

# *Kibble - A Lasting Legacy*

## *Sport, Recreation and Leisure*



*1859 - 2009*



**Kibble**

[www.kibble.org](http://www.kibble.org)

# Introduction

Sport, recreation and leisure have always been important elements of Kibble's curriculum. These have taken many forms and have changed and developed over the decades, partly due to factors such as new Health and Safety legislation coming into force. These activities have, however, always been recognised as important to the development and rehabilitation of boys in the centre, in terms of contributing to their confidence-building and self-esteem, self-discipline, ability to work as part of a team, leadership qualities, and general physical and emotional well being.

## Historical Background

Following the Boer War (1899-1902) and the large proportion of potential military recruits found to be unfit for service, there was acknowledgement at national levels of the need for a National Efficiency campaign. This campaign sought to address concerns about physical degeneration and, largely middle class, fears about moral degeneration. The campaign led to measures such as the creation of ante natal and child health screening, free milk for children, school meals and medical examinations, and family allowance, or child benefit, paid directly to mothers. It also influenced the drive to encourage young people to engage with youth organisations, such as the Boys' Brigade and Boy Scouts. Mr. William Dock, Rector of Dunoon Grammar School, alluded to this campaign in Kibble's records from 1905 when he presided over a meeting at Kibble of the Renfrewshire branch of The Educational Institute of Scotland. He reported that one of the speakers 'read a most interesting paper on "Physical Deterioration", with special reference to school children'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 16th December 1905)*

It was also recognised that membership of youth organisations could have a positive impact in reducing juvenile crime and that post-school crime incidence was appreciably lower among boys who were members of groups such as Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigade.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ferguson, T., *The Young Delinquent in his Social Setting*, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, p.37

# Youth Organisations

## Youth Organisations

Kibble was no exception to these trends; records from 1912 highlight the school's involvement with such youth organisations:

'The company of Boy Scouts is in full vigour and proves a valuable aid in maintaining the high tone of the school. This company was received by His Majesty in Edinburgh in July and was much praised for its smartness.'

*(Minutes of Education Committee Meetings 1910-1914, 3rd April 1912 Minutes)*

Boys were also encouraged to join the Army Cadet Force, as one of our former pupils told us:

'...there was the Cadets, which I did; I was the first guy ever to become a Warrant Officer in the Cadets, the local Renfrewshire Cadets.'

*(Bob Burniston, Kibble pupil 1956-58, interviewed 24/07/07)*

Bob won the discus throwing in the Scottish Cadet Championship in 1957, breaking the record at that time. He went on to have a successful career in the Army, firstly as a surveyor and then reaching the rank of Sergeant Major in the Physical Training Corps. After leaving the Army, he emigrated to Canada and worked for sixteen years as Fitness Coordinator for the Toronto Police until his retirement. Bob also ended up being in the top three in the world for discus throwing in the 65-69 age group. He therefore exemplifies the positive impact that sporting opportunities can have in turning someone's life around.

# School Sports

One of the earliest references to sport in Kibble was found in an 1868 Board of Trustees report, which says that the playground had been enlarged and that the boys played cricket there in the summer and football in the winter.

*(Brown, Robert, The History of Paisley Vol. II, Paisley: Cook, 1886)*

Therefore, less than ten years after the school opened, there was recognition of the importance of sport as an integral part of Kibble's activities. Football in particular has been consistently popular throughout our history and to the present day:

'The boys therein were engaged at football in the playground accompanied by a few old scholars, visitors'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, Mr. Abercrombie's Report, 24th March 1883)*

This focus on the benefits of sporting activity was a continuing trend throughout the centre's history, as highlighted again in October 1902, with the opening of a new gymnasium by the Honourable Thomas Cochrane MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Department.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 6th October 1902)*

Also, in 1910:

'Mr Love (Superintendent) brought before the Committee the desirability of having a play field for the boys. A good part of the playground has been taken up with the new buildings. A field near at hand would be a great acquisition to the boys.'

*(Minutes of Education Committee Meetings 1910-1914, 6th July 1910 Minutes)*

A field behind the main school building was subsequently rented for this purpose, for the sum of £12 per annum.

# School Sports

In 1959, Kibble's centenary year, a commemorative booklet reported that boys from the centre had reconstructed and re-laid the sport field and football pitch. The running track (laid in 1955) was the only one in Paisley and, like the school football pitch, was very much in demand for special occasions by local organisations. St. Mirren F.C. also used it during periods in which its own ground was undergoing re-seeding.

*(The Kibble School 1959-1959 [Centenary Booklet], p.12)*

This is an example of Kibble's historical and continuing principle of engaging with, and providing amenities to, the local community.

Currently, in spite of further new buildings on campus, sporting facilities have been expanded to include a basketball court, skateboard rink and a swimming pool. So this very early focus on the provision of sporting facilities continues to this day.

Kibble teams and individuals participated in inter-school competitive sports, including boxing, swimming, lifesaving and football with some success; in 1911, for example, Kibble won the Abercorn Football Challenge Cup, and, in 1950, Kibble and St. John's were joint holders of the Senior Boxing Cup and Kibble held the Senior Football Cup.

## Recreation and Leisure

Recreational and leisure activities have played an equally important part in Kibble's activities throughout its history, although these too have covered a wide range of activities and have changed over the years.

In 1868, the Trustees' Report stated that the school had its own flute band, for which uniforms had been provided.

*(Brown, Robert, the History of Paisley Vol. II, Paisley: Cook, 1886)*

By 1891, the band required new flutes, which would cost 'about £3. 17/-'

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 16th July 1891)*, so it appears that they were well used during the intervening twenty-three years.

# Recreation and Leisure

## Pictures and Film

Entertainment in 1887 included a magic lantern show for the boys and, in October 1889, the magic lantern was still in use, showing 'a display of views of Paris exhibition'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 17th October 1887 and 9th October 1889)*

The magic lantern was still going strong in 1904, when the children were entertained with 'views illustrative of the ascent of Mont Blanc and views in Switzerland'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, Mr. James Clark, 29th October 1904)*

More modern variations of this type of entertainment have continued: during the winter, weekly films were shown in the school throughout the 1940s and 1950s, when visits to the cinema during weekend leave were also popular; videos and, more recently, DVDs still provide evening entertainment.

This is perhaps surprising, given the perception of cinema houses' association with juvenile crime during the early 20th century, recorded in both Kibble's own records and wider literature. Author Geoffrey Pearson discusses a 1917 report by the National Council of Public Morals:

...the National Council of Public Morals addressed itself with particular vigour to the belief 'that the picture house is responsible for the increase in juvenile crime, and that boys are often led to imitate crimes (larceny or burglary) which they have seen in the pictures, or to steal money that they may pay for admission'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Pearson, Geoffrey, *Hooligan, A history of respectable fears*, London, MacMillan Education Ltd, 1983, p.32

# Recreation and Leisure

Nonetheless, as Pearson points out, the report discounted the fear of imitative crime, concluding that 'it certainly has not been proved that the increase in juvenile crime generally has been consequent on the cinema'<sup>3</sup>

"Picture houses" and "picture shows" are cited repeatedly in Kibble's records as a cause of delinquency for boys admitted during 1911 and 1912. The strength of feeling about this perceived phenomenon is illustrated in the language used at the time:

'...fond of attending picture shows and would get money any possible way to satisfy his craving for this'

'In majority of cases...found that the Moving Picture Shows have exercised an influence over the boys, who have used every means in their power – honest or otherwise – in order to satisfy their desire to attend these entertainments'.

*(Minutes of Education Committee Meetings 1910-1914, 22nd December 1911 Minutes)*

<sup>3</sup> Pearson, Geoffrey, *Hooligan, A history of respectable fears*, London, MacMillan Education Ltd, 1983, p.32

This lends a certain irony to the fact that two members of Kibble staff, a joiner and another staff member, left to open a 'cinema house' in Castle Street in 1915!

*(Minutes of Industrial Committee Meetings 1905-1928, 2nd July 1915 Minutes)*

The focus on potential causes of juvenile crime during the first half of the twentieth century reflected increases in juvenile delinquency rates in this period; the figures began to increase steeply in 1910, reaching record proportions in 1914-18. The number then fell after the First World War, before a sharp increase in the 1930s, and reached new record high levels at the outbreak of World War II in 1939.<sup>4</sup> These facts may, therefore, indicate that statistical increases were more related to economic deprivation and the hardships of wartime, rather than to forms of popular entertainment.

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson, T., *The Young Delinquent in his Social Setting*, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, p.11

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# Recreation and Leisure

The seriousness of contemporary concerns about the potentially negative effects of some leisure activities were again highlighted in 1917, when James Cooper of Glasgow University gave an address at Kibble to a joint meeting of Teachers' Associations of Renfrewshire on 'Training to use Leisure'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 24th March 1917)*

Other entertainments included a concert given by members of Paisley Opera Club in May 1906 and, later that year, 'excellent entertainment given to the boys in honour of Halloween'.

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, 12th May 1906 and 2nd November 1906)*

## Expressive Arts

Expressive arts currently play an important role at Kibble, with pupils and staff working together to produce two shows a year: a summer talent show and a Christmas pantomime. These utilise and develop a range of skills and talents, from set and video design/production to music and dance, as well as team working skills.

There is, however, a lengthy tradition of such activities and entertainments in the school:

'Visited school this evening, when the boys enjoyed an improvised concert.'

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, Mr. James Clark, 9th October 1889)*

'The meeting with parents and guardians of the boys this afternoon was very successful...there was an interesting programme of songs, duets, instrumental solos and readings.'

*(Visitors' Book 1859-1963, Mr. Clive MacKean, 29th October 1910)*

# Expressive Arts

Mark McGraw, a pupil/resident during the late 1940s/early 1950s has also recalled singing and performing in school concerts during his time at Kibble.

*(Mark McGraw, Kibble pupil 1948-1951, interviewed 01/02/2008)*

Ballroom dancing was also taught in the 1950s, as it was felt 'that if the boys can dance properly, they will not be compelled to "rock and roll".'

*(The Kibble School 1859-1959, commemorative centenary booklet, p.16)*

An early precursor to 'Strictly Ballroom'!

Another former pupil, now a member of staff at Kibble, is a living example of the transformative power of music:

'It made a big impact on me, you know? I mean, I...that was my first experience of...being in the Kibble was my first experience of seeing somebody singing and playing the guitar, which is basically what I went on to do.'

*(Alan Mitchell, Kibble pupil 1986, Kibble staff member 2005-present, interviewed 15/12/2006)*

Alan has had some success as a professional musician but switched to a career in residential childcare. He now works in classroom support at Kibble, as well as tutoring pupils in guitar playing, and continues to write and perform music.



# Outdoor Pursuits

Outdoor activities have included such diverse pursuits as moped driving, canoeing, hill walking, mountain biking and grouse beating. Summer camps have also been a key feature, with the annual trip to Dunure encompassing many activities until its demise in the 1970s/1980s. The late Clark McKechnie (*Interviewed 07/07/2005*), a Residential Social Worker at Kibble for some thirty years, remembered playing "cowboys and Indians", diving and swimming in the sea, dam-building, and collecting agates while at Dunure.

Jean Logan, formerly a Residential Social Worker, and now an Online Assessor at Kibble, highlights the lack of money available for leisure during the 1980s, meaning that staff had to be creative in providing activities at evenings and weekends:

'...all the fun was outside, you know, you made your own entertainment. We used to take them up the hills and do night time exercises with them and play soldiers. I mean, it sounds crazy but it was great fun, and everybody got into it, the staff and boys...But...eh...I would say probably making your own entertainment was more fun.'

*(Jean Logan, Kibble staff member 1986-present, interviewed 08/03/2006)*

The value of outdoor pursuits is still very much recognized, as one of Kibble's former Principal Teachers explained as he spoke about mountain biking trips:

'...it's absolutely fabulous because it brings in all sorts of things like their fitness, the skill of actually negotiating some of these trails in the forest, reading a map...eh...taking a shot at the responsibility of being the leader. I always say the slowest guy is actually the guy who determines the pace, not the fastest guy, so they have to take responsibility for setting a suitable pace. And then again, they're out in the wilds and they're looking at things, and they'll often stop and say, "Check it out – there's an eagle sitting on that post over there"... as I've always said, it's behaviour-related but sometimes we deliberately take the kind of high risk character who is causing mayhem in the school, to try and break the monotony of school that he's not "buying into", and say, "Well this is what's available to you". Give them a kind of idea and say, "Right, we'll take you again. Honestly, we will take you again but you need to attend classes, we need to check your points to make sure you're, you know...barring the wee hiccup here and there, you need to understand it's behaviour related".'

*(David Speirs, Principal Teacher 1984-2008, interviewed 08/02/2007)*

# Conclusion

Sport continues to play a key role in Kibble's curricular and extra-curricular activities. As well as offering fun activities for our young people, sport also represents an effective means of promoting general health, fitness and wellbeing and developing teamwork and leadership skills, as well as raising awareness of issues such as drugs abuse.

More recent sporting competition and achievements at Kibble include: P.E staff and selected boys taking part in West of Scotland Basketball league (Division 3) 1998/99 on Monday evenings after school; participating in regional competition at St James's playing fields and finals at Scotstoun Leisure Centre in a Glasgow City Councils Football Against Drugs Initiative in 1998; full 15-a-side Rugby games against Cathkin High School and Crookston High School; we were invited in 2001 to join Small Schools Football League against other schools in our own sector; 2002/03 reached the final of the League Cup - defeated 5-4 on penalties after extra time; 2003/04 League Champions (undefeated), League Cup Final Somerset Park (Ayr United's Ground); 2007/08 League and Cup Winners - won Cup 4-2 against St Phillip's at Ochillview Park, home to Stenhousemuir; competed in various inter schools competitions such as cross-country at Falkland school, badminton at Ballikinrain school; Golf Tournament Winners November 8th 2007 at Harthill Golf Club.

Two boys and two members of staff from Kibble also participated in a Global Citizenship initiative, along with fourteen other pupils from St. Paul's and St. Roch's schools in Glasgow and Plockton High School in Highland Region. This initiative culminated in a working trip to a shanty township in Ecuador, where the people live in abject poverty. Their homes were insect-infested bamboo huts without running water. There is no infrastructure such as a sewage system, no medical provision and educational opportunities are limited. Working in conjunction with local people, the group spent ten days replacing the floors of two bamboo houses, equipping and painting a nursery, and equipping an I.T. suite with computers that they took with them. They also supported the food kitchen. They then spent four days in the Galapagos Islands, where they visited the Darwin Centre and toured two islands, observing the wildlife and looking into the impact of Global Warming.

This project enabled sixteen young people to experience a life-changing opportunity to become ambassadors of Global Citizenship and to become confident responsible citizens and contributors to society. The impact of such experiences is evident in the comments of one of the young people from Kibble who participated in the project:

'I felt guilty about the amount of moaning I do every day in Scotland. I loved being able to help. I loved the people I met and I really enjoyed my experience. I would do it again in a minute as it was life-changing and I had the greatest sense of achievement on my return.'

Currently, one of our young people and a member of staff are planning to participate in a Nepal trek later this year.



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**If you are interested in finding out more about the sport, recreation and leisure history of Kibble, or perhaps you would like to contribute to it by telling your own story, please contact:**

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