

## New College School Archive

‘Evil irregular octagon has kidnapped the Queen Quadrilateral’;<sup>1</sup> this Year 3 exercise describing the properties of two-dimensional shapes exemplifies something of the creativity combined with the learning process at New College School. It also helps to provide an insight into what life is like for a pupil at the school, which is an intimate aspect that can be hard for an archive to capture. That is because an archive can be very focused on the institution, perhaps at the expense of the individual. A comprehensive archive, an archive useful to the researcher into the big picture and also looking for the perhaps personal touch which may truly embody that organisation, needs to reflect both aspects, the macro and the micro. So, it might incorporate both the formal reports of such as the school’s head and its inspectors, and also utterances of pupils at the time and also maybe more reflectively as alumni. It should also be reflective of other groupings very much part of the life of such a school, including of course the parents of its pupils, and the pupils themselves when they have moved on and become alumni, and also such as local suppliers, other administrative and educational bodies, and the local community.<sup>2</sup> Recent histories of New College School have sought to reflect these varying aspects, indicative perhaps even by their rather different titles: Jonathan Edmunds’s *New College Brats* (1996) and Matthew Jenkinson’s *New College School, Oxford: A History* (2013).<sup>3</sup>

Yet for much of the history of New College School, dating back to the foundation of New College itself in 1379, recourse has to be made to the main archive of New College, as evidenced by the references and images in these two publications. What has now been taken into the New College Archive to join the rest of the college’s collection, as of October 2022, is material that largely reflects and recounts the development of the school in the last century or so of its existence. That relatively short span is perhaps not surprising as it covers the school’s location at its current site in Savile Road since 1903. The school was based at some six other sites in and around New College<sup>4</sup> since its inception as part of Wykeham’s foundation. Thereby, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that the paperwork, and no doubt parchment-work, produced at those sites has not survived all the moves. A list of New College School pupils from the 1730s<sup>5</sup> is a rare survival from the pre-Savile Road eras.

So, what is there in the school’s archive that can illuminate this core aspect of the wider college life which, like so much else, sets New College apart from many other colleges? Firstly, arguably core records in any school’s archive are log books, and New College School is no exception. There is actually only one, compiled by Colin Hamilton Baynes during his time as headmaster 1932–55. This tells us so much about how the school was being run, and records highlights and achievements in that running with comments and insights into those daily happenings. It is supplemented by a file of circulars sent out by Hamilton Baynes to parents covering many aspects of the running of such a school, including health issues, proposed holidays with the boys, wartime evacuation issues, opting out of free milk, and increases in fees. There are also some quite key notices about the development of the school, such as the appointment of a separate housemaster in 1947, the introduction of competitive entry in 1954, and his on retirement and the appointment of his successor in 1955. For his predecessor Francis Carter there is no such regular record, but there is an invaluable snapshot on many aspects of school life, and also on the interaction of a headmaster’s personal family existence with that life, in a file of all his bills for 1920. These provide details on such as repairs to the school buildings, the clothing and footwear of the boys, provision for their health and teeth, their additional music teaching, their stationery, their food, and their books (largely from Parker’s), alongside more personal aspects of Carter’s life

---

<sup>1</sup> The Nucleus Creativity from New College School, 2017–18, p. 59, New College Archives, Oxford, NCA NCS/GC4.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Gullifer, *How to Lead a School* (London: Austin Macauley Publishers, 2022), pp.94–103.

<sup>3</sup> The latter is also accessible online: <[www.newcollegeschool.org/school-history](http://www.newcollegeschool.org/school-history)> (Accessed: 12 November 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Illustrated in Matthew Jenkinson, *New College School, Oxford: A History* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2013), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 2709, illustrated in *ibid.*, p. 25.

244

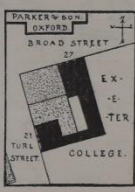
27 BROAD STREET } OXFORD.  
21 TURL STREET }  
Dec 1916

Bought of PARKER AND SON,  
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN BOOKSELLERS,  
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

TELEPHONE—342 OXFORD.  
TELEGRAMS—  
PARKER, BOOKSELLER, OXFORD.

AGENTS FOR  
The ORDNANCE SURVEY,  
The S. P. C. K.,  
The NATIONAL SOCIETY.

SECOND-HAND BOOKS AND LIBRARIES PURCHASED.  
Five per cent. Interest charged on overdraw Accounts.  
A stamp for postage should be added if a receipt is required for less than 10/-



		Net	
1916	Sep 14 12 Caetan Gallie Mar III.		18
	29 22 Latin Reader III.		12
	8 Primer of French Grammar	16	
1917	15 Macbeth		163
	8 Ceppi, French for Beginners		12
	12 " " Junior		18
	8 Baker & B. Geometry 1-3		1
	3 Cicero de Senectute		46
	Oct 4 11 Newth, Pract. Chemistry		176
	1 Wood's Macbeth		11
	5 Hillard, Latin Ec.		126
	5 Nixon, History		76
	12 La Poudre aux yeux		8
	20 Treasure Island	1	
	28 1 Newth Chemistry		26
	1 Hamilton, Greek Legends		26
	Order 54 2 Greek Reader II	16	
	4 Lock, Arithmetic		4
	57 11 Shorter Latin Primer		11
	1 Borchardt Algebra		36
	Gomard	176	1018

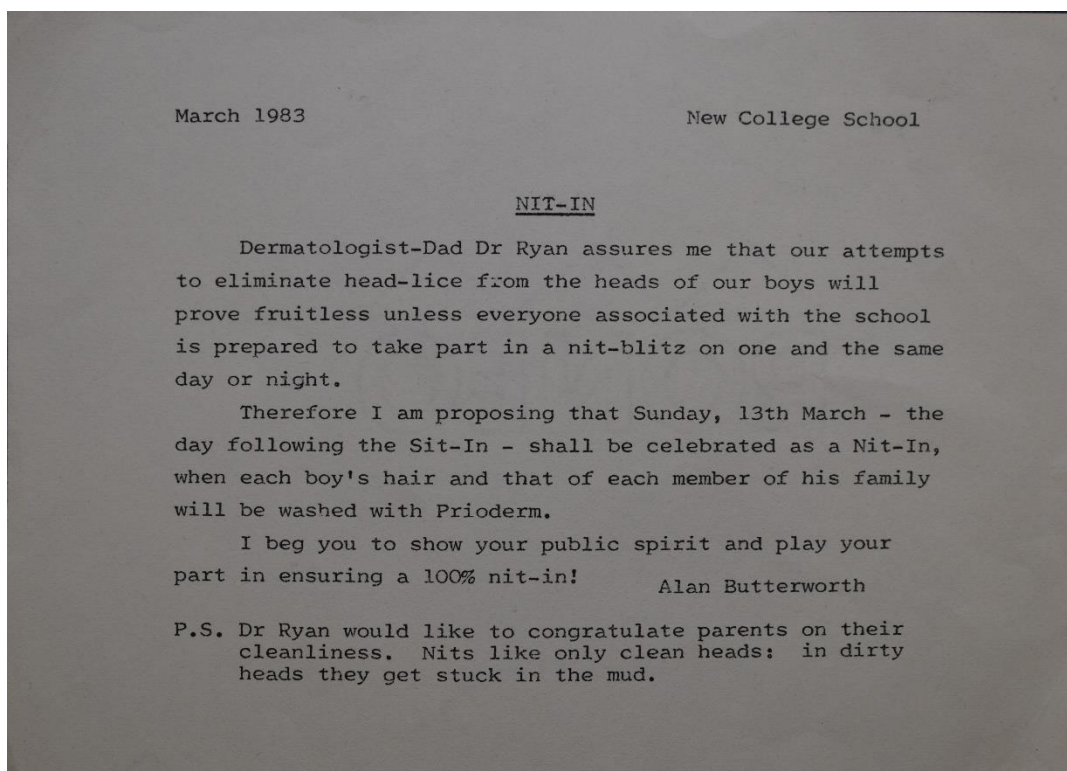
School books bought from the then Parker's during the First World War

New College Archives, Oxford, NCA NCS/B2/1/244

This and following images © Courtesy of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford

such as bills for jewellers, various motorcycle dealers and repairers, his sporting subscriptions, work on the family home, and his mother's grave in Holywell cemetery. These all provide some context for his time as headmaster 1912–32. Alan Butterworth, headmaster 1955–88, continued the specific issue circulars of Hamilton Baynes which he supplemented with the occasional more general information sheet or newsletter to parents. From the time of Penny Hindle, principal 2000–2008, and especially under her successor Robert Gullifer, this became a regular, even weekly newsletter, colour-illustrated as well, providing an invaluable record of the regular rhythm of school life. Added to it in 2013 was a separate newsletter from the head of the pre-prep department, detailing such as the award of star of the week and the kindness carrot.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> NCA NCS/B1/3-4, B2/1, GC2, GC3.



One of Headmaster Butterworth's circulars to parents, New College Archives, Oxford, NCA NCS/B1/4/1

Alongside these regular records of ongoing activity, there is also the more considered *New College School Magazine*, produced termly from 1935, and then annually from 1943, detailing school activities, pupils in the school, new pupils and those moving on, with also some short articles about aspects of the school or schools elsewhere or education and school life more widely. The cost of producing the magazine became prohibitive so that it was replaced by a termly newsletter from Christmas 1974. By 2006 this had been replaced by a more lavish colour-illustrated collage of the school's annual activities in a *Magazine*, which was rebranded and expanded as *The Newswire* by 2009. This was supplemented in 2017 by *The Nucleus Creativity from New College School*, an annual celebration of pupils' work and achievements.<sup>7</sup>

What then indeed of the pupils themselves? New College School has certainly been assiduous in recording visual images of them for the last century or so. The archive includes albums of formal group images from 1916 of the whole school, and sporting groups within that, generally football, hockey, and cricket, with rugby featuring for a while 1962–71 until the headmaster acknowledged that it was 'difficult for us to compete at Rugby Football on even terms'<sup>8</sup> and it was withdrawn. There are also loose group photos taking the consistent visual record of the boys back to 1903, with a Rifle team featuring for a while before the First World War. All of these images have the individuals named and are dated as well, providing thereby a crucial identifiable visual record of the schools' boys. More recent photographic images have featured and illustrated the increasing diversity of activities, and ages, of the school, including choir trips abroad, drama performances, and trips and activities of the pre-prep department. These less formal images provide a more relaxed record of the boys but are generally not dated nor identified so individuals are hard to trace. However a number of years of formal class photographs are also part of the archive where all are identified, and these can provide a key into the great variety of other images for the assiduous researcher.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> NCA NCS/GC1.

<sup>8</sup> NCA NCS/B1/4.

<sup>9</sup> NCA NCS/FA, FB3, FB2.





also enabled the school to interact more with the wider, especially musical, community in Oxford. Its activities are not yet fully represented in the archive, but this is an area where this initial ingestion of records from the school is leading to further development work on the archive.<sup>11</sup>

Much of the archive thus reflects the more formal overall development of the school, as is always going to be the case with such an institutional archive. There are glimpses of the individuals concerned, obviously particularly the heads. Establishing the career of a particular boy at the school, especially beyond the bare facts of their admission and departure to their next school, can be a little more elusive. Pieces of work by individuals can be helpful in that and so such as the school's anthologies of boys' poems of the 2000s, collages of their scientific work of 2010, and various stop-motion videos created by some boys in 2015, all now part of the archive, provide us with a more personal take on the many individuals who have passed through this institution.<sup>12</sup> What also does not feature too extensively in the archive from the school is the particular role of those boys who were choristers. That role is largely reflected and recorded in the archive of the College's chapel and choir, covering the services they will have sung in the chapel, their performances away from New College, and their recordings.<sup>13</sup>

Michael Stansfield  
Archivist & Records Manager  
New College, Oxford

---

<sup>11</sup> NCA NCS/E1-3.

<sup>12</sup> NCA NCS/GC5, GC6, M1.

<sup>13</sup> NCA CH.