

**Dennis Whittaker**  
**St. John's School Headmaster 1954-1960**

**e-mail from Jerry Pymer ( [jerry.pymer@outlook.com](mailto:jerry.pymer@outlook.com) )**

24 August 2021

I was surprised to see that the entry for Mr Whitaker in the roll of headteachers of St John's contained no details of Mr Whitaker other than his name and dates of service. I only attended St John's while he was Headmaster just over the last year of his time there, but my older siblings attended for most or all of their junior schooldays through the 1950s. All of us were in awe of him, and my parents respected him absolutely.

My mother said he had been in the parachute regiment in WW2, unenviably parachuting into difficulty at Arnhem in 1944. He was a strict disciplinarian but very fair.

I am sure that there would be plenty of tributes from old St John's pupils who were there during his headship. The names I recall best are Lionel Lusby, Keith Shepherd and Christopher Dance, all friends of my late and very much missed brother Gordon.

Jerry had also sent details of a Dennis Whittaker who was the head of Woodhouse Grammar School, Finchley. However he thinks that this was not the right Dennis Whittaker so have omitted the references.

**From:**David Roden. <[perkypenguin296@gmail.com](mailto:perkypenguin296@gmail.com)>

28 September 2021 11:21

I am able to provide some information on Dennis Whittaker who was Headmaster at St John's School in the 1950's. I had left that school at that time but it was in the mid 50's that Mr Whittaker set up the Lemsford Boy Scout Group [Hatfield 4th]. He went round all the houses in Lemsford and Stanborough asking if any boys would be interested in forming a group if he ran one. From the list of lads who wanted to take part Dennis selected four to train as potential Patrol Leaders and Seconders and I was one of those chosen. We had two patrols and I was Leader of the Peewits. Meetings were held at the Old Village Hall. We had many trips out including several camping stints in Brocket Park for which we had a hand pulled trek cart. I remember on our first trip 'Skipper' [Dennis] loaded his old army gear at the back of the cart which unbalanced everything [Dennis had been a Major in the army and his gear was heavy]. All was fine until it was time to change the two lads pulling the cart and once a lad was free of the handle the cart went down at the back - to great amusement. I hope this note gives insight into Dennis and what he did outside of school. Kind regards, David Roden. p.s. I still live in Stanborough and am willing to recount memories if they are of interest. I attended St. John's School between 1944 and 1950 and remember it before any extensions were added.