

**Down Memory Lane at St John's Ivy St
Eileen Hartley (nee Flynn) of 8 Colne Rd.**

St Johns from around 1945 to 1952. The following not necessarily in chronological order.

**When talking about St John's in the 1930's
1940s the name Sister M Ignatius crops up.**

**Her build was such that she appeared
frightening, so tall and red cheeked, she sat at
an enormous desk, raised up off the floor on a
platform. When she was reading she put
another pair of glasses inside the ones she
always wore. After she had retired into the
convent the family had, for some reason, to
visit the convent upon seeing me she picked
me up and bounced me on her knee, so inside
that apparently hard exterior she really had a
heart beating kindly.**

**The day I started school was very exciting, I
arrived with my mother, sister Patsy and two
elder brothers, Brian and Ronnie.**

**The playground was divided in two by a high
wall with Juniors on one side and Infants on
the other.**

Sister Mary Francis was my first teacher. Her classroom had a big rocking horse which if you were very good you could have a ride! At playtimes we played with dolls prams in the little yard. Sister Mary Benignus was my next teacher she was very strict, but a good teacher. Whilst in her class we all received Chocolate and Sugar from the American Government this went down very nicely in our house as we were a large family.

Miss Chadderton (later Clegg) was the top infants class teacher.

Another teacher was Miss Heap (now Mrs Joan Thornton)

I didn't like reading very much, when it was my turn to read I used to cough and splutter

I remember one year we had a Christmas Concert upstairs on the stage, I was an angel, being very impatient to go on I kicked the shin of the nun holding me back and pushed my way onto the stage before my cue, not very angelic .

We had lots of happy time with dressing up and fancy dress parades. Once I was dressed up as 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling' and I won first prize (I could look angelic at times) I had

my eyes on the dolly on offer as a prize, but my big brother chose a book for me instead which I received from Fr Connelly. I was not amused!

In the Junior department Mrs Reid played the piano for singing lessons, which I loved, but she pointed out to me I was not Ann Shelton and should sing properly. This helped me greatly as in latter years I became a quite a good singer.

Mrs Reid asked me if I would like to skip a class, so my next teacher was Miss Wilkinson who was an excellent storyteller.

As Sister Ignatius retired Sister Philomena took over as head.

On Sunday morning we went to Mass at 9.00am and sat with Sr Philomena, she played the organ sometimes and my eldest sister Rose conducted a small band of singers. In the afternoon we attended Sunday School with the nuns after which we all went to Benediction.

When in Sr M Peter's class we performed 'The Sleeping Beauty' the princess was Kathleen Parker (now Foster), Marjorie Cornet (RIP) was

the Good Fairy, Malcolm Stewart was the King and I was the Queen, George Winkley was the town crier. Lots of fun was had by all (I remember that George was very good at maths and got to add up the registers and dinner monies).

The Festival of Britain in 1951 also comes to mind as all the schools in Burnley got together in a large open air theatre in the middle of the woods in Townely Park. There was a massive choir conducted by Mr George Altham and each school performed tableaux or did country dancing as the choir sang. At the end we all sang 'I vow to thee my country' I remember it was very moving.

Mr Mercer was my last teacher at St John's he played the piano really well and so I enjoyed singing lessons very much.

At lunch time it was our duty to put out the tables, cover them with oilcloth covers and lay them for the meal.

We then served the children carrying the hot plates with food to the seated children (H&S?)

One day when I was carrying two very hot plates of rice pudding a head

suddenly appeared from under the table and hit the plates, the rice pudding went down the boys back. The lovely Mr Cabrey (caretaker) came to the rescue and pulled off his jumper.

I also made toffee to sell at 1p a piece. I also spent many hours doing embroidery for Sr Philomena's table cloths, but I only got to do the 'green bits'

Before lunchtime I set the table for the nuns to sit down to lunch. Their lunches came in a wicker basket from the convent so I put the dishes in the oven to keep warm.

The mystery of the nuns 'real names' was solved by looking at the many bottle of medicine and potions with their name before entering the order of The Sisters of Mercy.