

40 Minutes: “Knickerbockers in Knightsbridge”

UK TV documentary : 19[89] † : dir. [Grant Muter]: BBC : 40 min
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	✖	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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[† repeat broadcast April 01 91]



Note the deliberate placement of the girl pupil

Source: Radio Times

Radio Times listing:

“Unorthodox Hill House School once had Prince Charles as a pupil.”

Still Caption:

“The colonel and the knickerbocker kids... Stuart Townsend with pupils of Hill House preparatory school.”

No further information currently available. Sadly the accompanying *Radio Times* background article has been lost. As I recall, it characterised Townsend as an elderly but progressive-minded headmaster who had stamped his own individualist personality on this tiny but exclusive London school, distinctive if nothing else for the quaint brown corduroys of the title.

Television's love affair with (or at least, fascination with) the public school is amply attested to by such recent documentaries as "**Cutting Edge**" (Eton, Benenden), "**The Eton of Africa**", "**The Making of Them**", "**The Lowdown**" (on the Common Entrance exam), "**Only Human**" (Eton again) and of course the series "**Public School**" itself. The general trend is to represent these institutions as eccentric legacies from an imperial (hence, bad) past, nonetheless cutting their tack to accommodate more contemporary ideas and values. So it's out with corporal punishment and fagging, in with girls and ethnic minority pupils. What more could any parent wish for? In "**The Lost Betjemans**" (62), archive footage of his own public school (Marlborough, which he heartily detested) was set against the poet's elegiac verse on the joys and privations of boarding school life.

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