

THE ELIZABETHAN



The photographs on the front and back covers were taken by Chloe Andricopoulos (Hakluyt's) while on a Sixth Form visit to the Shri Ram School, Delhi.

THE ELIZABETHAN

No 716

Election 1997

CONTENTS

Report 1996-97	5
Station	7
Performing Arts	15
Features: Elections Past, Elections Present	25
Reflections - Christian and Muslim	28
<i>The Elizabethan</i> Literary Supplement	31
Common Room	42
Common Room Questionnaire	45
Oxbridge and Westminster	45
The Dungeons	47
To PC or not to PC	47
Commem 1996	48
Societies	49
Trips	57
Tales of the Workplace	63

Senior Editor: David Hargreaves

Editors: Tom Balogh (Dryden's), Laura Bender (Grant's), Adam Cohen (Ashburnham)

Alice Fleming (Purcell's), Murray Rogers (Hakluyt's)

Photography: Nick Wise (Hakluyt's)

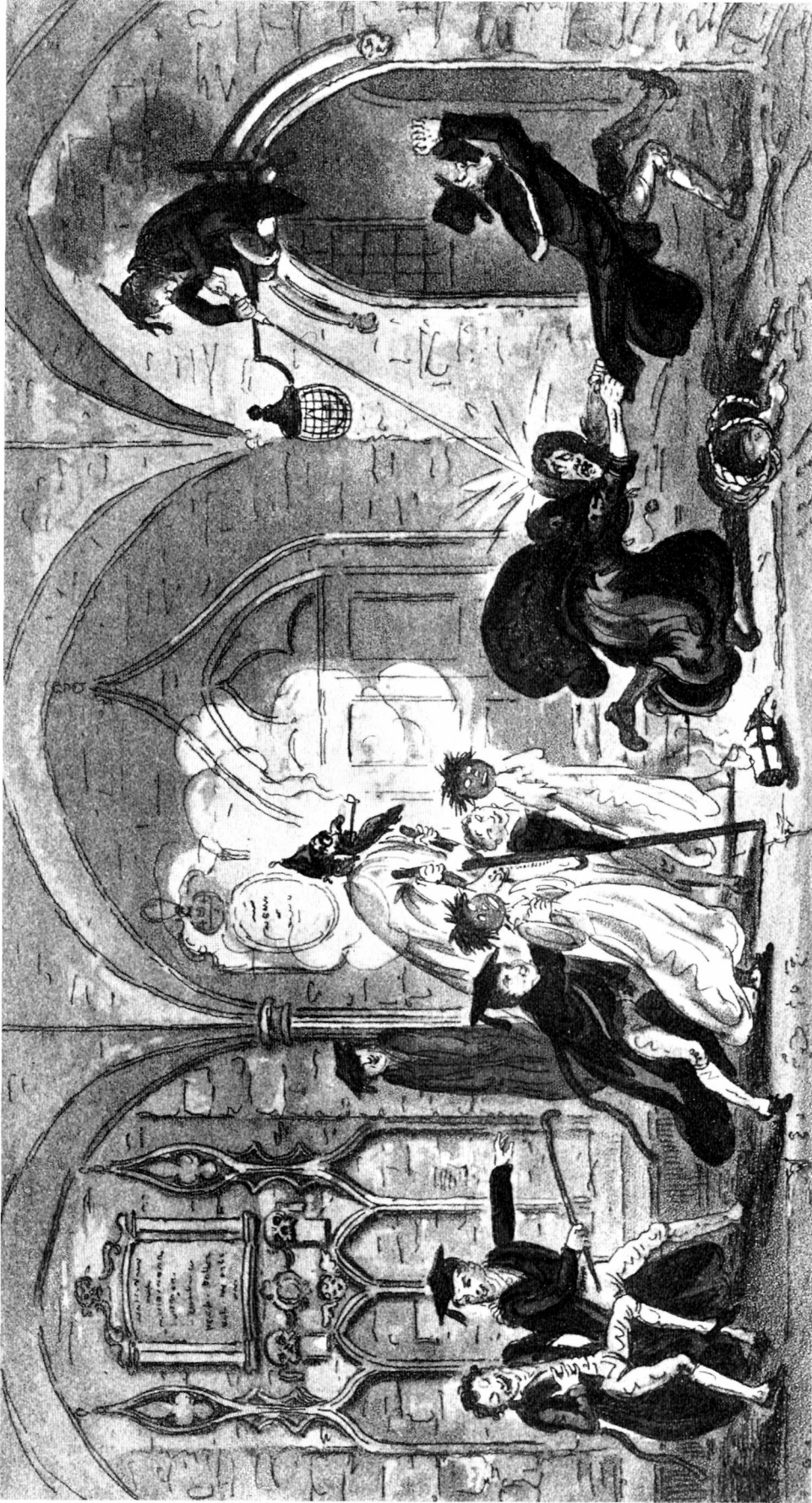
DTP: Nick Stevenson

Proof readers: Anne Carman, Jean Stevenson

Typing: Juliet Fitzherbert

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Westminster Frolics: Robert Cruickshank. Photo by Malcolm Crowthers.

THE ELIZABETHAN REPORT 1996-97

The Editor has decided to style himself middle aged. Very few people have noticed, but his voice now has the mellowness of a man in the early afternoon of life. Having seen out more than two complete generations of Westminster pupils, he will in all probability - assuming he can beat off the headhunters who try to flag him down on his motorcycle back to Clapham South - shortly see off a third.

Which means, in simple terms, that it is becoming hard to differentiate one year from another, at least in terms of the orthodox diarist. There is something comforting about the familiar rhythm of the school year, and these days it is a good deal more predictable than the seasons. The Play Term may have basked in most unseasonal sub-tropical sunshine, but it still encompassed its familiar rites of passage: Prep School Headmasters dined in College Hall, Sixth Form Entrance candidates sweated over entrance papers up School and long deliberations followed; pupils who veered between the challengingly fit and the merely optimistic set out on the Lyke Wake Walk; the Drama Festival, Long Distance Races, Parents' Evenings, Lower School Expeditions, Carol Service - all these happened. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, and in due course, the marathon Play Term was played out.

Reconvening in January, a disgracefully large number of pupils returned bronzed and fit from weeks in the West Indies; few staff, licking their wounds after the financial traumas of Christmas, got very much further west than Anglesey. Nor was there much chance for high living in the Lent Term that followed: modular exams, mocks, the start of the season of House concerts, more plays (in French and English), Fifth Form groups to Alston, Expedition Society forays, rock and chamber concerts one night apart from each other, School and House football, the Schools' Head for our oarsmen at Putney in the revamped boat house, the Bringsty relay, half marathon in Hertfordshire, the School concert at the end of term.

Election Term ought to be ferociously busy for Upper Shell and, especially, Removes. But a good deal else has happened besides: cricket, rowing (in abundance), athletic sports day, and tennis. School and House concerts, ubiquitous jazz in chic locations (Yard and Pizza Express in Soho, to be exact), cycling and parachuting weekends for Expeditions society, and Lower School expeditions after Exeat; more plays, German exchanges, departmental outings for historians and biologists, a protracted series of lectures for Sixth Formers on life, death - and UCAS. At the time of writing, the annual garden production (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), the glamour of Henley Royal Regatta and the 21st annual PHAB are perhaps the major fixed points before another school year comes to an end.

But the integrity of the diarist demands something more than an almanack. In our society - metropolitan, superficially assured and utterly unmonolithic - it can be hard to identify

much experience which is really in common to the School. Philip Needham and Guy Hopkins's combined production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in Autumn, being of an excellence unprecedented in the memory of many here, may have come nearest. Commemoration on 22 November, a triennial event enacted with a degree of ceremony more appropriate to a Royal Jubilee, also embraced many, staff and pupils, past and present. Just in case anyone thought it all a bit portentous, the party up School afterwards looked - and sounded - more like a convention for New Labour. Westminster has long cultivated the dangerous knack of having its cake and eating it.

The harder question is to speculate on what it may have been which marks out 1996-97 for our pupils. For many Fifth Formers, it must surely have been the change from prep school to the big time in Dean's Yard. Quite how that was experienced is something which must be as individual as the child himself: bigger buildings, deeper voices, commuting, boarding, the sense of starting all over again at the bottom, and the challenge of making new friendships. For most, this will have been in some measure disquieting but manageable, and for a few it may have been overwhelming. The Fifth Form outings in London at the end of the Play Term, the class trips to School House in Alston and the two Lower School Expeditions - perhaps these were among the most intensely experienced moments of their past year.



It is much harder to answer the same question for those in the Lower and Upper Shell. Many have developed interests which can be easily accommodated within the School, and for these a guess can be made: football or water may easily have been the greatest moments of their year, or just as likely, music and drama. For the seriously studious, academic study or real life GCSEs may have provided the focus for their best energies.

But others take only a passing interest in the School's extracurricular programme and what might charitably be called a pragmatic attitude towards their studies. For them, friends, social life and arcane adolescent vogue may have made infinitely more impression than GCSE Coursework or

the prospect of the Summer Shakespeare. For parents and staff, this withdrawal to a world into which we are most certainly not admitted is almost always unnerving. Received wisdom suggests that it is usually a temporary phase (lasting anything from six months to fifteen years), but it can be hard work for everyone while it lasts.

With an enviable range of school trips, visiting speakers and the whole of London at their door, Upper School have not been short of diversion this year - the officially School-sponsored kind. Perhaps the biggest stimulus for many of this year's Sixth Form has been the chance to study their favoured subjects, and the arrival of a large number of very congenial new pupils. With A Levels come Private Studies (of varying number) and, with them, a bit of flexibility during the days. A defining moment for many in the past year may have been their attendance (voluntary) at Commem: however laconic they may have appeared, most pupils were susceptible to the sense of occasion the service evoked, and thoroughly enjoyed the party afterwards.

Interestingly, in April most of the year surrendered the chance to drink coffee in Private Studies for three periods and showed up for Hustings for the Mock Election in which representatives for each of the big three parties were drawn from their year group. Jonathan Monroe led the Liberal Democrats to victory, and George Mangos was a very near runner-up for the Conservatives. Jenny Haydock's third position for New Labour was a very unfair reflection of her talent and professionalism - a trait shared by all the three speakers. The audience loved it all: having now the maturity to enjoy occasions which would have been largely inexplicable three years earlier, many discovered perhaps unexpected satisfaction and fun in a place they thought they already knew.

What of the Remove? For many, this past year will have been conditioned by the increasingly relentless treadmill of UCAS, interviews, Oxbridge euphoria or blues, and the grind through Mocks in February to the A Levels themselves in June. The School's sporting and other extracurricular programme has undoubtedly provided many with essential counterpoint to what can be an almighty slog, especially in the final weeks. There are less formal diversions too: the perennial spectacle of A Level candidates spending large amounts of time playing Yard football sometimes sets staff's (and parents') teeth clicking in frustration. While the exercise can be a vital unwinding from long hours of study for some, for others it is simply an evasion which continues until, most probably, peer example sends the pupil to his books. Teaching at this level can be extraordinarily satisfying, but it can also be stressful, as one tries to walk the tightrope between constructive exhortation and nagging. Westminster Removes are the definitive and living proof of the capricious nature of adolescents - brilliant, approachable and hilarious one day; petulant, bloody minded and vexing the next.

Each year, staff watch the Removes in their last weeks with fascination and a bit of protective concern. Some have long outgrown whatever we can give them; others seem very vulnerable. In 1995, this very *Report* made a mendacious denouncement of Gavin Griffiths for hiding behind the Headmagisterial Saab when he should have been supervising the mayhem that accompanies the annual Remove photograph. The Editor's hubris was justly punished when he was nominated by that very same Gavin Griffiths as his

successor in this least enviable of tasks. It is a bit disconcerting trying to control these urban sophisticates when they start behaving like a large group of Millwall supporters who have just stumbled across some Chelsea fans in a dark alley.

The result is a slightly out-of-focus group, set against the handsome façade of College from the garden: self-consciously 'hard lads' concentrate on dominating front centre, but the chief interest lies in the satellite groups: shy or brazen, spontaneous or posed, they look a heterogeneous lot, but youthful, charming, on the brink of life - and all coated in a shower of self-raising flour. Above all, it suggests Westminster, and the friends they have made here, has given them a strong sense of identity. That is certainly reassuring.

For Common Room, there is a sense of impending change. Long deliberations have been given to our catering arrangements and our system of staff development. In the usual relentless quest for self-improvement, many returned a day early in New Year for an in-service training day devoted to First Aid. The Editor saw in this a unique photo-opportunity but had his camera confiscated at an early stage. This year will see a larger departure of staff, almost entirely through promotion, than at any point in Westminster's recent past. Next year, with the retirement of the Head Master, a major chapter in the School's history will be rounded off. Here, just as on the other side of College Green, we are not immune from a sense of *fin de siècle*.



STATION

FOOTBALL

First XI

Results 1996-97

Play Term

Winchester	A	Won	3-0
Westminster City	A	Drew	1-1
KES Witley	H	Drew	1-1
Eton	A	Lost	2-3
Kimbolton	H	Won	4-1
Lancing (ISFA Cup)	H	Lost	1-3
OWW	H	Lost	1-4
Forest	A	Lost	0-2
Highgate	A	Won	2-1
Bradfield	H	Lost	1-2
Chigwell	A	Drew	1-1
Brentwood	A	Lost	1-2
Charterhouse	H	Lost	0-1
Ardingly	H	Lost	1-5

Lent Term

Corinthian Casuals	H	Lost	0-7
Sevenoaks	H	Won	4-0
UCS	A	Drew	3-3
Dulwich	H	Drew	3-3
St Paul's	A	Drew	2-2
King's Canterbury	H	Won	7-1
Oratory	H	Won	2-0
Bedford	H	Won	4-0
Harrow	H	Drew	1-1
John Lyon	H	Lost	2-3

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Although the results were less impressive than the previous two seasons this year's team was by no means a poor side. With the very dry summer a number of injuries were sustained during the early part of the season and it wasn't until after Exeat that the side became more settled. There was an encouraging start to the Play Term with good wins over Winchester and Kimbolton. The result against another battling Eton side was a big disappointment as the defeat was entirely due to two unforced errors and thus of our own making. On balance we played the more entertaining football making the final result even harder to bear. The first round of the cup brought us face to face with a strong, robust and direct Lancing side. They scored first before a stunning individual goal by Alan Jones brought us level. In the second half we competed well until the superior strength of the opposition began to tell. The Lancing pressure was rewarded with two goals in relatively quick time and our cup season was over. Lancing went on to reach the final and win the cup. The post Exeat phase of the Play Term began with a welcome, if scrappy, away win against a poorish Highgate side and then came a four game period of intense frustration. A run of three losses and one draw in no way reflected the team's overall ability at a crucial stage of the season. Games were lost by the odd goal and games which should genuinely have been won were drawn - notably against Chigwell. Again tragic errors revealed that soft under-belly which more than occasionally afflicts Westminster sport. We walked off pitches knowing we should have won or at least avoided defeat but failed to find any immediate comfort. We knew it was down to us! The only time we were genuinely outplayed against school opposition all season was against a well organised and skilful Ardingly side. We competed aggressively in the early stages and scored first. With 25 minutes to go it was still 1-1 before waves of attacks realised



Football 1st XI 1996-97

Jeremy Kemball, Alex Cochrane, Max Hildebrand, Roland Curtis, Sandy Haller, Theo Hildebrand, Ian Monk
Branco Obradovic, George Last, Kerry Karageorgis, Rupert Coltart, James Taylor, Danny Becker, Jon Korgaonkar

four goals. The conclusion of the Play Term left us feeling disappointed because we knew we hadn't quite done ourselves justice.

The Lent Term began with a heavy defeat against a strong Casuals side where I was concerned that not much good would come from such a thrashing by experienced ex pros and semi pros. To our credit we played our hearts out and learnt a little about how 'proper' football should be played. Some individuals learnt from this sobering experience and went on to demolish Sevenoaks in the following game. Over the next few games a pattern began to establish itself of our playing teams off the park, scoring two or three goals and then gifting sides a draw which they gratefully accepted, returning home with smiles on their faces. This was mainly due to a lack of concentration rather than a lack of self-belief. A 7-1 victory over a hitherto unbeaten Canterbury side, two good victories over Bedford (4-0) and Oratory (2-0), a dreary 1-1 draw against Harrow and a disappointing 2-3 defeat against John Lyon brought the term to a close. Rupert Coltart and James Taylor were both put forward for an ISFA U19 South trial and I would like to thank them both for their hard work throughout the season. A special mention should be given to Jon Korgaonkar for his exceptional goal scoring record of 25 goals in 24 games. Thanks must go to Roland Butcher, Simon Craft, Maurice Lynn, Richard Bryant, Jonathan Strong, Jim Kershen, Martin Robinson, David Hargreaves, David Cook and Valance Similien for all their efforts during a long and testing season, and to the parents who come and support us. More of this, please. Finally, let me give special thanks to Ian Monk for his tireless work and unselfish support of the football club. As part of our pre-seasonal preparations for next term we will be taking a party of fourteen players and three staff on a short trip to Munster in Germany.

The Players (goals scored in brackets):

Rupert Coltart (captain). Started in goal before a loss of confidence moved him out field. During the course of the remaining season he developed into an accomplished central defender. Good pace and skill.

Branco Obradovic (1). Utility player. Fast and strong on the ball with good dribbling skills. His first touch occasionally let him down but he proved to be a valuable member of the team.

Roland Curtis. Came into the side midway through the season and took time to settle into the role of centre-half. However, he developed enormously in the last three weeks of the season and became one of the most dominant players.

George Last (1). Made the left back position his own throughout the season. He had a good left foot and a good positional sense. Good level of skill but no frills and an excellent attitude.

James Taylor (1). Talented player. Strong on the ball and technically very proficient. His natural athleticism allowed him to cover large areas of the field and often dominate play. His play making also improved as the season progressed.

Danny Becker (1). Good passer with vision and skill. He suffered from injury problems early on but fought back to become an influential member of the side. Disappointed not to have scored more goals.

Jonny Korgaonkar (25). Very talented player and a handful for many schoolboy defenders. Good pace and a natural goal scorer. He had the odd quiet game but his work especially towards the end was excellent. He will be a key player in next year's campaign.

Alex Cochrane (12). Played off Jonny and became most dangerous in and around the box. Stunning footwork and genuine goal scorer. He responded well to the physical challenge but still needs to be more dynamic in attack.

Theo Hildebrand (1). Quick and aggressive, he worked tirelessly and unselfishly. Despite being played out of position he showed good skill and an eye for goal. Needs to develop a little more composure in certain situations but as a newly promoted U16 recruit he showed real potential.

Max Hildebrand. Took over in goal just before Christmas and proved himself to be a good shot stopper. In the second term he had very little to do for long periods and perhaps became rusty. With some work on technical aspects of his game he will develop into a competent keeper.

Kerry Karageorgis. Showed some good touches on the ball and looked an accomplished player. He obviously enjoyed his football but found a full game hard work. Fitness was a problem but he kept his place on merit.

Tom Webber. Tom began the season looking like our best player showing, as a defender, good pace and excellent covering skills. A dramatic loss of form due to illness forced him out for some of the Play Term and all of the Lent Term. I hope he comes back refreshed next year.

Others who played: E Havakuk, B Gordon, N Neuberger (1), B Holden (1), Alan Jones (2), Aidan Jones, A Cowper-Smith, D Esfandi (1), A Zalacosta, J Barber

Jeremy Kemball



Under 16 Football

In terms of results, the 1996-97 season was a disappointing one for the U16s. One was left inevitably with a feeling of 'what might have been'. Theo Hildebrand's departure meant that the squad was left short of effective, aggressive firepower up front, and a number of reshuffles had to be made.

On the positive side, several players developed considerably over the two terms. Ian Warren had two or three excellent games in goal, Olly Bennett-Coles did an admirable job sweeping behind the defence, and Chike M'Bamali and Michael Garnett were outstanding at the back. George Chichester, Jamie Graham and Ben Warner also produced many fine performances in defence.

In midfield, Michael Walls was somewhat mercurial but has the makings of a fine player, while Tristan Vanhegan, Elias Frangos and Philip Pongratz worked tirelessly, although Philip's finishing did leave a little to be desired on occasion. However, he made up for this by being, alongside M'Bamali and Garnett, our most consistent player.

Up front, Federico Ruiz did a good job for us as a lone striker, and scored one or two very good goals.

Overall, the team, and indeed the squad, worked hard without achieving the results that they often deserved.

Simon Craft

Under 15 Football

Though it did not end in quite the way we might have hoped, the U15 A team nevertheless enjoyed a season of considerable success in which they played some excellent football at times.

Only five games were lost over the two terms and only two of these defeats were by more than the odd goal in a tight game.

There were several highlights to remember in the Christmas term. Winchester were outplayed in a stylish opening victory (4-0); a strong Highgate team were beaten 5-3, largely thanks to a Kirk hat trick; two of the circuit's strongest sides, Chigwell and Ardingly, were both held to 3-3 draws in games that we might well have won; and perhaps the most pleasing result of all was the tremendous 3-2 victory over a previously unbeaten Charterhouse side, and all the more so for the barracking the referee was receiving from the visiting supporters - memorable!

A combination of loss of form in one or two key areas, a dearth of goals, fatigue at the end of a long season and unsuccessful tampering with the system by the coach meant that the team never quite reached these heights again after Christmas.

However, it speaks volumes for the resolve and spirit of the side that they raised themselves, bereft of their captain, from their tame submission at Bedford (the season's worst performance) and the barrage of bouncing bombs at Harrow, to match a physical John Lyon side in a splendid 2-2 draw to end the season. Karageorgis's stunning brace also made this a day to savour!

The team contains some talented individuals; Phillips, in goal, is a good shot-stopper but, as yet, is too prone to

alarming lapses of concentration and he will face stiff competition from the ever improving Bell next season.

In an admirable defence Choo was perhaps the outstanding performer and he put in some towering displays as sweeper. He was ably supported in the middle by the similarly stout and whole-hearted Karageorgis and by Howard, who did much unnoticed yet invaluable work as a marker and tenacious tackler. The unfortunate Mouracadeh was somewhat hampered by injury, but he proved himself to be reliable and consistent in the latter part of the season. Lahiri was probably the find of the season and the most improved player in the side.

In terms of ability the midfield had few rivals on the circuit, but they can be muscled out of games by stronger or more aggressive opposition. The captain, Cowper-Smith, was impressive throughout and he often illuminated games with his skill. His superb, individual goal to win the game at Bradfield will remain the highlight of this and many other seasons. *But his finishing and his tackling require improvement.* Kirk had an excellent season - he scored some tremendous goals and created many more; like his captain, however, he needs to learn to confront stronger opponents with more conviction and aggression. Makhoul was hugely impressive - quick, strong and fully committed at all times, he adapted extremely well to his new role and scored some vital goals. Alamouti will be a vital player next year and his indefatigable performances suggest that he is ready to take on the responsibility.

... which leaves Caporali, unstoppable before Christmas as he terrorised defences with his pace and scored buckets of goals, yet sadly debilitated thereafter by a cruel illness. I hope he makes a full recovery.

Praise also to Doeh, in particular, but also to Stevens, Obradovic, Ebied and Nikbin for deputising at various times with considerable willingness and success. And many thanks too to Jon Strong for his unstinting support throughout.

Richard Bryant

Under 14 Football

This was undoubtedly a difficult year for the U14s. However, over the course of the season, definite improvements were made throughout the side. The team made a good start with victories over Royal Russell and Kimbolton, as well as a high-scoring draw with Winchester where victory was only denied them deep into injury time. However, this promising start was brought to an abrupt end when the long journey to Lancing resulted in a heavy defeat which was swiftly followed by a similar loss to a strong Forest side. Thus the team went into Exeat with their confidence severely dented, and it proved difficult to restore when there followed heavy defeats to Highgate and Bradfield.

Nevertheless, the U14s then showed no little character and resilience to bounce back in a hard-fought match against a strong, undefeated Chigwell side. An early goal sent the confidence flooding back into the Westminster side, and they proceeded to play some excellent football only to give away a couple of 'soft' goals which ultimately led to a narrow 4-3 defeat.

Alas, the team was not able to continue this form and there followed convincing defeats against Aldenham and Ardingly schools. However, the nadir of the season came against a

very strong Charterhouse side who overwhelmed us at home by 13-1. This was a difficult result to take for players, parents and coach alike, sending us into the Christmas break with heads hanging low.

Lent Term brought undoubted improvement in the overall play of the U14 side, and they were very unfortunate to lose out by the odd late goal in several games. Nothing typified this more than the game against a strong and aggressive John Lyon team. Having grabbed an early goal against the run of play, the Westminster side defended heroically until the last couple of minutes only to concede an equaliser, and then manage to lose the game in injury time. However, there was one particular bright spot in the shape of a fine 2-1 victory away to the Oratory, thanks to goals from Gadani and a long-range free kick from Reilly.

As can be seen, the team did struggle over the course of the year, but, undoubtedly there were signs that this side could develop into a successful one in the next few years as long as they keep practising and playing with the great enthusiasm they exhibited this season. Particular praise must go to Santiago Lago in goal who showed real potential to become a quality goalkeeper during his School career. He showed good all-round ability between the posts, consistently performing heroics in a losing cause. Similarly, Edward Roy and Fabian Joseph turned in numerous solid performances throughout the season, but were often not given the support that their efforts deserved. Promise was also shown by James Jones who showed the ability to dominate a game when he was not injured. Edar Mullan, similarly suffered with injury, but still showed glimpses of good skill to go with his undoubted athleticism in defence. Leo Shapland also showed glimpses of real skill and speed, but was hampered by little or no service from his team-mates, as was also the case with Alexander Malamatinas. Equally Ed Reilly showed a good understanding of the game along with no little skill, but he was slightly short of pace and too easily frustrated by being on the losing side. Good contributions were also made over the year by Jamie Coggans, Philip Sanguinetti, Jason Lowe, David Stranger Jones and Ricky Gadani.

In conclusion, it must be said that the side's results were disappointing, but there were undoubted signs of improvement, particularly in the Lent Term, which point to greater success in the future. I would like to thank all the U14 squad for their efforts and enthusiasm throughout the season, and say what a pleasure it was to work with them. I would stress to them that they should not be disheartened by their lack of victories, and that if they maintain their enthusiasm and keep working to improve then they will soon have a winning record. I wish them all every success with their football careers at Westminster.

James Kersten

RUGBY 1996-97

The 1996-97 season was a year of unprecedented success for Westminster rugby. More matches were played, more victories gained, than in any previous year, and it can be said without hesitation that both the senior and the junior sides competed with distinction. The achievement augurs well for the future but new blood is urgently required if the momentum is to be sustained.

The senior side began the year not knowing what it was like to win, and this psychological burden contributed to a narrow 0-5 defeat at the hands of Mill Hill. But a crucial victory at Harrow (10-5) showed the raw quality and spirit of the team, and self-belief began to flow more strongly as Eton (20-5), UCS Hampstead (40-0) and Emanuel (17-0) were all despatched in convincing style. By now we were playing our best rugby of the season, characterised by an open, expansive and free-flowing style of play which expressed the wholehearted and joyous enthusiasm of its exponents. When things got tough we fought hard and dug in, holding the Oratory to a draw (14-14) and, although denuded by cross-country calls, frightening the life out of a powerful St Ignatius (Enfield) side before going down 21-25. However, a sobering December defeat at the hands of Charterhouse (0-36) should have served as a sharp reminder of our weaknesses (the tackle, for example), and of the need to work hard to overcome them.

This was a lesson that we disregarded to our cost. In the Lent term we failed to find the grit, the collective spirit and the fluency that had brought us so much success and put such a gloss on our game before Christmas. True, we recorded victories against the American Schools at Uxbridge (46-0) and Cobham (24-7), and against Bradfield (25-3), but without playing at our best, nor really as a team; and lost games we should have won, namely the return fixture at Cobham (15-19) and another against the American School at St John's Wood (10-20). Then the wheels came off with a real drubbing and humiliation at Epsom (0-67) when, unforgivably, too many of the side simply gave up the ghost. The pain of this experience opened up tensions which culminated, sadly, in a strike by senior players which caused the abandonment of the last three matches, bringing the season to an end on a very sour note.

Despite the successes and the achievements the abiding feeling is therefore one of wasted opportunity. In the second term the senior side settled too easily for being mediocre, lacking the hunger and commitment necessary for a sustained run of success. Instead of striving to reach new heights, there was an element of the side that grew stale, lazy, complacent, self-absorbed and exclusive.

The side was capably captained by Srige Sri-Skanda-Rajah. Andrew Little and Llewellyn ap Gwilym were the outstanding forwards, supported effectively by James Schlesinger. Behind the scrum Jon Seward was tirelessly effective, Edward Janvrin a rock of stability, and Adam Buchan and James Clifford showed flashes of inspiration and promise. Our thanks are due to Richmond rugby club for their hospitality and to Kevin Bell for his inspiring coaching.

Giles Brown

FIRST XI CRICKET 1997

The new season began with optimism. New practice facilities at Vincent Square were to be complemented by a new School cricket sweater and a very smart 1st XI team blazer. We had practised hard over the winter and the weather was kind. It was time to put the disappointments of last year firmly behind us.

To an extent this optimism has been fulfilled. The leadership of James MacDonald (captain) and Rowan Bamford (vice-

captain) has produced sides full of vigour and spirit. The wickets of Messrs Kershen and Campbell in the captain's first over in the opening match against the Old Westminster's was a truly sensational start. A strong OW side, practising hard for the Cricketer Cup, was held to a creditable draw. Another draw two days later against Bradfield confirmed that our spirit would make us a side that was hard to beat. As in last year's game, for a while we looked to be on course for a famous victory before our batting subsided.

Against the Lords and Commons, Ben Gordon and Rowan Bamford once again batted exceptionally well. Ben duly exorcised the painful memory of his dismissal on 99 in last year's fixture with a long-awaited first hundred for the School. Our bowlers, however, could not force the victory that we deserved. Against Aldenham, in a limited overs match, we bowled profligately, our batsmen got out chasing a monumental score and we deservedly suffered a heavy defeat, our only really disappointing performance thus far. Conversely, an unlikely victory was stolen at UCS through sheer grit and self-belief. Bamford held the batting together with a dogged 54 while Vivek Khemka emerged as the hero, ripping into some complacent UCS batting to good effect (4-23). This success was a tremendous team effort. At Alleyn's the weather defeated us at lunchtime. Further disappointment followed, however, at the hands of a powerful and motivated MCC side. Set 241 to win, at 123-1, with plenty of time in hand, we looked well set; but another batting collapse, admittedly against some top class bowling tumbled us to a second defeat of term. Although in a lost cause, Jonathan Korgaonkar's 80 was rated one of the outstanding innings seen at Vincent Square in recent years.

After the exam break, forthcoming fixtures against Charterhouse, the Butterflies and three Australian touring sides promise plenty more exciting and rewarding cricket to come. Heartfelt thanks to all those (too numerous to mention) who help to make Westminster cricket work, but especially to Ian Monk whose tireless efforts, constant support and unfailing good humour are so much appreciated by us all.

Giles Brown



Vincent Square

Results to date:

vs Old Westminster's		
Old Westminster's		215-6 dec (J Hall 96, D Mahoney 63)
School		178-7 (J Korgaonkar 92)
Result		Match drawn
vs Bradfield		
Bradfield		238-2 dec.
School		166-9
Result		Match drawn
vs Lords and Commons		
School		214-6 dec (B Gordon 115, R Bamford 73)
Lords and Commons		138-7
Result		Match drawn
vs UCS Hampstead		
School		159-9 (R Bamford 54)
UCS Hampstead		105 all out
Result		Won by 54 runs
vs Aldenham		
Aldenham		217-3
School		146 all out
Result		Lost by 71 runs
vs Alleyn's		
Alleyn's		70-1 Rain stopped play
School		
vs MCC		
MCC		241-5 dec
School		168 all out
Result		Lost by 73 runs

WATER

This year has been one of the most successful for some time. In the face of much adversity, such as the boathouse being reconstructed and the difficulty in getting to and from the river, each squad has realised its potential in the racing field, claiming medal after medal, with great style and determination.

National Schools' Regatta, on the Saturday and Sunday of the Summer Term Exeat, in many ways set the tone: not only did every crew reach the final, but three crews - the JIV+ (Jones, Watson, Waring, Mehrzad, Piesse), the J16 VIII+ (Calvert-Ansari, Stricker, Cook, Jesty, Cohen, Hamawi, Lillie, Steele, Crystal) and the J15 IV+ (Kapp, Vanhegan, McGregor, Oates, Leister) - all claimed Gold medals with finishing sprints that brought the grandstand to its feet. On Sunday the J15 IVx+ and J14 IIX won Silver and Bronze respectively. The triumphant J16 VIII+ was then invited to represent Great Britain at the Anglo-French Match in Boulogne, at which they did commendably, hanging on to a French composite right up to the end.

Before this, however, a young 1st VIII was formed from the JIV+ and half the J16 VIII+ to race at Henley Royal Regatta. Westminster faced Shiplake, who had won Bronze at the National Schools', in the first round, but unfortunately lost by 1 1/4 lengths. The 1st VIII had been rowing well, and a last minute postponement of the race no doubt meant we lost the edge of adrenalin. Nevertheless, before the Summer holidays finally got under way Westminster produced more

outstanding results at the National Championships. The JIV- and the new J16 of Jesty and Cook won, but unluckily the JIV+ just missed out on representing England at the Home Countries International.

The Boat Club continued to show its skill on the waves in the racing during the Play Term Head races. Whilst the cancellation of the Head of the Charles Regatta, Boston, frustrated our chances of improving on last year's impressive row, many crews performed well in other events closer to home with good results - in single and double sculls at Pangbourne (winning the overall team prize) and doubles and pairs at the Pairs' Head, Hampton Small Boats Head and Walton Head, where our J14 IIs (Cockburn, Treasure) win was amongst an array of other good performances. The Fours' Head, in November, highlighted Westminster's talent with our three top boats, JIV-, JIVx-, JIV-, equal to the top schools.

Nor was success confined to the water: Westminster won seven medals at the Indoor Rowing Championships, enough to beat Oxford University for the Victor Ludorum trophy. Olly McGregor also won the junior event of the Cambridge rowing, cycling and running triathlon.

The long-running saga of our new boathouse was finally brought to a happy conclusion when we moved from the Sailing Club, adjacent to our all-new boathouse, in the first few weeks of Lent Term 1997. The long wait was worth our while, and the new facilities it provides (such as a large tea-room, ergo room, improved boys' changing facilities and a girls' changing room) are invaluable. Oxford University will now use WSBC to boat from, in the run-up to the Boat Race.

For WSBC, the run-up to the Schools' Head at the end of the term was the main focus. Our now accustomed success was repeated in Hampton Head in February, primarily by the younger members of the Club; the two J15 IV+s came first and third as did our newest recruits, two J14 VIIIxs, in their first proper race. A newly formed 1st VIII and J1Vx also raced encouragingly, laying down a solid basis for success at the Schools' Head.

Yet again this was a victorious occasion. Despite extremely rough and windy conditions (causing the cancellation of J14 events) our J15 IV+ won, our J15 IVx+ came third and our J16 IV+ not only won their event but the overall IV's division. Our Girls' Squad also performed outstandingly, with the Sixth Form Novice VIII coming third. Our JIVx lived up to expectations, coming fifth in a very tough event. However the 1st VIII's disastrous performance (22nd) astonished all, especially considering the obvious talent within the boat and its recent success (winning Southampton Head outright). The top squad now went to Gent International Regatta for Easter training.

The response could hardly have been better. A remodelled 1st VIII, through intense seat racing, astounded everyone by claiming Bronze in Open VIIIs beating all British crews, and only being beaten by the Spanish and French National Squads. The 1st VIII, split into IVs, also came third and fourth beating Russia, Spain and Belgium. The J16 IV claimed a Silver medal coxed and gold coxless on each of the days.

Already this term WSBC has hit a level of rowing not seen for many years. Ben Jesty and Adam Cohen are poised to claim Great British vests, having qualified for final trials,

while on the domestic scene Westminster came second in the *Victor Ludorum* at Poplar Regatta, having entered only seven events and claimed Gold medals in JIV+, J14 VIIIx+ and J15 IIx and a Bronze medal in J14 IIx. The 1st VIII squad returned to Belgium in May to row in Junior VIIIs and IV+s. These results can be credited only to determined training on and off water and to the dedicated coaching given by various members of staff and others. At the moment crews are busy preparing to perform at Nottingham National Schools'.

Old Westminsters have also shown steely grit and determination with continued rowing achievement. Graham Smith (RR 1988-93) rowed in the Great Britain VIII at the Atlanta Olympics, while Ned Kittoe (DD 1985-90) rowed bow in the British lightweight Quad at the World Championships. Amongst other successes, Blaise Metreweli (GG 1993-95) rowed in the victorious Cambridge Women's Boat Race crew, with Laura Williams (DD 1990-92) in the losing Oxford boat.

John Mehrzad (Busby's), Head of Water
Simon Piesse (College), Secretary of Water

HONOURS May 96 - May 97

(Total : 40)

Eights:	1st VIII	Southampton Head Gent International Regatta, April (Bronze) Gent International Regatta, May (Gold)
	J16 VIII	Poplar Regatta 1996 (Bronze) National Schools' Regatta (Gold) National Championships (Silver)
Coxless Fours	Junior	Poplar Regatta 1996 (Bronze) Bedford Sprint Regatta National Championships (Gold) Gent International Regatta, April (Bronze)
	J16	Gent International Regatta, April (Gold)
Coxed Fours	Junior	Bedford Sprint Regatta Putney Amateur Regatta National Schools' Regatta (Gold) Poplar Regatta 1997 (Gold) Gent International Regatta, May Sat. (Gold) Gent International Regatta, May Sun. (Gold)
	J16	Schools' Head Gent International Regatta, April (Silver)
	J15	National Schools' Regatta (Gold) Putney Amateur Regatta Schools' Head
Coxed Quads	J15	National Schools' Regatta (Silver) National Championships (Bronze)

Doubles	J15	Poplar Regatta 1997 (Gold) National Championships (Bronze) Poplar Regatta 1997 (Silver)
Coxless Pairs	J16	National Championships (Gold) Hampton Small Boats Head
Coxed Pairs	J16 J15	Walton Small Boats Head Walton Small Boats Head
Singles	J16	Jesty - Gent International Regatta 1996 (Gold) Calvert-Ansari - Pangbourne Head* (Bronze)

NATIONAL INDOOR ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS*

Junior lightweight	Mehrzad (Bronze)
J16	Jesty (Bronze)
J15	Vanhegan (Gold) McGregor (Bronze)
J14	Treasure (Bronze)
J13	Ogilvie (Silver) Roeg (Bronze)

* denotes WSBC wins Team Prize

FIVES

This year saw Westminster's fives team rise impressively to most of the challenges it faced, playing and winning more matches than it has ever done before.

After a brief period of intense recruiting and training, including a warm-up match against St Olave's, we had two successful wins against Lancing and Sunningdale, with stunning play by Richmond and Kanetsuka, Roberts, Rose and Green, who all won in straight sets.

Play half term passed by, and our junior team grew in stature with wins against Emanuel School (where former fives supremo and Under Master TJP has restarted fives in courts which had been used as storerooms until his arrival three years ago) and QE Barnet. Our U15 and U14 proved themselves extremely capable with winning combinations of Copeman, Hull, Barkhordar and Ali. Playing away at St Olave's, the U14 team comprising of Ryland and Mackenzie, Jolly and Kim, and Adamson and Richards, among others, convincingly took the opposing team apart.

This winning streak was brought to a halt with defeats by two of the strongest teams in the country: Eton and Harrow. Even in defeat (which, against Eton consisted of the entire station - 17 pairs) the U15 team managed to achieve a draw. However, we were put back on course by strong performances by Redwood, Ell, Forgacs and Cartwright in a net win against Charterhouse. On our return visit again we bolstered our previous performance with strong wins at every age level of our team, with Richmond and Kanetsuka confirming their status as one of the strongest Junior Colts pairs with a victory against the Charterhouse first pair. In this match several new combinations had their first outings; successfully for Rose and Stevenson, and Embiricos and Crawford, who beat their opponents in straight sets.

The next match was a home victory against Lancing, which was memorable for the rare win by Harrison and Matthew. Towards the end of the season, the top three U14 pairs made

sure that Emanuel School's return visit would be a disappointment (for them, of course). Two junior matches against Highgate Senior and Junior School proved a disappointment, although Green and Roberts proved their calibre in a defiant victory over their opponents. The Senior team fared somewhat more successfully, with Lewis, McDonald, Redwood and Ell all bringing Highgate to its knees, thus ensuring all was not lost against them.

The season ended with the Juniors losing steam against Berkhamsted, but the team as a whole holding Harrow to a draw, with excellent play by Roberts, Hossain, Coomaraswamy and Mackenzie. However, the most exciting moments came in a dramatic fightback by Hull and Stranger Jones who came back from a two set deficit to achieve a winning position before exhaustion overcame them in the final match of the day.



Four play fives

Tournaments

The Schools' Tournament took place at Eton at the end of the first week of the easter holidays. The timing meant that only three U15 and one novice pair were available. All three of the U15s progressed into the knockout stages. Rose and Stevenson were unlucky in that they just failed to beat the first Shrewsbury pair and had to face Eton1 who had been playing for four years before they even got to Slough. Their reward for this was an entry to the plate competition which they won in an exciting three set match against Berkhamsted1. Roberts and Hossain achieved an upset by beating the fourth seeds, St Olave's1. They duly progressed to the quarter-finals where they met Westminster1, Richmond and Kanetsuka. The match had an air of unreality about it because none of the four players seemed to doubt that the result would be as the form book dictated. Richmond and Kanetsuka were defeated in the semi-finals by Eton1 who were the strongest team in the tournament. The encouraging aspect was that the U15 team is a match for the best schools in the land despite only having played the game for two years.

The novice pair of Hull and Ryland did their best in a strong novice tournament but were unable to overcome their lack of familiarity with the courts and each other's play and did not progress.

All in all, this has been an incredibly successful season, especially for the Junior team, with a flood of new faces, who doubtless will go on to be a fierce team in the coming years.

The Station would, of course, be utterly lost without the skilful guidance of John Troy, and the cheerful fine-tuning of Coach Hutchinson; so we would like to offer our gratitude to them. Until next year...

Adrian Lewis, Captain

John Troy writes:

This was a grand year to be associated with Westminster fives. It was clear that the quality and enthusiasm of last year's novices was exceptional; consequently I was concerned that the impetus should continue if, what are the best fives courts in the most beautiful of settings, were to be fittingly used. The new novices were good and enthusiastic, with the first pair of Hull and Stranger Jones showing real promise for the future. It was a pity that only one pair was available for the National tournament.

The under 15s continued to dominate in all the school matches they had against their peers of equivalent experience: Richmond and Kanetsuka, Roberts and Hossain, and Rose and Stevenson all showed their ability to raise their game in the National tournament.

The Seniors had far less depth and were unfortunate not to win more games: the captain Adrian Lewis performed miracles in compensating for a cut which was not really powerful enough to threaten most of the first pairs he and his partner James MacDonald (the secretary) played against. During the year MacDonald developed into a first class player.

I am extremely grateful to both the captain and secretary for their help in arranging both school matches and the London league evening matches which we entered to gain experience of adult competitive fives.



IN MEMORIAM

Phyllis Goonetilleke

Phyllis came to the Westminster School Society as Assistant Secretary at an age when most people are thinking of retirement, not of new jobs. She took over from a predecessor who had been in office since the Society's foundation thirty years before, never an easy thing to do. For those of you who know nothing of the Westminster School Society, it is a private charity whose function is to raise and administer funds on the school's behalf. This may sound a simple straightforward task, but it is not; there are numerous different funds, raised for different purposes, and with different terms of reference. But this is just the sort of thing Phyllis enjoyed; she immediately set about mastering the complexities and very quickly did so.

The Society had appointed her from a field of one; the Principal of the agency who found her had rung up and said, 'I am so certain that I have the right person for you, that I am sending only one person for you to see.' The Principal was completely right; from the moment of her appointment she became the Society's devoted servant, who enjoyed the scope the position gave her for exercising her talent for organisation.

After about twelve years as Assistant Secretary she became Secretary, and for the next ten years ran the entire organisation herself, assisted only by an accountant. She was still doing this a week or so before she died. She had gone into hospital to find out why her back hurt, and here she was, knowing she was dying, still telling us what needed to be done for the Society. She was never happier than when helping others and quickly captured the affection of those who got to know her. Loyalty was one of her conspicuous qualities, her warm personality another.

But her interest in Westminster extended beyond the Society to the School, and she much enjoyed taking part in its functions. She will be deeply missed.

Denis Moylan

PERFORMING ARTS

SCHOOL PLAYS

THE MAGIC FLUTE

School, September 1996

Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen
Tod und Verzweiflung flammet um mich her!
Fühlt nicht durch dich Sarastro Todesschmerzen,
So bist du meine Tochter nimmermehr.
Verstoßen sei auf ewig, verlassen sei auf ewig,
Zertrümmert sei'n auf ewig alle Bande der Natur,
Wenn nicht durch dich Sarastro wird erblassen!
Hört, Rachegötter! Hört der Mutter Schwur!
(Die Königin der Nacht, Achter Auftritt des zweiten Aufzugs)

(*'The vengeance Hell rages in my heart, death and desperation burn all around me! If Sarastro does not through you suffer deaths torments, nevermore be my daughter. Be disowned, forsaken for ever, all nature's bonds be forever shattered, if Sarastro does not through you meet his end! Hear, ye gods of vengeance! Hear a mother's vow!'*)



Light comedy, pantomime, Masonic mystery or something altogether more intangible, at once comic and profound? Certainly Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte - The Magic Flute* - is a many-faceted opera, with the sharp contrast between its folklike music, normally associated with the roguish birdcatcher Papageno - unique in opera at the time - and the lofty, uplifting arias of Tamino, Pamina, Sarastro and the Queen of the Night. In my view, it is therefore impossible and unfair to dismiss this *tour de force* as panto with enigmatic touches of an obscure religious message.

What is beyond question is that *The Magic Flute* contains music of quite inexpressible genius - in abundance. Anyone who doubts this should hear it again: for example, the Overture, Tamino's 'portrait' aria (*Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön* - 'such loveliness beyond compare'), the majestic bass arias of Sarastro and perhaps most of all the Queen of the Night's astounding 'revenge' aria (quoted above). But then this is only a tiny fraction of equally magical music throughout the opera - some of it I found most

striking on early impressions - but which in the end forms only part of the awesome whole. The examples given above indeed do not even mention the wonderful music of Monostatos and Papageno (and Papagena) and hint only at the vast wealth of 'magic music' elsewhere.

There are inherent difficulties in interpreting and staging this opera. The story is a puzzle, not least in the way Sarastro apparently turns from 'baddy' to 'goody' and the Queen of the Night vice versa. Translation complicates our understanding further: when undertaken for the purposes of singing it may entail a departure from the sense of the original in order to accommodate metre and rhyme. Nuances in the original may be lost and new ones created so that an unintended meaning is produced.

This is what happens in Jeremy Sams's undeniably lively version. The effect can be all to the good: Papageno is given a new lease of life, with his dialogue and songs made wonderfully buoyant. When he is about to commit suicide and is appealing to the crowd to stop him, his plaintive cry, 'Is it me that's hard of hearing - or is no one volunteering?' may be loose translation but is rich in theatrical value.

The drawbacks of translation are more apparent in the serious parts of the opera; there is difficulty in conveying lofty German in the same register without being fatuous, or imprecise. For example, 'In vain I fight with this desire' (for *Dies Etwas kann ich zwar nicht nennen*) in Tamino's 'portrait' aria, is puzzling, as he is not trying to resist 'this desire' and indeed it was the intention of the three ladies - in giving him the portrait - that he should not. A particularly egregious example, though, is contained in Sarastro's aria in which he explains to Pamina the code of the Brotherhood, and how those who falter do not do so for long: '*... Führt Liebe ihn zur Pflicht*' becomes 'We'll help him on his way', which is a weak attempt to convey 'love leads him back to duty'. Bathos may even enhance the comic part of the opera, but it ruins what is serious. Perhaps it is just as well that it is impossible to hear all the words of the serious arias. Sams's translation underlines the comic aspects of the work, at the expense of the loftier side: Papageno's rôle is more prominent but it is hard to see the more profound elements of the opera. The quotation at the beginning of this review is partly intended to demonstrate the futility of trying to match the height of linguistic power achieved in Schikaender's German.

Ultimately, though, the music reigns supreme. The orchestra, conducted by Guy Hopkins, was impressive, both individually with its large range of extremely accomplished performers, and collectively. Ben Linton had an extremely demanding rôle as Tamino, which he performed impressively, using his splendid voice to good effect, even at the high notes. I must admit to some reservations about the authority of his voice particularly on those highest and most passionate phrases, but these were largely swept aside when I returned on the Friday night, and I was impressed by what had not quite convinced me on the Monday night. Secondly, the staging of the English performance gives more emphasis, I believe, to the acting of the comic characters than the serious ones, just as the whole tone becomes more comic in the English version. Ben Linton's acting, aloof as it intentionally

was, can hardly be blamed for his being overshadowed theatrically - despite his outstanding musicianship - by the birdcatcher Papageno: the latter was certainly the one who charmed the audience.

Heneage Stevenson gave the rôle of Papageno all the prominence and comic theatricality the part offered - especially in translation - and more. He simply made the part his own, combining his immediately compelling and immensely popular stage presence with a marvellously authoritative and powerful baritone voice. He brought out perfectly all the human traits of the character with his cowardly bluffing and irrepressible human desires for food, a comfortable life, and of course his beloved Papagena. Papageno has a unique rôle in the opera - unique, indeed, in any opera up to that time - with his simple and simply wonderful, folk tunes - so catchy that people refused to believe Mozart could have composed them, so like traditional Austrian songs did they sound. Heneage Stevenson made the most of this unique part, his infectious enthusiasm pervading the whole performance and of course winning over the audience completely in a rôle he was seemingly born to play. His utterly human naïveté finally manifests itself in the reunion with Papagena (Sarah Grylls), who gave a convincing impression of an old woman in the first comic scene with Papagena, and was later an ideal foil for him, with a beautiful voice.

Becky Hewitt as Pamina was ideally suited to the rôle in terms of her voice, unquestionably a wonderful one, with impressive phrasing in the arias to boot. But she was clearly a singer who acts rather than vice versa, and I did not feel that on stage she quite captured all the emotion, even despair - as she prepares for suicide - as she did in the singing itself.

I was initially in two minds about Max Grender-Jones's high priest Sarastro: although he carried himself with great authority and demonstrated this in his singing, there was something missing, particularly in the lowest notes, which sounded uncomfortable. These reservations became more muted on the last night, though. Beyond this initial difficulty, I found his performance, with his superbly dignified bearing, awe-inspiring. He has a marvellous timbre to his voice, which will no doubt mature even further, and some very special music indeed to sing, to which, overall, I think he did justice.

Although Heneage Stevenson's Papageno stole the show in the end, Melissa Pearce as Queen of the Night inspired awe in equal measure, for facing, in singing terms, a supremely more demanding task, and triumphing. She not only managed to reach the terrifyingly high notes, but sing them with full phrasing and passion; she delivered her two arias, both with famous *coloratura* sections, with aplomb - one conveyed in extremely moving terms, expressed by a mother bereft of her daughter, the other delivered in phenomenal fashion, including the brilliant theatricality of seeing the enraged queen stand aloof from and ignore her daughter before she threatens to disown her. She too brought tremendous dignity, authority and maturity to the part - a memorable and outstanding experience for all who saw it.

In the lesser rôles, the Three Ladies - Simone Benn, Laura Soar and Joanne Goulbourne, all extremely accomplished singers - were excellent, though I confess there were many words I could not catch. This however was the case with most of the singers bar Papageno and Monostatos, the latter

being performed superbly by Nick Clark with a good tenor voice and a suitably villainous stage presence. As an actor who sings, he shone particularly in his wonderful interpretation of the pantomime villain, and got the appropriate volume of boos at the end. It was a sensible director's ploy to have the three 'Genies' - aged at least seventeen - instead of the rather more embarrassing spectacle of three pre-pubescent boys, and Hettie Williams, Anna Bishop and Matthew Butt gave good performances, the latter certainly brave to sing in counter-tenor. The chorus was impressive, and provided a suitable background to Sarastro's bass, containing as it did such accomplished singers as Edwin Cook, Toby Benton and Simon Piesse - who all doubled up in additional rôles. Simon Piesse, in particular, displayed an impressive stage presence as well as a magnificent voice.

A special mention must be made of some of the comic scenes in the opera. Particularly impressive were the scenes when Papageno can only hum because his mouth is padlocked, the magical reunion of Pa-Pa-Pa-Papageno with Pa-Pa-Pa-Papagena, and above all the charming of the animals and then Monostatos and his slaves, which was beautifully orchestrated and carried out - all some of the funniest scenes in opera. The costumes, supplied by the National Theatre, were magnificent, and along with the set helped to create an atmosphere of majesty and grandeur.

I must plead guilty to several things: to the fact that I am very much a fan of this opera and its composer; that I have no musical qualifications for writing this; and that I am prejudiced in favour of the German version. Nonetheless, the comedy and light-heartedness resulting from both the English translation and the direction, for which the credit goes to Philip Needham, need not necessarily weaken the opera, for after all it is difficult to interpret the whole as profound in a coherent sense. Rather, the profundity lies in the music itself, which somehow seems to have infinite depth, even when light on the surface. As Andrew Porter wrote in *The Observer* 'The opera hit me in boyhood days, and ever thereafter has provided a touchstone for how I must try to live. I can't begin to define why. Mozart's 'message' is a mystery conveyed in music, *not translatable into words.*'

We are talking about something more intangible than the Masonic images and ideas in the work, which brings us back to the idea of an unspeakable, ineffable brilliance that comes across in the music, which cannot even begin to be described - as Tamino says (of love) *Dies Etwas kann ich zwar nicht nennen* ('something I can scarcely name'). In *The Magic Flute*, Mozart achieves the universality which for many is the key to his greatness, and shows that a constantly pessimistic or serious outlook is not necessary to move an audience. It is quite magical, *bezaubernd* indeed ('bewitching') and the only way I can hope to convey my reaction is to say that during Tamino's 'portrait' aria, the words 'My heart beats faster in my breast' made me aware that the same went for me. Philip Needham, Guy Hopkins (as conductor), Heneage Stevenson, Melissa Pearce and others made this an evening to remember, and whatever technical criticisms could be made of this production by those with more musical judgement than I, it is nothing short of astonishing that a school can find the resources, enthusiasm and expertise to put together a performance such as this. To do justice to such genius - for in this opera is some of the most sublime perfection that the most sublimely perfect composer ever produced - has to be the highest accolade.

**Wir wandern durch des Tones Macht,
Froh durch des Todes düstre Nacht.**

(*'With the power of music we can lightly step through the dark night of death.'*)

Saul Lipetz (College)

DRAMA FESTIVAL

School, November 1996

First night

The evening began with an excerpt from *Abigail's Party* by Mike Leigh. This was certainly a witty choice of play, and a ripple of recognition passed around the audience as Beverly (Sophie Powell) comforted Susan (Lucy Priest) about her teenage daughter's wild party. The cast brought out the one-liners well. Sophie Powell commanded attention as the vociferous Beverly, while Lucy Priest portrayed Susan's apprehensive and uptight manner extremely well. James MacDonald was a very good foil for Susan and, I have to say, we loved the moustache. Howard Gooding brought out Tony's presence, as Angela's rather moody husband, in complete contrast to Angela (Romilly Collins), a more boisterous character, with some of the best lines. Romilly played her as though she were unaware of the humour in her words, which heightened the irony of the piece.

In complete contrast to this was the excerpt from *Journey's End* by R C Sherriff. The cast skilfully created the still and mournful atmosphere, and used the silences in the piece to great effect. Ned Harrison as Osborne and William Dunbar played off against each other well. Both gave a very calm, controlled performance, while still allowing the tensions underneath to show through.

After this came the most topical scene from *Twelfth Night*, with the line about BSE which brought the house down. As this excerpt was directed by Tom Balogh, the Drama Editor, I am not entirely sure that my review will survive intact, but the piece was extremely slick, and the comedy came through very well. James MacDonald as Sir Toby Belch was an

admirable old drunkard, countered by Connie Emerson's shrewd and subtle Maria. Nick Clark brought an air of unconstraint to the piece as the amiable but stupid Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

The evening finished with the stunning performance of two scenes from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard, performed by Nick Clark and Miles Copeland. This was very well paced and full of life, and the audience was entirely gripped by the witty wordplay and surreal situations. The performers interacted excellently, and never allowed the pace to drop. They brought out the characters of the more gentle Rosencrantz and the nervously pessimistic Guildenstern superbly. An evening of extremely good drama went out on a high note.

Laura Bender (Grant's)

Second night

The Fifth Form produced a competent *A Midsummer's Night Dream* which, through confident and steady acting, conveyed well the essential humour of their selected scenes. There was some well considered characterisation, especially from Nick Keeble as Bottom, and on the whole the delivery to the audience was well timed and we were left with smiles on our faces as the extract drew to a close - albeit a slightly abrupt one.

Molière's *The Misanthrope* was presented in a new, racy and self-aware translation by Martin Crimp and certainly the acting and direction reflected this. The verse was excellently handled, especially by David Odgers and Howard Gooding who played John and Alceste very ably. Ruban Yogarajah's superbly sharp direction resulted in a most amusing performance.

Subhi Sherwell's *The Pastiche* was a disturbing and thought-provoking marathon that flirted with many varied ideas. It was helped along by some sophisticated acting by Edward Tyerman, Nick Clark and Thomas Wood. The script dealt purposefully with semantic and ethical issues and a great deal more besides, yet plunged into self-satire as it swallowed itself up in a peculiarly unsavoury ending. This was a fine production, witty and gripping, which impressed everybody who saw it.

Miles Copeland (Busby's)



Heavy betting: Antigone



PHILOSOPHICAL WHIMSIES

School, February 1997

The first half of the Lent Term saw a flurry of dramatic activity with three separate productions within three weeks. The second of these productions was *Philosophical Whimsies*, which was notable as being Westminster's first world première of recent times, and having the longest and most understated ad campaign of any School play. With these factors in mind, it was a surprisingly small, but expectant audience that waited up School for John Morgan's series of three character based short plays.

The first of these plays was *Kids*, which was based on the idea that all children are born highly intelligent and able to communicate with each other, but lose this gift as they grow up. This could have been a fine basis for a play, but *Kids* ended up being an odd blend of modern politically correct conformity and redundant hippie philosophy, which largely failed to engage the audience. This said, the script was not without entertainment value; sections of the dialogue between Sam (Nick Clark), Johnny (Alexie Calvert-Ansari), the Baby (Leo Borg) and Wendy (Sophie Powell) were sporadically entertaining, whilst the behaviour of Ellie (Lucy Priest) was often funny. However these enjoyable sections were often engulfed by long tedious monologues and other sections of annoying stilted dialogue, which inevitably ended with one or more of the characters crying. The intrinsic problem with *Kids* was John Morgan's attempt to inflict a deep meaning on it; this caused problems that even good acting could not undo and resulted in a feeling of disappointment at the end.

The second play, *Dreamtime*, was somewhat bizarrely based on the behaviour of dogs. Surprisingly this worked extremely well, and resulted in a very funny play which illustrated John Morgan's ability as a playwright. From the opening dialogue, the play kept its energy and humour thanks to excellent performances from the cast as a whole, and especially Fred Hodder who took full advantage of the fact that he had the best lines. There were also good performances from Adam Cohen and Caroline Newte Hardie who reacted perfectly to Fred's hyperactive behaviour. Like *Kids*, *Dreamtime* was weakened by the imposition of an ambiguous philosophy, suitably supplied by Florrie Evans, but in this case it formed such a small part that no significant damage was done. This play was a rarity - a School play that was a comedy not a tragedy, and one that managed to be funny despite the lack of atmosphere up School.

The final play was *The Chosen Ones*, a play set in a post-apocalyptic world where there are only two men and women left. The characters in apocalyptic comedies are usually caricatures and this one was no exception; it contained Arthur the standard strong white stupid sex mad male (played by James MacDonald) who is manipulated by his more intelligent companion (played by Miles Copeland). Pitted against them was a psychotic feminist (Jenny Haydock) and her naïve companion Seraphina (Rachel Byng-Maddick). Though this play was extremely funny in places, it contained nothing that had not been seen in comic sketches with a similar plot. It contained the standard condemnation of how the world had been ruined by white middle-class dominant males, but offered nothing new.

To stage *Philosophical Whimsies* showed ambition on the part of Philip Needham. To produce the world première of comedies by an unknown playwright marks a departure from the tragedies which have been put on over recent years. Hopefully this will mark the introduction of innovation into large-scale School productions, allowing drama to develop and flourish at Westminster.

Ruban Yogarajah (Liddell's)

DEATH WATCH

School, December 1996

With prison the locus of event, and event the clinical, cruel analysis of guilt, crime and punishment, all this pitched in a dimension of inverted hierarchy and morality, the playwright's first and arguably least accessible piece for theatre held at the outset little chance of appealing to a public inclined to lucid plot, identifiable characterisation and palatable dénouement. And yet, Philip Needham's production, disturbingly taut and strangely turbulent, held a predominantly young Westminster audience rapt for close on two hours. How? Quite simply because the actors - Nick Clark (Green Eyes), Alexie Calvert Ansari (Maurice) and Jonathan Lillie (Lefranc), with worthy support from Jamie McClelland as the Guard - rose to the challenge of coming to close terms with the text and then plunged headlong into a dynamic, vibrant enactment. A stunning achievement.

Maurice Lynn

ANTIGONE

Drama Studio, February 1997

In what was to prove to be Mark Williams's directorial swansong in the realm of French language drama at Westminster, and with the inspired assistance of Brian Smith, a troupe of linguistically and theatrically talented actors and actresses achieved a *tour de force* in this outstandingly polished production of this twentieth century French reworking of the Greek legend in which a sister stubbornly and suicidally refuses to allow political expediency to overrule bonds that demand her brother's burial. A corpse left to rot, a fiancé rejected, an uncomprehending head of state (and uncle to boot) betrayed, and a sequence of blood lettings before tragic order is restored - these are the trappings of Antigone's predicament before she herself is sacrificed on the altar of - in this pre-eminently 'modern' version - well, we are never quite sure what.

Aye Leventis (*Antigone*) convincingly projected strength of character shot through with transitory doubts and vulnerability. Saul Lipetz (*Creon*) provided a commanding portrayal of the pragmatic statesman and leader, while Lola Peplow's interpretation of *Ismène*, the heroine's life-loving sister, demonstrated sureness of touch and meticulously accurate timing. Katya Aplin, as *Antigone's* nanny, was deliciously convincing, while Ollie Steele as the hapless fiancé *Hemon* dealt admirably with what was not the easiest of parts.

Earthy humour and pathos were superbly and inventively served up by the three guards played by Emmanuel de Lange, Rhodri Thomas and Anthony Kazan, while Gallia McDermott and Davina Bristow, as *Prologue* and *Chorus* respectively, skilfully wove together the strands of metatheatrical statement. The two younger members of the cast, Frederick van der Wyck as the *Messenger* and Mark Smith as the *Pageboy*, stylishly complemented the work of the major rôles. And all the while *Eurydice*, played by Molly Oldfield, patiently, relentlessly got on with her symbolic knitting for charity.

Down to the minutest detail, this was by any standards a uniformly polished and thoroughly memorable production. Bravo, director, cast, crew, and all concerned!

Maurice Lynn



The agony and the ecstasy: Antigone

JOURNEY'S END

Drama Studio, May 1997

Though Sherriff's play is - to some eyes anyway - painfully dated, this Lower School production was a delight. Intelligently directed by Ned Harrison and Oliver Marre (and tactfully overseen by David Hemsley-Brown), the play moved at a cracking pace and achieved both sharp characterisation and considerable dramatic impact. Nicholas Brough was an admirable choice as *Lieutenant Raleigh*, capturing the ardour of youth, but not in an empty-headed way. His melancholy and rapid ageing, a result of the front-line experience, was vividly depicted. Jonathan Sells as his boyhood hero-turned-sour was suitably irascible, while Tom Farthing, the 'uncle' figure of the front line, was a most benign ex-schoolmaster. Dan Barry's *Brigadier* was apologetic and businesslike, in sharp contrast to Charlie Howard's terrified would-be trench-dodger. Heroes and villains, this production succeeded consummately in telling us that we are all fashioned from the same stuff.

At a time when judicial *mores* from this most frightful of wars are being re-examined, this was a poignant - and pertinent - production, much admired by its audience.

David Hargreaves

HOUSE PLAYS

BUSBY'S AND LIDDELL'S

Drama Studio, November 1996 and February 1997

Everyone loves a House play but few seem to come expecting more than an entertaining energetic evening with unlikely performers. People seem slightly surprised if the play is actually any good and both *Busby's* and *Liddell's* this year could stand up to the toughest audience.

In the Play term *Busby's* gave us John Dryden's *The Wild Gallant*. One of his really early works, it was a simple play concerning slightly absurd romantic problems facing the hero, dashingly played by William Pym. The other strengths of this production were its set and its supporting cast; the *Gallant* himself did not have to carry the play. The real fun in these comedies comes from the smaller caricatured parts, of which there were many: Rachel Byng-Maddick as his landlady, Vineet Dewan as an impossibly camp nobleman, and Cecilia Mortimore slinking on stage towards the end of the play as a whore - to credit only a few of a remarkably together cast.

The set was fantastic - an innovative design from the director, Carol Jacobi. Strips of differently coloured fabric hung from the ceiling of the Drama Studio all around the stage, setting a colourful vibrant tone for the play. The many jokes and innuendoes stood out beautifully from this backdrop and really brought the play alive. The night I went the audience responded well to the humour: booing, applauding and gasping at the right moments. This was the greatest tribute to the production and one that cannot often be made about Restoration comedies - *Busby's* House dragged their

audience into Dryden's surreal world - and they wholeheartedly enjoyed the experience.

The setting for the Liddell's production of Willy Russell's *Stags and Hens* could not have been more different. The play is set in the toilets of a seedy northern nightclub and director Ruban Yogarajah pulled no punches when building the stage (Men's on one side, Girls' on the other), covered in lewd graffiti. The plot involves an engaged couple holding their stag and hen nights in the same club. It opened with the semi-conscious groom-to-be being dragged into the Gents' by his friends. The bride began to have doubts and ended up running off with the singer of the band playing that night at the club.

It sounds terribly serious but was actually incredibly funny. The cast was neatly divided into some very amusing characters and although it was set entirely in these small cubicles the play was fast-paced and witty. Once again the whole cast rose to the occasion perfectly and sustained beautiful and hilarious performances; it was impossible not to feel sorry for Katya Aplin as the bride-to-be, and Nicholas Matthews in full New Romantic mode will be talked about for years. The best thing about the production was that it looked like the cast were fully focused and giving everything and, without meaning to patronise, having a lot of fun (which of course the audience finds infectious). Too often School productions seem dominated by the same group of people who sometimes look like they feel obligated rather than excited to be on stage. Performances that night were energetic and loud - and wholly appropriate to the play. It was a brilliant production and will no doubt set a pattern for House plays to follow.

Howard Gooding (Dryden's)

DRYDEN'S

Drama Studio, January 1997

What can be made of *Translations*? Is Brian Friel's uncomfortable and ultimately melancholy play a homage to Ireland or a celebration of language? Is it, rather, an epiphany of frustration with both? Ireland has its saints and its poets, and may be a more cerebral and politically mature society than the hegemonic British ever allowed for. But though Friel was writing about Donegal, a pretty wild and desolate place even by west coast standards, and in 1833 at that, it remains topical. I watched Dryden's extremely thoughtful offering as the IRA ceasefire wilted and died.

That did nothing to lift the essential pessimism of the playwright. This is a story about a godforsaken place where domestic dramas are pitiful in their banality, where poverty and coercion and crime are so ineluctable they can scarcely be anything else. Manus is a schoolteacher of heroic - herculean - intentions. His scholarship, classical or Irish, may be prodigious but it is certainly misplaced. He is inevitably going to be second best for Maire, and only in conditions of utter desolation will he ever get half that distance. Sarah's efforts to articulate a single sentence are in sharp contrast to his tumbling fluency, but he is more pathetic even than she. Yolland is moonstruck, youthful - but ultimately venal, but in Baile Beag, it is enough that he is different.

This is a tough play: the intonation is Irish, definitely not English, and much of the humour as well as the pathos depends upon understanding the idiom. David Odgers as Manus was clever in depicting frustration as well as humility, a man aware of the desperate limitations that circumstances have foisted on him, but still wheedling and dishonest in his forlorn hope of a brave new world. Avey Leventis as Maire gave a finely judged performance; she had evolved a real Irish brogue which was both consistent and remarkably convincing, articulating with clarity and understanding. Connie Emerson turned in a strong performance of a near mute figure, conveying both strength and longing, as well as a legacy of suffering. Michael Gooding (Doalty) had a coltish zest, quite consistent with his rôle, and there were spirited and pleasing performances from others: Jack McGee (Jimmy Jack), Gemma Game (Bridget), Jannen Vamadeva (Hugh) and Tom Balogh (Captain Lancey) all showed insight and dexterity. Jamie McClelland as Yolland was nearly excellent, but succumbed to playing to the rowdy gallery the night I went. A pity.

Where Manus is speculative but ultimately passive, his brother Owen is hotheaded, angry and impulsive. However disastrous the consequences of his defection, however supine resistance may be alongside the might of the occupying power, he is at least a man of action. That grants him a great prestige in a subject people and is a powerful bromide to the verbiage which brings Manus, discretely, into contempt. Rollo Jackson's treatment of this focal part had moments of excellence - a sort of growling virility and impatience which gave him great credibility, but he knew his lines imperfectly.

There are important lessons for the future: for the directors - don't trust your cast to learn their lines over the holidays for one; for the cast - plays are raw teamwork, and everyone has to mind equally about the success of the production; for the audience - support the cast by concentrating upon what they're seeking to do, or don't come. Don't turn drama into slapstick.

This reviewer, while pulling no punches, admires pupil drama, and House plays. He admires especially pupil directors who, in addition to facing the artistic and logistical landmines of production, have the ferociously hard task of dealing with their peers. I congratulate Howard Gooding and Sam Spanier on a bold choice, impressively executed.

David Hargreaves

COLLEGE

School, March 1997

The traditions of fifth century Athenian comedy ('Old Comedy') often seized upon the literary, musical and educational developments - particularly the ridiculous ones - of their day. College nicely picked up this tradition with their relaxed and witty interpretation of *Frogs*, a production often earnestly faithful to the strange world of Aristophanes.

We were also very much on home territory: there were plenty of gags and asides, fanned by Subhi Sherwell's world-weary slave, Xanthias, and a part smug, part inhibited audience-conscious performance from the remoter dormitories of College, many of them new to the Mysteries.

We don't know much about Aristophanes, though he gets an affectionate mention in Plato's *Symposium* as a convivial companion who gives an amusing turn to a serious discussion. I imagine him regarding his immediate literary forbears with both envy and awe, determined to respectfully ape their grander measures, recruiting them to his own comic needs. Athens - as the programme notes informed us - is in 'a political and moral crisis' (not unlike Major's Britain) and needs good poets to save city and stage. This gives Aristophanes an opportunity to let Dionysus - the patron god of drama himself - 'boldly go' his frog-infested way through Hades disguised as Heracles, and stumble by good fortune upon a competition for the Chair of Tragedy between the departed souls of Euripides and Aeschylus.

Ed Tyerman's Dionysus had the air of a happy amateur, going rather reluctantly through his picaresque motions and failing to live up to the punishing consequences of his disguise. He was not the big shiny happy Heracles portrayed by Christian Coulson, but more of an Ealing Athenian, out on a jolly.

A number of minor characters enlivened this first half of the play: Howard Ryland and Tassos Tsitsopoulos's donkey added a little panto; David Ranki's 'corpse' was lugubriously eloquent and Yemon Choi's Charon disturbingly introspective. Lefkos Kyriacou and Stephen O'Brien's landladies had been exposed to hours of Monty Python videos and there was plenty of knock-about dynamic between Subhi Sherwell and Asad Abedi's Aeacus, Pluto's slave, who tips him the wink about the forthcoming contest.

The costumes were - I suppose - in period, and reminded me of many an 'Up Pompeii' or 'I Claudius' set (*wrong civilisation, Pyatt - Ed.*). I marvelled at Freda Bates's frog masks - they will, no doubt, be recycled in the Green Room, or linger on with their sinister trepanned presence for years to come.

I've never been sure about all these Greek choruses and I felt uneasy as the alien tribe of Initiates to the Mysteries tramped on and motioned to us, or harangued us with cries such as 'You're not welcome here!' The frogs were sportive and fun during their Stygian party, but were later sprinkled around in bored lilypad isolation. Maurice Lynn and I spotted one frog picking at his toenails. And why do theatre-goers quote their Greek verbalisation of a croak with such affection? 'Ah, you should have heard that Greek frog chorus on those immemorial lawns' etc (*get on with it - Ed.*). The fact is, we don't really know what the Frogs are doing in *Frogs*.

The second half of the play disappeared deeper up School, and echoed futilely about the magnificent temple set designed by Dale Inglis. This was a mistake I felt, though I understood the necessity of hosting the 'game show' part of the play in a glitzy distance, but I had been denied my coffee and bourbon, and was less willing to chuckle. Mohan Ganesalingam's Pluto was powerfully cool yet awkward, building up an unhealthy cult following in the audience, whilst Florrie Evans glided about at one with her trailing glory. Alastair Sooke and Thomas Wood, our two competing tragedians, had to carry the play and put a great deal of gusto into their vain and moody characters. Aristophanes's parody of their respective literary styles - Aeschylus, lofty; Euripides, popular appeal - gets plenty of coverage here and the literary conventions threatened to crowd us out. Failing to find any guidance to all this in the programme, I nodded off, finding some of the posturing a bit gawky and empty. This

may be unfair given the lion's share of lines that Alastair and Thomas had to field. The measuring of literary merit in the scales was funny and thought-provoking, but I couldn't cope - neither should Aeschylus - with the castanet interlude.

Still, what larks, and doesn't School make a lovely Hades. One more mention must go to Sinan Savaskan's eerie music which brought out some of the strange mysticism of the play. A good night out - and good to see College keeping the Latin play tradition of Westminster alive and kicking. Much more fun than listening to Westminsters ape American accents etc.

Richard Pyatt

GRANT'S

Drama Studio, April 1997

Woyzeck was a challenging choice of House play. Not only is it incomplete, but the order of the scenes as they are is uncertain, as all four separate manuscripts of the work left by Büchner at his death are fragmentary and numerous editors have assembled the play differently since, with a great variety of endings. On a practical level the frequent scene changes and complex themes beneath a simplicity of plot make staging the play a difficult task. Nevertheless David Odgers and Mark Yoong achieved a production of laudable coherence and accomplishment.

TOM GENTLEMAN IS WOYZECK proclaimed the posters, and if (as I suspect) many members of the audience were present primarily to witness this most eagerly awaited of dramatic debuts they were not disappointed. He portrayed all sides of Woyzeck's character with insight and sensitivity: his love for Marie and their child, his friendship with Andres, his resigned submission to the Doctor, his fear and anguish in relation to the voices he hears. Victimized and persecuted, he preserved the integrity and humanity of his character, while granting full weight to the fatal philosophical streak in his personality.

James St Clair was a splendidly self-centred and uncaring Doctor, motivated entirely by his science, without humanity or compassion, a performance which brought out the melancholic depression in Tom Hart-George's Captain, similarly uncaring for the fate of anyone but himself. Sophie Powell conveyed well the spontaneity of Marie, easily seduced by Peter Cole's suitably stereotypical Drum Major, but as easily brought to contrition. Sebastian Savage, as Andres, was appropriately sympathetic while still failing to comprehend Woyzeck's inner turmoil.

David Odgers was a more convincing monkey than one would have imagined possible, while James St Clair doubled up as an energetic, prancing horse (a rôle which, ominously, I had myself been offered the day before), both animals being skilfully exhibited by John Hampton as the Showman. Such parts of the play can create difficulties in production, and if the doll performing the rôle of the baby was somewhat less than convincing, this was an entirely understandable lapse; and while the cat looked much too much the cuddly toy it was to actually inflict any pain on Woyzeck, the sound effects as it was hurled through the air were perfect.

Jacob Kenedy's specially formulated blood and carefully modelled, fittingly repulsive bodily organs added a great deal to the autopsy in the final scene. Here, as throughout this

highly enjoyable production, the largely School audience appreciated the pleasing degree of disparity between the unrelieved tragedy of the play itself and the amusement afforded by certain aspects of its performance in an excellent House play atmosphere.

Tom Balogh (Dryden's)

CONCERTS

CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

St James's, Piccadilly & Westminster Abbey,
March 1997

The Lent Term Choral and Orchestral Concerts were particularly special for John Baird - the culmination of his many years as Director of Music.

They inaugurated his first term as Composer in Residence and Emeritus Director of Music. Brahms's Requiem followed the short companion piece which was John's new *Sinfonia Concertante* for 'cello and chamber orchestra. The *Sinfonia*, which was written for Alexander Shelley in February 1997, started life as a sonata for John's eldest son, Benedickt.

The title indicates the relationship of the solo instrumental character of some of the writing. Instruments flit in and out of the varied textures, sometimes highlighting, sometimes absorbing the solo 'cello. 'Many of the themes were workings of musical letter names of the family,' the composer writes, 'particularly Benedickt himself whose own name recurs throughout the work'.

Alexander Shelley, now in his last year at the School, gave an eloquent and convincing account at both performances. The repeated sections, not just in the usual expected place, here, in the central *Scherzo* and two *Trios*, but also in the introduction and *Allegro*, and the *Rondo Finale* gave the listener the chance to absorb the rhythmically complex music more effectively.

I welcomed hearing the *Sinfonia* twice and was struck by the greater confidence of the ensemble in the second performance. The Abbey's acoustics seemed not to impede the clarity of the piece from where I was sitting. Besides the obvious Scottish traits I thought I detected traces of Sibelius and Nielsen. I did not question John on this point and may be quite inaccurate in assuming influences. In this compact work there was ample contrast, from the harsh chord clusters of the *Scherzo* to moments of utter stillness. *Blow the Wind Southerly* was a recognisable external element in the *Finale*. It would be fascinating to compare the *Sinfonia* with its enlarged *Scherzo* with the original *Sonata*.

Shortly before hearing the two performances of the Brahms, I heard a broadcast performance which demonstrated the possibilities of adopting differing speeds in the same movements. Colin Davies took the first two choruses: 'Blessed are they that mourn' and 'Behold all flesh is as the grass' extremely slowly. John's *tempi*, especially in St James's Church, came as a complete contrast. The choruses, generally, were on the fast side, and he drew from the

Westminster School Abbey Choir, augmented by the Westminster Parents' Choir and his own Medici Choir, an almost Italianate intensity in the climaxes. I would dearly love to know the size of choir Brahms had in mind, but having heard the work many times, even most orchestral strings lose much of the intricate figuration when waves of choral sound take over. At the other end of the dynamic spectrum, I would have welcomed some really soft singing, that Brahms often calls for. The orchestra was quite small, the wind always audible, the strings sometimes engulfed. Brahms rarely uses the harp - not at all in his four symphonies - but although John ingeniously incorporated some of the writing into the strings of the first chorus, I felt an essential ingredient was missing in the second chorus, 'Behold all flesh...'

Leigh Melrose and Justin Harmer (OWW) sang magnificently, with the right dark hued quality needed and the dramatic element that Leigh produced filled the church. Both singers are making names for themselves in the concert/operatic field and we were most fortunate in securing these excellent soloists.

Simone Benn, also in her last year, gave a sympathetic and well phrased account of the fifth number: 'Ye now have sorrow'. This incredibly difficult and exposed solo is often ruined with heavy vibrato and too 'personal' an approach. Simone's voice is free of these defects and captured the mood beautifully. From my Abbey position soloists sounded a little distant, but both performances made their impact on the large audiences and do great credit to John.

Martin Ball

CHAMBER AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

School, January 1997

The first concert of 1997 began with a bang, as the samba band stormed into School laden with various instruments of, well, noise. The ears were given no gentle warm-up, but once the audience had grown accustomed to the loudness of the music, the rhythmic thundering became very enjoyable, and provoked a great cheer when... eventually... the samba band decided to stop. The theme of this concert was 'home' composition, featuring pieces written by Alex Shelley (LL), Matthew Butt (RR) and Simon Piesse (QS). However, there were several of the 'regulars' performed also: Dvorák and his *Serenade* for wind and brass; a strings serenade by Elgar; and *Two English Dances* by Arnold, played by the wind band. An outstanding singing performance by tenor Ben Linton (GG) capped the night's selection of traditional composers, singing Britten and Walton very powerfully.

Music scholar Paul Bailey (LL) had a hard act to follow, both in quality and volume, playing his recorder directly after the samba band, yet he succeeded triumphantly. Linde's shrieking *Music for a Bird* tests the technical, as well as the physical, limits of the recorder player thoroughly, yet he managed to work through the complex score faultlessly. Alex Shelley presented two compositions, performing in one and conducting in another. His duet with Rowena Cook (who left the school last year), 'cello and flute wafting together in harmony, was entitled *Nineteen Ninety Six*. Less obscurely

named, his *Andante* for strings blended together individual notes from different instruments to create, in an original fashion, beautiful melody.

One of the most complete pieces of the evening was Simon Piesse's *Calm Menacé*, which lived up to its name. A sextet of wind and strings, shifting from instrument to instrument, changed mood at first with seemingly no pattern. The menacing low notes from the 'cello contrasting with the flute changed to a calm melody with all the instruments interplaying beautifully. Yet the final intention was menace rather than calm, with the 'cello's resounding bass ending the piece. It was Matthew Butt who provided much entertainment with his original ideas in two compositions. The first, entitled rather self-explanatorily *After Foreplay*, *Run Away*, was played by Butt himself on the piano. It was the second that caused hilarity for both the audience and musicians involved. Innocently named *Wishbone*, the audience was caught off guard as the players had been in the first rehearsal when the counter-tenor of Matthew Butt produced some very amusing noises. But the music was not all fun: a very interesting satire that combined the other soloists of piano, violin and oboe very well with the Chamber Ensemble.

The final piece of the concert was a very interesting piece by Ives involving the whole orchestra, and two conductors: Sinan Savaskan and Robin Haller (AH). As both began conducting the strings and wind separated, and with a cacophony from the piano in the background, so too did the style. Ragtime contrasted to dark, sinister music on the strings left the audience slightly confused, but also pleased, and the conclusion of the evening was a great success. The standard of playing was pleasingly high, particularly in view of the diverse number and style of pieces that were played.

Adam Cohen (Ashburnham)

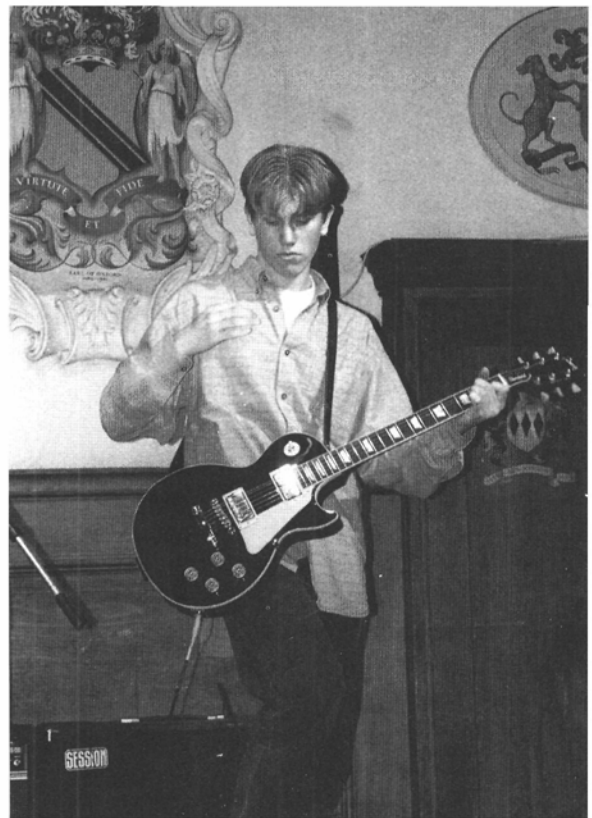
ROCK CONCERT

School, February 1997

The fifth annual rock concert provided an opportunity for Westminster's both to perform and listen to an area of music traditionally perceived in the music calendar as less serious and important. The object of the concert was not simply to serve as a platform for the most talented musicians to show off their ability: the emphasis was on enjoyment, both for those coming to listen and especially those performing.

As with the Chamber concert, it was the Westminster School of Samba that opened the afternoon's entertainment: as always, great fun to listen to and watch. The difference here though, was that the Samba band was one of the quieter groups... They were followed by several inexperienced yet highly entertaining groups; the first, the Dorien Hirsch Trio playing for the first time before an audience. The second group, Johnny and the Sandals, performed with more visual emphasis in mind, Nick Clark (RR) donning a top hat and tail coat for one song.

The last two acts of the evening were by more accomplished and certainly more experienced bands, playing mostly their own material. The Toby Benton Trio featured a very confident lead singer, who sneered and confronted his audience at every opportunity. The songs were extremely impressive: intelligently written and obviously well-



Shaker and mover: Jack McInnes

rehearsed. This trio was followed by the final act - Lethargy, a band who despite their name played with a great amount of energy. Having previously performed several gigs they were extremely confident and professional, although lead singer Ed Tyerman (QS) seemed almost unaware of his audience throughout the performance, leaning into his microphone.

They brought a very enjoyable evening to a close in tremendous style. Next year's rock concert should be even better, since, barring some members of the Samba Band, no one is leaving the School, and so we expect to see the quality rise even higher.

Nick Forgacs (Wren's)

BAROQUE MUSIC CONCERT

Henry VII Lady Chapel, February 1997

Although singing is very popular at Westminster, solo performances have in the past been consistently outshone by the instrumentalists. However, under the guidance of the extremely able Shauna Beesley and new member of staff Gavin Carr, the pressure for more vocal fixtures has grown, resulting in this concert.

Divided into two halves, the first with a rather bulldog spirit to it, the second equally spirited, only with *bolognaise*, it produced some very fine performances, the vocalists greatly outnumbering the *continuo* contingent. Even so, special mention must be made of the visiting presences of Firas Zen Al-Abdeen on 'cello and Michael Fields on the lute.

The opening of Henry Purcell's *If Music be the Food of Love* was sung beautifully by Simone Benn (WW); the music continuing with an impressive rendition by Max Grender-Jones (BB) of the melismata from *Arise, Ye Subterranean Winds*. Toby Benton (LL) sang with stunning melancholy

John Dowland's *In Darkness Let Me Dwell*, leading into a performance of J S Bach's 'Gamba' Sonata by Jonathan Katz and David Kenedy. Bringing an air of the foreign to the English first half, the Bach was striking in its beauty and elegance. The ensuing piece was *Resign thy Club*, by the renowned 'Englishman' G F Handel (buried in Westminster Abbey). This was sung by Meera Kumar (PP), and accompanied by the violins of Sarah Jackman and Florrie Evans (College). The final piece before the intermission was the madrigal *All Creatures Now*, sung by the Henry VII choir.

The second half opened with Lucinda Johnson (PP) and Laura Bender (GG) singing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, in which the chains of suspension perfectly suited the chapel. An aria by Galuppi sung by Edwin Cook (GG) was followed by the exquisite pain of Montiverdi's duet 'Pur ti miro', from *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, sung with great feeling by Ben Linton (GG) and Simone Benn. François Couperin's Trio Sonata, the curiously narcissistic 'La Française' - from *Les Nations* - was played by Paul Bailey (LL) and Max Grender-Jones on recorders, and the concert was rounded off by three movements of Montiverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. This ended with the solo/choir item *Audi Coelum*, in which Toby Benton acted as Ben Linton's echo, throwing his words back at him.

Well arranged, the concert was in every way a success, and congratulations are due to all the performers and, in particular, to the arrangers: namely, Guy Hopkins, Sarah Jackman and Gilly French. The venue was new, yet immediately felt established, and hopefully this and the Baroque concert itself will become regulars in our yearly music programme.

Matthew Butt (Rigaud's)

Concerto Concert

School, April 1997

Some fine soloists were on parade on 21 April up School. If the pre-concert hubbub was anything to go by, the performers were excited about this showpiece event, and the spirit of enthusiasm pervaded the evening's proceedings.

First off the launchpad was Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, featuring Lucinda Johnson on violin. This is an atmospheric piece, and the ensemble textures were suitably controlled as the soloist's 'lark' took flight. Intonation can be tricky in the higher E-string positions, and Miss Johnson rose effortlessly to the challenge, carrying off an accomplished rendition in spite of some signs of nerves.

The Allegro Aperto first movement of Mozart's *Flute Concerto in D*, K314, followed, under the direction of Alex Shelley. Dora Wood took the solo spot, and gave a brave performance of a difficult piece. The orchestra wasn't always on the baton, but the conductor managed to bring them up to tempo and pull together a commendable performance.

Next came Robin Haller's *Study for Orchestra*, 2nd movement. This was the only student composition on the programme, but I would certainly hope to hear more in future - Haller made very effective use of ensemble textures, the build-up and release of tension, and dynamics. The performers played with apparent ease, although it was by no means an easy piece, and finished to rapturous applause.

Alex Martinos took the stand for the finale of the Weber *Clarinet Concerto*, Op 73. Mr Martinos is an energetic, good-humoured player, and injected large doses of panache into the music. There were a few problems with tuning - I don't think he'd had a chance to warm up - and the band wasn't always together, but the overall effect was highly entertaining.

Fauré's *Elégie for Viola and Orchestra*, Op 24, came next, with Hettie Williams soloing, and Maestro Shelley returning for a second round of baton duty. Fauré wrote a lot of good tunes, and their popularity tends to make people think they must be easy to play. They're not. Miss Williams made a very good job of a tough piece, and despite a few moments where soloist and conductor parted company, the piece was a success.

Whoops of approval greeted Cecilia Mortimore for her solo feature, though whether these were in recognition of her musical abilities, or simply a comment on her red dress, wasn't clear. Her piece was the Allegro ma non Troppo, first movement of the Beethoven *Concerto for Violin in D*, Op 61. The longest piece in the programme, this was handled with flair by all concerned. The soloist produced a robust sound, and a spirited, well-crafted delivery of the part. The orchestra sounded confident, and followed Guy Hopkins's baton (finger) faithfully. The woodwind sounded excellent - this is a key feature of Beethoven's orchestration and was handled expertly by the section. The cadenza was an undoubted high point, and led seamlessly into the final ensemble climax.

Mozart made a second appearance with his *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in Eb*, K365. The Rondo Finale - Allegro was played by Gemma Game and Anna Powell-Smith, who, while I was taking notes on how well they were playing, swapped pianos. This seemed to cause some amusement, but in no way detracted from a fine display of musicianship.

Béla Bartók's Third Piano Concerto, second movement, was the choice for Matthew Butt who handled the moody solo tastefully and with control. The Orchestra did a commendable job, especially considering that they'd already been playing for nearly two hours, and created a suitably *religioso* atmosphere.

There was nothing *religioso* about the final number, with Leon-Chiew Foong taking the hot seat for Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The clarinet glissando at the beginning was fantastic, and got the piece off to a good start. The effervescent Mr Foong took the solo passages at brisk tempos, with some very polished keyboard work. At times this might have been too much for the orchestra, who had by now done the musical equivalent of running a Marathon, but they all pulled together and delivered a thoroughly enjoyable performance.

Christian Vaughan

FEATURES

ELECTIONS PAST, ELECTIONS PRESENT

Recollections of the 1945 General Election

Over fifty years on, my memory of the campaign itself is not as sharp as it could be. Election day was not a day I particularly remember. I was on leave at the time. Father was in the army; I suppose Mother voted - but at 18 I had no vote at all and was thereby entirely surplus to requirements.

The procedure in those days differed from today's in two important respects. The dissemination of news took time and there were no opinion polls. The results were mainly declared on the following day after polling had taken place and some later still. There was no swingometer as now, and with hindsight I recall some fairly amateurish commentaries.

The war in Europe had just ended and there was a euphoric relief that it was all over. It is hard to convey that feeling to a generation to whom it is all history and hearsay. Churchill had presided over the National Government which had been, at least outwardly, apolitical. His status was Herculean and to most he had seemed the only one who could stiffen the national sinews when required, as so often it had been.

A wily politician, he doubtless felt that the time had come for a General Election and a return to aggressive politics. Most of my friends felt sure that he would return to office as was his due. How wrong they were was convincingly demonstrated by the massive Labour landslide that followed. Gratitude was one thing; post-war aspirations were a different matter altogether.

In just over four years I had seen Westminster go from top hat and tails to short sportscoat and open neck shirt, and from the heart of London to remote parts of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire borders.

We had rubbed shoulders with many from whom we would, in the post war setting, have been segregated. Everything had changed in those years and our experience was little different from what had taken place in the rest of the land. The returning Servicemen had been part of much greater changes and in the main they were in no mood for a return to the old days.

On Election day plus one I happened to be visiting a wartime neighbour - a distinguished old sea dog - who was also a retiring MP. We listened to the wireless as the results were announced. They were punctuated by snorts of disbelief as yet another of his parliamentary friends lost his seat, the loudest erupting with the news that Bevin was to be the new Foreign Secretary. Things were never quite the same again!

Bryan Newman (Rigaud's 1939-44)

The 1964 General Election

The early 1960s were an exciting time to start becoming politically aware, and no teenager could have asked for a better place to be than sceptical Westminster. There was a rather tired Conservative government, beset with financial and sexual scandal, which had lost a succession of by-elections. Most boys and most masters were happy to discuss the forthcoming election, and I would guess that support in



Herculean, but spurned

both groups was split 50:30:20 between the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties respectively.

My parents were staunch Conservatives and, until going to Westminster, I had innocently assumed that all parents who sent their sons to Westminster would be Conservatives. Even in 1963, I remember being surprised by a close friend of my parents making it clear that he was going to vote Labour. To be fair, I think the great majority of parents were Conservatives.

Television satire, of the sort which would now be taken for granted, had only started in 1962 with a programme (*That Was The Week That Was*) which to us boys seemed witty and daring, and to our parents unacceptably disrespectful.

By 1963, there was a real feeling of social change: 'the swinging 60s were not yet fully underway, but social barriers seemed to be lowering; that feeling of change encouraged many people to contemplate a political change. The Conservatives had been in power for what, in the context of the past century, seemed an unusually long period of over ten years, and had leaders who seemed to be men of the past - Old Etonians and aristocrats who still thought in terms of the Empire. The mood of the early 60s was one of looking forward to a more egalitarian and technocratic society, a mood which the Labour leader, Harold Wilson, eagerly grasped.

I have two specific political recollections of that time. The first is a very cold one o'clock in the morning in the middle of some blasted heath near Aldershot. I was on a School cadet force exercise (such pleasures being compulsory in those days) and it was far too cold to sleep. There had, I think, been four parliamentary by-elections that day, and a

group of us, roughly equally divided between Conservative and Labour, had a long discussion about politics. Looking back on it, each group seems naïve (not, of course, because we were all young, but because I now have the benefit of well over thirty years' hindsight). The Labour supporters expected a change of government to have an enormous effect on all aspects of life; the Conservative supporters believed that their parents knew best.

I also remember the night of the General Election. We had no television at home (which was not as unusual as it is today) so that the only source of instant information was the radio (or, as we called it then, the wireless). One of the earliest constituencies to declare was Billericay, which, according to the pundits, would vote the same way as the country. I recall the Conservative glee and the Labour depression when the returning officer announced the vote: the Conservatives had kept the seat. However, as so often happens, the experts were wrong, and Labour went on to win the election.

David Neuberger (Wren's 1961-65)

The General Election of 1979

I saw the 1979 General Election almost entirely in local terms. I was just twenty, a reporter on the local Northampton paper, and was given the task of covering one of the town's two constituencies - Northampton North.

The seat was being defended by Maureen Colquhoun, a real old firebrand left winger who had irritated both local and national party beyond endurance. Part of this (at least as far as the local party was concerned) was due to their reprehensible small-mindedness when she 'came out' as a lesbian. I can still remember one veteran Labour councillor, voice hot with chapel indignation, declaiming that to have someone 'like that' as an MP was 'unthinkable'. Most of her troubles, however, stemmed from her volatility which made her constitutionally incapable of toeing the party line for any length of time. When I interviewed her formally before the election, she told me that the new government - of whatever complexion - would have to prepare for a permanently unemployed population of ten million. Not the way to stay in favour with the great and the good.

Her main opponent was another firebrand, this time of the Right - Tony Marlow. He was to win ten minutes or so of notoriety many years later in 1995 when he posed for the cameras, flanked by Teresa Gorman, in joint support of John Redwood in the latter's doomed bid to challenge John Major for the party leadership. Watching Marlow stumping into the conference room dressed in some ridiculous striped blazer (and Gorman - enough said), I gave up taking Redwood's chances at all seriously then and there.

In 1979, he was fighting his third election, having twice in 1974 stood for the Tories in the unwinnable mining constituency of Normanton. Marlow was brusque-mannered and held opinions at which I learned only slowly to draw breath silently. But he stood for free enterprise, union-bashing and there was never any prospect whatsoever that he would turn out to be gay. In Northampton North in May 1979, that was all that any parliamentary candidate would have needed.

My own impression was that Maureen had abandoned any serious effort to win the seat from the start. She chose the daughter of a veteran Labour councillor, Ron Dilliegh, as her

election manager. Fiona Dilliegh was even younger than I was, and seemed - let me put this kindly - not terribly clued up as to what the election was about, locally or nationally. Still, I got the photographer to take a nice shot of them both, looking cheerful and determined, which we accompanied with a bland little 'human interest' story.

I always quite liked Maureen who seemed to get on with me better than most of the other hacks. Or so I thought. When I went to round to Labour headquarters in Northampton a couple of days later, I was met by a flying chair (literally) which was clearly aimed at my head and a stream of invective moving in the same general direction. Fortunately the room was very sparsely furnished so there was nothing else left to throw at me. When I demanded to know what this was all about, it transpired that the photographer had sold his pictures of Maureen and her young female agent to the national tabloids who had not been slow to draw certain, quite incorrect, conclusions. It was then my turn to go ballistic, drag the photographer round to make his confession of guilt and reassure her as to my innocence. But she never really trusted me after that.

I was never in much doubt that Marlow would win, but his curt aloofness, allied as it was (I thought, anyway) to not very much upstairs, tended to provoke the press. The Liberal candidate was a whiny young man called Tony Rounthwaite, who had a job with the local FE college student union. He was kindly, but distressingly earnest, and used to fill my in-tray with ridiculous press releases about panda crossings.

Rounthwaite never stood a chance, but as the campaign wore on we got fed up with Marlow's high-handedness and, using rather a lot of journalistic licence, we encouraged the view that local feeling was very much for the Liberals who could well split the Tory vote. This produced a most satisfying flurry of telephone calls, demanding 'clarification' and rather heavy-handed attempts at matiness with the press. On the day before the election, our rival paper published a very large photograph of Marlow sporting a suspiciously closely cropped moustache. The photograph was an old one, and the moustache had long since been sacrificed but Marlow's right-wing views had by this point become the subject for tasteless jokes, so the symbolism of the moustache was obvious.

On the night of the election itself, a large crowd gathered in the school hall to see the count and hear the result. Marlow invoked God a great deal in his acceptance speech ('May God Help Me to do my duty' etc), but reverted rapidly to his old high-handedness when he caught sight of the press. Maureen in defeat was rather nice - daffily defiant, refusing to admit disappointment or discouragement at the way the national trend was turning. Poor Tony Rounthwaite started to speak third and everyone, press and public alike, drifted away almost as soon as he opened his mouth.

I was quite uncommitted politically. A genuinely affecting moment came later in the evening when many of the journalists in the town ended the night - very bizarrely - in a casino, where we watched results on the television, and never went near the roulette tables. Nick Bailey, a reporter who had been covering Northampton South, retained by the Tory MP Michael Morris, showed me a telegram sent by an appreciative voter to the unsuccessful Labour candidate, Graham Mason: 'Bless you,' it read, 'for all you do for your fellow man'. A few minutes later, we all saw Jeremy Thorpe's cadaverous, ashen face on television, refusing to

register expression as he was soundly beaten in his Devon constituency by the Tory challenger, Tony Speller. A few days later, he was to stand trial for conspiracy to murder at the Old Bailey.

Looking back after all this time, I am surprised at how little I speculated on the larger national issues being played out in the serious media. The winter of discontent had made an impression, but only fleetingly. I remember being sent to a pensioners' party at the end of 1978, and asking people there how they felt about striking lorry drivers wanting a rise of £6 per week, when their own pensions were frozen. Somehow the underlying issues, of Britain's woeful lack of productivity and of our dismal record in employment relations, seemed an abstract idea, and quite unconnected to my life as it was then. Much of that was due to youth, I am sure. I was broke (not surprising on a salary of £44.75 per week), and I was trying to make a name for myself in a new career: there wasn't much room to worry about anything else.

David Hargreaves

Westminster School Mock Election 1997

RESULTS

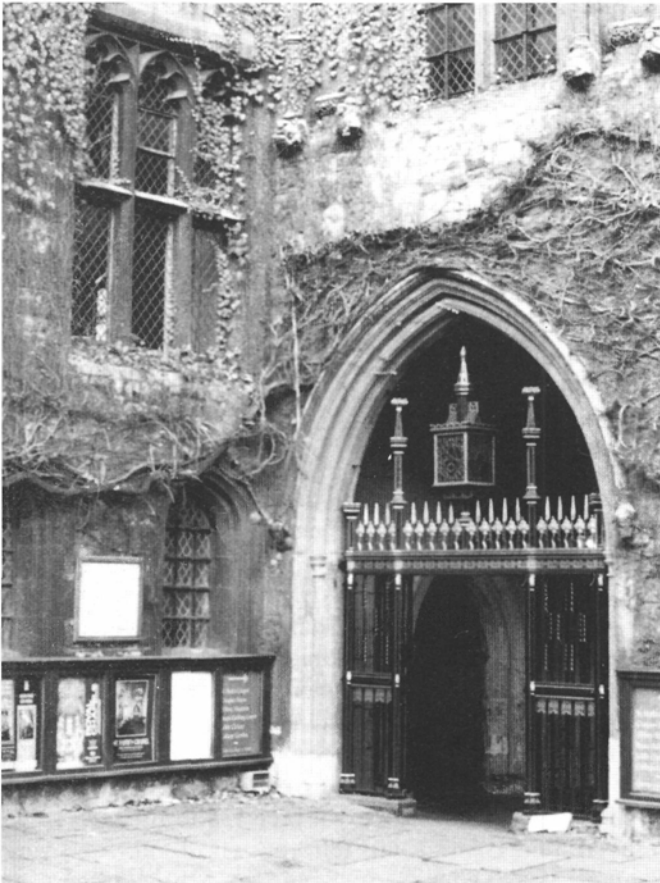
Jonathan Monroe (Liberal Democrat)	214
George Mangos (Conservative)	199
Jenny Haydock (Labour)	99
Jonathan Strong (Green)	75
Turnout:	70%

School mock elections are too often the breeding-grounds for polyester demagogues and would-be Monster Raving Loonies to divert too much serious attention. It was, therefore, with a certain sense of foreboding that I embarked on the political trail at the end of April.

I needn't have wasted my nervous energy. The spin-doctors of Westminster put the Prince of Darkness to shame, and we heard far more serious expositions of policy in Yard than on the air. The hustings were of a tremendously high quality.

Jon Strong opened the case for the Green Party, raising serious questions about the grey politicians' sperm counts. Adopting a rabble-rousing style, he set the high tone which was to be re-echoed by the other parties. Jonathan Monroe's (ultimately victorious) Liberal Democrats conducted a very sophisticated and highly visible campaign. Ultimately, their vivid articulation of policy won the day, if not necessarily, the arguments. Monroe proved that rhetoric does not have to preclude specificity. George Mangos, James MacDonald and Jamie McClelland won the Lower School Election. They found that they could not easily deflect the Seniors' sense of *ennui* with the party of Government; and although clearly getting the most hostile reception at the party hustings, each of them performed with great calm and style. Interestingly enough, Westminster was some way out of line with the verdict of the country in spurning Labour. Jenny Haydock's direct and passionate approach on the soap box won many admirers, but rather fewer votes - except for the Common Room, who voted for Haydock. Of the 58 votes cast by teachers and staff, only seven were given to the Tories. Responding to allegations of ballot-stuffing, Michael Davies claimed he did not even vote, thus raising serious questions over the identity of the Magnificently Quiet Seven. Quite a few, incidentally, pinned their colours firmly to the fence, by abstaining.

Jonny White



REFLECTIONS - CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM

Sermons by two visiting preachers this past year provoked considerable interest and approval.

The first, by the retiring Dean of Westminster, was at the Election Day Service on 3 July 1996.

And Jesus asked: 'Who do you say that I am?'

And I ask you: 'Who do you say that I am?'

Not long ago I had lunch at our small Choir School and sat next to the newly-admitted Choristers. The boy on my right, aged seven and three-quarters, sat totally silent throughout the meal. I simply couldn't get a word out of him, so I talked to the other boys. Just before we stood up for grace, he gave me a very cool look and said: 'So basically you're the Dean of Westminster.'

But am I? I shan't be by the end of this year.

The scarlet cassock will be packed away. This Bath badge will go back to Buckingham Palace to await the next Dean, and I shall leave Westminster for good, like many of you. We both face an unpredictable future, but with this difference. That you, leavers, have a lifetime ahead of you, while for me, so I am told, it's now downhill all the way.

So who do you say that I am? To the Governors I am Chairman of Governors. To those who work and worship here I am the Dean. To you I am the one who turns up occasionally to admit new Scholars or struggle to pronounce Westminster Latin at Commem. But those are just my public rôles. To myself I am the me I have always been. And I will tell you the strangest thing. Because the nerve cells of our brains (soft like toothpaste, with little threads of nerve fibre running down between them) are able to hold the memories of a lifetime, as we grow older nothing is ever lost to us, and our lives are both linear and instant. Here, inside our heads, everything happens at once and *then* becomes *now*, as you feel all the ages you have ever been. A bit of me will always be the ten year old me pining for a lost father; and the eighteen year old schoolboy me playing Hamlet and thinking that all the world was a stage; and the thirty-something me falling deeply in love for the first time; and the fifty year old me overworking in a demanding parish; as well as the sixty-six year old me stepping into an unknown future. That's who I am.

Who do people say that *you* are? How do your parents, your teachers, your close friends, think of you? What parts of yourself do you show those very different groups of people? How well do you even know yourself, in all the mystery of your personhood?

So who do I say that *you* are? I say you are a member of the human race. Which means that you, like me, are complex and vulnerable, prey to the same emotions, knowing pleasure and pain, anger and fear and lust, capable both of great selfishness and also of acts of kindness and compassion. Often pretty unconfident, and sometimes dejected. I say you are all these things because you are human, but I say one thing more. I say you are the child of God, and that you therefore have an extraordinary potential and that you are of irreplaceable value.



I have never doubted what schools and universities are for: their proper task is to release that potential, to draw out of us all the wisdom and skill and humanity we have implicit within us, and to show us our true value and that of every other person we are ever likely to meet.

I sometimes think this Abbey is the perfect expression of what that potential means, for it's full of the graves and memorials of people who could not be more different, yet the best of whom together illustrate all those aspects of mind and spirit that go to make a fully developed person living in a humane society.

Here are Spenser, Dickens, Hardy, Handel, Purcell, Milton, Keats. Who do we say that they are? We say they are those who have explored the mystery of what it means to be human in compelling words and music.

Here lie Darwin, Newton, Faraday, Rutherford and Kelvin. They are those who have combined a probing intellect with that leap of intuitive imagination to unlock some of the secrets of the universe.

Here are Gladstone and Pitt, Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, Churchill and Attlee and Bevin. They are among those who have sought a common life based on equity, justice and freedom.

And there, in the most public place of all, in a grave lined with Flanders poppies, lies the body of an unknown man. He has come to symbolize all who have known the horror of war, among them those who left this School eighty years ago to be slaughtered like cattle on the Somme and have preserved our freedom at an almost unendurable cost. And soon, in the autumn, we shall place a new memorial just outside the great west door for all those innocent victims, men and women and children, who have died as a result of war or oppression in this most violent of centuries. And together those two memorial stones will say to all prepared to listen: Who do you say that I am? I will tell you who I am. I am your brother, your sister, shot, bayoneted, blown apart, or tortured, raped and made homeless, yet like you of irreplaceable value in God's sight.

And wrapping them round, containing them all, surviving the wars, the civil strife, the shifting values of a thousand years, stands the Abbey. Built, this Church of St Peter, as every church in Christendom was built, as a response to Jesus's words to Peter: 'Who do *you* say that I am?' And Peter's

reply: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' For if that is so then it changes everything we need to know about the nature of God and the value of every human being.

What am I saying on this, my last Election Day? I am saying that it is not enough to define a human being in terms of the imagination of a Milton or the intellect of a Newton or the social conscience of a Wilberforce or the courage of those who give their lives in opposing evil, for deeper than them all is a hunger of the spirit, a yearning to see my life in the wider context of its origin and its purpose, an instinctive restlessness for the one we call God. And ultimately no account of life that leaves out that dimension is valid.

And what this Abbey exists to say is that there is a moment in history when people believe we came closest to an answer. One man who alone looked into the mystery and said: God's name is Father; His nature is love. One man who asked his friends: 'Who do you say that I am?', and Peter replied: 'You are the Christ, the one who reveals God.' Who do I say that you are? I say: 'You are the child of God, who loves and values you more than you can begin to conceive.'

I say, in a word, that you are irreplaceable. And that's the word with which I want to end. None of us is indispensable: members of the Remove, like Deans, come and go. And the place goes on just as well without us, having made its impact on us, though we may not know it until years later. And when you leave, there is a huge pressure on you to make your mark in this scary world, pressure to be smart, to be successful, to be popular. Yet by far the most important thing is for you to be the one thing that nobody else in the world can be except you, and that is your own unique and irreplaceable self. Whatever you do with your life, whatever you believe or don't believe, whether you end up achieving or not achieving, the greatest gift you have to give to the world is the gift of who you alone are: *your* way of seeing things, *your* way of saying things, and feeling about things, that is unique to you. If so much as one of you was missing there would be an empty place at the great feast of life that no one else can fill.

Once you understand that truth about your own value as a member of the human race, really understand it, it begins to change the way you look at everyone else. For what is true of you is true of them. In the words of Gandhi: *If you don't see something of God in the next person you meet there is no point in looking for him further.*

'Who do you say I am? Who do I say you are?' Those are not optional questions: and much will depend on how we answer.

Michael Mayne

The second was by a Muslim pupil in the Sixth Form.

Every human conscience with a spark of life is naturally inflamed by the injustice and pained by the suffering that haunts our world. How can I, as a Muslim, explain why innocent and helpless human beings are often victims of cruel injustice and miserable suffering?

As with every moral question my first source of reference is the Quran, the word of God revealed to the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Travelling through

commuter packed tunnels, through pressures of exams and essay deadlines, through tragic plots of novels and plays, through moods of happiness and sorrow, I have found the Quran a pool of peace, inner nourishment and guidance. Thus it is to the Quran that I now turn. I quote a passage which at the end of my short talk I should like to recite in the original Arabic, since for every Muslim the truth behind the revelation is intensified in the act of recitation.

In the Name of God the most Merciful, the giver of Mercy.

Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing - not even mentioned? Verily we created man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: So we gave him the gifts of hearing and sight. We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful rests on his own will.

Man as an animal has a humble biological origin. But he has been given the gift of faculties which enable him to receive instruction and to attain intellectual and spiritual insight. His life therefore has a meaning: if he chooses to use the gifts of hearing and sight with honesty he will be guided along the way of truth and virtue. But he must be trained and tried, and that is the whole problem of human life.

The training and trials of life create opportunities for noble traits of character to develop and shine. Maxim Gorky vividly describes in his autobiography the first time he was beaten by his violent grandfather. His face was cut open and he was left lying unconscious. More terrible than this he saw his mother make no attempt to defend him. The older narrator paradoxically comments that this experience was one of the most beneficial influences on his character. From then on Gorky devoutly sympathised with the oppressed and tried his utmost to defend the victims of injustice.

Man has been placed into the world to be trained and tried through toil and struggle - from the pangs of birth to the severity of death. In Conrad's novel *Victory* the hero Axel Heyst spends his life trying to escape from the toil and struggle of life. He isolates himself on a tropical island - but the trials of life seek him out. His response is to purify himself through fire - he burns himself to ashes.

But such is the response of a man who in the author's own words carries 'an infernal mistrust of all life'. How different is the response of a true believer, who knows that this life is a temporary period of trial and who puts his trust in God. The prophet Jacob is tried through the loss of his two favourite sons, Joseph and Benjamin. His instructions to his remaining children are narrated in the Quran:

Oh my sons go and enquire of Joseph and his brother and never give up hope of God's soothing mercy: truly no one despairs of God's soothing mercy, except those that have no faith.

But where is God's soothing mercy for those, who in the words of Charlotte Brontë 'seemed to journey on from suffering to suffering'? Where is the mercy for Palmyre - a character who in Zola's poem of the Earth leads 'the life of a beast of burden mercilessly whipped during the day' and returning every night to a cold hovel where she has no choice but incest with a dull-witted, deformed brother. Where is God's mercy for such as these?

The answer is found in the following verse from the Quran.

O thou Man! Verily you are toiling towards your Lord, painfully toiling, but you shall meet Him.

The raped women of Bosnia, the starving street children of the poorest cities, the freedom fighters tortured by their oppressors, they are being made to weep at the hands of their fellow human beings. God is allowing the doers of evil to continue with their evil, and He is allowing their victims to suffer. It cannot be that this universe comes into being with a big bang and disappears with a big bang without there being a making of amends for the injustice that has passed on earth. The balance must be set right in the end. All mankind must, and shall, account for their lives to God and meet Him before his throne of Judgement.

When the training and tests of life come in the form of some deprivation, it is called suffering. But for me and many of you deprivation is something distant - something flickering on a television screen or on the pages of a newspaper.

Surrounded by luxuries and frivolity we should not allow our hearts to harden to the suffering of others. We should not allow ourselves to become passive participants in the running of a cruel and unjust world order. If we want to find any happiness and peace within ourselves then we must strive to relieve the suffering of others.

Muhammad the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said: *Show mercy to those on earth so that the one in Heaven shows mercy to you.*

When I get bored or frustrated with the toil and struggle of life, I should remember these sublime lines from Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

Above... there was only the sky - the lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty, with grey clouds creeping softly across it. How quiet, peaceful and solemn. Quite different from us running and shouting and fighting. How differently do these clouds float across that lofty, limitless sky! Yes, all is vanity, all is delusion except the infinite heavens. There is nothing, nothing but that. But even it does not exist, there is nothing but peace and stillness. Thanks be to God...

The ascent of man along the way of truth and virtue begins with a feeling of wonder and gratitude to God. For me as a Muslim, this is expressed in the opening verse of the Quran: *All praise and thanks be to God, Lord of all the worlds.*

The final prayer of those in paradise as they slip into an eternity of peace will be the same: *All praise and thanks be to God, Lord of all the worlds.*

Tayeb Sherif (Dryden's)



THE ELIZABETHAN LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

English Creative Writing Prizes

The Gumbleton Prize

The Gumbleton Prize is awarded for outstanding creative writing in the Sixth Form. Candidates may submit prose, poetry or drama scripts. This year's winners were:

1st Prize :	<i>Congestion</i> by Lucy Priest (WW) <i>A Translation of Homer</i> by Sophie Powell (GG)
2nd Prize :	<i>The Smokescreen</i> (Poetry Prize) by Kendal Gaw (GG) <i>Necropolis</i> by Nick Clark (RR) <i>Faith</i> by Emma Winberg (LL)
3rd Prize :	<i>Hackney Borough Library</i> by Philip Taylor (RR) <i>Shot to Nothing</i> by Howard Gooding (DD) <i>Untitled</i> by Meera Kumar (PP) <i>The Formula</i> by William Pym (BB)
Highly Commended	<i>Incident</i> by Mary Paterson (AH)
Drama Prize	<i>Hellbent</i> by Nikolai von Steiglitz Grune (DD)
Non-Specialist	<i>Untitled</i> by George Mangos (WW)

The Fifth Form Prize

1st Prize	Imran Coomaraswamy (QS)
2nd Prize	James Bueno (HH)
3rd Prize	Nicholas Keeble (AH)
4th Prize	George Hull (AH)
5th Prize	Jonathan Goldsmith (QS)
6th Prize	Edward Kenny (LL)

Congestion

by Lucy Priest (Wren's)

Stagnant lanes of traffic extended beneath the harsh mass of the bridge that segregated the blinking carpet of brake lights from the blank dullness of the night sky. Mounted against the structure, three unanimous signs read '50' in precise, iridescent pinpoints; lighted bulbs set against an expanse of dark spheres, forming the familiar numerals. Cars sped optimistically down the slip road, their headlights encompassing the volume of my upper body, etching its silhouette against the passenger seat in front. I watched this childlike, tonal figure expand and distort across the contours of the seat, finally becoming motionless as the car joined the stationary bulk of traffic behind.

Any movement was mirrored by the momentary flicker of brake lights; rippling through the lanes of domino-like traffic as it lurched forward. I was bored, and pulled at the seat belt. It felt synthetically smooth against my sticky fingers; stained with the dewy residue of long forgotten toffees. The volume of traffic was oppressive, whilst confined to the coordinated, pastel beige of the interior. I glanced out of the window, through the mesh of patterns that I had idly drawn in the condensation.

Each car appeared as an individual, enclosing its own intricate web of activity; an outer shell littered with hallmarks of the owners. An over-stretched saloon was sprawled across the outside lane, the neutral dark blue of its body reflecting a buckled image that was our car. A GB sticker, placed above the bumper, broke this monotony of metallic surface, its oval shape contrasting the linear contours of the car. A second, less obtrusive sticker was stuck to the rear window, adjacent to mine, advertising Alton Towers in a faded red type.

A young girl of about five picked at its creased corner with short, stubby fingers, tentatively pulling it away to reveal a grey, marbled area. Her head was suddenly drawn away, her hair echoing the movement in a delayed blur of fluffy confusion. Her fingers clawed at her brother, sat placidly in the seat beside her, who held a rather scruffy doll aloft, just beyond her reach. The doll stared forward, its plastic smile widening as the boy bent back its head. Its neck bulged, dissected by a sharp and momentary crease that quickly deepened to form a permanent crack in the ivory plastic. The girl began to rock backwards and forwards, becoming more and more agitated, pressing her palm against the window pane so that it became drained of colour, only highlighted by a network of red veins.

The car muffled her shouts of protest. The pink, indignant face of her brother was pressed against his headrest; a barrier from the torrent of disapproval that emerged from the front passenger seat. In it sat a large, authoritative-looking woman with shoulder length blond hair, not dissimilar to that of her daughter. A Family Value Pack of juice cartons rested on her knee, still pristine under their cellophane wrapping, undisturbed by the chaos that surrounded them.

The image of the saloon retreated as we edged forward, followed in quick succession by the familiar creak of the hand brake. I was drawn back into my own world, momentarily tracing the recent scene in the neighbouring car against my own memory. It is limited when I picture myself as a similar age to the girl with stubby fingers and precious doll. I am in a supermarket... no, a maze, with towering rows of shelving as walls, stacked with bright, lurid packets. Mum had said to wait by the trolley but she had been gone ages... I could have sworn it was her that I had seen next to the frozen vegetables... wearing the blue coat with the wide collar, but when she turned round the buttons were different, bigger with shiny gold edging, and the handbag was wrong...

'Beep!'

'You prat!' hissed my father, sharply jamming his hand against the horn in an angry, mimicking reply. The sporty Mazda retreated to the outside lane. Its exuberant red body was momentarily unnerved against the suburban greys and dark blues that surrounded it. The number plate read in pert, stylised writing: PHIL 1, or, perhaps PHIL1. Within, the sedate couple appeared almost fictional, over-sized in comparison to their confined interior.

Rain began to blow across the motorway, intensifying in short bursts of activity. The windscreen wipers oscillated rhythmically, revealing a virginal surface, quickly lost to the steady onslaught of droplets. My window was a lattice of beads, each tinted with the vivacious red of the car alongside.

The couple were still motionless, only the shadow of the wipers criss-crossing the tranquillity of the awkward scene. She wore a large pair of sunglasses; hosting gold, decorative discs at their corners. She was talking now, no, arguing. Small flushes of colour illuminated her temples and in her lap her right hand was woven tightly around her left, drawing a wide band of gold back and forth.

My father put on a tape. It was halfway through a song, beginning with a warped stringing of a guitar. The languid voice of Van Morrison began to drift in unison with the flow of oncoming traffic. As the lyrics started to fade into the short, claustrophobic silence between songs I watched 'Phil' launch into his defence. He occasionally lifted one hand from the steering wheel, only to quickly replace it in hurried defiance. His mouth twitched as he spoke, the words tumbling out too quickly for a deft onlooker to decipher, as *Brown Eyed Girl* began in its accustomed ease.

Still watching, the lethargic phrases began to transpose themselves to match his angry reproaches; until I could hear him, his tiny mouth stretched in order to accentuate the words:

*Whatever happened
To Tuesday and so slow
Going down the old mine
With a transistor radio
Standing in the sunlight laughing...*

There was a muffled screech followed by silence. My father pulled the tape out of the machine, sighing. Behind it trailed a tangled mass of ribbon. His mouth still moved, now out of sync with the loss of sound, as the outside lane began to tentatively accelerate.

The crumpled map was spread out across my lap, my knees forming a landscape of mountains and valleys against the previously flat web of roads. The stark pink of the motorway stood out from the dull greens and blues of minor routes, dissecting the pallid white areas. These seemed of little importance when travelling from one city to another, sticking religiously to the motorway, and expecting life to cease outside of the narrow expanse of tarmac. Life here seemed all too varied, an unusually mixed community, strangely against people's nature to blend into obscurity amongst equals.

A white car braked sharply in the inside lane, the low dense thud of music announcing its arrival. The dirt on the back windscreen hosted a spread of markings; only some recognisable as words. Behind this screen of grime, a small fluffy pink pig was stuffed into the corner, presumably to impress some long forgotten girlfriend. The driver's window was open, allowing a clear view of his sharp profile, against that of his dog, sat in the passenger seat next to him. The window rose momentarily revealing an unsullied area, then retreated back into the door. The driver placed a cigarette between his lips, the glow from the lighter exaggerating the rugged contours of his face. In profile once more, the cigarette distorted the balance of his silhouette, but, almost to counteract this, a long elastic ribbon of dribble hung from the dog's mouth.

The driver was distracted, his eyes roaming the queues of traffic. He flicked ash from his cigarette in time to the relentless hum of music. It clung momentarily to the clammy air, then darted into the obscurity of darkness; once detached from the confined glare of a headlight. The driver of the 2CV sat placidly in the middle lane, rolled up her window, as both a barrier to the ash, and a form of mild protest. The car boasted a large, spherical dent, partly concealed by a sticker voicing that 'I love unleaded'. Pressed against the back windscreen was a pack of nappies depicting a chubby, smiling baby dressed in stereotypical pink. A tape cover, bearing the title *Languages of the Sea*, was imprinted against the soft packaging.

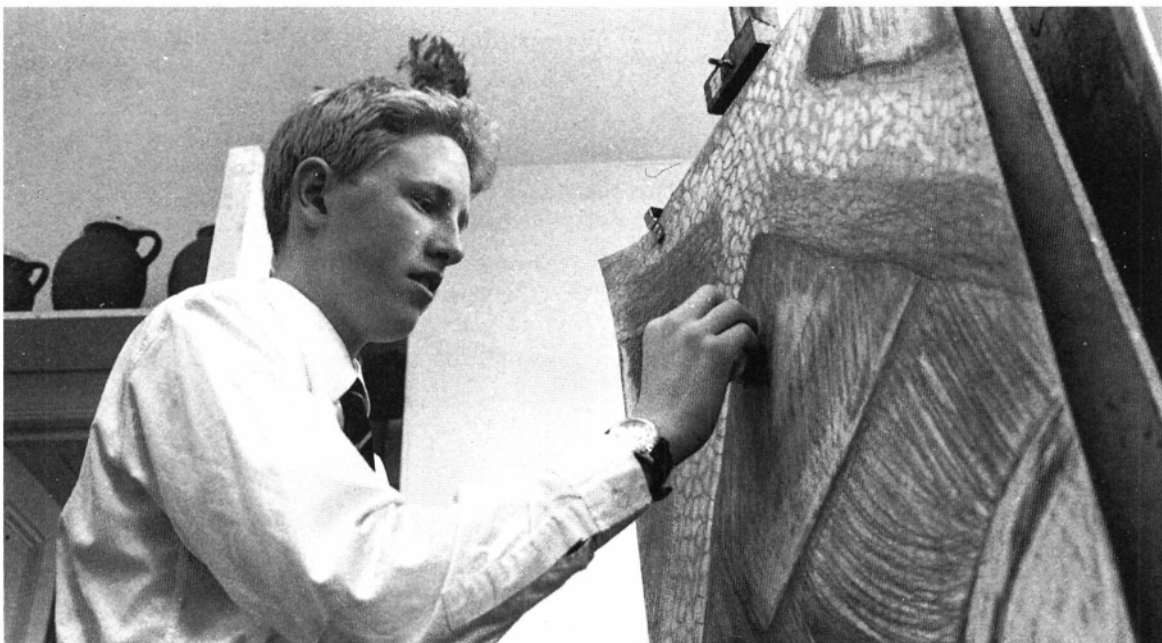
The man in the inside lane shouted something inaudible across the barrier of white markings that divided him from the woman in the 2CV. This was accompanied by the hoarse bark of the dog, and a few seconds later the restless squeals of the baby. The man rolled up his window, smiling. His brake lights flickered as he pulled away sharply eager to catch up to the car in front that had idly edged a couple of feet forward. In his place, a shiny Rover Metro gently came to a halt. It seemed unusually clean; even the rubber of the tyres had a peculiar density to their colour, normally softened by dirt. An orange 'Disabled' sticker drew light upon the tangled body of metal protruding above the line of the boot.

A grey haired woman sat at the wheel, her body erect and slightly arched away from the comfort of the seat. Next to her was a balding man, his limbs relaxed, embedded deeply into the support of the car. There was an eager alertness about his face, its polished surface free from the constraints of the rest of his body.

My father turned on the interior light to examine the remnants of his tape. Suddenly the inside of our car was stripped of all privacy illuminated against the dull evening. A contorted reflection of my face splayed across the driver's window of the Metro.

The woman remained intently fixed upon the road in front, but the man turned to face me, his gentle features merging into my distorted image, until we became one. But it was not me, or him... It was us: the children arguing over the doll, the couple who tried to pull in front, the man with the pink pig, the woman and baby in the 2CV, and now this old man. Was this life? Can the monotony of a motorway embody life?

The intensity of the siren was unexpected. The inside lane dispersed themselves to allow the police car to pass, the hard shoulder sealed off by a row of lurid bollards. The order had been confused and any familiarity lost. The 2CV was no longer in front, and the Metro had disappeared completely lost in the obscurity of the traffic jam.



Life of a Miner

by Edward Floyd (College)

Alston Prize 1996-97

Like the waving of a hand,
Nine summers, so short, pass.
Childhood's ignorant pleasure,
Perishes, like russet autumn leaves.
The fresh young boy, shirt drenched with sweat, grubby worn feet,
His blistered hands clutch the leaden shaft;
The pendulum axe, it feebly swings down
Hard, upon the time heavy lumps of ore rich stone,
His grimy toil hard hands wildly work, his
Six lone shillings in the infant's mind;
The shallow metal discs glow bright gold.
In the cold, dull, low roofed canteen,
Silent men, after work, depressed,
Morose, the snake queue moves, a sloth.
His water soup slops wet into the chipped dirty cup,
Meanwhile his hunger, roaring, prowls a tiger, and
Haunts him, like the the ash white spectre of his own
Hungry face.

He sleeps in slovenly stench,
Around him, stuffy excrement deeply snoring,
Nauseous sights, smells, sounds; the thirty lifeless bodies, in
Eleven rock hard beds, in the
Twelve foot bunked cell.
Crowded, rats patter, quick and loud,
Like death black raindrops on a corrugated roof.
There! He sees one on his bed,
The awesome fear wakes the childlike head,
With rigid fear, he lies still on his back,
No gentle thoughts, like the very lead,
His weakling spindly heart pounds his wheezing chest.
He shuts his bleary sleepless eyes, tight screwed shut.
He tries in vain to dream of lush verdant fields,
Which bask in golden sun, and his mother's
Lap. Slap!
Cold coal black hand awakes him harsh, while
Chilled wet shouts herald the gloomy dawn;
No sun or verdant fields,
Not here, not now, but why?

His innocence like a crisp white bone china cup,
Falls deep down the black chasm - now it crashes into dark...
Dark mine, just fourteen - just
One lonely candle lights the dim and smoky mine.
On work grazed hands he crawls by inches
His gnarled bare feet scrape stalagmites.
Ice drips, drop by drop into the muddy pool below.
Below ten thousand tonnes of heavy rock...
Hair like wire grease and his lungs
Wheeze uncontrollably then, he stumbles,
Face first. Grazed cheek bleeds pain onto the floor underneath.
Under the mountain, who crushes the precious
Life of the young man.

He turned the handle fifteen minutes,
His trembling hand expects the crushing blow.
If he missed? He tries to blot the unthinkable.
Could his worn out comrade, tired as he, misguide the
Dreadful razor axe? The polished blade hits true,
It drives the rusty hand drill through the crumbling rock;
He fully trusts his miner friend, yet
The recurring nightmare returns, without end.

Over and over, every day and week,
He stuffs the powder - smells the burning reek,
His jet black thumb, with practice, eclipses the hard won hole,
The powder sealed like a wild horse, feebly nooses by the thin
Fuse. He rips the eager match across the searing rock,
The hell-tipped match erupts with blinding sulphurous fire -
The fuse resists a while, then complies
It sparks the life the miner lacks, a thousand sparks and stars,
The match, its duty done fizzles out, quenched by the rank pool.
Life forgotten, a ghost...
'RUN!' he sprints back, awakened from the face.
His weakling candle smoulders feeble then expires, and lights with black.

Dark black mine, confusion surrounds him
Where? He dashes fast, but feels the dead crash of lime.
He falls, concussed and holds his bleeding head.
'Get out of there Sam, its going to blow!'
Their shouts, so far above.
With mighty strife, he uses his last remaining gasp of strength
He stands and staggers blindly up the upwards tunnel,
Towards the pin of light above.
He must run on, or be slaughtered dead.
By flying shards of glass sharp rocks or
Crushed by blunt boulders - he launches on.

He makes it, and hears the crash and bang.
He crumples up in pain, upon the sacred grass,
All calm now, no danger, just inky
Black.

He lies now, a shadow on the crisp linen,
A pale reflection of his former self,
His chest - from all the sandy dust
Cannot support his injured frame.
His loving wife, his small young child observe
His final minutes, 'Please daddy, breathe!'
The gut sorrow drenches the teary funeral.
The murderous lime stone is laid to rest forever.
'Aged forty years' what sin!

The memories fades, the mines decline.
Not one miner in the Glengarry mine.
The lichen covered stone, so forgotten, it remains.
Rotting flowers, in an upturned vase
Swallowed by all swallowing time.

A Translation of Homer

by Sophie Powell (Grant's)

'How yuh doing, Mr Rivett?'

'How's your girlfriend, sir?'

'Sir, you're looking smart today!'

'Nice tie, sir!'

Rivett shuffles in awkwardly, jaw clenched, fist curled, shunning our glances and sinking into his chair, which also squeaks almost impudently.

'Sir!' He is immediately arrested by Rupert. 'A matter of small importance, sir, but one that's been positively teasing my curiosity!' Unrestrained outbursts. Someone starts to hum. 'It concerns line 745 of the sixth book of the *Odyssey*...' Rivett's expression remains delightfully unimpressed.

'Later.' Rivett wafts him away.

'Ovid's erotic poetry'll provide you with the stimulation you need.' Alexander stretches his arms upwards in a deliciously ostentatious gesture of incredible indolence. Rupert is left suspended in confusion, briefcase in one hand, Homer's *Odyssey* with a pointless post-it peeping sadly out of it in the other.

'Line 360. Victor.'

A display of ritual groans and a rustling of paper. Victor is already poring over the book, Parker pen poised, a concentration of complete intensity.

'But Aphrodite snatched Paris away and set him down in the sweet-smelling bedroom. Then the Goddess went herself to find Helen...' A deep, monotonic drone. I look up and catch Alexander's eyes. His eyelashes are tinted with winter sunlight from the window. Beautiful eyelashes and a chaotic nest of thick, mad curls. He half smiles, then immediately casts his eyes downwards. Intimacy. 'Divine Aphrodite spoke to Helen: "Come this way. Paris is there in the bedroom, on the carved bed, shining in his own beauty and his clothing."'

I can feel Alexander's long gaze. 'So she spoke and stirred the heart in Helen's breast.' Golden brightness, blinding. The text becomes a blurred whitewash and the letters are dancing. 'Helen of the beautiful neck and lovely breasts with the eyes that flashed brightness spoke in reply: "Strange goddess, why are you so eager to work this seduction on me? I have a husband Menelaos..."' Coloured sequins start orbiting in distorted patterned clusters, multiplying, resonating...

'Sir, could I be excused? I think I'm going to be sick!' The words roll off my tongue before I can stop them. The room is a whirlwash of colour.

'Yes, of course. D'you want Margaret to...' At the door and into stinging, chilly bitterness before I can frame a reply. Silence, save a mad clattering of platforms and my heart. Pump, pump, pump, pump, pump. In through the toilet door, over the lavatory, stagnant water and... nothing. Pump, pump, pump. The nausea subsides. Rich silence almost piercing and the walls are magnolia. Pump... pump... pump and my breath is a thick cloud of icing sugar.

Strange goddess, why are you so eager to work this seduction on me?

I stagger to the basin and slap myself with icy relief. Quick, light footsteps. A creak.

'Katie, are you all right?' Margaret.

'Better, thanks.' I force a smile. 'Just coming.'

'God you look pale! Are you sure you don't want matron?' Unsympathetic sourness, clinical whiteness reeking of pine disinfectant...

'I'll be fine, thanks.' We climb the steps together and re-enter. A sea of inquisitive eyes.

'Feeling better?' Rivett peeps up from behind Homer. He is looking past me.

'Much better, thank you.'

'Good. Line 380.'

Victor is still droning. 'Then, angered, divine Aphrodite spoke to her: "Do not provoke me wilful girl, in case I grow angry and abandon you and show a hate for you as extreme as the love I have shown you till now."' The room is suddenly dullness in grey shadow. "I might bring bring a fatal hatred of you in both sides, shared by Trojans and Danaans alike, and then you shall die a miserable death."'

The window starts to patter. Raindrops, like streams of tears, start to pattern the pane.



'Excellent.' Victor shuffles in his seat. 'Sam.'

He starts. A panicked expression. 'You want me to translate, yeah sir?' He is not even favoured with a reply. 'Okay. So... so she spoke... and Zeus feared...' It can feel like eternity. Rivett slowly massages his forehead.

'Come on, Samuel.'

Sam's cherub-like features become pink and pained. 'So she spoke and Zeus feared...'

'Goddamnit! What's the ending?' An outburst. A bubble from a simmering cauldron of impassiveness. Everyone is equally shocked. Silence and the air almost beams empathy. 'Anybody?' Everyone wets their lips. Silence.

'Could it possibly be patronymic?' It's Rupert and he is stabbed with dagger glares. Oblivious, he continues, 'so... Helen, child of Zeus, was afraid.' He leans back into his chair, triumphant. Rivett nods.

'Helen, child of Zeus, was afraid...' A door creaks open. A blast of freezing air and William stands at the doorway.

'Chiroprapist, sir.' A loud snort from somewhere. William saunters, reeking self-importance, to the end of our horseshoe arrangement of desks, affecting a pathetic limp. I pretend to be absorbed in the text. I can feel his eyes hunting mine.

'She covered... her... face in...' Strained agony.

'Shining...' Rivett's neck has gone blotchy.

'She covered her face in shining white cloth...' Sam swallows hard, 'and went to the glorious...'

'High roofed...'

'And went to the glorious, high roofed chamber of Paris, son of Alexandros.' Relief sweet as honey and the rain shower is over. Sam loosens his tie.

Helen, child of Zeus, was afraid.

'Okay, five minute break.'

Everyone shuffles out, temporarily numbed, into that wonderful winter bleakness in yard, full of Homer and confusion and craving hot chocolate.

'Must sign in.' A snake-like arm encircles my waist. William. 'Speak to you later.' He hobbles across yard with studied intensity, umbrella swinging, golden waves bouncing. I see Alexander sneaking off for a smoke with George behind the oak tree.

She covered her face in shining white cloth.

Eight shivering individuals conversing with listless eyes and chattering teeth and all I can think of is how the litter dances with elegant carelessness. The intensity dissolves into a hubbub of chatter. Groups like impenetrable barriers are suddenly scattered up the steps. I smile at Margaret. A mutual feminine impulse to stick together; yet we almost dislike each other. Strained conversation like the intimacy in a broken lift; odd, abstract yet strangely personal.

'How's life?' It's my stock phrase; covers all occasions.

'Not too bad actually.'

'Yeah?'

'And yourself?'

'Oh, same as usual I guess.' And the same pointless exchange of pleasantries. 'How's Hubert?' It's her chess-champion turned Internet-wizz boyfriend who hasn't yet mastered the art of rucksack on one shoulder only.

'Oh, great!' Her face is suddenly glowing and a faint smile plays on her lips. 'It's going really well actually.' She flicks back her plait. I refrain from prodding her on that one. It's cold, everything feels an effort and William is back at my side speaking too loudly about nitrogen treatment for verrucas. My hands are raw red. Slabs of concrete arranged with unnerving regularity.

William pauses. 'Anyway, so how are you?' An afterthought.

'Oh, fine.' My mouth has gone dry. 'Fine, absolutely fine. Great!'

I am suddenly seized by a flush of nervousness. Alexander is strolling towards us, past us, hands in pockets, curls madder than ever, shirt hanging out with casual carelessness.

'Are you all right?' William sounds almost concerned. I can see his bony hands fidgeting.

'I said I'm fine.' I try to skip up the steps with deliberate indifference but my limbs are clumsy, quivering. The classics door smiles heavy oak. Alexander pushes the door open with his shoulder. Studied gum-chewing and hair jaguar black.

Consolation in cartridge filling. Hot breath tickles my neck.

'Katie, have I done something wrong?' It is moaning, plaintive. I sneak a glance at Alexander. 'Katie...?'

'No, of course not.' A cutting whisper. 'Not now, please!' A movement from the shadows and Rivett squints something uncanny. 'Later.' The text smirks at me.

And Aphrodite, smiling goddess, herself took up a chair for Helen, and brought it and placed it in front of Paris. There Helen, daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis, took her seat, turning her eyes aside, and spoke slightly to Paris...

'Katie.' Rivett addresses the door handle. 'Helen's rebuke.' Something cold worms its way down my spine. The irony is chilling.

"You came back from the fighting, then. I wish you had died there..." My voice is quivering and I cannot stop thinking of black curls. "Well, go now challenge the warrior Menelaos to fight you again face to face..." A finger of golden dust shoots through the gloom and William's golden waves against the shadows. The door rattles teasingly and my heart is pounding. "Wait! No, I would advise you to stop now, and not pit yourself against..." My hand is shaking. I cannot read my translation. A wash of black ink and harsh whiteness.

"Fair haired Menelaos." Rivett's words slap me.

I cannot repeat them but I must press on. "In warfare or combat without thinking." Alexander is running his forefinger over his lip abstractedly. "You might well be brought down by his spear." Alexander laughs. I shiver. Harry is making faces. Silence, save the mocking of the clock and the air tinkling poison.

You might well be brought down by his spear.

Rivett is staring at me with that same devoid intensity.

'Alexander.' Rivett's voice is hoarse. Numbness.

Alexander is ready. 'Paris then answered her: "Dearest, do not deride my courage with these hard taunts. This time Menelaos has beaten me with Athene's aid, but another time I shall beat him. There are Gods on our side too."' Rivett's Adam's apple slithers downwards. "No, come, let us enjoy the bed of love." Black curls and a drift of Silk Cut and something else. The sunlight filters through the window, lazily poignant. "Never before has desire so enveloped my heart." Don't you dare look up. Resist. Rich fibres in the paper; fat, bold calligraphy. Alexander's voice is suddenly deeper. "Not even on that first time when I saw you." The words are a stream towards me, drowning me and I know I cannot stop myself now. "Even that was less than the love and sweet desire for you..." His glance is burning; sharp, short yet unmistakable. "...that overcomes me now." Words left drifting and the air rings agony. A rubber drops and dances. Sunlight, like death-gas, paints impassive faces. 'Then they lay down together on the fretted bed.' Pump, pump, pump. Rivett is pinching his lip.

'William?' He stops massaging his foot.

'Sorry, sir, with the foot problems and everything, I didn't really have time to...' What did I ever see in him? Queasiness returning.

Rivett tenses and the same slow slithering of the Adam's apple.

'Of course, I'll try.'

'Do.'

William's eyes sparkle something distasteful. 'But Menelaos went raging up...' Studied effort. 'Went raging up and down the battlefield like a wild beast...'

Chiropodist, sir.

'...looking for a sight of godlike Paris.' Mad, black curls. 'But none of the Trojans or their famous allies could then point out the son of Alexandros to the warrior Menelaos.' A spout of prepared fluency. 'Certainly they were not trying to conceal him out of friendship, if any were to have seen him - he was hated by all of them like the black death.' A rolling of eyeballs and Harry and Alexander are absorbed in some sophisticated, hand-gestured conversation. 'The glorious Menelaos spoke out to the men...'

A folded piece of paper lands on my desk. 'For Katie.' And the ink is smudged. Who sent it? But the room is a horseshoe of bowed heads.

"Listen to me, Trojans. The agreement was whoever won the duel would..."

'Dear Katie...' The letters are slightly laboured. 'Will you be my Helen of Troy?... 399 3612.' More dots, like seconds of fruitless pondering and then an initial 'A'; and it's underlined.

'Have Argive Helen as their own. Victory plainly rests with me...'

Waiting with nervous anticipation for the last piece of the jigsaw.

'What's that?' A zap of electricity and my hand is shaking. No use pretending.

'Sorry, sir.' Pathetic, weak. I can feel Alexander tensing.

'Give it here!' Voice icy.

'Sir, I...'

'Give it here. Now!' He snatches it from my grip before I can frame a protest. Dark, emerald curtains and a crow is screeching. Whispers shoot through the silence. A cough and Rivett's eyes are dancing. Dark curls and blond waves. He wouldn't dare read it aloud. 'Alexander, save your love confessions for more appropriate moments.' Worse, much worse. I can feel William seething. 'And Katie... stop provoking him!'



The class is a muffle of awkward laughing. Someone is humming:

*Alex and Katie sitting in a tree
Ef, Uoo, Cee, Kay, I, En, Gee*

The air rings imminently. Moments like frozen camera shots.

'I didn't write it.' The words are stinging. 'I swear I'm not into love confessions.' More nervous laughter. Black death and black curls and my mouth is clinging with mucus. Two glazed eyes softly dying in someone's jagged jigsaw.

I might bring a fatal hatred of you in both sides and then you shall die a miserable death.

The bell slices through the silence. Already the room is a chaos of paper rustling, light laughter and staccato conversation about Man United. In a gesture of finality Rivett turns to draw the curtains.

A slap. It's begun. William's umbrella spike sparkles.

You might well be brought down by his spear.

Only it hasn't. The slap is one of companionship. Exclusive masculinity. Black curls and blond waves embraced in animal oneness strolling towards me, past me.

'Christ, man, I had to relieve the boredom somehow!' United in sniggers and they're already on to Cantona. A joke for the after-match showers; it comes to nothing more.

Clonk, clonk, clonk. Platform steps heavy and laboured. Sleet sifts through the afternoon gloom. Silhouettes with bright rucksacks locked into intimate circles. Standing in yard with flesh-coloured tights, excluded and shivering, clutching Homer under my armpit.

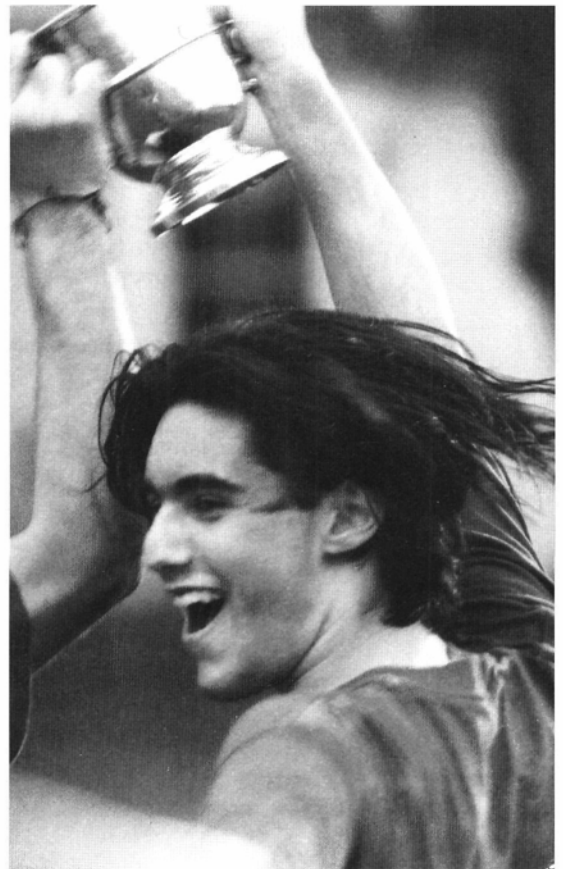
The Game

by Jonathan Goldsmith (College)

James sighed and laughed softly at the irony of it all;
The saying rung true: 'the higher you go, the harder you fall'.
With a wistful sigh he remembered when all was well:
Money, kids, pretty wife and how he'd used to tell
Himself that it was all he had ever dreamed about...
And then the discovery of corruption, fraud and wife's shout -
'Divorce!' as she'd growled and smacked him with her shoe.
But it was not fitting that the child genius should at sixty two
Be living in a flat showering plaster like manna from heaven
When he had been used to a mansion since he'd been eleven.

It was his mother that he'd hurt most by all of this.
Tearfully disappointed as she had reason to miss
That poor little angel with forget-me-not blue eyes
Which used to tell the truth but now told only lies.
He had never been completely normal, even as a child,
With thick-rimmed glasses and curly hair gone wild
He had been a genius but never once did he try
To fit in with the crowd, but grew gawky and shy.
And he played the game he was playing now:
'How to put an end to it all but can't think how'.

Everyone had supported him, loved him so much
Now he festered as an old man no one would touch
And all he really wanted was a bit of love...
Reluctantly he gave the window a resounding shove
And looked upon the dusty filth he would see no more -
But he was no longer there but on the white, sandy shore
Where he had grown up with the rippling crystal blue sea...
His heart pounded, he gave his lucky charm a final kiss:
He had known it all along: it had to end like this.



La Seine du Rupture (ou Un Drame Parisien)

de Maurice Lynn

Fin août je t'ai légué
Mon coeur déchiqueté.
Paris s'éternisait
Sous une pluie drue.

La Seine s'embrumait.
- 'Tu m'avais toujours plu' -
La gare s'endormait.
Deux acteurs égarés
Tristement sirotaient
Leur petit dernier.

'Toi, tu m'as toujours plu...
Tu sais... Tu n'as pas répondu.
'Vas-y, cruelle, continue
A petit feu de me brûler.
Me prends-tu pour un pont, Cathou?'
Tu t'étais tue, où étais-tu
Allée?

'Le train de nuit s'en va
Vers un Sahara froid.
Mon coeur est resté là,
Cathou, saignant, il est à toi.
(A toi, Cathou, à toi...)
Le train s'en va, descends là-bas,
Va sur la voie, mon coeur est là.
Ce fleuve noir et rouge, Cathou, le vois-tu?
Il est fait de cambouis, de sang, de pleurs, de boue.
Ce fleuve entraine un coeur, Cathou.
Dis-moi si tu l'as vu,
Toi qui m'as toujours plu.

Et elle entend, dit-on, encore sa voix tue -
Un lourd écho muet du fond d'un long tunnel.

Fin août on se quitta.
La Seine s'écoula.
Un rideau se tira.
Un express s'éclipsa.

La salle se vida.

Deux billets sur un quai,
Usés, déchiquetés.
Tout s'en était
Allé.

Visitors

Seasick

Woollen redness, marooned in the wind,
Bench slats rattle, are pulled along
The deck. Hysterical picture: blind tips
Of flat faced tumbles. Sylvia frowns

Over her scarf and laughs endlessly.
Her cries are carried away, bobbed
On the backwash, past Egypt, past
The captain and turn full circle

Homeward. She hears them coming
And runs. The chairs have purpose now;
She is chased ten times around the ocean
But never caught. She remains upright,

Breathless, in a cemetery of lying white backs.

I am ignoring the presence,
After all, I am ill; the grapes
And carnations prove it;
They say little else.

I feel like a beetle, an antisocial
Wanderer, crunchy black
Armour shelling me,
A tender boiled thing

Encrusted. If they would call
I might come
Out. But they do not.
They simply stand

Like hovering doorways,
Hinting a path I could take.
For all they know
I really might not

Have heard them.
But they
know
Better.

Four short poems

1 mother thoughts

stupid girl you are reality
i have brought you into existence
i am not proud.

2 chime apple night

wind bells chime in the weighty shadow,
in the green apple tree, with the night
swinging on it and the house lights sinking it.
deep rooted in untrodden earth.

3 rush hour

today i watched fish, fast finned in a stream,
they were silver blue
and lightning.

4 skylight

like carbon paper
deep grey drifts drip
bleeding across my picture,
my small square of existence.

COMMON ROOM

David Custance

David Custance is retiring this summer, 39 years after arriving at Westminster. John Carleton had recently been elevated from the Under Mastership to Head Master when he arrived in 1958 and Harold Macmillan was scarcely one year into his first premiership. Petrol was 20p a gallon, and the school a little over 400 pupils.

How can a teacher survive for forty years and still maintain vigour, interest and good spirits? It is all very well to talk about a sense of duty or even the prosaic requirement to earn a living, but while both these conditions may continue to propel a teacher through the school gates and even to mark written work, they are unlikely to put him in a very cheerful frame of mind. David Custance is consistently even-tempered and accessible.

Among his colleagues, he has become famous for poring over the printed menus which stand in the rear Common Room and asking (every day or near as dammit) *Now then - what's for lunch?* Although *The Elizabethan* is not famous for its lavish expenses, I decided Dr Custance had earned a good one. On an unseasonably beautiful April day, we played hooky and went to the Auberge de Provence near St James's Park.

David is not the kind of man who is going to become confidential or revelatory, however much wine you offer him. He was appreciative of the hospitality, and remained unselfconsciously himself. In those self-consciously French surroundings where the waiters' accents are so ludicrously Gallic as to be nearly incomprehensible, he accepted the offer of an aperitif. *A dry sherry, if you please.* I told him I didn't think I had tasted one since college tutors handed them round when they were reluctantly entertaining undergraduates. *Really?* he asked, obviously surprised. The sherry arrived, and I realised what I had been missing. Dr Custance's imperviousness to fashion has not at all blunted his fine taste.

No, he said, he had not become bored in the job. He loves his subject, and he enjoys the people he works with and on behalf of. I suspect that his academic interest, though necessarily not easily translatable to non-biologists, has been his governing passion. He studied for his doctorate whilst working as a young teacher, and raising a family - hugely demanding, no doubt, but David is averse to drawing attention to himself, and perhaps the corollary is that he is adept at securing time for things that he has discreetly prioritised.

Thank heavens, indeed, he knew what he liked. His taste for research extended also into the teaching of Biology. In the financially palmier days for educational research, this led him to take several research trips overseas and finally a two year secondment with the British Council in Malta in the mid 1970s.

Leaving that, I suggested, must have been a terrible wrench. Presiding over a stimulating and substantial project into the teaching of Science, leading a gracious expatriate lifestyle, to return to school teaching - had it been a mistake? He didn't

think so, and here the matter of factness of the man started to show through. Family responsibilities couldn't be gainsaid, and he liked Westminster, where he had a department to run. He slipped back into it, he said, easily enough. I am sure that he did, for David has made himself famous for being reasonable and accommodating. Yet there is an unspoken sinewy quality that would deter anyone, I think, from trying to take advantage of that. He could not be railroaded or exploited, and I doubt many (if any) have tried.

These qualities were no doubt sorely tested - but demonstrated to best effect - in his fourteen years as Director of Studies from 1981 to 1995. In spearheading the overhaul of the Lower School curriculum, matched by a parallel broadening of the Sixth Form curriculum, David had to prepare the School - staff and pupils - for a world in which Oxbridge glory simply no longer cut the mustard it once had, and excellent A Level and GCSE results really did matter. This kind of academic diffusion amounted to a substantial culture change, and one in which the vision and compliance of many was involved. But David's tact, calm and discreet efficiency proved pivotal - perhaps especially in retrospect. It was also these qualities which played a large part in the success of the 1995 OFSTED Inspection, in the preparation for which he and Eddie Smith worked together so fruitfully.

Liking his subject, his teaching and his colleagues - an evidently potent recipe for successful longevity, then. Had his feelings towards the School changed fundamentally?



David Custance and Hettie Williams

He thought carefully. Size, he acknowledged, was a drawback. When the School was 400 or so pupils and a smaller Common Room, it had been easier to know people and to avoid the abrasiveness which erupts inevitably in cramped conditions. No, of course, there was more to it than that: attitudes between adults and adolescents had altered fundamentally, and there were extremes sometimes which he found intolerable. But the fixed points remained: subject and teaching, he enjoyed - and the great majority of pupils.

Academic rigour provided him with discipline and purpose, and his family with emotional focus. He is a devoted husband of Mary and father of Tom and Harriet, both OWW and grown up. His capacity to contend with some fairly seismic changes within the School itself, and generally among the young, must be explained, I suggested, by the quality of

detachment which accrues to a man who has got most of life's critical choices correct. Two thirds of the way through some well done roast lamb, he was still too modest to congratulate himself in those terms, but I think he saw the point.

He eschewed pudding, but thoroughly enjoyed roaming among the cheeses: in some ways his tastes are archetypically masculine, but he is blessedly free of heartiness. At my prompting, he indulged in a little gentle reminiscing: of an early senior colleague who ritually dumped all his uncompleted marking at the end of term in a large waste paper bin ('I don't think they'll be needing that'); of the shameful practice that some Heads of Departments indulged in whereby all of their marking was farmed out to the junior colleague; of the urbane 'gentleman' headmastership of John Carleton; of the effervescence of John Rae, who arrived in 1970. He has liked all of his Head Masters.

He is one of the very last staff at Westminster to have done National Service, going into his father's old regiment - the Tanks - after Wellington, then to Trinity Hall, where he has pleasing memories of a bright and charming fellow undergraduate, named Summerscale. It is a long time ago, all that, but it helps me understand: I have never seen a man spend so long in one institution as David who is so utterly emotionally independent of it.

But he lives in the present. Retirement will give him opportunities for leisure, of course: he waxed fulsome about his recent cruise to Turkey arranged through Andrew Hobson's agency, and will no doubt return for more. That did not surprise me: well mannered company, good food and wine, and discreet culture are all manna to his civilised soul. He is a modest but expert gardener, and has a good deal of work to do on his garden in Warwickshire. And - most appropriately - he is not lost to schools, having now trained as one of the new OFSTED (school) inspectors. The new agency has become notorious for the Stasi-style of some of its more abrasive representatives but David will be the perfect corrective: he is gentle and competent, and has the knack of never throwing people on to the defensive.

We finished our coffee and walked out into the strong sunshine at St James's. A leisurely, frankly luxurious lunch, and more chat as we walked round Dean's Yard, ruminating unmaliciously on the future of School and Abbey: Trollope would have been proud to have seen life, once again, imitating his art.

David Hargreaves

Derek Stebbens

Derek Stebbens took up his appointment to teach in Westminster's Chemistry Department in September 1960. In the intervening years this country has had seven Prime Ministers (perhaps reaching eight by the time this article is published), while Westminster has had just three Head Masters. During this time, manned space flight has happened, the Berlin Wall has been built and destroyed, Britain has been actively involved in two wars and has dismantled an empire. In 1960, Westminster was less than two-thirds its present size and, in no particular order of importance, there were no girls, Robert Hooke Science Centre, Dryden's, Hakluyt's or Milne's. The roof of School, removed by the Blitz, had only just been replaced.

As this brief list illustrates, Derek came to Westminster in an era which we would hardly recognise as akin to our own, a

point underlined by the circumstances of his appointment. The interview amounted to no more than a (comparatively) relaxed chat with the then Head Master, John Carleton. His starting salary was '£1170 4s 0d per annum, *paid in termly instalments in arrears*'. In those days there was still the tacit, genteel and largely unrealistic assumption that anything public schoolmasters earned as salary was a useful but unnecessary adjunct to their private income, so that one could survive from September until Christmas without needing to draw a penny in salary. In practice, one could approach the Bursar with all due deference and request a monthly advance. The quotation of an annual salary to the nearest 20 pence (= 4 shillings) seems extraordinary from our 1997 perspective.

In his letter offering Derek the job, John Carleton wrote, 'It would not be worthwhile having anybody who did not stay for a reasonable time.' Given that Derek proceeded to stay for 36 years, one could reasonably confidently say that this was one Head Magisterial injunction which was obeyed to, or even beyond, the letter.

So what of those 36 years? For all of them Derek has been a superb teacher of Chemistry, one who loved his subject and wanted it to be fun. His end-of-term manufacture of live yoghurt was always popular, but Derek will forever be associated with the spectacular explosion. His *tour de force* was the experiment which required a connection between the apparatus and the experimenter (Derek) via a very long piece of string running through the keyhole of the laboratory door. With all pupils also safely outside the laboratory, the string would be pulled, the clocks would be dislodged from the walls of the then science building (now Sutcliff's) and some of the world's seismographs would register spurious readings. Such experiments are of course nowadays sadly outlawed by the bureaucratic killjoys of the Health and Safety Executive.

He was Head of Science from 1974 to 1984, and a prolific and successful author of chemical texts and contributed much as an A level examiner. He did his stints on the various academic committees that schools inevitably spawn and he organised A level examinations. In this latter role he presided over a system which worked smoothly and according to all the rules, but Derek always took enormous care to ensure that candidates sat their exams under the best possible conditions, heatwaves, cloudbursts and incontinent pigeons notwithstanding. In 1984, he decided to become part-time but remained a vital, albeit less high-profile, member of the science staff.

We shall undoubtedly miss Derek enormously as a colleague. When I first arrived as a very young and quite inexperienced teacher, I found him unfailingly kind, reassuring and encouraging. His calm and avuncular manner has been hugely appreciated by many younger science teachers, whilst his fund of chemical knowledge has been invaluable within his own department. Many of his pupils missed him too when they were deprived of his teaching. The last Lower School set he taught, Lower Shell S for Stebbens, felt themselves to be somehow incomplete as a form when they discovered he was not teaching them in the Upper Shell: the separation only lasted a term, and they became happily complete once more when reunited with their ex-Form Master.

We all join now in saying a huge thank you to Derek and we wish him and Valerie a long and happy retirement.

Robert Court



and comments made by her pupils on the other, it was her enthusiasm for her subject which was the VStJ hallmark. Every opportunity was taken to make History exciting; trips out, guest speakers in, tours of the Abbey, apart from the rigorous approach in the classroom, these things made Valerie that strong leader which she undoubtedly became. The interest she took in her students was wide ranging and far reaching. Many found success both here and at university because of the high standard Valerie set. Her advice was constantly sought and I know many Old Westminsters who still seek her views and are in touch with her.

still seek her views and are in touch with her.

She played her part in the supervision of Station; the fencers in particular came under her eager eye. Her own athletic enjoyment ranged from the tennis court to the ski slopes, and I guess that on school trips after a day's skiing the evening was not complete for her without a keenly contested hand of bridge.

Outside the classroom it must be her contribution to the debating life of the school that will be a lasting memorial. The success and high standards of debating at Westminster owes much to Valerie's demands. National trophies were won under her direction and support.

As a colleague and a friend her concern was always registered, her loyalty never in question, her criticism well-founded, and her hospitality generous. We raise that glass of red wine she loved so much to wish her and Colin every happiness during the next stage of their lives - not I hasten to add in retirement.

Christopher Clarke

Katharine Whitaker

Having graduated at the University of Hong Kong, Katharine was awarded a scholarship to Oxford in 1936 (St Anne's). On her return to China, she was almost immediately involved in the Japanese invasion of China, surviving the threat of execution by a local warlord and the bombing of Churking in 1941. She escaped to Britain again by way of the United States, and was engaged by the Ministry of Information to travel round the United Kingdom and lecture on the situation in China.

After the war she became a lecturer in Cantonese and Classical Chinese at London University, where she took her doctorate. She taught at SOAS from 1945 to 1969. Early in his Headmastership John Rae invited her to teach Chinese at Westminster which she did until a few weeks ago: Cantonese, Mandarin and Classical Chinese.

Katharine's scholarship and impeccable calm and dignity earned her the admiration of generations of Westminsters - pupils and staff in equal and abundant measure.

Tim Francis has retired as Common Room President after many years' capable and devoted service. His replacement is Dr Rod Beavon, who has been Head of Science since 1992. The present Common Room Secretary is Damian Riddle.

Anne Allwood

Anne Allwood arrived as Anne Middleton in 1986, part of a powerful crop of new teachers - among them Fiona Freckleton, Michael Mulligan and Richard Pyatt. She rapidly proved herself to be the consummate professional: thorough, unstinting in the time she was prepared to give her pupils, but properly sceptical of the practice of spoonfeeding. A Sixth Form pupil was heard to complain to his tutor shortly after her arrival, 'It's not fair. She won't answer the questions. She makes me think.'

Anne enjoyed Westminster, worked very hard at it, but kept enough space for herself. She did more than anyone to organise the Gap programme and pupils seeking advice in this knotty area found her approachable and clear-headed. The same qualities were brought to bear in her management of the Community Service programme which, thanks to her sharp attention to detail, is now very much a going concern.

It was Danny Gill who, a long time ago, made a bad job of trying to keep secret the news that he had seen Miss Middleton in the company of a young man who appeared to be both an admirer and a member of the Maths Department. The couple in question were to prove more adept than anyone could have predicted at keeping the world (the Common Room, anyway) guessing. When Anne and Michael Allwood did marry it seemed the most appropriate match - so much in common: music, mathematics and many friends.

Anne and Michael are shortly to begin a new life in the United States. We wish them every happiness.

Valerie St Johnston

My first memory of Valerie was the sight of her, from the window of my study in Grant's striding across Yard in a splendid pink silk shirt, on her way to her first classroom in the Wren's corridor. The message that came across, even from that distance, was there goes a lady who means business. Soon after she arrived she asked if she could become a tutor in Grant's. Of course I said yes and from then until she left us she filled that role with authority, kindness, wisdom and dignity.

My experience of Valerie as a teacher is only second hand - would that I had been one of her students. But on the evidence of comments made on her reports on the one hand,

COMMON ROOM QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the most prominent features of Westminster daily life, the teacher-pupil relationship, remains a curious one. For most pupils at any school these are the adults with whom they have the most contact besides their parents. Yet at Westminster, despite the familiarity of the Common Room, there remains an intrinsic curiosity regarding our educators. It was for this reason that *The Elizabethan* carried out a survey of the Common Room, hoping to determine more about their general opinions regarding the benefits or drawbacks of teaching at Westminster, and their hopes and plans for their own careers.

The most prominent characteristic revealed was the variety and individuality of the answers. In such matters as the *long term career plans*, there seemed limited correlation between teachers' current amount of experience at the School and their beliefs about any future time to be spent here. Only a tiny minority had any definite intention to remain at Westminster in the long term. Those teachers for whom Westminster was their first excursion into the profession seemed, as a group, to favour a 5-10 year tenure at the School.

As expected, in the *newspaper popularity contest* the broadsheets scored highest, with *The Times* far and away the most popular daily paper. This sits somewhat oddly with the result of the Common Room Mock General Election in which (unlike the pupils' contest) Labour won resoundingly, with the Liberals a close second, and the Greens coming third, headed by Jon Strong, the only Common Room member to stand at the School's best imitation of the nation's democracy.

This individuality of response also showed in answers to the question concerning those *factors that most influenced a teacher's decision to move to Westminster*. The most popular responses included the salary and the availability and standard of teaching facilities at the School; but the margin of their majority was tiny, and among the other factors listed as the most appealing were the age range of pupils at the School, and the amount of holiday time.

There was a wide-ranging and colourful selection of responses to the question as to *what staff liked and disliked about their working life at Westminster*. Many stressed as positive the intellectual and cosmopolitan atmosphere at the School and the warmth and friendliness within the Common Room. However, there was an unprecedented consensus as to what most staff seemed to dislike - large numbers singling out what they perceive as an arrogance and lack of respect from certain pupils as being the most negative aspect of daily School life.

The magnitude of this feeling must surely raise questions regarding the lack of effort expended in changing pupils' perception of the Common Room's authority. Interestingly enough, one of the most popular responses to the 'Like' section, was the 'relative freedom in a high academic context'. Is the perceived lack of respect for authority an unavoidable consequence of this 'relative freedom', or is it a personality flaw of the generic public school child? It would seem that any response to such a question would be entirely subjective. If the response was closer to the latter, then the question must be asked 'does the Common Room favour a more punitive method of pupil discipline?' If the response is

the former, then in contrast the question must be posed 'is the Common Room willing to sacrifice the liberal attitude and relative freedom in return for a more respectful deportment within the student populace?' After all, the same academic freedom has perhaps led to the variety and individuality of response apparent in our survey, and the same diversity probably encouraged the *Good Schools Guide* to state that: 'Westminster offers a more liberal and broadening education than the academically comparable St Paul's.'

Thanks are due to James Hooper, whose continual enthusiasm (and analysis of the data) doubtless contributed more to this than I did, and to all the kind members of the Common Room who bothered.

Ashgan Fahy (Ashburnham)

OXBRIDGE AND WESTMINSTER

Westminster has always had a tradition of sending its pupils to Oxbridge, and this year, 61 of the Remove were given offers to one or other University. Extra classes in most subjects are arranged for pupils applying to Oxford or Cambridge in the Play Term, and in particular the vast majority of scientists attend STEP or S Level classes. Is this extra emphasis and attention justified, or is the traditional image of Oxbridge as the ultimate centre of academic excellence out of date? Even if they regularly come near or at the top of the University League Tables, is it justified to pay more attention to them than to other universities which come near, or sometimes beat them?

Mr Michael Davies, Master in Charge of Careers and University Entrance, thinks not: '*The School does encourage pupils to go to Oxbridge because they are the best in terms of their resources and in their varied programmes. However, it is not my job to make people more determined to apply - on the contrary I spend more time discouraging people who we feel are not suitable for Oxbridge.*' He also claims that the style of teaching at Westminster leads very naturally on to the Oxbridge methods, and that this causes many Westminsters to find some other universities disappointing. However, he does not claim that Oxford or Cambridge are inherently superior, '*I would distinguish between technical degrees, such as Engineering, and general degrees, such as History. Often Oxbridge is not the best place for a technical degree, and the School's advice reflects this. My job is to try to help people to do what is best for them.*'

In the Common Room, the Oxbridge bias dies hard. One teacher even commented that to disapprove of the School's attitude to Oxbridge would be 'thought crime'. However, there are more mixed attitudes among the teaching staff than one might think. Some believe that the greatest emphasis on Oxbridge actually comes from the pupils, and the Common Room is simply responding to this. Mr Jonny White of the History Department said, '*It is middle class society in London that places too much emphasis on Oxbridge. The best academics are still disproportionately at Oxbridge, but this is not necessarily reflected in the rather rigid courses they often impose. For example, the History courses at both Oxford and Cambridge are heavily Anglo-centric and weighted towards political and constitutional history, in an age where the greatest historians are using a far greater range of materials*

and abandoning narrative history. Oxbridge has not responded to this.'

The attitudes of parents are more mixed. Many believe that the emphasis the School places on Oxbridge is necessary. One comments that: 'as long as society regards Oxbridge as special and prestigious, Westminster would be failing in its duty to its pupils if it did not take entrance to these Universities seriously.' Another recurrent view is that an important reason for sending a child to Westminster is the high levels of entry to the Universities, and that the School has a duty to the parents not to let these numbers fall. Some parents admit to double standards about attitudes to Oxbridge, saying that the School undoubtedly does overemphasise the Universities, which will cause unsuccessful candidates to feel more disappointed than is justified, but that the unreasonable pressure is more likely to help their own child to get in, which is more important to them.

The majority of Westminster pupils are caught up in the image of Oxbridge, and it is difficult to find any who are truly objective. It is almost impossible to find any Sixth Formers who, as yet, say they have no intention of applying, unless they have been told that it is unwise for them to do so. The Remove have different impressions, depending on whether they have been accepted or not. One says: 'Despite having an offer from Cambridge, I feel that on balance the School probably overemphasises Oxbridge. For example, at the talk on university, we were told that "there are many fine universities other than Oxford and Cambridge", and in the rest of the talk Mr Davies proceeded not to mention them. It is certainly considered unusual for a good candidate not to apply there.' Everyone has their own reasons for applying - in the words of this Remove pupil: 'I think that there are two reasons people apply for Oxbridge: that the course is better, or purely because of the kudos attached. Most Oxbridge candidates believe that the course is better; in many cases they are right. However, as a scientist, I happen to know that the courses at Imperial College are at least as good if not better. Even so, if people will be happier at Oxbridge, that is a perfectly valid reason to apply, and if there is kudos, it will attach itself whether it is justified or not. It is almost impossible to make a decision based purely on the course, all other factors such as town size, atmosphere, being equal, without taking into account the reputation of a university.'

The atmosphere at Oxbridge is clearly seen as important by all involved. Its supporters say that it leads on very naturally from Westminster, that it still encourages a sense of diversity as well as learning. However, its detractors see it as cloistered, both intellectually and socially, and worry that the ease of life can have a negative effect. Mr White says: 'Westminster teaches self-sufficiency, and prepares pupils for being individuals. At Oxbridge, the danger is that the individual might become part of the institution more than is desirable, and might regress. Westminsterers who go to other universities often have less impact and are more prepared for the real world.' The view that Oxbridge is very unlike the real world is difficult to refute. Nevertheless, university is more than just groundwork for employed life, and it is important to enjoy the experience. It is the belief that Westminsterers will

be happy at Oxbridge and less happy elsewhere that seems the most deeply rooted, and the least logical. Many of the teachers and pupils take it almost for granted. Yet campus life can be just as satisfying, and there will be like-minded people and good tutors in most universities. Perhaps this idea comes from the stiff competition to get in, and the thought that there must be something inherently superior, inherently more enjoyable about a place so many people are applying for. This belief would feed off itself, until the point where many people see Oxbridge as an aim in itself.

The final reason for applying to Oxbridge given by candidates is often the employment potential afterwards. Mr Davies genuinely believes that an Oxbridge degree will significantly help graduates to get jobs. He notes: 'An Oxbridge degree can also act as a signalling mechanism for employers, not simply because the degrees may be better, but because the stringent admissions process acts as a selection to some extent for the employer. The attractions of Oxbridge for an employer, therefore, are quite different from those for a student. A good degree can make all the difference in today's competitive job market.' However, this view is disputed by an employer who has been involved in picking graduates. She believes that where a degree comes from is of secondary importance at best. In her words: 'I genuinely do not believe that it makes much difference whether a candidate is from Oxbridge or not. Looking at people who have succeeded in business, their academic credentials are often irrelevant. The character and style of the person, and the way they behave and comport themselves is far more important. Of course it is essential to have a good degree from a respected university, but there is by no means a magic quality about Oxbridge.'

It seems that the School's attitude is unlikely to change, even if it is unjustified, as it is deeply rooted in Westminster tradition, and, more importantly, backed by the pupils and parents. Oxford and Cambridge are excellent Universities, but the School often only nominally recognises the excellence of others. However, as long as the pupils wish to apply to Oxbridge above anywhere else, and are encouraged to do so by their parents, and as long as they would be unhappy not to receive the support in this aim which they need, the School would be failing in its duty to its pupils and the fee paying parents if it did not place such emphasis on Oxbridge.

Tom Balogh (Dryden's) and Laura Bender (Grant's)



THE DUNGEONS

A Waste of Space?

Previously a bomb shelter during the blitz, the dungeons have recently been converted into Westminster's new Sixth Form and Remove common room. Sited at the top left of Yard near the cloisters, the room opened at the start of the Play Term 1996 with the intention of providing a teacher-free space in which the Upper School could relax and socialise.

This proved not to be the case with the space barely big enough to fit fifty people comfortably, something of a problem for a combined Upper School of some 240. The dungeons lacked adequate facilities and quickly got a reputation as a sad alternative to Yard, one filled with people who preferred a closed and sheltered environment in contrast to Yard's wide open space. After all, what exactly did the dungeons offer that Yard didn't? The dungeons could hardly be said to offer comfort, boasting only an ugly piano and a few chairs. Not the ideal place in which to socialise. The dungeons also lacked the ability to challenge Yard's supremacy in drawing people; its novelty wore off within hours of the Head Master's speech at the start of the Play Term, and the dungeons were seen as a half-hearted attempt by the School to create an Upper School common room.

However, over the Christmas Holidays the dungeons were reformed. With a £1 subscription from pupils, the School managed to buy a good TV and video player, very comfortable chairs, drinks and food machines. At this time of year the cold weather allowed the dungeons its first taste of people, indeed many people! Only a few hard 'nutters' decided to stay outside on the benches in Yard. The Sixth Form in particular wanted a place where they could go and socialise, especially around the drinks machine that constantly doled out strong coffees or choc-chocs, and the dungeons' warm environment proved to be ideal. Above the constant chattering of students, Vartan's musical blues could be heard from the piano or the angry thumping of the food machine after a fruit pastille packet had failed to dislodge properly. We thought the dungeons may just have it. If there was one thing many Sixth Formers had on their mind at morning break it was coffee - and lots of it.

The queue at the drinks machine was enormous, and someone at the end of the queue got their drink only at the end of break. However, the food machine meant no more long queues at the School tuck shop, and soon, the School rules were amended to allow the use of the dungeons during PSs. This proved popular with many students meeting friends during these periods.

Alas the honeymoon period was soon over. Near the end of the Lent term the food machine was vandalised resulting in the theft of the bottom two rows of chocolate bars. This led to an emptying of the entire food machine. The weather also got warmer, making Yard a more attractive place and meaning that fewer people bothered to come into the dungeons.

The dungeons' life as a common room was short lived, providing a 'safe' place to go only during the really cold winter months when the only other options were the Houses. Its purpose as a Sixth Form common room is severely undermined by Yard being a natural focal point. Even the pull of the drinks machine seemed of no consequence. The caffeine consumption is seasonal, the number of people

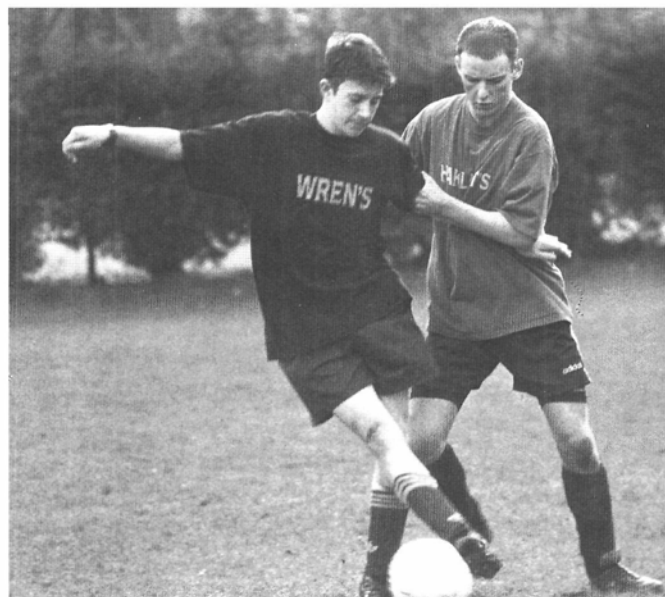
requiring coffees in the Summer is obviously drastically less than those required during the cold dark days of winter.

Now in summer, the dungeons have reverted from a thriving social Mecca back into the mundane rôle of housing the socially introverted and orchestra rehearsals. It has become an expensive seasonal room and it is not surprising that when the £1 fee was introduced, many people did not pay and gatecrashed instead.

Are the dungeons really needed? In the words of a Sixth Former, 'Nah, man, it's too dry.'

For many students, his words have summed up the generally felt view. The best factor of the dungeons is the drinks machine, especially when a desperately needed cup of coffee is required during those important PSs, and the fact that we have a place to go during rainy or cold days.

Jannen Vamadeva (Dryden's)



TO PC OR NOT TO PC?

At the beginning of this academic year the School invested in 24 new computers, all of which have proved of great use for pupils and teachers alike.

The PCs, equipped with a full range of useful programs, and the increasingly important Internet connection, are to be found in use throughout breaks, after school, at lunch time and during pupils' PSs.

The Internet gives pupils the ability to access far more information than was ever previously available. This means that essays and projects can be done in far more depth than was previously possible. It also allows boarders to communicate with their homes by email - a great asset for those with families abroad - and enables pupils to make their own home pages on the World Wide Web.

But the benefits do not stop there. Teachers often use the network for lessons. It is a great tool for note-taking and for setting tests. A scanner and colour printer have proved to be a great help to artists, and a top-of-the-range spreadsheet has been essential for both mathematicians and scientists. The software also includes a word processing package, some drawing programs, and much more besides.

If pupils are in need of a break from academic life then the Internet provides a great way to while away the time. People have often gone in looking for one particular thing, and have spent hours searching through the latest gossip about their favourite football team, pages of jokes, chat forums, and all other things 'cyberspace' related.

The computers are strictly controlled so that nothing unsuitable takes place. They are to be found in Ashburnham House, and are available to pupils (and teachers) throughout the day.

The overall investment has only just begun to pay off, but already the benefits of a computer network within the School are becoming more than apparent, with the 24 computers often all in use at once.

Edward Hill (Liddell's) and Murray Rogers (Hakluyt's)

Nick Stevenson writes:

In addition to the suite of 24 computers mentioned above, the Geography Department in Sutcliff's and the Economics Department in Ashburnham House, whose computers were generously donated to the School last summer by Peter Ogden, have been incorporated into the network. The Music Department and the Common Room also form part of the network, as do the 12 Apple Macs in Ashburnham House.

A good deal of new computer equipment has appeared in the Technology, Electronics, Physics and Chemistry Departments, and plans are afoot to incorporate the Robert Hooke Science Centre into the main network, to upgrade the facilities in room 28, to set up our own internet and email server, and to install a new network at the Under School.

This has been an exciting year for the School in terms of Information Technology and there is more excitement to come on the 'road ahead'.

COMMEM 1996

The Service for the Commemoration of Benefactors has as its focus an act of thanksgiving for the Foundation of St Peter's College in Westminster by Elizabeth I. In recent years, happily for the School, and in a large part thanks to the efforts of our two Directors of Development, many new benefactions have been received from individuals, companies and groups of supporters. It was felt fitting that these new Benefactors should be remembered in the company of many previous Benefactors, whom we have tended to neglect, who have, since our Foundation, given money or gifts to the School.

This was the thinking behind the revision of the Service which took place in the Abbey on 22 November 1996, the 436th Anniversary of the Succession of our Foundress.

However, the greatest change for some, evident before the Service began, was the decision to abandon the dinner jacket for dress that was, it was felt, more appropriate for an act of worship in the Abbey. This also avoided the anomalous mixture of academic and formal dress sported hitherto by the Common Room.

A programme of organ and instrumental music greeted the families from the School, Old Westminsters and representatives of recent Benefactors. During this, a

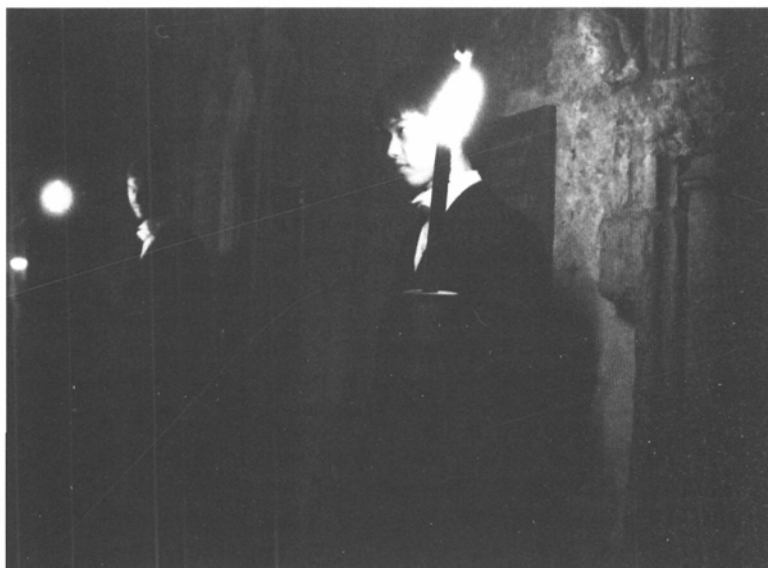
number of the Honorary Fellows of Westminster School moved in procession to their places in the Quire. The Service began traditionally enough with the entry of the Abbey clergy and the Common Room to *Angularis Fundamentum*. The Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend Michael Mayne, in his last appearance with the School before his retirement, welcomed the congregation, and then the Choir, conducted by the new Director of Music, Guy Hopkins, sang the setting of Psalm 146 by Monteverdi. The traditional form of Service continued with the singing by all of Psalm 150, *Laudate Dominum*, and the reading of *Let us now praise famous men* by the Captain of the School, Lefkos Kyriakou. In his address, the Head Master spoke of the responsibilities of giving and receiving, benefaction and commemoration, and the recognition of the heritage of the past translated into meaningful response in the present and the future.

The Queen's Scholars then processed to the West door to receive the Roses. The Roses Procession was punctuated by three intercessions, remembering and giving thanks for recent Benefactors, represented by the name of A A Milne, the major Benefactors of the past, and the Foundation of the School. Responses to each of these were sung in Latin by the Scholars, conducted by their Master, Dr Jonathan Katz. After prayers said by the Chaplain, the Roses were borne in silence to the Tomb of Queen Elizabeth. As they were laid on the effigy, the choir broke into the magnificent setting of the *Te Deum* by Kodály.

After the Recession to *Gloriosi Salvatoris*, guests were entertained by the School; many Old Westminsters were pleased to find that they were invited up House - perhaps for the first time in many years.

There are considerable problems in devising a service which retains the tradition of using Latin, but which involves a congregation less and less familiar with that language. Critics may feel that the balance has tipped too much in favour of English, although they may be appeased to know that much of the apparently new material in the Service is taken from the original Latin Service which included an exhaustive list of Benefactions. It is hoped in any case that those who attended the Service will have felt more involved in the enactment of our Thanksgiving for Benefactors, and will have understood more clearly the purpose of our celebration.

John Arthur



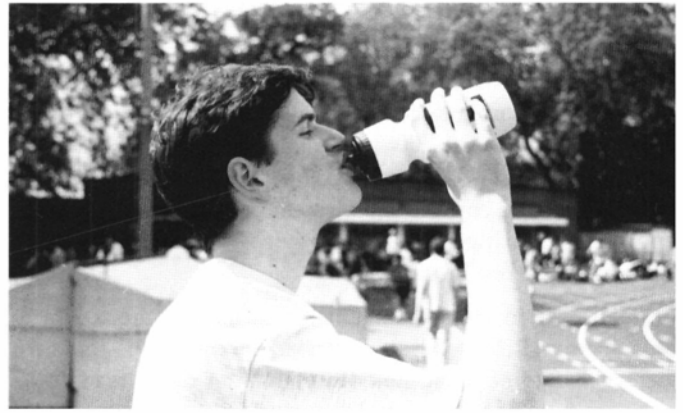
SOCIETIES

JOHN LOCKE SOCIETY

No introduction is necessary for the John Locke Society at Westminster; as ever, it has met in the Lecture Room on Wednesdays and has been attended by members of the Upper School. This year's programme has been very varied, and has included some extremely good speakers from all walks of life.

The year began with **Jonathan Green**, author of the *Dictionary of Slang*, speaking to a packed room about the history of lexicography, and alluding to words never before mentioned in John Locke. He was followed by **Sir David Hunt** who gave us an overview of the situation in Cyprus from a very English point of view, and reminded us how diplomats used to be. The next speaker was the late **Majorie Proops**, of *The Mirror*, whose honest speech on the problems faced in her work should be a model to all Agony Aunts. Following her was **Jeffrey Archer**, who gave his talk up School about himself and his patriotic positive beliefs, refusing to answer floor questions from 'belittlers'. **Brian Sewell**, art critic, spoke enjoyably about art and life, and was involved in a debate as to whether photography could be counted as a form of art. The following week, we had a talk from **Baroness Warnock** who explained the facts behind multiple births. Next, the arch spin-doctor, **Peter Mandelson** revealed his political beliefs and hopes for the future, though unfortunately, like many before him, made the mistake of underestimating a Westminster floor, and like many before him, possibly regretted it. **Colin Caffell** gave a strikingly honest and moving talk on his feelings and experiences following the murder of his family. The next speaker, **Alan Howarth** is an old Westminster teacher and parent, so was prepared for the verbal crossfire which he received, and delivered an extremely balanced account of the reasons for his defection to the Labour party. **Robin Janvrin**, deputy private secretary to HM The Queen, gave us a detailed account of Her Majesty's timetable, but much to our disappointment did not speak with an insider's knowledge about the recent scandal surrounding our monarchy. **Richard Humphreys**, Head of Education at the Tate Gallery, showed slides of the Bankside development of the Tate, and spoke engagingly about its development. The Play Term was rounded up by **Lord Lester QC**, who gave an interesting and beautifully articulate speech on Human Rights Law, including the recent Bugging Bill.

The Lent Term began with **Sir Ian McKellen** speaking both about his acting, and about gay rights, impressing and amusing his audience throughout. **Sir David Puttnam** delivered a very well crafted speech on how he would improve Britain. Following him, **Alison Weisselberg** of The Samaritans spoke about her work, and provided us with an insight on the aims and methods of the organisation. The next speaker provided another insight into reality - **Rabbi Julia Neuberger** spoke about anti-Islam prejudice, and her continuing efforts to promote harmony between religions. The next week was entirely different, and consisted of three Westminsters, **Chloe Andricopoulos**, **Nick Jackson** and **Hettie Williams**, who informed us about the PHAB course at the beginning of the summer holidays, and gave us an honest and funny overview of the week. **Léo Paskin**, owner and founder of *The End* night-club, told us about the joys of



clubbing, a subject with which the Westminster audience had clearly never come into contact. **Diane Blood** gave a very courageous and moving speech about the situation she has confronted (seeking to have a child with the sperm of her late husband) - especially courageous given that she was speaking on the day before the final judgement on her case. The next speaker had a huge audience as he strongly encouraged his own classes to attend - **Jim Cogan** gave his time-honoured speech on the Rio Summit and the demise of Western education. The final speech of the term was given by **Lady Soames**, Winston Churchill's daughter, who gave a realistic and affectionate reminiscence of her father.

The Election Term got off to an unfortunate start when **Roger Uttley** forgot to turn up, and his speech, delivered from a mobile phone to a slightly agitated David Hargreaves consisted of two short words, remorseful but unprintable. The second speaker of the term was **Kevin Maxwell**, who more than kept his cool under heavy fire from a floor determined to get to the bottom of the issues surrounding his controversial trial. Our next speaker, topically enough for the election week, was **Nigel de Gruchy**, head of the NAS/UWT who gave us a very informative talk about the ins and outs of union life. The following week, Roger Uttley was able to come, and reminisced about his career in rugby, and his views on achievement. The final John Locke speaker of the year was **Sue Townsend**, author of *Adrian Mole*. Unfortunately, she was delayed by the crowds surrounding the State Opening of Parliament, so to fill in the interim, Lefkos Kyriacou bravely began a game of charades, in which the entire Upper School participated. Sue Townsend's arrival could easily have been an anticlimax, but she entered at once into the spirit of the occasion, giving us the insider's view of *Adrian Mole*, and the wider context to which he belongs. The year concluded on an extremely successful note, with much credit due to Lefkos Kyriacou for his excellent Chairmanship - and charades.

Laura Bender (Grant's) and Alive Fleming (Purcell's)

Selected quotations from John Locke:

'Good speaker, shame about the art.' - *A Westminster on Richard Humphreys*

'Is there anyone here who doesn't eat bacon?' - *David Hargreaves to the John Locke lunch for Rabbi Julia Neuberger, where chicken in a bacon and cream sauce was served*

'No, sorry, these are for David Hargreaves' - *Lefkos to Sue Townsend, as he produced a large bouquet of flowers*

BEN JONSON SOCIETY

An evening with Peter Ackroyd

Much has been said about Peter Ackroyd's visit to the Ben Jonson society in the Play Term. As well as being a distinguished novelist he is also the master of literary biography, whose subjects have included Dickens, T S Eliot and, most recently, William Blake. Those of us lucky enough to have attended enjoyed the pleasure not only of his literary knowledge during the meeting but also of his company throughout the rest of the evening.

A small excited group had gathered in the Lecture Room to hear the man Richard Pyatt described as 'one of the foremost men of letters of our time'. He then went on to read some passages from Peter Ackroyd's work with the author himself looking suitably embarrassed. Mr Pyatt slightly self-consciously asked the first few questions but as the atmosphere relaxed others joined in. Mr Ackroyd has a passion for London, its culture and its literary heritage and spoke inspiringly about a line of London visionaries which he traced through Defoe, Blake and Dickens to the present day.

After the meeting finished he was happy to stay for wine and an informal chat. Eventually the wine dried up but as conversation was still flowing the party moved on to a local pub. Here Mr Ackroyd was enormously generous, standing the whole group round after round of drinks whilst speaking illuminatingly on the rôle public houses have played in London's history. He also displayed an impressive grasp of Pop culture, admitting that he had, on occasion, been compared to the character Uncle Monty from the film *Withnail and I*.

Gradually the crowd thinned but Mr Ackroyd was in the mood to continue and offered to take the remaining seven or eight of us out to dinner. Taxis were hailed and soon we arrived at a restaurant in Farringdon, where the staff were a little surprised but happy to accommodate Mr Ackroyd and the group. By this point conversation was merry and animated: one of the evening's high points was the sight of Richard Pyatt, napkin on head, giving impressions of the Brontë sisters. Sadly the evening had to come to an end and glasses were raised for Peter Ackroyd, as generous, fun-loving and brilliant speaker as we will ever have at this School.

Howard Gooding (Dryden's) and Nick Forgas (Wren's)

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY AND HOOKE

If you spend too much time in Yard or hanging out close to the Fives courts you might be willing to believe that one in ten humans have been abducted by aliens, or perhaps even *are* aliens. If you approach the problem of extraterrestrial life scientifically you are more likely to end up wondering where they (the aliens) are. After all, life seemed to get a hold on this insignificant little planet a mere 500 million years after it formed, and look at us now... Our planet orbits one star among about 100 billion in our galaxy alone. And there are billions of galaxies. And they've been there for 10-15 billion years. So where *are* they (the aliens I mean) and why aren't they here? In one of this year's excellent scientific society lectures Dr Ian Crawford from UCL pondered this question and led us to the conclusion that, despite the vastness of space, the myriad of possibly inhabitable worlds, and billions

of years to evolve, other advanced technological civilizations might actually be very rare indeed.

Dr John Thomson from the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories presented a review of modern particle physics and speculated about the major discoveries that may lie around the next corner if we can squeeze more energy out of our existing particle accelerators and crash things together even more violently. This lecture was of particular interest to the group of A-level physicists who are due to visit CERN this year. The following month Dr Christine Sutton, author of such racy best-sellers as *The Particle Explosion* and *Spaceship Neutrino* (I only buy them for the pictures...) gave a lecture called 'Inside the Proton' and hinted at a new discovery that might just blow the lid off the Standard Model (that is the cobbled together theory that links all the known particles and forces). Something odd had just happened at DESY and in this centenary year of the electron, just as we are celebrating the big birthday of the smallest and most enduringly fundamental particle, it might just be that it is not fundamental after all, or that it has some new tricks the theorists never thought of. Watch this space, or better still subscribe to *Hooke*.

Ken Zetie is really an atomic physicist, but last year he won the 'Science in Print' competition with his essay on why bees can fly (despite headlines that periodically claim that physicists have proved they can't) and has suddenly become an international celebrity and bee-fancier. And apparently bees fly by clapping, so now you know. However, it is true that stiff dead bees can't glide.

Thinking back a bit further to the Play Term, John Hassard from Imperial College gave a lecture on Diamonds. He grows them one atomic layer at a time and you can have any colour or size you want. Perhaps it is not surprising that he also spoke a great deal about making money out of research - he has formed several companies to exploit his discoveries and sees this as the way ahead for many university departments. We also had two lectures by fathers of pupils at Westminster. John Sorrell, Chairman of the Design Council, challenged us with examples of good and bad design everywhere from McDonald's restaurants to Babe the talking Pig. Professor Peter Ell spoke about imaging techniques in medicine and the impact of nuclear medicine in diagnosis and imaging. Both of these lectures were extremely well presented and very popular.

More recently, a small group travelled up to Cambridge to attend two lectures in the Cavendish. The first was given by Frank Close, the second by Stephen Hawking. I can't tell you much about it because, sadly, I couldn't go.

Chris Lightfoot and James Fairbairn who edited *Hooke* in 1995-96 for issues 7 and 8 passed the magazine on to James Acton, editor, supported by a team of three assistants, Mkael Abrahams, Dora Wood and Leon-Chiew Foong. They had a hard act to follow, but *Hooke* 9 arrived on time, full of interesting articles, and even saw the return of Bevman and Robbo, now faced with an attempt by the History of Art Department to take over the basement of the Robert Hooke Centre. Strangely this has actually happened - was it a case of History of Art imitates life or art imitates history of art or life or or.... My favourite bit is where the Bevsignal appears in the sky and Robbo looks up and says 'It's the Bevsignal, but holy halogens, Bevman... they've... nitrated it' (I guess you had to be there, or be a chemist...). One new feature for this

issue was a book review, Paul Davies's *About Time* reviewed by two pupils and two staff - and reading the reviews in *Hooke* is cheaper and quicker than actually buying the book. In *Hooke* 9 you could also try to answer Jonathan Monroe's burning question: 'Why Sex?' or find out whether a foetus feels pain. There was even a competition, and you can still subscribe for the 1993 price (£2 *per annum*). By the way *Hooke* 10 is on the way as I write, as are its tenth anniversary celebrations. Articles are welcome from students, OWW, staff and well-known scientists, and anyone is welcome to subscribe - just send me the money!

Steve Adams

CERN 1996

Particle physics aims to investigate matter on the very smallest of scales; the fundamental particles that make up the universe. It is a famous irony that while particle physicists investigate the tiniest shreds of matter they need the largest equipment to do so. (Other physicists, aggrieved with ever increasing amounts of funding being poured into particle physics, always remind us 'it's not how big it is, it's what you do with it that counts!') CERN is a prime example, it investigates particles far smaller than an atom, yet the main experiment is a huge doughnut shaped ring, 33 kilometres in circumference. This experiment is buried 100 metres underground, and spaced along its length are enormous cavities holding the massive detectors. It is a huge shock to step out of the lift into a cavern many times bigger than School and knowing that in front of you is equipment recreating the early stages of the big bang itself.



On 6 June 1996 an ISCO group, including nine Westminsterers and two teachers, left Heathrow for Geneva. We spent the next day exploring Geneva, by ferry in the morning and foot in the afternoon (and in the process found out how expensive it was to get drunk - strictly as a theoretical exercise, not a practical one, of course). Having to sleep the night in a youth hostel, sharing a room with seven others, was made up for the next day by actually seeing CERN itself.

CERN, because of its enormous cost is very much a multinational endeavour. (As one physicist put it, its official language is not so much English as broken English). What impressed us most was that the physicists were exceptionally friendly, answering all of our questions with real enthusiasm. CERN consists of much more than just a 33 kilometre collider, including CHORUS, an experiment to measure the mass of the possibly massless neutrino, a particle so

unreactive that on average 6 million miles of lead is needed to make it interact.

We have, of course, to end with the cliché of recommending CERN to you. But for those armchair physicists among you, *Particle Physics* (a new book by the Head of Physics) may be more to your taste, available from all good book shops.

Leon-Chiew Foong (RR) and James Acton (RR)

THE 1997 HENRY TIZARD MEMORIAL LECTURE

Consciousness bothers us all in one way or another; why else should so many of the world's religions promise that it will not end? It is us, it is what we call 'reality', and mostly we would dearly like to know what it is. Computer scientists want to know if their machines can emulate it; chemists want to know which molecules might mediate it; biologists would like to identify the structures in which it is cast. Medics want insight as to why it sometimes goes wrong, and most people seek to modify it in one way or another at some time in their lives.

Thus it was certain that Susan Greenfield, Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Oxford, and Gresham Professor of Physics, would find a large and enthusiastic audience for the 1997 Tizard Lecture. Fresh from her appearance on *Desert Island Discs* the previous Sunday, where she had chosen for her one record Beethoven over Marvin Gaye (but not even the eminent are wholly perfect), Susan Greenfield gave a charismatic performance which led one of the Remove the next day to exclaim 'doesn't she just make you want to go and work with her!'

Susan Greenfield's views on consciousness were given in the form of an analogy, of a stone falling into a pond with the ripples spreading out. She envisages an epicentre within the brain, from which influence spreads to other neurons, the extent of this influence varying from time to time and depending on the nature of the processing required. It is a highly fluid view of the mechanisms in the brain, quite unlike the 'hard-wired' picture which is probably what many people have. The thesis was pursued with vigour, and was evidently much appreciated; importantly, it was probably far from universally accepted. The best test of a Tizard Lecture is not whether the audience has received an hour's worth of instruction, but rather an hour's worth of ideas which will lead to further argument and hence to a better understanding. Science is not 'right' or 'wrong', rather it should be seen as the ferment of controversy which it really is. Susan Greenfield's theses can be read in her writings, and those of the many other people active in the field; the enthusiasm and commitment which she showed, and which will be well-remembered (but how?) will have been the spur to many to learn more. It was an admirable evening, complemented by the Chairman, Professor Jeffrey Gray of The Maudsley. He wanted to offer a couple of Westminsterers a job, based on their questions.

Rod Beavon

Anyone not presently on the mailing list who would like an invitation to the 1998 Henry Tizard Memorial Lecture should write to the Head of Science, 7-9 Dean Bradley Street, SW1P 3EP, or fax on 0171 222 0853.

BROCK LECTURE 1996

The thirteenth Brock Lecture was given on 4 December 1996 by J H 'Brummie' Stokes BEM. As a departure from recent years, a close contact of the School was invited to speak. Brummie is involved twice a year in Lower School Expeditions, and runs an Activity Centre in Hereford where outward bound Survival and Group skills are taught, especially to underprivileged and difficult youngsters. He finances this as a charity (to which the School Society was delighted to give a donation) by running courses for schools and businesses. Brummie himself came from a very rough background in Birmingham and in his teens was involved in a drug/gun culture from which he escaped to join first the regular Army and then the SAS, where he spent his Army career and in which regiment he is something of a legend. Though his experiences in the SAS would have made a thrilling and thought provoking talk, he is not proud of what he has had to do in the past and instead aims through his centre to encourage and promote an individual's desire to succeed and to be motivated towards worthwhile goals. The emphasis is firmly on team progress however and is totally contrary to any form of selfish desire.

Brummie's goal was to top the world and, despite having been shot in the knee some years earlier, he reached the summit of Everest in 1976 as part of a massive Army expedition. This formed the basis of a powerful talk, supported by slides for which the intervening 20 years had done nothing to diminish a sense of awe and wonder and gratitude for the team-work and joint effort which enabled the summit bid to be made. The expedition was not without calamity and, having lost one climber, Brummie and the other summiteer 'Bronco' were caught out just below the summit and had to spend a night in a snow hole, barely keeping each other alive. The experience cost Brummie and Bronco their toes and made a remarkable tale of survival.

The fact that Brummie went back to full time soldiering, and now even runs marathons, is a testimony to his will to survive.

The talk was well received by an audience of some 300, including a pleasing number of prep school visitors and present pupils as well as invited guests and old boys. I think all felt moved in the presence of such a character.

The Fourteenth Brock Lecture is due to take place on 3 December 1997 at 8:00pm and will be given by Hallam Murray, a frequent lecturer at the RGS, who will talk on cycling the length of the Andes. Any further information may be obtained from Charles Barclay, 17 Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3PB. Tickets and invitations will be sent out from October half-term.

Charles Barclay

FULL STEAM AHEAD

On Thursday lunchtimes for the last two terms twelve Sixth Formers have gathered in the Technology department for a packed lunch before setting off for the wilds of Wandsworth. Having successfully negotiated the vagaries of the 77A bus (reputed to be scheduled every ten minutes but actually found hunting in packs every half hour) we made our way to South Thames College. All the students attending the course have

an interest in applied science and the facilities at South Thames offer the opportunity to gain experience in the techniques used in engineering manufacture.

Over a period of twenty weeks each student built, from scratch, a working stationary steam engine. To achieve this, a range of machine and hand tools were used, and practical skills were learned and developed.

Many of the parts for the engine begin life as various sizes of hollow round tube or solid round bar in a variety of materials: steel, brass, copper and aluminium. To convert these into the precision components needed for a functioning machine the students used a Centre Lathe to reduce diameters, knurl, form curves, create smooth surfaces, bore holes of precise diameter and depth, and cut threads. Sheet metal cutting, shaping, bending and finishing techniques were used to build the chassis frame of the engine.

It is of course crucial that a working steam engine has a sealed boiler in which water is heated to create the head of steam necessary to drive the piston back and forth. The fabrication of the boiler involved the use of various joining processes including brazing and silver-soldering. The manufacture of the body of the engine was achieved using a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) milling machine, fashioning the complex shape from a solid block of aluminium following a computer program.

There were times when there seemed to be just too many parts to be made and cries of anguish when an absent-minded twist of the controls destroyed an hour's work, but as you neared completion the excitement of seeing your own engine working - first using compressed air, and then quite literally under its own steam - made the effort worthwhile. An additional highlight of the course was the opportunity to visit the local brewery where they still have two functioning steam powered Beam Engines (not to mention a large collection of dray horses, donkeys, goats, other assorted wildlife and a very pleasant sampling room!). Having seen the brewing process it was naturally necessary to check the chemical make-up of product before leaving the premises.

On the last day of the course (with a little assistance from our ever helpful and knowledgeable tutor, Graham) everyone successfully completed their engine. Whilst none of the students are likely to spend time in future working on a lathe or mill, the insight into how artifacts are manufactured will be invaluable to those entering careers in engineering or product design.

David Hemsley-Brown

DEBATING

Not only did Westminster achieve success nationally last year (as reported in *The Elizabethan*) but in the summer international spoils were also gained when the English team, including Spencer Steadman, gained victory in the world debating championships. The standard he and Emile Fortune set last year was always going to be hard to follow, and was very much a fitting end to Valerie St Johnston's years as coach.

This year a new coach was at the helm, Jonny White, whose policy has been to open up senior debating further down the School, encouraging as many pupils as possible to speak in

our internal society, with more motions debated impromptu and more speakers decided 'on the day' from members of the floor. Motions this year have varied from 'This House Would Live in Interesting Times' to 'This House Prefers Blur to Blair' (the latter being memorable as half the floor and one speaker had no idea who Blur was!) Having said that, attendances this year have been disappointing, especially amongst the Remove once UCAS season had been negotiated. The quality of debate has as ever been high, especially from the floor, where speeches, while invariably intelligent and often witty, have not always been quite to the point. Both Mkael Abrahams (DD), for his passionate floor speaking, and Alice Fleming (PP) for, among other things her staunch defence of the States (on more than one occasion), deserve mention.

Competition this year opened with an inglorious exit from the Mace in December. Laura Bender (GG) and James Acton (RR) had to oppose religions in schools, debating in a convent, against the convent - we finished third with two to qualify. But the year ended on a higher note when the same team qualified for the next round of the Cambridge Union competition, defending the House of Lords and the abolition of free education. We achieved the same result at the first round of the Oxford Union, but this time with Mohan Ganesalingam (QS) and James Acton proposing 'fighting for Queen and Country'. At the second round of Cambridge we faced the issue of the minimum wage and in spite of a valiant effort and some first rate debating from Laura, Westminster finished an agonisingly narrow second with one to qualify. The competitive season ended at the Oxford Union itself on finals day. We reached the last sixteen, and missed the next round by yet again one place, in spite of the most passionate case I have ever heard for talking to terrorists, advocated by Mohan. Jonathan Monroe (AH) and Tom Balogh (DD) got their first debate for the School on that occasion, dummifying for another team who failed to turn up. Although I was not able to hear them I am assured they comfortably outspoke many of the more experienced pairings.

Writing about competitions when results have been disappointing is hard enough without feeling that in some cases we were badly judged; cries of 'the judging was unfair' hold little weight with those who were not present, and will no doubt be seen by some as excuses. Yet on various occasions we faced judges ignoring some criteria clearly stated in the competition rules and discriminating on other criteria nowhere to be seen on marking rules.

A friendly against St Paul's Girls (medical technology versus morality) saw Mohan, Laura and James team up with Frederick Van der Wyck (DD) in a enjoyable end of season clash. Frederick drew attention to himself through some stunning summing-ups in junior debating, and his maiden speech left nothing to be desired. He, Laura, Mohan and a few others form the nucleus of some promising pairings in future seasons. But my most enduring memory of this year will perhaps be Mohan's floor speech in the Mace, a speech which made quite an impression on all. Starting from the topic A Levels he crescendoed into a rant, imploring us with the fire and sword to forge a new world order...

James Acton (Rigaud's)



JUNIOR DEBATING

The competition from an ever increasing range of other Lower School Activities does not appear to have diminished our enjoyment of an entertaining year of high calibre Junior Debates. Support from visiting Juniors and Seniors, added to the LSA's own representation, resulted in many well-attended debates with motions ranging from the controversial: 'This House would reintroduce National Service' to the lively: 'This House would make alcohol an illegal substance'.

Many of this year's debating topics have been closely tied to current affairs. A controversial television debate on the monarchy prompted: 'This House would abolish the Monarchy', in which the final vote was reassuringly in bold opposition to the motion; 'This House supports the Single European Currency' was, by contrast, widely supported. The launch of Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party led to: 'This House believes in Representative Government' - the first of many motions to be influenced by the impending General Election. A political theme reappeared in, 'This House would rather Blur than Blair' - a hotly contested duel between the Junior and Senior debaters. The undoubted superior experience of the Seniors led to the triumph of pop music over political chicanery.

A review of our activities suggests that our overall views are in favour of a monarchical system in which politicians are suspect, alcohol welcome, more representative government is wanted and in which we prefer the Euro to Sterling.

The debaters are indebted to Gilly French and to Jonny White for their tuition, guidance and encouragement throughout a most enjoyable year.

Gerard Rothschild (Liddell's)

WSBO

It has been said that the problem with boarding school is that there is nothing to do most nights. However, at Westminster School, one student wanted to change all that.

'My idea was that I wanted to set up something for boarders that would appeal to the type of culture that they were in; i.e. something that they would welcome on a night when they would have no prep, or something that they would just enjoy on a Friday night.'

That student was Jason Kow, and what he wanted to do was set up a Westminster School Box Office (WSBO), a fortnightly showing of a film at around eight o'clock on a Friday.

The WSBO got underway. So far the feedback from the pupils has been very positive. Most of the boarders think that it is very good since it provides them with some much needed relief from the workload that they get during the week. Planned improvements include the introduction of some sort of food service.

However, there are a few grey areas. The majority of pupils who go are mainly from the Lower School. I asked Jason to explain this.

'This is mainly because they have more free time on their hands. The Upper School in general have more work to do since they have to worry about coursework, and also exams. Thus the Upper School cannot really afford the time as much as the Lower School can.'

There has also been criticism that the films shown seem to show a lack of range. Jason responded by saying:

'I don't think it's really a wide range of films, but I'm trying to show what people want to see, what is popular at the time, and if, for example, action films are popular then I will show more action films. I am however trying to show more diverse films; for example, we showed Toy Story recently. However, the attendance was about a third of the normal attendance. What I'm really trying to do is have something that boarders will enjoy, and if they enjoy action films or comedy films, then I will show action films and comedy films.'

So one burning issue remains - what's going to happen when he leaves?

'I hope that the School can provide a successor, since I am funded by the School, because I believe that this is a service that every school should have since it provides a little relaxation at the end of a long week. I just hope that the person who replaces me will be able to do an even better job.'

Hopefully the School will be able to provide a successor since it seems that the WSBO is very popular, and many pupils want it to be continued. The only question remaining is whether the School will decide to replace him. They have a year to pick a successor. Let's hope they do.

Weng Yu (Busby's)

BRIDGE

The School only entered one team in the London Schools' League competition, wishing to avoid splitting up the best players. This policy has been vindicated by our results: we

performed unprecedentedly well in the League and are now seeded for the knockout stages. Even so, the younger players have been able to get some match experience due to the secretary's commitments to classics, a discipline which seems to take up every waking moment of an adherent's life (those making A level choices take note).

The League started off with a ritual trouncing of St Paul's (SPS has 7 teams, two of which are of international standard), who gave up well before the end of the match. Whitgift were tougher opposition, leading significantly at half-time, but fell before the inspired overbidding of Sam Treasure, who bid and made five diamonds doubled when the opponents should have made five hearts. St Paul's A beat us by a large margin, but we finished the term with a convincing win over Dulwich B, again after falling behind at half-time. A knock-out match against St Paul's C awaits next term...

A new event started by the EBU this year is the Schools' Simultaneous Pairs, in which results of an internal competition are compared with results on identical cards achieved in other schools. The first of these was extremely successful, with the first pair being ranked in the top 15% of the national field. This event is extremely useful as it allows the younger players to gain experience in duplicate techniques.

Altogether, the year can only be regarded as a success for the team. New players in the Lower School are showing considerable promise, and the first team continues to improve.

Jonathan Monroe (Ashburnham)

The Team: Jonathan Monroe (AH, Captain), Saul Lipetz (QS, Secretary), Thomas Baranga (QS), Alice Fleming (PP)

Substitutes: Sam Treasure (QS), Ahmed Lajam (QS)

HENRY VII SINGERS 1996-97

This has been an excellent year for the Henry VII Singers. A large and enthusiastic intake of new Sixth Formers has helped swell the ranks, and the Singers are now better and busier than ever before.

The first exciting project of the year was the performance, in two consecutive Abbeys, of Carissimi's beautiful oratorio *Jephtah*. Telling the story of a father's rash promise and its tragic consequences, we heard scenes of battle, triumphant homecoming, despair and lamentation. The two main characters were sung by Ben Linton and Hettie Williams; but there were a number of smaller solos and a prominent chorus rôle. Later in the Play Term we sang three pieces in the carol service, immediately after which we all trundled down to the Banqueting House where we entertained various members of the House of Lords and their guests at a charity dinner. As a result, Lord Archer seems to be on first name terms with our conductor, but not apparently the other way round...

After having successfully led the singing at the 1996 School Confirmation, the Henry VII Singers appear to have landed themselves a regular job. For this year's Confirmation Service we learned Jonathan Harvey's haunting anthem *Come Holy Ghost*, with the assistance of its dedicatee Martin Neary, the Abbey organist. We had to reassure several people that 'it is meant to sound like that', but in the end most appeared to enjoy it.

One of the main duties of the Singers is to provide music for School Communion services, held in the Henry VII chapel twice a term (hence our name). This we continue to enjoy. We have sung anthems by Pachabel and Gibbons as well as old favourites from the anthem book. This year's May Day madrigals, another regular, were our best ever.

Our first production, a semi-staged version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* was a triumph. A courtroom drama about good old British justice, it was not without drama of its own: Maxwell Grender-Jones singing the Judge on less than a full complement of lungs, and Nick Clark gallantly learning in three hours the part of the Defendant after Ben Linton's late retirement with a sore throat. Rising star Meera Kumar sang the Counsel and Hettie Williams made a pleasing Plaintiff. Supported by some first-rate chorus singing and Guy Hopkins's piano playing, and followed by the Annual Dinner, it was truly an evening to remember.

Gilly French

EXPEDITIONS SOCIETY 1996-97

Another very good year can be reported. Membership has kept to high levels, and the number of Sixth and Remove involved in at least one Expedition is very encouraging. Play Term saw Sailing in the Channel and the ever popular Lyke Wake Walk. This year's LWW was heavily oversubscribed (warning to potential walkers next year!). Lent Term was more awkward because of the lack of free weekends, but the cavers managed to get away, and the small party who got to Skye also had a marvellous time. Election Term brings the good weather and is always busy. Cycling, Parachuting, more Caving (due to popular demand) and Riding are all in the pipeline. To cap it all, a week in Scotland over the vac looms for the Summer Camp.

As for next year, the perennial favourites (LWW, Sailing, Caving, Parachuting) will all be there. The Easter Camp will be cross-country skiing in Norway, and the Summer Camp looks like taking off for one of the USA's National Parks.

I would like to thank all those who have helped in running the Expeditions this year - the assistance is much valued.

Damian Riddle

PHAB

Two things stick in my mind about the PHAB week. The first is what we were set up to expect - how I went into it recoiling against horror stories of exhaustion, stress, and irritatingly psychological 'spiritual development'. The second, how much easier everything became. By the end of the first afternoon, awkwardness was sliding down the list of priorities, and we were functioning - granted, in an unusual environment, and with slightly more responsibility and required effort - as coherently as Westminster conceivably can. I can't stress enough how quickly disability stopped being the major issue (except where it concerned the daily manoeuvring of wheelchairs up and down stairs), and how various hyped stereotypes ('the chronic exhaustive', 'the emotional gauntlet') found themselves clinging on, rather than controlling. At a certain point - and that point comes pretty soon - you find yourself having more problems with



fellow ABs than the PHs you're meant to be focussed on: legend has it that last year's Crucible-like scenario saw bemused PH's counselling traumatised Westminsterers. There's always the flip-side, of course; the hard-core financial advantages of the week: flexible budget, perennial chocolate supplies, theatre, and cinema. All successful, except our final *Mission Impossible* outing (£5.50 for a desperately needed three hour nap, and not-so-comfortable chair), which just goes to show the truth behind various horror stories. Yes, you do get pretty tired. Yes, socialising is the order of the day. And yes, there's no question that the week involves an excessive amount of lifting, early rising, and tolerance.

The 'pragmatism' theory, however, refuses to fit the whole equation. Even for people who have done the course several times, the emotional side remains a highly charged, and highly attractive, area. At its most mechanical, you can trace a few stages: the obvious initial awkwardness, being unsure of what to say, when, and how to say it; improvements on both sides, and shift from conscious 'socialising' to chatting; and the final, indiscriminating retaliation against everything, and desperate bid for sleep. This - even this - doesn't account for everything. Despite a violent phobia of over-emotionalising, and inbuilt 'psychobabble' filter, feelings squeeze through that cannot be slotted into any kind of agenda - realising that you're giving, and having, a lot of pleasure, that conversations are now more interesting than awkward, and still (even though it becomes less frequent), that you are incredibly lucky to be able to dress and feed yourself. Everything, in this respect, seems to be a mixture of extremes: intense fun, intense exhaustion; one minute motivated, the next, deflated.

Unsurprisingly, the ending concert - towards which daily workshops had been geared - encapsulated the week's exotic emotional combinations. An Oscar-winning performance by David Esfandi boosted the remarkable Abba hits/musical numbers repertoire, was burnished by futuristic prop contributions, and backdropped by PHAB's premiering

thriller sequence. After a much deserved round of mutual back-patting, we were left with the last item - David Myles reciting one of his own poems. It is difficult to pin down, and even harder to describe. If I say that he can hardly move or talk, and that he writes exclusively of love and beauty, the audience confusion becomes understandable - one of the only times where the clichéd laugh/cry dilemma has been totally accurate. If I had to sum up PHAB in a memory, it would have to be that finale. The week is a balancing act, a see-saw of overwhelming sympathy and awkwardness (unproductive), and pitiless pragmatism (equally unproductive). Embarrassingly obvious as it may sound, the key to a sane seven days is remembering that they're in it for fun, that you're in it for fun, and that you'll end up getting as much out as you put in.

Salome Leventis (Hakluyt's)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

'Ask not what the community can do for you, but what you can do for the community.' This would be a fine, even noble, reason for doing community service but most of the twenty of us who do Community Service on Station afternoons have more pragmatic ones - including avoiding going up to the knees in the Thames in weather that would make a polar bear wince. But there's more to it than an excuse for spending the afternoon making cookies and doing finger painting. It's a great way of getting a view of life which isn't filtered through books. Placements include nursery and primary schools, working in hospitals and Oxfam shops and visiting the elderly. The breadth of options is matched only by the variety of people who take part, from the future doctor who feels her work in a geriatric ward shows her the less glamorous side of medicine to the visitor of the elderly who said, 'It's fascinating, she's done things my family and I have never done and will never do.'

Rachel Wellman (Purcell's)



ST BOTOLPH'S

St Botolph's is a self-funding project, set up to help the homeless in central London. It is run from the halls and crypt of St Botolph's Church which is next door to Aldgate tube station, in the heart of the City of London. Over the Play and Lent Terms this year thirty or so Westminsterers (all volunteers from the Sixth and Remove) worked there, each for a few weeks, on Monday nights.

Like most people who volunteered to work on the project, I

had no idea what to expect from it nor what would be expected of me. On arrival each evening, we were allocated jobs, ranging from giving out soap, rolls and sandwiches (the latter were donated by snack bars from the vicinity) to taking names of people wanting to see the doctor or nurse, or any one of the many little tasks needed to keep the evening running smoothly. Afterwards there was cleaning-up and then a long discussion with the project workers as to what we felt had been good or bad about the evening. The atmosphere was always relaxed, welcoming and friendly; only once in all the times I went to St Botolph's was there any kind of violence and that was dealt with so quickly, it seemed over almost before it had started.

I feel that the benefit to me, and to all those who took part has been enormous. Rather than making uninformed generalisations about what I believed the reasons for homelessness to be, I recognise now that there are no simple solutions to this complex and on-going problem. Only by taking part in a programme at the lowest level can we hope to understand the realities of the situation.

All credit to those who took the plunge and gave up their time. To any considering working at St Botolph's - you miss this opportunity at your peril. Many thanks to John Troy and all the other members of staff who facilitated our working on the project.

Alex Aiken (College)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AT WESTMINSTER

Westminster School has been an active supporter of Amnesty International for several years now, and has run weekly letter-writing sessions open to all years.

We started the year handicapped. The 1996-97 committee was surprised to find itself in debt to the tune of over £150 to the School. This was due, in part, to an absence of funding by the School, and to the extensive use of money raised here to fund Amnesty projects elsewhere.

Owing to this, the new committee (Tom Balogh, Vineet Dewan, Mohan Ganesalingam, Jacob Kenedy, Jamie McClelland, Jemma Myers, Dave Odgers, Cara Proctor and Francesca Segal), rather anxious to conserve and raise money, obtained permission to hold a Shag Day after a rousing talk in Abbey by Jamie McClelland. The Shag Day provided well in excess of £500 in new funds, making Amnesty solvent once again.

Every week, members of the School write to governments and embassies which condone, or choose to ignore, human rights violations such as torture, the oppression of freedom of speech, wrongful imprisonment and unjust capital punishment. This year we have written to, among many others, Algeria, South Africa, Indonesia, the USA, and also to Great Britain (under both Conservative and Labour administrations) about the export of military and security equipment to countries known to disregard human rights, and we have had considerable success with our home government, and also with prisoners of conscience abroad.

Attendance at our letter-writing sessions has been consistently high, to a maximum of sixty-seven participants. It would seem that Amnesty has a long future at the School, and we look forwards to many forthcoming productive years.

Jacob Kenedy (Dryden's)

TRIPS

JAPAN 1996

As far as expectations go, none of us hoped for anything beyond surviving the trip. The reality therefore could not have been anything less than a pleasant surprise.

We congregated *en masse* (all eight of us - two girls, five boys and Mr James Gazet) at Heathrow where, after the usual tearful goodbyes from our parents, we prepared for our ten hour flight. Once on the plane, I took part in the usual ritual of shuffling seats, ending up squashed between two of the boys (at which point, surviving the trip seemed a tall order). Having arrived at Tokyo airport, we then proceeded on a further two hour journey on a train, standing all the way. Tired, hungry and bad-tempered, we finally met with our host families. The temporary relief of finding my host father friendly and fluent in English evaporated when we parted company from the others and continued with yet another two hour train journey (standing too).

After a night of hearty introductions and delicious Japanese food, I was then told that I had to get up at five in the morning in time to leave for school. Having initially vowed never to set foot on a Japanese train again, I had the pleasure of another journey, smiling continuously and greeting my exchange's friends who appeared at every stop. It became evident that all students at Keio Shonan High School took the train to school - there was even a public bus direct from the train station to the school. The train system in Japan is much more organised than our own, but one fault I found was not so much with the system as with the commuters. They did not seem to have much respect for each other nor for their own comfort as they piled on the trains, shoving so that we were packed tightly with very little room in the carriages. Much of my time on the trains was concentrated on ensuring I received enough oxygen.

Keio Shonan High School was very modern, clean and organised. We spent a lot of time in lessons, during which we frequently had no idea about what was going on, but it appeared that although no teacher taught the class continuously, the students chose whether to listen or not. In one particular lesson, the Maths teacher ran out of the room crying because the majority of the students refused to pay attention. In another Maths lesson, the teacher rather smugly stood me up and asked me to answer one of the questions. Equally smugly, I answered the question and was greeted by a round of applause and sounds of awe. Having established my goddess status, I then received notes from all over the room asking to be my friend or whether I liked hip-hop.

The students were all surprisingly friendly and sociable in contrast with the attitudes of some of the English. They wore uniform trousers or skirts with a choice of top. It soon became obvious however that the socially acceptable dress was Ralph Lauren jumpers, preferably red. The girls also had a curious way of wearing loose white socks up to their calf muscles, the rule being that the trendier you were, the looser the socks. The fact that these socks seemed to defy the laws of physics by staying up puzzled us until we learnt that they used sock-glue!

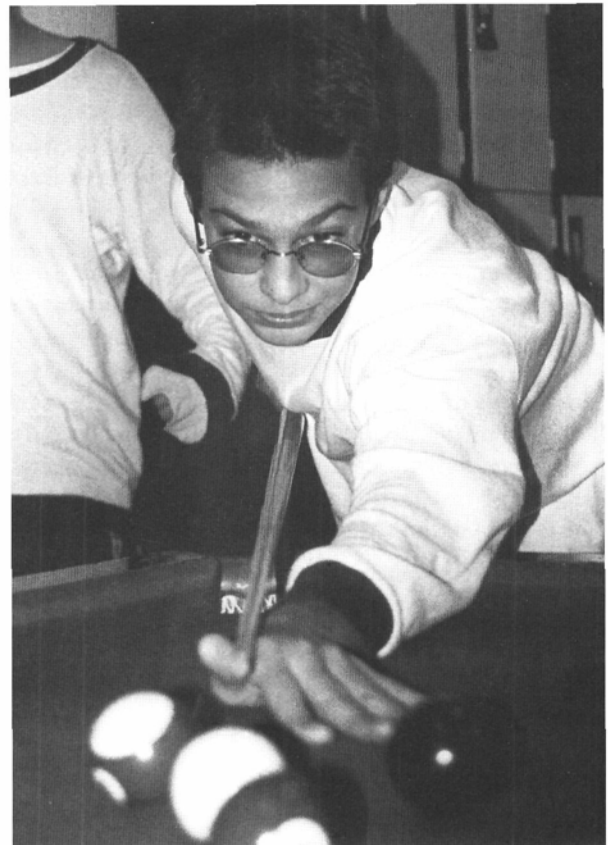
Our social life revolved around karaoke sessions. But as we laughingly went out to our first session set to have some fun, we soon found that the Japanese took their karaoke very

seriously, making what we thought to be a form of entertainment a serious hobby. Despite the English songs being restricted to *Bohemian Rhapsody* and the various hits of Shampoo (who?), we nevertheless showed them a thing or two with our head banging and hearty renditions.

I had never been particularly fond of sushi, so fearing I would be forced to eat raw fish for two weeks, I had armed myself with packs of Chocolate Digestives. As it turned out, I did not even have to take them out of my bag. Our hosts fed us very well, and the mother spent hours in the kitchen preparing a selection of Japanese delicacies every evening, for which I thanked her with appreciative murmurs and the only Japanese words I could think of.

We spent a weekend sight seeing - either statues of Buddha or shopping centres - as well as various day trips. Our cruel teacher refused to take us to Disneyland, though shopping in the Ginza district of Tokyo partly made up for this. On the whole, the trip turned out to be surprisingly enjoyable. The beauty of Japan and the friendliness of the Japanese made it an incredible and worthwhile experience.

Meera Arumugan (Hakluyt's)



THE SIXTH FORM TRIP TO RUSSIA

In March this year, four Sixth Form boys and their Russian teacher, Dr Hugh Aplin, set out from Heathrow to St Petersburg. The plane left early in the morning and the flight was uneventful. Arrival in St Petersburg was smoother than the usual reception for foreigners in a Russian airport.

By the time the boys' bags were with them in the minivan and they were riding into the centre of the city everything was different. Gone was the capitalism and commercialism of England. Gone were the sights and noises of England. Even more strikingly, gone was English, the mother tongue of each of the five travellers. In Russia, the definition of common sense is different. It makes sense to drink lukewarm water because cold water makes you ill. People will remind you to stop whistling because if you whistle you will never have money. The Soviet Union was (together with the US) the strongest nation in the world and always would have been were it not for Gorbachev.

During their time in St Petersburg the boys had a chance to experience Russian culture while deepening their knowledge of the Russian language. The boys had a three hour lesson every day, while in the evening they visited art and cultural museums, cemeteries, operas, ballets, palaces and markets. In their free time in the evenings they had a chance to explore the city on their own until they dined with their host families. The boys are accommodated during the Russian trip with host families that have been selected by the tour agent. This provides an opportunity for the students to practise their spoken Russian in a domestic situation.

There is a lot to be learned by going to Russia, especially for a Russianist. The boys who went all enjoyed their time there while learning Russian both mimetically and didactically. Experiencing a culture firsthand is the best way to learn to appreciate it.

Fred Hodder (Rigaud's)

SUMMER CAMP 1996

My last sight of England: dark sea, grey storm clouds faithfully following its shores, and the sun going down in a blaze of glory, lighting the dark clouds and tinting them red and gold. When we arrived in Spain the weather was perfect and the thought of those rain clouds seemed very distant.

'Does anyone know where we are?' This remark sums up one of the main preoccupations of the camp. This was for the simple reason that the only one of us who had ever seen the Picos de Europa before was Martin Robinson, and even he not for some time. So in spite of inspired map work from nearly everyone (except me) it always took some time before we could say that the mountain we were climbing actually was Pena Vieja and not some other rocky mass that had inconsiderately got in our way.

Another very common remark had two variations on this most original theme; 'Andrew, how do you say...?' and 'Andrew, what's he saying?' Andrew Bartlett, interpreter and rock climbing expert for the expedition, was our only Spanish speaker and so naturally, at the slightest hint of language difficulties, the adventurous person who was attempting to explain or ask for something to the Spanish-speaking person on the other side of the counter would set up

a cry for help to Andrew, who would immediately clear up the problem, with a few incomprehensible (at least to me) words.

Mark Tocknell, Martin Robinson and Bill Phillips came with us; I would like to thank them and Andrew for a wonderful holiday. Mark Tocknell led us all over the Picos, generally in the right direction. He even managed to restrain Martin Robinson from reaching the top several hours in front of the rest of the party. He accomplished this notable feat by putting us into order: he set the pace (termed by Andrew a funeral march) then came the slowest and Martin Robinson at the back. Bill Phillips was invaluable since even without speaking any Spanish he managed to provide what seemed an almost unlimited supply of superb nectarines and other food for picnics as well as quick and easy to cook meals.

The walking and climbing were idyllic: towering canyons, Promethean cliffs rearing to the sky. At one time when we were on a peak the clouds formed beneath us, and all that could be seen was a fluffy landscape of cloud with the tops of the mountains piercing it. Most of the mountains were around six to eight thousand feet, and even driving as high as we could we would still have a considerable ascent. In any case the minibus could not always cope. Once the gradient was so steep that the minibus ground to a halt and so after giving it an encouraging shove we walked after it, picking up the cutlery that was falling from the trailer. Of course we did do things apart from watching the view: airy chat, limericks and poems were exchanged and the Spanish mountains reverberated to the sound of hymns and a drinking version of 'Do-Re-Mi' sung both *fortissimo* and out of tune. Half way through the holiday we walked through the Cares Gorge, looking a hundred metres down sheer cliffs into a peaceful river which wound slowly through the canyon. We later saw that the river was peaceful because a canal had been drilled through the cliff to run parallel with the river. Edward Lynch-Bell thought that the ideal way to see the gorge would be drifting along this canal in an inner tube. The one trouble was we did not know where or how the ride would end - another day perhaps.

We went on a wild camp, walking into the Central Massif and camping by a spring that some resourceful farmer or hiker had channelled through an old broken coke bottle. The valley where we camped was about three or four thousand feet above sea level and extremely beautiful, with serpentine tracks which had been etched by a river and luxuriant grass sweeping up to a band of red bracken which in turn gave way to the rocky screes and towering cliffs of the mountains.

As well as the amazing walking and scrambling some special activities were organised. One day we could choose between riding or mountaineering. I chose riding. For five hours we rode over a mountain through spectacular scenery. When we dropped down to the lake, there was a horse box waiting. 'Brilliant', we thought, 'we're going to be driven home.' So all we needed to do was nurse our stiff muscles and wait for someone to pick us up. We sat down on the grass and waited. An hour later, when we were beginning to wonder where the car was, the guide came up to us and said the horses had rested long enough! The showers were crowded that night and supper was late!

Rock climbing was brilliant; starting with only mild climbs the rock became progressively harder as the day advanced, and at the end of it I was standing on a tiny protrusion from

the rock face with one foot, with one of my hands in a little hole in the rock, and the other frantically groping for a hold

Tom Balogh (Dryden's)

SPANISH SIXTH FORM TRIP TO VALLADOLID: EASTER 1997

Sitting in a café on the crowded beautiful Plaza Mayor as the sun slowly set in the cloudless Spanish sky, we knew we'd made the right decision. A Level Spanish is not an easy course but if it gives you the key to worlds like this... School trips of this sort don't just help your learning of the language, they remind you why you bother; under the light of a foreign sun vocab tests and verb tables miraculously gain purpose and lose some of their tedium.

Valladolid has some very pretty parts such as the old university, but mainly it fits into the pattern of most small western cities with pedestrianised shopping areas in the middle surrounded by extensive residential and commercial suburbs. I stayed with a family in 'Sun Park', a new development next to an out-of town shopping centre. Iniake, the son and a rising star of third division football, unfortunately broke his leg while we were there so was unable to show us around but he was always up for a game of Nintendo or a chat about Spanish life. He insisted once, between his fantastically unfunny jokes, that he could walk into town in 45 minutes - I preferred to take the bus.

Most days we had classes at a language school in the centre of the city, taught by the admirably patient Ani. The school also organised excursions every other day. A visit to El Escorial (Felipe II's enormous country palace) one morning and El Valle de los Caídos (Franco's cathedral) in the afternoon demonstrated in one day Spain's passionate need for splendour and its more macabre side. Other trips to Salamanca (known as the 'Oxford of Spain' but more ornate) and the historic village of Tordesillas led up to what many saw as the highlight of the trip: an afternoon's visit to a bodega. Whilst some of our guide's more technical observations on the very subtle process of wine-making were hard to understand, the spirit of the place was not lost on us. Treat your grapes as you would have them treat you and all will be well.

A day after this the trip was over; in two days we were back at School. It had been an eventful and happy ten days - enough work to keep the teachers happy, enough fun for it to have felt like a holiday.

Howard Gooding (Dryden's)

SCHOOL SKI TRIP TO KILLINGTON, VERMONT

At the end of the Christmas term 1996, a party set off by tube for Heathrow to board a Virgin flight to Boston. Seeing little of Boston apart from the inside of the airport and the freeways (hopefully not its most attractive features) we boarded the bus for the several hours drive to Killington, Vermont, making the obligatory en route stop at the 'American Embassy' (McDonald's).

The party consisted of two members of staff, C D Riches and Claudia Harrison, and about twenty boys and two girls, mainly in the Sixth Form and Upper Shell. We were staying at the Mountain Green Condominiums, a few minutes walk



just below the overhang that was the last part of the climb, and not quite reaching it. Naturally I fell.

We also went caving and were warned by Mark Tocknell, an experienced caver, that the caves would be muddy, cramped and dark. It was therefore a shock when we entered the first cave and found that he had only been right in one particular; the cave was dark. This darkness was easily banished by the acetylene torches that we wore and we were able to see the cave. It was huge, the first cavern was a hundred metres by a hundred and forty, and was filled with breathtaking stalactites and stalagmites. In the next cave there was a natural organ of translucent, shimmering pipes. These were hollow and when tapped gave out a note.

The second cave that we entered was different. We had to abseil down a hundred metres or so before getting to the bottom of the cave. My main worry was that if my light was burning, I was afraid of it searing through the rope, and if it was not, it was impossible to see and I would bash myself on the rock. Naturally, it went out half way down, so I dangled trying to get my lighter out of my pocket and terrified of letting go of the rock and falling. It turned out that I need not worry; my 'descender' had stuck and I could not fall, even if I wanted. The passages in this cave were very much more what Mark Tocknell had warned us about - muddy! The floor was magnificent, regular wave patterns made out of a reddish rock, huge red pillars ascending to the ceiling and mud.

After we had been caving Mark Tocknell happened to mention that if we had 'flu-like symptoms two to three weeks later, we should go to a doctor as it was possible that we had caught Weil's Disease. We said that we would remember this, not expecting anything to come of it. Unfortunately, twenty days later, swimming happily in the Saronic Gulf, 'flu-like symptoms attacked me. Oh dear.

away from the 'Base Lodge' where the ski lifts started. The rooms were more like small apartments, sleeping around four people, with a TV, kitchen area and balcony. The Mountain Green complex included a restaurant where we ate breakfast (with plenty of local maple syrup) and dinner. There was also a games arcade where CD and Claudia Harrison battled it out over the air hockey table and a health centre with volleyball and swimming. In the evenings we watched videos or played volleyball, going out one night to a disco and another tenpin bowling.

The skiing was divided up into morning lessons with our instructor, Al, who was from 'London, England' as his badge told us and, even worse, an avid supporter of Arsenal. In the afternoon we were free to go off in groups and ski where we liked. The skiing was good even though many of the runs were closed due to lack of snow. In the afternoons we did some of the hardest double black runs and the fusion zones - large areas of the mountain side where you pick your own route down through the trees. The mountains are quite low so all the skiing is below the tree line with wide cleared trails. The afternoon of the last day was probably the best as it poured with rain and skiing some steep runs in warm rain was a great feeling.

Edward Hill (Liddell's)

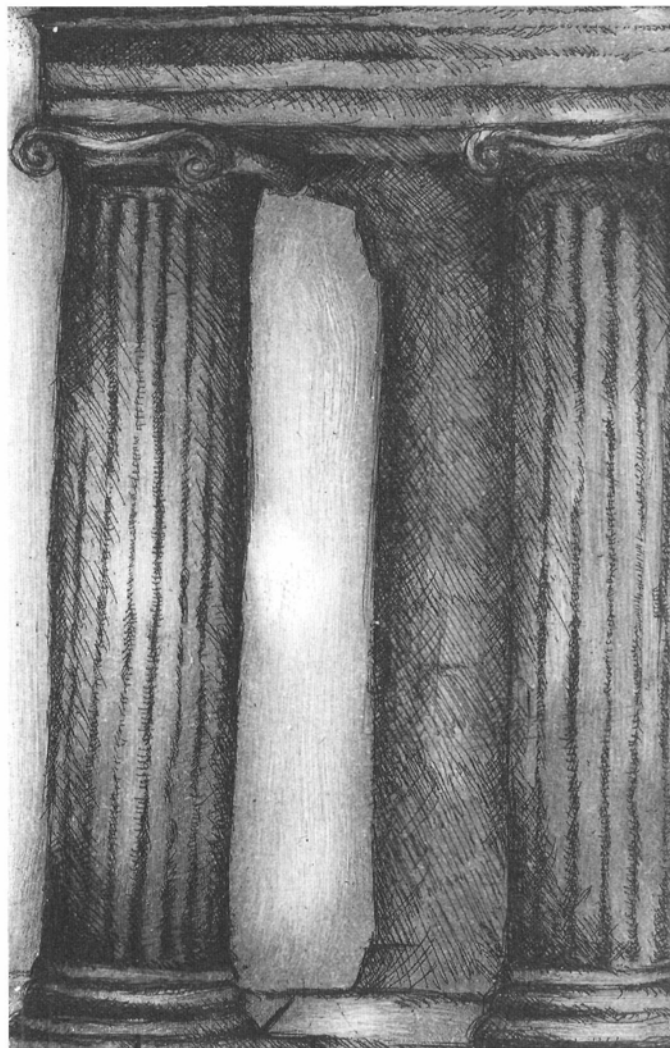
TAKING OWLS TO ATHENS

Need an extra pair of hands on the Classics trip? Why not take a physicist? It was with a little trepidation that I agreed to join the party, feeling I probably knew less about Ancient Greece than the pupils. So two Classics masters, 23 pupils and I assembled at Heathrow on a grey Tuesday morning just before the Easter holidays. One hiccup (one passport in luggage!) and four hours later we and all our luggage arrived in Athens. As we were in the home of democracy we immediately had a vote and headed out to see that intellectually stimulating film *Mars Attacks*.

Next day came real culture. After visiting the Acropolis and standing in the Agora, where Socrates and Plato must have once stood and debated, I wondered whether we had had the highlights of the tour on the first day. But no - each day that lay ahead held unexpected and often dramatic delights. There were the religious sanctuaries - Olympia in its shady glades, Delphi clinging to its mountainside and - my favourite - the small and intimate Amphiareon. There were small glimpses into a past world, such as the trireme slipway at Sounion - no bigger than an inshore lifeboat slipway at home. There was also the delight of scrambling up a hillside and finding shards of ancient pottery lying scattered around - this was so absorbing that the majority of us got hopelessly lost on the way down!

As well as Classical Greece we saw the almost mythical Mycenaean Greece. We followed in Schliemann's footsteps populating Mycenae with characters from Homer, we sat in Nestor's cave and imagined Odysseus's son passing by in search of his father.

The tour wasn't restricted to the ancient history of Greece, for all around us were the obvious signs of a later and perhaps more turbulent history: castles of Frankish, Venetian and Turkish occupations. After visiting the Castle of Karytena we were unexpectedly invited to visit the village's



Agnieszka Wiloch (Purcell's)

13th century Byzantine church - the frescos were tired and faded, but our host's folk memories of midnight services during Turkish occupation were vivid and moving.

The holiday wasn't all culture - there was also time to build impressive fortifications of our own in the sands at Tolon, to play football and skim stones into the sea.

We were also aware of history being made; while we had seen images from Albania on the television, we saw for ourselves an Albanian freight ship waiting in Navarino Bay to disgorge its cargo of refugees.

It would have been hard to engineer a more appropriate ending to the trip and it encapsulated all that I had expected of a Classics trip from Westminster - Saul Lipetz declaiming an ode of Horace in the theatre at Epidaurus.

And finally, if you are wondering about the title, well for that and much more I am indebted to my Classical colleagues, Charles Low and Jonathan Katz - it is the Ancient Greek version of 'coals to Newcastle'.

EXPEDITIONS SOCIETY EASTER CAMP

The 1996 Camp had been so successful that there seemed to be little left to climb in the Cuillin this year. But the first day saw us trudging up towards Coire Ghrundeah, before splitting into two parties; one to accompany Adam Hunt's (OW) thermos full of raspberry jelly to Sgurr nan Eag, the other to hang precariously off the Thearliach-Dubh gap for an hour or two. What was obvious from the start was that the weather had presented us with ideal conditions (almost no snow, dry rock) and that the party was generally very technically competent. It was a shame therefore that the second day began with a driving blizzard. As our plan had been to navigate part of the knife-edge ridge, the 40mph winds were a tad off-putting, so the day was instead spent trying to find a tea-room in Portree.

After the wet day, the rock was going to be a little less secure, so the party decided that a quick trip to the north of the ridge would be best. Bruach na Frithe, always an easy climb, was the target. At last here was the snow which we'd been looking for! As we ice-axed our way to the top, Skye played its usual trick and the weather closed in. After bagging the Munro and becoming soaked through, it suddenly seemed a jolly good idea to try An Basteir. In the end sense prevailed, and, sitting on our rucksacks, we slid back down the mountain. By now, the rain had widened all the little streams which we had crossed on our walk-in. Damian Riddle impressed everyone by pirouetting on a stepping stone and falling gracefully into one of these raging torrents. Day 4. A long day on the mountains: two different routes to the summit of Mhic Choinnich had been followed by two different ascents of the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Philip Needham can be congratulated on getting half way up before realising that he wasn't wearing a helmet...

Next day (Monday) saw the group ascend Bla Bheinn by the long ridge. Taking lunch half way up the peak with a view over the whole Cuillin was one of the highlights of the trip, particularly with the sorts of bizarre conversations that the altitude inspires.

Mark Tocknell's plan to take in the Pinnacle Ridge on Tuesday was foiled by evil weather, and so the group girded up its collective loins and returned to Westminster after a very successful week.

Damian Riddle

LYKE WAKE WALK

mad, a. (-dd-). Out of one's mind, insane; (of person or conduct) wildly foolish; (prov.) ~ as a March HARE, as a hatter; ~'house, lunatic asylum. Hence ~'LY adv., ~NESS n.

The other end of the phone suddenly went very quiet.

I breathed slowly and gently, my eyes clenched tight shut, and my fingers inadvertently crossed; I had been expecting



Madness? Nick Clark

this.

'So, let me get this straight,' came my mother's voice after a few seconds of a silence more expressive than any words could possibly be. She became mute once more, obviously trying her hardest to understand what I had just told her. Finally, she spoke again, slowly and pointedly: 'Let me get this straight. You want to do this Lyke Wake Walk thing. In the middle of Yorkshire. In the middle of the night. In the middle of *Winter*... And it's forty-two miles long.'

Well, she hadn't said 'no' straightaway. More to the point, unlike everyone else, she hadn't said that I was m...

'Nick, as your mother, I think that I ought to be the first to tell you: you're *mad*!'

I laughed down the phone line. 'Mum, you are by *no* means the first.'

Madness is often associated with the moon.

However, as far as I can remember, there was no moon on the night of the Walk. Although, that's not saying much because the majority of my memories are confused and blurred. Maybe amnesia is a symptom of madness...

I am sure that there are many other traits which indicate a slight lack of sanity; perhaps included in these are singing maniacally to the empty black moors, throwing yourselves in the muddiest boggy bits you can find, seeing and hearing people through the mist only to find on closer inspection that they are a sheep bleating or an upstanding rock, or screaming to the stars that you can go on no further without your legs breaking, and yet continuing to drag yourselves on - *we walk, therefore we hurt*, someone had said... *we hurt, therefore we walk*, another had countered, inspired with determination and a resolution to defeat the Walk.

However, the surest indication I have that the Walk induces madness is when someone asks me whether I would do it again next year and I answer: 'You just try and stop me!'; mad or not, we were all brought together and bound by the closest comradeship I have ever known. The Walk was painful. The Walk was challenging. The Walk drove us all mad. It was more rewarding than I thought possible.

If this is madness, count me in...



Excuse me. I think you dropped...

Nick Clark (Rigaud's)

SWANSEA SAFARI 1997

Swansea was the site of Westminster's annual Geography A level trip. Post World War II the area was swallowed up in economic depression, and in an attempt to put Swansea back on the map there has been recent development. Our trip ran from 23-28 March. There were nine pupils and three teachers.

We were welcomed by 1970s tower blocks and yellow net curtains. This was our accommodation. We were based in Swansea University's campus where we slept, studied and supped every day.

Our trip involved both physical and human geography. We studied Swansea's city centre and its decay, and the Lower Swansea Valley, a site of redundant industry that has brought with it crime and poverty. A huge attempt has been made recently at boosting the local economy and this was central to our study. The second half of our stay was spent studying the beautiful coastline and its quaint rural settlements. Swansea lies on the Gower Peninsula, which has recently gained the status of 'an area of outstanding natural beauty'.

Nightfall brought exploration of the local night life. Unfortunately our mapping of Swansea's services in the day brought little hope of any excitement by night. However, we took advantage of a peaceful five days out of London and discovered many old and attractive pubs.

The working day was long, yet rewarding, and the week passed quickly. Our return to London was welcomed yet the contrast was astounding. Life in Swansea is very different from one amongst the bright lights and I, with my



TALES OF THE WORKPLACE

BANKER

As the cold ripped across my face, and the sun was still rising in the sky, I began to wonder just exactly what I thought I was doing at such a vulgar hour, twelve miles from home, wearing a suit in the middle of the holidays. When I was initially offered the chance of working for Morgan Stanley I jumped at the chance. But now, having been up several hours and having travelled across London to Canary Wharf, I began to think again.

All my fears were soon allayed as I was introduced around the offices. With an office canteen the size of most offices the sheer immensity of the organisation became rapidly apparent. With alcoves of free coffee machines, speakers in the ceilings and an average of four monitors per computer this was clearly techno-paradise. It wasn't long before all my dreams of a week of decadence and glamour were ended when the time came when people in suits have to do what people wearing suits have to do, call their accountants! My first job was filing, followed by photocopying. My heart leapt - all I would have to do would be to file, photocopy, and drink coffee - what a life.

As the first week progressed several things became abundantly clear. First, work does not consist of filing, photocopying and drinking coffee; it involved calculators, computers, pieces of paper and thought - but every so often I was permitted to go and ride in the lifts on the pretence of going to the graphics department. Second, the reason I never see business men on the tube in the morning is because they are all in the office by the time I usually get out of bed. Once the initial shock of working wore off I began to appreciate just how much information there was to deal with in financial markets, and how much work needed to be done to accomplish this. Since I was only doing a fraction of the others around me, city salaries almost seemed justified.

By the time my last day arrived I was looking forward to a slow wind down to the week, requiring minimal effort from me. Instead I found a pile on my desk that almost dominated the office skyline. Then before I even had time for my customary early morning coffee, I had to jump in a cab and courier a phone to the airport, and all before breakfast. This was a welcome end to a fortnight of long days, short nights, and an eye-opening glimpse into a future that could well happen.

Nick Moodie (Liddell's)

INVESTOR

Early into my Sixth Form year, I discovered that I could take a work placement via the School. I hoped for something in investment... I dreamed of getting a job with a large firm, making multi-million pound deals for breakfast, having a secretary, playing golf with big executives...

However, it wasn't quite like that. Three months later, when no placement had been found for me, my dreams seemed shattered. A few days later it was. I was to work in an investor relations firm.

The day after school finished I set off to work at eight o'clock in the morning, ready for a hard day's work. I arrived at 9:30. My presence was announced to the staff and I went on a tour of the building. 'So what's my first job?' I asked, eager to get going on the multi-million pound deals.

'Filing,' came the reply.

Dismay. My dreams shattered as I spend the whole day filing. I don't know if it's possible to be more bored.

The next few days showed an alarming trend towards filing. Not a good sign. However, four days into the job I attended the results presentation of a major construction company. Progress! I then spent the next couple of days doing work in relation to that company. The next day was quiet as it was just before Easter. At least I got to go home early.

Three days left. I discovered that there were rather a lot of charts to do, so I spent the remaining few days making charts and looking up company's details for the records.

After celebrating the end of work, a few days later I weighed up all the costs and benefits. Was it worth having to work two-thirds of my holidays? The answer is, quite comprehensively, yes. I doubt that I could have learnt as much anywhere else.

Weng Yu (Busby's)



JOURNALIST

'Black Rod!' When first I heard those words, I was watching the proroguing of Parliament from the Press Gallery of the House of Commons and at same time gaining marvellous insights into the working lives of both journalists and politicians.

Work-placement with the Political Editor of *The Guardian* was absorbing, especially as the first day that I was there was not only the day that Parliament was prorogued but was also the day that *The Guardian* fired its pre-election broadside over sleaze at the Conservatives. This meant that my first impression of their work was of knuckle-biting anxiety, caused by one simple question; would the Tories attempt to raise a question in Parliament before it was too late and they had to leave. Even after the Speaker relayed the wishes of the Chancellor to the Commons, we were not out of our anxiety: up stood a senior Conservative MP and... thanked the Speaker.

With such an exciting start to the week, it would have been unsurprising if the rest had been a slight anticlimax. However it was nothing of the sort. That week I went to press conferences at both the Labour and Conservative Headquarters, saw Margaret Thatcher go on a inspection tour of the Conservative campaign, attended an 'off the record' meeting between *The Guardian* staff and Labour spin-doctor Peter Mandelson and, most importantly, organised *The Guardian* Political Library in the House of Commons office.

All in all this experience was highly rewarding and if I have one complaint it is that after this tremendous experience I am not sure whether it is preferable to be a politician or a journalist; both jobs seem fascinating. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Michael White for putting up with me for that week and David Hargreaves for giving me the contact.

Tom Balogh (Dryden's)

ACADEMIC

Late in the Lent term I was offered a week-long work placement over Easter by Hagar Guttman, a PhD student at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, conducting her research at Israel's national marine and oceanographic research centre (hekerey yamim). I leapt at the chance.

After spending a week with friends in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (including Yehuda Amichai), I moved on to Haifa (on Israel's Mediterranean coast), where I assisted in Mrs Guttman's preliminary doctoral research.

The work involved observation of cellular and complete organism activity of *heteroxenia* under adverse conditions (in the dark and in presence of a photosynthetic inhibitor), genetic work to attempt to quantify diversity between populations of colonies of *heteroxenia* and *dendronephthia*, and attempting to culture blood cells from *botryllus*.

I found my time at the institute highly rewarding, and I would like to say that I was struck by the warmth of my hosts, extending my thanks to Jacob Douek and Hagar Guttman.

Jacob Kenedy (Dryden's)

