

## Education in Hugglescote, 1902-56

In 1902, education in Hugglescote was provided by a Baptist School and a Church of England (National) School –commonly known as the ‘Church School’ – both ‘all age’ schools.<sup>1</sup> The Church School building is now the Hugglescote Community Centre, whereas the Baptist School was part of the Baptist Chapel on Main Street, now Dennis Street, and has recently been demolished.<sup>2</sup>

The Baptist School closed in 1915, and the children were transferred to either the new Hugglescote Council School or Ellistown Council School.<sup>3</sup> Hugglescote Council Primary School was purpose-built, a few hundred metres from the Church School, and opened with 88 children on its books.<sup>4</sup> Both the Council School and the Church School remained the only two schools until 1937, when there was a substantial reorganisation. A new, central secondary modern school was provided in Hugglescote to serve Hugglescote, Ellistown and Snibston.<sup>5</sup> This school took over the premises of the Primary Council School of 1915, and a new primary school was built next to it, named Hugglescote Primary School. This new school educated around 270 pupils and most came from the Council School, with seven teachers, including the headmaster; the Secondary Modern school accommodated 295 children.<sup>6</sup> Before Hugglescote Secondary Modern School opened, Hugglescote had no dedicated secondary school and children attended the King Edward VII Grammar School in Coalville if they passed the entrance exam.

### War Time

The reorganisation of the schools was soon followed by the Second World War. Hugglescote received evacuees from Birmingham, London<sup>7</sup> and Guernsey.<sup>8</sup> Measures were implemented rapidly; children from Dennis Road School in Birmingham arrived two days before war was declared.<sup>9</sup> The next day, teachers and helpers from the primary school billeted 53 mothers and young children.<sup>10</sup> Within a month, they had been inspected by the school medical officer<sup>11</sup> and by His Majesty’s Inspectorate to ensure the evacuees were healthy and suitably integrated into their new schools.<sup>12</sup> Four teachers from the Dennis Road School joined the 90 evacuees in the Church school,<sup>13</sup> whereas the primary school received 61 children from Dennis Road along with three teachers. Sixteen privately evacuated children and an additional supply teacher were also absorbed into the classes.<sup>14</sup> Numbers varied, as many became homesick or their families requested them back.<sup>15</sup> Although the last two evacuees left a month after VE Day, most went back within a year.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Hyde (ed.), *Hugglescote* (Coalville, 1991) pp. 8-11.

<sup>2</sup> C. Hyde (ed.), *Hugglescote* (Coalville, 1991) p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> ROLLR, N/B/150/17, 29 June 1915.

<sup>4</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/7, 1 July 1915.

<sup>5</sup> ROLLR, DE 3627/73, p. 177.

<sup>6</sup> ROLLR, DE 3627/73, p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> C. Hyde (ed.), *Hugglescote* (Coalville, 1991) pp. 41-2.

<sup>8</sup> E. Terry, *Fridays were Special, Memories of an Evacuee in Hugglescote* (Wythall, 1998) p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> ROLLR, L/LB/150/2; ROLLR, E/LB/150/8.

<sup>10</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 2 September 1939.

<sup>11</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 13 September 1939.

<sup>12</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 25 September 1939; ROLLR, L/LB/150/2, 29 September 1939.

<sup>13</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 6 October 1939.

<sup>14</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 11 September 1939.

<sup>15</sup> E. Terry, *Fridays were Special, Memories of an Evacuee in Hugglescote* (Wythall, 1998) p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> ROLLR, L/LB/150/2; ROLLR E/LB/150/8.

The threat of bombing and the continuing war effort meant that changes had to be made to the school buildings. The Church school had its iron railings removed to be made into munitions and the school bell remained silent throughout the war.<sup>17</sup> There was little further interference with school routine until the threat of bombing became reality a year later. The first air raid warning occurred during school-time at 10:15 on 21 August 1940.<sup>18</sup> At the primary school, most of the children were sent home within two minutes, with the infants' teacher and a few infants going to the public air raid shelter; the Church school similarly dismissed the children who lived nearby. The schools were then visited by the Air Raid Warden and recommendations made.<sup>19</sup> An air raid shelter was completed in the Church school hall by mid-November, 1940.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the primary school instead designated a corridor to be the 'strong point'; a fourteen-inch brick skin was built along the length of the wall. The roof was also reinforced with concrete blocks and a 'concrete curtain' built in front of an underground room.<sup>21</sup> It was decided that registers should be left open until ten o'clock when there was a warning the previous night.<sup>22</sup> The structural changes took a few months to implement and so were not as smoothly executed as the evacuation of urban children – although the country was now in the grips of war.

## Post War

Towards the end of the war the 1944 'Butler' Education Act looked at the provision of secondary schools. After the 1937 reorganisation, Hugglescote had a secondary modern school and the King Edward VII Grammar School was in Coalville. However, the Church school could not conform to the building regulations of the new act and could not be converted, so had to close.<sup>23</sup> In view of the migration of people from Hugglescote, the Church school was seen as unnecessary and was not to be replaced.<sup>24</sup> The school managers sought legal advice upon their available options, arguing that the school was needed as more houses were being built in Hugglescote, the nearby school of Bridge Road Infants was closing and the village had the Church of England National School since 1862.<sup>25</sup> After years of negotiations to turn Hugglescote Secondary Modern into an Anglican Infants school, the proposals came to nothing.<sup>26</sup> In 1956, the school applied for, and received 'controlled status'<sup>27</sup> but the fate of the Church school could not be spared. In 1958, it was finally closed by the Ministry of Education; it is now Hugglescote Community Centre.<sup>28</sup> Hugglescote Primary School exists today and also incorporates the buildings of the former secondary modern school.

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<sup>17</sup> E. Terry, *Fridays were Special, Memories of an Evacuee in Hugglescote* (Wythall, 1998) p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 21 August 1940.

<sup>19</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 23-26 August 1940.

<sup>20</sup> ROLLR, L/LB/150/2, 15 November 1939.

<sup>21</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8, 10 December 1940.

<sup>22</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/8; ROLLR L/LB/150/2.

<sup>23</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 5 April 1946.

<sup>24</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 8 March 1957.

<sup>25</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 8 March 1957.

<sup>26</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 11 August 1949 onward.

<sup>27</sup> ROLLR, E/MB/B/150/1, 8 March 1957.

<sup>28</sup> ROLLR, E/LB/150/6, 31 August 1958.