



School Cookery but not always for the girls



The photograph above shows a class group from what was once known as Ventnor Senior School (based at the buildings on St. Boniface Road). It is plainly a week or so before Christmas 1946 and the pupils have been busy making Christmas cakes. They appear to be standing in the new Domestic Subjects Centre that Ingrams had built for the School that summer. The individuals in the class (reading left to right) are recorded as follows:

Joan Scovell, ? Winchester, Evelyn Jefferies, ? White, Doreen Ringer, June Russell, Barbara Lock, Wilma Pirie, Jacqueline Hull, Barbara Mursell, Freda Terry, Angela Allen, Diana Jennings, Maureen Pinnock, Fay Widdop, (Mr. Crosland, Headmaster). Note: this list appears not to include the spectacled teacher or assistant who is part hidden at the back.

Three years before this picture was taken, the *Isle of Wight Mercury* (in 1943) made reference to a speech given by Mr. Crosland, Headmaster, at the School's annual prize-giving. The School was evacuated to Steephill Castle for much of the war and he reported how boys were being taught cookery and girls were being instructed in woodwork – a decisive reversal of gender stereotypes that was described by the *Mercury* as pioneering. The girls were learning how to saw, plane, chisel and polish. They were also getting instruction in how to fix washers on water taps, to fit new fuses in electric circuits, to fit new flex to electrical appliances, and to undertake basic soldering. The boys' cookery included rice and canary puddings, jam roly-poly, jam tarts and scones, spotted dick, toad-in-the-hole and Cornish pasties. All enough to make your mouth water. One wonders how many of such youngsters (both girls and boys) carried these new skills into adulthood. Perhaps someone will write in and tell us! If they do, we will do a follow-up piece in a few weeks.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

www.ventnorheritage.org.uk / telephone 855407

[Ventnor & District Heritage Facebook Group](#)



