



This month's article from the Item of Interest series told the story of an inspection at St Giles Secondary Modern School in 1952. The November Picture of the Month features one of its pupils, Kenneth Gordon Sylvester, who was a student at the School from 1942 to 1946. Probably aged 14, and in his final year, Kenneth had won the Art Prize for his 'Painted Stallion'.

Sadly Kenneth passed away several years ago, but the photograph was kindly donated to the Garton Archive by his widow, Christine Sylvester, who was a former pupil at Lincoln Christ's Hospital Girls' High School, and the indefatigable secretary of the School's Old Girls' Association for many years.

Kenneth was at the School during the Second World War, when times were hard, and many teachers were away fighting for King and Country. The Log Book for the period recorded some of the events that took place at the time, many of which were war-related. For example, 'fire-watching' took place throughout the war, and talks were given on subjects such as the dangers of unexploded bombs. Just before Christmas in 1942 a 'Pound Day' raised seven pounds and five shillings and bags of groceries in a collection for the Red Cross and Prisoners of War.

Even during the war there were visits to the School, including one by Chaplain Johnstone of the US Army, who spoke at an assembly on American life, one of many lectures by visiting speakers on a variety of subjects. There were cultural events, too. For example, three plays produced by Mr Sands were performed in the hall, including the Trial Scene from 'The Merchant of Venice'. Several plays were produced at the School over the years, including scenes from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

There were two inspections during Kenneth's time at the School. School dinners were inspected by Mr Phillips HMI and representatives of the Board of Education

and Ministry of Food. Later, the practical block and some classrooms were inspected by the Minister of Education, other MPs, HMI and representatives of the Education Committee and teachers' organisations.

Curiously, Inspector Ward of the Special Police investigated a theft from the craftwork room, and Miss Stuart, educational psychologist, visited the School and tested two boys. No connection between the two visits was either implied or inferred!

In 1945 the School was closed for two days for the Victory celebrations, and in 1947 the whole School travelled by bus to Carholme Road to witness the arrival of the Royal Party in Lincoln. Between those momentous events Mr Brook and four senior pupils attended the Cathedral for the official return of the Magna Carta from New York, where it had been housed during the war after being exhibited there in 1938.

One key event during the time when Kenneth was a pupil was the re-opening of the School, originally known as the St Giles Council School, as the St Giles Secondary Modern School, as a result of recommendations in the ground-breaking 1944 Education Act.

Continuing the St Giles theme over twenty years later, Mr John Maddison has sent me a photograph (shown below) of the St Giles Secondary Modern School Second Eleven in 1965-66, the year England won the World Cup of course! John is the teacher in the top left-hand corner, but no other names have been provided.



**Peter Harrod  
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