

King Ted's A Biography of King Edward VII School, Sheffield

King Edward VII School! KES! King Ted's! The various names of the school resonate with Sheffielders of all generations. For a hundred years the School has occupied a central role in the educational life of the City of Sheffield.

When I tentatively approached John Cornwell three years ago with the suggestion that he might like to consider writing a history of the School to celebrate its impending centenary, I hardly imagined that a volume of such significance would emerge. Neither could I foresee the labour of love combined with a real taste for scholarship and original research, which my innocuous question had set in motion.

This work is a unique chronicle. Throughout the troubled twentieth century King Edward VII School has evolved and adapted. It has survived and flourished. It has lived through and reflected the dramas of the times at home and abroad, in good times and bad.

John Cornwell weaves a fascinating narrative, drawing on many original and hitherto unpublished sources, to portray the journey of the School from the imperial post Victorian era to the dawn of the globalised and multi-cultural twenty-first century. He finds themes of permanence and continuity in a period of change, which would have bewildered the Methodist founders of the original Wesley College in whose magnificent building the contemporary school still thrives. He records with forensic thoroughness the cut and thrust of local politics which shaped the destiny of the School in this most political of cities. He traces the emergence of this most diverse and successful co-educational comprehensive school from its origins as a small fee-paying Edwardian Boys' Grammar School with public school pretensions, and in the process captures the pivotal moments in the School's history.

Yet this remarkable book is much more than a constitutional history of the English education system. John Cornwell brings to life with great affection and generosity the many characters who have graced the School and left their mark on it. He recalls anecdotes, achievements and rivalries. His pages are animated by the sport, music and theatrical aspirations of the staff and students of the School, set in the context of their time.

King Ted's: A Biography of King Edward VII School does honour to a great school. There is much in this book to appeal to the widest readership; whether you have personal memories of the School as a pupil or as a member of staff or a passionate interest in the vicissitudes of Sheffield politics or whether you have just wondered all those years what actually happens behind the imposing façade which looks out on Clarkehouse Road, you will find something to surprise and delight you in John Cornwell's history.

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