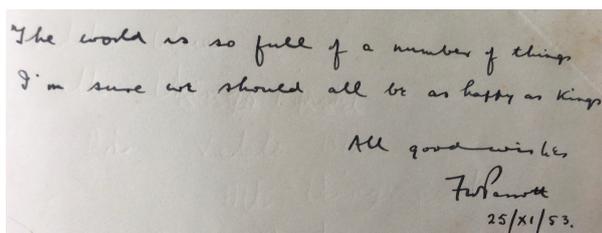


a dog, We were never sure if it was his dog, or had just followed him, but it sat quietly under the desk during lessons. They both achieved local fame when they starred in the school play *Tobias and the Angel* – Ronnie playing Tobias with his faithful dog.”

“One day Mr Parrott came in with a list of 12 names, and we were asked to go to his room. We all stood in a semi-circle and he asked us, in turn, ‘Do you wish to take the entrance exam?’ The first girl said, ‘Yes’ so we all said yes. Although we didn’t know it, this was to take the 11+ exam, for entrance to the grammar school.”



Above: do you remember when autograph books were popular? This, from Mr Parrot, is written in a school pupil’s autograph book in 1953.

### **The Primary School after WW2:**

“I remember on my first day, just turned 5, noticing that the windows were really high; I couldn’t see much except for clouds, trees and birds. Our teacher was Mrs Evie Dent. The toilets were outside and would freeze up in the winter. The playground sloped down, away from the school building, and in winter that would freeze too – making a wonderful slide. Some of the children stayed for dinner but I used to go home, then when I went back in the afternoon we would all have a short rest, lying on a little mat on the floor, in one part of the large classroom.”

“One day in 1952 I remember that Mrs Bell, our teacher, switched on the radio so we could listen to a news bulletin – announcing the death of King George VI [Wednesday 6 February 1952].”

### **Kirkby Stephen Grammar School before 1955:**

“I passed the 11+ and went to the girls’ grammar school which was here in Kirkby Stephen. The headteacher was Miss Rothwell. There was the main building and the annexe – two wooden huts left over from WW1. The one on the right was the science room, the other one was for school dinners, Greek dancing, PE and art. There was a grand piano on the stage and Mr Wilson, the church organist, played it for our dancing lessons. The sports field was across Frank’s Bridge, about where the cricket nets are now. We played tennis there in the summer and hockey in the winter. We didn’t wear special clothes for PE,

our gym slips as usual. Miss Rothwell was very strict about the length of these gym slips – we had to kneel on the floor and it had to be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.”

“We had to be at school by 8.50, and the day began with assembly: a hymn, a lesson read by Miss Rothwell, and a piece of classical music played on the gramophone. Miss Rothwell reinstated Founder’s Day in November. We would go into the church two by two, and say the psalms decided by Lord Wharton. Once a term we also visited one of the other churches in Kirkby, to learn about each of the religious denominations in turn. A big house, Melgates, was a lodging house for girls who came from Appleby and Brough, on the Ribble bus. School finished at 3.50, and we had a long lunch hour, 12.10 to 1.40. We had 3 ‘houses’: Lady Anne, Nightingale, and Wharton. Each ‘house’ had a garden next to the river and we had a competition for the best one. The grammar school had evacuees too and when the number of pupils increased a temporary classroom was built in the vicarage garden.”

### **The New School, Kirkby Stephen**

**Grammar:** “We were the first full year group to go to this school, in September 1955. The existing girls (from Kirkby Stephen School) and the boys (from Appleby School) had already moved in, after the Easter break that year. We had a smart uniform: ties, maroon blazers with the Wharton badge, and caps for the boys.”

Editor’s note – it was a big year group in 1955, four classes, because for the first time all secondary-aged pupils moved up from the primary schools, whether they had passed the 11+ or not. Before that date only those who had passed the 11+ went to a grammar school – those who did not pass stayed to be taught (as Seniors) in their local primary schools until they left aged fourteen or fifteen. Although the New School retained the name ‘Kirkby Stephen Grammar School’ it had become what we would now call a comprehensive school, one of the first in the country.

“The facilities were wonderful – I did a pond study (in Jubilee Park) for A level biology and we had microscopes to view the pond life. In the winter the girls played hockey and netball and the boys played both rugby and football, and we played even if it was wet. But if the weather was really bad, perhaps with snow on the ground, we all had to do country dancing, boys and girls together – I didn’t like that. The PE teacher was David Tait, Scottish, and he taught the dancing.”



## WRITING THROUGH MY LIFETIME by Sarah Kirkup

(images from Anne Cradock and Keith Jagger)

My first words were written on thin paper with special lines so that all the letters were the same height. The pencil was hardly ever sharp. So much pressure would be put upon it that the pointed lead would snap and then write thick and black. The rubber was used often and vigorously so there were many grey smudges and even some holes. So discouraging. But a new page brought new hope; this would look neat, the letters would be correctly formed and the page still clean and white.

Two of us sat at small wooden tables. The greyish-blue paint was chipped and peeling. This made useful maps and fields for plasticine people and animals.



There was a drawer for each of us; when opened they gave off a dry, woody smell that contrasted with the pervading air of children in slightly damp shoes and socks, thick and woolly, and small bodies heating up in unforgiving scratchy underclothes.

Perhaps a year later the battle with pen and ink ensued. Now we had double desks with hard folding seats attached. Each desk had an inkwell, filled daily with ink mixed from powder and water. Its colour was always the same, blue-black, but sometimes thick and sometimes watery. It had a metallic taste. Once the ink was on the paper there was no getting rid of it. So mistakes were there for all to see, accompanied by blots



and scratches. Another year saw promotion to fountain pens. Watermans, Conway Stewart, Parker. So good. The

nib quickly adapted to my way of writing and I could fill it up with Mum's royal blue Quink ink.

Quink ink and fountain pens lasted for years through French and Geography, English and Science. Then letters home, the first cheques and other important signatures. Biro pens were frowned on for so long, but later there were felt tips that brought bright colours to the page.

I learnt to type. I bought a typewriter but pen, ink and clean paper were not yet ready to give way. Drafting of essays, learning anatomy, love letters – these were always hand written.



My secretarial career had ended when word processors came into being. How different that career might've been – no carbon copies, no duplicating machines with their inky rollers, no hard blue rubbers and then tippex.

Now I sit at home with a blank screen before me. I select a font and choose a size and tap the keyboard. I play with the spacing. It is so much more efficient, but much less pleasing than pen on paper.



## ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS AND REGINALD BAINBRIGG of APPLEBY notes and photograph by Anne Taylor



Reginald Bainbrigg (c.1545 to c.1613), was the headmaster at Appleby Grammar School from 1580 onwards, a careful and scholarly antiquarian and archaeologist. He made detailed notes of his observations at Hadrian's Wall and collected Roman inscribed stones, some of which can still be seen set into a low

wall at Chapel Street in Appleby.

The lower stone in this photo is a copy of a Roman milestone of the period of Constantine (AD 307–337) that Bainbrigg had found in 1602 near the Roman fort at Brougham. Full details at <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/2285>

