



# HISTORY OF MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL



Our school building was only opened on Monday 17th November 1980. By this time, however, the school community was already over 4 years old.





Before 1976, young people from the Burgh of Monifieth had traveled to Carnoustie High School during their secondary school years. On 17th August 1976, however, the new Monifieth High School opened with 132 pupils and 16 teachers. Because work had not even started on the building, all pupils were taken by bus each day to the former Stobswell Boys' Primary School in Melrose Terrace, Dundee.





## Monifieth High School

1976/77

### OPENING DAY INSTRUCTIONS (17.08.76)

8.55 Pupils will be assembled in lower Gymnasium and allocated to classes by Mr. Martin.

9.05 Register teachers collect classes at gym and take them to register rooms.

Classes will remain in register rooms until lunch break.

Normal timetable will begin at 12.40.

Registers :- Scroll registers will be used until the roll is established. Return these to the office daily at 9.15am. Throughout the year registers will be returned to the office every Monday morning at 9.15am for completion of the summary.

Attendance Cards will be issued for all absentees after 3 consecutive Absences or as soon as a pattern of half days appears. If in doubt consult Mr. Martin. Cards for issue must be in the office by 9.30am (marked completely up to date i.e. tallying with Register).

Dinner tickets :- price 15p per day per pupil i.e. 60p this week collected today at 9.30 by Mrs Gollan in register rooms. As from 22<sup>nd</sup> August tickets will be issued by Mrs. Gollan during registration on Mondays.



MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL

1976-77

Register Teachers

Class	Room	Teacher
1 <sup>1</sup>	5	Mr. Andrew
1 <sup>2</sup>	16	Miss Clark
1 <sup>3</sup>	6	Miss Duncan
1 <sup>4</sup>	3	Mr. Elder
1 <sup>5</sup>	7	Mrs. Watt

MONIFIETH HIGH SCHOOL

1976-77

Staff List

<u>English</u> Mr. D. Grainger (P.T.) Mr. I. Martin (A.H.T)	Room 13 5	<u>Technical</u> Mr. T. Elder (P.T.)	Room Tech.5
<u>History/Geography</u> Mrs. H. Watt (P.T.)	7	<u>Home Economics</u> Miss P. Duncan (P.T.)	T1/T2
<u>Mathematics</u> Mr. D. Easson (P.T.)	3	<u>Music</u> Miss E. Clark (P.T.)	16
<u>Modern Languages</u> Miss J. Russell (P.T.)	6	<u>P.E.</u> Mr. J. Andrew (P.T.) Mrs. C. McLean	Gym Gym
<u>Science</u> Mr. G Nicoll (P.T.) Mrs. C. Maxwell	Lab.3 Lab.4	<u>Guidance</u> Mr. B. Hird (Mathematics)	3/G
<u>Art</u> Mr. J. Wallace (P.T.)	A.1	<u>Remedial</u> Mrs. S. Jamieson	14



There are numerous colourful stories from the school's early years in Melrose Terrace. The building had not been well maintained and there were particular problems with the old coal-fired boilers, as revealed in the detailed school log kept by our first Rector, Mr. Hector Low:

4 January 1979: "The staff all reported for duty but we found there was no heating.....the school would be closed till Monday 8th."

8 January 1979: "The pupils arrived only to be sent home at 11.00am & told not to report back until Thursday. The toilets were completely frozen & the inlet water pupils were all burst."

10 January 1979: "I sent the staff home at 2.00pm.....although we were burning fuel steadily no heat was coming through the pipes."

11 January 1979: "Pupils returned....The toilets were finally working by 11.45am. There was a dispute in the boiler house between the Janitor and the heating engineers....the boiler flues [airways leading to the chimney] were chocked solid with ashes and dust. When these were opened, the boiler house filled with smoke."

*Hector Low was famous for his dry wit and his Rector's Log goes on to describe being caught in the middle of a furious argument between the Janitor and the engineers while ashes and dust billowed around them in the depths of the stricken boiler house.*

The original boiler house chimney still stands today, though the Melrose Terrace building is now part of Dundee College and the coal-fired boiler has long since been replaced.





## The first staff photograph!



This picture was the 1st year of MHS 1976-1977.

Staff in the picture are:

Ian M. Martin (Assistant Rector), Hector Low (Rector), David A Eason (P.T. Mathematics), David J Grainger (P.T. English), Mrs Heather Watt (P.T. History/Geography), Miss Jean M Russell (P.T. Modern Languages), George Nicoll (P.T. Science), James L Wallace (P.T. Art), Thomas R Elder (Technical), Miss Patricia A Duncan, Miss Evelyn J Clarke (P.T. Music), John R Andrew



The first school show took place in June 1977. Every pupil in the school (around 130 in total!) took part in some way in staging excerpts from 'Oliver'.



Fagin looks a little older than the rest of the cast, because he was played by David Easson, Principal Teacher of Mathematics. David was the longest-serving of the original staff members, only retiring in June 2007.



Right from the start, the emphasis was on broadening pupils' horizons. There were field trips (this was one of the first, to a Royal Navy ship in Dundee Docks, 1977). Parties went on the School ship SS "Uganda". There were early holidays to mainland Europe (when the spending money for the entire trip was kept on the coach in a large handbag underneath the seat of a certain lady staff member!)

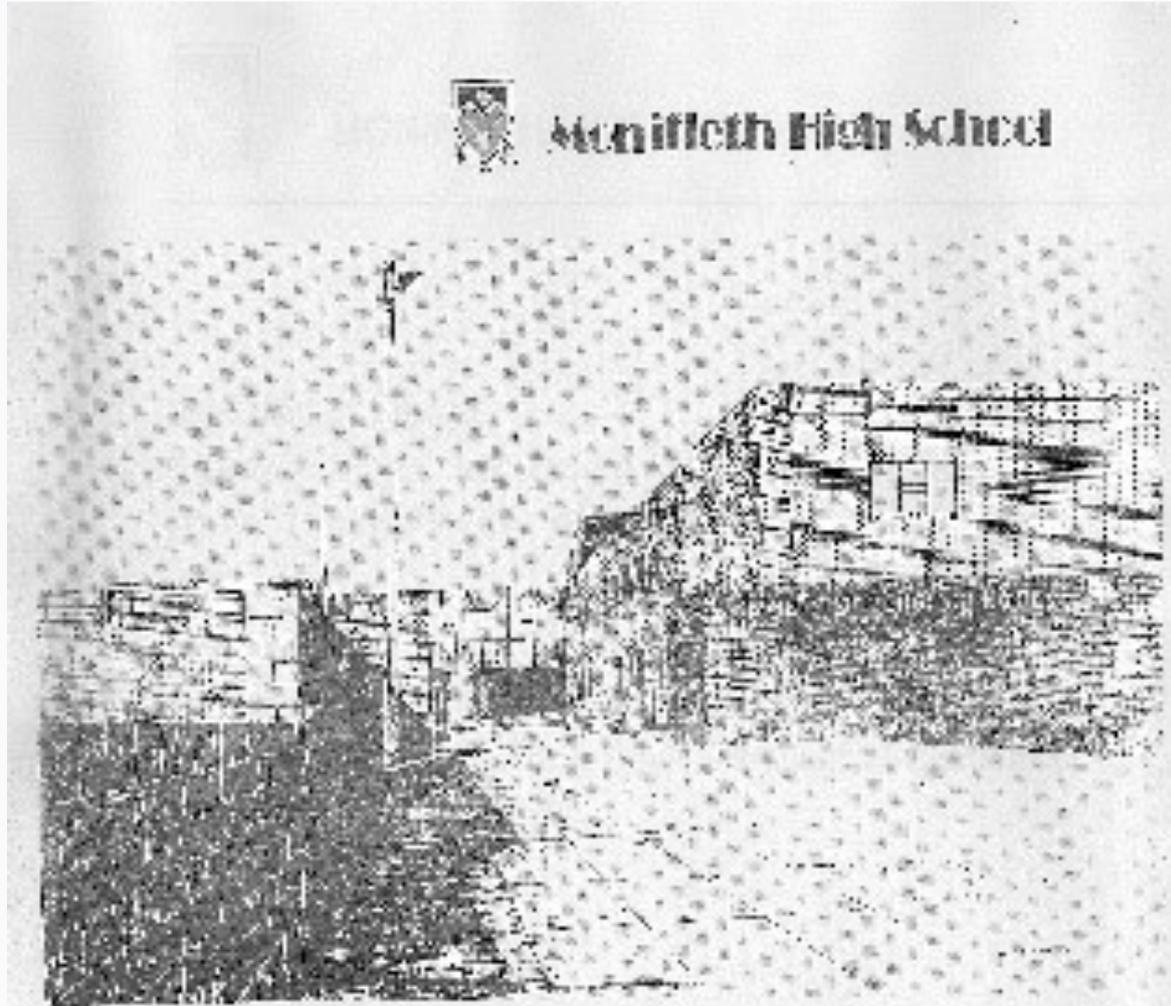




This staff photograph was taken in summer 1979, the last term in Melrose Terrace. The school started in 1976 with only S1 pupils, so each year brought a major increase in numbers of both pupils and staff.



By the time we moved to the new building in the following session (1979 - 80) the staff has grown again, but it is still only a fraction of our current total (almost 120 teachers and support staff!)



The new school building finally opened to pupils on Friday 17th August 1979. Pupils had been given 3 days of extra holidays to allow the staff to sort out all the furniture, stores, and books that had been transported from Melrose Terrace.

In fact, the building was only partially completed and Hector Low's School Log records that it is opened "minus sports complex, playing fields and link corridor". Most of the houses that now surround the school had not yet been built. The Rector's Log for 29th August 1979 records a request from Balmoissie Farm that pupils should not walk over the fields on their way to school.



It seems strange that the official opening of Monifieth High School was not until 17th November 1980. It was a high-profile event, however, with Tayside Region Councillors and distinguished guests. Lord Thomson of Monifieth formally declared the building open at 2.30pm. As the photographs on the following pages show, there were numerous displays by pupils as Lord Thomson “made a thorough tour of the building.” The Rector’s Log records that:



Lord Thomson worked hard at meeting as many pupils in the school as he could.



Lord Thomson (left) & Lady Thomson with Hector Low (right) and some star swimmers.



The school orchestra entertained guests at the opening concert.



How times have changed! The electronic typewriters in Business Studies and one of the Home Economics kitchens were displayed as up-to-date features on Opening Day. The typewriters and the gas cookers have long since been replaced.





Grey, unpainted breeze-block walls were thought to be fashionable (as in the Art Department). Visitors who have returned to the school in recent years always comment that the modern paintwork is far more cheerful than the original austere concrete.





By 1980 the school was already building an enviable reputation and this was a great chance to show everyone what we were doing.



Lord Thomson clearly enjoyed posing for the press photographs.



# R ECTORS



**Mr Hector Low**



Our first rector was Hector Low. A colourful and charismatic personality, he was affectionately known (though not to his face!) as 'Hector the Rector'. Having come from a very different type of school in the West of Scotland, he developed Monifieth High School from its first day until it became one of the highest achieving schools in Scotland.

Mr Low retired on 30th September 1994. A staff dinner celebrated his 18 years in the school. This mock 'Report' was issued at the dinner. Hector remained a good friend of the school, and returned to give a hilariously witty speech on the school's history at the 25th Anniversary Dinner



**Mr Jim Collins**



Mr Jim Collins took up post as our second Rector, on Monday 12th December 1994. The next 5 years was a time of rapid change in education. New courses, new technology (especially computers) and new ideas swept into the school. The school started to work more closely with business and industry. Work Experience took pupils out into the community.

Some of the traditions that we take for granted were started at this time – like our very successful Prefect system.

With local government reform in 1996, Monifieth was transferred from Tayside Region to Angus Council. This caused a major increase in our catchment area, which now covered the whole of south-west Angus. Young people from Birkhill, Liff, Auchterhouse and even Newtyle, who had previously gone to schools in Dundee, now traveled by school buses to Monifieth.

The school started to grow and by 2000 had topped 1000 pupils.





**Mr Richard Coton**



Our third Rector was Mr. Richard Coton, who served the school from May 2000 until June 2013, a period of just over 13 years.

Widespread changes have continued under his Rectorship, with significant improvements and extensions to the building, many new courses, and greater responsibility for pupils in helping to run the school.

During his Rectorship, the school became increasingly well known throughout Scotland. It became a lead school for key national projects, from the use of IT in Science to the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence to Transformative Innovation. High profile visits have come from a Minister for Education (twice), the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, and a range of senior civil servants and government advisers. Not only staff but also senior pupils have spoken in national conferences.

Additionally there have been international links with schools and education projects in India, Lebanon, Denmark, Canada and the USA. The school has established a partnership with Lipscomb University, Nashville, USA. This involves annual visits by professors and students from Lipscomb University, a bi-annual visit by Monifieth pupils to Nashville, and seminars for our pupils being delivered by American professors via video link.



One of our pupils with some children from our partner school in India



Our fourth Head Teacher is Mrs M-C McNally, who took up post in August 2013. Mrs McNally came to us from Webster's High school, Kirriemuir, where she has had extensive experience as Depute Head Teacher.



# Photo Gallery



Last staff photograph with Mr Hector Low, 1994.



By 1996, when this photo was taken, Mr Jim Collins was Rector.



Visit of Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Schools in March 2010



Visit of Sir Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary in November 2010



Early debating team success with Mrs Kate Legg (Assistant Principal Teacher of English who joined the school in 1979).



A Melodrama staged by the staff, which entertained pupils and colleagues alike in 1987.