

I began teaching at St John's School in September 1963, known as Miss Burns. It was my first teaching post, having left college in July, and I took over from Mrs Mann who was retiring. In those days, my planning took place while I walked along Brocket Road from the bus stop near the Bull public house, it was a lovely start to the day, walking along the country lane to the sound of the skylarks soaring above. Not so good on a wet day, of course! Record keeping consisted of a page number in a reading book, and the Sealy Maths scheme. How things have changed!

I was responsible for the 24 children who made up the Infant department, aged rising 5s to 7-year-olds. Mr Temple had just started as Head, and Mrs Temple took the lower juniors. What a team, with Mrs Temple definitely the power behind the throne! I remember her standing by the window in the screen which separated her classroom from mine, looking at what I was doing, and then reporting it to Mr Temple. It was quite off putting for a newly qualified teacher, and quite a lonely experience. But they were also very supportive for the most part. Mrs Temple regularly had choral speaking lessons with her class, and I remember the poem The King's Breakfast by A A Milne being recited on a daily basis for weeks! I could repeat it too!!

My classroom was bright and colourful, and I thoroughly enjoyed the inspiration of working with the young children, some of whom I still know now. I loved making interest tables, and nature collections, with contributions from the children, thus involving parents, bringing in things from home, early homework? I got into trouble with the then vicar, the Rev Mitchelle, when he saw my Methodist Sunday school teaching notes on my teacher's table. My early childhood had been in the Methodist church. He told Mr Temple to have a word with me and make sure I removed it. Mr Temple suggested I just didn't leave it out on the desk!

The school meals were of a really good quality, Mrs Newsom being the head cook. Sadly, the canteen was not nicest place to eat them as when seated, my back was very close to the gas heater, which also produced unpleasant smells. Mrs Newsom was very friendly and supportive, she offered to collect tokens from the Vim scouring powder canisters, which gave a 4 place setting of stainless-steel cutlery for 9/11d.. She collected enough tokens for me to buy 12 place settings, which I still use every day, from almost 60 years ago!

After a year, I got married and the class, with the support of 'the Temples', gave me a lovely celebration, in the school orchard.

After a further year, I did start a family, but returned to finish off the school year, and also doing some part time work after that, teaching recorder playing, which I really enjoyed.

I had happy times at St John's school, and I am grateful to the County Education Officer who posted me there as a newly qualified teacher, as this has led to a full and happy life centred in and around the village of Lemsford.

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