

Work and Training

Kibble provided skills training from its earliest days, in order to equip boys to become self-sufficient when their time came to leave. One of the main trades taught was shoemaking – which seems ironic, given that many of the first residents were sent to Kibble for theft of shoes. On their discharge, boys were commonly apprenticed to external shoemakers. Tailoring and farming were also taught and, during the first quarter of the 20th century, some boys were given the option of emigrating to Canada or Australia to take up farm work there.



Landscape gardening training



Catering training



Furniture renovation training



Car mechanic training

As the 20th century progressed, other trades, such as joinery and bricklaying were added to Kibble's skills training portfolio. Bob Burniston, a Kibble boy during the mid 1950s recalled the high standard of joinery training and told us that he still uses these skills to this day. 'Mr. Leggatt was the joiner shop master who taught me a considerable amount. He was a very exacting woodworker who did everything properly and with patience. A very likeable man who was a guiding light in my future'.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century the emphasis moved away from vocational training to focus more on academic qualifications, such as Standard Grades. However, as the twenty-first century dawned, there was growing recognition of the value of these earlier approaches to training young people. A former member of staff explained it in this way:

'The school had a huge sea-shift towards written qualifications. And now we've taken a step back, and everything that's happening in KibbleWorks, as I said before, it's not new; we've done it all before, it's just that we chose to walk away from that and leave it. And we did ourselves a great disservice there and I'm glad to see there's some kind of resurgence in this "hands-on" work experience.'

The current KibbleWorks programme offers a diverse range of vocational and work training skills, including car mechanics, catering, internet radio production, picture framing, gardening, metalwork, joinery, original music composition, design and production of promotional items, warehouse skills, and office administration.