

# Draft

## CHAPTER 4

# Schools and Colleges

In 1870 the School Board for London came into being under the Elementary Education Act. Just before the Act passed, the Society of Arts published 'an inquiry into the existing state of education in Battersea', the last of four such it sponsored in

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1750 with debts of over £400 owing to him for board and tuition of a large number of boys and a few girls, some of good standing. Powell's establishment had a schoolroom and a dining room for the boys. The suggestion that this was Sir Walter St John's own school in Battersea High Street, the oldest in the parish with a continuous history, is questionable.<sup>3</sup>

There are further passing references to private boarding schools in the parish during the Georgian era, most of them in the central 'village' area. Around the 1770s the Rev. John Gardner, as yet still the parish curate and doubtless seeking to supplement his income, issued a detailed prospectus for an academy for a maximum of thirty boys (boarders only) in his house. Mathematics, geography, music, drawing and fencing were all offered; decorum was punctiliously observed at mealtimes, Gardner told prospective parents, while 'the French Tongue is constantly spoken in the Family' – fees, £30 per year, or 40 guineas for 'Parlour Boarders'.<sup>4</sup> After Gardner took over as vicar

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Village School, and linked now with Battersea Training College, the pioneering college for teachers established at Old Battersea House near by. That apart, there were just two tiny schools: one of 1826 in Battersea New Town, Nine Elms, and another of 1840 linked to the Battersea Chapel, York Road. All other instruction took place privately. The voluntary schools mentioned by Allen were nearly all of the 1850s and '60s, and church- or chapel-affiliated. Most were still small, though the largest, Christ Church Schools, catered for 600.

The continuous programme of school-building embarked upon in Battersea after 1870 can be set against that backdrop. The School Board for London spent the next three decades battling to overcome the shortfall exposed by Allen and keep pace with the population. It did so effectively enough to put voluntary school-building agencies in the shade. Though six of the twenty board schools then built have been demolished and only eight are still in educational use, enough remain to stamp the Battersea skyline. Indeed the famous vignette from the Sherlock Holmes story *The Adventure of the Clapham Junction*, where Holmes extols the board schools as 'beacons of the future', takes place on a train clattering through Battersea. Between Queenstown Road and Clapham Junction, Holmes and Watson could have glimpsed a shoal of such schools rearing up from the sea of artisan housing: Basnett Road, Gideon Road, Holden Street, Latchmere, Lavender Hill and Shillington Street, to use their old names, while west of the junction the festively gabled Plough Road presided over the division of lines. Though the first two have gone, the school-crowned panorama southwards from the railway east of Clapham Junction can still be savoured. It is one of London's least-blemished Victorian vistas.

The impact of the board schools was immediate. Charges were imposed until the 1880s and many schools started in temporary hired premises or huts before permanent buildings could be put up, yet they were soon fully subscribed. Nonconformists now stopped building their own schools; indeed Southlands College off Battersea High Street was founded to supply Wesleyan women teachers for this new breed of schools. Anglicans were warier of non-denominational

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instruction, but in Battersea they too largely ceased competing with the better-equipped board schools. Among Anglican voluntary schools, only the tiny St Peter's (1875) and St Michael's (1887–8) post-date the 1870 Act. The creation of St Michael's School is curious, as Canon Erskine Clarke had in 1877 given up classes held there in an iron room once the Belleville Road Board School opened, 'with all the space and appliances which the support of the rates afford'.<sup>8</sup> That year Battersea's largest and smallest Anglican schools, Christ Church Schools and an outpost of St George's School at Nine Elms, were both ceded to the School Board after just eleven and seven years of respective existence.<sup>9</sup> Christ Church eventually reverted to Anglican management, but it could never compete with the neighbouring Shillington Street Board School and was eventually 'downsized'. And in 1880 Sir Walter St John's felt that because of the board schools it need no longer offer elementary places, allowing it to cater for older boys.

Battersea's first three board schools (Battersea Park, Bolingbroke Road and Winstanley Road) accommodated between 575 and 720 children. All were rapidly extended to take in more. Their successors were bigger. Sleaford Street of 1873–4 and Holden Street (Shaftesbury Park) of 1875–7 both housed more than a thousand children. In later 'three-decker' board schools a complement of over 1,500, divided equally between infants, girls and boys, was standard. From the 1880s these large schools mostly followed a symmetrical plan, their centres occupied by superimposed halls. They were normally built in stages, as money became available, as at Honeywell Road, Lavender Hill and Wix's Lane; sometimes the composition was never completed, as at Shillington Street. Peculiarities of site permitted alternatives. At Plough Road (High View) an asymmetrical design with a single bulbous-topped tower prevailed.

The first London board schools had no proper halls, though Bolingbroke Road had a 'centre room'. Central halls connected to a cluster of surrounding classrooms came in during the 1870s. They did not dominate at first, as can be seen from Latchmere School of 1882–3, said to represent the final thinking of E. R.

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Robson, first architect to the School Board, before his assistant T. J. Bailey took over. Perhaps because Bailey lived locally, Battersea schools (Latchmere, Lavender Hill and Plough Road) were unusually well illustrated in the building press, the last two from drawings exhibited at the Royal Academy.

From the 1880s the Board differentiated its schools and aligned them to local needs. Surrey Lane of 1884–5 became one of a select few ‘higher grade schools’,

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School acting as a feeder. Emanuel School was a boarding school created from amalgamating certain Westminster charities. It took over the Patriotic Boys' premises in 1883. As a result Emanuel enjoyed more space, and could expand when the boarding element dwindled and the school sought out the local middle classes after 1900. As a day school created in an old villa, Battersea Grammar had no such advantages and soon sold to the railways most of what open space it had. While it stagnated, Sir Walter St John's recovered ground, becoming from the 1890s the thriving practical secondary school that Battersea needed.

By then Battersea, like the rest of London, was inching towards a system whereby bright boys (not yet girls) could climb the 'ladder' from the board schools to local secondary schools and maybe beyond. An example is Albert Mansbridge, a carpenter's son and future founder of the Workers' Educational Association. Mansbridge attended Bolingbroke Road and Surrey Lane schools before winning a scholarship in 1885 to Sir Walter St John's and hence onward to Battersea Grammar School. His means allowed him no further, so in 1890 he left at fourteen to work as a City clerk, while pursuing his studies via a university extension course at Munt's Hall, Clapham Junction.<sup>10</sup>

Later Mansbridge took a course at the Battersea Polytechnic. Raised on Battersea Park Road in 1892–4, this was a key piece in the jigsaw of industrial Battersea's training and welfare, and the only one of three polytechnics planned for South London to acquire a wholly new building. Battersea Polytechnic symbolized the parish's stride to educational maturity since Allen's report. But it was not at first co-ordinated with Battersea's school system, fostering feeder schools of its own that had later to be integrated into wider local secondary provision. There was also friction between its vocational slant and the polytechnic movement's early ideal of bringing culture and recreation to working men and women. As the institution grew, those facilities lost out. It is a measure of Edwardian Battersea's thrust that its polytechnic was among the first to embrace a wholly academic and vocational

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orientation. The movement which led Battersea Polytechnic to become the University of Surrey in 1966 was palpable by 1900.

By the time the LCC took over the board schools in 1904, Battersea was built up. The Council's main task in respect of elementary schools was improving what had already been built. A Board of Education circular of 1909 limiting class sizes to 60 led to the reconstruction of Mantua Street (Falconbrook) School in 1913 and Belleville Road School in 1921–2.<sup>11</sup> The LCC thought some new schools in Battersea still desirable and in 1911 hoped to create four. None was built. At Meteor Street near Clapham Common, the Council bought a site and won an enquiry against opposition, but the project collapsed after the hiatus of the First World War.<sup>12</sup>

A more telling case was Linda Street off York Road. There as part of the shake-up of school design following T. J. Bailey's retirement, the LCC put a new school for 1,264 children out to competition in 1913. Arnold Mitchell (once an assistant of Bailey's) won with a single-storey design which followed the best recent practice and earned praise in the building press (Ill. 4.1). But when the Board of Education saw the design, its architectural adviser objected: 'it appears that, as is likely to be the case in London, the site is not of sufficient size to make the building of one storey only'. The LCC's own architects privately agreed. This project too foundered, and Linda Street did not get its new school until Joseph Tritton School of 1952–3.<sup>13</sup> The only educational building the LCC actually erected in north Battersea

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successor after 1965, the Inner London Education Authority, strove to shape their policies, teaching and indeed location. Demographic change and educational politics both played their part in this long-running battle. Battersea Grammar School moved away to Streatham in the 1930s, losing its identity forty years later, while Emanuel resisted and went independent in 1976. Through amalgamations, Sir Walter St John's School forewent its name in 1977 and its ancient site in 1988. But its buildings remain in school use as one of Wandsworth's post-Thatcher crop of independent schools, Thomas's, Battersea (the same group has also taken over the Broomwood Road school as Thomas's, Clapham).

Battersea's purpose-built secondary schools from the 1930s onwards are a disappointment. Between the wars the LCC managed to raise only the Battersea Central School, Culvert Road (1938–9), replacing converted premises in Surrey Lane. This was enlarged in 1965–9 to create Battersea Park Comprehensive School. The other 'provided' secondary school of the post-war period, Marianne Thornton School, Clapham Common West Side (1958–60), was amalgamated with Clapham County School in the 1970s and obliterated twenty years later. In the voluntary sector the Salesian College, a Catholic secondary school started in converted e6.i-Tj-- Scho -0.ID 2



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between provided primary capacity (8,608) and pupils on the roll (5,378), or a surplus of 28.8%.<sup>15</sup>

A round of closures followed, often bitterly contested, as at Latchmere (1993–4) and Ethelburga (1999–2000). The advent of ‘parental choice’ and the partial recovery of Battersea’s population complicated these debates. At Ethelburga School, first earmarked for closure in 1992 and put under ‘special measures’ in 1998, the governors argued unavailingly that local demand for primary places was increasing, and that in North Battersea most local children left primary schools ‘at a variety of ages (or never attend them in the first place) because the secondary provision has been of such a low standard for many years’.<sup>16</sup> Not all schools slated for closure were discontinued. Falconbrook survived after radical reconstruction, while empty space at Wix was filled by a feeder school for the Lycée Français in South Kensington.

School and college provision in Battersea offers a different face at the time of writing than it did twenty years ago. Since Westminster College left the old polytechnic building in 2000 there is no longer a higher educational college in the area. Meanwhile, fostered by Wandsworth’s policies, independent nursery, primary and preparatory schools are now frequently to be met with, some in school buildings inherited from municipal and voluntary providers, others in houses or church crypts. None of these establishments can bear much resemblance to the ‘private adventure’ schools described by Paynter Allen in 1870.

## Independent schools

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Sir Walter St John's School occupied premises on the west side of Battersea High Street from at least 1700 until 1986. It was succeeded by a private preparatory school, Thomas's, which took over the buildings in 1990. These are a miscellany, but the long street front is marked by the pungent Gothic brickwork of William Butterfield, who rebuilt the school in 1858–9. Later extensions largely respected his lead.

The official foundation date, 1700, derives from the deed of that year whereby Sir Walter St John, then lord of the manor, endowed a school in Battersea 'for the Education of Twenty Free Scholars' with the income from 31 acres of land in Peckham, and provided a house and garden to 'forever hereafter be used as a Schoole house for teaching of Scholars therein'.<sup>17</sup> Sir Walter, then nearing the end of his life, resided mainly in Battersea and was already a parish benefactor. The school's historian, Frank Smallwood, was able to show that there had been a schoolmaster in the parish since the late

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teacher training college established that year next door at what is now Old Battersea House (page xxx). A report of 1846 on the efforts of Eden and his curate suggests that 'Battersea Village School' was then partly being used as a feeder for the college in order to swell the number of competent assistant schoolmasters.<sup>26</sup>

Under Eden's successor, J. S. Jenkinson, a feeling arose that the Sir Walter St John trustees had neglected their duties by ceding the school to the church authorities. Some 'Battersea gentlemen' now voiced complaints about its direction; a public meeting followed. Behind the wrangling lay an incipient demand for better middle-class education in Battersea. In 1853 a fresh scheme of management was obtained in Chancery, four new trustees were appointed, and Jenkinson resigned as the school's nominal master.<sup>27</sup> These events paved the way for Sir Walter St John's School to reassert its independence, rebuild and expand.

The first step was to sell half the foundation property in Peckham, completed by 1855 with the surveyor-architect Charles Lee's assistance. The trustees then secured the freehold of the school site from the 4th Earl Spencer, and resolved to rebuild 'with all convenient expedition'. The premises were described by a school inspector as 'so ill-shaped and ill-arranged as to render organization and supervision extremely difficult. They are moreover too small for the numbers now admitted'. These were 20 free scholars on the foundation and 196 paying day scholars, mostly of the artisan and labouring classes, aged 8 to 13.<sup>28</sup>

It had been hoped to build on the southern portion of the Old Battersea House property, but its lessee, John Shaw Lefevre, declined to sell. So the trustees, again using Lee, secured in August 1857 from Charles Chabot dilapidated houses and a garden south of the school.<sup>29</sup> But when Lee applied to design the new school, he was told that another architect had already been instructed. This was William Butterfield, then building a chapel next door for the Rev. Samuel Clark, principal of the training college and chairman of the reformed Sir Walter St John trustees. Clark was assisted in taking 'the active part in the proposed buildings' by two other

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trustees in particular, both City merchants: Philip Cazenove, a benefactor to local Anglican causes; and the treasurer, James Bogle Smith, whose arms and initials feature on a cinquefoil in stained glass, preserved near the school entrance.<sup>30</sup>

Butterfield's design consisted of a school for 350 boys at the south end and a master's house to its north – a long street composition held together by a projecting centre, perhaps inspired by Pugin's convent at Handsworth, Birmingham. The elevations were in Butterfield's wiry style of diapered brick Gothic, specially bracing at the back (Ills 4.3, 4.4). The master's house replaced the old school, though the 1840 extension to its north survived. There were two schoolrooms, one classroom and a 'hat room' on each floor, corresponding to an upper and a lower school, with access to the upper storey from an open flight of steps. Entry was via an archway at the extreme south end; it is surmounted by a fine roundel with crested shield upon a

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persuaded that the parish most urgently needed higher schools. By a scheme of 1873 the foundation was redirected towards creating an upper school, the future Battersea Grammar School on St John's Hill (see below). The elementary school and a middle school were to stay in Battersea High Street.<sup>33</sup> The scheme was disliked locally on the grounds, relayed by Canon Erskine Clarke to the 5th Earl Spencer, 'that it withdraws the benefit of the school from the artizan, clerk and small shopkeeper class ... and applies the bulk of the endowment to provide a school at a rate of payment ... which the parishioners of Battersea cannot afford'.<sup>34</sup>

Under the headmastership of William Taylor (1873–1907) the school fought itself free from the restrictions of this arrangement. In 1880 it was resolved to shut the elementary school, a level of education now well supplied locally. There were then 212 boys in the middle school, and despite overcrowding Taylor was keen to expand into science teaching. The connection with the training college, though chequered, provided a cheap supply of assistant masters.<sup>35</sup>

Once ampler subsidies for education became available, improvements were possible. Pitching for funds in 1894, Sir Walter St John's could claim to be the only secondary school in the district providing 'a thoroughly practical and commercial education'.<sup>36</sup> In 1898 a single-storey science room was built at the bottom of the playground to designs by A. H. Ryan-Tenison, the foundation's architect for some thirty years. The middle school became offiTm(ho), the foundatioonly

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cum gymnasium. Behind, a classroom block stretched backwards, including a headmaster's room equipped with strategic bay window for policing pupils' movements through the entrance arch. Ryan-Tenison also made minor changes to the remnants of Butterfield's building. Internal replanning provided a broad new staircase with tiled dado and wooden balustrade; a war memorial window was installed here in 1921.

In inter-war phases of expansion, the school's street front was elongated at both ends. Slum property in Crescent Place to the south having long been earmarked, Ryan-Tenison in 1919 produced a scheme for a library, laboratories and classrooms eventually built by John Willmott & Sons in 1925–6.<sup>39</sup> It is a plain Tudor-style brick building, with a projecting centre at the front, also originally at the back. At the north end, Kempthorne's school extension of 1840 still stood. Extra land further north was acquired with the LCC's help, and here in 1937–9 the junior school was rehoused in a further large brick block in stripped Tudor idiom, designed by a young architect-alumnus of the school, T. J. Denny, then an assistant to Vincent Harris; for the purposes of the job, probably his first, Denny teamed up with his old architectural master, C. W. Baker. Early drawings for this Baker & Denny scheme going back to 1935 suggest bolder, late-Lutyens-like detailing, toned down in execution.<sup>40</sup> The southern end projects forward, while at the northern end is an arch with a delicate iron grille. The interiors and rear elevation are functional.

The school was evacuated to Godalming during the Second World War. The buildings suffered in September 1940, when a delayed-action bomb lodged itself unerringly beside the headmaster's study. It exploded after four days, destroying much of the south-west wing of 1913–15.<sup>41</sup> After the war it was decided to demolish what remained of that block, curtail the back of Butterfield's schoolroom wing with a new end, and build a new three-storey wing behind the 1925–6 extension. Baker & Denny produced a scheme in 1946 for restoring Butterfieldian tracery. In the end the architects for both this stump and the new wing, carried out in 1951–2, were Farquharson & McMorrان. The wing, plain but tasteful, has a hipped roof, and

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carries round to meet the earlier buildings by means of a single-storey corridor behind the entrance arch. In 1960–1 a lower western block was added to even plainer designs in concrete and brick (since painted) supplied by the LCC's Architect's Department. Its siting supplied the school for the first time with a quadrangle, while its accommodation allowed the old science block in the playground to be demolished.<sup>42</sup> In 1968 the east window in Butterfield's upper schoolroom was glazed with colourful abstracted panels by Lawrence Lee alluding to the brotherhood of man.<sup>43</sup>

Since 1903 the trustees had increasingly lost control of the school, as more of its funding came from the LCC. In 1944 it became a voluntary controlled grammar school. In line with the Inner London Education Authority's policy to end secondary selection, after a failed merger with Lavender Hill as a mixed-sex comprehensive, Sir Walter St John's was amalgamated in 1977 with William Blake School as a voluntary boys' comprehensive. Because of falling secondary rolls, in 1988 that school was in turn merged into Battersea Park School (page xxx), and the historic site relinquished. Sir Walter St John's foundation was subsequently recast as an educational charity.<sup>44</sup>

Since taking over the school buildings in 1990, Thomas's has made one addition. This is a brick-faced block filling the corner between the wings of 1951–2 and 1960–1, completed to the designs of MEBP & P Partners, architects, in 2001.<sup>45</sup>

Battersea Grammar School was created to supply the fast-changing Victorian parish with a dedicated source of secondary education. But it proved precarious, surviving in Battersea only from 1875 to 1936, when it moved to Streatham. The name disappeared in 1977.



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As described above, the Charity



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premises are now occupied by a department of the Streatham and Clapham High School.<sup>53</sup> On the St John's Hill site, the buildings were demolished to make way for a Granada cinema (page xxx).

Between 1852 and 1934 this school occupied the site of the present Clapham Junction Estate between St John's Hill and Boutflower Road. Like other sizeable schools of its day, it came to South London for its suburban amenities and quiet but moved away once these had vanished. Only its two lodges survive.

The school owes its existence to Bartholomew Ruspini, a surgeon-dentist from Bergamo who had done well in London selling dental and medical equipment.<sup>54</sup> A fervent mason, Ruspini in 1788 founded the Royal Cumberland Freemasons' School, or Royal Freemasons' School for Girls, at first in Somers Town but then in Westminster Bridge Road, St George's Fields.<sup>55</sup> With the lease due to run out, the trustees sought a better site in about 1850–1. The school's solicitor and 'Bro. [P. C.] Hardwick, G. Superintendent of Works' led the search.<sup>56</sup> Hardwick was working for the 4th Earl Spencer at the time, so maybe he it was who found the chosen site of two and a half acres at the north end of Wandsworth Common, just east of the London & South Western Railway as it curved southwards. Its seclusion was real. Neither the West End of London and Crystal Palace Railway (which soon joined the LSWR line close to the school) nor Clapham Junction was then anticipated. The site itself was freehold, but Earl Spencer donated a strip of common land over which a southern approach drive from Battersea Rise was laid.<sup>57</sup>

Hardwick prepared alternative designs, from which a 'mediaeval' option was chosen and built by Thomas & William Piper (Ill. 4.9). The school was masonically consecrated in August 1852, the 65 children arriving in December. The

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original building was a block of Tudor, H-shaped plan with shallow projecting wings, prettified by diapered brickwork and lead patterning in the windows. Prudholme stone from Northumberland was the unusual choice for the dressings.<sup>58</sup> The spectacular feature was a baronial water tower over the entrance, foreshadowing Rohde Hawkins' similar creation for the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum further south.

The school flourished and grew at Battersea. A journalist in 1866 found the 'Freemasons' Girls' School' a haven of comfort, 'spotless cleanliness' and judiciously trained staff, not forgetting the 'healthy cleanly dormitories, the light and airy glass-covered exercise-hall, where the young people drill and dance'. There were then 103 58

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charming stained-glass panels on English literary subjects, probably in the alcoves under the galleries.

Hunt, a member of the school's House Committee for twenty years, was probably responsible also for the school's boundary railings, gates and picturesque lodge of 1886–7 beside the railway – safeguards reflecting that the district had become built up. Northwards, a junior school was created in 1880 at Lyncombe House facing St John's Hill just east of the railway, sold to the trustees by William Evill. A further purchase taking in the two houses eastwards led to enlargements and changes by Hunt in 1888. With Higgs & Hill as builders, he went on in 1903–4 to replace the houses with a purpose-built junior block in a workaday Tudor facing St John's Hill.<sup>63</sup>

As the years wore on, and after the railway had encroached further on to the property in the 1890s for track-widening (Ill. 4.8), Clapham Junction seemed an ever less suitable vicinity for a large girls' school. The juniors departed first, emigrating to Weybridge in 1919. The main school at first took advantage of these extra premises, but soon sought a new home itself. Some 280 acres acquired at Rickmansworth allowed a new school to

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The lifespan of the Royal Commission of the Patriotic Fund Boys' School (its official name) was brief. The fund had been created in a surge of sympathy for the dead of the Crimean War, with the aim of maintaining their orphaned children. It was resolved to create a school and asylum for 300 girls, and another for 100 boys. The girls came first. With the money amply donated, the Commissioners bought from the 4th Earl Spencer 52 acres at Wandsworth Common between the LSWR's main line and the WELCPR. This land's southern portion was farmed, while at its centre arose the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum, conceived as a 'national monument' and built in 1858–9 to ebullient Gothic designs by M. Rohde Hawkins, architect to the Committee of Council on Education. The Patriotic Asylum itself was in Wandsworth parish and is therefore not treated here, but the northern end of the grounds and long drive from the railway bridge on Battersea Rise lay in Battersea. At the top of this drive a plain lodge, now the entrance lodge for Emanuel School, was erected, probably in 1862–3.<sup>65</sup>

In 1862 a temporary school for 146 boys started in a house on East Hill, Wandsworth. By 1870 the sum set aside to accommodate them permanently had accumulated, and eligibility had been extended to orphans of wars since the Crimea. So another large, though less grand, building was planned on the Battersea portion of the grounds. The Commissioners sought designs from five architects: Arthur Blomfield, Henry Dawson, John Giles, Henry Saxon Snell and John Tasker. Snell was chosen as architect, J. T. Chappell as builder after competitive tenders, and the Patriotic School went up expeditiously, opening in October 1872 without ceremony.<sup>66</sup>

Snell's design set out a square, barrack-like plan with a central courtyard cut into by a dining hall, over which a chapel, reached by divided stairs, was added as an afterthought (Ill. 4.12). On the ground floor, the west (entrance) and north fronts were mainly taken up by small rooms, of which the committee room (now the headmaster's study) survives best. Facing south came a large schoolroom and large

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playroom, originally intended by Snell to have a wing of their own; beyond them a half-open playshed projected. On the east side were a single-storey swimming bath and 'lavatory', both of similar size to the southern rooms. The upper floors were mainly dormitories, since the Patriotic School took boarders only. The superintendent occupied the north-west corner. To the south-east lay a separate infirmary on two floors.<sup>67</sup>

The style of the main building is Gothic in Sir Gilbert Scott's manner, of red brick with some coloured patterning and sparing Portland stone dressings. The pointed windows are grouped on the ground storey and separated on the first floor, above which gabled dormers break into the roof. The pièce de resistance is the Ypres-Cloth-Hall-type tower surmounting the entrance with its prominent porch (Ill. 4.13). It was originally topped off with a salient two-stage crown, removed in 1931.

Briefly all went well at both schools: 'The girls did all the washing for the boys while the boys' school did all the baking for the girls'.<sup>68</sup> But in 1874 an epidemic at the Patriotic Asylum killed several girls and a young doctor in the public eye, Francis Anstie. Bad sanitation was suspected. Saxon Snell insisted that there was

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created by the Endowed Schools Act of 1873 to restructure educational charities in Westminster, notably Lady Anne Dacre's Emanuel Hospital, founded in 1594. Under these provisions a boarding school named Emanuel School was to be opened within twenty miles of London, in parallel with two day schools, later combined as the Westminster City School.<sup>71</sup>

In 1878 the governors bought 36 acres near Swanley, Kent. The plans prepared proved too expensive, and the governors were about to embark on a revised scheme when the Wandsworth Common site was drawn to their attention. Important in clinching the deal was the architect-surveyor Henry A. Hunt, deputy chairman to the United Westminster governors.<sup>72</sup>

Emanuel School opened in the Patriotic School building in January 1883 with just 80 pupils, mostly boarders, though the numbers soon rose to over 200.<sup>73</sup> In preparation, the eastern end of the north front was rebuilt and raised from one to three storeys; Henry Dawson, one of the unsuccessful competitors in 1870, designed these works, which followed Saxon Snell's tone, with J. McLachlan & Sons as builders.<sup>74</sup> Otherwise the site changed little until 1895–6, when a new classroom wing with a large top-lit examination and recreation hall behind supplanted Saxon Snell's playshed. Built in a busy late French Gothic style, this was the work of an obscure architect, James Emes (Ill. 4.14). The extension's main purpose was to boost science teaching. In 1898 C. W. Kimmins of the LCC's Technical Education Board reported that Emanuel had 'excellent laboratories and science lecture room ... admirably equipped with all the modern appliances', yet he found them little used and the science teaching 'not yet satisfactory ... The school always gives me the impression of being much understaffed in the science department'.<sup>75</sup>

Emanuel started out a boarding school. The high point of 185 boarders was reached in 1889, then fell, mainly (says the school's latest historian) because of 'the steady urbanization of the area. It made boarding pointless'.<sup>76</sup> Some thought was given to transferring the school to the countryside and handing over the premises to





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## Church Schools

Battersea's earliest surviving purpose-built school building is the former **St Mary's School** in Vicarage Crescent, formerly Green Lane.

When Sir Walter St John's School became a National School after 1814 (page xxx), girls were admitted as well as boys. They were later taught elsewhere, probably in an infants' school which existed on the north side of Green Lane close to the Sir Walter St John's site by 1828. These premises were decent enough for the Vestry to meet there regularly in the 1840s.

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**St George's School**, at the junction of Thessaly and Corunna Roads, is the second oldest of Battersea's parochial schools in point of foundation. The present buildings date from 1969.

Before St George's Church had been erected, an infant school, probably purpose-built and later at least also used for girls, had been provided on the west side of Thessaly (then New) Road in 1826 to meet the wants of Battersea New Town.<sup>91</sup> This was supplanted in 1856–7 by fresh schools further south just beyond the LSWR line, at the corner of New Road and St George's (later Wadhurst) Road. The scheme goes back to at least 1854, when the Battersea Vestry agreed to devote a windfall of £400 towards a boys' school in the St George's district, regarded as in a 'deplorable state of ignorance'. It was 'to be based upon sound Protestant principles, and to be under the supervision of the incumbent'.<sup>92</sup> The freeholder, J. J. S. S. Lucas, gave the site and a government grant was secured. Subvention probably also came from Eliza Maria Graham of Clapham Common, a benefactress of St George's parish. All this allowed a handsome group of schools for 200 boys, 150 girls and 150 infants to be built, with teachers' houses for each, 'fronting the open fields in a very fine situation'.<sup>93</sup>

Their designer was Joseph Peacock, known as one of the 'rogue' architects of the Gothic Revival. St George's Schools demonstrated all his picturesque intensity. The L-shaped composition was broken into three (Ills 4.19, 20). Along the side road lay the boys' school, marked by over-buttressed chimneybreasts with castellated stacks, and a bellcote. Beyond the boys' teacher's house came the girls' school over the infants at the corner, adding height and dignity. Facing Thessaly Road were their teachers' quarters, again superimposed, with an outside staircase to the upper house and access through from both to the schools via a bayed turret. The materials were white brick with stone dressings, and the builders William Beevers and John Harmer.<sup>94</sup>

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In 1867 Peacock added an extra infants' classroom at the back.<sup>95</sup> Much of the playground and some of the back buildings were lopped off after 1895 for widening the LSWR line. The compensation money was devoted to building extra classrooms in 1900, probably to designs by W. C. F. Gillam of Brighton, replacing all three teachers' houses and upsetting Peacock's balance.<sup>96</sup> By then the neighbourhood was deteriorating. Rebuilding to serve the new Patmore Estate was mooted in 1952, but the school continued on its reduced site till 1970, when Wadhurst Road was closed and replanning of the area allowed extra land to be taken in down to Corunna Road. It was then demolished and the present single-storey school built in 1968–9 to designs by Richard Sheppard, Robson & Partners.<sup>97</sup>

The present **Christ Church School** in Este Road was built in 1907–8, replacing an earlier school on the site of 1866. In that year too this parochial district created a separate infants' school further east in Orkney Street, also demolished.

The original schools in Este Road, built for 600 children in equal numbers of boys, girls and infants, served the district east of Falcon Road, where modest houses were accumulating. The initiative began with Christ Church's vicar, Samuel Bardsley, in about 1864. With help principally from William Evill junior, a half-acre site was bought and single-storey schools were raised forming three sides of a quadrangle. Boys at the front faced Pearson (now Batten) Street, girls along the flank faced Grove (now Este) Road, while infants occupied the back. Two teachers' houses completed the composition, which was fenestrated with lancets and faced in red bricks with Bath stone dressings (III. 4.21). E. C. Robins was the architect and Lathey Brothers were the builders.<sup>98</sup>

This was the school that the young John Burns attended in the late 1860s. But in 1877 the managers felt unable to carry it on. It was transferred at a peppercorn rent to the School Board for London, which rechristened it Falcon Grove School and ran it as a stop-gap measure until Shillington Street Board School was ready near by in 1883. The premises then reverted to the vicar of Christ Church, who

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For **St Mark's Infant School**, at first St Mary's Infant School, Battersea Rise, (1866–7), see page **xxx**; for **St Michael's Schools** (1887–8), page **xxx**; and for **St Peter's School**, Plough Road (1874 &c.), page **xxx**.

For the former **St Joseph's Boys School** and **St Mary's (Notre Dame) Roman Catholic Schools** on the site of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the former Convent of Notre Dame, Battersea Park Road, see pages **xxx**. **St Mary's Catholic School, Lockington Road**, is the latter's successor. A low-rise lightweight primary school of conventional appearance, it was built to designs by Tomei & Mackley, architects, in 1971–2, and extended soon afterwards.<sup>106</sup>

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After the Sacred Heart School migrated in 1990 (see below), the premises became first a Montessori school and then in 2005 L'Ecole de Battersea, a branch of the Chelsea-based L'Ecole des Petits. Additions and renovation were carried out by David Rosemont Associates, architects, with the London Planning Practice.<sup>109</sup>

The present Sacred Heart School lies half a mile south between Este and Cabul Roads, beside the old Shillington Street School. The site, cleared after war damage and then occupied by prefabs, had been allocated for the school by the Inner London Education Authority in 1973, as the Trott Street premises were 'cramped and poorly planned'.<sup>110</sup> Government cuts led to repeated postponements of the project, which only materialized in 1988–90. The low-rise brick building, planned around two internal atria (since filled in), was designed by Hans Haenlein Associates, architects.<sup>111</sup>

**Salesian College**, a Catholic secondary school for boys, operated between 1895 and 2011 north and east of the Sacred Heart Church. In its latter years it was housed mainly in buildings of 1964–78 off Parkham Street. The site awaits redevelopment at the time of writing.

The Salesians' coming to Battersea in 1887 is described in the account of the Sacred Heart Church (page xxx). From the first they wished to found a senior boys' school to complement the existing Sacred Heart School beside the church. That proved possible when the Order in 1895 acquired Surrey Lodge, a brick villa of the 1830s fronting Surrey Lane. It had a generous garden stretching behind the houses of Orbel Street, where the Salesian priests were living. By dint of capacious, plain wings added westwards in 1897 and eastwards in 1901, the house was made large enough for both priests and boys, while a Tudor-style chapel was created in old stables at the angle between Surrey Lane and Parkham Street.<sup>112</sup>



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By the time of the First World War there were some 250 boys (Alfred Hitchcock, briefly a pupil in 1908, remembered being given copious laxatives).<sup>113</sup> Technical workshops had been erected in the garden to teach trade skills like printing, tailoring, woodwork, mechanics and shoe-repairing.<sup>114</sup> The chapel was also enlarged in 1911–12 to create an aisle with a Lady Chapel as well as a nave (Ill. 4.49). Though quaintly amateurish on the outside, its interior was richly decorated, having a screen and full rood with paintings of the apostles, an alabaster reredos, and heraldic devices on the boarding of the open-roofed ceilings.<sup>115</sup> Fr George Fayers, who filled the Sacred Heart Church with his paintings, probably had much to do with this adornment. Later the screen was moved into the side aisle and has since been removed altogether, the chapel interior having been much simplified, though the reredos remains. Outside in the garden, the charming ‘ambulacrum’, a covered walkway running along the back wall of the houses in Orbel Street, may also date from about 1911 (Ill. 4.48).

A new school proposed behind the houses in Parkham Street to plans by James O’Hanlon Hughes in 1938 was not built. In 1950 two temporary classroom blocks were constructed in the Orlit system to designs by D. Plaskett Marshall.<sup>116</sup> These survive, though intended only as expedients until the new school envisaged under the London School Plan could be obtained. That became possible when the LCC authorized the closure of most of Granfield Street at the west end of the site, and the demolition of Parkham Street’s south side, which was thrown into the Salesian College’s space. Plans for the first stage were made in 1963 by Greenhalgh & Williams of Bolton, architects favoured by the Salesians at the time, as Bolton was their English headquarters.<sup>117</sup> Their orthodox secondary school design, concrete-faced on a steel frame and set back from the road by decorative



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consisted of a simple schoolroom with porch. Nicholson & Sons, probably the original builders, soon added an extra room, and in 1869 another was tucked in on the flank facing Benham Street, to designs by J. R. Gover, the architect responsible around that date for the surrounding housing.<sup>124</sup> Like the boys' school it became a Sunday school only, probably in the 1880s. It was demolished in 1905 and replaced by the Plough Road Institute (page xxx).<sup>125</sup>

In 1909 the managers of the Battersea Chapel decided to replace the boys' school with a new Sunday school and institute for the 641 scholars and 43 teachers which they claimed to employ. The two-storey scheme, with halls over teaching rooms, was carried out by William Hammond (a former Grove schoolboy) in 1911–12 to designs by George Baines & Son, who won the job by competition. The elevations were in Baines's disciplined style, with two tones of brickwork and chequered gables. The entrances were from the side streets. Latterly known as the York Road Baptist Sunday Schools, the building succumbed following the transfer of chapel and schools to Wye Street in 1973 (page xxx).<sup>126</sup>

## State Schools

As in other parts of London so in Battersea, when the School Board for London started work in the early 1870s, it made do with temporary premises until new buildings could be ready. Its first two schools in the parish (which was assigned to

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Road closed when Winstanley Road School opened; Landseer Street was supposed to be replaced by Battersea Park School, but survived until 1883.<sup>128</sup>

When these short-life schools opened, permanent ones had been widely commissioned via the competition system first favoured by the School Board. Battersea acquired two such, originally called Battersea Park and Bolingbroke Road. Both survive, though the former has been converted. The following account of the board schools begins with these two and then proceeds in chronological order. Where later schools have been rebuilt on the same site, they are included here.

**Battersea Park School**, now 110 Battersea Park Road and entirely distinct from the later Battersea Park Secondary School opposite, was the first board school commissioned in the parish. Negotiations for the site, part of the Crown lands attached to Battersea Park, were in train from October 1871. They were conducted for the School Board by E. R. Robson, acting as its surveyor in the period before he began designing the schools himself. The plot of land on offer amounted to an acre and a half, but the Board whittled this down to three-quarters of an acre for reasons of cost. The site was to be enclosed eastwards as well as westwards, since there was as yet no thought of Forfar Road, later the school's eastern boundary.<sup>129</sup>

In May 1872 an architectural competition took place involving W. G. Coldwell, R. W. Edis, G. G. Stanham, W. M. Teulon & Cronk, and J. Toner. Edis produced a Gothic design which the \_\_\_\_\_ would have been 'glad to see adopted' and later illustrated, but Coldwell won. W. Shepherd built his three-storey design in 1873–4.<sup>130</sup> The numbers of children had been set at 720, but the accommodation was raised to almost 900. At the opening Sir Charles Reed, the School Board chairman, predicted that the school would be full within a week, although boys and girls then paid 3 p per week and infants 2 p.<sup>131</sup> An immediate western extension followed in 1875.<sup>132</sup>

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Coldwell's original school can be identified with the central section bearing the legend 'Battersea Park School' (Ill. 4.24), plus the portion next westwards. They are in the austere style (pinkish stocks and red dressings) typical of the first London board schools, some Gothic touches being counterbalanced by sash windows. The design has an unresolved quality, perhaps due to simplification of gables following war damage. The 1875 afterthought is the westernmost portion, while to the east is a large extension by T. J. Bailey, the School Board's architect, of 1893–4, added after the school had been found 'very inconvenient and unworkable'.<sup>133</sup> The former schoolkeeper's house in front is of 1888.<sup>134</sup> Rechristened Chesterton School in the post-war period, the school moved to new premises on the other side of Battersea Park Road in 1965 (page xxx).<sup>135</sup> The buildings were used for a time as an annexe to Battersea College of Technology and for other educational purposes, then converted to housing.

**Bolingbroke Road School**, of 1873–4 with many later additions, is now **Westbridge School**, Bolingbroke Walk. Here John W. Walton was appointed architect in July 1872, after a limited competition; John Spink was the builder.<sup>136</sup> The school, planned for 575 children, opened in two stages at the turn of 1873–4. After disappointing early attendance figures ascribed to 'absence of publicity to the fact of the opening', the full complement was soon reached.<sup>137</sup> The original two-storey building (the southern end of the present school) had classrooms clustered round a 'centre room'.<sup>138</sup> Though altered, the front is in a pleasant, simple stock-brick Gothic with windows grouped in triplets. The robust gate piers and cast-iron gates, thrice repeated, are lively survivals from this phase. At the rear a rather domestic half-hipped extension protrudes.

Additions were made in 1875, 1880 and 1894.<sup>139</sup> Perhaps of 1894 is the northward extension of the main front, while the single-storey infant accommodation, Gothic in style, is likely to be earlier. An internal reconstruction took place in 1908–9.<sup>140</sup> There were then over 1,000 pupils, described as largely in 'straitened home circumstances'.<sup>141</sup> By 1931 Bolingbroke Road had the reputation of

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listlessness and apathy which, it is often said, are characteristics of riverside children'.<sup>142</sup> The school's name changed to plain Bolingbroke in 1937, when Bolingbroke Road became Bolingbroke Walk. It was diagnosed as having serious weaknesses in 1997 and reorganized by Wandsworth Council as a 'fresh start school' called Westbridge in 2000.<sup>143</sup>

**Winstanley Road School**, the third of the School Board's early Battersea schools, has been demolished. Built in 1873–4 to serve the rising district north of Clapham Junction, it belonged to the select early group of schools designed by the Board's first regular architect, E. R. Robson, and illustrated in his of 1874.

A corner site of a mere quarter-acre at the obtuse angle of Winstanley and Livingstone Roads, was bought from Job Caudwell in 1872. Robson's design went to tender late that year, the school being built by G. Stephenson of Chelsea.<sup>144</sup> On opening day in January 1874, 'the place was besieged with parents accompanying children whom they sought to enter on the school register', so that 580 out of the 700 places were instantly taken up.<sup>145</sup>

Robson made his resourceful best of the constrained, rhomboid site. In front came the single-storey infant school, consisting of a schoolroom with two 'babies' rooms off, one having a polygonal end. The infants were not in the main block, Robson explained, because they needed wider, squarer rooms than the 'graded schools'. They shared their outside playground with the girls, but also enjoyed a covered play space under half of the three-storey block behind. There the planning was spare; both the boys on the first floor and the girls above were divided into senior and junior schools, set out in simple rows to maximize north light on desks (Ill. 4.25b).<sup>146</sup> The elevations, in two tones of brick, were lively. An angular access tower staircase took up the centre of the larger block, open-topped for a bell and flanked by two high chimneybreasts, like sentinels. All the front-facing parapets of

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the school were crenellated, giving a tang of Flanders or North Germany. Winstanley Road was the most flagrantly ‘castellated’ of Robson’s early school designs. The                      objected: ‘we decidedly think parapets are one of those peculiarities of the pseudo-Classic best avoided’.<sup>147</sup> It may also have been the first to deploy the School Board relief panel of ‘Knowledge Strangling Ignorance’ commissioned from the artist Spencer Stanhope, placed on the chimneybreast right of the staircase tower.<sup>148</sup>

The accommodation immediately proved inadequate. The first of at least two northward site extensions appeared in 1875. A thorough remodelling of 1901–2 involved altering Robson’s south-facing front and shifting the relief panel (III. 4.26).<sup>149</sup> Despite these improvements, the LCC opted for a complete rebuilding in 1937. A standard three-storey LCC design with rooftop playground was ready for building in 1939, when the school was demolished. In the run-up to war the contract was cancelled, never to be revived in post-war plans for the area.<sup>150</sup>

**Sleaford Street** (later **John Milton**) **School** (demolished), was built by W. Higgs in 1873–4 to Robson’s designs. Initially known as Lower Wandsworth Road Schools, it occupied back land between Aegis Grove and Sleaford Street in a poor area of Nine Elms. More land was gradually acquired, with extensions in 1882 and

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**Gideon Road (later Elsley) School** (demolished). The boys' and girls' departments of this school, housing 440 pupils from the environs of Shaftesbury Park, took shape at the corner of Acanthus and Gideon Roads to E. R. Robson's designs in 1875–6, following an asymmetrical plan because of the site (Ill. 4.27). Despite reorganization and enlargement southwards in 1906 bringing the accommodation to 1,102, the premises were described soon afterwards as 'awkward, inconvenient and behind the times'. The school was discontinued in 1927 but not



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**Falconbrook (formerly Mantua Street) School**

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changed its ending in 1877. Despite some enlargement in 1879, it was deemed constrained and out of date by the 1890s, when the School Board bought extra ground to the east. This allowed reconstruction of the original block in 1900 so as to tuck in halls, followed by two new buildings in 1901: a junior mixed department on three main floors, and beyond that nearer Silverthorne Road, a two-storey special school.



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Road, later annexed to the main site.<sup>177</sup> An enlargement of 1887 is represented by the northern end of the main block, beyond which lies a schoolkeeper's house. The omission of an answering north wing makes the composition lopsided. A cookery, laundry and manual centre were to be added in 1895, and accommodation for blind children in 1898; these are the lower buildings at the north end of the site. An inspection in 1911 reported that the girls were mostly children of the unskilled labour classes, though 'a small proportion are comparatively well-to-do'.<sup>178</sup> By 1980 only one floor was in use, as a special school. The whole was converted into housing in the 1990s.<sup>179</sup> The street after which the school took its name was abolished as a result of post-war planning, so that the flats now face on to a cul de sac and are numbered 181–187 Este Road, while the northern outbuildings are known as Takhar Mews.

The former **Latchmere School**, Burns Road, built in 1882–3 but now a group of flats known as Southside Quarter, was published as 'the last school built under the direction of Mr E. R. Robson' before he gave up as architect to the School Board for London and became advisory architect to the Government's Education Department.<sup>180</sup> So it may perhaps be taken as Robson's final word on board school layout, at a time when funding was improving. Built by William Oldrey,<sup>181</sup> it was planned with rigid symmetry, following the customary stacking of infants at ground level, girls on the first floor, and boys at the top. The classes of the older children were confined to 60, though in the large infants' rooms this rose to 80. On each floor the rooms clustered around a central hall, as yet restricted to 30 feet square but extensible into adjacent classrooms (Ill. 4.33). The elevations, in two tones of brickwork, were suaver than in Robson's early schools, but not as plain as they now appear (Ill. 4.32), since the shaped gables were simplified after the war for maintenance purposes, and the turrets atop the staircases on the north side removed. A separate low-rise junior mixed department was added east of the main block in 1890-2; an early building of this type, it has rendered gables. At this time also a secondary entrance was contrived from Battersea Park Road.<sup>182</sup>

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Despite objections from local parents and teachers, Wandsworth Council closed the school on grounds of over-capacity in 1994.<sup>183</sup> After conservationists pointed out the school's value to the context of the adjacent Latchmere Estate, the Council agreed to a scheme of conversion into housing, carried out by Sapcote Real Lofts<sup>184</sup> Extra housing units have covered much of the playground space, obscuring the view from Burns Road.

**Basnett Road School** (demolished). This imposing, three-decker school for 975 children was sandwiched in 1883–4 between Wickersley and Wycliffe Roads, between the Shaftesbury Park and Park Town estates, and called after Basnett Road (formerly Grove) to the south. It was oversubscribed in 1899 with 1,121 on the roll, rising to 1,212 in 1907. A single-storey northern extension was added in 1901 next to St Bartholomew's Church. Though scheduled for replacement in 1947, it survived until the 1970s under the new name of **John Burns School**, for whose later history see page [xxx](#). The schoolkeeper's house survives at 66A Dunston Road.<sup>185</sup>

**Surrey Lane** (later **William Blake**) **School**, on the west side of Surrey Lane South (now Bridge Lane), has been converted into housing. The main four-storey block was originally built for 1,592 children in 1884–5 (E. R. Robson, architect, C. Wall, builder). Solid and compact, it dominates the west side of Bridge Lane; to its north is a schoolkeeper's house. The school enjoyed the novelty of a workshop where the staff would 'teach the boys the use of various simple tools, how to execute trivial repairs, and in other ways to make them on leaving school handy and intelligent lads'.<sup>186</sup> It soon became one of the higher-grade schools instituted in the 1880s. A chemical laboratory, drawing room and manual centre were added in 1896, followed by a centre for deaf children in 1898.<sup>187</sup> Surrey Lane was the first school attended by the poet and critic Richard Church, whose memoirs paint a picture of unhappy years in the boys' department (1901–5).<sup>188</sup>

In the early 1920s the LCC turned the upper floors into Battersea Central Schools, with separate departments for boys and girls ([III. 4.35](#)). Inspections of 1925



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Plough Road. Stepped gables, slightly clipped by later maintenance regimes, and a bulbous top to the north-east staircase tower do much for the composition's vivacity (III. 4.37). T. J. Bailey must have been pleased with the design, for it was shown at the Royal Academy in 1891.<sup>194</sup> A schoolkeeper's house facing Plough Terrace belongs to the ensemble.

The former **Lavender Hill School**, largely of 1891–2 and now converted into housing coyly named The Village, rears up on the south side of Amies Street where Latchmere Road climbs steeply. Conceived as far back as 1884<sup>195</sup> and designed by T. J. Bailey in 1888, it was one of the School Board for London's frankest ventures yet in the direction of secondary education. North of the conventional elementary school came a separate centre for 216 pupil-teachers on three main floors, equipped with a laboratory, drawing school and two gyms. E. R. Robson, who had by then transferred his loyalties and become consulting architect to the Government's Education Department, was wary: 'The P.T. Centre appears to be a complete technical school. What is the accommodation which has been sanctioned for the purpose? And on what scale should such buildings be allowed? No precedent, I think?'<sup>196</sup> The project was delayed until 1891–2, when the builders were S. Belham & Company. A wing may at first have been left off the elementary school and added in 1894–5, when the complement of places rose to almost 1,600. At this point also a cookery school with schoolkeeper's accommodation above was added south-west of the main block, as originally planned, and a lower-scale laundry and manual centre south of the pupil-teachers' block.<sup>197</sup>

The school proper, illustrated at the Royal Academy in 1888 from a perspective by Arnold Mitchell, previously an assistant under Bailey (III. 4.38), belongs to the bold, symmetrical three-decker type favoured at this time, but has lost its shaped gables and parapet details in post-war simplification. The pupil-teacher centre, higher up the hill, has likewise been simplified. Under the LCC this became a secondary school feeding the Battersea Polytechnic,<sup>198</sup> but by the 1930s it was a men's institute. By then rolls in Lavender Hill School itself were falling. It was





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**Sir James Barrie School**, sandwiched between the Patmore and Carey Gardens Estates and facing Stewarts and Condell Roads, is perhaps Battersea's largest primary school. It was built in 1951–3 to replace Bradmede (formerly New Road) School, a board school in the Clapham port

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environment'.<sup>215</sup> The school was closed by Wandsworth Council in 1999 and demolished.

**Chesterton School**, Dagnall Street, built by Thomas & Edge to the designs of the LCC Architect's Department (Schools Division) in 1963–4 and originally for 560 children, replaced the old Battersea Park Board School as part of the post-war redevelopment south of Battersea Park Road. Most of the children attending the old school were already living on that side of the main road, so the southward shift was logical. In the demure single-storey courtyard design, made in 1960, a central block for assembly halls and administration was linked to classrooms by semi-open walkways. Each of the classrooms was a separate square cell faced with sand-lime bricks and covered by miniature hyperbolic paraboloid timber roofs, then in fashion (Ill. 4.43). The assembly hall was a larger version of the same concept, but concrete-framed with a wider span. The schoolkeeper's house followed after the school itself. Much infilling has occurred since the 1960s, and in 2008 the classroom roofs were replaced by simpler pyramidal coverings, though the original assembly hall roof remains.<sup>216</sup>

**John Burns Primary School** between Wycliffe and Wickersley Roads east of Shaftesbury Park, was built in 1966–7 as **Wycliffe Special School**, replacing a previous special school of that name on the same site. That school, opened in 1905 and later enlarged, was for mentally defective boys and run in connection with Basnett Road (later John Burns) School on the other side of St Bartholomew's (now St Nektarios's) Church.<sup>217</sup>

In the early 1960s the LCC decided to replace the old buildings with a day school for some 180–200 educationally subnormal children. The work was carried out under the Inner London Education Authority to plans by the GLC Architect's Department (Schools Division), as successors to the LCC.<sup>218</sup> The flat-roofed building has two storeys, with brick infill and exposed concrete floor slabs. The plan divided

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primary and secondary children into separate wings, with a hall and kitchen in the centre.

In 1993 Wycliffe Special School was given up. It was replaced by the John Burns School, which after its former home was pulled down (page xxx) had occupied buildings near by on the east side of Wycliffe Road. These were built in about 1973–4 by the Inner London Education Authority using the MACE system for primary schools then officially favoured by the GLC Architect's Department. Like many MACE buildings, this one proved technically unsatisfactory, its roofs requiring major repairs; it was demolished in about 1995 after the school had moved across to the Wycliffe site.<sup>219</sup>

**Paddock Primary School**, a maintained school for young children with learning difficulties on a site between Forthbridge Road and Meteor Street, occupies a low-key building erected to designs by the GLC Architect's Department for the Inner London Education Authority in about 1972–3, and first opened as Susan Isaacs School for children with special needs. The site's educational history is bound up with that of **Springwell House School**.

In 1913 the LCC bought Springwell House, 80 Clapham Common North Side (vol. 50). Its deep garden behind shaved the west side of Meteor Street, then stretched back at an angle to a point in Forthbridge Road close to the junction with Marmion Road. Known as the Meteor Street site, it was intended for an elementary school. But Battersea Council opposed the location, and war intervened.<sup>220</sup> The LCC hoped to add in No. 81, west of Springwell House, whose garden bordered the east side of Forthbridge Road, along with two houses in Forthbridge Road and a terrace in Meteor Street. Most of these properties were finally secured in 1924–5, but the elementary school project died.<sup>221</sup>

Meanwhile Springwell House had been opened in 1919 as a school for tuberculous children under the aegis of Mrs L. S. Bennett, building on an informal



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create. As at Paddington and Woolwich, secondary schools in Battersea had grown up around the polytechnic. The LCC decided to turn these into directly funded schools with purpose-built premises. As girls' secondary education was thin in Battersea, they took priority. The two-acre site on the north side of Broomwood Road, chosen in 1906, had been briefly occupied by temporary school accommodation. Bailey's designs, for what was one of four new-style LCC secondary schools, were ready by July 1907. The school was erected by Holliday & Greenwood, opening in Autumn 1909 with some 390 girls. Most came from the Battersea Polytechnic girls' school, hitherto on Clapham Common North Side, as did the first headmistress, but some were transferred from the Battersea Pupil Teachers' Centre at Lavender Hill School, defunct under the new regime.<sup>226</sup>

The building conformed closely to LCC secondary schools designed around this time in Chelsea and Hammersmith. Despite superficial similarities to the board schools, the arrangement was quite different, housing only a third of the pupils expected in an elementary school of its size. The four-square plan (Ill. 4.44b) was dominated at ground level by a large dining room at the back, doubling as a gymnasium and with open steel girders in the ceiling (Ill. 4.46); around it were ranged staff rooms and kitchens. Above came a double-height assembly hall with galleries round three sides, ringed by classrooms, while at the top level were laboratories, rooms for art and music and the school museum. The ample grounds were part turfed and part tarmacked, with a strip reserved for nature study.

Elevationally the school, of brick with Portland stone dressings, follows Bailey's forthright 'Free Renaissance' idiom, with projections upwards and outwards (Ills 4.44, 45). Particularly wild and bold are the twin staircase turrets, drawn well forward and culminating in lead-capped roofs and cupolas. Entrances are slotted in below these at an angle, one marked 'visitors', the other 'pupils'. The tone is summed up in a poem by Pamela Hansford Johnson, an alumna:

Not a great period for architecture,  
LCC nineteen-nine, red brick: but still

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The Arabian turrets dominate the hill,  
From upper windows still young voices trail  
Out on the air  
“And did those Feet in ancient time” ... I know,  
I once sang there.<sup>227</sup>

The schoolkeeper's house at the south-east corner of the site sports quite another style, with roughcast elevations, brick corner piers, modillion cornice and hipped roof.

The front and flanks of the school look much as they did in 1909. Internally the planning has naturally changed, the first major addition being a library in 1930.<sup>228</sup> After years of stability, the Inner London Education Authority proposed in 1970 that Clapham County should be amalgamated with Marianne Thornton School (see below) as a large comprehensive school. Despite the governors' opposition this plan was implemented in 1976 under the new name of Walsingham School. At first both sites were used, but the idea was that in due course the school should operate only from Broomwood Road, with extra new buildings.<sup>229</sup>

After Wandsworth took over educational powers from ILEA in 1990, Walsingham School attempted to opt out from council control. Despite a high-court action, that was refused and the school shut down.<sup>230</sup> In 1993 the premises were taken over as a private day school educating children from the age of two to thirteen by the Thomas's network of schools, already present in Battersea on the Sir Walter St John's site.<sup>231</sup> Additions and alterations since include an extension of the main block on one side at the back in 2001–2 to the designs of Richard Grey Associates and the MEB Partnership, and low buildings behind the playground by Claridge Architects, consisting of an art block (2005–6) and a reception block (2007–8).<sup>232</sup>

**Marianne Thornton School**, an LCC secondary school of 1958–60 for some 700 girls, has been demolished. Built on the west side of Clapham Common, bounded by Manchuria Road on the north and Thurleigh Road on the south, it replaced some villas with long gardens which had escaped Edwardian

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development. It was mooted in 1956 as new premises for Elmfield School for Girls, Balham, with the intention that it would evolve into a 'county college' or comprehensive. The design was made in 1957 by the LCC Architect's Department (Schools Division), with H. L. Smith and Warren Chalk as job architects. The layout sought to create 'a collegiate atmosphere' by means of semi-enclosed courts. A four-storey teaching block of cross-wall construction with storey-height glazing faced eastwards over the common, while a lower-lying steel-framed hall and other facilities lay behind. The school, erected by Thomas & Edge of Woolwich, was formally opened in July 1961. It was named



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Extra space to the east in the Battersea Park Road redevelopment area became available in 1963, when plans were laid for extending the school into an

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The college owed its origins to the Whig reformer James Kay, later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. As an assistant poor law commissioner during the 1830s Kay had become a strenuous advocate of improving education for the poor. On his transfer to the Metropolitan Poor Law district in 1839 he began to reorganize the Norwood School of Industry into a model school. He also became secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, newly created by Melbourne's Whig administration to formulate a national policy for education and disburse grants. Kay and his ally Carleton Tufnell spent that summer looking at continental schools, notably the Ecoles Normales of France and Switzerland, which trained pupils as teachers. On their return they found that Parliament had declined to establish a normal school. Kay therefore determined to found a training school at his own risk.<sup>239</sup>

To that end Kay contacted John Shaw Lefevre, a fellow poor law commissioner who moved in the same Whig circles.<sup>240</sup> Since 1827 Terrace House and its grounds of some five acres had been let by the 2nd Earl Spencer to Shaw Lefevre, who was advising the Spencers on property matters, not least in Battersea. Recently, having found the situation unhealthy and inconvenient, he had moved his family to Bayswater, while retaining the lease.<sup>241</sup> Terrace House could therefore be put at Kay's disposal.

The main local enthusiast for the venture, however, was not Shaw Lefevre but Robert Eden, whose success in raising the nearby village school to high standards had already drawn it to the attention of reformers and notables (page xxx). Kay wrote:

We were led to select premises at Battersea chiefly on account of the very frank and cordial welcome with which the suggestion of our plans was received by the Hon. and Rev. Robert Eden, the vicar of Battersea. Mr. Eden offered the use of his village schools in aid of the training school, as the sphere in which the pupils might obtain a practical acquaintance with the art of instruction.<sup>242</sup>

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came next and remained closest. The name was not at first altered. In 1845 there were 71 pupils, all now aged twenty and over, so the tenor of the establishment naturally changed.<sup>249</sup> Additions were slow in coming, in part because the college was on a sublease, though Shaw Lefevre offered extensions of tenure. Under the first Anglican principal, Thomas Jackson, in about 1845 a lecture theatre was built east of Terrace House, and a small dining room to its north.<sup>250</sup> The college acquired a committee system which soon involved local churchmen including Philip Cazenove and Henry S. Thornton as well as Battersea's vicar, J. S. Jenkinson. Under the architect Henry Clutton various minor works were undertaken in 1850–1, including a new classroom with dormitories over between the house and the lecture theatre. Clutton was also asked to prepare plans for a building 'set apart for Divine Worship' – the word chapel was perhaps avoided to avoid the imputation that this was a final arrangement.<sup>251</sup> The addition of a small museum and laboratory behind the lecture theatre may belong to about 1853, when works were contemplated.<sup>252</sup>

The next principal was Samuel Clark (1851–62). His main memorial was the permanent chapel, erected to Gothic designs by William Butterfield in 1857–8 and paid for by subscription. It was sited east of the house and built in brick with stone dressings by Butterfield's favourite contractor, Joseph Norris. found 'much masculine power in the design ... there is an entire absence of foppery'.<sup>253</sup> Rose windows lit the chapel from three sides, while over the altar excellent glass by Clayton & Bell in memory of Clark's wife filled a three-light window. The bench seating was laid out in the parochial manner (Ill. 4.52). A cusped timber arch and a change in the roof profile marked the division between nave and chancel. In the Edwardian years A. H. Ryan-Tenison added a screen, executed by Nathaniel Hitch.<sup>254</sup> The west gallery with organ may also have been an addition.

Under Evan Daniel, longest-serving of the principals (1866–94), the name St John's Training College was adopted. A block of classrooms and dormitories arrived north of the chapel to designs by E. C. Robins in 1878.<sup>255</sup> But not until H. Wesley Dennis succeeded Daniel did the college grow substantially. This succeeded a

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critical period when with their sublease about to expire the college contemplated moving away. Following negotiations with Battersea Vestry, a strip of ground was ceded in 1895 for a road along the river frontage to link Lombard Road with Vicarage Crescent. At the same time the National Society bought the freehold with help from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and a building fund was drummed up.<sup>256</sup>

A loose half-quadrangle now emerged round the chapel (Ils 4.50, 51). First

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buildings were also altered; light-green tiling cheered up the corridors, while the old conservatory became the students' dining hall, with an added bay.<sup>267</sup>

By 1924 talk had begun of moving away because of the deteriorating neighbourhood and in 1927 the property was sold to Battersea Borough Council for a health centre and library (page xxx). The school closed down, while Southlands College moved to a larger house on Wimbledon Parkside.<sup>268</sup> The college is now part of Roehampton University, where a stained-glass fragment from the Edwardian hall is retained. The Battersea buildings were mostly demolished following war damage but the 1904–5 wing remains, mutilated and converted into housing.

(now )

Battersea Polytechnic – the first London polytechnic to be purpose-built – was constructed to designs by E. W. Mountford in 1892–4. Much extended and changed over the years, the buildings were finally converted to housing in 2006–8 and have since been known as Kingsway Square.<sup>269</sup>

The Victorian notion of the polytechnic as a venue mixing technical instruction and recreation for working men and women goes back to Quintin Hogg's Regent Street Polytechnic, opened in 1882. The People's Palace in Mile End followed, slightly different in tone. Expanding the polytechnic movement became an objective of the Charity Commission, charged with disbursing funds under the City of London Parochial Charities Act. South London, then weak in facilities for training artisans, became one focus of effort. In 1888 the Commissioners met a deputation aiming to create three foundations south of the Thames, and promised endowment and some funding if matching money could be raised. The deputation included Canon Erskine Clarke, who 'urged the claims of Battersea'.<sup>270</sup>

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An executive committee for the South London Polytechnic Institutes was duly formed, headed by Evan Spicer. New Cross, Elephant and Castle, and Battersea, were earmarked, all three with available sites and buildings in mind. The New Cross project, destined for the former Royal Naval School there, was sponsored by the Goldsmiths' Company, becoming Goldsmiths' College, while the committee took on former school and college premises near the Elephant to create the Borough Polytechnic.

That left Battersea, chosen because of its rapid industrial growth. Support came from the Battersea Tradesmen's Club and from the Battersea Vestry, newly liberated from the Wandsworth Board of Works. The response of employers was mixed. Octavius Morgan, local MP and director of the Morgan Crucible Company, acted as Spicer's right-hand man in the early stages, but there was no immediate reaction from the railways. The main donations towards the £60,000 appealed for came from William Guesdon, a Clapham businessman and evangelical (£20,000), and Sir Henry Tate (£10,000).

The first idea was to buy all or part of the Albert Palace facing Prince of Wales Drive, which having failed financially was for sale in 1888 (page xxx).<sup>271</sup> This attracted advocates of the polytechnic movement's recreational side, doubtless aware of the glass domes and winter gardens then planned for the People's Palace. That December the architect Rowland Plumbe, also employed at the Borough Polytechnic, reported that the palace buildings could be adapted for technical education 'at a comparatively low cost'. But a high-powered subcommittee including Hogg, Tate, Sir Lyon Playfair, Silvanus Thompson and Erskine Clarke investigated further and advised otherwise, with Clarke one of two dissentients out of nine.<sup>272</sup>

The promoters now opted for taking a portion of the Albert Palace's grounds, held under Crown lease and stretching south and west as far as Battersea Park Road and Forfar Road. Building on a one-acre site south of the palace in



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combination with purchase of the Connaught Hall at its west end was the intention. That too fell through after Plumbe surveyed the hall and concluded that its 'most deplorable state' needed large sums to set right.<sup>273</sup> By June 1889 the committee had decided to abandon the Albert Palace altogether, buy the larger two-acre site facing

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overlooked by the first-floor corridor behind an open screen and balustrade. The main stair rises behind the long lateral front corridor, which is enlivened by a stone tympanum with the arts and sciences in relief.<sup>290</sup>

From its opening Battersea Polytechnic came within the remit of the London County Council, which provided a growing proportion of its funding. Under its first principal, Sidney Wells, and chairman, Edwin Tate, it developed a strong technical reputation. It was organized in six departments rather than the projected original three: mechanical engineering and building trades; electrical engineering and physics; chemistry; 'women's subjects'; art; and music.<sup>291</sup>



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department; Tate's organ was reconstructed to fit the reduced lower space. In the south-east corner the block barged beyond the previous building line.<sup>299</sup>

Like other such establishments, the polytechnic was rechristened a 'college of advanced technology' in 1956, becoming known as Battersea College of Technology. In 1962 it transferred to Ministry of Education control from the LCC, which had just completed a large men's hall of residence, Ralph West Hall in Albert Bridge Road. By then local links had loosened, and two-thirds of the students were said to come from outside London.<sup>300</sup> The college had long outgrown its original buildings and taken on annexes round about. The search for an extra or alternative site had already begun. In 1962, under the principalship of Peter Leggett, it was decided to abandon Battersea for Guildford. Next year came the announcement that the colleges of advanced technology would become universities. That paved the way for the college to become the University of Surrey in 1966, a change made before the move, which occurred in 1968–9.<sup>301</sup> Some historic relics were taken to Guildford, including the Shrigley & Hunt west window from the library, later lost.<sup>302</sup>

The Battersea buildings were taken over by Westminster Technical College. After talk of demolition, a refurbishment took place in stages by GLC architects on behalf of the Inner London Education Authority in 1973–7.<sup>303</sup> The college, latterly Westminster College, remained in possession until 2000. St James Homes, a subsidiary of the Berkeley Group, bought the complex in 2005 for development as housing and recast it as Kingsway Square in 2006–8, with the A & Q Partnership as architects. Most of the buildings were converted, but on land formerly occupied by annexes facing Lurline Gardens at the back a new block called Drapers Court was created. The entrance hall, main staircase and lateral corridor in the Mountford building retain their identity. The internal flank wall of the big hall, curtailed in 1953–4, was recreated to allow flats with large west-facing windows.<sup>304</sup> The library has since been converted into a small art gallery.