

Tour of Norwich School 1954

Good afternoon ladies & gentlemen. My name is Timothy Maggs; I joined the First Form last September and became a boarder at the beginning of this term, so I can show you around School House as well as the parts of the school that the day-boys know.

We're standing at the main gate, which leads into the playground and is the only way into the school for pupils. On your left you will see End House; I'm afraid we won't be able to go in, as the Masters and the School Prefects have their Common Rooms there and other people are only allowed in at break times. Beside it, behind the wall, is Matron's garden which has a fig tree, a small lawn and flower beds.

These gates on our right are for the Bishop's Palace and, as you can see, they are usually kept closed. That's a problem if a ball goes over the wall: either you risk being beaten by the Headmaster if you're caught climbing over it or you lose the ball.

Now, if you're ready, we can start our tour by walking beside this wall to the gym. At the end of the wall is the Old Headmaster's Garden – that doesn't mean the old Headmaster, it means an old garden! At the moment it's a bit of a wilderness but the bike sheds are there and in the far corner is the room where we do woodwork with Mr Barwick.

If you look at the middle of the playground you'll see a concrete square with a metal plate in the middle. The older boys say it used to be the way into the air raid shelters but it's sealed up now. The boarders use it as a base for some of the games we play after school, especially 'Tin Can Tommy'. There's a wicket painted on the wall of the New Buildings and playground cricket is very popular. If you hit a ball into the Bishop's Palace garden you can climb over the wall by the bike sheds – but it's not so easy getting back again as there's nothing to climb onto like the bike sheds.

We can look in the gym... you're not supposed to go in with ordinary shoes on (except for the end-of-term school assembly, when we sit on the floor). For our gym lessons we change at this end, by the door, and put our clothes on the benches. There's a lot of apparatus and the ones we use most are the wallbars. We climb the ropes as well but the beams are only for senior boys.

Next to the gym is the Dyer's Lodge. This has only just been built – there used to be another building here but it was bombed during the war, so the Worshipful Company of Dyers gave the school some money to replace it. The boarders do their prep in two of the classrooms every night, supervised by House Prefects. There are four form rooms: on the ground floor UVJ (Mr Holden) and UV (Mr Blakeney), on the top floor IV (Mr Dearden) and LV (Mr Lumb). I like the coloured walls and the venetian blinds. The lampshades are very modern and there's a neon light for the blackboard. Downstairs in the basement there's a big cloakroom for the day-boys on the right and toilets and washbasins on the left. These toilets are much nicer than the ones by the Screens because they don't get so cold in winter.

I'll just show you the Screens before we go into the New Building. All the school notices are put up here: you can see this is the Headmaster's section, all the ones on that side are for games and on the other side they are for school societies and the day-boy houses. School milk is put on the tables before break – I don't know what it's like in winter, but in the Lower School our milk is put in front of the gas fires if it has frozen. You can come and look at the washbasins if you like – they all have taps which turn off automatically if you stop pressing them – and there's a jolly useful drinking fountain. The toilets are in that door, just before you get into the Quad, but I won't take you to see them, as they're a bit out of our way.

There are two doors into the New Building, this one from the screens and another one which leads into the Quad – we'll go out of that one when I've shown you inside. As we go up into the New Building you'll see the stairs down to the boiler room on your right. That's where Masters lives; he's the caretaker and as well as keeping the boilers going he is in charge of lost property.

I don't know why they call this the New Building, as it looks as old as School House! There are six form rooms here, three on each floor: to the left on this floor is MV (Mr Williamson), facing you is IIIJ (Mr Bowden – he's really the Reverend Mr Bowden) and beside the stairs is MVJ (Mr Harries); upstairs there's a list of all the Head Boys – you can see my father's name there for 1938; the form room on the right is IVJ (Mr Waterfield), facing you is LVJ (Mr Bates) and to the left is III (Mr Cain). The desks here are older than the ones in the Dyer's Lodge and they have ink wells and a groove for your pens and pencils: it stops them rolling down the slope. We are not allowed to use biros. Boys keep all their books in their desk and have to clear them out at the end of the year – there's a little hole in the bottom of every desk where you can push all the muck out.

As we go down the steps out of the New Building into the Quad you can see the science block to the right; I think there's a chemistry lab and a physics lab on the ground floor; upstairs is a classroom – it's good that the stairs are on the outside of the building, as they're a good place to hide in our games. In front of us is School

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House and the door you can see is for the music room – we have choir practice there after school on Mondays and Fridays with Mr Blakeney. The room stinks of lunch as some day-boys have to eat school dinners there.

The Quad is a good place for playing games like British Bulldogs and Chain Catch. All the boys in the Main School do playground PT at break time and there's a competition every term which School House usually wins, because we can practice after school. The House Prefects sometimes make us do playground PT before breakfast as a punishment. School House always uses the Quad for playground PT; the day-boy houses use the main playground.

We'll enter School House through this door in the bell-tower and we can look into the refectory as we go in... this is where the boarders have all their meals and I think some day-boys also have lunch here. It's odd that the windowsills are level with our feet on the outside but they are too high for me to reach from the floor in the refectory – I have to climb on one of the benches that we sit on. We're allowed to keep eggs on the windowsills: if the food at tea time is something you don't like, you can put in an egg. Everyone has to write their name on their eggs otherwise they could be used by somebody else. There's a small blackboard where the serving ladies write what's for tea, and beside it is a plate where you put your egg. At teatime the fried eggs are put on a separate table for you to collect – you know which is yours because they leave the shell on the plate with your name on it. We have to provide our own eggs; I'm lucky because my grandparents keep hens and they give me eggs on going-out Sundays but there are some boys who don't have any.

Go straight on when you go in the door... the refectory is on the right and beyond the glass door is the school library and the way to the Headmaster's study and the kitchens. We hang our blazers on the pegs outside the refectory when we go to tea because we have to go to chapel straight afterwards for a short service every night before prep. You can see the rope for the school bell here – it's odd the way it comes out through a pipe! The caretaker or his assistant, Mr Bush, rings it at the end of every lesson and at the end of the lunch hour. On your left is the way down to the crypt; it isn't used for anything but there's a rumour that it's haunted by a grey lady. The cupboards on your right are where the choir robes are stored... someone has to take them into the school library so that we can get robed on Sundays.

Be careful on the stairs, there isn't a handrail... the little door on the right leads into the School Chapel. Ignore the metal stairs and turn to your left when you get to the top of these ones. The sink there is very useful for cleaning our gym shoes, especially after we've had a cross-country run. All our boots & shoes have to be kept in the shoe racks that you see by the window in front of you; every morning after breakfast we have a shoe inspection after we've made our beds. It's much better to clean your shoes before you go to bed, as it's a bit of a crush in the morning! Now we've come to the studies: mine is the first one on the left; I share it with two other boys from my form – they aren't particularly my friends but we get on alright. There are only two chairs so it's not very good if we all want to use the table; we each have a shelf for our things and we keep the rest of our stuff in our tuck boxes on the floor – they can act as chairs if we just want to sit and read, but you can sit in the common room if there's a free chair. As you go along the corridor towards the little arch the studies belong to older boys and some of them have only two people in them. Mind the step as you go through the arch – this is where we have to wait for letter inspection on Sundays – I'll explain that later... the four studies between the arch and the common room are for House Prefects; the first one on the right is for the Head of the House who is the only person to have one to himself.

The common room is quite popular if the weather isn't good enough to play outside after school. You can see there's a library and anyone can take out a book to read while they sit here; you can also borrow books to read after you've finished your prep or in bed after lights out – that's a special thing about the summer: it's still light after the duty prefect has come round at "lights out" time to make sure we're all in bed so we're allowed to read until he comes back and tells us to put our books away. I've just finished reading "Coral Island" which is a bit like Swiss Family Robinson – but better. When I sit in the common room I enjoy books like "1066 and All That" or the Heath Robinson ones because you can read as much as you want and don't have to remember where you left off. The chairs are a bit old but they are more comfortable than the ones in our study because they're like baskets. Most of the boys who use the common room come to play table tennis but you have to be quick to get a chance of bagging a game – there's only about an hour between the end of school at 4.15 and the first bell for tea at 5.25.

We have to go back the way we came in... as you walk down the corridor you'll see the clock ahead of you; one of the punishments that the prefects can give you is to make you stand under the clock if you've been naughty. They can also give you lines to copy or make you write an essay as an imposition; there is special green paper for it, with lines very close together so you have to write more on a page; we call it impo paper. That door between the clock and the shoe-cleaning area leads to the Housemaster's study and a classroom where we write our letters home on Sunday... after going to chapel we have an hour when we have to write

home; after that we clean our studies and the prefects inspect them to make sure we have dusted all round – we have to have our own dusters – and emptied the wastepaper basket. Sometimes they make us do it again and this can be a time when people are sent to stand under the clock for being a nuisance. When the study inspection is over the Housemaster comes to the common room with our pocket money and we line up – juniors first, so I'm always the first in the queue – to have our letters inspected and collect our pocket money. When that's over there's some free time before lunch and most of us go to the common room to listen to the radio: Family Favourites is on and it's a chance to listen to some music.

To go up to the top floor we have to take the spiral stairs that we passed earlier. The door at the top leads into the matron's room but we're not allowed to use it. I think it's there so that matron can use the toilet – it's the only toilet in here and although, we're allowed to use it, most of the time it's only for emergencies and we use the ones in the Screens. Mind the extra step at the top of the stairs... on your right is the changing room where we keep all our games clothes; it also has a stand-up toilet, so we don't have to go to the Screens all the time. In front of you is the bathroom – you can see the four washbasins. The footbath is very useful after games but the shower isn't very popular, as it never gets very warm. Everyone has a bath twice a week and there's a list showing your bath night and the time you have to have it – the youngest boys have to go first and we only have 15 minutes each. As there are only two baths some of us have to go up to have ours immediately after prep so that everyone in dorm one can have a bath before lights out. Only senior boys in dorms 4 & 5 keep their stuff in this bathroom – the rest of us keep ours on the landing, where there are four more washbasins. Follow me down this little passage – sorry it's a bit dark – to dormitories 4 and 5, which are for senior boys. They're called the 'cubes' – I think that's short for cubicles, but I don't know why, as there are no cubicles here. Dorm 5 is the first one and is for the most senior boys who aren't prefects; through the arch is dorm 4. The bureaux down the middle are where they they keep their clothes; each boy has his own and the lid lifts up so things like hairbrushes, cufflinks and Brylcreem can be kept in the top; there's also a mirror inside the lid. At the far end of dorm 4 you can see a fire escape contraption at the window by the prefect's bed; there's one in my dorm too. Each dorm has its own prefect but all the prefects take turns to do 'lights out' duty. If we go back towards the bathroom I'll take you through this door to the oldest part of School House. On the left is the medicine room where we go if we feel ill or need to see Matron about something like getting a button put back on our shirt. Facing you as you go into the medicine room is the medicine cupboard, beside the door that leads to the toilet and the spiral stairs. The flowers on the table in the middle of the room are probably from Matron's garden beside End House. If you're feeling poorly and Matron doesn't know what to do with you, you can sit beside the window on the chair or the settee. There are two matrons: the proper one, Miss Cooper, who has a bedroom next to the medicine room – the door is beside the settee – and an assistant matron, Miss Lenton, who has a bedroom through dorm 3.

Leaving the medicine room you see the stairs down to the Housemaster's study. The only time we use them is if we are caught talking after 'lights out' and Mr Harries takes us down to his study for a beating. In the corner here is the linen cupboard where they keep all our sheets & towels. All our clothes and things have to be marked with our name and the number '6', so the laundry knows which belong to the school. Once a week we get out of bedmaking, as the maids have to put on the clean sheets for us. All the other days we have to make our beds after breakfast and the dorm prefect inspects them to see that we have done it properly – I had to learn how to do hospital corners. Sometimes we rag a boy in the dorm when he has a birthday: we make an apple pie bed for him – the prefect can't tell the difference from a proper one but it's funny when the boy tries to jump into bed before lights out.

The door next to the linen cupboard is the other way into Matron's bedroom and the door next to that is the sick room. Luckily I haven't been put in there yet. You can see the other washbasins on the landing and all the pegs where we hang our towels. Everyone in dorms 1, 2 and 3 has to use these, which means it's a bit of a rush in the morning but we only have to wash our hands and faces so it doesn't take too long.

Through this doorway we come to the other dorms; those stairs on our right go down to the maids' rooms but sometimes the Housemaster comes up them quietly to catch us talking after lights out. Dorm 3 on our left is the biggest here and the Assistant Matron's bedroom is over there in the far corner; under her bedroom is the Housemaster's bedroom and under that is the Headmaster's Study - when you walk out of the playground down the Close you can see him sitting at his desk. The windows in dorm 3 look out onto the Close and it's quieter than dorms 1 and 2, which look out onto Tombland.

Dorm 2 is the smallest but dorms 2 and 3 have lights out at the same time – half an hour after ours, as they have longer prep than we do: we only have one hour. If you finish your work before the end of prep you can read a book – but you have to ask permission from the prefect and if he doesn't think you've done your work properly he will come and inspect it before allowing you to read. Sometimes they tell you that the book you want to read isn't a good one and make you get another one, either from your study or from the house library.

You can see the fire escape thing more easily here – it's beside the prefect's bed again. I think the prefect has to open the window and one boy gets into the loop and it lowers you down to the ground, then the prefect pulls it up again and the next person goes... we're not allowed to touch it and nobody has practised using it so I hope it works!

Dorm 1 is for the youngest boys, so this is where I sleep. You can tell whose bed is whose because we all have our own rug on top of the blankets – mine is the blue one here. Lights out for us is 8 o'clock; prep ends at 7.15 and we're supposed to come upstairs at 7.30 but as long as we're in bed when the prefect comes it doesn't matter. Sometimes the Housemaster comes to turn out the lights.

We've been given special permission to use the maids' stairs today so we'll leave dorm 1 and go there now. As we leave the dorm you can see the maids' bathroom on your left; there's a toilet there, too, but we're not allowed to use it except in a real emergency, like if you're going to be sick. At the bottom of the stairs turn left and walk past the maids' bedrooms, turn left again to go through the doorway towards the Housemaster's study – the stairs on your left lead down into the kitchen – pass the Housemaster's study and we'll go down the stairs (if you go through the door at the top of the stairs you'll come back to the clock and the studies). We're lucky to be able to use these stairs today – turn left at the bottom; normally boys aren't allowed in this part of the school unless you have been sent to the Headmaster or you have to see his secretary. The secretary's office is on the right before the main door and there's an interview room opposite. As we leave the Main School through the Front Door the Erpingham Gate is on our right; we'll walk past Lord Nelson's statue so you can see Comp's garden and Number 68. You get a good view of the School Chapel from here and you can also see the Cathedral Choir School – it's not a proper school any more, as the cathedral choirboys all come to our school, but it's where they go for their choir practice. They have to go there for first period on Mondays and Fridays and for last period on Wednesdays so Mr Blakeney has choir practice for the trebles in the school choir at the same time. Comp's garden is next to that; Comp is a chemistry master in the Main School and sometimes he sells flowers that he has grown there. The ruined arch in the garden was part of the old monastery.

Number 68 is the building in front of Comp's garden. I've never been in here before because it's mostly for the Sixth Form. Mind the step as you go through the door. The stairs on your right go up to three classrooms; we'll look at them later... first we must visit the Sixth Form Library. It's very nice room, isn't it, with a nice view of the garden. It's a bit like the School Library with big tables in the middle so you can sit round and read. The classroom next door is nicer than any other classrooms because of the view into the garden. Halfway up the stairs is a classroom on your right and at the top of the stairs the room on your right is for private study so it has tables like the library but the room at the end of the corridor is an ordinary classroom with desks.

We have to go out the way we came in... turn left outside the main door.

Before we turn down towards the Lower Close have a look to your right; we have our art lessons in the room over the Ethelbert Gate. Mr Smith takes us there from the Lower School; it's a strange place and we have to get the water from a tap downstairs so each week we take turns to bring it upstairs. We use powder paint and have to leave our paintings to dry at the end of the lesson, so at the beginning of the next lesson we have to find them again because the Art Master has to tidy them away for his lessons.

We used to be able to walk past Nurse Cavell's grave and through the big gates into Bishopsgate but for some reason they stopped us – I don't know if it was because we walked across the grass instead of keeping to the road – anyway, we now have to go through gusgogs (the proper name is Gooseberry Gardens) so I'll take you that way. There's a little shop beside the kissing gate and although we're not meant to go into it, lots of us do when we have some pocket money... you can get gobstoppers for a penny or a ha'penny and sweet cigarettes are very popular but my favourites are sherbet lemons.

The Lower School is opposite the Great Hospital. It doesn't look very much like a hospital and the main gates seem to be closed all the time. There's a memorial which says something about King Henry, I think – you can look at it if you want but it's quite high up on the wall. The Lower School is what I think a school should look like! But I don't like the playground: the chipping are rough and they can cut you if you fall down. There are three classrooms here but they're joined together and you have to go into the the middle one (Form II) from the cloakroom. Form IJJ is on the left and Form I is on the right. The partition between my form and Form II can be opened if we need a big space for something. Having windows in the partitions makes the classrooms nice and bright but it's sometimes possible to hear what's happening in the next room. We come into Form II for music, as Mrs Stephenson plays the piano for us, and also to listen to radio programmes. In winter the milk is put in front of the gas fire until break time if it's very cold. I don't really like the taste of warm milk – but it's better than having a lump of ice!

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If we go across the School Field we can get back to the Lower Close a different way and you can see the where we play games. As we go to the field we will pass the Lower School toilets. I think the teachers have one in the cloakroom but we have to use this outside one, even when it's freezing.

In winter we played football, although that's only for Form One, everyone else plays rugger. In the summer we play cricket. There's a cricket square in the middle of the field and it's roped off most of the time. If a ball goes there we're not allowed to get it and have to ask Mr Boswell, the Groundsman, to fetch it for us – if you can't see him on the field, he's probably in the pavilion. Mr Greengrass is the other groundsman and he has a clever machine for making white lines on the pitches: it has a tank of whitewash and a big wheel in front; some other wheels carry the whitewash from the tank onto the big wheel, which makes the line. To make sure the lines are straight, he ties a piece of string between two pegs.

If you look across the field to your left you will see a big mast. That's part of the Brig, which is the School Scout Troop's HQ. The mast is actually on the river bank, which is a bit of a swiz, but the boat is in the river – I'm not sure if it moves up and down with the tides. I'm in the cubs and we have our meetings in the gym, but next year we're moving into a Nissen hut on Hospital Meadow.

The changing rooms are in the buildings on the far side of the field. In winter we have to have a shower after games because the field is muddy. First we have a hot one to wash off the dirt, then we have a cold one – I hate that! Most of us run through it as quickly as we can but Mr Smith makes sure that we all go through it. We can leave the School Field by this little gate beside the changing rooms.

As we go back up the Close I'll show you where the Headmaster's House is... it's just down that little lane, beside the kissing gate. There's a wisteria on the front of the house and I don't know how it can live, as there's no garden: the front door opens onto the street! Most mornings as we go down the Close to the Lower School we pass the Headmaster walking up to the Main School so we always have to raise our caps to him and he usually says "Good Morning".

If you don't want to come back to the Main School with me you can go when you want to. I hope you've enjoyed the tour. If there's anything else you'd like to know, please ask.

Thank you very much for listening to me.

Form	Class		Building	Teacher	Nickname	Houses
One	I	Y5	Lower School	Mrs Spruce	Ma Spruce	School
Two	IIJ	Y6	Lower School	Mr Smith	Smithy	Parker
	II		Lower School	Mrs Stephenson	Ma Stevo	Nelson
Three	IIIJ	Y7	New Building	Revd Bowden	Billy	Coke
	III		New Building	Mr Cain	Tyson	Brooke
Four	IVJ	Y8	New Building	Mr Waterfield	Boggy	
	IV		Dyer's Lodge	Mr Lumb	Harry	
Lower Fifth	LVJ	Y9	New Building	Mr Bate	Sam	
	LV		New Building	Mr Williamson	Pop Willie	
Middle Fifth	MVJ	Y10	New Building	Mr Harries	Tweedy	
	MV		Dyer's Lodge	Mr Dearden	Dan	
Upper Fifth	UVJ	Y11	Dyer's Lodge	Mr Holden	Jack	
	UV		Dyer's Lodge	Mr Blakeney	Beewee	
Sixth	VIB Arts	Y12	Number 68	? Mr Self	Freddy	

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Form	Class		Building	Teacher	Nickname	Houses
	VIB Science		End House	? Mr Gittos	Taffy	
	VIA Arts	Y13	Number 68	?		
	VIA Science		End House	? Mr Mills	Comp	
Upper Sixth	UVI	-	End House	?		