



## A History of Cheadle Hulme School 1855-1955

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### *Extract from Chapter XII, The Old Waconians' Association*

"The early minute books of the Old Boys' Association were unfortunately destroyed in the Manchester blitz and factual information about the years previous to 1920 has not been easy to come by.

The Old Boys' Association was founded at a meeting in the Manchester Athenaeum Club in the early winter of 1892. It was decided to hold an annual dinner and this remained the outstanding function of the year. The first dinner was held at the Wellington Hotel, Manchester, and about twenty Old Boys assembled; in later years at the Grand Hotel there was an average of a hundred.

In ten years the Association grew to a membership of three hundred; social functions were held at Hulme Town Hall.

The first Chairman was Mr Matthew Limbert, succeeded by Mr. A.S. Brewis, Mr J.D. Pinnington and Mr. J.C. Buckley.

During Mr. Buckley's chairmanship there was considerable activity. A Debating Society met at 29, Princess Street; from this sprang a Shakespearean Reading Society which evolved into the "As You Like It" Shakespeare Society and plays were produced, the Old Girls' Association assisting. In 1911, a Lacrosse Club was founded, an important development which is noticed separately.

From the very first, two annual functions held at Cheadle Hulme established a close link between the Association and the School; the Summer Reunion, at which sports were arranged and prizes awarded, and the Christmas Party held on the last Saturday of the Autumn Term.

From 1921 the story is well documented. From 1926 onwards the annual report was published in the *Waconian*, which thus became the official organ of the Associations.

In 1921 there were fifteen District Representatives, the districts including Liverpool and London. A Benevolent Fund had clearly been in existence for some time, to which apparently a proportion of the income from subscriptions was allotted.

Difficult times seem to have been encountered in the 'twenties, the number of subscribing members recorded in 1926 was under a hundred. However in the following year a Junior Section came in to being to cater for the interests of the younger Old Scholars and to bridge the gap between them and the older members. By 1932 the Junior Section had over a hundred members and the Association could report "an entirely successful year both socially and financially".

During the thirties the character of the Summer Reunion changed from a Sports Day to a Social Gathering centring round the Cricket and Tennis Matches and with a dance in the evening. Prizes were still awarded by Old Scholars for cricket – bowling, batting and fielding and a hockey stick and tennis racquet for the girls. The date of the Winter Reunion was altered to November and was not revived until after the war.

Old Scholars joined in debates at School and in the meetings of the League of Nations Union; in 1935 Old Scholars' Sunday was instituted and became an annual fixture for the last Sunday in September. In 1937 the Educational Fund was founded and was soon in a position to make grants to help leavers in their further education.



It is perhaps convenient here to give some account of the Old Girls' Association before coming to the amalgamation of the two Associations in 1953. On July 16, 1897, at 29 Princes Street, Manchester, a meeting of seventeen Old Girls decided to form an Association to promote a spirit of friendship among Old Scholars and to further the interests of the Schools. Old Scholars abroad and "Lady Teachers" were eligible for Honorary Membership. The two Associations were in close collaboration from the first and regularly appointed a joint Social Committee to make arrangements for social events, notably the Summer Reunion at Cheadle Hulme and early dances in Manchester.

In the early days the Old Girls had social meetings monthly. On one occasion seventy-four members attended an At Home at the Y.M.C.A., Manchester. There was a cycle-club and suggestions of joint runs with the Old Boys but the latter's habit of having meals at public houses was deprecated. In 1902 it was possible to make £2 11s 3d. profit on a Social at a charge of 1/3 per head. The Old Girls did the catering but took only a third of the profits. Some years later a profit of 5d. was divided 3 ¼ d-1 ½ d.

The 1903 minutes give insight into the working of the Summer Reunion. Six races were arranged for boys and four for girls. Prizes were bought to the value of £2 13s. 4d. for boys and 30/- for girls. There was a hockey-stick presentation for the girls. There are regular records of gifts to the girls: cricket gear, netball apparatus and books.

An Old Girls' Hockey Club was founded in 1921. In its second season it joined the Sixth Division of the North of England Hockey League, in 1924-25 the Club rose to the Fifth and in 1932-33 to the Third Division. In 1933-34 the championship of Division III was won and promotion to the Second Division. The following season saw an unfortunate collapse due apparently to the withdrawal of a number of members and the Club disbanded. The Club was revived in 1939 and struggled gallantly against war-time conditions for several seasons; it was again revived in 1951-2, and is now in the First Division of the Stockport and District Women's Hockey League. The very high standard of hockey at School since the war gives every hope that this persistence will result in the establishment of a strong and prosperous club.

Apart from games and the annual dinner all the major activities, Educational Fund, Waconian Memorial Fund, reunions and dances have been equally the concern of both Associations. The formal amalgamation in 1953 with a joint committee and officers must have saved the secretaries much correspondence and negotiation. Both Associations successfully weathered a difficult period during the thirties when the rapidly increasing day-scholar element at School tended to shift the centre of gravity from Manchester to Cheadle Hulme. In recognition of this a number of social events and a regular club-night were arranged to take place in Cheadle Hulme. In 1949 a dinner-dance celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Old Girls (the circumstances of 1947 made the postponement inevitable), in 1952 the Diamond Jubilee Dinner of the Old Boys was honoured by the presence of the Lord Mayor of Manchester.

Mention has been made of the fine record of Old Scholars in the two world wars and of the designing and dedication of the Sundial and of the Plaque in the Holden Hall that commemorate those who lost their lives.

There is every promise of a bright future for the Association; the Memorial Fund is growing steadily. The ties between the School and the Associations have never been closer, it is usual for 100% of leavers to become members. A Press-correspondent keeps the *Waconian* in touch with Old Scholars' news. There is a flourishing Theatre-evening Group and the June, 1954, issue speaks of the formation of a cricket club.



Lacrosse was played at the School at Cheadle Hulme from very early days and in 1911 a group of Old Boys who had been meeting regularly for practice decided to suggest to the Old Boys' Association the formation of a Club. The Club was duly founded under the name of The Manchester Wacoboys Lacrosse Club and in the season 1911-1912 played in the fourth division of the North of England League for First Teams.

After the 1914-18 war the Club appears to have played in the Second Division and in the season 1923-24 won promotion to the First Division, where they remained for two seasons. In 1925-26 the "A" Team won the Championship of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the "A" teams, the first of many honours to fall to the Club. Meanwhile, a number of boys were now staying at School till eighteen or over and under able coaching a powerful school team was being built up. A stream of skilled recruits thus became available, some of whom were good enough to go straight into the first XII. Results soon became manifest and the Club, now The Old Waconians Lacrosse Club, became one of the strongest in English lacrosse. In 1930-31 the Junior Flags were won and in the following season the first XII won promotion to the First Division where they remained. The "A" team also won promotion- to the First Division of the "A" teams league.

In 1931-32 came the first of the "representative" honours: W.L. Clarke was chosen for Lancashire. In 1932-33 Clarke and R.A. Williams played for Lancashire, and Clarke for the North of England. Thenceforward the Lancashire, North and England teams were seldom or never without a contingent of Waconians; J Beebee captained Lancashire, J.I. Whitehead, rather later, captained Lancashire and the North, and the England XII at the Olympic Games. More recently Brian Makin has captained Lancashire.

In 1936-37 the "A" team won the championship of the reconstituted North of England League and the next year saw the beginning of a remarkable series of successes by the first team. In 1937-38, 1938-39 they won the Senior Flags, the Referees Trophy and the Iroquois Cup, the last named carrying the title of English Champions. The Club managed to keep alive during the war, using the School ground and for a time collaborating with Old Stopfordians. In 1946-47 two full teams were fielded and enjoyed a remarkable season winning the First Division Championship and the Lancashire Senior Cup in addition to honours previously held, while the "A" team won the Lancashire Junior Cup. The 1948-49 season saw a repetition of these successes and an added trophy in the "Birch Cup" for a Six a Side competition. The First Division Championship was won again in 1948-49, and the Senior Flags for three years in succession.

During these years Waconians figured largely in representative teams; in 1947-48 six of their players were selected both for the North of England and for Lancashire; in the England Team chosen for the Olympic Games there were no fewer than seven Waconians.

In 1937-38 for the first time a match was played on the School ground in which the First team was opposed by a team of Old Waconians playing for other clubs, the "Rebels". Since then, this most successful fixture has been repeated annually, except for some of the war years, and has proved most successful in raising money in the early years for the Education Fund and more recently for the Waconian Memorial Fund."