school held, Sixth Form becomes a lot more personal and catered to the particular needs of the student and their aspirations for the future. The Oscar Romero Sixth Form Centre provides opportunities for a mostly academic education with subjects ranging from Geography through to Dance.

In the past, sixth formers were able to leave site during free periods and also allowed study leave close to exams. Recent changes mean that students are supervised during what are now “study periods” (free periods) in our personal Study Room in the Sixth Form block. Despite this not going down with the 16-18 year olds in the Sixth Form for obvious reasons of being a teenager, one day they will hopefully look back at their time here and appreciate the changes the school made in the final years of its existence.

UCAS is the main event in the two years students spend in Sixth Form. The stress of creating and writing a personal statement for university, travelling and visiting open days and then receiving offers for their chosen courses is a feeling which I cannot describe, but for those of you reading who have applied, you know exactly which feeling I speak of (it’s a good one, I promise).
So, the Sixth Form tries to make things more personal, and with it being a very small Sixth Form (only around 60-70 students) the staff really gets to know the students – noticing particularly when you’re not in the lessons... This gives lessons a more one-to-one feel and you definitely are a name and not a number.

Leaving the Sixth Form, it is always quite upsetting to say goodbyes to the people you’ve known for the past 7 years. The teachers usually create a liturgy where they say these things which have become so personal to your college experience, often the students get choked up – it’s always a lovely day though. I know from personal experience, I got a certificate which my tutor had named the “Metallica Award”. Not because I liked the band, but because I had a few facial piercings at the time. But this just goes to show how your individuality shows through in your Sixth Form life.

Having moved on from a day of 5 lessons a day, 5 days a week in the lower school, us students in sixth form often comment on how we wouldn’t survive a full day of lessons now as we can barely get through a single hour lesson without complaining that we’re too tired. What can we say, that extra episode of the current TV series won’t hurt to watch tonight, will it?

Lessons, being more personalised gives each student a specific timetable, having 4 options and 2 cores in Lower Sixth (ASt), and then 3 options and 1 core in Upper Sixth (A2). Homework is still a major part of school life, but it is expected of a student – we even still get unofficial detentions sometimes to finish work but it’s not as daunting as we know the teachers and are able to have a talk and ask necessary questions if we need to.

Uniform was never an issue in the past... simply because there wasn’t one. You were allowed to wear anything you wanted: jeans, trainers or even that band t-shirt you love. But with the recent changes in the school, the path of other Sixth Forms in the area have taken has been followed and the students have been given a set of ‘guidelines’ for a more specific and smarter wardrobe.
“We would travel to school on the train, there would be about 30 of us. Quite often I would miss the train. At break-time we would play pitch and toss with 1p and 2p coins. We would have been in trouble if we had been caught.”

“I had to catch the bus at 8:10am, then a train at 8:35am and arrive at school at 8:50am. At home time I would catch the 4:15pm train and be home by 5:00pm.”

“When St. Mary’s Primary School, in Madeley, burnt down we spent our last year of primary school here at BRJ, in the Moore Building.”

“On one Mission Day Father Kelly forgot the wine so Mrs. Rust went to the Co-op to buy some.”

“After nearly getting kicked out of my school in year 7 I joined BRJ. Mr. Ellis took me under his wing and made me the strong family man I am today. There are not enough thank you’s in the world to say to that man.”

“When BRJ was first built it was gleaming new and seemed very modern at the time.”
The School Day - 1970’s

“We started at 9:00am and had two 35 minute lessons before morning break. We had two more lessons after break then a one hour lunchtime. We had two more sessions in the afternoon and then home. There was no form session then.”

**Morning Lesson 1**
**Morning Lesson 2**
**Break**
**Morning Lesson 3**
**Morning Lesson 4**
**Lunch**
**Afternoon Lesson 1**
**Afternoon Lesson 2**

How does that compare with the timetable in 2014?

8:45 to 9:15 - Registration
9:15 to 10:15 - Lesson 1
10:15 to 10:30 - Break
10:30 to 11:30 - Lesson 2
11:30 to 12:30 - Lesson 3
12:30 to 1:15 - Lunch
1:15 to 2:15 - Lesson 4
2:15 to 3:15 - Lesson 5

Not too much difference!
Some things pupils remember

“I was swinging on my chair and ended up knocking myself out and going to A&E. I should have listened to Mrs. B in the first place.” Does that sound familiar teachers?

“The first school trip I went on, in the 60s, was to Switzerland. It cost £60. My parents paid £30 and I paid the rest from the money I earned delivering bread on Saturdays. I got paid 15 shillings (15/-) a day, that’s 75p. It took me 40 weeks to raise the money but I was determined to go.”

“Mrs. O’Neill gave us a list of rules in our first lesson. The last one was, don’t breathe!”

“When I got lines I used to use three pens at the same time to get them done quicker.”

“The first uniform included a cap for the boys. You had to wear your cap until you got to your house.”

“It rained and rained at camp and we lived off cornflakes.”
“There was a lot of snow one day and only a few of us managed to get in to school. We were given hot chocolate by the teachers. It’s one of my biggest memories.”

“In one English lesson one of the boys crawled down the aisle and rubbed some things of the board, the teacher was very confused.”

“One of my mates spelled his name wrong on a mock exam paper!”
Do you remember your exercise books? Covering them with wallpaper or maybe sticky-back-plastic (memories of Blue Peter!). Remember the horror of losing a book or forgetting to put it in your bag on the day when your homework was due in? These things never change and form the day to day drama of being a high school student.
Thermometry

75°C to 0°F

\[ \frac{75 \times 180.9}{100.5} = \]
\[ \frac{15 \times 9}{7} \]
\[ 15 \times 9 = 135 \]
\[ = 167° \]

**Phillip Williams of IV Cleaning your Teeth**

**Equipment Required**
- A toothbrush
- A tube of toothpaste
- A glass of water (Hot or cold)

**Method**

1. Rinse the toothbrush with water to remove any lint. Apply carefully the toothpaste onto to the (squeeze tube from bottom to avoid waste). Use a toothbrush in the hand to brush the teeth at the front, in a downward action, and working to the back still using the action. After brushing, spit the waste toothpaste in into the basin then taking the glass of water a into the mouth and swirl it around, then spit it out. Brush the teeth again same downward action, and again swirl the old water. This whole operation should last 3 to 4 minutes. After this has been done, clean and wipe water with towel then put it away due to be used again.
Reports are another part of school life that may have lead to some of us feeling a little bit anxious. Do you recognise any of these comments, or something like them, from your own reports?

*a great improvement in her work this term. She should gain a higher grade next year if she keeps this up.*

*is not really pushing herself hard enough. If she is to pass 'O' level then she will have to put in a great deal more effort than she is doing at present.*

*The standard of her work has improved, but she has shown little enthusiasm for this subject. She must spend more time on homework if she wishes to obtain a satisfactory examination grade.*

P. Phipps
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ATTAINMENT</th>
<th>EFFORT</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Some difficulties noted. Has a good imagination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Still rather erratic. Could do far better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has worked with great enthusiasm and improved well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is capable of some good work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Her effort is very erratic. Must concentrate completely on her work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has worked steadily throughout the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Usually works quite hard in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has not been working as hard as she might. The work produced is fairly satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has not been working as consistently as she would. Her work is of good standard but not exceptional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not do much practical work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlecraft</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Works quite well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>A very good year's work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Much improved with excellent results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summer 1977

Anna always tries hard and is a reliable young lady.积极推进。
Some more things pupils remember

Here are some of the things that happened to former-pupils, they have been slightly para-phrased to protect the innocent!

“I tried to set the world record for not blinking and kept my eyes open for 45 minutes. I ended up in first aid with severe dry eyes.”

“Sometimes if we misbehaved we would have a piece of chalk thrown at us. Some of the teachers had very good aims!”

“We made a list of the top ten teachers to avoid.”

“Once we were caught sneaking out of school by the Deputy Head. Next day in form he said “Remember the 11th Commandment, Thou shalt not slope off from school before 3:45” It was great that we could be told off in such a nice way.”

“Mr. Kibby, who was a music teacher, once sang to me...

\[
\text{You have a DT} \\
\text{With Me} \\
\text{In C3} \\
\text{At eleven twenty}
\]

...a DT is a detention by the way.”

“Sometimes when we had a supply teacher we would swap names and pretend to be each other. It was confusing for the teacher and for us in the end.”

“Exam time meant that the exam room was very quiet, silent in fact. We used to have coughing competitions during the exams. We thought the teachers didn’t know, but it must have been so obvious!”

“It seems like it’s an obvious thing to happen in school but we used to sneak into the toilets by the history room for a quick smoke. I don’t think we realised that the teachers could smell the smoke, not only in the corridor but on our clothes.”
Chapter 6
Photos, Photos, Photos

We have been very lucky to obtain a large number of photographs of BRJ. We cannot put them all in this book so we have selected a representative sample. It would have been ideal to put names to faces and events but most of the photographs were not labelled. So, we hope you know who some of the people are and what they were doing.

The main aim of this section is to show what BRJ is all about, to stimulate your memories into remebering and maybe to get you to scour your lofts to dig out more images to share with each other!
We have been very lucky with this project in having a large number of photographs loaned to us for scanning. Unfortunately not all of them were labelled. Some have been identified, others have not. What follows is a selection of these images, in no particular order which are here for your enjoyment and to keep you asking the questions, “Who is that?” and “What was happening there?” Perhaps you can help each other with the answers.
Blencathra 2013

Blist’s Hill 2013
Mission Day 2007
Paralympic Games 2012

Skipathon 2008
Performing Arts
Photographs of the school in 2014
Blessed Robert Johnson Student Heritage Group

NEEDS YOU!

EX-PUPILS & EX-STAFF

We are collecting memories, stories and memorabilia from Blessed Robert Johnson School over the last 50 years. From them we are making a book and a film to celebrate the life of the school.

Come along to our reminiscence day on SATURDAY JUNE 29TH from 12:00noon till 4:00pm

Contact us on:
Email: brj.heritage@gmail.com
Facebook: BRJ Heritage
Twitter: @BRJ_Heritage
Mob: 07792 075855