

School

Joanne Stidwill
Former pupil,
Public High School
for Girls

If the question was put to me, "If you had a choice would you leave school now or later?", my immediate answer would be, "Now, I wouldn't stay here a minute longer than I had to", but after a few moments my opinion would probably change, because if there wasn't any school, where would we all be? Nearly the whole of the population of the world would be unable to read, write, or add up a simple sum of $2 + 3$ and although we can't think so at this moment, we are all benefiting from it.

I find school very boring half the time, but on the other hand I can find it equally as interesting.

School is very strenuous at times and as a 4th year, I know that in a few months' time, I'm going to be taking mock 'O' levels and C.S.E.s and to achieve the satisfaction of passing them, I am, as many other girls are, willing to spend time doing thorough revision. This is where the teachers of my school help, most pupils of other schools, and probably my school too, think that the teachers have nothing else to do but make sure we know everything about English, physics, and French, etc., but in fact, they are as worried and anxious as us about the 'O' levels and C.S.E.s, and it probably gives them a satisfaction of knowing that that pupil has benefited because of her/him.

My maths teacher, Mrs Higman, spends a great deal of her time in our lessons drumming facts about 'the outside world' and how to handle it, for example, if she came into the classroom to hear us talking about anything but maths, she would stand with her hands on her hips and say: "Oh, so you'd all rather talk than pass your exams, eh!"

At that point everyone would shut-up, knowing we were all heading for a lecture on our life's prospects and it would be "Oh, here we go again!", but afterwards, I bet each individual would probably, like me, think, "Well, she's right, you know!"

It's difficult to say that my schooling has been an utter flop because although it could be unbearably hard, there was always a way of understanding, even if everyone was puzzled by the way that you had personally figured it out. At one time of my school life, it seemed that I couldn't do anything, it was like a maze, knowing you could never get out, but as I grew older I got over that and I had the ability to figure things out for myself and also knowing that if I put my mind to it, I could do it.

The fact that our school is closing in 1985 meant that many of our previous teachers would be leaving and substitute teachers coming in for the last few months with us. This is quite hard on us, because although we understand that they must find other jobs, we have to put up with chopping and changing with teachers, e.g. I have had 4 different French teachers since the first year, and just as we settled down to our French C.S.E. coursework, the teacher we had just got used to left for another school leaving us with another teacher, she is very highly educated and a good teacher, so I wouldn't want to degrade her in that way, but we are finding it quite hard to get used to her because she teaches so differently. This has happened quite a few times but there is nothing we can really do about it.

The rules of our school, I reckon, are a bit pathetic because we are restricted to the playground for the whole 1 hour and ten minutes of our lunch break, when the boys have permission to go out. Another thing I totally disagree with is rules about our hair, we should be able to do anything we like with it, but no, even a blonde fringe is questioned for no reason at all. When we have questioned the teachers about why we can't do this and why we can't do that, the reply is, "The school has had these rules for a long time, so you can't expect the board to change them now!" but why shouldn't they; the world was a different place 30, 40 years ago.

In my opinion school will always be important to me because it prepares us for the rest of our lives.