

The Granite
REVIEW 1999





MURRAY ELLENDER

The Granite Review 1990

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Editorial

Hello, and welcome to the new, nineties edition of TGR. We, the editorial staff, hope you like our efforts this year, and that you will start on some articles to give next year's lot. This edition may not be as prolific as last year's, but it is out on time, though I don't know how, and it is topical, especially with articles on South Africa, an exchange to India, an alternative in education systems from Germany and an introspective on public schoolboy cruelty by Merlin Sinclair, drawing lightly on his own memories of four years ago as a fifth-former. This year, the editorial is doubling as a review of the past year or so, covering incidents that escaped mention elsewhere. Please excuse any inaccuracies.

The latest news of the House is that Miss Simborowski, now Mrs Simborowski-Gill, has a son, Louis, and is leaving us to set up a language school in her home town of Stratford. Nader Akle has, as expected, become Head of House with Mark Dummett Head of Hall. This very same Mark recently came back from a term-long exchange in India with the Doon School, while we had the company of Ishan, his exchange partner. Alex Lordos, a Greek Cypriot, has joined us in the Sixth-Form, as have four members of the fairer sex; Maiko, Claudia, Kate and Melanie; all five welcome additions, and all have made Grant's a more varied and colourful place. This year, four more make their debut.

The house concert, held in the Lent Term, was a great success, with a mention on the telly! The organisation was by Claudia, who sang as well, and it included many notable acts amongst which were the Grant's House choir singing "Penny Lane" with soloist Turi Munthe with an amazing voice that surprised us all, Maiko's ever-present violin and Nan producing what must have been some of the most exotic sounds ever heard in a house concert.

The inter-house athletics produced a many disappointments, though an adequate performance for

a house that is not as sport-conscious as it could be. Notable exceptions were a third in the high-jump from Mark Braithwaite, a first from the senior 4x100m relay team and a first from Felicity in her 100m.

The cricket match was a controversial loss in the first round. The scorers gave a close result, but sloppy bookkeeping on their part lead to much dispute over the actual totals. The result according to the scorer was declared to be valid in the absence of any firm evidence to the contrary, and Grant's were out in the first match.

Once again I hope that you will enjoy this Review, and from me, my colleagues Mark Dummett and Kate Barker, and our one-man support team, Manika Balasegaram, have a good 1990-91 year.



A Sad Farewell to Westminster and to Grant's

As most of you know, Westminster and Grant's in particular have been a source of romance for me: Daniel Gill and I met here in the course of our duties, fell in love and were married. We were both touched by the generosity of the House on the occasion of our wedding and later when Louis was born. He has been in school quite a few times and you all seem to be amazingly good with babies: what a broody lot you must be, and I don't just mean the girls!

The baby has been the catalyst in my decision to move on: I started to think about the future. I wanted to bring him up in the country and I wanted to work from home so I could see as much as possible of him in the early years. The result is that I will be leaving at the end of this term in order to run my own company: a language school. We have been fortunate enough already to attract the attention of a number of multinational companies and several excellent teachers.

The school is called The Shakespeare School of Languages and is based in Stratford-upon-Avon. (Not a very original name, I know, but I couldn't resist it, in the circumstances). There are two sides to the teaching: foreign languages and EFL. Teaching will take place either in our premises in Stratford or in-company: in other words, teachers will travel to the offices of businesses requiring language-training. Distance is no problem as I have teachers based in all parts of the country. I even have a scheme for sending teachers to teach on company premises abroad, if that is useful to the firm. So, to all you budding businesspeople (and Old Grantites in the business world) when you need language-training for your staff, you know where to come and you'll get special treatment of course!

I'm excited about this new venture, but I'm also very sad indeed to leave Westminster and Grant's. Chris Clarke has been a particularly helpful and understanding "boss" and a dear friend and the members of the House and their parents have been unfailingly kind, truly a huge family.

Producing the Grantite Review has always been fun. My role has become increasingly nominal as the editors over the last two years or so have been very skilled and confident, both in terms of selecting the content of the magazine and its production and financing. They could certainly make a career in publishing and journalism in the future.

I hope not to lose contact with the school and the House as I will be in fairly regularly to visit people. Daniel will keep me informed as to all the goings-on in any case, but I do hope members of

the House will keep in touch and feel free to contact me in Stratford, if they happen to be coming up that way. This applies also to the many friends I made in the Old Grantites' Club.

Best wishes to all of you, whatever you go on to do in the future, and thankyou for being friends over the years.

Nicoletta Simborowski-Gill

The editorial staff of the Granite Review, on behalf of everyone in Grant's, would like to wish Nicoletta every success with her new venture. Goodbye, and thankyou for all your help through the years.



Old Palace Yard

Tom Forsyth



Election Term 1989

Departures were: Beverly, Bilgrami, Buchanan, Conder, Laura Dubrinsky, Tilly Franklin, Lucy Greggains, Hamilton, Hamlyn, Heaton, Hughes, Ingham, Levy, Lipari, Laila Manji, Martin, McCleish, Mustapha, O'Hara, Pemberton, Streaton, Tann, Themen, Thompson, Voak.

Play Term 1989

Chris Brent was Head of House.

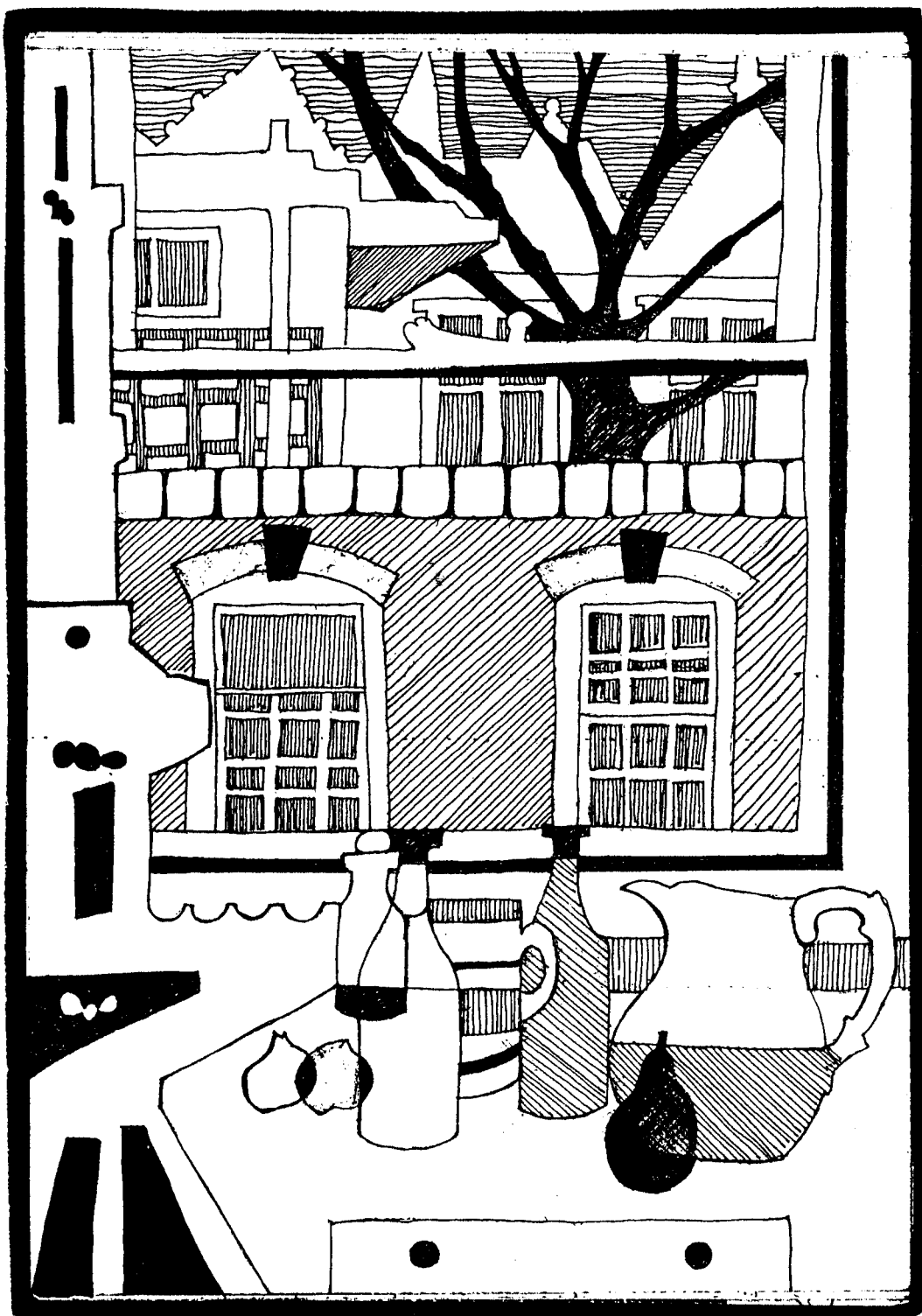
Mark Braithwaite was Head of Hall.

Monitors

Boarding: Enoeda, Hammerson, Havranek, Horwood.

Day: Connelly, Kim, Hedayati.

Arrivals: Kate Barker, Maiko Kawabata, Melanie Rodier, Claudi Solti, Lordos.
Allen, Cresswell, Dummett, Hooper, Lavender, Likierman, Linton, L'vov
Basirov, Mahoney, Massey, Meier, Munthe, Sri-Skanda-Rajah, Thomas.



A View of the German Education System

I recently completed a German exchange, during which I experienced at first hand the German education system by attending "Gymnasium Nonnenwerth" for almost two weeks. Yet it was only on my last day that I discovered that the school was entirely state owned and run, surely a mark of its success.

I had gone to Germany intending to practice the spoken and written language and partially through a mistake concerning my exchange's term dates, I went to the school on the understanding that I could attend whatever and however many lessons I wished. Thus every day I went to German classes with ten year olds, who were learning the infamous grammar for which the language is known. Later I went to English classes with nineteen year olds who were just completing their "Arbitur" exams, the equivalent of our A-level. The standard of their English was far higher than I had expected, and their teacher had gone to Oxford University and spoke without a hint of an accent.

As a class they were studying "Macbeth" and "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley, both fairly ambitious texts for foreigners. Yet what really impressed me was the style of teaching, the thought put behind it and the class commitment. However, that was the expected norm in state schools - with high standards of academic achievement, motivated students and resources and technology to back up these high standards.

In Germany, schools are divided into three distinctive academic groups; "Gymnasium", "Hauptschule" and "Realschule", each catering for a specific intelligence bracket, and with fierce competition at all levels to attend the higher "Gymnasium".

Juxtaposed to these state schools are small privately run, fee paying schools; yet the academic achievements of these are directly comparable, or indeed even slightly inferior to the state schools. The private schools' importance has gradually been eroded by a continuous improvement in the state sector, until the two groups now mirror each other in virtually all aspects - except that no money for education has to be paid for pupils attending state school. Thus, there is little incentive to attend a private school purely in order to be more certain of high academic results, as happens to a large extent in England. Private schools in Germany now only exist for certain groups, such as artists and actors, who wish to specialise in a chosen career. However, this renders the system as a

whole obsolete.

Education in Germany is regarded as a prime concern of the community, representing, in the words of Herr Dillenburger (headmaster of Gymnasium Nonnenwerth) "the investment and hence future of Germany." Thus the state is keen to maintain high academic output, upon which business, technology and social advancement is based. To maintain this high standard, a high financial input is obviously needed, yet nothing is required from individual parents.

As a result of this interest in education, and due to parental and peer pressure, there is generally a motivation to work, and truancy was a word that I never heard mentioned. I saw this desire to succeed in every lesson that I attended, from ten to nineteen year olds. Surely this aspect of education is purely positive as, irrespective of parents' ability to pay for education, all children have both the opportunity to learn, and also the instilled desire to learn.

I believe this motivation is sadly lacking in many of our schools, with pupils greatly underachieving as a result. In Germany, the desire to succeed and compete is intensified by the division of academic groups, and also a certain frankness in the schools, by which it is widely acknowledged that without higher education, or at least good "Arbitur" grades, an individual is very unlikely to achieve later in his or her professional career. This frankness and motivation seem to be lacking in many of our schools, and the words "competition" and "will to succeed" are almost shunned in some areas. Thus Grammar schools have been abolished as unfair and indeed sports day in one Lambeth school was cancelled three years ago as it was felt that the majority of students who did not win would feel inferior.

This lack of motivation is compounded by staff shortages, large uncontrollable classes and lack of funds and resources. Yet in many public schools lies a different structure, where large budgets can attract a percentage of quality staff disproportionate to the size of the school. Due to parental sacrifice, many students feel compelled to achieve, and others are imbued with the motivation and dedication of their staff.

However, this leads to a breakdown in the education system, by which the better financially backed can be certain of greater academic choice, and to a large extent greater academic output. These higher standards in England rely mainly on inherited and social conditions, a concept that has been carefully outdated in Germany.

Surely such a system, by which the better financially off can choose the style and quality of education for their children needs redressing, and higher standards and academic results are

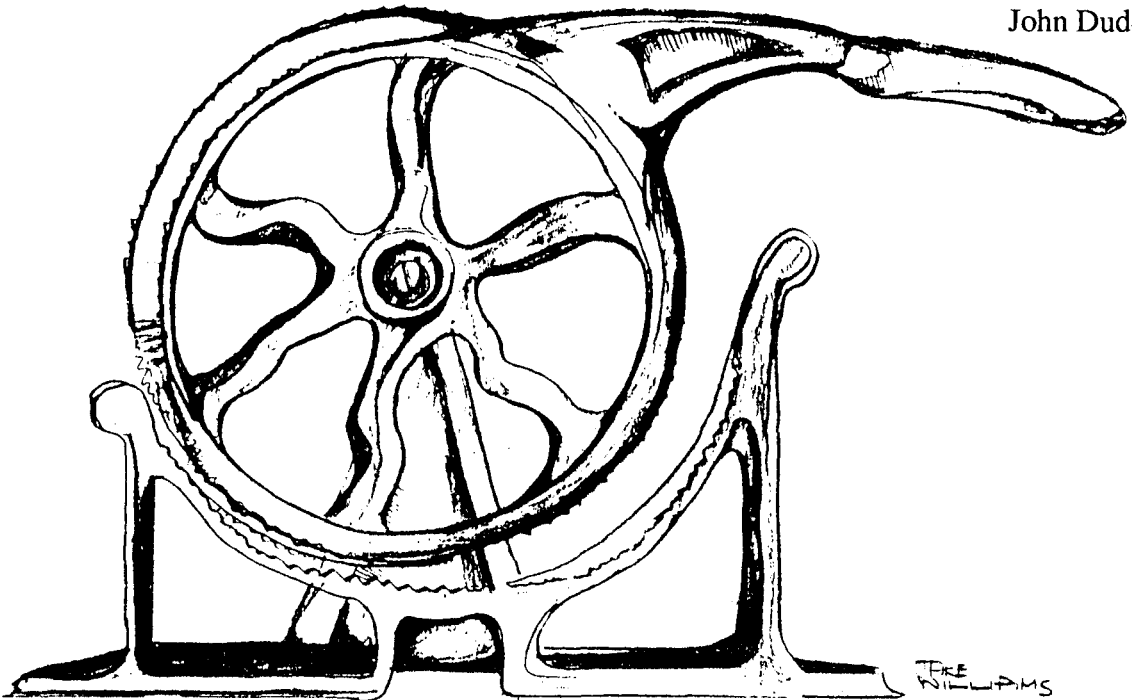
required nationally. In Germany today, the possibility of success rests purely with the individual and his intelligence, not the financial constraints which to a large part govern British students' success.

However, it would be idiotic to abolish public schools immediately; this would merely create educational chaos and create low morale amongst teachers. Instead, higher results and stronger motivation to work have to be reached in the state sector, until the results of private and public schools are comparable, thus removing the incentive to attend a "public school."

The current education system in Germany benefits everybody; the state, industry, parents and most importantly the individual. The state is thus sure to maintain academic results, so much so that "Gastarbeiter", primarily from Turkey, have to be employed for menial labour, for which most Germans feel themselves over qualified. Industry relies on this education, and hence input of fresh ideas, and parents gain in the knowledge that their children will have the opportunity to achieve, with or without their financial commitment.

All children in Germany have the possibility to succeed in academic terms. To a large part, financial constraints and inheritance do not play a role in the education received, results rest with the individual, his motivation and ability, and not with his immediate social standing. This however is not true in Britain today.

John Dudding



A LIFE IN THE DAY OF A COMMUTER

The morning starts abruptly as the alarm rings and I topple out of bed hitting the floor hard with a feeling of complete contempt for the world. Another day has dawned. With a spurt of life I lift my wrist to see my watch, half past six, my wrist falls to the floor. Wait, half past six, the train leaves in thirty minutes, quick, rush, help! I grab a shirt, a tie, a suit and throw them on in a vain attempt at office attire. I rush down the stairs, grab my keys and rush for the car, it starts first time for once!

Twenty five minutes later I am racing up the platform in a valiant attempt to make the train; made it. An hour and a quarter later I am off the train and on the way to the office. Out of the taxi window I see thousands like me, a stereotyped image. What is the pull, the compulsion to be like a thousand others. A mere nobody in the middle of nothing, for what is it all in aid of?

Soon the office looms in front of me. The meetings come, the money comes and goes, mostly goes and finally the day goes. The train comes and goes and I am finally home. Another day of annoyance, frustration and work is gone. My life looms in front of me; I reach for the gin!

David Mahony

Tom Lavender

Latin Translation

Atticus was being worked in the garden when Classus walked through the harbour.

"Have you seed Flava, my husband?" he dictated.

"Nothing, but I conquered Gladius, your daughter," Atticus was said. Classus was replied "Alas, for she was stolen the toga of my slave-girl!"

But Flava relinquished and delayed it presently.

*3/10 - Not a very good effort,
try harder next time.*

A Fifth Former's Life is not a Happy One

"A study, a study, a kingdom for a study." This was my first thought as I crawled out from under my duvet. Letting go of my teddy Bonzo and extracting myself from the My Little Pony duvet which mumsy had given me last weekend, I left the dormitory.

Beginning on the bottom corridor I systematically worked up the house sampling the different odours rising from each room while waking up my elder compatriots. Tip-toeing into the first Remove's room, I asked him if he wanted waking up, and pegged it at the first expletive. After this had occurred six times, I vowed never to do waking up fag again. I went to breakfast.

Cornflakes again! I couldn't believe it. Where were my usual sugar-saturated tooth-destroyers? I hid myself in the corner away from my fellows due to the unpleasant look in their eyes that told me Bonzo's head had been bitten off again.

Upon returning to the house, I was greeted by six Removes who asked me why I had not woken them up. I quickly replied that my best friend was doing it instead of me, knowing there was only a small chance they would ask him. It was not my lucky day. I was reminded that if this happened again, I would follow Bonzo. I promptly hid in the toilet until 9.00.

The lessons were not exiting; the teachers did not understand my exceptional intelligence. I had to beg to be asked a question to increase my expanding mind. The footballers did not recognise my abilities and put me in goal for two hours. Beginning my preps, I was shocked to find the prep monitors of all people causing trouble by victimising me. I told them I knew they were jealous of the Remove. I said that I pitied them for it and understood that this was their chance to exert power over us. This was not appreciated and I got no work done. I went upstairs to get some fruit but found only a half eaten banana skin. My friends locked me in a cupboard after prep, and the housemaster let me out at 10.00 after hearing my sobbing.

We then talked about our sexual exploits after lights out. Everyone except me had at least three sixth-form girls who passionately adored them, but just hadn't admitted it to themselves yet. I replied that I was far too mature to be interested in girls. My compatriots slandered me and tipped my bed. I fell asleep exhausted at 11.30.

Merlin Sinclair

A Short Walk in the Garhwal

This April, while on an exchange with the Doon School, the leading Indian public school, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to raft down a section of the Ganges which contains some of the most violent and exiting rapids in the sub-continent. The school is situated in the fertile Dehra-Dun valley in the north of India, and it took only four hours to reach Devprayag (four hours for a journey is short in India). Here, the rivers of Bhagirathi and Alaknanda meet to form the Ganges. From here we (myself and the other English exchange at the Doon) were to join the camp of a man who would take us down the rapids.

The area we were in was the Garhwal region of the Shivalik range of mountains, which although being merely foothills of the Himalayas, were immensely impressive; the black rock strata jutting out of the ground at about 50°, and the holiest of Hindu rivers rushing through the peaks in its violent course through its deep, well-defined valley. These foothills were named the Shivaliks and, like most Indian names, after one of their numerous Hindu gods. Shiva is the god in this case, the hills representing his matted locks. As the Ganges is the holiest of Hindu rivers, the Garhwal is dotted with temples, caves and streams each with individual religious significance for the thousands of pilgrims and aesthetes who, in their orange robes, walk in search of enlightenment on the journey for the source of the Ganges at Gangotri, about 100km distance on the meandering tracks from Devprayag. As a result meat and alcohol are banned in this area on both banks of the river, down to Hardwar, where the Ganges leaves its mountainous course and meets the plains where it begins its journey east and southwards. All along the course of the river, and especially the four towns of Hardwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nusik, one can see hundreds of devoted Hindus washing themselves in the polluted river; and act which is meant to cleanse their souls and bodies! Religion in India is not like religion in the West where it seems to manifest itself as an optional extra; it is more than a way of life for the millions of Indians who constitute one seventh of the world's population - for them it is life and death. Since the partition in 1947 when most of the Moslems moved into the regions now called Pakistan and Bangladesh, Hinduism is the largest of the two-hundred-odd religions in India, and wherever one goes in India it is present. It dictates what you are called, where and how you live, what you eat, what jobs you have (as defined by your caste, though this is dying out these days) and indeed even how to make love; the Karma Sutra is an

incorporated part of Hinduism). Religion also provides the refugee from Britain with a B.S.E. free zone - cows are not allowed to be killed or eaten.

It is too easy however to fall into the trap of the hippies and many subsequent tourists to 'quantify' India too much; its religious, social and physical differences from the West are at once fascinating and vivid, yet the squalor and tedium of most Indian's lives are in sharp contrast to the West's perception of India. However, desperation among Indians is rarely present; they believe that whatever misfortune they encounter is due to some misdeed of their's in their last life. In India, religion is literally the opium of the people.

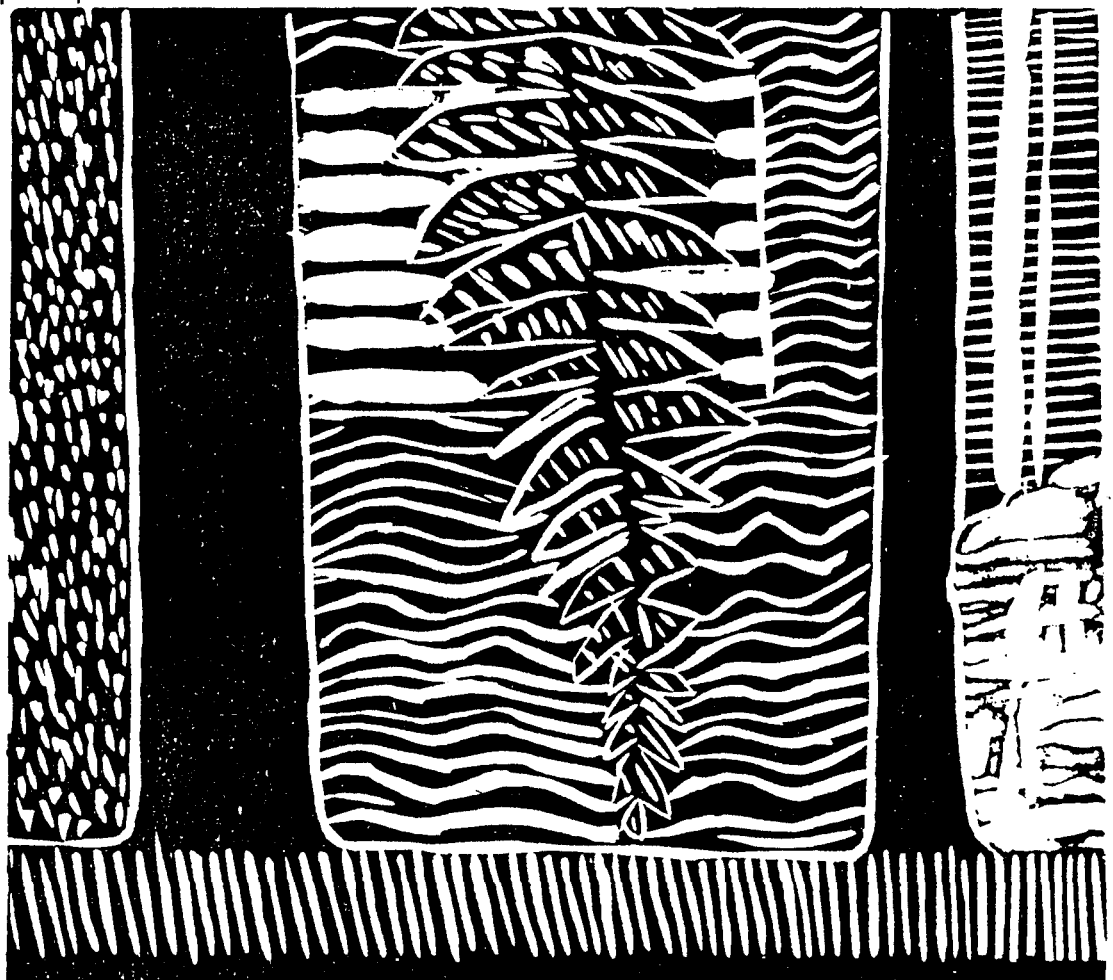
My adventure in the Garhwal started when us two English pupils were left alone on the road from Hardwar to Devprayag in a small run down hamlet facing the camp where we were to join the rafters. Unfortunately, due to religious complications the camp was on the other side of the river and the rapids. The camp was deserted and without a boat we had no way to get over to it or indeed know if it was the right camp. What was more, neither of us spoke Hindi and the inhabitants of the hamlet at first treated us with bemused looks, then with raucous laughter, and then told us to leave. Despair was brought on eventually by the fact that nightfall was approaching and a thunderstorm was only just further up the valley and civilisation (or rather meat, alcohol, chocolates, a telephone and toilet paper) seemed a very, very long way away. We had seen a small town which sported several eating rooms and stalls selling food to cater for the constant stream of pilgrims about ten miles from where we were, and prompted by fears of the imminent storm, we started walking in its direction along the dust track which was the road. Had we realised, as we were later told, that the route we took led us through a forest inhabited by tigers and panthers, as well as the ubiquitous monkeys and snakes, I doubt we would have taken that road. Fortunately the only danger we came across was being hit by the huge trucks careering down through the valley at breakneck speeds. However, we avoided being hit by them, and suppressed the temptation to jump out of the way, for the road was only just wide enough for the lorries, and on one side was a cliff wall, and on the other was a vertical drop to the river below. The lorries have their engines positioned beneath the cabin, and since the engine heated up a lot due to the strenuous journey, as well as the fact that the floor was metal, it is hardly surprising that the soles of our shoes melted on that ten minute journey. We were in luck, my companion was sure it was due to our bath in the holy river earlier that day, as we met the rafters travelling up the road in a truck after a long day's rafting.

The excitement of the day, the uncomfortable mats that we slept on, plus the sighting of a tiger

on the beach by one of our rafters, meant that not much sleep was had that night. The next day we discovered the amenities of this campsite, the toilets were the river, the showers were the river, the drinking water was the river, the basins were the river; it seemed the last place to achieve spiritual enlightenment!

We rafted for the next four days through rapids which had been given names whose naughtiness would have shamed Terry Wogan; since I doubt there were gods named Rollercoaster of The Nineteenth Hole. As well as excitement, the rafting gave us the opportunity to see beautiful landscapes and forests (which, for the botanists amongst you included Marajuna), accompanied by constant and piercing peacock cries. This exotic idyll was broken by finding the skeleton of a child on a beach one day who must have drowned in the rapids. Fortunately, that same fate did not befall us.

Mark Dummett





An Alternative Editorial

With the Grantite Review readership currently as high as that of the Chernobyl Gazette, I feel it is high time that some culture is introduced to this rag. So what controversial issues currently face us in Grant's. Will the tournament of the mind still be on the table when I arrive at School? Is there going to be an extra plughole (renovations) put in each room? Whose table will Mr Clarke sit at in lunch? And is there anyone who hasn't wanted to rip down the Baffin Fund notice? Well: No, yes, mine and yes.

Five great Grantite "Lord Lucan" prize entries for whatever happened to:

At number five it's the Grantite play, a nice idea back in the 18th century, but plans to perform Rain Man were soon lost, next to septuagesima in the All maniac. Next term maybe. Sure.

At number four, there's the house snooker balls, which haven't been seen for a good three years, barring special guest appearances on what can only be described as the Alpine snooker table due to its warped condition.

A new entry at number three for bread with lunch. Many won't remember the plate of mouldy bread which caused many hours of pleasure to no one at all. Nevertheless, this digestive aid disappeared as fast as the herald of the free enterprise.

Down three to number two, it's any of the competitions that we see on the shields and cups in the dining room. Like we really wanted to know that during 1732-34 inclusive, P. R. Koestler Rottweiler won the house snot flicking championships. Lets try to get some of these reinstated i.e. the cleverest pupil whose name begins with a V, etc.

And at number three, we want to know what happened to going in reverse order to one?

Finally at number one, whatever happened to celebrating people in the house's birthday. Traditionally this was a ritualistic cup banging ritualish ritual, where at lunch one would make as much noise as possible, followed by everyone trooping into yard to give the victim far too many "bumps", finishing with him / her being ritually dropped to the squeals of all spectating.

Fun, but gone, so where are they?

A Short Pome

Pee paw, pee paw went the pleeece car
as we speeded round the coroner at 10 million miles a second
"Screeech" On no run they'll catch us
Daddy we lost snuggles

Suddenly, Wham oof and wee were in a tyme machine
in spaits. The moon was all cheese
and we met a green fluffy monoter with six eyes who
invited us in for tea and cadbury's buttons.

Time four bed so we went home, and I wet myself on
my first day at school.
Then I woke up it was all a dream
or was it?

Daniel Gill aged 25+ (approx)

Horrorscopes

Leo

A Hitler lookalike in the sixth form, but otherwise a pleasant to dreadful day.

Pisces

You'll probably get caught under a bus and fished out with a sieve leaving an arm on the road, then again maybe you won't.

Tourists (Taurus, get it?, no, not as often as I'd like to)

Complete bull.

Virgo

A trifle risqué this one as it sounds remarkably like Virtue. Oh and Virile, Virgin, Vertigo, etc.

Who cares? **Jesus.**

Thanks to the Rev. William Booth who sent us this last Joke. *Thank God, eh? -Ed.* What does "Ed" mean? Does it mean Edifice or Eddie Smith or Education? Who knows? Will we ever know? Do we really care? **No, but Jesus does**

Yes, thankyou Will we got the message.



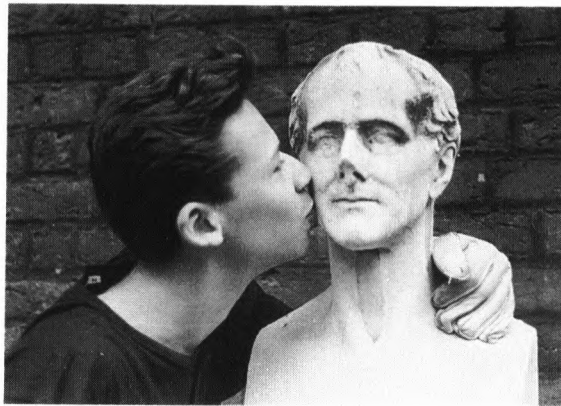
Finally a letter sent in by a reader from Ireland: **P**

I'd just like to thank everyone who contributed to this word, and I'd also like to take this opportunity to use an even longer word. Lackadaisical. There, isn't that better?

Lastly and this time finally for good, and seeing as how no one reads this far anyway, here is a picture of Lee and his new girlfriend Marc Anthony, who has a heart of stone and will only be loved, as is evident, by people who wear anti-radiation gloves.

Perry Blacher

The editors would like to disclaim any responsibility for this article.



Teaching in South Africa

Last January Isobel Olsberg (from Rigaud's) and I as part of our year off went to do voluntary work in South Africa. We had both spent the previous few months since leaving school working to raise enough money to be able to do so. We both feel very strongly about the situation in South Africa and this seemed the perfect opportunity to go and find out more and, if it were possible, to help in any way we could. Isobel had relations in South Africa so we knew we would have contacts when we were out there. We had nothing formally arranged before we went except that we were going to spend up to three months based in Cape Town. I was prepared to come straight home if we couldn't find any work.

Within the first week of our stay we had rented a flat for the three months and been introduced to a group called "The Surplus People Project" who help black squatter communities who are facing eviction by such methods as providing legal representation, negotiating with officials on their behalf or simply helping the community upgrade their land. Having been lent a car by Isobel's cousin, we provided transport for SPP's field workers and by the end of our first week we had made our first visit to a black squatter settlement and attended a three day National Conference for the National Committee Against Removals.

Whilst in the Noordhoek squatter settlement, we met a woman from a church organisation who had set up a school only the week before for both the adults and children. The school was a shack made of cardboard and plastic - like the shacks the community's 600 families lived in and everything from the plastic on the roof to the exercise books for the children had been provided through donations to the church. We had no desks or chairs at the beginning; however, as we left, some tables for the pupils to kneel at had just been made from some old doors with crates underneath. Noordhoek was a Xhosa community and most of the 40 pupils had never been to school, could not understand English and few could read or write in their own language. The pupils ranged in age from 6 to around 60; their main incentive at the start for coming to school on the three days it was open was the provision of two meals - breakfast and lunch - comprising of a sandwich and water (as the community had no water supply) and Woolworth's donation of fruit which was past its sell-by date. However after a few days the numbers rose and it was clear the main reason for attending the school was because they wanted to learn.

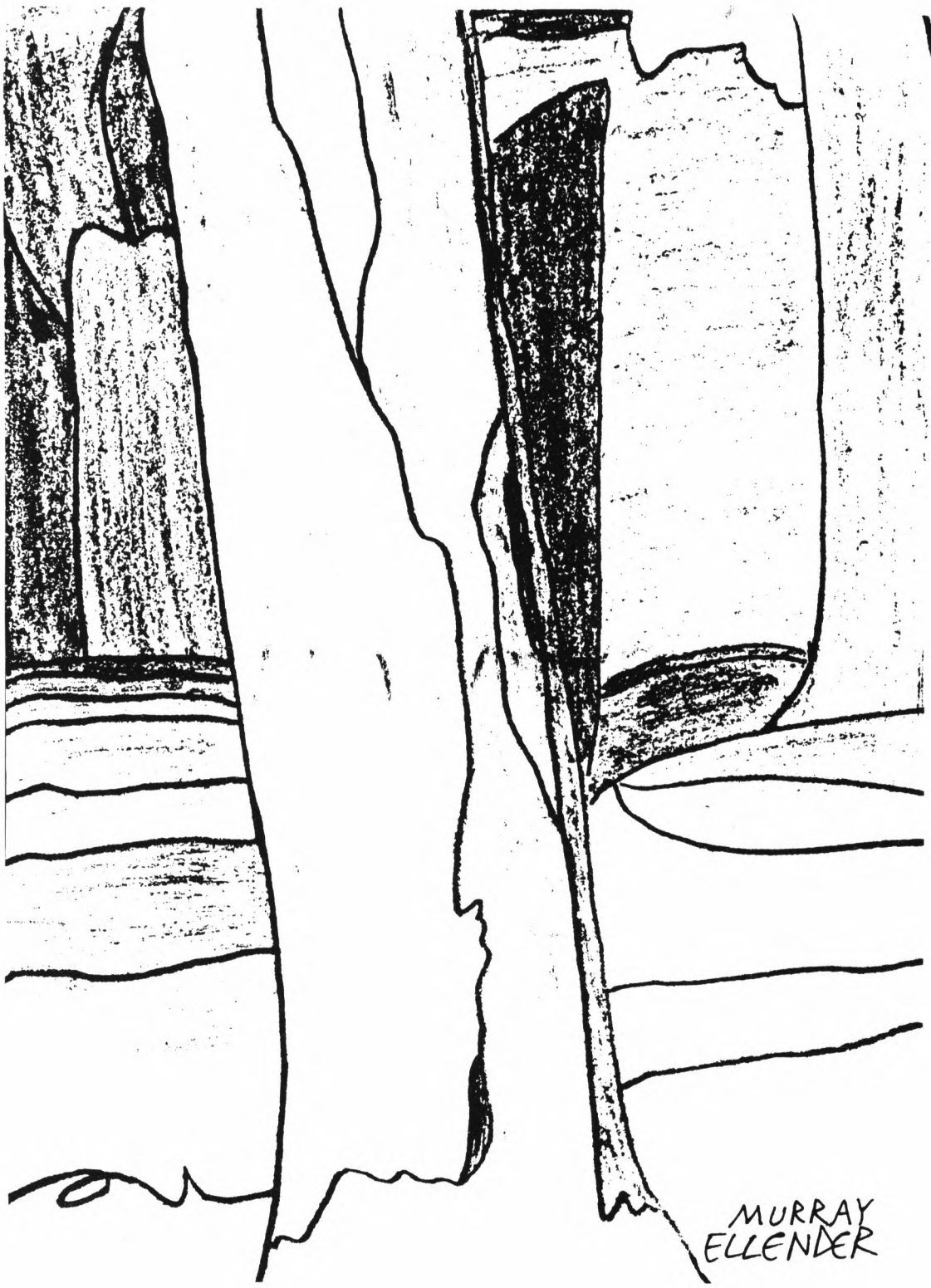
Isobel and I started teaching. The teaching was arranged to cover a broad spectrum ranging from exercises, singing and drawing with the younger children to teaching them how to write and helping with simple maths. Some of the adult pupils were learning these along with the children but the more advanced were learning to read and tell the time among other things. At the start of the school most of the pupils looked at us as if we were mad as we tried to talk to them in English. Apart from Isobel and myself, the only other regular "teacher" who attended every day was Pat who had set up the school. Luckily she could speak Xhosa and so translated for all of us and as the days went by we could see those children and adults who couldn't understand us gradually begin to comprehend and speak in sentences back to us. Some of the adults had always understood English, however little, and they helped those who couldn't - it was a real community project. In our spare time we were still helping SPP, but not driving their field workers any more since they refused to get in a car with us after a few bad experiences. Instead we did clerical work for them. We also started working in the Service Dining Room in the centre of town where we served food to the local homeless. It had been started during the Second World War and was still going 45 odd years later, heavily subsidised and again helped by donations of food from Woolworth's, Save the Children, etc. A full meal cost seven cents; around 2p.

During our stay we also visited Crossroads and Khayelitsha trying to see as much as we could. We attended lectures including the first given by an ANC exile when he returned, several on the "Land Question" - i.e. who does South Africa's land belong to? and we went to hear Nelson Mandela in Cape Town the day he was released which was an incredible experience. We were lucky to be there when at last changes towards ending Apartheid were being made. We met various people ranging from very liberal to extreme right-wing Afrikaans.

The highlight of my time in Africa was the teaching. We grew very close to many of the children and adults and I was extremely sad to leave them in April. I would have loved to have stayed longer, and in leaving I felt I was letting down the people who I had been trying to help, but as my visa ran out my money ran out and I was due to come home. Isobel, however, went on to Zimbabwe where she also has relatives and has just set up an organisation out there. She is hoping to get sponsoring for the school which will enable it to carry on and to allow other pre-university students to go out and teach there.

If you are planning a year off, try to spend part of it in such a country whether independently or on a scheme as it may be the only chance you get to do so.

Lucy Greggains



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