

Around 1900: Student Life at Norwich Training College.



1898-1900 Year group with training Principal Rev J. Addison Hannah and staff

During our time at college we studied many subjects, history, reading, English, literature, maths including Euclid which I particularly disliked. My special subject was needlework and we were taught to make button-holes, hem, sew, whip and knit socks. Saturday mornings we did drill, and for this we changed into special drill suits. These were slightly shorter than our usual long skirts. The drill, which lasted the whole of the morning, was not among my favourite subjects. On three separate occasions during my training I had to take a criticism lesson. This meant that I taught the children from the practice school. These children came into the college once a week. They would sit at the desks in the lecture room, their teachers as well as the lecturers and all the students would sit around the walls of the room, and one student would give a lesson on the subject she was told to teach. At the end of the lesson, the other students and lecturers would give their criticisms of the lesson. My first criticism lesson was on geography, and I remember using plasticine to make a model illustrating the point

of the lesson. My second criticism was a maths lesson and I had to teach long division. I do not think I did this very well. My third, which I did enjoy was with the infant children when I took a lesson on paper folding

I had a wonderful life at college, we were so happy although I got into many scrapes because of my impulsive nature. We had no transport, and had to walk everywhere, although the students from London were allowed to take a horse-drawn cab from Thorpe Station to the college. On one occasion six of us actually hired a boat and rowed four miles up the river which was against the rules as this was out of bounds to us. As we approached Hellesdon bridge we noticed a figure on top of the bridge watching our progress, it was Canon Hannah. Our fright may easily be imagined, and we were all summoned to the principal's room later on, but we got off very lightly."

Others remembered the rigours of the late-Victorian and Edwardian college

"Visitors — No male visitors were allowed in College other than one's own clergyman or schoolmaster. Even fathers were excluded!

Outings — Everyone was obliged to be out of the building every afternoon from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m., unless it poured with rain, or one had medical exemption. No one must leave the building alone. Morning service at St. Thomas's Church was compulsory ... Norwich students might not call home without previous leave to do so. All restaurants were out of bounds. In fact, we worked out that the cockle-stall on the market was the only place omitted from the "Index Expurgatoris."

College Plays — All male impersonators had to wear long tunics and high boots if possible, so as not to show any leg!

Orderlies — Waitresses, poor unfortunate students, dragging out of bed earlier than the rest, had to set breakfast and help with washing-up afterwards. Laundry orderlies spent all their free time on Thursday evenings putting laundry to air, and Friday evenings sorting it into students' laundry bags ready for collection."

"Our two years' training cost £7 10s. if we had gained a first-class in the preliminary examination, and £10 if a second-class. You can therefore imagine the cuisine was a little unvaried!

NTC around 1900

I have memories of porridge for supper at 8.30 p.m., and it also figured at breakfast. This meal was at 7 a.m. We were roused by a bell at 6 a.m.

In those far-away days we had a very fascinating occupation for Sunday afternoons — we wrote in one another's autograph albums"

"In spite of its being well on into the twentieth century, we were hedged about by Victorian restrictions — we might not go out alone, we had to wear goloshes when it rained, we were forbidden to visit the railway stations!

