

Memories of a brand new school

by Jim Baldwin

I was one of those who attended Fakenham Secondary Modern at Field Lane before it officially opened, Indeed I was one of those who used to walk from the school at Queens Road to have lessons in the woodwork room before the main building of the was completed.

When the entire school moved in during April 1958 it was somewhat of a culture shock, so much room and so many places to hide!

The flower beds and school gardens had not been prepared; this was a job for the pupils. The early summer sun had baked the builders' mud hard and it was a most difficult job to get a fork into the ground to dig it over. Nevertheless we tried. I liked gardening and volunteered to give up my PE lessons to work on the flower beds. This rendered the sportsmaster almost speechless. He came from one of those families where even the dog could play snooker and he could not believe that anyone on the planet did not like sport! Needless to say my school leaving report reflected this.

The desks were all new and each had a small inkwell, this being well before the introduction of ball point pens. It was my job to go around the classrooms topping these up with ink from a small can. It was the world's worst job. Other pupils tried to make you laugh in an effort to get you to spill the ink and, of course, everyone was watching in case you did!

Another of my jobs as Head Boy was to ring the (electric) school bell at the beginning and end of break time. I must have misread the time on one occasion and morning break Finished early. The only complaints I received were from the teaching staff!

I spent less than four months at the Secondary Modern School at Field lane and before I left I was called into the head's office where he asked me what book I would like as a prize, a craft book or dictionary. I went for the dictionary, something I have never regretted. I still use it today and it reminds me of those exciting days in a brand new school so many years ago.