

Schools of Scotland—VII

WHITEHILL IS STILL AIMING HIGH

From OUR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

As befits a school with the motto "Altiora peto," standards are high at Whitehill Secondary, opened in Dennistoun, Glasgow, in 1891. Although the buildings may be outdated, the curriculum is modern, and few schools of its kind can equal Whitehill's academic achievements.

IF the shade of James Henderson, the first head master of Whitehill, or that of the great Fergus Smith who is still, 40 years after he retired, remembered, were to visit Whitehill School to-day, little change would be found—all too little change.

The main block of the school still stands in red freestone much as it was when the school was opened by Sir John Neilson Cuthbertson in 1891. It is a mark of rising costs that the site then cost £2205 and the building cost about £15,050.

It was a fee-paying school, for the days of free secondary education had not arrived and pupils were charged from 3s to 15s a quarter. There was no difficulty in filling it for it had 828 pupils in 1892 and reached the 1000 mark four years later. It speedily made a place for itself in the academic world and by 1896 had won places in the Glasgow University bursary competition.

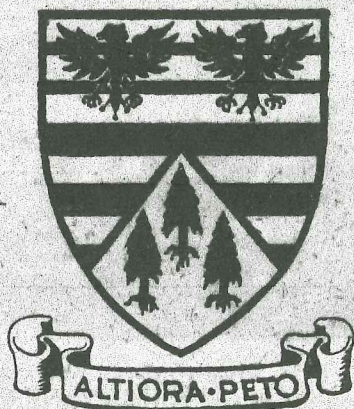
Justly Proud

The school is justly proud of the record of Snell Exhibitioners who have come from Whitehill. It has given a constant stream of men and women to the professional, industrial, and commercial life of the country.

The first winner of the dux prize, instituted in memory of the first head master, James Henderson, was James Porter, who became rector of Irvine Royal Academy. In the list on the school wall one sees the name of James Scotland, who is now principal of Aberdeen College of Education.

It has provided ministers and doctors, teachers and civil servants. Professor J. H. Baxter of the Chair of Ecclesiastical History at St Andrews, Sir Eric Bowyer, the distinguished civil servant; Mrs Jean Roberts, the present Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Sir David Anderson, formerly Director of the Royal College of Science and Technology, are among the former pupils and behind them are many only slightly less illustrious names.

It must be admitted that the impression created by the buildings is disappointing. A new school was scheduled and approved for 1939 but the war meant its abandonment, though apparently the plans still hang around somewhere and some people believe the new school was



plans. And that is the only place the swimming pool is.

There have been few changes to the buildings beyond the re-wiring. Behind the school is the block familiarly known to generations as the annexe. It began life as a ward in Yorkhill Hospital in the First World War and was re-erected behind the school in 1921 to provide temporary accommodation for four or five years.

It still stands and in it the pupils freeze in winter and fry in the summer. The head master, Mr James Walker, ruefully reports from personal inspection that the timbers beneath it are still sound.

The old ash pitch has, however, been transformed into a modern field that is suitable for games all the year round. The past energy and initiative of the school's friends and former pupils has provided a fine set of playing fields at Craigend, which once stood miles deep in the country, inaccessible except on foot but now in the heart of new housing. This has eased the transport problem but it has cost £2500 worth of new fencing to protect the ground.

Library

Here and there little changes can be pointed out that try to bring a more up-to-date look to the school. The girls' gymnasium has a pleasant changing room and showers where there used to be a rather long overhanging gallery. Two of the classrooms have been turned into a library which is serviceable enough but is far from adequate.

The art room has been considerably changed both by the removal of the dreary old furniture, but even more by the opening of three windows into what was a blank wall. The

Miss Mary Bell, a member of the staff then and a former Herkless Scholar, had a qualification in Russian and was only too happy to start a course.

That boy is now in teacher training at Jordanhill. Since then the teaching of Russian has been introduced as a systematic part of the curriculum and there is a teacher in charge.

The old pattern of the abler pupil attempting the bursary examination is passing and more and more pupils are looking towards the Royal College of Science and Technology either as ordinary students or student apprentices with such firms as Colvilles or Stewarts and Lloyds. It has still strength, however, as was seen in the number of successes the school had three years ago in the bursary competition.

The war memorial, with its quotation from Samson Agonistes, is an adequate tribute to the fact that Whitehill has produced its share of those who have served in the armed forces in time of war. It was in the past unusual, however, for a boy to enter the Regular forces except perhaps as a medical officer.

Cadet of Honour

Recently, however, John Edgar asked permission to sit an Army examination and was admitted from it to Welbeck College where he was Cadet of Honour. From there he went to Sandhurst and is now commissioned in the Royal Corps of Signals. It may be that instances like this reveal a changing social pattern.

Technical subjects now have their place in the modern Whitehill. Unfortunately the lack of accommodation means that they have to be housed elsewhere under a principal teacher who is sited in Onslow School nearby. The technical course proper starts in the third year and candidates are presented for the leaving certificate. Because of the same lack of room it is not possible to provide a full homecraft course, and only dress and design are in the curriculum.

A new assembly hall is badly needed for Whitehill. The weekly school service in Rutherford Church means much in itself but it is not enough to give the school the feeling of unity that it should have. Soon, perhaps, the difficulties in connection with this may be resolved if the negotiations over the use of the former Regent Place Church succeed. Additional facilities are also needed for physical