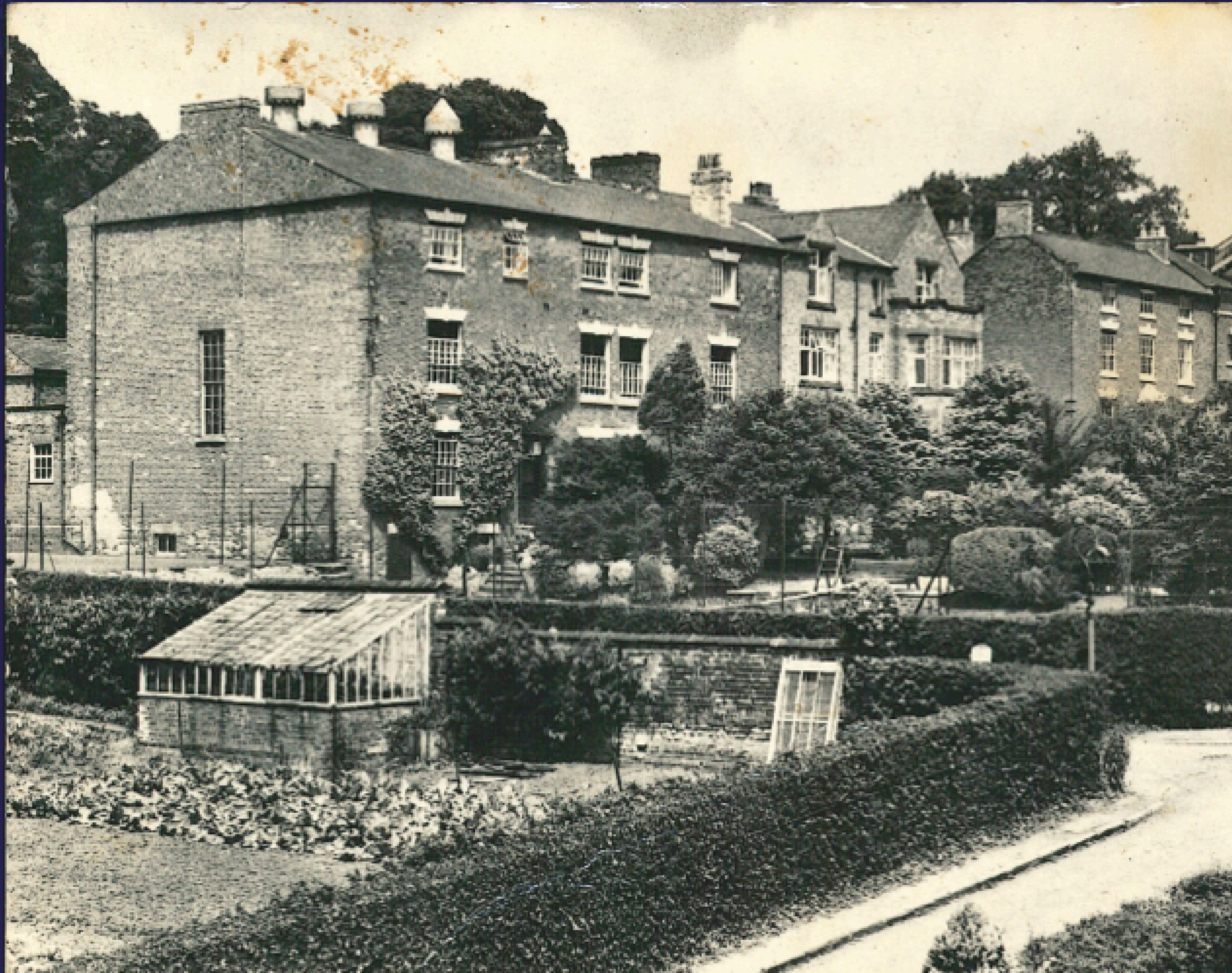


Preserving the Heritage of Ockbrook School

The 'Saving Ockbrook's Heritage' Project aims to capture and celebrate Ockbrook School's rich history.

We have completed a Heritage Assessment and Options Appraisal to determine the future use and preservation of the most historically significant aspects of the site.



The Main Building and school vegetable garden.



The Girls' School used rooms in the buildings above the Moravian Church before moving into the main school building in 1915, following the closure of the Boys' School.

We have a dedicated Heritage Officer, and created a Heritage Volunteer team to record and preserve the history of the site.

We are creating heritage spaces throughout the former school to share the history of the School and Over The Wall Camp.



The 'Saving Ockbrook's Heritage' Project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.

A Long History of Education



The Pupils' Entrance with its original lamp.

The historic buildings associated with the school today were originally part of Ockbrook Boys School. This was open from 1812 - 1915 and proved a 'troublesome neighbour' for the Girls' School.

Ockbrook School was founded by the Moravian church in 1799 as part of a settlement. The Moravian Church believed that all people, including girls should receive an education. The school started with just six pupils and one teacher in a house at No. 11 Shop Stones. It soon moved into buildings above the Church.



Rooms in Liley House were used by the school from 1803 until 1915.

For its first hundred years, the school remained relatively small with a few dozen pupils. During the 20th century, pupil numbers increased. The school outgrew the main buildings and started using spaces in other buildings in the settlement. Two large houses, The Mount and The Grange, were purchased post-World War II to provide extra classrooms and boarding accommodation.



Originally named Swallows Rest, The Grange was built in the 1860s as a home for wealthy Moravian Minister William Mallalieu.



The Mount was purchased in 1948 to become the Junior Department.



The school grew to over 500 pupils in the early 2000s, spread across the 17-acre site. The final building was a new science block in 2004. However, pupil numbers began to decline during the 2010s, falling to just 252 at the time of the school's closure in July 2021.

Birtill Hall, named after former headteacher Elise Birtill, opened in 1968, providing a flexible space for drama, gymnastics and whole school gatherings.

Sports at Ockbrook School



Swimming lessons in the 1980s.



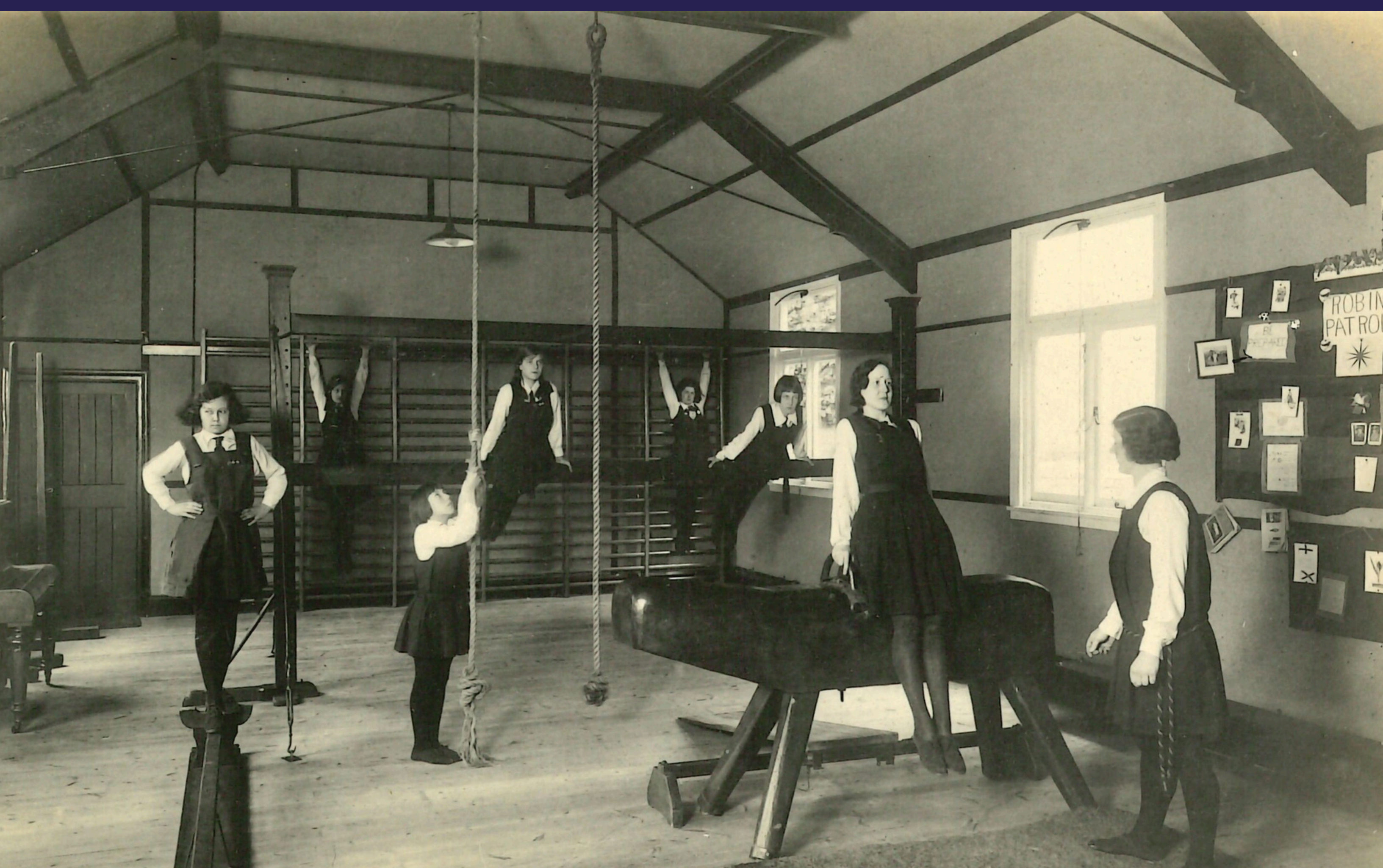
The Swimming Pool was allegedly one of the oldest heated indoor school pools in Britain. However, few former girls ever recall it being heated!



Swimming lessons were an experience! The pool was small and not very clean. We made patterns with our feet as we walked about in the silt at the bottom, and we had to remove spiders with a net.



The PE mistress was very keen on deportment, so we walked along the narrow bar without looking down, with our tummies pulled in, balancing a beanbag on our heads – to give us 'poise'!



The Dining Room was extended in the 1930s to add a new gymnasium.

There was little formal sport played at Ockbrook before the school moved into the main school buildings. After this, P.E. became compulsory. Hockey and Netball were played during the winter and Tennis and Badminton in the summer. A proud sporting tradition developed, with school teams winning many regional sporting trophies.

School Life



The Dining Hall in the 1930s.



Lunch time during the 1980s.

“

The lunches were simple, made on site in the school kitchen. They were served by one of the matrons from the boarding accommodation (one of whom loved her bright blue eyeshadow!) and by a different girl every day.

”

I had the very best school days at Ockbrook School. Such a beautiful, happy place. There was a member of our family at the school from early 1900s to approximately 2017.



The House Craft Room. Later, this became the School Library.



A 1930s classroom with victorian desks and bench seating.



The Boarders' Sitting Room.



The Boarders' Study.

“

The boarders would put their hands out if you had any sweets and ask, 'Are you loving?'. You felt like you had to give them a sweet. If there were too many, you'd have no sweets left!

“

I felt like, coming from my previous school where discipline was metered out in terms of physical punishments, Ockbrook School was not disciplined in that sense at all. It was all about learning to behave decently and well towards other people.



The Senior Dormitory in the attic space of the main school building.



The Junior Dormitory on the top floor of the main building. This space was later converted into classrooms as the number of boarders declined.



Memories of Ockbrook School

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Me and Hannah brought the skeleton from the Biology Lab, dressed it in school uniform with a wig on and sat it in the back of French. It was sat with a shirt, tie and blazer. We might have put a hat on it too. It was 10 minutes before Mrs. Hoyle recognised it! But she found the funny side of it.

“

We had a Garden Party where they invited various guests once a year. We'd have strawberries and cream teas for the parents. The boys from Trent College used to come in their boaters. All these boys with big boaters on and stripey jackets.

“

The house was lovely, the gardens were lovely, and I think most people were happy there. I do remember in Miss Lowe's classroom we had wooden desks with little ink wells in them. We had to put our pens in and get the ink out if we were writing, which is very historic. I'd say it was a happy place, disciplined and a lovely environment.

Share your
school memories

We'd love to hear from former Ockbrook School pupils who'd like to tell us about their time here.

