

December 2022

BAVERSTOCK

The Magazine



Image: Ben Christie



Image: the Wolfson Archives, Library of Birmingham



The material in this Magazine about Baverstock school has been taken from public archives or has been donated or loaned to the People's Museum of Baverstock purposefully for the use of remembering, telling and sharing the story of Baverstock School.

We are grateful to everyone for their generosity and support.





Maypole School, Wolfson Archives,
Library of Birmingham

Baverstock was created from three schools, Yardley Wood, Brandwood and Maypole in a merger in 1983.

The site that finally became Baverstock was the former Maypole School in Druids Heath.



Maypole School Badge, Wolfson Archives



School Photo Karen Urwin 1974



Staff photo 1981, Wolfson Archives,
Library of Birmingham

“They originally wanted to call it ‘The Downlands, because of Downlands Road, but Roger (Perks) thought it wasn’t a good idea so we ended up with Baverstock, which he liked better. He thought Downlands was a bit too negative.”

Mary Small

Maypole School Football Team circa
1972/3, Mark Allen





Roger Perks was appointed Head of this new school.

Roger Perk's ambition was: equal educational opportunities to all children, whatever their ability or background.

The school motto was **'Strive to Succeed'** and the belief was every child could succeed, and that learning is the golden key that unlocks the future.

Roger appointed two Deputy Heads, Rick Coleman and Mary Small.

"It started out with the three of us, Roger, Rick & I, then there was the senior management which made seven and we used to call ourselves 'The Magnificent Seven', we had a laugh."

Mary Small



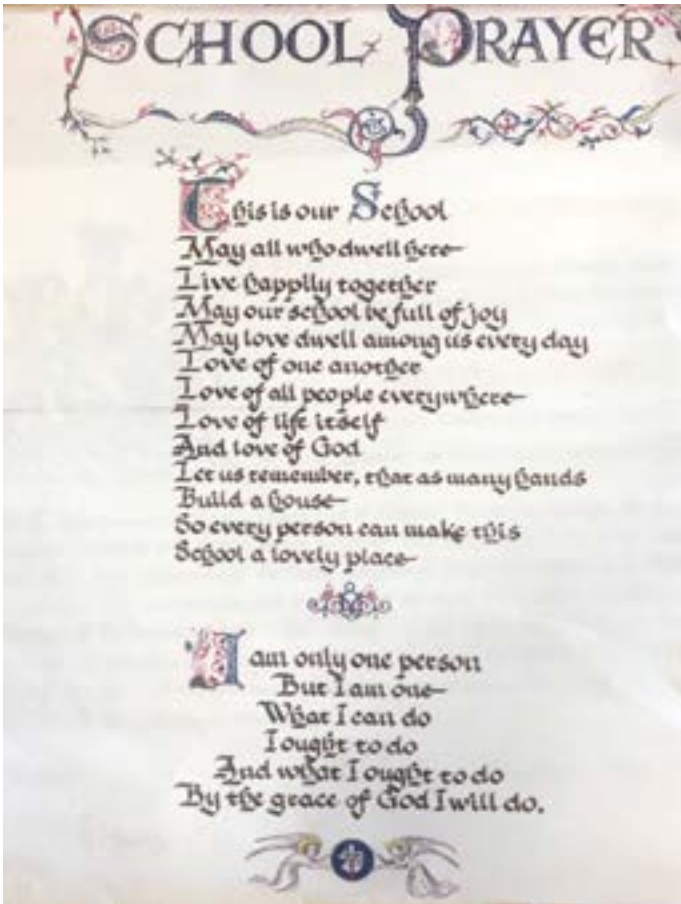


"It was a buzz that he did create – but he had a staff team, senior team, Mary Small, Pat McDonald, Andrew Laing, Roy Hamer, and then, subsequent ones as well were just as first rate."
Siôr Coleman

"One of the first things that he would say to us - he said it at the beginning of each year - 'We're on a mission'."
Siôr Coleman

"Roger was a maverick. He put the children 1st, 2nd and 3rd. He led from the front and supported staff and children. He was an inspiration".
Sandra Howes,
Chair of Governors

THE BAVERSTOCK FAMILY



“It was a family, a Baverstock family. I think that’s what it was. You were there to support as a family.”

Fiona Petrucke

“It was a school that was very much involved in its community. One of the first things I did was organise the harvest festival and I reckon we got about £5000 worth of food in, which we distributed to people in need. We had elderly people who came in for lunch every Friday and the kids helped serve them. But more importantly than that they chatted with them and that was great. I think Roger Perks had a very clear view of the school as a school that worked for its community.”

Siôr Coleman

“The local community owns this school and the knock on effect of the school’s success sends ripples through every part of life round here.”

Roger Perks





Bill Evans, chair of governors circa 1980's & 90's

"Bill Evans, he was brilliant, very down to earth. He worked a lot with me because again he was pastoral." **Mary Small**

The Bill Evans Centre was built and opened in 2000.



"Rick Coleman the other deputy took the morning briefing, so he'd tell us what we were doing for the day. But we never left the room without a joke at the end, so everybody went out laughing or smiling, so you got a good start with the children everyday." **Mary Small**



"It was a caring school. The staff all worked together. We were a very friendly staff. There wasn't really a hierarchy as such, there was just us, Baverstock people." **Mary Small**

"School was a happy place, it was a looked after place, within the area." **Fiona Petrucke**



"I used to call them Pinky & Perky, and they took it very well! You could have a joke."

Irene Osbourne, School Cook



"I wouldn't have had my children go anywhere else." **Bob Burns, former caretaker**



"Head of year Roger Burr was mad as a box of frogs, and it was great. If you forgot your tie he had an outlandish collection of ties which you had to wear." **Siôr Coleman**



Rugby Shirt courtesy of Dot Forster

"We were fairly strict, that was laid down at the start, for the parents as well as for the children, as to what was expected. Like full uniform, because we felt it didn't put the haves and the have nots. On occasion when we did a free (non-uniform) day to raise money, they could come in what they liked, and the ones that didn't have things, they just didn't turn up for school that day. We knew that this was happening, and so having a uniform was the best idea.

We had the most common colour that we could find, navy blue. The school tie - they had a competition with the kids at the school - and we chose the one that had the special badge that had the book of learning on it. The head always wore the uniform. He liked to".

Mary Small

"You were pulled up if you didn't have your uniform, like if you was missing a tie, blazer, a jumper or something, you weren't allowed to wear trainers, no baseball caps, even haircuts, body jewellery, make up, you weren't allowed to have shaved heads, it was strict, but it was how to present yourself. Mr Perks, one of his main goals was you're representing the school when you're not in it, so when you're out of it you are a representation of that school and it was important to him that everyone was smart."

Ricky Wallace

"The boys' kit was yellow and black like Wolverhampton Wanderers. Roger was a Wolves fan. 'Roger wrote the Wolves fan song in the 1960's!'"

Siôr Coleman



Baverstock Sports College School Tie
Baverstock Grant Maintained School Tie
Ties courtesy of Dot Forster



Image: Ben Christie

GOING GRANT MAINTAINED



In 1989 the opportunity to move away from local authority control and become Grant Maintained presented itself. Baverstock benefitted enormously from this. It could repair its buildings, build new ones, create new facilities, and have more staff. Baverstock was the first school in Birmingham to become grant maintained and remained as such until 1998 when New Labour abolished GM schools.

“There were a lot of improvements, we had much more control over the premises, Pretty much all the windows were replaced. We extended some of the existing plant, but we also built the Bill Evans Centre which replaced some temporary and very worn out hubs. The décor was also a reflection of the aspirational things that Roger Perks was trying to give. We had very poor playing fields and the Astro turf came after a few years.”

Siôr Coleman



A CLASS APART

Head tells how his opt-out school has beaten crisis

NAMES that thousands of schools are having to see teachers has left headmaster Roger Parks stunned. His state comprehensive, Baverstock GS School in Sighthelm, has TAKEN ON 12 extra teachers over six years and is keeping them all. The reason is that the school is Grant Maintained and has

opted out of having their budget run by the local council. Roger controls £2million allocated by central government to run the 1,300-pupil comprehensive, which takes 11 to 13-year-olds from a nearby estate. Here he reveals how his school has escaped the budget cuts that are crippling schools all over England and Wales.



PERKS OF THE JOB... headmaster Roger with his pupils

SIX YEARS ago Baverstock School was demoralised and starved of cash.

It was rundown and neglected by Labour-run Birmingham city council.

The council had spent so little on upkeep that the premises were literally falling down around our ears.

We had 27 loan computers and the few textbooks we could afford were battered and held together with Sellotape.

Then, we were only allowed 11 teachers and when a vacancy came up we were given a teacher from a post office.

Things were so bad that when you would want a French teacher and you would get someone whose speciality was woodwork.

In 1980 Baverstock was one of the first schools in Britain to go Grant Maintained, opting out of council control.

We quickly discovered by handling our own budget,

Interview by MIKE RIDLEY

which came direct from Whitehall, we could buy materials and had it up to half the price that the council could supply them.

Today we have seven brand-new classrooms, 180 computers and every pupil has a full set of brand new text books.

And instead of having to cut teachers we actually have 12 staff for more than the local authority would have allowed.

Keen

What many councils have forgotten is that the best thing you can do for any pupil is to give them teachers bursting with enthusiasm and ideas.

In fact, our staff are so keen you can't get a spare in the car park at night a block in the morning, or here before school officially starts. Many are still here at 7am.

Now, when a vacancy comes up we advertise all over the country to find teachers who share our enthusiasm. And it

is paying off for our kids. Before, only six per cent of the school's youngsters got A to C grades at GCSE.

Today one in three - that's 23 per cent - get top grades and we take boys and girls of all abilities.

Two children fight for every one of the 240 first year places. And every place is filled throughout the school.

We have even opened a sixth form, which the council would not have allowed us.

Most companies don't take young people on until they are 15. Now the kids have a good chance of getting a job because they take A-levels.

Last summer the A-level pass rate was 12 per cent. This year I expect it to be higher.

The school used to be the education authority's last outpost. Today it is the centre of the community. Parents' night is always a full house.

When we voted to go Grant Maintained, the council claimed we would neglect

children with learning difficulties.

But, in fact, because we manage our budget so well, we have been able to take on two extra staff who spend their whole time teaching children with problems one-to-one.

It is expensive but it pays off. Instead of feeling they are no-hopers, these children now have pride and self-confidence.

Champions

Sport is not neglected either. By managing our money we can afford to offer pupils every sport possible - even powerlifting. And our sports teams are all local, regional or even national champions.

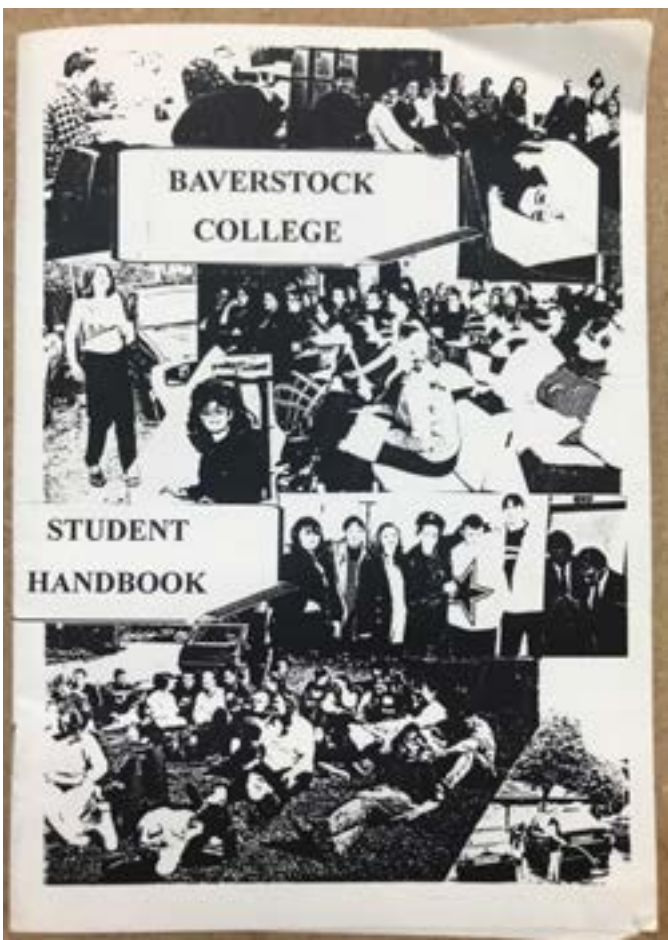
I feel sorry for people at local authority schools where teachers are being made redundant.

But I'm even more worried that Labour's education spokesman David Blunkett is ready to return Grant Maintained schools like ours to council control.

The Sixth form centre was opened by John Major during the 1992 election campaign. The sixth form proposal was initially blocked by Birmingham City Council. This led to far more pupils being able to go onto higher education.

"Roger didn't see that the postcode should be an impediment to pupils' chances of success. That led us to the possibility of having a sixth form, when the sixth form first came we had roughly 24 % of kids going on to post 16 education and it became over 70%, so that was a significant change for what was happening here."


Siôr Coleman





Baverstock went from being under subscribed with 26 applications in 1983 to being over-subscribed 2 places to one in 1992 and by 4 places to one circa 2000. The catchment area became smaller and smaller with the school focusing on serving children from the local community.





"We made it high academic, I meet children all over the world and they've got very high jobs a lot of them, but it was based on pastoral. The whole lot was based on care of the children, not on pushing the academic."

Mary Small



"Results weren't everything

All we were bothered about, parents and staff was the kids. Because that's the main thing in a school and I think sometimes we're so pressurised to get the scores in and tick the boxes that we forget about the children and children with problems. There are problems everywhere, you've just got to see what they are and what you can do with it. That's what we did at Baverstock."

Mary Small

"It was a family school rather than simply an exam factory."

Siôr Coleman

“Everybody’s good at something – it’s up to the school to find out what it is”.

Sandra Howes, Chair of Governors



“We liked children to enjoy their education, that everyone was of equal value whether they were clever or not, there was something for every child to do and succeed in. It was a very positive school, it was what we call a ‘can do’ school. This is the way we felt about the children. We wanted them to have fun too”.

Mary Small





Artist Unknown, artwork salvaged from Baverstock after closure

“As educators they instilled an incredible amount of confidence in the youngsters. They had a phenomenal achievement rate. Youngsters went on to higher education, they got good GCSE & A Level results, they were great on the education front, they were great on the social support, they also developed a good sports and arts side, which again gave youngsters the chance to achieve, it was also an outlet for kids who were living in quite difficult circumstances, so it was like a focal point in the community”.

Steve McCabe MP

Artist Unknown, artwork salvaged from Baverstock after closure





Artist Matthew Ryan, image courtesy of Dot Forster

Artist Unknown, artwork salvaged from Baverstock after closure





Artist Unknown, artwork salvaged from Baverstock after closure

"It was a rounded school because it did everything. The priority was getting your qualifications to go on, but wasn't the most important thing. I think in today's world, it is the amount of qualifications and the level you've got and not taking into account the actual pupils, and what they are capable of and what you are training them for and doing. That's a different thing nowadays."

Fiona Petrucke

“We lifted the kids eyes up to horizons beyond just this immediate community. This is what Roger was very keen to do. He inspired us.”

Siôr Coleman



Artist Unknown, artwork salvaged from Baverstock after closure

Image: Aaron Dayman



Aaron Dayman
'A' Level Photography

"The various trips, I catered for everybody and I did that purposely. In year 7 they went to the pantomime, then that got moved to the whole school going to the cinema every Christmas, we all went to the cinema and you'd see the coaches all lined up to go. And I did the day trip in July, to Alton Towers, and I think I got to about 23 coaches, was the biggest – then I did daytrips to Disneyland Paris, I think I did 9 coaches was the largest one.

It enabled those pupils that might not have been able to afford the actual holiday I did to Disney, they were able to go on the day trip. We left Friday night, drove through the night, got to Disneyland Paris and they had the day there, then we drove all the way back – costwise to do it the cheapest and it enabled 9 coachloads, that's 450 pupils that I took to Disneyland Paris, and they all came back! And they all did as they were told.

We'd say back here 3 o'clock and they were all back on time. They were super. I did Disney trips and I did skiing trips, and I can't remember how many, and then I used to do other trips, we did coach trips, we went to Sardinia, Paris, we went to Holland, all over the place and I can't remember half of them!

At Cape Canaveral, one of the members of staff stayed up with the kids and they saw a rocket take off! We were there when a rocket took off – I think that was '93. You just hope they'll enjoy it and have a memory of it."

Fiona Petrucke



EUROPE



By Ben Taylor

It measures 106 yards long, 40 yards wide and is held in place by 22 tons of finest builder's sand.

But for the staff and 1,200 pupils of Baverstock School this green rectangular carpet is so much more than just a playing field.

It is the result of years of jumble sales, duck races, sponsored walks and even mountaineering expeditions. And it has all been built without any help from the National Lottery.

Two years ago, the *Sunday Mercury* revealed the search for how Baverstock, in Dravish Heath, Birmingham was battling its way to sporting success despite having no playing field.

All it possessed was an overgrown meadow, where towering wild grass could dwarf a first-year pupil, and we urged the Lottery to fund a new pitch.

'We had promised the children the pitch and it had become a kind of article of faith for us all'

Our pitch - as well as Baverstock's - fell on dead ends but instead of giving up the great maintained school simply rolled up its sleeves and raised the cash itself.

Today, it has a £300,000 astro-turf facility that is the envy of any sports club or school. It took five months to build, was officially opened last year, and is already in use seven days a week.

Pupils who once risked falling on unforgiving playground tarmac can now practice their skills safely.

Baverstock - recognised by former Prime Minister John Major as a beacon of sporting excellence - hasn't stopped there.

The school, which boasts champions in cross country, basketball, weight lifting and tag'o'war, has also transformed a nearby farmer's field into a full-size soccer and cricket pitch.

But it is the extraordinary sight of scores of youngsters playing happily in the shadow of the 16th Dravish Heath tower blocks which still amaze head teacher Roger Perks.

He says: "The *Mercury's* article gave us a tremendous

Playing field of dreams



GREEN GRASS OF HOME... Baverstock's new playing field, above, and before its construction head of PE Graham Davies stands in the area it now occupies, right **MAIN PICTURE:** Ed Heynard

boost and renewed our determination to realise our dream.

"But we have had to do this ourselves and the result is a credit to every pupil, parent and teacher who has worked towards it.

"When the pitch was first laid I used to stand and gaze at it out of the window, still not really convinced it was there.

"We did get help but I would estimate that we had to raise £190,000 of the cost ourselves.

"But we had promised the children the pitch and it had become a kind of article of faith for us all.

"The kids kept saying 'When are we going to have it?' and there was no way we could let them down.

"I had grown up on the Lottery and was even considering disguising myself as a London opera singer to see if that made any difference!

"Other schools use the pitch and we are ultimately hoping to erect floodlights so it can be used at night."

Head of PE Graham Davies said: "A party of eight climbed the three tallest mountains peaks in Britain - Snowdon, Ben Nevis and Scafell Pike - to raise cash.

"We also had to clear sheep from the field in Worcestershire which was as overgrown and badly kept as our old meadow!"

"Everyone helped out - from

the children to the governors. This isn't a rich area but the families are proud of the school.

"I remain convinced about the benefits of sport to young people and we want to keep the momentum going."

■ Has your school pulled out all the stops to notch up achievement despite the odds? Write and tell us of your achievement at Talkabout, Sunday Mercury, 28 Colmore Circus, Birmingham B4 6AL.



PERKS AT PITCH... Baverstock head of PE Graham Davies



Image Ben Christie

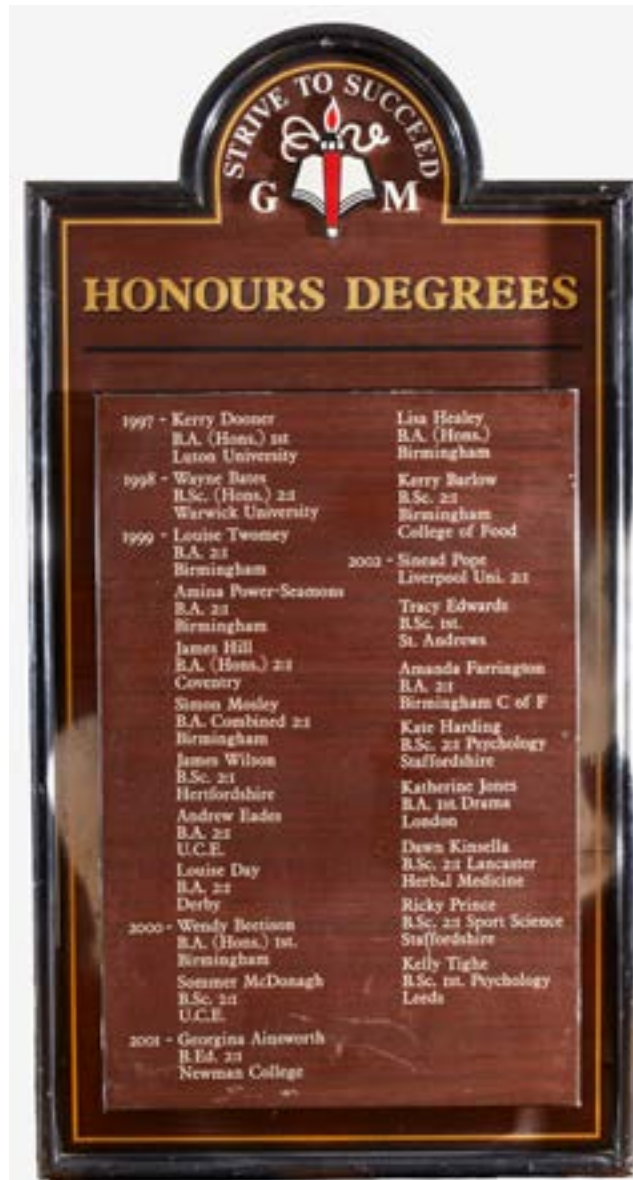


In 1997 the school managed to raise the £300,000 needed to build the astro, so the school had an amazing sport facility that made a huge difference to the school and pupils, and was available to the community.

Baverstock had established itself as a centre of sporting excellence with local, regional and national champions and later became a specialist sports college.



PREVIOUS HONOURS



Achievements were acknowledged and rewarded

"If you got 100% attendance you got a McDonalds voucher for fries. If you got it for the year you got a meal, which was big at the time, when you were kids and didn't have money."

Ricky Wallace

UNIVERSITY - 2007	Gemma McIntosh 2:1 B.Sc. Psychology Aston University	2010 Sarah Walker 2:1 BA Drama Loughborough
Simon Harrison 2:1 B.Sc. Psychology and Sport University of Hull	2008 Annabella Cleverley 2:1 BA Law De Montford	Joanna Coleman 1st BSc Biological Science Birmingham
Gemma McIntosh 2:1 B.Sc. Psychology University of Aston	Sabrina Ricketts-Long 2:1 BA Law De Montford	Matthew Thomas 2:1 Ba Business & Management Birmingham
Yvonne Woodward 1st. B.A. Childhood Studies and Education University of Leeds	2009 Tom Beynon 1st LLB Law Leicester	Samantha Selwood 2:1 BSc Psychology Newman
Tom Beynon - 2008 1st. LLB Law Leicester University	Andrea Hughes 2:1 BSc Psychology Newman	2011 Mitchell Baines 2:1 BA Business University of Derby
Andrea Hughes 2:1 B.Sc. Psychology Newman College	Holly Beedon 2:1 BA Criminology & Sociology UCE	Matthew O'Grady 2:1 BA Sport PE & Coaching University of Birmingham
Holly Beedon 2:1 Criminology and Sociology BA Honours U.C.E.	Lisa Cartwright 2:1 BSc Physiotherapy Coventry	Joseph Keenan 1st BSc (Hons) Psychology & Marketing University of Aberystwyth
Lisa Cartwright 2:1 B.Sc. Physiotherapy Coventry University	Gemma McIntosh 2:1 BSc Psychology Aston	Ryan Carter 2:1 Law University of Hull
Mark Collett 1st. B.Sc. Psychology Bangor University	Mark Collett 1st BSc Psychology Bangor	Latoya Morgan 2:1 Law University of Birmingham

"I think it was always lovely to see a pupil through, who had some difficulties, or achieve something that they've worked so hard at and to be so proud of what they've done & that was always something. So that you worked with the students to see their pleasures and them grow."

Fiona Petrucke



Clock awarded to Nicola Houghton for no lost time (100% attendance)

Object loan courtesy of Mick Houghton



Prefect Badge
loaned by Ricky Wallace

"She loved going to school. It was a happy place."

Mick Houghton

Mr Perks writes

MR PERKS WRITES

Letters received this week

"I would like to express my gratitude to you and your staff for all that you have done for Stuart.

Arriving under a cloud as he did, you all gave him the opportunity for a fresh start that he desperately needed. I am very proud of him for grasping that opportunity and achieving his full potential both academically and socially.

I feel Baverstock really brought out the best in him".

Mrs B

"My wife and I would like to express our sincere thanks to you and your staff for educating our son James over the last seven years.

James has decided to take up an unconditional offer to study for a degree in Mechanical Engineering at Hertfordshire University.

I would also like to inform you that our other son Danny who left Baverstock last year to join the Army is doing very well as an apprentice Electronics Technician.

Once again thanks and good luck to you, your staff and students in the future"

Mr & Mrs W

"Last week saw the publication of the 'A' level results and the discovery that Michael had secured two B's and two C's, allowing him to take up his place at Sussex University to read Geography. Obviously, a great deal of credit goes to Michael but we are also very conscious of the solid foundation that Baverstock gave him both academically and in terms of his motivation and confidence. We felt it appropriate that this appreciation should be expressed both to yourself and to those members of staff associated with Michael. All those of us who have contributed to the success can then share in the pleasure of his achievement.

Hoping that all is well at Baverstock and wishing you another successful year"

Mr & Mrs H

"Words cannot express my thanks to you all for the kindness you have shown Laura and the rest of our family during this very difficult time.

I will be forever grateful"

Mrs K

"A very big thank you to you and all the staff who have supported and helped Mike especially during the last difficult two years at Baverstock. His GCSE results surpassed his expectations and he can now confidently take his next step up the ladder. This would not have been possible without the sympathetic support of your staff. It's been a long and difficult struggle with many spells of despair but Mike has always felt that school cared and that he wanted above all to retain his part in it all. Our grateful thanks to all those who helped him to 'hang on' - and in the end to achieve creditable exam results".

Mr & Mrs W

MR PERKS WRITES

Letters received this week:

"Thank you so much for all the effort you, your staff, governors and, of course, pupils, put into making my visit to your school so enjoyable and worthwhile. I was enormously impressed by everything I saw.

I was very glad to be given the opportunity to open your new Technology Suite. It provides ideal surroundings for both teaching and learning and you must be very proud of what has been accomplished in such a short time.

Please accept my best wishes for the future and my congratulations for the success you, your governors and, of course, your pupils have made of the school".

The Rt Hon Gillian Shephard, MP

"I feel that the time has now come for me to write to you about Baverstock School and L.

I cannot praise Baverstock GM School more than I have done to everyone over the past five years for their caring and conscientiousness for their pupils especially L.

If ever I came to the school unexpectedly I was always made to feel very welcome. You have a great team of staff who are a credit to you. They are truly devoted.

It is without a doubt that your hard work, along with the teaching staff and L's dedication that she has achieved her results, for which her father and myself are extremely proud.

I like the way we were always informed of what was going on, and how you sent letters to thank and congratulate L for work that she had done. I personally have kept each and everyone of these letters.

Even now L is apprehensive of the future but I hope that she will overcome this and I especially thank you for accepting her decision. I am sure that you know it was one of the hardest things she has ever had to do. However, you made her feel somehow reassured by giving her your blessing.

Mr & Mrs F

Many thanks

CRP



END OF AN ERA



Roger Perks, in his office, Baverstock School, image courtesy of Wolfson Archives, Library of Birmingham

Roger Perks retired as headmaster in 2002 and sadly died two years later on Christmas Day 2004 after a battle with stomach cancer.

“He created something in that school that will never be replicated by anyone else”

Claire Lester, former pupil

“He was a phenomenal figure.”

Steve McCabe MP

“He was a fun fella. He was very hard working and he expected a lot from you, it was his school, he was the founder, He was a strong man.”

Mary Small

“It don’t matter who he’d be walking up that corridor with he’d stop and he’d introduce you. He hadn’t got to do that but he would. I was only a basic caretaker. But that’s how he thought of everyone, he was sadly missed when he went. Sadly missed.”

Bob Burns

“One of the things that hit us hard was when Longbridge closed, and Roger Perks was part of the protest against that. He did a survey and discovered that about 700 of the families were affected by the closure, either directly, family members worked there, brothers, uncles, dads, mums, or were involved in the supply chain, that was cut off once Longbridge was no longer needed.”

Siôr Coleman

canteen from 8 o'clock morning.



But it was at Baverstock that Roger Perks realised his ambition of giving equal educational opportunities to all children, whatever their ability or background.

He firmly believed that education gives everyone a chance in life and constantly reiterated the message that learning is the golden key that unlocks doors to a successful future.

A mark of the respect and esteem with which he was held by pupils, parents, staff and the local community was evident at his funeral, which took place roughly half way between his home and Baverstock School.

Upwards of 900 attended the ceremony, at least half of whom were pupils from the various schools with which he had been associated. The service was taken by the School Chaplain and Head of Religious Studies, and the hearse was driven by an ex pupil. Speakers included Roger's own son, a family friend, his former deputy, the present head and the school's head girl.

Baverstock was closed for the day as a mark of respect and to allow staff and pupils to attend the church. Additionally, a recording was played to over 200 in the school assembly hall immediately following the service.

"He's not perfect, nobody's perfect, but he worked, he supported, so you did a lot for him, and the pupils did as well. They respected him. From all walks of life and parents did as well. He was open for parents to come and talk to him – we used to see a load of parents for various things, and we'd support wherever we could."

Fiona Petrucke

"I think the biggest thing with Mr Perks was that he wore school uniform, you never see that anywhere now. Show me a school where the headteacher wears the same as the students. It's his way of showing you that he's no better than you and you're no better than him, we're all the same, we're all equal."

Ricky & Danielle Wallace

"He was firm, but firm in a gentle manner. He talked to them like adults. He used to stand on the steps and he knew everyone's name, all the kids' names."

Mick Houghton

"Roger's view was always not to narrow children down to what they should 'get', but who they were and would become."

Siôr Coleman

"He was Baverstock, Baverstock was him."

Ricky Wallace.


"We all knew when Mr Perks went it would go."

Michael Reeves



THE NEXT CHAPTER

David Green took over as head in 2002 - 2010. During this time the PTA was disbanded.

BAVERSTOCK SCHOOL	
PRESS RELEASE – May 31 st 2002	
<p>Note to editors. Baverstock Foundation and Specialist Sports College has appeared in OFSTED's list of the top 50 most improved schools. Its previous Head teacher, Roger Perks, retired in April 2002; the new Head, David Green commenced at the start of the summer term, in the same month.</p> <p>New Head at Baverstock School Baverstock School is at the beginning of a new era following the retirement of its former head teacher. After 19 years of ground breaking leadership from Roger Perks, the School has appointed David Green as his successor.</p> <p>Mr Green was headteacher of the very successful Crestwood School in Dudley. Whilst there, David Green had been absolutely convinced that a School needed strong links with its community. He is delighted that Baverstock shares the same values: "Baverstock is a successful and well thought of school", he said, "which is committed to working closely with the local community to provide an excellent education for the young people of the area."</p> <p>A keen mountaineer, David Green enjoys challenges, and expects his pupils to share them fully: "The school will enable them to prepare properly for life in the 21st Century and to take an active and positive part in our fast moving, modern and diverse society."</p> <p>Part of that opportunity is seen through the School's Sports College status. Director of Sport, Graham Davies, has introduced a number of new sports into the school. It now boasts champions at Birmingham, Regional, National and International levels. "By offering such a wide variety of sports," said Graham Davies, "with twenty six volunteer coaches, we can release hitherto unseen potential. That's what it's all about!"</p> <p>The newly built Sports and Community Centre at Baverstock will enable the school to become even more significantly involved in the Community. At a time when Druid's Heath is being targeted for social regeneration, Baverstock's role could well be crucial for its success.</p>	
	<p>DAVID GREEN</p> <p><i>Aims- To make Baverstock School number 1.</i></p> <p><i>School Attended-King Edwards High School.</i></p> <p><i>University- Aberystwyth.</i></p> <p><i>Subject- Marine Zoology.</i></p> <p><i>Football Team- Aston Villa.</i></p> <p><i>Hobbies-Mountaineering, Skiing, outdoor pursuits.</i></p>

"For David Green it was like being handed a poison chalice. He was a decent hard-working man, but he was never going to be Roger Perks. The staff didn't see him as Roger Perks, the children didn't, the parents didn't. My impression was he had difficult time and he had to weather a number of storms, and he was always up against an unrealistic comparison. The school did appear to take a dip on all fronts during his initial phase, but by the time David left it had the best GCSE results that year that it ever had."

Steve McCabe MP

"First of all he had to battle against he wasn't Roger, he'd taken Roger's place, which is not his fault. He was nothing like Roger in his whole attitude so it was very difficult for him, but he did his best, he worked his way through things. That's why I decided to wait a year to go through things before I went. "

Mary Small

“The atmosphere changed. It was a different school. A number of very good staff left. It changed. The support had gone. The atmosphere had gone. The government had made changes too. Like Ofsted was very different, you had to do x,y,z - you knew Ofsted was going to come in unannounced so there was all that pressure, so the pressure and stress were very different. It was a different school before that catered for the area and the pupils as opposed to a school that catered for what the government wanted it to do. And I think that is the difference.”

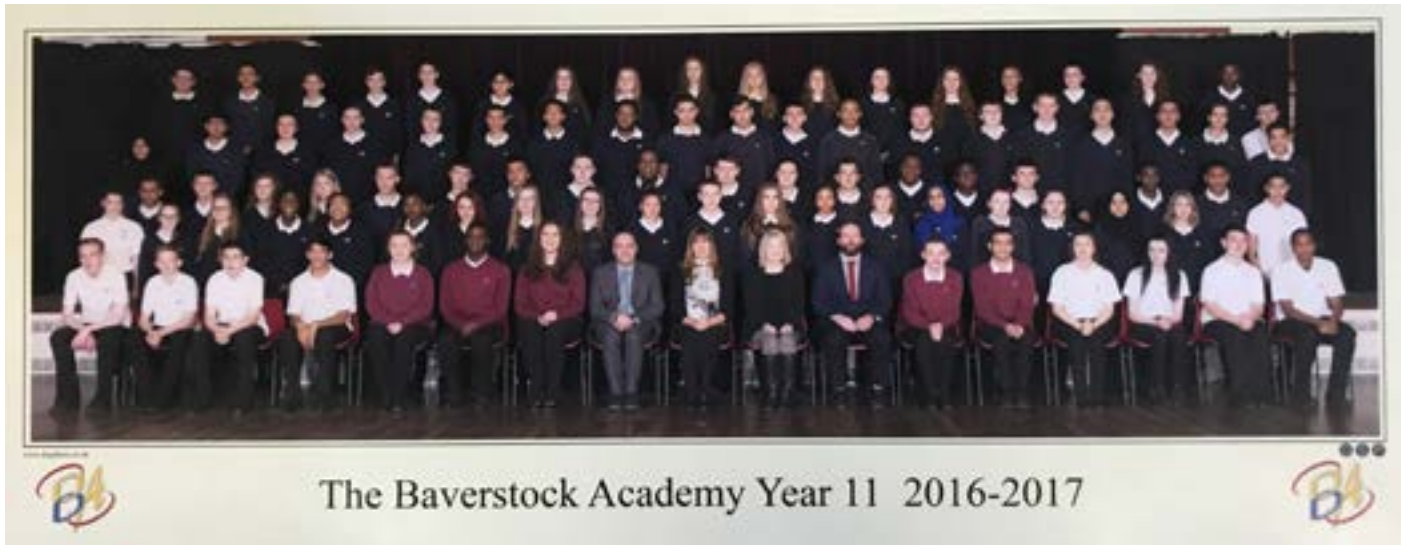
Fiona Petrucke



“Just before David Green left there was a proposal to actually merge Baverstock with Kings Norton. I think I’m right in saying Michael Gove was the education secretary at the time – but certainly there was a proposal for a merger into a super school and there was a lot of ill feeling and opposition certainly in the local community and a lot of questioning about where has this come from? What is the purpose of this? It was some sort of agreement of understanding which I guess must have been signed by the governors but I don’t ever remember being consulted on it at all, and I remember being quite annoyed when I found out about it. ”

Steve McCabe MP

BAVERSTOCK ACADEMY



Thomas Marshall took over as head in 2010. During this time he turned Baverstock into an Academy in 2013 and opened a second school for 'school refusers'. This can be seen on Panoramas 'Last Chance Academy' programme. The school came into huge difficulties under his leadership and closed in 2017 as a result.

"I think there were only three applicants because it had changed. The number of applicants that came round when Roger Perks retired was unbelievable. But I think there were only about three applicants when David Green went."

Fiona Petrucke

"Thomas Marshall; again his initial presence seemed to be quite good, he was a man who seemed to have ideas, he seemed to be trying, again he was someone who was adjusting – of course Roger Perks was still somehow in the fabric of the building. He expanded into a second school to deal with school refusers and gypsy children, and I think he over committed and over-extended and ran out of resources. In the end there were allegations of financial irregularities; there was a serious investigation, he was allowed to retire on

ill health grounds, but in fact, an order was taken out against him to prevent him from teaching and sitting on any kind of governing body, so there were clearly some difficult financial irregularities. Whether they were deliberately malign in intent or whether this was someone who ended up losing control and being out of his depth I don't know. But by that time massive damage had been done to the school. The initial academisation phase at Baverstock was to be a single trust academy, that's the weakest possible model and one that the government no longer allows.

The choice at that stage was to mount a rescue operation, it had some financial problems, it had some staffing problems, there were some issues - because of the dual school there were some problems with numbers in the main school - but a rescue operation was perfectly possible at that stage. In fact the academisation model at the time for the government was to rescue failing schools. I think it could have been done.

Sylvia Thomas, she was a perfectly good head and would have been capable of turning the school around, but she didn't get the support she was looking for and saw the writing on the wall and she left.

Peter Cox was brought in with the intention of closing the school. The Leap trust wanted the school closed, the governing body were put in a weak position. The local community had no involvement in it at all.

At this stage, it became apparent that the government had for some reason decided that Baverstock closure was what it was after. To this day I've never entirely understood their logic. Around the same time the Church of England had expressed an interest in opening a new free school, at Yardley Wood, which by that stage were even more popular in Tory party politics than Academies. I think that in the department (of education) the government decided that the way it could justify the free school was by closing Baverstock, because clearly if Baverstock closed there would be a need for additional school places. I think it saw an opportunity to get rid of the headache they felt Baverstock had become.

There seemed to be an obsession with closing the school, which I don't think was ever justified. In fact I remember we did a lot of work – because at the time these decisions were taking place we were building extensions onto junior schools right across south Birmingham because of the increase in the youngsters going into school. So you could easily predict that within a few years time you were going to need more not less places in the secondary sector. And we gave all those figures to the department. They were not interested in saving this school.

There were a series of decisions taken where alternative options were clearly available, the decisions have a kind of logic if you assume that somewhere in the department there was a view that Baverstock by itself shouldn't be allowed to continue and the earliest trace of that is the proposed merger with Kings Norton (shortly before David Green left).

I'd love to know how the academy status and the second school was established and what discussions were had. At some stage in the future there may well be papers available on this. I've never been given any information when I've asked on it.

Of course if there'd been too much focus and enquiry into what had happened with Thomas Marshall, or it got too much traction and attention, it may have drawn a lot of attention to who had been involved in discussing what – who suggested that there should be a merger, who decided that a single trust academy should be a good idea, who spoke to Thomas Marshall about opening up a second school for school refusers and truants, and who was responsible for the oversight – remember at that stage regional commissioners were only just coming into being, there was no oversight other than at the Secretary of States Office of Academy School finances."

Steve McCabe MP



**Most
Improved
School**

BAVERSTOCK ACADEMY



"It was silly things – the uniform changed and I think that didn't help, like the uniform got very casual, hoodies, polo tops, the tie went, looking respectable, I think, that kind of era went."

Danielle Wallace

"A lot of staff wouldn't go back. My other deputy wouldn't go back at all. I was still going back as I ran the gym club there, I would just go the gym, but occasionally I'd go to the staff room and you just knew the atmosphere had changed and the whole set up, it was sad, very sad."

Mary Small



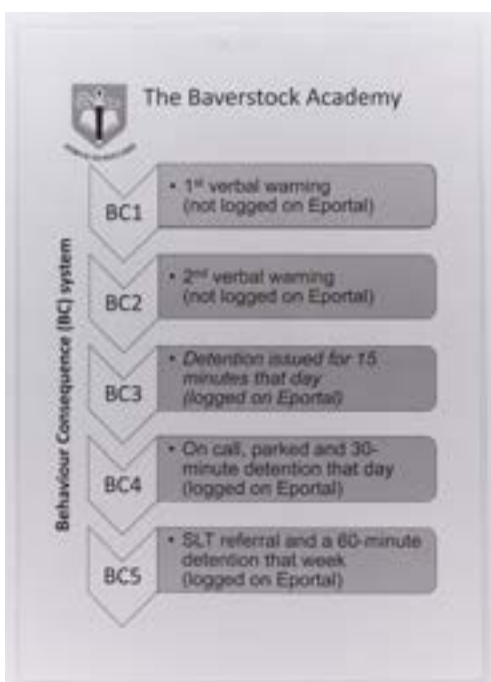
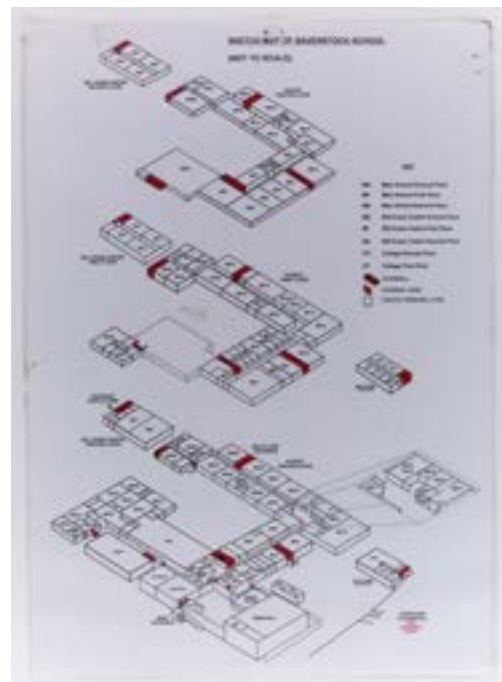
Druids Heath News & Views
2011 Courtesy of Karen Urwin



Druids Heath News & Views
2011 Courtesy of Karen Urwin

**STOP
WISHING
START
DOING**

~~**IMPOSSIBLE**~~
~~**UNABLE**~~



Items salvaged from the Baverstock site before demolition

CLOSURE 2017

“What was lost was the heart of the community”
Siôr Coleman



Image: Martin Cooper

“BCC had no say in the closure of the school and in fact opposed the closure of the school at the time. I opposed it vigorously. I contacted three other trusts and asked them if they would consider taking it over. I had four meetings with government ministers where I put proposals to them and as a final throw of the dice the King Edwards foundation were in the early stages of taking on schools and I begged them to take on Baverstock, because quite frankly I would rather the school was part of a grammar school foundation rather than close, because the school has served as more than a school, it’s been the social glue of the community.

“When I saw it knocked down that was even worse really. And it’s even worse because nothing is happening to it.”

Mary Small

You can see some of the problems since its closed because the children have been dispersed. There’s youngsters getting two and three buses sometimes to go to school.”

Steve McCabe MP

DEMOLITION DECEMBER 2020



Image: Martin Cooper



The site 2022, image: Jayne Murray

"It was like a skeleton towards the end, no one was hardly there. We had to get rid of the confidential stuff, there was bags and bags of that – in special bags with a tag on. Spent most of the last 3 months emptying things from the school. They left everything, tea pots, cups, books, you name it, it was all there. Tools, and paint, the lot. Just skip after skip. Towards the last few weeks we had Pickfords removals and they emptied the school of everything. A lot of it was auctioned. They had all the stuff in the hall and all the schools came and they sold a lot of it off. The multi gym that was all sold. The last thing they sold was a little buggy, like for a golf course, we used to use it on the Astro."

Bob Burns

"I think when Christchurch was being built it was like why get rid of a football field to build a school when there's a perfectly good school – I think they just wanted that whole reputation and the school gone, and a fresh school."

Ricky Wallace

THE SIGN AND IT'S SAVING



The sign was the school logo, designed by pupils. The logo is made up of the book of learning and the light of knowledge and underneath the School Motto "Strive to succeed". The sign was fixed to the wall on the Bells Lane side of the building.



"It's a last kind of vestige, it's a last kind of symbol of an era that's really important in Druids Heath History. It's an era largely associated with success and achievement, sometimes against the odds, I meet adults all over the place who went to Baverstock, the fact that it ended in such an unsatisfactory way, for me, means that it shouldn't be allowed to just finish like that, the golden era if you like, the achievements of Roger Perks & Rick Coleman, the things that were demonstrated through a whole series of phases, there was a local authority school, a grant maintained school, a beacon school, a teaching school, a sports college, this was the epitome of good secondary school education in a working class community where all the positive benefits of education with the right people, with the right motives, could be achieved."

Steve McCabe MP



STRIVE TO SUCCEED



Image courtesy of Mary Small

“Baverstock’s history has been punctuated by political interference. Sometimes for good, sometimes for bad.”

Steve McCabe MP



Image from the Wolfson Archives

I miss them all. There's some really good kids there and they deserve better than they got in life.

Mary Small

This magazine has been compiled during 2022 from archive research, and collecting stories and objects from former staff, parents and pupils of Baverstock School over the years. Before this A Level Playing Field were asked to look after salvaged items after the school building was demolished in December 2020. This led to us asking the community about a Baverstock project, which became 'The People's Museum of Baverstock'.

We would like to thank Anne Marie Alder, Mark Allen, Robert Burns, Ben Christie, Dave Christie, Revd Siôr Coleman, Kath Coogan, Martin Cooper, Peter Conway, Helen Donaghy, Amy Evans, Bill Evison, Juliet Faulkner, Rabah Fadlalla, Nick Fearon, Dot Forster, Jodie Edwards, Mick Houghton, Sandra Howes, Les Kuriata, John Moore, Fiona Petrucke, Kevin Thompson, Karen Urwin, Danielle Wallace, Ricky Wallace. Support staff Sian Summerfield and Charlotte Speakman, photographers David Rowan and John Charalambous who captured all found and loaned objects.

Steve McCabe MP, Councillor Pritchard and Ian Ellis for their support.

*Research, Compilation and Design: Jayne Murray
Design and Print production: Sharonjit Sutton*

Image Ben Christie

www.thepeoplesmuseumofbaverstock.co.uk



Place
Prospectors
community interest company



Made possible with
**Heritage
Fund**

#sillycranes
@SillyCranes

Live Life Laughing.
Doing the things you Love

