

BFSS Archives Info sheet No. 3

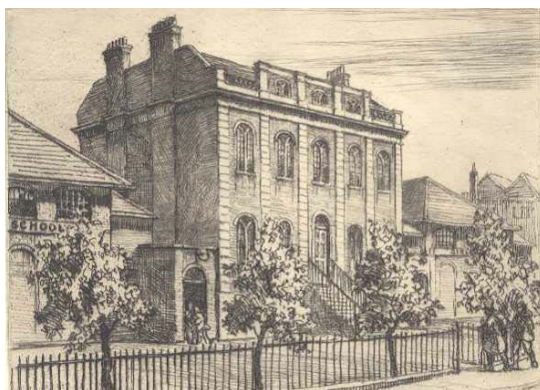
Stockwell College

The history of Stockwell College goes back to the end of the 18th Century, when Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, set up his first school in Southwark in 1798. Overwhelmed by the number of children coming to his school, Lancaster developed a system whereby the older children went on to teach the younger ones, known as the Lancasterian or monitorial system, which soon developed into teacher-training.

In 1808 Lancaster's work was formalised with the setting up of The Committee of the Royal Lancasterian Institution for the Education of the Poor of Every Religious Persuasion, which became the British and Foreign School Society in 1814.

Initially, male and female students were taught at Borough Road. A separate Women's Section was formed in 1814 under Ann Springman, who herself had been trained under Joseph Lancaster.

In 1817 a new building on Borough Road, Southwark, London, opened housing a teacher-training establishment and schools accommodating 500 boys and 300 girls.



Known as Borough Road Normal School, teacher training was brief – 3 to 6 months. Even in these early days, a few students each year came from overseas, including Sierra Leone, Russia and Greece. The numbers of students (men and women) rose steadily: 44 in 1818; 87 in 1828; 183 in 1838; 207 in 1840.

In 1842 the newly-built Normal College¹ at Borough Road opened. It had accommodation for 45 men and 30 women, a lecture theatre, dining room, several classrooms for the use of students, large schoolrooms for boys and girls and other offices. The male students received instruction in teaching

¹ *St. Mark's College, Chelsea was founded by the National Society in 1841 and took the title Normal College or Training College in a deliberate attempt to organise on collegiate lines, modelled on the ancient universities. The title 'college' was gradually adopted by other teacher training institutions but at first 'Normal School' and 'Normal College' were interchangeable. By 1860 'Training College' had been generally adopted in preference to 'Normal College'.*

English, geography, history, mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, singing and drawing. The women's courses were similar but with less academic work and more emphasis on needlework. Practice in the schools during the day was followed by instruction in the evening. Students could attend the junior class for three months and the senior class for a further three months, many left after the junior class.

In 1846 the 'Teacher's Certificate' was introduced by the government. At age 13, promising boys and girls were indentured as 'pupil-teachers' to schools of approved standard for 5 years apprenticeship. Grants were made to teachers who supervised their work. Pupil-teachers were examined annually by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs). At 18 the students competed for 'Queen's Scholarships', tests assessed by HMIs and the principal of their preferred college. Successful candidates were awarded a scholarship, worth £20 or £25, to a Normal College for a minimum of one year's training. Annual exams were held and Certificates of Merit awarded, called the Teacher's Certificate. These gave the candidates a state-recognised qualification and entitled the college to a grant of £20 for each student who passed his first exam year, £25 if he passed a second year and £30 if he qualified for a third year. The exams were held at Christmas in a prescribed list of subjects including English grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, reading, penmanship, physical science and singing. The first BRC students sat for the Teacher's Certificate in 1851.

After taking their certificates almost all BRC graduates were engaged in British Schools or Board Schools. Students were expected to 'take charge of any schools to which they may be appointed, and make no change without permission'. There they would undergo a period of probation. After two favourable inspections in two years they would receive their '*parchment*' from the Dept. of Education, which enabled the College to claim their final grant. In 1861 the Dept. of Education issued a 'Revised Code' which reduced public expenditure on education. Money was to be given to grant-aided schools solely on the results of an annual examination of each child in the 3 Rs by an inspector, together with the record of school attendance. Reduced grants meant that teacher training colleges were now obliged to charge fees.

Transfer of female students to STOCKWELL

In 1861 the BFSS bought a site at Stockwell in SW London and transferred the women students there from Borough Road College. The Rev. Alfred Bourne, principal of BRC was also the principal of Stockwell. There followed several name changes; starting out as Stockwell Normal School, by 1869 it was known as Stockwell Normal College; by 1871 Stockwell Training School and by 1875 it was known as Stockwell Training College. Attached to the College was the Stockwell Practising School.



During the 19th century the College made a distinguished contribution to the education of teachers. Degree courses and postgraduate courses were available as well as the normal course of training. A significant number of students attended as day students.

In 1935 another move was made. The BFSS bought the former Palace of the Bishops of Rochester at Bromley in Kent – a historic site as the Bishops had had a manor in Bromley since before the Norman conquest. The 18th C house was adapted and extended to provide accommodation for the 114 women students.

In 1940 the college was evacuated to Devon, to a mansion built by Brunel near Torquay. The return to Bromley in 1945 was to a scene of devastation. The Music House, craft rooms, PE hall, students' common room and caretaker's house had all been destroyed as a result of bombing, and enormous air raid shelters had built by the Borough Council on the east and west of the building for use by the townspeople. High blast walls obscured the windows and the grounds had been turned into allotments.

The next few years saw much reconstruction, and additional large houses were purchased in Wanstead Road, a mile away from the main site. By 1960 c. 200 students were following one or two year training courses leading to the Teacher's Certificate, plus small group of men and women following one-year supplementary course in mathematics

In Aug 1960 the BFSS sold the College to Kent County Council, to fund expansion at Borough Road College. This included the construction of a large hostel for women and allowed women students to return to the original foundation after an absence of almost exactly a century.