

# HAYES SCHOOL ALUMNI

HISTORY & MEMORIES OF HAYES SCHOOL



Second-year (year 8) form group 2H -1973

# History of Hayes School

Hayes School began its existence as a secondary school in 1956, developing from the local parish school of 1791, following a need for expanded secondary education. The school was housed initially in the Gadsden building, a red-bricked Victorian Gothic mansion which served for the first few years as a teaching and administration space at a time when the first admitted students were all-boys.

In the sixteen years prior to 1956, the Gadsden site housed juniors aged 7-11 transferring from the Infant Department of the County Primary School in George Lane (now known as Hayes Primary School) before they moved to borough secondary schools aged 11. Photographs from the period show juniors at Gadsden performing in a wide range of Arts and Sports activities.



*Recorder lessons on Gadsden Lawn— 1952*

Following the construction of Pickhurst County Primary School in 1953, relieving pressure on the local primary education system, the juniors later returned to the two county primaries, allowing Hayes School to open in 1956 as a secondary school.

Once known as Buttfield, and later as Street Field, the land the secondary school today sits on was bought in 1873 by Henry John Norman, a director of the London & Westminster bank, from his uncle George Ward Norman. Henry Norman, known by many at the time as 'the Gad' (hence the name Gadsden) had the large Gadsden residence built on the site where he, and his family of seven children, would reside when not in London.

Prominent across Bromley Common, the Norman family owned many estates across Bromley, including the land of the local Norman Park (1.0 miles from Hayes School) which was sold to Bromley Council in 1934.



*Gadsden as an estate —circa 1930.*

*Gadsden on a foggy March morning—2022*



The Gadsden property was characterised by a long winding carriage drive leading to the entrance of the property from the east (Baston Road); today known by students and staff at Hayes School as 'The Street'; and the west (West Common Road). At the western end was situated a lodge and stables, which still stands today, now serving as storage capacity and a residence for an on-site caretaker.



*Building at the western (West Common Road) entrance to the school site. Once a lodge for the Norman family's domestic staff, and today the residence of an on-site caretaker.*

After opening in 1956, Hayes County Secondary School for Boys as it was then known, initially began with 77 pupils. With the admittance of girls to the school three years later in 1959, there was a need for the expansion of teaching spaces across the school site. 'A-block' and 'C-block' opened with fourteen classrooms, sports facilities, laboratories and an assembly hall.

Under the headship of Dr J S Leeming, the school expanded to 180 student entry, with 1200 pupils by 1973 which saw great developments in the way of 'D-block' and later 'B-block' housing the then Sixth Form Centre (now located in D-block).

The expansion to 240 student entry in 1992, as the school became grant-maintained, encouraged greater developments in Media Arts and Technology. Most recently the construction of ‘L-block’ and ‘M-block’ were completed in 2010 with specialist teaching rooms for Maths, English, Media and Student Support.



*L-block and M-block, as viewed from Gadsden Lawn—2022*

## Hayes alumni: Memories of Hayes School

Hayes School today is proud to have a strong alumni community of former students and staff, who have attended Hayes over the years, each with their own unique experiences.

Hayes School reunion events are well-attended by the alumni community, and offer guests the chance to see the developments at the school and provide the opportunity to meet up with fellow former students and their teachers.

The history of Hayes School is often untold to many students, and to celebrate this rich history, we gave members of the alumni the opportunity to share some their memories from their time at Hayes. The project led entirely by students in Year 13 (Upper Sixth) gave Year 8 (second year) students the opportunity to interpret some of the experiences from the alumni and to see the changes pre-dating their studies at Hayes.

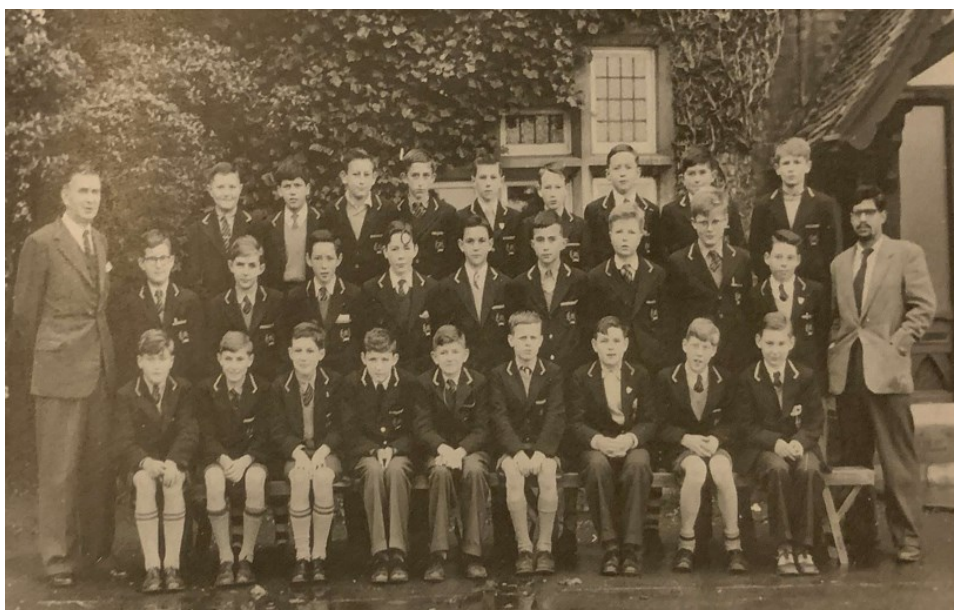
Here are some experiences of our alumni, and current Year 8 students.

### The First Day of Hayes School

On a beautiful early September day in 1956 around 120 boys assembled under the California Redwood trees outside Gadsden house. This was the first day of the school called Hayes School and most of the pupils came from Hayes with some from Biggin Hill and Cudham who came by school coach. The boys were a little self-conscious and at the time male pupils in primary schools wore shorts and then wore long trousers at the secondary school. There was a little delay until we were called into Gadsden to meet the staff, the redoubtable Head Mr R. W. Bigg and 4 teachers Messers-Coles, Thompson, Davies and Sirop.

We were assigned into four classes 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D—not very original! We then proceeded with some of the highest quality teaching I experienced during my educational journey. A wide variety of subjects were covered Maths, English, History, Geography, Science but also Art, Handwriting, Music and French. Formal tests were held each term in all subjects. A excellent start to my secondary education.

*John Daffey (from 1956)  
Praia da Luz, Portugal*



*Some of the first Hayes School boys — 1956*

I really enjoyed my time at Hayes School from 1972 to 1977. I have many fond memories of my time there but there is one project I was involved in that particularly stands out.

In the second year, 1973, I teamed up with other pupils, 2nd, 5th and 6th years (now known as Year 8, Year 11 and Year 12), to play instruments and sing songs on the stage in morning assemblies. This was organised by teachers Mr Hughes and Mr Thomas.

This led to a sponsored walk around Richmond Park to raise money to record an album of songs called 'Haze' at a professional recording studio in Wimbledon. The album was produced and all profits from the sales were given to a spina bifida charity. To help increase sales we also performed the album 'live' at Hayes School one evening at "Club Nite '74" when all our parents were there to watch.

The whole story, the album in full and many pictures of the whole project can be found on YouTube. Search for "The 'HAZE' album (video)".

*Tony Lewis (from 1972)*



*Recording the Haze album—1972*

I went to Hayes at the age of 11 and that would make it 1966. At that time it was a school for 11+ failures and those who were not expected to aspire to much. Thanks to some fantastic and dedicated teachers, led by a visionary Dr Leeming, that all changed. I retire this year from a very successful career as a Chartered Building Surveyor and a business which I co-founded 20 years ago that now employs more than 80 and runs an apprenticeship programme. I also met my wife of 42 years at Hayes so it has a lot to answer for.

*Jeff Timms (from 1966)*

So many happy memories of Hayes, particularly meeting my friends daily and the good fun we had. Lunchtime groups of us would sit on the grass behind Gadsden (Gadsden Lawn), eating our packed lunches and discussing our morning in class and what teachers and subjects we had for the afternoon.

My best memory is the skiing trip I went on in 1972 to Achenkirch, Austria, still spoken about with old school friends that I meet up with regularly.

*Cindy Farron (from 1970)*



*Hayes ski-trip to Austria—1972*

I was at Hayes from September '78 until June '85 and the school was very different to how it looks now. You'd know exactly who was due the slipper or the cane when you saw the glum looking faces sat outside Dr Leeming's office in the glass-walled ante room just by the main entrance. Gadsden was where the music department lived and also incorporated a window for the ever popular tuck shop. Here you'd jostle with your friends just to buy a packet of crisps or some sweets at lunchtime. The teacher who had the biggest influence on me was Miss Tait my cookery teacher. I passed my cookery "O" Level (yes no GCSE's yet) and still love cooking today. My Spanish "A" Level class only had 2 of us in it and Mrs Adlam would be proud to know that I still practise the lingo whenever I go out to Spain. I've been back to the school several times for reunions and can't believe some of the teachers are still there!

*Karen Perkins (from 1978)*

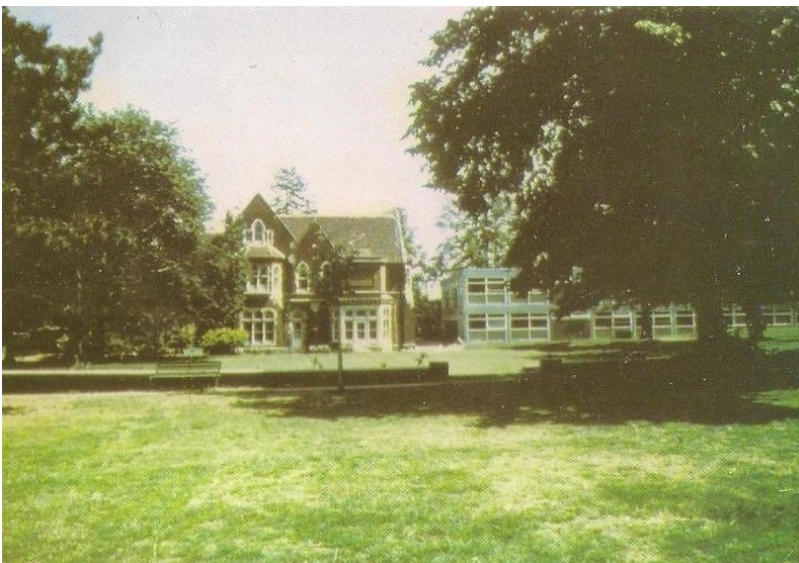


## Hayes today: A reflection from Year 8

Jeff Timms, with memories from 1966, writes about how at the time, Hayes “was a school for 11+ failures and those not expected to aspire to much”. Despite this, he writes of his successful career as a business owner.

Cindy Farron also mentions her happy memories of Hayes and that she would sit on the grass behind Gadsden at lunchtimes with friends which is interesting as this is something we have the opportunity to do in Year 7 when we first move to the school. Cindy also went on a ski trip to Austria in 1972 which is something the older years have the opportunity to go on, just to France.

*Chloe Lucas, year 8 student*



*Gadsden Lawn looking towards Gadsden-1981*

*Gadsden Lawn looking towards Gadsden, D-block, and newly completed M-block (right)-2022*



On my first day at Hayes all of the first years (Year 7 now) were herded into the hall and had to wait as the class lists were read out one by one, name by name; there was no transition and no being in a class with your friends, it was pot luck.

Mr Annear the French teacher had a habit of referring to us by a very literal translation of our surnames into French, if possible, and I remember him announcing to a group of our French exchange penpals "Je m'appelle Monsieur Oreille" they were completely baffled.

My parents wanted me to have the "proper" school uniform so they even bought me the school summer dress, come summer of first year I was the only person in the entire school wearing a summer dress and there were loads of nudges and laughs. I went home and begged for short-sleeved school blouses which is what all the other girls wore in summer.

Dr Leeming (head), Mr Crowdy and Mrs Markham (deputy heads) always swept into assembly in their long black academic gowns, we had to stand up when they came in. It was quite formal, teachers would stand in the raised area on the corridor and watch us to make sure we were being suitably respectful and not shuffling around. Mrs Markham used to patrol the cloakrooms looking for any coats which weren't navy blue (the required colour) and woe betide us if we risked it with a non-navy coat.

Mr Bayes was my chemistry teacher and Mr Cracknell, who I think only retired recently, was my physics teacher for most of my time at Hayes including A level, I don't think I would have got the grade in A level physics without Mr Cracknell's patience in trying to explain mechanics. I couldn't believe they were/are both still at Hayes!

In the Upper 6th common room (then downstairs in B block) we would all gather at break to listen to the radio (we had one radio for the common room) at that time it was always "Our Tune" on Radio 1 with Simon Bates and we'd groan exaggeratedly at the sad stories of lost love and tragedy. I can never hear the "Romeo and Juliet" theme tune without thinking of the common room!

After my time at Hayes, I went to medical school to train as a doctor and I'm now a psychiatrist in North-West England.

The photo shows my first-year class in 1982, we are at the back of Gadsden with Dr Leeming, Mrs Taylor (my form teacher) and Mr Turner (the head of year).

*Helen Sanderson (from 1982)*



## Hayes today: A reflection from Year 8

One thing that students are still made to do is stand-up when the teacher comes in, which is something Helen Sanderson wrote about. She also wrote about how they had to opportunity to wear the traditional summer dress, something we don't get anymore. Helen also says that her French teacher had a habit of referring to the class by a very-literal translation of their surnames. In language lessons today, we also have the opportunity to be referred to by traditional names of the language.

*Emma Prayag-Baltanas, year 8 student*

I was a student during the 80's, and in 1986 when I was in the Sixth Form I was entered by the school into a borough-wide competition to design a logo for the school dinners division of the local council. I designed a logo which consisted of a plate, knife, fork and spoon topped off with a mortar board, all made from sticky paper carefully cut out and assembled together (as shown in the photo of me with my design).

And I won!

I was interviewed by the local press. I also remember winning a set of water-colour paints, and a £25 WHSmith's voucher, which was presented to me by Dr. Leeming (the Headteacher) during assembly.

After leaving school, I went on to become a studio junior in a small graphic design and advertising agency in Chislehurst, 36 years later I'm now a creative director at a London design & communication agency.

*Steve Hickson (1980s)*



*Steve Hickson in a local newspaper, featuring his winning logo.*



I loved going on the ski trips to the Alps, and being involved in the amazing drama productions each year.

My favourite subjects were Drama with Mr Gunning, Maths with Mr Solomon and Economics with Mr Robinson, which I went on to study at the University of Warwick. I also enjoyed my French A Level, which continues to help me as I now live and work in Paris.

I still have close friends from school, and was recently a groomsman at the wedding of two friends from Hayes.

*Georges Vacharopoulos (from 2005)*

### **Hayes today: A reflection from Year 8**

Georges Vacharopoulos in his memories of his time at Hayes talked about the amazing drama productions and lessons. This definitely is still true, we recently had the opportunity to watch some of this year's main school production of Romeo & Juliet in assembly, which was amazing. My favourite lesson is also drama. We still have good trips, not to the Alps just yet, but a river walk and cinema trip and are a highlight of Year 8!

Steve Hickson also mentions the logo competition he took part in and we still have similar opportunities with a recent logo competition in our planners. Some of the year group have also created a Year 8 newsletter with its own logo competition and regular design work.

*Dominic Roberts, year 8 student*



*Snippet from the whole school photo (centre: Dr Leeming, Headmaster)—1977*

## **Gadsden: The school no one wanted to go to**

I arrived at what was then still called Gadsden School by the locals, in 1960.

Going to what became known as Hayes Secondary Modern was a symbol of failure. Failed 11-plus, so going to the local 'Sec-Mod' for the not very bright kids. The 1960s were different times. There were no laws against racist abuse and, as the only non-white child in the school in that first year, I soon became the victim of racist comments from fellow pupils and in a more subtle way from some of the teachers. I often wondered if the teachers resented being there, wished they could teach in a better school. Most of them certainly showed little enthusiasm for the job. This became much clearer when my own children went to school, it was very different. I left with the sense of failure that I arrived with, but now with a sense of frustration as I felt that I was bright. Years later, top of my class at university and with a Masters degree in Psychology, I just feel angry at what that little girl who arrived in secondary school in 1960 was put through. Hayes was not a good school and it let down a lot of children. The fact that the headmaster was sacked was a testament to just how bad the school was. I visited a few years ago and it was obviously a very different place.

*June Scott (from 1960)*

## **Hayes today: A reflection from Year 8**

June Scott described what was then known as Gadsden School in the 1960s as "a symbol of failure" being a school for those who may have failed their 11+ exam. However, many of the students went on to achieve great things - June achieved a masters degree in Psychology after her time at Gadsden. This year alone, for example, ten students in Year 13 received University interviews for the Oxbridge Unis (Oxford and Cambridge) with five receiving conditional offers to either university. As June recognised, there have been lots of improvements since the 1960s on ability.

*Fabian Bailey, year 8 student*

Funnily enough, one of my best memories was coming back to Hayes School the year after I'd left my A-Levels in 1999. I was given permission to film a promo for the school as part of a project on my HND course at Ravensbourne College, and while it's always odd returning to your old school - you somehow start to feel a little bit closer to being an adult! My time at Hayes was really well supported by teachers and they certainly helped me to get to where I wanted in my career. I was really single-minded about my next steps following my A-Levels and I couldn't have wished for more guidance from my Media Studies teachers at the time.

*Steven Mayatt (from 1992)*

The first thing I remember is that it was called the Second year and not year 8. The second-year brought a big change.... I was no longer one of the “little ones” of the 1<sup>st</sup> year. I had passed a relaxing summer, after the previous one which was full of apprehension about going to join my brother and sister who were already at Hayes Secondary School.

The academic year was full of new experiences, we did Metalwork rather than Woodwork and I even had the chance to learn the trumpet with individual lessons in the old Gadsden building, saving me from Biology lessons on Tuesday mornings. That is until the old Headmaster, Dr J.S. Leeming, changed the music lesson times to become an “after school activity”, which ended my trumpeting career!

I was a very keen sportsman and Hayes Secondary gave me every opportunity to excel at sport. Mr Howe and Mr Ratcliffe, taught a variety of sports and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (Year 8) selected me to represent the school at; football, cricket, basketball, badminton and hockey, where that year I was the goalkeeper for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year school teams.

I often say, even today, that I went to school to play sport, and between training and official games, I did lessons. My usual excuse for not handing in homework on time was “sorry, I was playing for the school team yesterday”.

Year 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> year to me), was the trampoline year, it launched me into my love of sports, and the pursuit of excellence in sport. It taught me about teamwork and how to relate to my elders and involve younger students in team games. Academically it was the year that Mr Logan showed me I could master mathematics and Mr Pearce that I would never speak French.

*Michael Hulls*



*Third-year football team– 1961*

## Hayes today: A reflection from Year 8

Compared to Michael Hull's time at Hayes School there are quite a few things that have changed since then. Year 8 was originally called second year, which really makes more sense knowing that I'm no longer the youngest in Year 7 but wasn't quite the oldest either. Like Michael, I did feel anxious about starting Hayes, but went to the school knowing my brother and sister were at the school a few years before me and having an exciting time.

In terms of subjects we now do woodwork for Design Technology, they did metalwork. Michael talks about being a keen sportsman where Hayes gave him the opportunity to excel at sports, something we also have the opportunity to do. Mr Howe and Mr Ratcliffe taught a variety of sports then and selected him to represent the school at football, cricket and basketball. Compared to Michael, sport isn't my strong point and instead, I hope to do well in Maths which is the subject I struggle with most. Michael says sports taught him skills in team work and these opportunities are vital. For me, I have picked up these skills in my love for English working with others where Hayes has taught me to work out of my comfort zone.

*Lara Griffiths, year 8 student*

I attended Hayes between 1982-1989, starting in form 1T with Mrs Taylor. I only lived around the corner from the School and so was usually the last to arrive. In the second year, with Mr Cracknell as form teacher, I remember being disappointed not being able to go on the trip to York – I seem to recall about half the class were off with a stomach bug (myself included) and couldn't go, and the half that did go seemed to be ill there! School discos were popular in the first and second year, and I remember teachers trying to pair us all up for the end of evening 'slow dance' – only for the lights to come on and the embarrassment of all our parents standing at the back of the school hall! External competitions – like the "Energy Study UK" and "ICL Faraday Time Capsule" competitions were great extracurricular activities and led to some fascinating trips. I also remember being sent home early one day in 1987, having just started in the Lower Sixth – the only time I can remember that ever happening – the morning after the "great gale".

My two main passions at Hayes were science and music. I remember regular concerts in the school hall – I played the piano or clarinet – led by Mr Williams, Mrs Clarke and Mr Smith – and something must have stuck as I still play until this day. And who could ever forget taking part in the musical Hans Christian Andersen at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley.

However it was at Hayes that my passion for science was really nurtured – by Dr Waters, Mr Bayes, Mr Mathews, Mr Hague and at A Level by Mrs Findlay, Mr Martin,

Mr Cracknell and particularly Mr Jeremy Lewis – who inspired me not only to study chemistry at university but now to a life long academic career in chemistry and being a Professor. Science practical classes in all the subjects were great fun and the lab facilities were excellent.

Hayes in the 1980s was an incredibly fun and caring place to be and I will always be grateful for the opportunities and start in life that it gave me.

*Adrian Dobbs (from 1982)*



*Hayes School Sixth Form—1989*



*Hayes School Sixth Form—1986*



# With thanks:

## Hayes School alumni:

Adrian Dobbs  
Cindy Farron  
Georges Vacharopoulos  
Helen Sanderson  
Jeff Timms  
John Daffey  
June Scott  
Karen Perkins  
Michael Hulls  
Steve Hickson  
Steven Mayatt  
Tony Lewis

## Year 8:

Chloe Lucas  
Dominic Roberts  
Emma Prayag-Baltanas  
Fabian Bailey  
Lara Griffiths

Written and composed by Ben Frost, student 2015-2022



*Aerial view of Hayes School-2020*

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