Putting names to teachers’ faces

Pictured above are: St Bede’s staff 1950: 1 Stuart Baxter; 2 Alex Smart; 3 ‘Abe’ O’Neil; 4 Tom Dooley; 5 Bernard Crowley; 6 Jack Ward; 7 Jim Foster; 8 B Waite; 9 Tom Taylor; 10 Gerald Fee; 11 Terry Walsh; 12 Harold Walsh; 13 E V Casey; 14 Thomas Brogan; 15 John Connor; 16 Paddy Creedan; 17 Horace Jackson; 18 Jerry Coogan; 19 Charlie O’Dowd; 20 Harry Hayes; 21 Bill Rigby; 22 J Brogan; 23 Pasha Doughty; 24 Miss Ball; 25 Fr Doyle; 26 George Forrester; 27 Mrs Crowley; 28 Fr Paddy Langan; 29 Jim Brannigan; 30 Fr Sweeney; 31 Fr Oram; 32 Miss Thompson; 33 J C Evans; 34 Harry Eagle; 35 Kitty Bottomley

The proposed merger of Bradford’s St Bede’s School and St Joseph’s College – Catholic grammar schools for boys and girls respectively – has prompted St Bede’s old boy Vincent Finn to send this numbered photograph.

It shows 35 members of staff at St Bede’s in 1950, when young Vincent was making his way through school.

Now living in West Roxbury, Massachussets, in the United States, Mr Finn thinks there are only two teachers in the photograph who are still alive: Stuart Baxter (1) and Father Doyle (25).

“There were two sets of brothers on the staff. The first was T and J Brogan (14 and 22). To differentiate them the boys gave them nicknames – Toady Thomas and Froggy Brogan. The second set was Terry and Harold Walsh (11 and 12). Harold taught woodwork and metalwork.

“Bernard Crowley and Mrs Crowley (5 and 27) were the only married couple on the staff.
“Several teachers in this picture were recently returned from service in the Second World War. Baxter, Smart, Dooley and Hayes (1, 2, 4 and 20) were all my teachers. Sometimes on a slow day you could get them to share some of the experiences they had in the war.

“Mr Brannigan (29) was the deputy headmaster. He was a First World War veteran.

“Kitty Bottomley (35) was the school’s assistant secretary. She was at St Bede’s for something like 40 years. She became the senior secretary and handled all the money associated with the running of the school.

“Harry Elgie (34) taught Latin, as did Bernard Crowley (6). Vince Casey (13) ran the photographic society. Chuck Evans (33) ran the library and was in charge of the prefects. I think the headmaster father Sweeney (30) died recently in his nineties.

“Miss Ball (24) taught French. She was joined by another female teacher Mary Hayes who was the sister of Harry Hayes (20).

“Tom Taylor (9) taught chemistry but he was also a fully certified optician/optometrist. Just about every boy at this time had Abe O’Neill (3) as his art teacher.

“Paddy Creedan (16) was a physics teacher. I can still remember a number of songs we learned in the music class taught by Jack Ward (6).

“Pasha Doughty (23) earned his name from the cigarettes he smoked. Pasha cigarettes had a very strong odour, they smelled like camel dung, and were a cheap brand, sometimes the only ones for sale in times of rationing.

“In his younger days, George Forrester (26) was reputed to have been a very good boxer. Tom Dooley (4) was known throughout Yorkshire and nationally as a boxing referee.

“Mike Dinn, an old boy from this era, is now a resident of Australia. He has created a memorabilia page which can be found at http://members.pcug.org.au/~mdinn/StBedes/stbedes1.htm

“This may be the end of an era as the two Catholic schools merge. I bet you get all kinds of feedback and memories of school days tied to the picture.”