

Norwich Training College: End of WW2 Years: 1944-46

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Originally published in the Keswick Hall Old Students' Club magazine
December 2004

MEMORIES OF N.T.C. 1944-46

Sixty years ago, when we went up to Norwich Training College, most of us travelled by train with our trunks sent on in advance. The main college buildings had been destroyed by the bombing two years earlier, but we were happy to live in the nearby houses, then used as hostels. I was with five students of my year and six of the senior year, some of whom were our "college mothers". We were in South Annexe, twelve girls sharing one bathroom with an unreliable geyser as the only source of hot water. However, we had each been provided with a small wardrobe and a bureau, the new utility furniture, which I regarded as a luxury in those days of austerity.

There was much optimism and anticipation of the good years to come after the war, with great hopes for the future of education.

Miss Garlick's new Social Studies course was the forerunner of the Social Sciences. During the Christmas holiday of our second year, some of us went on a course at St. Hilda's settlement in Bethnel Green to learn about the lives of the people there. Miss Meredith Jones introduced us to the delights of Modern Dance for which we wore short tunics that we thought most elegant. Miss Pearson taught us how to make puppets and puppet theatres, a skill, which our pupils were always keen to acquire. We spent hours making individual cards, mainly for use in teaching English and Arithmetic, often using illustrations from old magazines. Picture Post was an invaluable source for school practice materials. Such was the emphasis on creating a happy and secure environment for learning that on one occasion, when Miss Duff visited me, she accepted, without question or reprimand, that a small boy was asleep under a desk in my classroom.

For entertainment we had some productions and occasional dances in the gym. Many boy friends were serving in the Armed Forces overseas. Some students went to dances at the U.S. air bases. Transport was provided and food there plentiful. The Maddermarket Theatre maintained a high



standard of productions, particularly appreciated by those of us whose main subject was English.

The most memorable event was on Ascension Day 1945. It was a glorious summer day and, thanks to the generosity of the staff, we celebrated peace and freedom following VE day with a visit to Scolt Head.

When the time came for us to apply for our first teaching posts we were strongly advised to move away from home. We needed to become independent and, in some cases, to grow up. Some of us had started our course at seventeen and a half years and in wartime had had little experience of the wider world. Consequently, at the time of my twenty first birthday, I was already in my second year of teaching in a secondary modern school in Bradford.

Sixty years later, I continue to enjoy my main subjects by attending U3A classes in Literature, Theatre and T'ai Chi in Ilkley where I now live. Some of the movements of T'ai Chi are similar to those we performed in Modern Dance. We have a very patient tutor and we move with varying degrees of suppleness but maybe not with the grace of the students at Norwich in the good years of 1944-46.

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