

# From the Archives

David Amdurer, Learning Resource Centre (Library) Manager reports the following correspondence regarding archive material.

Jill Bryant's father attended the school in the early 1900s and she requested any photographs of the cape he would have worn, as she wanted to weave something similar.

We received a request for assistance from a woman investigating the history of her grandfather and his sister, who attended the school in the 1890s. We were able to confirm they both attended the school and supply a copy of their register entries to the school but no further information was available.

Dr Tony Talburt made enquiries regarding Andrew Wilson. We supplied two photographs to Dr Talburt, who also bought a copy of The Crossley Heath School book.

We have received several requests from Malachi O'Doherty and Swami Narasimhananda, regarding any information on Mary and Margaret Noble, or as Margaret became known, Sister Nivedita. We supplied several photographs and two articles from The Crossleyan. The following is an extract from The Crossleyan, January 1912:

**Margaret Noble**  
**A Tribute to a Remarkable Career**  
(By S.K. Ratcliffe)

"News comes by a private cablegram from Darjeeling, in the Himalayas, that Miss Margaret Noble (known throughout India as Sister Nivedita) died there a few days ago, after a short illness. The announcement will bring profound grief to a large number of



Margaret Noble

English and American people, to whom Miss Noble was known alike by her books and her vivid personality. It would be true to say that no English-woman has ever made for herself a similar place in the affections of the Indian people, or has tried to do the work to which she put her hand.

Irish by birth and family, the daughter of a Nonconformist minister, Margaret Noble was known in London twenty years ago as perhaps the most eager and brilliant member of a group of new educationalists who among other things founded the Sesame Club. In the middle of the nineties she met the Swami Vivekananda, the first real missionary of Indian religion in the West. He had made a dramatic appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions two years before, had been astonishingly successful in his tour of the United States, and in 1895 was lecturing in London.

Margaret Noble became the most devoted of his followers, and in 1898 she went out to India to assist in the educational work of the Ramakrishna

Brotherhood, of which Vivekananda was the head. She became, under the name of Sister Nivedita, an unattached member of the order, and began in her small house in Northern Calcutta, a school for Hindu girls and classes for Hindu women – her aim being to provide modernised instruction on the firm basis of Eastern feeling and ideals. She lived with extreme simplicity entirely among Indians. Her name became known far and wide; there were few Indians of distinction unknown to her; she identified herself with their culture and thoughts, and as a consequence her influence was incalculable. To Young Bengal she was an inspiration, for there can be no doubt it was through her words, spoken and written, that the ideal of Indian nationality grew to be a living and absorbing force.

Not on its metaphysical side, but in its vital social relations, Margaret Noble was a constant and intense student of Indian thought. Some years ago she spoke frequently to audiences large and small in many cities of India, and her power of speech was a wonderful thing. In later years, when fever had destroyed her fine physique, she was content to use her pen – for the most part in the Indian monthly reviews. To readers in the West she is known chiefly through her most ambitious book, "The Web of Indian Life" (which by no means reveals her full powers), or through the "Cradle Tales of Hinduism", published three years ago. She contributed a paper on "The Present Position of Woman" to the proceedings of the Universal Races Congress held in London last July. She was forty-four years of age, and to many of us her death means the passing of a rare intelligence, and of a dauntless and most beautiful soul."

## My Pilgrimage to France and Flanders with Toc H

(From the magazine of May 1923)

We left Halifax at 7.13 a.m. on Saturday, 23rd March 1923. We had a very pleasant journey to London, arriving there at 12.20 p.m. The time we had to spare was spent in seeing some of the places of interest. Our first visit was to the Tower. After leaving there we took the 'bus to Westminster, where we sat for a while in the gardens which join the Houses of Parliament. After our rest, we went to Westminster Cathedral (R.C.). After supper, we joined the remainder of the party, numbering almost a thousand, from all parts of the British Isles. Then we were divided into groups (the reason for this was because of the various cemeteries that were being visited). This being finished, we entrained for Folkestone, two special trains being used. After we arrived at Folkestone, we embarked on the Engadine for Calais, arriving there at 3.45 a.m. on Palm Sunday. The next thing was breakfast. Afterwards we left for Abeele, arriving there at 9.45 a.m. From there we went, in every available motor-car, to Lijessenthock Cemetery, where a special service was held. After service, we were taken in charas to our various cemeteries.

**The one I visited was Brandhock Military Cemetery, where my daddy is buried.** Afterwards we went to Ypres, and saw the ruins. After supper we entrained for Calais, arriving there at 2.30 a.m. on Monday. Then we crossed the Channel, arriving in London again, tired and weary, at 7 a.m. After breakfast we went to Westminster Abbey, and saw the Unknown Soldier's Grave, and the Cenotaph at Whitehall. We then left London for home by the 1.50 p.m. train, arriving at Halifax at 6.45 p.m., after a week-end which will always remain fresh in my memory.

ETHEL WRAY  
(aged 12)

# The Whitmore Family

## At Crossley and Porter Schools

The picture of Reginald Choveaux Whitmore's examination paper in The Crossleyan 2014 prompted me to contact my cousin in Cairns, Australia. We have pieced together a little more information about the members of her family who were pupils at the school.

Their father, John Whitmore was a general practitioner in Oldham. He unfortunately died in 1910, leaving his widow with seven young children. The oldest, Kathleen aged 10 and her brother Reginald were packed off to Crossley's and two other siblings, Mildred and Nancy went there when they reached an appropriate age some years later. Reginald had been saddled with his granny's name to keep the family name alive. The oldest boy, John had the middle name 'Crossley', although in fact he did not go to Crossley's and he and two older sisters probably went to a different school. The Crossley family were good friends of the Whitmores and became benefactors of the family in various ways when their father died. They may have helped to get John through medical school but he sadly died of a heart condition at the age of 23 at about the time he would have been expected to qualify.

Equally tragic was the death of his sister Mildred at the school at the age of 13 in unusual circumstances. She was sucking the end of a pencil when another girl accidentally jogged her arm and the pencil lead broke off in her gum. A little time later one of Mildred's friends told the matron that Mildred had a very sore mouth and her gum was turning black. The doctor was told but dismissed it as a stupid story from a schoolchild and didn't follow it up at once. Mildred died soon after from septicaemia. In the days before antibiotics she might not have survived anyway but it certainly appears that there was serious negligence on the part of the doctor. No one in the family ever said whether any action was taken.

On the current school website is a piece about 23 letters found stashed away under the floor of a former pantry over the old boot room. They were discovered during renovations in 2000 and date from the 1920s. There was no easy means of communication between the girls and boys in those days nor indeed until the last war, when joint mathematics and science lessons for sixth formers were arranged for those of us who needed more than biology and basic maths to get to university.

Many pupils were referred to in the letters and it appeared that they were delivered by go-betweens. One of the participants in this unofficial postal system was named as Nancy Whitmore! She never told us about that but as she had remained at school after her sister's death there can have been no recriminations over the earlier accident.

LAYINKA SWINBURNE  
(née GLADSTONE)