

Featured Accession, November 2010

Acc 9626

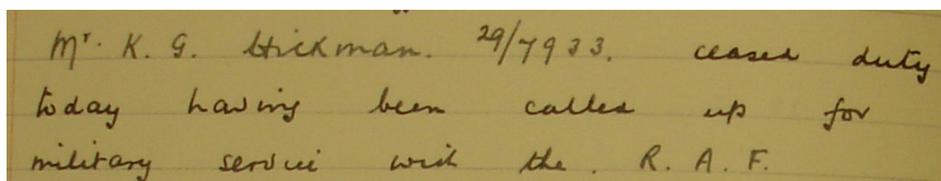
This month's featured record is a Logbook from Brockmoor Primary School (Acc. 9626). This item was received with five other logbooks: two from Brockmoor Infants School (S/BRO/BI) and four from the Primary School (S/BRO/BJM), dating from 1930 – 1998, which fill a gap in the records already held at DALHS.

Generally beginning in the 1870s, school log books maintain a day-to-day record of what happened at the school. They are very confidential documents, written by the head teacher, and include all sorts of information as the contents of a logbook were not specified, meaning that events from the mundane to the extraordinary can be found within. A typical entry would record any notable event often including things such as absenteeism of both children and staff (and the cause for this); difficulties with pupils (including misbehaviour and corporal punishment – often recorded separately in a punishment book); visits to the school by inspectors and/or local dignitaries; social events; seasonal activities and trips; and fund raising events.



Above – Three logbooks from Brockmoor Primary School (Acc 9626).

National events that had an impact on the running of the school, such as the war, were also recorded. In an entry dated 8th October 1941 we see that 'Mr. K. G. Hickman 29/7933 ceased duty today having been called up for military service with the R.A.F.' and the celebrations following the end of the war can also be distilled through Brockmoor's logbooks: 'School closed today & tomorrow for Victory in Europe Day' is recorded by the entry for 8th May 1945. But these four logbooks are also particularly interesting as they detail the school's transition from Brockmoor Junior Mixed School, to Brockmoor Middle School, and finally into Brockmoor Primary School.



Left – Extract from Brockmoor Primary School logbook, 1930 – 1952 (Acc 9626).

Despite the fact that logbooks were meant to be neutral documents, many are much more personal, almost being treated as diaries or journals by the head teacher. For this reason, and the confidential nature of the information they record, logbooks are subject to the Data Protection Act (DPA), meaning that they are closed to general access for 95 years. In the case of Brockmoor Primary School, this means that the earliest logbook (1930-1952) is closed until 1st January 2047, whilst its most recent logbook (1989-1998) will not be fully open until 1st January 2093!

Whilst the content and quality of an entry in a logbook varies from school to school, and head teacher to head teacher, school logbooks can be thoroughly engrossing and particularly revealing about the state of education and the curriculum in general, as well as about their school.

DALHS holds a number of school collections from across the Borough. Other records that can typically be found include: Admission and Discharge Registers (subject to DPA); Manager's Minutes; Building records and Photographs. School records can be tricky to negotiate, due to their sensitive nature, but they can offer a fascinating insight into education and society from the late 19th century to today.