



JOHN RUSKIN GRAMMAR SCHOOL MAGAZINE



APRIL 1949

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“There is no wealth but life. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is the richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence over the lives of others.”

John Ruskin : “Unto This Last”

*Great wits are sure to madness near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds divide*

Dryden knew this long ago; and we all know that melancholy madness was common among men of letters in the eighteenth century. Shakespeare, too, who knew almost everything, has a line about poets and lunatics (and lovers, of course) being one of a kind. But even he, the great Bard himself, must have raised an Elysian eyebrow at the recent news of a famous poetry prize being awarded to a certified madman. Yet this happened in America a few weeks ago. The poet is alleged to have expressed his gratification at the award: and his doctor is said to be busy—no doubt very busy—studying the prize-winning cantos as a clue to his patient's mind.

We find ourselves unable to make such a sensational award. Our modest poetry prize goes to a perfectly sane member of the Lower Sixth, Anthony Nye, for his poem *Aftermath*. True, it is an experiment in the "modern" manner, but mild and comprehensive enough. (Besides, the American story, though true, is not the whole truth, and though inviting wrong inferences should not be allowed to prejudice the modern poetry issue!) In addition we should like to compliment Owen Everson on his blank verse poem *John*, and John Prevett on his sonnet *Night*.

The prose prize is awarded this time to Andrew McIntyre for his article *Speedwell Cavern*, an account of an interesting personal experience in Derbyshire. Also commended are two younger boys, Jack Edwards and Maurice Mackrell, for their compositions *The Goods Yard at Night* and *The Prefabs*.

Features of this issue include: an account of our recent Speech Day held at the Civic Hall when our Guest Speaker was Professor B. Ifor Evans, the eminent literary critic, editor, and Principal of Queen Mary College, London; a full report (with photograph of cast) of our Annual School Play, and articles on the New Laboratory Building, with a photograph of the Chemistry Section. On one of the Sports Pages there is also a photograph of our under-15 Football XI, finalists at Selhurst Park in the Croydon Schools' Football Association Cup. Mention must also be made of Leslie Blake's *Canadian Diary*. Since he left us last term, he has arrived safely on the Pacific Coast, and his article is part of the diary he kept during his long train journey from Halifax to Vancouver.

We have one staff change to report since our Autumn issue. Last November Mr. D. Hart left both us and the profession to take up an important appointment in Paris with the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation. We wish him every success and happiness in his new life. But Europe's economic gain—however deserved—is our educational loss, and the sort of loss the Grammar Schools can ill afford.

Mr. Hart's scholarly mind will be much missed in classroom and common-room alike. In his place as French master, however, we have been very pleased to welcome Mr. G. Richardson, B.A., formerly on the Staff of Gunnersby Grammar School, Middlesex.

The Summer Term begins on the 10th May. Meanwhile April—Chaucer's April, with its "showers sweet"—is as good a month to start a holiday as any. As reported elsewhere, a number of our boys will be journeying as far as Yorkshire—and most of the others will be finding their way well into the shires of Kent and Surrey. And for many of them Chaucer's "sweet showers" will have, this April, a further significance. For the long restrictions are nearly over: the day of de-rationing has almost dawned. Again as Shakespeare said—though on a less happy occasion—"Sweets to the sweet!" Sometimes.

NIGHT.

The evening now is melting into night:
The blue of heaven deepens, and gives birth
To bright stars—stabbing points of twinkling light
Piercing the darkness that enshrouds the earth.
The pale cold moon shines on the sleeping land,
On silent streets—deserted, dirty, drear;
Dark lines of roofs and smoking chimneys stand
Against the sky; Night has no beauty here—
She cannot hide the ugliness men's brains
Have rashly planned. I close my eyes, and dream
Of night among the fields and country lanes,
The loveliness of moonlit pond and stream.
O God! that men might learn to love once more
The beauty and the splendour they ignore.

J. PREVETT—L.VI.

FROM THE PASSIVE TO THE POSITIVE.

The House Cup* which was presented for the first time on 17th March is more than a mere award; it is a token and an expression of policy. And its meaning, like that of most things good, grows upon our understanding the more we consider it. I can think, therefore, of no more fitting foreword to this Magazine than an attempt to analyse all that this trophy symbolizes.

In the first place it symbolizes partnership in, and affection for, the School. Purchased jointly by the Old Boys and the Staff, the Cup demonstrates the pride and interest which both parties take in boys of the School to-day, and the hope that the fine traditions of past generations will be enhanced still further in the future.

Secondly it suggests incentive, not prohibition. While it is true that points can be lost for bad work and conduct, it is obvious that no House can ever win the Cup by merely passive virtue. The vast majority of points in the aggregate will depend on positive achievement.

Credit for achievement can be won in any field of School activity: academic, athletic, artistic, executive, even social. The first two winners of points came from Forms I and VI, and gained their awards for pursuits as wide apart as making Geometrical Models and writing an essay on the Odes of Keats. Dramatics and Magazine points jostled points for examination successes when the initial starting places of the Houses were determined. The Cup, then, symbolizes, thirdly, the comprehensiveness of true education.

Lastly—and most important of all—the Cup implies that educational and social training which comes from working for the good of a wider community. No boy can gain for himself more than a passing word of praise; for his House, however, he can gain a great deal; and I hope that, as the trophy was presented, each boy felt that he had a part in the general success.

I specifically said each boy, not each boy in the winning House. The so-called losers could reflect on this; that they had set the pace, that they had done their best, that they had made the Cup worth winning. The really defeated were the boys who had not tried.

On more than one occasion I have said in Assembly that the only School Rule I really wish to make is the general one: "Boys are expected to act in such a manner as will reflect credit upon themselves and the School." The other rules are not really made by any of the Staff: they are made by boys whose conduct forces us to formulate some prohibition. Such rules may be inevitable, but they are negative and undesirable. In the award of this Cup I see an opportunity for rule by positive not negative considerations. Here is a fine chance for boys to co-operate in worthy and purposeful activity, not because of possible punishments if they fail to do so, but because they know that merit and effort are obviously receiving their due recognition.

*The Cup has been won by Alpha House.

SPEECH DAY

Our third annual Speech Day since the war was held in the Civic Hall on Thursday, 17th March. The guest speaker was Dr. B. Ifor Evans, M.A., F.R.S.L., Principal of Queen Mary College, London, and the chair was taken by Councillor F. Gardner. Among those present were the Mayor and Mayoress, Mrs. Gardner, Councillor and Mrs. Maycock, Councillor Cole, Councillor W. H. Gough, Councillor and Mrs. A. S. Marshall, Father Larkin, Dr. and Mrs. Weeks, Miss Lister, Mother Marie Cuthbert, Mr. Wheeler and the head masters of several of Croydon's Primary Schools.

In giving his report Mr. Lowe welcomed the many friends of the School and thanked them for their encouragement and support. He referred to the gratifying results obtained the previous year in the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations—particularly in the latter where out of 13 candidates nine were successful, five of them with Intermediate exemption, and one (J. M. Clark) placed on reserve for a State Scholarship. He praised the work of the Staff and boys which had taken the School almost at a bound into the lists, as serious challengers for higher academic honours. Mr. Lowe concluded by thanking the Education Committee and the Chief Education Officer for providing all the means of education within their power, and felt that nearly all that could be done for the School in its present building had been done.

The prizes were then presented by the Mayoress, Mrs. Margaret Turner, J.P., after which the Chairman introduced the Guest Speaker.

Dr. Evans delighted his audience with some introductory witticisms. He complimented the Mayor on his "anecdotal versatility" and the Chairman for being quick to learn for a "new boy"—adding that as a Yorkshireman among a lot of Southerners he had of course an initial advantage. He sympathised with the Head Master and Staff in their attempts to educate "the resistant material of youth" especially when the multifarious duties imposed upon them by the State made teaching almost "an ancillary activity." Nor were they the most amply rewarded section of the community, their remuneration not comparing with the "preliminary salaries of dentists." But of all the learned professions they had "the most pleasing material in which there was the greatest element of hope."

Then Dr. Evans turned to the boys—with his main message. In England in the last few years there had taken place, he said, a bloodless revolution. Major changes had been made in the structure of the State—changes more fundamental than had occurred after warfare or revolution in other countries. And whether people thought these changes desirable or not, too rapid or too slow, they were permanent changes. The result was that the attitude of responsibility to the State must be re-adjusted, and increasing attention must be paid to civic duty. What were once the major motives of life—the old motives of private competition and gain—were gone, and would have to be replaced by something else. The incentive now must lie in a belief in work for its own sake. New opportunities awaited youth. They were facing a future far less economically uncertain and with far greater opportunity for contributing to a

society in which they could believe. This, said Dr. Evans, was not a political issue. They were living in a century of the common man, of common opportunity and the decrease of privilege. But a great responsibility was being placed upon them (the boys). They must make themselves as able as they could, for there was for this country the opportunity of the moral and social leadership of the world. By our wonderful system of education, by our technical and scientific organisation (superior to any in Europe or America) this could be achieved—and he wished them well and God's blessing in their endeavour.

The vote of thanks to the Chairman and the Guest Speaker was proposed by Councillor S. A. Maycock, Chairman of the Education Committee, and seconded by John Clark, the School Captain. Councillor Maycock endorsed the opinion made in the early part of Dr. Evans' speech, that each school should remain a distinct personality; and he deprecated any tendency there might be to weaken the special position of the Grammar Schools. He congratulated all the boys on winning their scholarships to the School: there, at least, they had shown the value of private enterprise! In conclusion he suggested that a message of remembrance should be sent to Alderman Peters, the former Chairman of the Governors, who had lately given up much of his public work in Croydon.

A very warm welcome was earlier given to a few words from Mr. Greenwood, Deputy Education Officer, who was making his last official appearance at an educational function before his retirement. He spoke of his long acquaintance with the School. The quality of its Head Masters and Staff and its record had well fitted it to become a Grammar School. He recalled that he had been invited to address the School on the first day of its new status. He had expressed his confidence then in the ability of the School to hold its own among other Grammar Schools. He felt that his confidence had been justified and wished the School success in the future.

In between the speeches the audience was entertained with songs from the School Choir and music from the School Orchestra and the Recorder Group.

NIGHT BREEZE.

The sun had sunk beneath the hills,
Deep shadows filled the sky;
And as a breeze caressed its leaves
I heard the lilac sigh.

The breeze slid by, and all was still,
At rest in twilight's bliss;
Save where the raptur'd lilac hung
A-tremble with its kiss.

M. FARROW—V.S.

NEWS MISCELLANY

The arrival of Spring has brought with it the long-awaited flowering of our playground bulbs and trees. Saffron crocuses have been peeping through since February, and now the almond blossom is out. Soon it will be the turn of the cherry, the laburnum, and the red May tree. Meanwhile the old lime tree in the corner looks on in silent dignity, like some elder statesman observing a host of new members rushing into florid speech. It has seen and heard many things: and its presidential position can never be challenged.

During the coming holiday a party of sixth formers will be going, to use a Yorkshire expression, "ower tops," which means that they will be spending a week climbing over the Pennines in the North West corner of the County of Broad Acres. The Yorkshire dales and fells are less well known to "foreigners" than they deserve to be, and though they do not possess the fame of the hills of Derbyshire, the mountains are higher and the moors more expansive. The ascent of Pen y ghent, Ingleborough and Whernside are in the programme, and though the larger caverns and pot-holes are not for the ordinary walker, a scramble into the more accessible caves will give a taste of speleology. Headquarters for the week will be at Youth Hostels in Malhamdale, Ribblesdale, Dentdale and at Ingleton. The party, led by Mr. Peacock, will be leaving St. Pancras Station for Skipton on Tuesday, the 28th April, and returning the following Thursday.

Old Boys of the pre-war era will be interested in the recent announcement that Kenneth Norman Forester (1933-37) has been made Deacon in the Church of Ely St. Mary by the Lord Bishop of Ely.

We should like to congratulate T. P. Morris and G. D. Southgate on the publication of a volume of poems "Through a Glass Darkly." Only a few private copies were presented to their friends, but the two young authors are to be commended on their enterprise as well as their ability. Southgate, who left School last July, is now soldiering in Austria, near the Yugoslav and Italian borders, in the Winter Sports country. He can be trusted to appreciate the breathless beauty of the Alpine scene, and also to observe intelligently the people. He writes that "they seem to have no understanding of Western democracy—and are completely sincere political realists. Hitler and the Allies are accepted equally as successive phases in life."

We should also like to congratulate Ronald Matthews on being accepted as a student in the Art Department of Goldsmith's College, London: and Alan Chapman who has been accepted as a student at the Royal Dental Hospital. And as we go to press we have just heard that

John Clark, the School Captain, has won one of the highest academic awards in the kingdom—the Goldsmit Entrance Scholarship, tenable at University College, London, for three years, during which time he will study for a degree in Engineering. Well done, Clark!

The Coloma Convent Grammar School was the scene of an Inter-Schools' Dance held on St. Valentine's Night in aid of the U.N. Appeal for Children. Ten guineas were raised. The dance was well supported by members of the Upper School and by Old Boys, and its success was largely due to the efforts of Constable who was chairman of the Organizing Committee.

Two boys brawling in the corridor.

Master : "Your name, sirrah!"

Boy : "Montague, sir."

Master : "And yours? Capulet, I suppose."

Other Boy : "No, sir, Binney."

JOHN.

A lone voice crying in the wilderness,
A hermit living in a desert land;
His food was berries, honey from the bees,
His rough clothes made of skins were all he asked
To shield his hardy frame. Son of a priest,
In early youth he left his temple home
To live in deep seclusion with his God.
For many years he watched, and prayed—prepared
To do the task which God himself had set.
So John began his work—he sometimes felt
The way was hard, but since he put his trust
In God he gained the strength to overcome—
And many were baptized in Jordan's stream.
Yet still John watched and waited; and he asked
No honour for himself, but often spoke
Of one to come, the lachet of whose shoes
He might not loose. "I am a forerunner;
Not the Christ—sent to prepare the people
For the coming of the Lord." It came at last,
The promised advent of the Son of God.
The work of John was done; yet was he cast
In prison by the King who gave his head,
A present to a festal dancing-girl.

O. N. EVERSON—L.VI.

THE SCHOOL PLAY



By kind permission of the "Croydon Times"

She Stoops to Conquer, chosen this year as our Christmas play, was the Dramatic Society's most ambitious production to date: and, we might say, its most successful. Self-praise being no recommendation at all, we are pleased to be able to quote in full (by kind permission), Backstager's notice that appeared in the *Croydon Times* of January 8th:—

"End-of-Term productions by school dramatic societies do not as a rule fall within the province of this column. A few days before Christmas, however, I went to see the John Ruskin Grammar School Dramatic Society's performance of 'She Stoops to Conquer,' and found it at least as well played as many productions by more adult, more spontaneous, but certainly not more enthusiastic companies.

"Goldsmith's comedy is a popular piece for school performance, perhaps too popular. But the Ruskin Players tackled it freshly and told the story vigorously. A touch of cynical suavity in the production helped to overcome the most obvious difficulty, that of the players' immaturity.

"A common stumbling-block to credibility, the impersonation of female parts by boys, was here no handicap. One of the best performances was that of Anthony Nye, as Mrs. Hardcastle, who 'took off' the mannerisms of an elderly woman exactly, even to the voice. This was also true of Frank Millington as Kate Hardcastle and Geoffrey Child as Constance Neville, though the latter occasionally adopted an unfeminine pose.

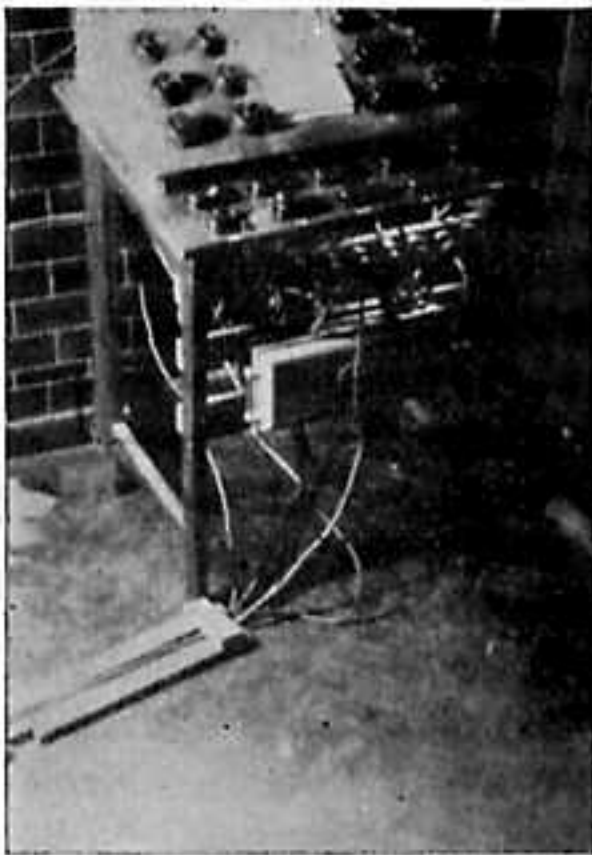
"Terence Constable played the part of Charles Marlow with a fine swagger and an excellent assumption of dandified elegance, though his bashfulness in his

encounter with 'good woman' Kate was rather overplayed. Owen Everson gave the part of Tony Lumpkin an appropriately country crudity contrasting well with the urban elegance of Marlow and his friend, George Hastings, played by Bernard Leadbeater.

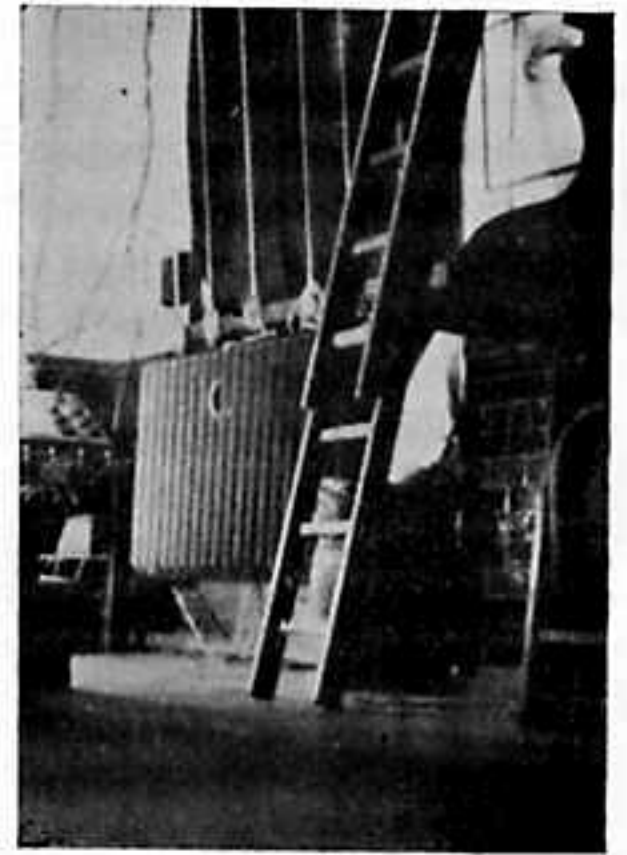
"Other well-played parts were those of Derek Howes (Mr. Hardcastle), Nicholas Appleyard (the landlord), and Derek Lawrence (Sir Charles Marlow). The play was produced by six of the School's masters. Settings were simple but effective, particularly the outdoor scene with cut-out elm trees silhouetted against a pale green night sky."

No one could be dissatisfied with such an outside judgment, and Backstager might have felt even more inclined to praise had he been aware of some of the problems and difficulties that had faced all concerned with the production. For instance, less than a month before the first night, a serious decision had to be taken. To carry on, or to call the whole thing off? It was a decision made almost on the flip of a coin. Plans went ahead. A truly prodigious amount of work was packed into three short weeks—by cast, producers, carpenters, painters, make-up teams and the like. Long after dark the strident voices of producers, the metallic ringing of hammers, could be heard echoing through an empty school: painters daubed "flats," carpenters fixed "pulleys," electricians wired switchboards—work was unceasing and unremitting. Rehearsals and stage setting went on simultaneously, and at least one producer felt the draught of a screwdriver dropping dart-like past his ear; while on several occasions a "man" with a ladder, and possibly a paintbrush, interposed himself between the romantic leads right in the middle of a sentimental tête-à-tête.

It seemed a miracle that all went right on the night. It was teamwork—and hard teamwork at that—that saw it through. But despite the labour and anxiety, there was, as indicated, considerable fun with it all: and what sometimes went on behind the proscenium would have given the coolest critic a flutter. One occasion deserves recording: when the juvenile lead, late on his call, had even then to be fiercely deprived



BEHIND
THE
SCENES



of a cup of tea from one hand and a large piece of jam tart from the other half a second before he made an irreproachable Eighteenth Century entry.

And now a word from one of the "men":—

"The settings were simple but effective.

"We welcomed this tribute to our staging of the School play because we did in fact deliberately seek simplicity for, after all, 'the play's the thing,' and 'the greatest art is to conceal art.'

"The design, construction and decoration of the scenery, entailing as it did a vast amount of work, was in itself not difficult, but on such a small stage as ours with its totally inadequate wing space, the erection, changing and manœuvring of the flats presented difficult problems. That we overcame them was due to the ingenuity, resource and improvisation of a few hardworking enthusiasts.

"To compensate for the absence of storage space all overhead drapings, lights, backcloths, etc., were suspended from the ceiling by means of an intricate system of ropes and pulleys, the installation of which was carried out by members of the Schools' Maintenance Department, to whom we tender our grateful thanks. The almost automatic raising and lowering of the required units made for quick scene changing and adjustment of lighting circuits, but even so it is to the great credit of the stage hands, moving slickly and silently in slippered feet, that we avoided these long intervals, so often a feature of amateur productions.

"The value of the stage lighting set has been considerably enhanced by the provision of a twelve-way switchboard and the incorporation of two '500w. spots,' whilst the advent of a system of warning signals by the main operator afforded a greater degree of co-ordination than had hitherto been possible. But we still need at least four more 'spots,' six 'floods' and several 'dimmers' before we can meet all the requirements of our exacting producers!—R.N.A."

THE PREFABS.

It seems only yesterday; I can still see it. Before me lay a vast expanse of green, broken only here and there by an occasional bunker or tree or bush. It was not a very good golf course; the greens had got out of condition during the war; the fences had rotted and the rain shelters had fallen into ruin. Nevertheless it was a place of quietude and the air was fresh as the wind swept across it. The quiet was only broken by a skylark, as it rose higher and higher towards the heavens. 'Twas here that I spent much of my leisure, here was my favourite playground. I would run and run until I was exhausted, with Prince worrying me and barking with the sheer joy of freedom. Then I would stop and sit down to watch him as he bounded to and fro, rabbiting and partridge-hunting. I would inhale deeply the cool, fresh air. How perfect it all was and how I loved it all.

But now it has all changed. The intensely green grass has gone. The bunkers, trees and bushes have gone. The fresh wind and the rabbits have gone. Instead stand rows and rows of dull grey prefabricated dwellings—broken only by dusty, concrete roads bordered with weeds. The wind is no longer fresh and no longer sweeps along. Instead of rabbits there are yapping mongrel dogs. The peace and quiet is no more.

M. MACKRELL—IVa.

AFTERMATH*

The storm is past,
The lightning and the thunder have gone by,
Once more the scene is calm;
Only remains a fallen tree, a broken fence, by which
they may remember.
Once more the children romp and play,
Laughing at the sky,
The sky that yet a while ago
Had sent them screaming home in deadly terror.

But now they play and fight as formerly,
Forgetful of it all,
Forgetful how they cowered home,
Each clasped to each,
While lightning cracked its whip about their heads.

Forgetful,
Forgetful of those earnest, stifled prayers,
Low-whispered from their beating, sobbing hearts,
Forgetful of their resolutions,
They bicker in the same old petty way,
Careless, pampered by security.

Pampered,
Unable more to see beyond themselves,
They have become gourmands; because deprived so long,
And wantonly fling their paper bags among the hedgerows.
The beauty of the clover now is hidden,
Crushed by banana skin and half-eaten loaf;
The bank of wild-flowers that gently heaves its breast
At the love song of the summer breeze,
Is scarred and gashed with dirty orange peel;
The stream that dances o'er the polished pebbles,
Becomes a drain, gurgling through a broken bottle.

O! God in Heaven!
Must we become thus blind again?
Must we Thy children once again forget?
Throwing our ugliness upon the world,
For yet another storm to clear it all away?

A. NYE—L.VI.

THE SPEEDWELL CAVERN*

"To the Speedwell Cavern and the Bottomless Pit—Wonders of Nature." The sign-board creaked lazily in the wind. We paused to read the inscription and then passed onwards in the direction indicated by the notice. Two great hills of light grey limestone, latticed by sheep tracks, and capped by stretches of fresh green grass, rose above our heads. The road snaked between the hills and we walked along until we reached our destination. The cavern is an old lead-mine long disused, which provides many attractions for the visitor. The entrance to the workings takes the form of a house, set against the hillside with a small moss-covered doorway which reveals itself at one extremity. We were quite surprised at this state of affairs as we rather expected a deep chasm revealing a huge, dark cave. A man came forward and made the peremptory announcement that a party would soon be able to depart.

There were several other people waiting beside us—some Scouts who had come over from Buxton and a young French boy over in England for his vacation. He was accompanied by English friends who were explaining in obvious pre-Matriculation French the possibilities of the journey.

"Il y a une grande caverne"; he heard these words and remained as perplexed as young Paris at the sight of merely a small door into the hillside. A man who, by appearance, held the post of manager, installed himself at a vantage point near the door and we filed through while he received from us suitable pecuniary reward.

Once inside the mine we were faced by the prospect of descending countless slippery steps which lay before us down into the bowels of the earth. Our host grudgingly supplied the company with minute candles and he carried himself an acetylene lamp which emitted an inconsistent, smoky, light. Nearing the bottom—the French boy was probably convinced that these wild English were transporting him to the Nether Regions—we espied a boat in which was sitting a grimy individual who regarded us with an expression of annoyance as if we were causing him needless trouble. We clambered into the boat and moved away, the guide propelling the boat by pushing the rock above our heads. The tunnel, he explained, was the workings of an old lead mine. The owners of the mine had calculated, from the surface, where a deposit of lead would be found and this was the shaft which was driven towards the lead. We moved on quietly listening to the guide's monotone while the candles flickered and sent up golden beams to glisten on the moist limestone. Suddenly the boat grounded and we stepped out.

We had arrived at the point where, after eleven tedious years of work driving through solid limestone, the miners received the most potent shock of their lives. Water had suddenly poured through and filled all the tunnels to a depth of four feet. They had sprung upon an unknown stream which had washed away all the precious lead. All that was left was an immense cavern—so immense that its size has never been determined. The guide showed us the other tunnels driven by the miners in

* Prose Prize

vain. The rock taken from these shafts was all thrown down the course of the stream. Forty thousand tons of limestone disappeared and the stream was not in the least altered. Thus the Cavern earned its name of the Bottomless Pit. We saw other signs of the miners' labours—all to no purpose—before we departed.

The return journey was even more mysterious than the outward. The guide had ceased his perfunctory lecture and the candles had all gone out. The boat moved silently, save for the ripple at the stern, through the silver water. The steps were easier to climb than to descend and soon we stepped out into the cool mountain air of Derbyshire. Our young companion from France was visibly relieved when he arrived safe and sound—his fears of a premature death at the hands of the barbarian English were allayed.

We turned away and with the copper sun gradually sinking over the now dark grey hills of Winatts Pass we walked away towards the winking yellow lights of Castleton further convinced by the story of the Speedwell Cavern of man's useless attempts to overcome Nature.

A. D. McINTYRE, L.VI.

THE GOODS YARD AT NIGHT.

Who could be luckier than I? Only this morning I had received a permit to visit my favourite locomotive sheds, and now I walked briskly along the gravel between two rail tracks, which carried a never-ending line of heavily-laden trucks. From tractors and tanks to coal and shingle were their varied loads. Although it was night the well-spaced fluorescent lamps made me forget the great black velvet darkness which hung above me.

The shrill whistles of the shunters, the deep Caledonian hooters of the express engines, the peculiar noise of the diesels, and the continued hiss of steam surrounded me as I made my way to the sleeping quarters of these scientific monsters. Regularly, wagons passed to the southern end of the yard with rattling links and clattering chains. Sometimes they would skid on an icy strip of the line and my heart would thump at the thought of chaos and disaster.

The slight mist, which I had hardly noticed before, was quickly thickening; and by the time I had reached the opposite end of the yard visibility was almost nil. The noise of fog horns, wailing like sirens, replaced that of the bustling strenuous "Billy Bunters" (the name of my favourite shunter). I perceived the silhouette of a fireman showing his partner's locomotive the way home. I jumped on to an extremely slow-moving truck laden with timber and fifteen minutes later arrived at the sheds, my original destination.

Here engines were being cleaned and refuelled, while others stood silent—monsters in the gloom. Another was coughing and choking as it traversed the short distance to the main line terminus. Blissfully my gaze encountered the blue and white stripes of that most modern of engines, "Coronation." Then, with a start, I realized the time, and reluctantly turned my steps homeward.

J. M. EDWARDS—Va.



PROMETHEUS

MARS CALLING!

The existence of life on Mars has been indisputably established! One of the radio geniuses of the Science Fifth was experimenting with a new ultra-ultra short wave receiver (with band spreading) when he heard a most startling programme being transmitted. It appeared to be a cross between Russian and Chinese, and, having a recording machine at hand, he made a permanent record which could have gone down to posterity. But unfortunately the permanent record was not permanent, for the record was accidentally broken. Before this regrettable mishap, however, with the aid of the form linguist and the School Russian expert, the astonishing message was decoded, and this is our translation of the part recorded on the ill-fated disc:—

“This is the voice of Mars! The time is now fourteen thousand minutes, treble Martian winter-time. Tonight we present the fourth in our series ‘The Survey of Science.’ Here is Professor P., the famous astronomer, to tell us something of the new two-thousand inch electronic telescope. Professor P.:—

“‘Good evening! As you will all know, the new two-thousand inch telescope was tested at Mt. Ramalot recently. The first object upon which we set it was that insignificant minor planet, Earth, since it is new to us. Finding a break in its eternal cloud halo, we proceeded to set the telescope to maximum magnification. Into view came a vast conglomeration of what appeared dwellings. We picked out one of them, which had written upon its wall the strange insignia “John Ruskin School.”

“‘Inside the high wall surrounding the school, many more of these minor individuals were engaged in a miscellany of pursuits. For example, some seemed to abhor a small sphere, for they were continually kicking it about with all possible power and dexterity in an effort to manoeuvre it between two fixed points.

“‘We then placed into circuit the “beam audiometer,” an apparatus which magnifies sound from the direction in which the telescope is pointing. We were almost deafened by a sudden roar from Earth. It sounded like nothing on Mars. Everybody seemed to be screaming at the top of his voice. Suddenly a piercing whistle was heard. All noise and movement were arrested, and every face turned towards an upstanding figure in the centre of the locality. He uttered strange words of command, and groups of people entered the building, until at last no one was visible.

“‘We then turned on the X-ray apparatus, so that we could see inside the school. Here the boys were in the charge of masters who continually turned round to write peculiar hieroglyphics upon a board.

“‘It was later observed that in the upstairs hall, little ball games were progressing. A group of the boys stood about, whilst two of them faced a table, hitting a small white ball backwards and forwards over a net. The object of the occupation seemed to be to hit the ball so hard that it went right off the end of the table.

“‘In a nearby room, the members of the school (they appeared to be more intellectual types), seemed to be engrossed in moving small coloured “men” of wood about on a checkered board. Occasionally a

piece was taken off or another was put on. Suddenly tension was relaxed, all the pieces were removed, and were replaced in a different order. It appeared that this strange activity was a form of recreation.

"A larger room contained an assembly of boys sitting in the dark watching gigantic figures flashing across one wall, in coloured lights. The scientists present could in no way account for this, or for the way in which sound issued from an odd box in one corner.

"Outside, in a white outbuilding, people in white coats were engaged in pouring coloured liquids from one container to another, heating them, and making them change colour. An occasional explosion did not seem to cause any concern.

"Since the clouds had by now moved, we were able to inspect another part of the Earth. So we turned the telescope on to——"

Here the record finished, so we learnt no more.

S. FEATES—Vs.

LANDSCAPE.

I had just reached the end of my cycle ride, and was at the top of Braydon Hill near the village of Oldbourne in Wiltshire where I was staying at the time. It was extremely hot, and I had started from Oldbourne early in the morning so as to avoid the heat of the day. I had gone to Swindon along the Lottage road, and had come back to where I was at the moment by the village of Oldbourne.

The sky was an endless blue and the sun shone down pitilessly on the farm workers in the cornfields adjoining the road. The hills in the distance were dotted about with trees and woods, making a superb background. In front of me the village of Oldbourne nestled in the country below; the houses almost sweating in the heat. The long straggling street was very dusty and the duck-pond water was very low. The church spire shining out among the green foliage of the trees glistened like silver in the sun.

Behind me lay the village of Ogbourne, although only the church tower was visible and part of the village. The railway tracks glistened in the sun, and then were shadowed as a puffing local train steamed out of the station. To the right there were cornfields stretching away down a gradual slope. The sight of the tractor and the men harvesting completed a perfect landscape.

J. G. SMYTH—IIh.

REPTILE OF THE FAMILY TESTUDINIDAE.

The mailed and contemplative tortoise
Respect for his grave wisdom brought us;
When Winter cast its icy spell,
He undertook self-burial;
Nor ventured from his earthy bed
Till Spring had spread her warmth instead.

W. C. LEHAN—III.P.

CANADIAN DIARY.

By
LESLIE BLAKE.

We landed from the *Aquitania* on Monday, 25th October. Once the Customs were passed, and luggage checked, we were free to enter the station.

Before the train left Halifax, I had time to look at the track. A British engineer would have had a nightmare! There are no chairs, and the rails are secured to the withered, carelessly spaced sleepers by means of a slightly stronger version of the bent pin. They say that the track would not stand the speed of a British locomotive, for, although a Canadian engine is a heavy monster, it never reaches a high speed.

The signals are strange looking things to the visiting Englishman. Either they have curved arms, or else they are merely four-sided bulls-eye lanterns on short sticks.

As soon as Halifax was a few miles behind, that tireless evil, the news-agent, was at work. He is as much a part of the Canadian railway system as the negro porters, and a more persistent character one could never hope to meet. He is through the coach shouting "Comics! Papers!" one moment, and the next it is "Coffee! (pronounced 'corfee') Sandwiches! Biscuits!" Once the comic papers were read, it was interesting to see how eagerly they were exchanged. White-haired gentlemen of sixty would gravely surrender their copies of "Dry-Gulch Dick" in return for the little boys' offerings of "Whizz-Bang."

Outside Halifax, where, for many miles, there seems to be a predominantly unfertile area, I caught my first glimpse of a Canadian wooden house. I was really surprised at the number of houses which are wooden, for back in England I believed the day of the "old log cabins" had passed. How wrong I was! Even the churches, their steeples included, are made of wood in some of the smaller towns.

A meal in the dining-car is a luxury to the immigrant. The days of rationing seemed far away when I sat down for my first dinner on the train. My journal yields a list of appetising meals that still make my mouth water—but I will spare you. After dinner, I returned to my car to find the porter in the process of making the beds. But the traveller is lucky if he can sleep peacefully the first night of his journey, for there are no buffers on a Canadian train. This means that, for twenty stops, there are twenty nerve-racking resumptions. When you consider that there are as many as twelve cars to a train, you begin to understand that the prelude to a start can be in the form of an extremely unpleasant jolt.

I woke up next morning to find myself in the world of French Canadians—the towns, like Rivière du Loup, which we passed about seven o'clock, are full of French advertisements. In these small places the track frequently passes along the middle of the road. There are no embankments: only a grass verge may separate the railway from a main street. Again, there are no level crossings. Only a white signpost may warn the approaching motorist of the danger.

My first glimpse of the dock-lined St. Lawrence was before a small town called St. Joseph's. Then there was a stop of ten minutes at Levis, which is just across the river from Quebec. In all its majesty of height above the river, Quebec somehow reminded me of London. As seen from a distance, there were many public buildings that might have been taken from the heart of the Old City. The ten minutes were soon up, and the cry "'Board!" which very quickly became as familiar as the dismal sound of the locomotive siren, brought the passengers hurrying from snack-bars and bookstalls.

We were off again, past Chaudière and Villeroy, where little pony traps seemed popular, past very flat land to Montreal, where we arrived at about two-thirty, Tuesday afternoon. I am no judge of distances, but it seemed to me that the St. Lawrence was a mile wide at the point where we crossed it to reach the city. As I looked back, I could see the bridge sweeping away to the distant river edge, and the end of the train moving cautiously along, like a huge green caterpillar.

We saw little of Montreal. We were shunted into a yard full of trains, and were given only an hour's rest. Hence, all that could be seen was the tops of some high buildings and a multitude of green coaches. But I was able to see the exchange of locomotives which is made, together with dining-cars and their crew, at the main stations, Montreal and Winnipeg. Most of the C.N.R. locomotives seem giants compared with their English brothers, and this new one was no exception. It was a massive 4—8—4 type, with a water capacity of 11,600 gallons.

The train was due to arrive at Ottawa about seven o'clock that evening. Although it was dark, I missed the dinner queue in order to be able to see the Parliament Buildings lit up, but I was disappointed. I saw nothing at all—and missed my dinner.

Wednesday gave me a chance to read "The Devil Rides Out," for, by the time I awoke to the time I went to bed, the view from the window was solely one of trees and lakes. If you pause to consult a map, you will find that the Canadian National line from Capreol to Nakina and beyond lies through such a district, which, though undoubtedly beautiful, becomes monotonous after a time.

We reached Hornepayne at 12.30 p.m., and Longlac, where we obtained a fine view of the lake glittering under the sun's rays, at 3.30 p.m. The houses in the woods are the true Canadian style. That is to say, they are built of logs with the rounded sides outward.

Seven o'clock Thursday morning saw us at Winnipeg. At this point, our train, which was a special, was due to connect up with the Continental Limited, which was to arrive at 10.10 a.m. Hence the passengers were free to look around the town for a couple of hours. Outside, the Main Street ran parallel to the track. On the left was the river bridge, and on the right the way to the town centre. The road was as wide as, or wider than, the Streatham High Road, but it was infinitely more dangerous. As soon as I put my foot into the roadway, traffic seemed to jump up out of the ground at me. The air overhead was thick with telephone wires and electric cables. The policemen in Winnipeg looked like mixtures of British postmen and "bobbies," for they wore helmets,

greatcoats, holster belts, and dark blue trousers with a red stripe running down each leg. Orange, one-deck street cars, complete with cow-catchers, were frequent. Many complaints are made about the London tramcars—the No. 42 in particular—but, from what I saw, I should prefer to trust my life to a London Transport vehicle rather than to a Winnipeg General Electric car. The trolley-bus, built on a similar design, seemed a safer mode of travel.

Wandering along the street, we were able to compare Canadian prices with English. Matinee prices for a cinema were twenty cents (a shilling) for adults, and ten cents for children. As is the custom, these prices applied to all parts of the building, where, I think, "Green Dolphin Street" was being shown. Fish and chips were thirty cents. We went into a branch of Woolworth's stores, and the only differences I noticed between this and, say, the Croydon branch were the prices (dollars and cents), the unrationed sweets, and the fact that the assistants did not wear the dark red uniform common in Britain.

Winnipeg was full of barbers' and second-hand shops, to the exclusion of nearly everything else. I looked in vain for a really good bookshop, for Canadians seem to think a magazine stall can be classed under that title. Cycles bore number plates. Both here and in Victoria they have to be licensed.

The train left at 11.45 a.m., and was soon on its way into the prairie lands which are supposed to lie mainly between Brandon and Melville. Here, too, I was disappointed. Instead of the unfenced desert rolling to the horizon, and army of grain elevators that I had dreamed about, there were comparatively tiny, fenced-in patches of ploughed land, with here or there an odd elevator. Of course, had the land been covered with a *waving sea of corn*, my reactions might have been different, and also they tell me that a better view would have been obtained on the C.P.R. route. Only at Welby did I see anything approaching my idea of a prairie.

At Edmonton, next day, I saw my first Canadian Mounted Policeman. Apparently, there is a great deal of overlapping in police authority out here. The Canadian Mounted are employed by the Ottawa Government, the provincial forces by the provincial governments, and the municipal forces by the town authorities. With three forces acting in one area, there is bound to be some collision in the question of rights.

Edmonton itself is a mixture of the ranch town and American city. Its high street consists of modern, brick-built offices, surrounded by recreation parks, but the side-street houses are made of wood, and have verandahs. Outside Edmonton, the train passed the airport, which is supposed to be the best in Canada, and a huge set of buildings that were the Canadian Government Elevators.

We stopped for a few minutes at Edson, a really fine example of the traditional "cowboy" town, complete with a group of "old-timers" engaged in conversation at the corner of the street.

Soon after lunch we passed into the foothills of the Rockies. There was no disappointment here. It was beautiful. On the right wound the blue Athabaska River, and above it the green trees rose up the valley

slopes to touch the grey peaks of the mountains. Here and there the sun just streaked the greyness with gold. When we had crossed the river, the Rockies appeared like huge plum puddings sprinkled with sugar—the snow that is there the whole year round.

Once through the Boule Roche tunnel, and past the Roche Miette, we were well into the Jasper National Park. Occasionally, we caught glimpses of mountain sheep grazing on the slopes. The train stopped at Jasper for thirty-five minutes. The place was like a toy town with its little white houses and red and green roofs. Above the houses was a layer of green, and above that the craggy peaks of the Rockies. The air was very chilly indeed. In front of the Administrative Buildings was the famous totem pole which came from the Queen Charlotte Islands, and is of great antiquity.

After leaving Jasper, we began to ascend the Yellowhead Pass—there was ice on a stretch of water beside the track. At the Red Pass Junction we bade farewell to the Fraser River, which we did not see again until early Saturday morning.

It was almost dark when we stopped for five minutes to see Mount Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Range. The surrounding mountains had taken a dark blue tinge, and the white of the snow stood out against the darker background. Night had fallen, and, of course, we had to miss the beauty of the Fraser Canyon and the Pyramid Falls. But I think we all had drunk enough of the intoxicating loveliness by them.

We entered Vancouver at 9.20 the next morning.

S P R I N G .

Winter days are nearly over;
Spring is drawing near,
And with the Springtime and the sunshine
Daffodils appear.

Listen to the happy songbirds
Singing as they fly.
They all feel the joy of Springtime
When 'tis drawing nigh.

In the fields the lambs will gambol,
Finding life such fun.
Spring is such a happy season,
Joy fills everyone.

Welcome to the joyous Springtime,
Best time of the year.
Sing a song of happy Maytime,
Spring is drawing near.

G. BULLOCK—IV.S.

THE CHEMISTRY LABORATORY.

So much heralded, so ardently desired, the new laboratory is, at last, our proud possession. Not yet, however, is our sway undisputed; our rearguard action with the workmen knows sudden, but half-hearted, attempts to recover ground lost to them, as when, the other day, with brush and colour-wash, one of their number "attacked" a very small portion of our wall. But he soon gave up. We are confident that the "mushroom odoriferous," our proud emblem, will continue to minister to our boast, "Odor ad infinitum."

Some there are who would quarrel with our choice of emblem. They would say that such an establishment as ours was not a mushroom growth. How right they are. Rome was not built in a day. Long past the laboratory existed; as proof, there were actually in existence drawings of it, and of its furniture, but for time seemingly immeasurable it could have been defined as having position but no dimension. Men came to speak of it derisively, having lost faith in its ultimate reality. Now are the scoffers confounded.

On the first day of last term, the first class of boys picked its way through the builder's debris to enter the building. Most were impressed with what they saw there; certainly they had reason to be so in days such as these. For there they saw all the apparatus for "stinks" delightful to the heart of almost every boy; they would not be of those who have in the past asked the question: "Why can't we do chemistry?" or those who, paying a return visit to the School, mourned that the choice had not been



theirs. They, the modern alchemists, would have such equipment and facilities as would have made Berzelius, that prince of experimenters, green with envy. His skill, and patience in manipulation, they have yet to learn.

To those who have the energy, and the willingness to take pains, this laboratory will minister through the years ahead. We have to ensure that we, the first to use it, shall set the pace and the pattern which our successors can follow with success and pride.

G.T.P.

THE BIOLOGY LABORATORY

With the opening of the Biology Laboratory in September of last year, the School is now equipped for the teaching of the Biological Sciences in addition to the Physical Sciences. In spite of its being designed as a Physics Laboratory we have, in true biological fashion, adapted ourselves to our new environment and are happy in our new ecological niche. Perhaps our chief regret is that, unlike the caterpillar which grows by moulting its coat, we are unable to shed our exoskeleton of ferro-concrete and immediately lay down a new one a little larger.

Remarks about this new department of the School vary from "They cut up frogs in there and keep things in pickle," to "They keep stick insects, tropical fish, various aquaria, insect larvæ, and even mouldy bread." Biology (Gk. *Bíos*, life; *lógos*, discourse) is the study of life in all its forms, but that does not mean we learn the details of hosts of animals and plants, for we find our interest is rather "How does it work—what are the functions of organisms and of their parts?"

Biology is a true science and its study is based on the scientific method of experiment and observation followed by objective conclusions. Whether concerned with hobbies, the Scientific Society or school work, we want the boys who are keen on biological studies to know that they now have a place where they can experiment, observe and draw their conclusions. Already we have an expert on insects, several keen aquarists, and, judging by the Scientific Society's programme, a budding parasitologist. These are healthy beginnings.

In reply to those who ask, "Why do we have to study Biology?" we put another question: "Do you not wish to know more of your own body, more of the divers forms of nature?" Also there are vocational openings for those taking biology: they are mainly in medicine, dentistry, agriculture, forestry, veterinary science and entomology, besides work in general laboratories, hospital laboratories, museums and schools. With the acquisition of the new laboratory we are now in a happier position for providing the basic education necessary for these varied careers.

R.B.W.

SCHOOL FILMS.

No less than thirty-six films have been shown in the past two terms. How many of these have you seen and, what is more important, how much of any particular film can you remember? So much of what one is told "goes in one ear and out at the other," and in viewing films in school much that goes in both eyes is promptly reflected back and does not penetrate any further. It is up to each boy individually to try to make his film-viewing something worth while. These films are not for your entertainment or relaxation: they are an *additional* aid, to help you in your learning, to present some aspect of a subject in a way which the master cannot. Whether it is a dynamic diagram of the internal combustion engine or of the circulation of the blood, or whether it is views of distant lands, you will readily agree that a film is the most satisfactory way of learning about these things.

You will have noticed that your master prepares you before you see a film by telling you something about its subject matter, and after you have seen the film and discussed it you will not be surprised by now if you get a homework question which can only be answered well if you yourself have really tried to get the maximum value out of the film

Macbeth. This film had direct bearing on the Fifth Form Literature Course and consisted of two scenes—the murder of Duncan, and the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth. Wilfred Lawson gave a very sensitive and moving interpretation of the murderer who has just lost his own soul, while Catherine Nesbitt, as Lady Macbeth, was suitably strong and resourceful, and later, in her sleep-walking, she portrayed the full agony of the tormented mind. Both scenes were excellently produced, and were of real educational value.

Elimination. All who saw this new film could hardly forget that excretion occurs through skin and lungs as well as kidneys. Most boys were very critical of this film as it was definitely misleading in referring to excretion through the colon.

Seed Dispersal. So many different methods of seed dispersal were shown here that it would take many hours at different times of the year for each boy to find and see these things for himself. The explosive mechanisms were the most interesting and particularly that of the squirting cucumber working by jet propulsion! Now that you know how a pansy expels its seeds you will keep your eye open for the real thing.

The Beginning of History. This film showed the cave dwellings of pre-historic man in the Orkneys, his temples at Stonehenge and Avebury, and a British village of the kind that Cæsar saw and described.

Other noteworthy historical films were those illustrating the extension of the franchise in Britain, the expansion of German might between 1870 and 1914, and life in Elizabethan times.

R.B.W.

SCHOOL MUSIC.

The programme of the School's musical activities since last September has been an unusually full one, embracing both outside visits and actual work within the School.

In October numbers of boys attended the London Senior Orchestra's Concert at the Civic Hall, ably conducted as usual by Ernest Read. Soon after a School party visited the Davis Theatre to see a matinée performance given by the Sadler's Wells Company. This was not of particularly outstanding merit, and in addition the average age of the audience was a little too young to ensure an intelligent appreciation of such works as Helpmann's "Hamlet."

On November 13th, some members of the Upper School went to the first of the latest series of Students' Concerts given by the New English Orchestra (conductor Leonard Rafter) at the Selhurst Grammar School. In many ways this series of concerts, directly organised by the Croydon Schools' Music Association, is an improvement on those given at the Civic Hall. On the 24th there was a recital of music and song at the School given by the versatile Mr. Peter Upcher.

In December, besides the second of the Student's Concerts on the 4th, there was a Schools' Carol Service at the Parish Church at which our School was represented.

1949 began with the third of the Students' Concerts, one which was most excellent. Two movements, including the wonderful slow movement of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto were played, making this concert perhaps one of the finest of the series. We look forward eagerly to the performance of Mozart's 40th Symphony, the magnificent G. Minor, which is to be played in its entirety on March 5th.

On February 8th a School party attended the 100th Lunch Time Concert at the Civic Hall, and heard Joan and Valerie Trimble at two pianos and Campoli, who has made an interesting return as a solo violinist. The following Saturday, there was a somewhat disappointing concert given by the London Senior Orchestra. The movement of the Schumann A Minor Concerto in which the soloist was Phyllis Chatfield, had apparently been "polished" at the expense of the rest of the programme, especially of the "Capriol Suite" in which the playing was particularly "rough."

T. P. MORRIS—U.VI.

INTER-SCHOOLS COUNCIL.

There have been three general meetings of the Inter-Schools Council since the last report was made. The first, early in the Autumn, was held at the Whitgift Grammar School. A talk was given by Mrs. Barbara Whittingham-Jones, a contributor to several national magazines and newspapers, on the problems of South Eastern Asia. At the next discussion, held in this school, a local speaker gave some interesting views on the British Commonwealth and its future.

The last meeting was held during February at the Croydon High School. A lecturer from the British Soviet Society gave an enlightening description of life inside Russia.

T.M.C.

VISITING DAYS

THE CAMBRIDGE THEATRE.

Late in the Autumn, several boys from the upper school paid a visit to the Cambridge Theatre to see the Comédie Française production of "Le Misanthrope" by Molière. It would be presumptuous for an English schoolboy to do anything but praise the acting of this world-renowned French company. Annie Ducaux was superb as the witty coquette Célimène; and Pierre Dux excelled in the title rôle. The unusual stage technique was interesting. The curtain, for example, never descended during an Act. The division of scenes was indicated by the "coup" in the wings.

The curtain raiser "La Navette" was extremely amusing. Mony Dalmes as the elegant, intriguing Antonia was delightful.

T.M.C.

THE GRAND THEATRE.

Thanks to the excellent productions of C. O. D. A. (the Croydon Operatic and Dramatic Association), many boys in the School have been introduced to the light-hearted, witty music of Arthur Sullivan and the brilliant wit of W. S. Gilbert. The School party which was at the recent performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore" at the Grand Theatre numbered no less than thirty.

"H.M.S. Pinafore" was preceded by "Cox and Box," a seldom heard operatic trifle written before the immortal partnership by F. E. Burnard and Arthur Sullivan. Burnard's libretto cannot be compared with those of Gilbert, while Sullivan's music shows only signs of his future greatness. "Pinafore" is perhaps the gayest of the Savoy operas, full of lilting melodies from the very overture. The libretto is typically Gilbertian. The chorus's "What, never?" and the captain's answering "Well, hardly ever," have passed as catch phrases into the English language.

D.C.H.

THE BEDFORD THEATRE.

On Thursday, 10th February, a party of fifty fifth-formers, accompanied by Mr. Cracknell and Mr. Manning, took a long bus-ride to Camden Town to see Donald Wolfit's production of "Macbeth" at the Bedford Theatre. Ample compensation, however, for the tedium of the journey was found in the interest evoked by a somewhat unusual performance of this great tragedy. For we saw a Macbeth whose Iago-like villainy was matched only by the superb enunciation of his poetic frenzies, and a Lady Macbeth whose youth and frail beauty made her evil designings more hideous by contrast.

With the possible exceptions of Duncan and Malcolm, the lesser parts were admirably played. The greatest defect in the performance proceeded from the limitations of the small stage: Wolfit's effort to maintain a fitting speed of action resulted in several scenes being played on a tiny strip of stage in front of the curtain, and often the effect was ludicrous.

G.E.M.

FORDS, DAGENHAM.

At 1 p.m. on January 7th, a party of 25 of us, led by Mr. Chaundy, entrained at East Croydon for Heathway Station, whence we made our way to the Fords Works at Dagenham. After informing us in a casual fashion that 16,000 people were employed there, our guide conducted us to the blast furnace from which a glittering cascade of molten metal poured into ladles from which the moulds were filled. The entire area near the furnace was lit up by showers of sparks. All the time we noticed the amazing organisation of the endlessly-moving conveyor belts. Piece after piece of the vehicle is added at various points of the belt. Tyres, electrical equipment, and the bodies were efficiently assembled, and placed into position. From the end of the conveyor belt car after car, and tractor after tractor drove off to the waiting ships in Dagenham Docks.

D.R.

THE MAGIC OF THE THEATRE.

Tomorrow is the dress-rehearsal. For weeks now we have been rehearsing in a school strangely quiet and unlit—save for the Upper Hall. We have drunk innumerable cups of tea and made inroads in the Staff's tea-ration. We have ranted and raved on the stage; producers have fretted and fumed on the floor of the Hall. For sometime now the Hall has been the scene of feverish activity. The "men" have been at work constructing and painting the scenery, the curtains have been put up, the lighting connected. Tomorrow is the dress-rehearsal.

Wig, knee-breeches, white hose, black velvet coat, lace cravat—my costume. This is quickly donned—I hasten to the lobby to see the effect of this transformation. There staring at me from the mirror is a complete stranger, a man from another age complete with periwig and quizzing glass. My colleagues too are transformed—lly form-room looks like a Bath Assembly Room in the heyday of Beau Brummel. But this antique costume, romantic though it may be has nevertheless its inconvenient side. The wig is hot and uncomfortable and smells of paraffin, the breeches are too tight. What a torture it must have been to appear elegant in the eighteenth century!

The Dress Rehearsal has come and gone and now it is THE night. To-night the important visitors will be present. There are bright lights in Va. room and the atmosphere is heavy with an exciting "stagey" smell—a combination of grease-paint, cold cream and powder. What the smell of the sea is to the old salt this smell must be to the old actor. Now, seated in the chair, you come in for some rapid attentions at the hands of the make-up man. Then you take your place in the waiting-room nervously running over your opening lines in your head. "Five minutes to go"—you take your place in the wings. The most experienced actor can scarcely fail to feel the qualms which those few moments in the wings can give. But everything is fine now—you have stepped from the shadow of the wings into the glamorous light of the stage. You are actually saying your opening lines; the audience is appreciative; you are not yourself but a character from the eighteenth century. There is a magic in the theatre—even if it is only an end-of-term play.

D. HOWES—U.VI.

THE SCIENTIFIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

Since the last issue of the Magazine the Society has passed through a crowded period in its history. This period has witnessed more lectures and film shows than any other. The quality of the lectures and the enthusiasm of the members have soared, in which connection Science Fourth deserves special mention.

We have enjoyed several fine film shows, which illustrated such topics as Air Screws, Microscopes and Hospital procedure. In October and February the Croydon Gas Co. gave us two lectures and film shows on "Gas and its By-Products," for which we should like to thank them. The first dealt with the actual mining, shipment and conversion of coal into gas. Mr. Hutchinson, the lecturer, carefully explained the vital process whereby gas is supplied to our towns. In his second lecture he showed a film "Gas in Battledress," illustrating the importance of gas in the Second World War. Another amusing film stressed the amazing part the By-products play in our daily life. At both lectures a booklet entitled "The Treasure in Coal" was issued to those present.

In October, veteran Society members heard Blake's last lecture of a long and brilliant series on astronomical topics. Shortly after he left us for Vancouver. This lecture concerned "Comets and their significance" and certainly was most illuminating. We should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Blake's enthusiasm and work for this Society. Other prominent speakers have been Carter and Bamford, who have given us lectures entitled "Vitamins," "Parasites," and "The Alkali Metals."

D. RUSSELL—U.VI., Secretary.

DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

The high-light of the winter season was the School production of "She Stoops to Conquer," reported fully elsewhere. Early in November our normal activities ceased and the cast for this play was selected. During the next six weeks rehearsals were held almost daily.

It was at the end of a day of feverish rehearsing that we made one of our most interesting local visits, and with the grease paint of comedy still damp upon our faces we saw the Selhurst players' production of "Julius Cæsar." Most of the principal parts were well played, particularly those of Cassius and Brutus. Cæsar and some of the female characters, however, were not well cast.

Earlier in the term we visited the Civic Hall to see the first performance of "The Dark Return" by Stuart Ready.

In our after school meetings we have read several one-act plays, and are now beginning a series of readings from "The Rivals."

T. M. CONSTABLE—U.VI., Secretary.

DEBATING SOCIETY.

The first meeting of the reformed Debating Society took place early in January. The new constitution was read and discussed, and members were enrolled. The first debate was held on the 4th February. A. Nye, supported by B. Leadbeater, proposed the motion "That books, plays and films should be officially censored." The motion was opposed by B. Vail, seconded by T. Morris.

There was a lively discussion with quoting and counter-quoting from works ranging from Milton's 'Areopagitica' to Kathleen Windsor's 'Forever Amber.' The motion was not carried.

The Debating Championship held a short while before half-term, took on a novel form this year. The competitors, instead of making speeches on set topics, came before a panel of three judges. They were told that they were making application either for admission to a university, or for a commercial post. The judges acted as an interviewing board. Terence Morris was awarded the first prize, and Nye the second. Carter and Russell were placed third and fourth.

T. M. CONSTABLE—U.VI., Secretary.

MUSIC SOCIETY.

The Music Society has met regularly at 12.30 p.m. each Thursday since September. Mozart is the most popular, the 39th Symphony having been performed twice, as well as several overtures and extracts from one of the trumpet concertos besides the clarinet concerto. Beethoven has not been heard as often as he might; so far we have had only the Fifth and the Sixth (Pastoral) Symphonies and Leonora No. 3. The playing of the Sibelius 5th, a bold experiment, was a bitter disappointment; only three members stayed to the end. The Music Society is at present held together by a band of enthusiasts—it is a pity that they have not more support. Members of the Staff however have been generous in their loan of records for which the Society is extremely grateful.

T. P. MORRIS—U.VI., Secretary.

CHESS CLUB.

Despite the rather disappointing results of matches with other schools, the Chess Club has had an enjoyable season. We did not win a match, but our standard of play compared favourably with that of other teams.

Before the opening matches of the Briant Poulter Shield competition, which was eventually won by Sutton County Grammar School, a "friendly" was arranged with Selhurst Grammar School, which we lost by $1\frac{1}{2}$ points to $4\frac{1}{2}$.

The team remained unchanged for all matches, except when Reeves was substituted for Chapman against Beckenham, and, incidentally, won a very good game.

The record of the members of the team is as follows:—

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
Clark	6	1	2	3	2
Funnell	6	1	1	4	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Chapman	5	0	2	3	1
Wilson	6	2	1	3	$2\frac{1}{2}$
Allen	6	2	3	1	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Banks	6	3	0	3	3
Reeves	1	1	0	0	1

The results of the Inter-House Competitions for the Keable Cup was: 1, Alpha; 2, Beta; 3, Gamma; 4, Delta.

This was only after a very close struggle between the first three Houses.

J. CLARK, P. FUNNELL—U.VI., Secretaries.

SPORT

Our programme continues to expand, with four XI's in action on most Saturdays and a total of almost a hundred outside fixtures in some twenty-seven playing weeks.

With the Playing-Field now enclosed, the pathway which formed such a scar across the ground is rapidly healing. New nets and supports are permanent features of the 1st XI pitch and similar nets and supports are now ready for the Junior pitch.

Pavilion amenities are being increased at the time of writing, and still further improvements are scheduled for the near future.

The 1st and 2nd XI's have enjoyed friendly fixtures with Grammar Schools in the London-Surrey-Kent area and results so far are as follows:

	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against
1st XI	20	9	2	9	53	72
2nd XI	12	8	2	2	42	22

Colours awards for the season 1948-49 go to D. Green (Captain; left-half), A. Turner (centre-half), K. Brown (goalkeeper), J. Brown (full-back), P. Bell (inside-right).

Third and Fourth XI's have competed with considerable success in Croydon Schools' Soccer.

The 3rd XI (under 15 years, photographed below), has every pros-



By kind permission of Photo Functions

Our thanks, too, to Mr. W. Phillips who, with much Service Boxing experience upon which to draw, is instructing in Boxing each Tuesday evening in the Gymnasium.

The following receive Gymnastics Colours for 1949:—

R. York, P. Bell, M. Horscroft, M. Appleyard, A. Bone, A. Poucher, K. Brown.

R. York, holder of the Gymnastics Cup for 1948, retains the trophy for 1949.

May I, once again, as we begin the Easter Vacation, remind all boys in the School to realise that when we re-open in May, it will be to a programme of Cricket and Athletics.

So check those white flannels, shirts, cricket boots, white sweaters, and that running-kit, and be fully prepared to take a worthy part in the season's activities.

L A T I N P R O S E .

'Twas Latin Prose, and deep in thought
I sat profound and reason sought;
When all at once—a drooping head,
And from the book my mind had fled.
The scene had changed; instead of desks
White, foaming seas and white ship's decks
Confronted my amazed eyes,
And white gulls circled in the skies.
I landed on an "Ile Tropique"
With waving palm fronds, trees of teak,
And dark-skinned natives on the shore
Whose mighty arms bronze muscles bore.
They grinned and danced, cream teeth aglint
Their hair jet black with bluish tint,
My hair on end, a-knock my knees—
When—"M-K-L-W-R-T-H, the next word please!"
I gazed around in wild despair—
The master's voice had filled the air.
And now "at four" for my repose,
I must rewrite my Latin Prose.

P. MACKLEWORTH—Va.

HOUSE NOTES

ALPHA.

Captain: D. C. HOWES.
Vice-Captain: O. N. EVERSON.

Alpha has been determined to get things done: it looks as if the House is succeeding. We have a House Committee which meets regularly and members of the House are kept informed through the House Bulletin and through the Form Representatives who attend Committee meetings. We have taken the initiative here and hope the House will take a similar initiative in all School activities. Although, at the moment, we are not particularly strong on the sports field, we confidently expect to win the House Cup for general activities. Premature congratulations, must, however, be tempered with complaints—remember bad conduct and unpunctuality could reduce our total to a minus quantity. If you lose a point try your hardest to gain one in its place, and let us bring Alpha back into the proud position of "cock" house which it once occupied.

BETA.

Captain: P. A. FUNNELL.
Vice-Captain: A. TURNER.

The struggle for the "Old Boys and Staff" Cup has proved Beta House to be very capable challengers. Our performance in the terminal examinations has been very creditable, but there has been a noticeable slackening of effort during recent weeks, the third forms in particular losing a large number of points.

Although beaten by Delta in both the Junior and Senior Competitions, our football teams gave a good account of themselves.

The Keable Cup Competition has resolved itself into a close battle for supremacy between Alpha, Gamma and ourselves, and the Chess team will do well to win the trophy for the third successive year.

We were unfortunate in the Athletics Competition on the last Sports Day, for while winning the Junior Games Cup and Field Events Cup, we lost the last track race and with it the Athletics Cup to Delta House. We hope to reverse this result next July.

GAMMA.

Captain: T. P. MORRIS.
Vice-Captain: D. GREEN.

Gamma has not had a promising start in the House Competition, due mainly to the fact that our balance of points was the lowest to begin with. However, efforts have been made to recover our prestige: in the Junior House football we put up a stiff resistance to the end. Form 2L deserves special commendation; its eight Gamma members have between them gained eight points in one week.

Form representatives are as follows:—

Gratton (I C), Hall (I H), Allen (II H), E. Wood (II L), Ringham (III P), Muggeridge (IV A), Singleton (IV S), Allen (V G), Wells, Harris (U.VI).

DELTA.

Captain: J. CLARK.
Vice-Captain: R. MATTHEWS.

As can be seen from the notice board, we have fallen behind Beta House in the General Activities race since the beginning of term. Great enthusiasm, however, is evident amongst our footballers this year. The Junior team caused much excitement by beating Beta House, but failed, after a thrilling match, to win the final. The Senior team also won through to the final.

In Chess, however, our team did not distinguish itself in the Inter-House Competition.

I hope that those who decided not to enter the Debating Contest in February, when one of the two Delta representatives was awarded a prize, will show more enthusiasm in the Society this term.

Form representatives: York (V's), Gibbons (IV's), Burnley (III's), Drain (II's), Montague (I's).

PREFECTS' CORNER.

The School is a singularly unimposing building from without, but it's a veritable beehive inside; dozens of people moving from room to room as the bell sounds at forty minute intervals. The busiest bees, of course, and the aristocracy of the beehive, are the Prefects! They have recently installed themselves in the small room which was once the Art store, and like cress seeds on blotting paper they have taken root with amazing ease. The sofa used in the Christmas play was until recently a coveted possession, but unfortunately its rightful owner has reclaimed it. It was observed only the other day, reclining in the sun outside a South Croydon junk shop—unwept, unhonoured and unsprung!

Addison for School Cert. seems to have affected quite a few of the Upper VI and the modern counterpart of the coffee house, Lyons teashop, is a very popular place after 4 o'clock. What gossip is exchanged over a "dish of tea"! I am assured that any connection between this practice and the recent Ruskin coup d'état at Coloma is purely coincidental.

The Upper VI arts appears to have a number of keen geographers. As previously mentioned, during the Easter holiday they will be exploring Yorkshire—that county which seems to be the geographer's paradise, abounding in examples of practically every geographical phenomenon with perhaps the exception of tundra and equatorial forest! As a preliminary measure they explored the Geology museum at half-term. Although this is only at Kensington two members spent at least an hour examining the lower strata of London from the Tube before getting there! Perhaps if they go Barnsley way at Easter they may find another example of calamites—schuetzeiformis (as displayed on the second floor at South Kensington). Or who knows, they *may* discover a piece of carbonate-epidote-chlorite-schist—which they were assured was "a product of the lowest grade of regional metamorphism in dolerite."

Overheard in the entrance to the museum:

"I say, old man, what gniess schists they have in there!"

"All the better to marl you with!"

T.P.M.

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OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

President: Mr. J. C. Lowe, M.A.

Chairman: Mr. F. H. Clements.

Secretary: Mr. A. Young, 113, Grange Road, Sanderstead.

Treasurer: Mr. M. Vincett, 7, Bolderwood Way, West Wickham.

Committee: Messrs. P. E. Davie, D. Dunning, R. W. Loveless, R. L. Spurling.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at the School on the 12th November; twenty-four members attended. The chair was taken by Mr. Lowe. After the Secretary and Treasurer had presented their reports, the Officers for the current year were elected.

In order to provide greater contact with the School, Mr. Myers agreed to act as liaison officer between the School and the Committee. This arrangement has already proved very successful.

Mr. Alexander suggested that the Association should form a panel of members willing to advise boys leaving School on their proposed careers. The Committee are following up this suggestion, and a number of members have expressed their willingness to serve on the panel.

The Annual Dinner was held at The Greyhound Hotel on the 18th December; thirty-three members were present. Mr. Harding and Mr. Alexander proposed the toast of "The School" and "The Old Boys" respectively, and Mr. Cracknell and Mr. Bouracier replied.

The John Ruskin School War Memorial Fund has now reached a total of £141. An Extraordinary General Meeting in connection with the Fund was held at the School on 1st March. It was decided that the Fund should remain perpetually open for contributions, which should be sent to Mr. Myers at the School. The meeting also decided that part of the Fund should be used to provide a bronze memorial plaque, listing the names of those killed. The plaque, which will cost about £45, is to be fixed in the School Hall.

It was also resolved that the balance of the Fund should be used to form a trust to provide an annual award to be made at the discretion of the trustees, acting upon detailed confidential recommendations from the Headmaster and Staff and/or Old Boys' Association Committee, to a past or present student of the School proceeding on a course of further education.

Members are reminded that the Table Tennis Sub-Section provides facilities for play at the School every Friday evening. Those who are interested should contact Mr. D. Dunning at 69, Corporation Road, Croydon.

We hope to revive the Football Sub-Section next season. Mr. J. B. Rickard of 54, Grange Park Road, Thornton Heath, will be glad to hear from all who would like to play. We particularly invite boys, now at School, who will be leaving at the end of the Summer Term, to join this Sub-Section.

Mr. R. W. Loveless of 24, Northway Road, East Croydon, is arranging the fixture list for the Cricket Sub-Section. Will all who are interested in playing, or coming along to support us, please contact him as soon as possible.

The Committee are very concerned about the lack of active support given to the Association. The main purpose of the Association is to continue and develop the friendships and team spirit of School days. This is of course principally done through the sub-sections and social functions. But the efforts of the Committee, in planning these activities, are useless without the active support of members.

Since the School was founded, over 1,200 boys must have passed through it. We have the addresses of about 250 of these. This proportion is due, no doubt, to the gap of war years, but at the first two general meetings held after the war, over 100 Old Boys turned up, and 70 attended the first post-war dinner. The small numbers at last year's General Meeting and Dinner have already been reported, and only between 40 and 50 have paid their Annual Subscription.

We realise that the fall in enthusiasm is due to lack of thriving sub-sections, but this is a vicious circle. The sub-sections cannot flourish, however much the Committee may wave their planners' wands, unless the members of the Association also give their wholehearted support.

The Committee therefore appeal to all active members to do their utmost to persuade other Old Boys to join, and energetically support the Association. We also hope that all boys who leave the School at the end of the summer term will join us and help to restore the Association to its pre-war strength.

In order that as many Old Boys as possible can be kept acquainted with the activities of the Association, it would be appreciated if present members would inform the Secretary of the names and addresses of any past pupils of the School who are not in contact with the Association.

A. YOUNG, Secretary.