

A walk around the grounds of

King Edward VII School

Formerly Wesley College 1838-1905

Enter by the gate on Newbould Road. To your left, where there is now a small car park, the area was the **Masters' Garden** in Wesley College's time. Some terracing, shrubs and trees remain in the top corner.

To the right is the **Close**. In Wesley College's time this was the school's football and cricket field. Satisfactory for football (there were no all-weather courts then) but very narrow for cricket. There must have been easy boundaries to be had in the Nineteenth Century.

During WW2 shelters were built under the Close between September and November 1939. They were built on an M tunnel pattern and could accommodate all 800 boys at the school. They are still intact under the Close. Also in early WW2 a RAF Barrage Balloon unit operated from the Close.

Between 2010-2012 there was a two-story temporary school annexe built in the SW corner of the Close during the refurbishing of the Main Building.

The Main Building:

Built between 1837-1840 by the Methodist Connexion in Sheffield, it was intended to serve as a prestigious boarding school for the sons of wealthy Methodist laymen. This was the Methodists' answer to the Collegiate School built on Collegiate Crescent by the Anglicans and opened in 1836. That building is now part of SHU Collegiate campus.

The architect of Wesley College was William Flockton (1806-64), who previously had made his local reputation by designing The Mount, nicknamed "Flockton's Folly" at the time. The Wesley College building was built in the Palladian style with sixteen Corinthian pillars, and described by James Montgomery as a "Palace for the children of the King of Kings," Flockton later designed the Workhouse (later N. Edge Hospital) on Union Road, Nether Edge.

It took over two years to complete the building. The central pavilion was completed by 1838 and the school was opened for 161 pupils. The eastern pavilion was completed in 1839 and the western pavilion in 1840.

Wesley College's longest serving Headmaster, Rev. Henry Shera, was known to amuse the boys by kicking a football right over the building. If they were still not amused he would throw a cricket ball over the building.

The Main Facade, as well as the east and west facades, look exactly the same today as they did in 1840. It had cost £18,000 to build Wesley College in 1837-40 and it was sold for a similar amount to the City Council in 1904. The City Council's aim was to create a prestigious boys' school for the sons of the upper middle and professional classes of Sheffield. To demonstrate their ambitions they petitioned the King to grant the use of his name for their new school and he agreed in December 1904.

However, the **interior of the school** was completely altered by the City Council between 1905-06. Only the classical Entrance Hall would be recognised by former pupils of Wesley College after 1906, everything else was significantly altered. The superb Assembly Hall, modelled in the style of a Methodist chapel, was also created at this time, and not in 1838 as is often believed.

The Eastern Side of the Close:

There are now three buildings of significance on the eastern side of the Close, the **Lewis Building** (1995), the **Sports Hall** (2011) and the **Swimming Pool** (1936).

In Wesley College's time this area was largely a long sloping quad with a couple of Eton fives courts (they survived into the post WW2 era) and an **open air swimming pool** that was neglected in KES's time and whose dank waters became covered with slime.

The **Swimming Pool** was constructed on the site of the old open-air pool. It was built and owned by the City Council as part of a policy of creating a network of dual use pools. By the outbreak of World War Two only King Edward's Pool was completed and up and running for use by the school and the public. After the war Rowlinson School's pool was another dual use facility that was built.

The King Edward's Pool was opened in October 1936 by Sir Stanley Jackson, the former England and Yorkshire Cricketer, MP and Governor of Bengal. After the World Student Games in 1991 the pool was no longer required by the City Council and was rescued by a Trust in 1992. They have successfully run it to this day and it is still called King Edward VII Swimming Pool.

The Lewis Building, (known simply as the New Building from 1995-2008) was designed by Sue Williams, of the City Council Architects' Department, to relieve a chronic shortage of classroom space. Classes were taught in mobile classrooms parked around the north-east end of the school grounds and also in Melbourne Annexe, a large house at the top of Newbould Lane that had once been the home of KES Headmasters from 1905-38. It is now part of the Girls' High School.

The financing of the new building (£1.26m) was found from the sale of the Lynwood site at the top of Clarkehouse Road. The Lynwood building had once been the home of KES boarders and then served as accommodation for the school's Art and Music Departments until 1991. It became the Aunt Sally public house and is currently known as the Francis Newton.

The New Building of 1995 housed a number of school departments including modern languages and music and in 2008 it was **renamed the Lewis Building** to mark the retirement of Dr. Michael Lewis, the Headteacher of KES from 1988-2008.

The New Sports Hall: Before 2011 the only gym facilities on the Upper School site were inside the main building on the ground floor and were totally inadequate for purpose. When the school was refurbished under the Labour Government's "Building Schools for the Future" programme, the opportunity arose to build a medium sized Sports Hall behind the Lewis Building. It was completed in the summer of 2011.

Its size was constrained by the area of land available but it is large enough to contain a full size basketball court/ five-a-side football pitch. There are also classrooms for PE studies in the two storey building.

The school's main sports facilities are at Lower School, off Darwin Lane at Crosspool. They comprise a large sports hall, a gymnasium, playing fields, tennis courts and a large multi-purpose all-weather pitch.

In front of the SE corner of the main building is the school's **War Memorial**. It was unveiled in 1921 to commemorate the school's 92 dead of the First World War. After the Second World War the dates 1939-45 were added to the base of the cross to remember the school's 110 dead of that conflict. Within the railings is a commemorative tablet erected by the Old Edwardians Association to honour the memory of Marine Robert Griffin, an Old Edwardian who was killed in the Falklands War in 1982, while serving with the Royal Marine Commandoes.

The Rear of the Building.

This area was transformed by the BSF building programme between 2010-2012. The utilitarian "New" Wing, built in 1954 and attached to the NW corner of the main school building, was demolished and replaced by a rather graceful three storey **STEM building**, containing science laboratories and engineering and technical workshops. It was designed by HLM Partnership architects based in Sheffield, and is linked to the main building by attractive bridge corridors. It was completed in November 2011.

On the NE side of the main building there are two new single story extensions. One houses the **Food Technology Department** and the kitchen extensions and is attached to the STEM

building. The other building, with a doorway opening on to the eastern quad, houses the **Learning Support Department**, and includes a parents' room and a Careers Guidance room.

To the rear of the STEM building visitors can see the massive concrete **retaining wall** that was constructed to support the 19th Century perimeter wall, after a substantial portion collapsed in October 2011 leaving an alarmingly cavernous gap in the pavement on Glossop Road. Traffic was seriously disrupted as the road had to be closed until mid January 2012.

The Eastern Quadrangle. This area was once littered with mobile classrooms but as part of the BSF programme it was once again laid out in an attractive pattern. Included in the area are two pieces of **public art** that were also part of the BSF programme. The two pieces were both created from steam bent strips of wood with a steel spine and were designed by Charlie Whinney, a Cumbrian sculptor, who also designed the public art at High Storrs School and at several Harvey Nichols stores.

The final building, before passing through the gates onto Glossop Road, is the **Porter's Lodge**. This was built in 1839 and was the family home of school porters well into the 20th Century. In more recent times it has housed the school's peripatetic music tuition and the offices of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, an activity that is well supported at KES.

The School's **coat of arms** is on the signboard outside the gates.

It was created in 1905 and contains the arms of the City of Sheffield (top), the arms of the Royal Grammar School (1604-1905) (left) and those of John Wesley and the University of London (right). --*Wesley College was also an outlying college of London University in the 19th Century*—

*The school motto is **Fac Recte Nil Time** (Act Honourably and Fear Naught)*

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