

THE ELIZABETHAN



The painting on the front cover is of **Leonidas Paul Lambrinudi** (1916-1943). The artist was Philip de Laszlo (1869-1937).

Lambrinudi was a Homeboarder at Westminster between 1929 and 1931. He trained as a lawyer before enlisting in the Greek Navy, and was lost in action on the submarine *Katsonis* against a German submarine destroyer in the Adriatic on 14 September 1943.

The painting now hangs in the Drawing Room in Ashburnham House.

THE ELIZABETHAN

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EDITORIAL: HAPPY DAYS

The front Common Room, April 1986. Only sixty or so members of staff, so everyone can fit into the space without too much discomfort. Quiet chatter, bits of paper, cursory studying of the new Almanack. The inner door from the staircase up to the Head Master's house opens and a tall, lean, quite absurdly youthful figure emerges. He wears a well cut tweed jacket, but dresses mainly as someone who seeks to combine discreet good taste with an urge not to draw attention to himself. His hand movements and voice betray a superficial nervousness, but there is a quality of authority which is unmistakable.

Up School, the next day. The first Latin Prayers of term and of the new Head Master's career. Tales abound of the bedlam of John Rae's last assembly and of how twenty thousand loo rolls were unfurled in a bizarre schoolboy version of a sword of honour as he departed. The new Head Master has a deep patrician voice that - while it becomes easy and rewarding to parody - masters the proceedings. When he announces the appointment of a member of staff to a new position, some of the children given an ironic cheer. He has a knack of fixing his eyes somewhere in the middle distance, but there is tempered steel here, and the audience is disconcerted and relapses into silence.

The Elizabethan was different too. It was edited by Richard Jacobs, a cerebral young English teacher who had coincidentally been a pupil of the Head Master's at Charterhouse, and the two held each other in evident regard and affection. His *Elizabethan* was literate and highly political, full of left wing polemics which, even now, read well. Reviews of marches, art house movies and meetings which betray the troubled conscience of the rich. In the artless way which all school magazines possess, high flown (and sometimes high falutin') rhetoric rubbed shoulders with jokey, unintelligible reports of football tours and - thank God some things have changed - the audited accounts of *The Elizabethan Club*.

The urge to say the place was much the same needs to be damped down. It was perceptibly different. There were a few more boarders, but about eighty fewer day pupils. No Hakluyt's, no Purcell's, no Milne's. The latter was, on the ground floor, shared between the School Society and the Development Office over which Neil Mackay presided, with bonhomie and a permanent invitation to 'pop in for a whisky'. Next door, as now, was Ashburnham, famous in those faraway days for housing some very naughty boys and girls. Even now, the chosen décor of the House could be termed minimalist; in those days, one was just happy if the walls held up for 24 hours. In the Music Competition that term, they taunted their audience with a reedy and appropriately apathetic performance of *We Don't Need No Education*.

Yard looked, superficially, much the same. Instead of Hakluyt's were two History rooms. The one on the ground floor housed a rather headachy mural of Dr Peter Southern, erstwhile Head of History, and David Cook, who was still very much in residence. Always idiosyncratic in teaching style and indifferent to the reactions of passers by, David Cook in full flow reverberated all across Yard. The present writer taught his first ever lesson at Westminster in that room and remembers it as - without a shadow of doubt - the most

disgustingly unkempt classroom over which it has ever been his duty to preside. Much the same went for the pupils too.

Liddell's with 80 pupils, exactly half of them boarders, spilled out all over the place: its studies abutted the Adrian Boulton Music Centre, the Chapter Office, the top of what would soon become Hakluyt's. Gerry Ashton was then its competent and popular Housemaster, and Tutors included Gavin Griffiths and Robin Aizlewood, pin up to every girl Russianist.

Singleton's : still home to the Registrar and Bursar, in those days Messrs Livingstone-Smith and Fox; Adrian Boulton Music Centre: just the same - light switches still in the wrong places.

Ashburnham House, then home to most of the non-Science teaching in school: the ground floor has since been radically tidied and transformed into superior classrooms and a committee room. The main staircase is still frighteningly overcrowded, but somehow manages (just) to sustain the mill of humanity that thunders up and down it. The first floor rooms (Stack, Brock Library and the handsome reception rooms) had only recently been refurbished in 1986 and have maintained a timeless grace and pleasure. One floor up, Economics and Maths now have hegemony in an area in which all non-Science subjects used to crowd for space. Walls and partitions have gone up and down, BBC Computers have been replaced by Apples and then, in enormous profusion, by PCs and many miles of cable, but that's about it. A wonderful Art Studio, just the kind that style magazines love to photograph, dominated the entire top floor with its big picture windows overlooking Yard. Nowadays, there are three English classrooms there which is jolly nice, but not quite the same.

Burlington Arch: the office on the left presently houses the Director of Studies, but nobody seems to remember what went on there twelve years ago. Happily, begowned First and Second Election boys still doff a mortar board to staff as they walk up the steps to Latin Prayers. School, with the exception of the vast Cockerell canvasses at the south end (opinions vary on this), and some rather hi-tech lighting and sound enhancements, feels exactly the same. Room 37, the classroom at the far end, has been subtly upgraded with some smart book cases and new flooring and has delightfully idiosyncratic views over College Green. The Busby Library and John Sargeant rooms seem identical.

Over to College. Opposite the entrance to what is now a Music Classroom was an Expeditions Store which was a curiously prime site for a gross of anoraks and sleeping bags, presided over with great severity by Cedric Harben. Wren's corridor, give or take a few repaints, looks exactly the same. In those days before Dean Bradley Street had been converted, the mezzanine hosted almost continual Upper School teaching. The present writer remembers (and has his old mark books to prove it) sets of sixteen and seventeen packed into those dim, low ceilinged little rooms - an infallible recipe for tension in an audience both pungent and restless, especially on Saturday mornings.

Above lay College, exotic territory indeed, with a pretty strong sense of its own importance. The first Scholar I encountered was the son of a University Vice-Chancellor and

had the idiom and control of language of one who expected, at any moment, to step into his father's shoes. His Housemaster, whose unvarying expostulation 'For Christ's sakes, man' could be heard at any corner of the School, day or night, (though probably not from wherever he was officially supposed to be), struck a reassuringly earthy note.

Entering Grant's in 1986, with its long tradition of rigid independence, was a bit daunting. The new Housemaster, Chris Clarke, seemed to bring light and space, creating a Housemaster's flat at the top of Number 2, overlooking Yard, and the old ground and first floor rooms were now made into light airy recreation rooms and studies for the younger children. Grant's had the air of a House in which morale was palpably rising each day, but also the distinction of containing some of the untidiest children in Westminster at any point during the last twelve years, even if many of them heralded from College or Dryden's.

Rigaud's red-brick garishness amidst the Georgian classicism of Numbers 2 and 3 Little Dean's Yard set it apart. Its pupils, or at least a quota of them, seemed appreciably different too: they answered to bells, stood up for a procession of Housemaster and Tutors filing into the subterranean dining hall at lunchtime, and had a curious House language of their own (including the distressing refrain *Ipsu Razu* etc). But there was a powerful fifth column, too: you had only to go downstairs into the German classroom in the basement overlooking Yard, presided over by Richard Stokes and Ian Huish, to wallow among peeling walls, damp, piles of marking, concert details, litter and - absolutely inevitably - scores of copies of *Gefunden*.

To get to Busby's involved, as it still does, walking past Common Room. What are now ground floor studies was a newly converted Maths classroom: from the Common Room one could see into this pokey little room and watch the then Housemaster cover acres of whiteboard in minutes at a time with his red and green board markers. It looked very busy in there and the Housemaster was someone who, whether expounding on integral calculus or merely reminding people that perhaps they might like to begin their prep, had the reputation of finding discipline not a great problem.

Those who were 18 years old in 1986 are only 30 now; too early, really, for many to have achieved eminence. The world into which we sent them has changed, not least in terms of the volatility of the job market. Some have come to have, even if only locally or ephemerally, their moment of fame. Lynda Stuart had faced the *paparazzi*, (well, the *Daily Telegraph* anyway) for being the first ever female Captain of the School. Future directors and performers were even now limbering up: Paddy Dickie was preparing to direct Ben Walden in a staggeringly good production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Joe Cornish and Adam Buxton, now anchoring a zany show on Channel Four, were busy writing, directing and improvising. Louis Theroux, he of BBC2's *Weird Weekends*, was a bright, approachable and hard-working historian.

Teachers remember their pupils usually for how they were then, not for what became of them. In a 1986 Upper Shell O Level History set, three boys sat just in front of the teacher's desk. One - a steady, modest, quite delightful high flyer - opted to become a Maths teacher in a Surrey comprehensive. The second - something of a handful - became a fashionable portrait painter. The third was the



youngest son of the Duke and Duchess of Kent. One of the keenest pleasures of that term was witnessing the late Stewart Murray, supervising a punishment run of ten laps of Green for some infraction, bellowing out: 'Get a move on, Windsor. Lift those knees up.' Oh, happy days.

Smaller than now (about 60 full time members), the Common Room was not lacking large personalities. So many now gone: Aizlewood, Ashton, Bland, Booth, Cook, Custance, Davies, Evans, Field, French, Harben, Hepburne-Scott, Hobson, Hugill, Huish, Jacobs, Livingstone-Smith, Miller, Muffett, Murray, Pratt, Stebbens, Stuart, Williams (both Mark and Mike) - an impressive litany to the inevitably diminishing numbers here who knew them: most kindly, several tricky, but nearly all united in their love for the sheer drama of the place.

The Almanacks for the two Election Terms 1986 and 1998, placed alongside each other, give a flavour of the passage of time, albeit in muted shades. On Saturday 26 April 1986, J A Cogan's XI played R W Gilson's XI, and the next week there was tennis against Tonbridge, where a First, Second and Colts VI were all put up. There were *House* cricket matches at the end of the month. Exeat kicked off after a Lower School House Handball competition and that was also the closing date for Summer Camp applications. Liddell's produced *Bugsy Malone*, the Movie Society met on 5 June and the very next day O Levels began. But examination candidates - both O and A Level - were not allowed on study leave until Friday 13 June. Term proper ended on Friday 11 July.

In 1986 Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister, Maradona the most feared footballer in the world, and a large number of Westminster pupils called themselves Goths: strictly monochrome clothes, pointy black shoes, the tightest black trousers the authorities would permit them, and a lot of black and white make-up. While the theme of continuity is attractive and not misplaced, Westminster is a subtly different school, all the same.

At the Election Dinner in 1986 the final lines of the *Proemium* were intoned:

...Up School's the same, and Yard to shouts abounds,
The term is o'er and hallowed be these grounds,
And lo! the board with glass and wine stands crown'd,
Goodwill is all; may happy days be found.

Happy days indeed. *The Elizabethan* salutes all leavers - for every parting is a sorrow - and salutes David Summerscale as a gracious and generous Head Master. It welcomes Tristram Jones-Parry, who has a powerful pedigree of devoted and capable service to Westminster. The Chinese prayer - *May You Live in Interesting Times* - looks certain to be fulfilled.

DAVID SUMMERSCALE

A FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO DAVID SUMMERSCALE

College Hall, 16 May 1998

1986 was an unpropitious year: Chernobyl, the US air strike against Libya, the assassination of the Swedish Prime Minister, the disintegration of the American Space shuttle Challenger. Iraq was using mustard gas to repel the Iranian Army, Baby Doc was thrown out of Haiti, the GI discotheque was bombed in Berlin, the Hand of God helped Argentina win the World Cup, and Simone de Beauvoir died. There was trouble too at home. Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson became engaged, Geoffrey Boycott was fired by Yorkshire, Jeffrey Archer resigned as Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party but denied sex with a prostitute, the AIDS campaign got underway, and Henry Moore died.

It was also the year in which the Summerscales, David, Pauline, Emily and Tristan - just - arrived at Westminster. Nothing world-shattering happened in the ensuing 12 years, but there was plenty of parochial activity that affected our lives. Two new Houses, Hakluyt's and Milne's, were created, and Barton Street became Purcell's. A Scholarship and Bursary fund was established, where none had previously existed, for those who would not otherwise be able to come to the School. The Robert Hooke Science Centre was opened in June 1988 by The Queen. School House at Alston was acquired as an Expedition Centre for the Fifth Form. A new Boathouse was built. Grant's Dining Room and its mansard roof were created. The Computer Room was installed, the Art Department moved to Sutcliffe's, and a new Art History Department was formed. The School became permanently connected to the Internet. All present Housemasters were appointed, and all Heads of Department, bar one. The National Curriculum and GCSE were introduced, the Berlin, Spanish, Russian and Chile Exchanges started, and both an OFSTED and Social Services inspection were successfully negotiated and endured. Senior Management structure was revamped, bullying and drug policies drafted. And so on...

Compared with his predecessor, David was low-profile - *not* a very difficult achievement. But he loved the School as energetically and enthusiastically as many a more public and extrovert headmaster. It's hardly remarkable that he travelled the length and breadth of England and beyond to monitor expeditions (the Isle of Bute, Skye, Loch Lomond, Cornwall, Normandy and the Lyke Wake Walk spring to mind); that he took part in the German exchange to Munich (the first Head Master to do so); that he supported Westminster sport across the country; that he spent hours in the Drama Studio, the Dungeons, up School and in Ashburnham Garden, in the cause of Westminster music and drama. Any diligent Head Master would have done as much. What to my mind stood out was not the dutiful carrying out of all these activities but the genuine enthusiasm with which he followed some. He was, above all, an individual of passions.

Music was one such, and literature another. He came to Westminster with a formidable reputation as a charismatic and original English teacher; Richard Jacobs, who taught English here, was a former pupil, and I remember vividly his rapturous (and Richard was not given to rapture)

reminiscences of David's lessons at Charterhouse. A few phrases remain: 'electrifying in a sort of rambling way', 'all or nothing teaching', 'anything could happen', 'emotionally raw'. People who were not interested in books were suddenly convinced that books were somehow more important than life. He exercised a formative influence on many young people who later went into television, theatre or the Arts. Headmasters, of course, can't do that in quite the same way - they have paper to push, committees to steer and parents to placate, but the fire that flamed at Charterhouse and Haileybury glowed here too. Not just in his teaching and his own productions of operas and plays, such as Gluck's *Orfeo et Euridice*, *In Parenthesis*, *Measure for Measure* and scenes from *Fidelio*, but in his low-profile (that word again!) and utterly committed support of the Arts at Westminster. I remember John Arthur returning once from an Eton Group Heads of Drama meeting, and telling me how other Drama heads had complained of meagre provision and paltry support. When asked how things were at Westminster, he replied that the Head Master was to direct the next production - an opera...

Sport was another passion, and he communicated his enthusiasm to staff and students alike. He played many times for Pink Elephant cricket teams, and his weekly appearances during the last 12 years at Vincent Square Tennis Station always caused a flurry of excitement, as pairs would line up to challenge him and his partner at doubles. None of them ever won a single set. With squash it was the same, and the same competitiveness (he hated losing) was evident on golf courses and links; I particularly remember an occasion at Sandwich in a match against the Old Westminsters, where his Midas touch saw off his low single-handicap OW opponent. And then there was Fives. Three of the most enjoyable times of the week for some dozen colleagues over the past decade have been Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 5-7 in the fives courts. There we thrash a little cork ball about, let off steam, lose weight and tempers and enjoy intense competition and camaraderie. The Head Master is usually there, and it wouldn't be quite the same without him: he has the enviable knack of mixing easily with his staff, without any feeling of condescension or awkwardness. He was gregarious, in a sort of private way.

There is a German proverb that I have always liked: 'Leichenpredigt, Lügenpredigt', which translates something like 'Funeral oration, mendacious oration.' But have fear, David, this is to be no hagiography. Headmasters cannot avoid the limelight, and it is there that they display, for our delectation, their own gestural and verbal eccentricities. A previous Head Master always had difficulty with his first person singular personal pronouns, in their nominative, accusative and dative manifestations. Thus it was that the Common Room were often told, if they had a problem, to 'talk to the Second Master or I'. David, as far as the Common Room were aware - and we were aware, very - committed no such grammatical solecisms. But there were wondrous things to admire elsewhere. 'Winging their way.' What an extraordinary phrase! I especially liked the image of communications 'winging their way' to our pigeon-holes. It seemed somehow to beautify bureaucracy. One saw them issuing from Anne Carman's study, wafting through the window, fluttering across Yard as they winged their way into

the Common Room, before alighting neatly in our pigeon-holes. As it were. Another delightful habit was the way in which sometimes, in casual conversation, he would refer to teachers by their titles: 'Ah! Here comes the Head of English!' Or 'Well, let's ask the Director of Studies!' He was also responsible for coining two strangely pompous adjectives: I refer of course to the neologisms: 'headmagisterial' and 'housemagisterial' - strangely pompous, for the man was quite incapable of pomposity or swank. And then there was that orthographical peculiarity, the aposiopesis: the suspension mark, the dot dot dot that ended almost every report, fraught with significance and leaving room for development or imagination. Most disarming of all, perhaps, was the way he would occasionally say, as he did only last week, 'Having arranged for a short meeting, I realise I've nothing to say.' What might have been silly or embarrassing when uttered by another, somehow seemed rather admirable.

All these eccentricities, of course, were heard in the Common Room, but that is not why we liked to see him there. On the contrary, he was welcome and very much at home. In my limited experience of four headmasters in two different schools, David stood out as being far more comfortable and integrated in the Common Room than any other - although the only times that he actually sat down were on the last night of term, when he'd be waiting to welcome, with cheese and wine, colleagues who had taken yet another group of students to yet another violent film. When he entered the Common Room there were no sudden silences, no sniggerings behind newspapers - at most, you might hear certain colleagues raise their voices, in order to be heard expressing some laudable opinion, as he moved into earshot. He always managed to be friendly and accessible, without losing any of his authority.

The Common Room is essentially a happy place, full of energy, argument, bad language, laughter, groups rather than cliques, and a cheerful tolerance. Perhaps we would have been happy anyway, but I suspect that wise appointments to and within the School have been a key factor. Particularly noteworthy, it seems to me, was his decision to entrust Wren's to Fiona, and appoint Frances Director of Studies. Women in important positions at Westminster would have been unthinkable fifteen years ago. The average age of the Common Room is probably as low as it has ever been - a result of economic measures, perhaps? I don't think so. It would have been easy to appoint safe, proven but dull teachers. Another crucial appointment, in which he had a hand, was Gerry Ashton to the Under School. There is a genuine rapport between the two communities that never used to exist, and waiting-lists at both places are still large - something that is most unusual in London. He was good at analysing character.

His own, included. He filled crucial positions in the School with people he could work with, and who complemented his own way of working. He was criticized, of course, like all headmasters are - but the truth is that he succeeded in running a very happy, successful and stimulating School. There are many, of course, who measure a headmaster's achievement by erecting a list of innovations, or new buildings, or radical re-thinkings of school policy. The important thing is to be busy, to be seen to be busy, and always to be busy. As we've seen, he did introduce many changes, and was very active, but you never had the impression that he was doing it for his own glorification. He wasn't like that.

Others measure success by results: GCSE, A level and Oxbridge. Not, of course Red Brick. Well, results continued to boom astonishingly during his period here, and for those who like such things, I have some statistics:

1986 A levels:	34% A 80% A-C 5% Fail
1997 A levels:	60% A 95% A-C 0% Fail
1988 GCSE:	52% A 5% D-E
1997 GCSE:	76% A or starred A 1% D-E

Despite all this success, he never encouraged a hothouse approach to study, and when he announced new peaks that had been scaled, it was almost with a feeling of embarrassment. I remember, in the time of his predecessor, how Wednesday Afternoon Guilds, during which the Upper School would have no lessons but explore London with a teacher instead, were suddenly discontinued. Probably with good reason. But with David, erosion of the timetable seemed almost to be encouraged. Many headmasters would not urge boarders to hit cultural London during prep - but that is precisely what he did; many headmasters do not permit footballers, cricketers, rowers, fencers, swimmers etc to leave for matches before morning school is over; many frown on teachers who pursue outside interests during term; and teachers, in many schools, are not allowed to miss the beginning of term, because they are on a course, or giving a lecture, or playing in an important sporting fixture, or supporting a husband or wife on a business trip. In all these things Westminster, under David, was an exception, and perhaps we do not know how lucky we have been. He led, of course, by example, with his work in India, helping to set up a school in Assam, assisting schools in Calcutta and Delhi, and establishing exchanges with educational establishments in India and Australia. He encouraged diversity, and only very rarely proscribed - unlike the Government, and another institution even nearer.

In a climate which requires schools to achieve ever higher academic grades, we are fortunate at Westminster to still have Expeditions and Alston intact - two organisations that take youngsters away from the classroom and allow them to savour or suffer the unacademic side of life. Such freedom is precious. And the freedom he gave his teaching staff was inestimable. He had the ability to bring out the best in people.

The game of describing character by using only three adjectives is a dangerous one, because it is so open to mockery; but I would like to play it. Civilized, cultured and courteous he certainly was. I think that needs no elaboration, and since they all begin with 'c', I shall count them as one. Tactful, sensitive, describe another quality. I'm thinking of those occasions, such as David Hepburne-Scott's death, when a discreet, cautious and imaginative approach allowed David a dignified end that a prying press would almost certainly have denied him. Countless other occasions will doubtless suggest themselves to many here this evening. And the third? I hesitate to mention it, firstly because the noun rather than the adjective springs to mind, and secondly because a few of you might not at first agree, and one or two not agree at all.

The noun is leadership, and the adjective influential, inspiring. A strange choice, perhaps, to describe someone who never screamed his head off in Yard, never fulminated up School, never really shouted from the touchline at Vincent Square, and often delegated matters of discipline to others. But it was true. His leadership was not of the tub-thumping variety. He spoke beautifully in public, not with a slick gift of the gab, with peerless periods and faultless cadences, but with real eloquence, in a voice that was rich without being plummy. And he also had the ability, through silence, coolness and aloofness, to express displeasure. He inspired loyalty and a wish to please.

I've worked at Westminster for twenty-three years under two Head Masters, and now have the prospect of staying for a further seven years under new management. Two Head Masters have been outstanding and I'm looking forward to Tristram's accession. It would be instructive to compare styles, because comparisons are not odious but interesting. But we are not here this evening to do that. We are here to celebrate, to thank David and Pauline who have spent over twelve years with us, and done so much for the school and community. Fortunately, they will not be vanishing. David is planning even now to take a play to India with Philip Needham; and the best news of all, for a passionate father and loving mother, is that Tristan has won a scholarship to Westminster - which means that David and Pauline will be around for some time yet.

Richard Stokes

DAVID SUMMERSCALE: ENGLISH TEACHER

David Summerscale's reputation as English teacher preceded him. Before he arrived at Westminster, rumour suggested that he was stimulating, scholarly, wise and humane. Those of us who struggled to explicate the multi-layered complexities of Arthur Miller to Upper Shell savages, or who endeavoured to tease out Metaphysical conceits in front of brutally fashionable Sixth Formers, awaited his arrival with an assumption of superiority. Surely, the man would be eaten for breakfast and spat out by lunchtime.

English teachers divide into two distinct types: stuck up elitists and crowd pleasing egoists. The former will colonise some remote territory of English Lit - say, Caroline Comedy - and then savour it among a few specially selected sherry-sipping students. The latter regard the treasure of our literary heritage as a branch of the light entertainment industry. David could not be squeezed into either category. He enjoyed scholarly banter, remained self-effacing and was as happy to teach rogues as he was to inspire saints.

We shared senior school sets for many years. David did not become dehumanised by the wear and tear of daily doses of illiteracy and ignorance. On the contrary: Westminsters, many of whom seemed destined to a fate of booze, fags and merchant banking, became more civilised, more curious, more involved, more literary. Odder still, the sets that David taught were invariably more polite; at times, people even listened to one another.

David's taste in books tended towards the metaphysical. He liked big books with big themes: Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*, *King Lear*, *Wuthering Heights*. He also liked books that were open and refused to force conclusion. For this reason, Milton, with his ironmongery of judgements and certainties, was a low priority. David's religious apprehension of the universe did not include the notion of God as moralising detective inspector.

Of course, David had his little foibles. It's said that, despite his self-evident modesty, he was inclined to read all the parts when Shakespeare was studied. No doubt this was because he could not bear to hear blank verse mauled. But can it really be true (as one pupil claimed) that he played both eponymous rôles in *Antony and Cleopatra*?

It was a privilege to work beside David Summerscale for all those years. He would throw out a remark or insight which, if attended to, supplied a week of lessons. Underneath the distracted and quizzical façade, David thought about literature with a passion. The force of his intellect was such that it was 'nowhere to be seen, but was everywhere apparent'. His students will miss him. So will I.

Gavin Griffiths (Head of English, 1988-1996)



DAVID SUMMERSCALE: NOT RIP

For the past eleven years I have spent a good deal of my time and energies in organising and planning Memorial Services (or as is now generally preferred, 'Services of Thanksgiving for the life and work of...'). What a pleasure, then, to take part in an exercise in which we give thanks for someone who is living and working among us now - although soon to be moving on.

David and I arrived in Westminster at about the same time and in many ways have shared similar experiences. First of all, both of us had to live for a little while in the shadow of our predecessors, yet convinced that we did not need nor ought to attempt any kind of imitation. Certainly David's 'style' is very much his own. The phrase 'laid back' could almost have been invented with him in mind. Others have probably seen him ruffled or indeed wrong-footed, but those moments must be collectors' items.

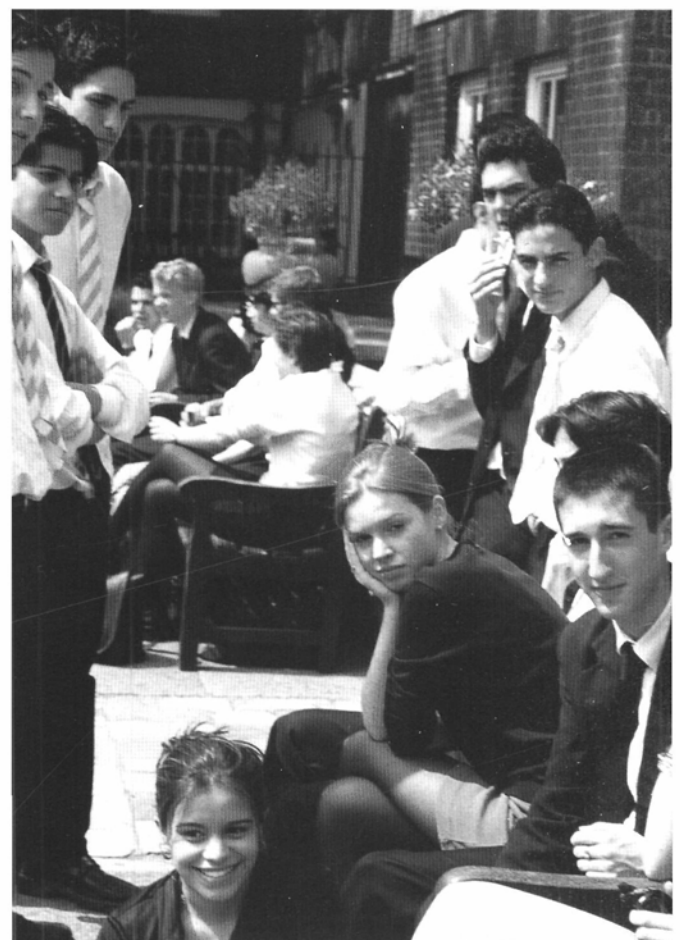
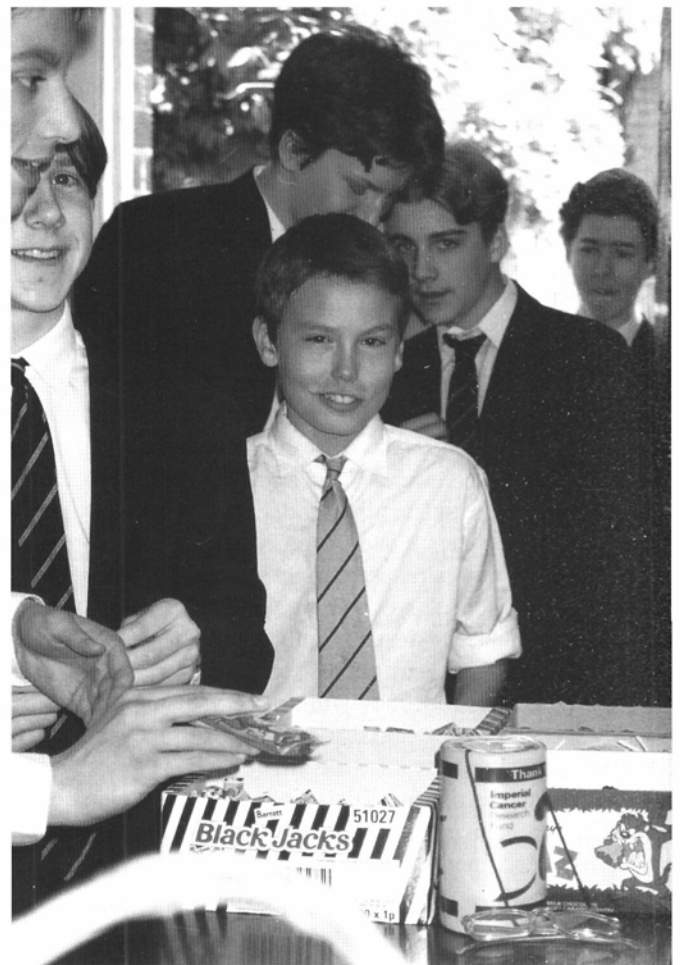
Yet that seemingly languid and relaxed attitude does not tell us all about this man. I apologise if I use a morning in Abbey as the moment when I saw the full David revealed. Obviously, I've heard many sermons from that pulpit but none has remained with me so vividly (not so much for its content or even detail, as for style, atmosphere or - dare I say it? - spiritual power) as David's opening of term address based on Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines*.

We are all getting increasingly bored by the suggestion that these last years have been more a decade of change than any other period this century. None the less, it cannot be denied that David has needed to guide the School in times in which fresh developments in educational matters have come thick and fast. Speaking only for himself, this Governor has been constantly grateful for the way in which these often complicated matters have been explained, and very obviously coped with, by the Head Master. Here an obvious example must be 'the League Tables', which are not going to go away, but surely do need to be approached in David's indulgent yet critical style.

The Head Master is always a significant and senior member of the College of St Peter; he needs to wear his scarlet cassock with pride and never with a hint of indifference. David Summerscale has always done that, so that he, Pauline, Emily and Tristan have been valued members of that community which is the College. They will be missed, and our best wishes and our prayers go with them into what, I am sure, is going to be the next exciting stage in life.

Donald Gray

Canon of Westminster Abbey and Governor of the School



STATION

1ST XI FOOTBALL 1997-98

Results

Sept	Westminster City	h	L	4-5
	Slough Town	h	L	2-4
	KES Witley	a	W	3-0
	Bradfield			
	(ISFA Cup 1st Rnd)	h	W	4-3
	Peninsula School			
	(W Australia)	h	W	5-1
Oct	Ardingly			
	(ISFA Cup 2nd Rnd)	a	L	1-10
	Lancing	a	L	0-1
	Forest	h	W	5-1
Nov	Highgate	h	W	6-4
	Bradfield	a	D	1-1
	Brentwood	h	L	2-6
	Aldenham	a	L	0-3
	Kimbolton	a	L	0-3
	Charterhouse	a	L	0-1
Dec	Chigwell	h	W	2-0
Jan	Corinthian Casuals	h	L	1-5
	Sevenoaks	a	L	0-4
	UCS	h	L	1-4
Feb	Dulwich	a	L	1-7
	St Pauls	h	L	0-2
	King's Canterbury	a	L	2-3
	Oratory	a	L	0-1
Mar	Harrow	h	L	1-4
	Higham	h	D	2-2

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This was a difficult season, and when taken as a whole a disappointing one. It was also a season of two halves, where up until Christmas we achieved a 50% record. The first term traditionally includes our strongest opposition, so on the surface this was a creditable achievement. However when looking at the defensive record and results of the Lent Term, where goals dried up, there were clearly fundamental problems with the character and composition of the side. The season began with a very successful and enjoyable trip to Germany where we were entertained by the King's Hussars Artillery Regiment stationed near Munster. We played a couple of games here against a local youth side at a wonderful enclosed ground (won 3-1) and against the regiments' rear party (heard it before!) where we lost to a strong and capable men's side 3-0. The trip was an opportunity to look at players and to reintroduce some physical self-respect into a bunch of holidaying adolescents. The short time away was crammed with incident involving trips to most of Munster's public amenities, but that is another story.

On our return we proceeded to lose our first two matches. The Westminster City game should have been won easily, and the Slough Town game was a good test of the side's potential. We played well and looked a competitive and balanced team against a well organised semi-pro youth side. This was important for us because we had been building towards the Cup game against Bradfield. This was a tense affair and a game in which we allowed a poor Bradfield side too much of

a say early on. We dominated large parts of the game and played some attractive and concise football. Chances were not converted and Bradfield scored two goals, so with ten minutes to go we were two down and chasing the game. A great header from a corner by Rowland Curtis and a piece of individual magic from Jonny Korgaonkar brought us level and the game went into extra time. We scored soon after the first period of extra time but Bradfield equalised. We then played some of the best football of the season and came out eventual 4-3 winners. The team deserve real credit for this performance as it took us through to the second round and the last 16. An enjoyable and relaxed victory against a young and pleasant Australian touring side from Peninsula School bought us to Round 2 and Ardingly. We prepared for this game as best we could and I felt before the kick-off that we were up for it. Unfortunately we were swept aside by one of the best school sides I have seen. They scored two goals quickly after the start, but we responded well and pulled one back with Theo Hildebrand adding the final touch. We felt that we were back in the game, but this feeling was short lived, and wave after wave of Ardingly attacks realised five goals by half time. We were unable to cope with the movement and pace of their attacks and were simply not allowed to settle. It highlighted the fact, and this was confirmed in many later games, that we were not an integrated unit but a bunch of individuals who were only inspirational if things were going well for them. We would never have won this game even if we had played better than any Westminster side in the past but we were still shell shocked by the experience. With a weakened team we travelled down to Lancing and by all accounts responded very well to the loss of an early goal. The second half performance was full of character but too late. This was the most frustrating aspect of the side. With probably the best Westminster goalkeeper of recent times in Julian Dale and good individual players in the back four in Tom Webber, Rowland Curtis, Elias Frangos and Miles Copeland, we conceded an extraordinary number of goals - invariably through poor communication and lack of initiative. This meant our reading of rapidly changing situations was laboured and we were punished. Blame should also rest with midfield players and forwards alike who surrendered possession far too easily on occasions and never worked hard enough to get it back and establish control. There were good wins against Forest, Highgate and Chigwell, and in all these games were passages of play which demonstrated that this side had its share of talented individuals. Even in the other games of the play term which we lost, we looked more than capable of competing with - and beating - all the sides we played against. We were vulnerable to pace against Kimbolton, but had taken a changed side due to a combination of Oxbridge withdrawals and injuries, and against Aldenham - despite John Barber causing them real problems down the left hand side - we gifted them goals and looked predictable in front of goal. We played well against a strong Charterhouse side, and with 5 at the back looked good for a 0-0 draw. However in the last minute we conceded a comical own goal which was really hard to bear for a team which pleasingly had worked hard for the duration. Miles Copeland should be singled out for an exceptional performance. Perhaps the highlight of the first half of the



season was a successful trip to the ISFA sixes, a competition where two years ago we made the quarter-finals of the cup competition. With 32 member schools taking part from all around the country and beating Brentwood 3-0 along the way, this was a real achievement.

The performances in the Lent Term were largely depressing and sometimes inexplicable. The worst set of results in an Easter term that I remember were partly due to a side that had lost its way, but mainly due to the well organised, enthusiastic and very capable sides that we met. Great credit must go to some of those traditionally Rugby playing schools who benefit from robust and fit individuals, but who are now producing good footballers into the bargain. For many of these games we looked physically lightweight and found it difficult to maintain our discipline. This led occasionally to sometimes well-founded frustrations being expressed by rude and disrespectful behaviour. This immediately enabled some schools who needed little encouragement to cast us as the villains. I would like to thank and applaud those players who gave their all for the side, particularly Rowland Curtis who despite being a Palace supporter was a thoughtful and effective captain, in addition to developing into an accomplished centre-half. I wish them well in their sporting lives. For others, some who are leaving and some who remain, there is a need to reflect on whether competitive sport at a reasonable level with all its rigours is a commitment too far.

Finally a heartfelt thank you must go to Ian Monk for arranging the tour to Germany, running the 2nds and doing much of the behind-the-scenes organisation. To Jim Kershen for doing much of the administration, to the masters i/c teams and to the coaching staff for all their hard but I hope fulfilling work. Richard Bryant is leaving us this term, and I would like to thank him for the devotion he has shown to running School teams over the last four years. Football Station is comfortably the largest Station in the School, and although this season may not have been as succesful as the previous three seasons, I feel sure there are some good times ahead.

Jeremy Kemball

Players:

R Curtis	M Copeland	J Dale
E Frangos	T Webber	J Barber
T Hildebrand	D Cavanagh	J Korgaonkar
A Cochrane	J Gunnell	A Jones
A Cowper-Smith	H Rowland	D Barker
R Bamford	C Makhoul	R Kirk
T Vanhegan	L ap Gwilym	J Bennett
A Edey		

UNDER 16 XI

In the final match of the Christmas term, Chigwell, supposedly one of the strongest teams on the circuit, were almost totally outplayed in a superb team performance as we ran out 4-2 winners; the score had been 4-0 with three minutes to go. And yet this was one of very few successes in a season that was a considerable disappointment in many ways; there are important lessons to learn, but if they are learned, there is nothing to prevent this side from producing some excellent First XI players in the next two years.

How had a team that had won the majority of its games the year before managed to become one that barely registered a victory all year? Avoiding the traditional Westminster malaise of seeking to devolve responsibility, the coach is ready to hold his hands up on certain things: a decision about our best system was never really made with any certainty; our supposedly senior and more gifted players who underperformed were probably indulged for too long; training should have been more rigorous and demanding, both physically and technically; and perhaps the players needed clearer guidance on what their individual roles were. Motivation did not seem to suffer too much however and the boys were admirable in their quest to get things right, but confidence became so brittle that each time we went a goal down it dissipated all too quickly, and the collective resolve became gradually fragmented.

Caporali was a shadow of his former self to be honest, and very rarely performed at his best; his fitness is questionable, to say the least, and he also needs to rediscover his goalscoring habits, and fast! Kirk suffers to an extent from the overblown expectations of his peers, but he ought to relish this; as it is, he performed too fitfully, happy to do twenty minutes here and there between rests; this is inadequate for a boy of his talent and too often he allowed players of lesser ability to master a game. And when is he going to learn to tackle? Karageorgis seemed alone in failing to realise that defenders are meant to do just that, defend, and he should curb, or simply eradicate, his tendency to career forward; he left his fellow defenders exposed far too often.

The right back berth was a continual problem; poor Mouracadeh continued to be plagued by injuries and never found the consistency and sharpness of the previous year; at times Doeh promised to be the solution, and this may yet be his position if he could only find some consistency.

We had three different goalkeepers at various times and those we had were either reluctant or error-prone, or both! Phillips, who had some super games at the back, possesses a good positional sense (at times!), is a strong tackler and a more than respectable ball-player; but he

will presumably return to his gloves. Fine, but concentration will have to improve.

Makhoul was always totally committed, and had some good games; but I think he would admit that he was below his best at times; perhaps he should be restored to a striking position, though against this are his performances out wide in the Lower Shell, which were terrific.

For a long time Choo led admirably and he had some outstanding games, playing with great determination and strength; he remains a highly impressive performer and is a fine ball-player for a defender. Latterly however his self-discipline waned and he let himself down at times. Shaw, who is a determined character, had some good games in the middle of the park, while he seemed a little swamped in others; this is a difficult rôle and if he maintains his confidence he should do well.

The consistent beacon was Alamouti, who was player of the season by a distance. He is unstinting in his efforts, tremendously fit and energetic (if only others looked after themselves in a similar way!) and he possesses lovely skills. He did extremely well to perform so consistently in a struggling team. Lahiri continued to impress; his positional sense is improving, he always tries to use the ball well and with both feet, and he tackles fearlessly. All he needs are a couple of extra yards of pace from somewhere. Not easy. I'm sorry that we didn't get to see more of Richmond, who looks very promising, and I am grateful to Dhoul and Stevens for filling the gaps so willingly. Both are good athletes and perhaps just need to work on their touch and passing.

Two years is a long time to spend with each other and I'm sure that one or two relationships were straining a little by the end. However, I'm grateful to all the boys for providing me with much entertainment and for keeping me busy over the duration and repeat my expectation that many of them will represent the School with considerable success in the Upper School. And many thanks to Mark Feltham for his good-natured and valuable assistance throughout the year.

Richard Bryant



THIRD XI

A tough season for a tough team. Under the innovative new management of David Hargreaves, the team which the First and Second Elevens initially scorned and then idolised, went on to have a very fulfilling and interesting season.

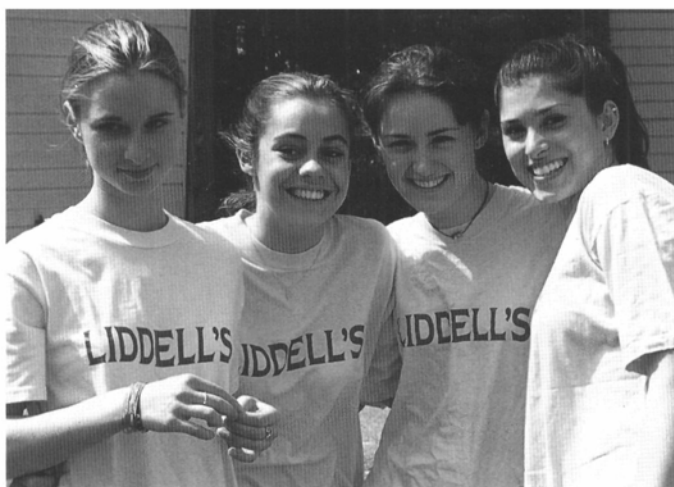
The season began with the shock news of the appointment of a new manager in the shape of David Hargreaves; a man who hitherto had made his name as a very successful sports coach - in long-distance running. (*News to me - Ed*) The Thirds initially found his unique approach to football a bit of a culture shock. His harsh new training methods (including players sticking to strict diets, no post-match alcohol or cigarette abuse and certainly no female support in the dressing room) led to a more professional approach to football than we had previously experienced.

So, after a gruelling and intensive pre-season training course, the Thirds were ready for battle for the first time. The line-up looked invincible; Ian Warren the ever-reliable goalkeeper, Phil Morrison as our committed right-back, Oliver Bennett-Coles and Michael Mansour patrolling the centre of defence like fairies guarding a tooth, Ben Warner as our one-footed left-back, Tom Rowlinson as our sparrow-legged McManaman-esque right-wing, Mike Walls our big man in the middle, Imran Hameed our wonderfully gifted Zidane-esque left winger and Federico Ruiz the Italian Stallion Del Piero-esque playmaker. And upfront? Michael Ash, aka Denis Bergkamp, alongside Charlie 'Ronaldo' O'Farrell (even though he is not Brazilian).

The season started with a bang. A 5-2 trouncing of an unbeaten Dulwich team was a result which all the team will remember. The other three matches played resulted in defeat, mostly due to the incompetence of the referees - men who no doubt accepted bribes, free holidays and luxury cars from our opposing schools. Nevertheless, the Thirds played hard and worked hard and had a great time, mostly due to the charismatic football approach of our coach and mentor, David Hargreaves. Recent rumours of his imminent departure from the Thirds to join Manchester United as player manager can be officially quashed here and now.

Thanks to all who played for the Thirds, and especially to David Hargreaves for his dedication and support.

Federico Ruiz (Ashburnham) & Imran Hameed (Rigaud's)



UNDER 15 XI

From the outset the U15 football season promised to be a struggle against adversity. Our squad numbered only twenty, and although it contained several talented players, we were always going to lack strength in depth. The season began with heavy defeats by Westminster City and Eton (despite the flailing acrobatics of Santiago Lago in goal), and this, unfortunately, set the pattern for both terms. The final statistics are not for the faint hearted! However there were many enjoyable moments, glimpses of the beautiful game. I recall a bullet header from Jamie Coggans bulging the net on a sunny September afternoon at King Edwards, Witley; a gritty team performance that left a superior Charterhouse side thoroughly frustrated. The high point was perhaps the wet and windy away fixture at Harrow (fittingly officiated by one Mr Ellery), which had all the drama of an epic Cup-tie.

Nostalgia aside, it is fair to say that we were regularly outclassed in every department. Our defence lacked aerial presence, and was helpless against opposition with anything resembling pace in attack. When we did gain possession, our midfield did not distribute the ball quickly enough. The real disappointment was the attitude of several squad members towards training and fitness work in particular. The match day spirit was usually better, and although the elusive victory never came, the team kept battling until the very end - James Jones scoring a memorable solo goal with virtually the last kick of the season.

Finally, I must thank Roland Butcher for his valuable assistance, and Edward Roy for his brave and valuable captaincy.

Nick Hinze

PUNTING AND SKIFFING

The 1997 season opened with the Captain's Regatta, marking the captaincies of Tom Gentleman (Grant's) and Xandi Imboden (College), in Skiffing and Punting respectively, on 18 May, the first time that the duality of our newly extended activities had been thus enshrined. During the season that followed sixteen trophies were won by Westminster's in open competition, of which undoubtedly the most significant was Tom Gentleman's victory in the Junior Best and Best at the Amateur Championships at Maidenhead, making him the first member of the Station ever to win a Thames Punting medal. Several wins in the Under 16 category now encouraged by the TPC bode well for the future, and this year for the first time there will be schoolboys' events at the Amateur Championships.

Westminsters competed - and won - in almost all the summer regattas, earning much favourable comment, and the continuing support and encouragement of parents and families at these events was, as ever, much appreciated. With the conclusion of the season, marked by the Secretary's Regatta at the DSPC on 12 October, the Station could reflect upon a highly successful season, with the promise of further development in both sports.

1998 has begun with the Captains' Regatta on 17 May, marking the captaincies of Howard Gooding (Milne's), in Punting, and William Pym (Busby's), in Skiffing, to which we were especially delighted to welcome the Head Master and Mrs Summerscale, on the eve of his retirement. Ten years ago, it was Mr Summerscale who first gave the go-ahead for the foundation of the Punting Station at Westminster, and sanctioned the purchase of our first pair of racing punts. Throughout this, our first decade, his support and encouragement have been invaluable, and deeply appreciated.

This summer the Station will also lose the group of Removes who have formed the core of its activities now for upwards of three seasons. During those years, in terms of trophies won in regatta competition, and development of the Station, especially the diversification into Skiffing, much has been achieved; but the signs are good that the Station will continue to build upon this progress in the future.

Tom Edlin (Dryden's), Secretary



CRICKET

This summer of 1998 has been remarkable in many respects. Firstly, the main pitch at Vincent Square, relaid last summer, has been out of action. This is unfortunate for those in their final year who will never again tread the hallowed turf wearing the School colours - and for the Bursar - but it has offered the consolation of some mind-broadening travel to 'away-home' venues such as Moorgate, Finchley and Cobham (courtesy of The Honourable Artillery Company, the MCC and Imperial College London respectively). Secondly, the weather has been unprintable, in April anyway, with the 1st XI fixtures against Eton, Lords and Commons and UCS all washed out. The same fate would doubtless have befallen the Old Westminster game had the organisers (sic) of that game not pre-empted it. Thirdly, since May opened, we have been playing some excellent cricket and winning. In school fixtures we have won two out of two, with Aldenham and Alleyns both despatched (by one and four wickets respectively). Rocking at 80-5 after the morning session, MCC looked on course to be similarly digested - but an excellent lunch and a sharp phone call from Headquarters inspired them to pull away to gain a deserved 120-run victory.

Outstanding performances so far have come mainly with the ball, with James MacDonald, Rajiv Daryanani and Daniel Cavanagh bowling probing, disciplined and occasionally hostile overs - although Rowan Bamford's half-century which secured victory at Aldenham was in a class of its own. The key to it all is that this side, more than its recent predecessors, plays cricket with a lot of determination and controlled aggression, and both captain and players know how to sustain the pressure that induces mistakes and bowls sides out. There is a good mix of experience and youth, or responsibility and raw keenness, and an excellent team spirit, forged perhaps in the back of Mel's bus on the long journeys to all these away games. With some success for the junior teams in recent weeks also, and the emergence at senior level of a crop of good young players of whom David Stranger-Jones is the most conspicuous, and of course the homecoming to Vincent Square eagerly awaited, prospects look brighter than for some years. Nothing of course would be possible without the services and skills of a committed group of 'backroom staff' - masters, coaches, umpires, scorer and groundsmen - to whom I am immensely grateful.

Giles Brown



RUGBY

The 1997-98 season was only moderately successful in terms of results but the players were a happy, enthusiastic group with a good mix of experience and youth, very ably led by Adam Buchan. The strength of the side lay in its spine, from James MacDonald and Richard Sanders in the pack, via Charlie Stevenson at scrum half to Adam Buchan at outside half or centre. Its weakness was its narrow playing base. With under twenty boys in the Station spread across four age groups the options are limited, and players' places are never under pressure. It was unfortunate that the School's outstanding rugby player, Llewelyn ap Gwilym, was not available, and at various points the squad was undermined by injuries - this was the year of the finger and the shoulder. On the other hand a sense of togetherness stemmed from the fact that virtually everybody in the Station was a member of the team. Given these limits and disadvantages the side did extremely well. They tried harder than many Westminster sides and found some grit and steel when the going got tough (at least in those games when that spine was intact). They always sought to play attractive running rugby and often succeeded in breathtaking, exhilarating fashion. The handling was generally slick and sharp, a testimony to the excellent coaching of Kevin Bell at Richmond RFC. The rucking and mauling was often highly effective. But, as ever with Westminster sides, we missed too many tackles: indeed, the team consisted of tacklers and non-tacklers - but remarkably the tacklers never minded very much, another indication of the excellent team spirit. Highlights of the season were a gritty draw at Harrow (10-10), a 12-5 win at Mill Hill and a 17-0 win against the American School at Uxbridge.

It is a sad fact that after ten years of fun and endeavour Westminster Rugby is facing its demise due to its falling numbers. It is ironic given the success of the last couple of seasons, undreamt of in those Bohemian early years. If successful education is characterised by diversity of choice then Westminster is the poorer for rugby's disappearance. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to have been involved with the life cycle of Westminster rugby know how much pleasure and fulfilment it has given. My thanks to Kris Spencer, Martin Cropper and Tony Morris who helped so much over those years and to Danny Gill who started it all off and who gave us that wonderful, unforgettable trip to Calcutta.

Giles Brown



WATER

This season's Water Station has been one of the most successful in recent history, both for the Top Squad and others. Most notably, the 1st VIII ended its two year drought at Henley by reaching the semi-finals, en route defeating the National Schools Champions, Radley, who were celebrating their 150th anniversary at the Regatta. Over the past six months the 1st VIII has won Henley Head, and was victorious at both Gent regattas, in April and May. Indeed, the second Gent proved extremely successful, with victories over a Portuguese junior VIII (by 0.1 seconds) and Hampton School. The Top Squad has achieved success in other boat types as well, with victories in fours at Southampton and Cambridge, and some excellent results at the Fours Head. Walton Head was again a brilliant day to be a member of the Westminster Squad, with our School putting out the fastest junior double, pair and coxed pair. Ivor Vanhegan (Wren's) again excelled at the Ergo Championships, winning his J17 event.

The size and quality of the Top Squad this year meant that for National Schools there was a 2nd VIII, for the first time in recent history. Unfortunately, our Saturday performances could not mirror those of last year - only the J15 VIII managed to reach their final, winning the bronze medal. Both 1st and 2nd VIII's underperformed considerably, a fact made clear by the success of the coxless and coxed Championship

fours the next day, which came third and fourth. Only Eton (first in Championship VIII's) and St Edward's (fifth) achieved better results.

The Girls' squad attained a new pinnacle at the Schools Head, winning both the novice VIII and quad events. This success was continued by the Sixth Form girls at Gent, where they won in the quads (albeit against slightly less opposition...). The Lower School continues to produce good results, perhaps most notably with the J15 double of Sam Treasure (College) and James Cockburn (Liddell's), who at the National Championships won by six seconds. In addition, Statten Roeg (Liddell's) broke the world record at the Ergo Champs for J15's, although this only won him the silver medal.

A final mention must be made of the diverse travelling the Top Squad has made this year - Gent, as usual, but also Hawaii, over the New Year, where Westminster recorded possibly its greatest ever achievement: winning the Royal Hawaiian Rowing Challenge Grand Challenge Cup For Eights. Scullers travelled to Switzerland in October, and there are plans to once more go to Boston for the Head of the Charles, as well as Genoa in July, for an invitational sprint regatta.

Adam Cohen (Ashburnham), Head of the Water





PERFORMING ARTS

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA

September, up School



Rehearsals for *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* involved, almost immediately, both music and blocking on the stage. We were learning exits and entrances even before we had learnt our parts by heart. This actually proved quite useful, as it is always easier to remember lines when you have movements to associate them with. As the days and weeks flew by, our orchestra began to form. Our brilliant musical director, Shauna, on the harpsichord, was joined by a cellist, an organist, and then two violinists. Nero's bodyguard started flitting to and fro from stage to band, to play an exquisite baroque guitar. One afternoon we arrived to discover a man playing what someone commented looked like a deformed banjo: they were quickly told that one called it a chitarrone - of course. The growth of the band was simultaneous with the development of the acting and singing that it would accompany. Slowly, Seneca's students began to remember the meaning of the word 'pitch', and, as Seneca himself recovered from a cold, the production as a whole came together. And just in time.

The first night proved what we could do as a cast. There was an enviable sense of cooperation both on stage and off, and everyone sang brilliantly. Perhaps most notable were Ben Linton and Simone Benn, playing Nero and Poppea, who wowed the audience (and the rest of the cast, backstage) each night. The performances were over before most of us realised, and, suddenly, we were all crowded in the wings, listening to the lovers' final duet for the last time. My most lasting memory of the opera will be hearing that beautiful music drift out into the mild evening, as Westminster Abbey stood in view, silhouetted against the sky.

Jenny Haydock (Busby's)

The annual opera at Westminster is something of an institution. It is a notable synthesis of the drama and music departments, and always a considerable achievement, especially given the extremely limited time available for rehearsal. This year, news that the production would be 'something by Monteverdi' reached me in July, but casting decisions were barely complete before everyone had jetted off on holiday. It was September before the cast, depleted by the seemingly insatiable need of some of its members for sun, met to rehearse. It was recognised that, yes, it was only three weeks (and one day) to the first performance (how long is that in hours?), but there was a determined attitude that we would do it.



THE MISANTHROPE

September, Drama Studio

*'Could you really bear
to sit though another play
by Alan Bennett or David bloody Hare?'*

The first play of the year was Molière's *The Misanthrope*, directed by Ruban Yogarajah. The script was a translation by Martin Crimp that kept the rhyme and sentiment of the original but updated the setting. The direction brought out the humour and kept the fast pace of the script whilst elevating the importance of the underlying themes and emotions. The play, set in a luxury hotel room, opened with a sharp and witty section of dialogue between Alceste (played with wit and intelligence by Ed Tyerman) and John, his 'philosophically disengaged' friend (stylishly played by Nick Forgacs). The humorous became the hilarious with the appearance of the flamboyant Stephen O'Brien playing the Ackroydesque art critic Covington.

The electric exchanges between Alceste and Jennifer, played with considerable maturity and flair by Jenny Haydock, provided the emotional depth present in the original play. This was juxtaposed with sections of the funniest dialogue involving virtually the whole cast. An example of this was their first confrontation at the beginning of Act Two which was followed by the entrance of William Pym playing Julian, James MacDonald playing Alex and Lucy Priest playing Ellen; their fine performances together creating a wonderfully funny tableau. A further twist was added by Caroline Newte-Hardie who gave a compelling performance as Marcia, the brilliantly manipulative feminist.

The last Act was a fitting climax to the play. Katya Aplin made an infamous appearance as the French maid, Fifi. Her hilarious performance broke new ground in the provocative and theatrical lighting of candles. The appearance of the characters in full period dress paved the way for a reinterpretation of Molière's conclusion. The spectacular ending featuring techno music, strobe lighting and flying vinyl allowed the audience to leave secure in the knowledge that the incredible promises of the posters had been more than fulfilled.

Edward Hill & Greg Neill (Liddell's)

BUSBY'S PLAY

October, Drama Studio

Boucicault's *London Assurance* was an excellent choice for a house play. Fast and entertaining, the performance certainly had the audience laughing all the way through, though if not always for the right reasons. Adhering to the usual rehearsal times allotted to House plays, mistakes were made, but the critic (himself a House director) knows full well how difficult it is to find the time to rehearse - the urgent conversations with the prompter will not be dwelled upon. There was much to praise in this production directed at an urgent and lively pace by Damian Riddle and Brian Smith.

As the ageing but nevertheless lustful town fop Sir Harcourt Courtly, Alexie Calvert-Ansari gave an accomplished performance. He exuded that kind of slimy charm that right from the start you knew would be checked by humiliation,

though perhaps the sheer imbecility of the part was not fully captured. Together with Chris Peck's genial country gentleman Max Harkaway, the two played off each other very well: a case of regular horse riding matched with regular manicures. Chris acted as the host for much of the play, and reliably held it together when things looked as if they might go amiss.

Miles Copeland's portrayal of Charles Courtly was extremely convincing and brought a sparkle to the production as Harcourt's wastrel and debonair son. His later guise as the bookish and intellectual boy his father believes him to be was similarly entertaining. Miranda Zahedieh's Grace Harkaway, betrothed to the lecherous Harcourt, radiated charm as a woman very much in control of her life and loves, and her gradual realisation of her uncontrollable feelings for Charles was skilfully expressed. It was unfortunate that a crucial scene between the two was interrupted by fits of laughter.

Supplying the other comic elements that make one fully understand why the play was an instant success at its first ever performance were an amusing set of early nineteenth century characters. Max Usher played the upwardly mobile Richard Dazzle (related to every good family in England) as an upper class dandy, which lead me to wonder exactly how much acting was involved. However, the portrayal was engaging, and I eventually decided that the pauses and squinting that accompanied most lines were meant to be upper class mannerisms rather than desperate attempts to remember the lines.

Rachel Byng-Maddick's portrayal of the larger than life Lady Gay Spanker brought the house down: suitably over the top and complete with horsey laugh. The only criticism was her later guise as the vulnerable wife who fears her henpecked husband will leave her: Grace was perfectly justified in asking her 'are you really in earnest?'. The talented Ollie Marre played the husband himself, and made a good impression with what is a small rôle. Benji Lehmann's Mark Meddle, the foolish lawyer, was certainly irritating in the extreme. There was solid support from the body of sensible servants watching the bizarre spectacle from afar.

A minimalist set did nothing to hinder this well acted and enjoyable production, which was performed in an excellent House play atmosphere and continues the Westminster tradition of accomplished drama on low budgets and even less time.

Neil Fisher (Milne's)

DOGG'S HAMLET/ AFTER MAGRITTE

November, Drama Studio

The first of the two plays produced by Westminster's new House - Milne's - was enough to convince me of the House's high proportion of 'Thesps'. Dogg's Hamlet is, for some, difficult to understand, but nonetheless all the members of the audience seemed to find the 'Stoppard-speak' hilariously funny - despite numerous shoulder-shrugs and protestations of not knowing what on earth was going on. The play is set in a very remote and idiosyncratic public school which is putting on Hamlet as an end of term play. Thomas Munby, as the headmaster, had an authoritarian and fatherly air, whose demeanour made me much less inclined to call him 'git' ('Sir', in Stoppard-speak) than some of my present masters. The type-casting in the play was superb, and all credit must go to David Hemsley-Brown for that. Charlie Ashcroft appeared to be simply acting herself in a vicious take off of Ophelia. Meanwhile, Georg Ell's serious and straight way of portraying Hamlet himself (whether deliberate or not) contrasted well with the camp over-acting by the other parts; none more so than Neil Fisher's appearance as Polonius, which brought the house down. As rip-offs go, this play continued the Westminster tradition of being able to extract the Michael out of practically anything.

The second of the two plays, also a Stoppard, *After Magritte*, shows the surreal homelife of a dysfunctional family, with Amy Dixon playing excellently a frightful mother-in-law with a predilection. The incompetence of the Met was exuberantly portrayed by William Dunbar, who made his character seem rather too larger than life, and slightly eclipsed the other actors, whose acting was on the whole good. The period where Clare Fraenkel (as Thelma, the daughter-in-law), found it necessary to partially undress was done with the kind of disarming frankness which caused more shock than making a great play of it would have done, as was evinced by the attitude of the audience members sitting near me at the time. Alasdair Donaldson as Harris - the uncaring son who thinks that he is a superb ball-room dancer and has a very high opinion of his own machismo - was well type-cast, and his efforts in carrying off the ridiculous waders he was forced to wear at the beginning were awe-inspiring.

All in all, Milne's first House-plays show very good promise for the future, and Thomas Munby, Charlie Ashcroft, William Dunbar, and especially Neil Fisher (both as actor and director) deserve special commendation for their talent and effort.

Max Usher (Busby's)

AN ORIGINAL FUTURE

November, up School

'Your parents sent you here under the misapprehension that in school you might become educated and disciplined. In my experience, you are all delightfully meek and mild until you cross the threshold of my house, at which point you regress into a horde of barbaric uncouth simpletons...'

The Reverend Rigaud's harangue to his rowdy class opens Nick Clark's *An Original Future*, written to commemorate the centenary of the building of the present House. In the play Clark pays tribute to Stoppard and the way he plays with time in Arcadia, combining elements from the life of Bishop Rigaud and an Orwellian world of 2047, with internal references to itself as the centenary play. The juxtaposition of Bishop Rigaud's Victorian values with those of the House and society of 2047 is used to demonstrate the effect of prejudice upon historical analysis, which is one of the play's major themes. It is to Clark's credit that his first work for the stage, a full-length play, creates a world which interests, illumines and frightens as the world of 2047 plunges towards destruction. There are familiar ideas in the play: three vast political regions dominate the world, books are an expensive status symbol, the computer and the internet provide all information and the reading experience. The concerns of the pupils are, as today, prep (its avoidance) and relationships: schoolboy humour and pretentious philosophising abound. The writing of a play within the play is the central and self-referring argument of 'an original future'. This device effectively moves the action between the two time periods, as Bishop Rigaud guides Selwyn towards his future and moves towards his own dreadful end.

The dialogue works well, at times simple and child-like, at others using more complex and philosophical idioms. It is effective because its aims are clear; Clark has limited his world to what he is familiar with and not attempted to introduce too many complex ideas.

Robert Wilne's return to Westminster is marked by his direction of this work. He took the difficult task of staging a multi-scene play and set it in a single classroom, against the garden wall of School. This created a good space through which the scenes could rapidly flow. The classroom scenes, set at a slight angle to the audience, made particularly effective use of this space, filling it with babbling, shouting Victorian children or the quieter, reflective, older pupils of 2047. Other scenes used portions of the stage and, with careful lighting to focus attention, enabled the set to function throughout without the need for any set changes that would have impeded the flow of the play.

Selwyn, clearly written for himself, was played by Nick Clark with his usual sensitive and detailed delivery, showing his understanding of how to communicate subtext as well as the text to an audience. Tara Hacking's first performance at Westminster as Sarah was of the same high standard, beautifully balancing the growing, clumsy relationship with Selwyn and reacting well to Dan's sexist jibes. Perhaps Dan was too close to Charlie O'Farrell for him to develop the rôle sufficiently, particularly in terms of his body language. Meera Kumar had the stage presence and authority to carry the difficult role of Miller, the female Housemaster in 2047, with panache.

There were many good first performances and cameo appearances: John and Hilary Arthur as Bishop and Mrs Rigaud; the Fifth Form as the tail-coated Victorian children, at one point donning bonnets to become Victorian Westminster's girls in Selwyn's imagination.

One criticism I would raise was the slow transition from scene to scene. This impeded the dramatic development in what was a successful production, making it feel unnecessarily episodic.

It is impressive that a first play should work so well on the stage and it is clear that Clark's wide ranging experience in the theatre has contributed extensively to this ease of transition from page. I trust that he will be encouraged by this success and continue writing.

Philip Needham



ABIGAIL'S PARTY

November, Drama Studio

December brought a comic performance of Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party* to the Drama Studio, which was much enjoyed by all. The action took place in a suburban household living room, where bubbly Bev and her husband, the long-suffering Lawrence, invite their neighbours round for a sociable evening, while Abigail - daughter of one of the guests - stereotypically trashes her house down the road in the midst of a rampant teenage orgy (ie her sixteenth birthday party).

Clare Fraenkel had a hysterical interpretation of the character Bev which she brought to life with a high-pitched cockney and 'stylish' plastic jewellery. She was well supported by Catherine Taylor as her best friend, Angie, who took the meaning of the word 'airhead' to new extremes. Tony, her strong but silent partner, grunted with exceptional talent, given the monosyllabic lines that he had available to him.

Will Stevens in this part looked mysteriously attractive in a luminous green shirt, complete with gold jewellery and white socks.

One high point was the scene where the cast began to dance. While Bev attempted to seduce a very cooperative Tony, Angie flapped around the room in her (hopefully not true-to-life) effort to dance. On the other side of the stage Sue (Marina Grob) danced rigidly (or was it frigidly?) with an obviously uncomfortable Lawrence (Sebastian Billings) who gave a very professional performance throughout the play.

Indeed, a certain member of the Remove found the action so thrilling that he was unable to contain himself and threw himself into the performance, walking across the stage before making a dramatic exit. Fortunately the cast had the presence of mind to continue despite this interruption.

This was a play tightly worked and extremely well performed, much loved by teachers, parents and pupils alike.

Georgina Burley & Nisha Makan (Purcell's)



MEASURE FOR MEASURE

January, Gymnasium

Drama at Westminster is a perturbed spirit, doomed for an uncertain term to walk the site in search of a suitable venue. It has been seen everywhere up School, except in the ceiling, heard down in the cellarages of Sutcliff's and the Dungeons, spied in College Hall, encountered all over Ashburnham House, inside and out, met on Yard, or bumped into in the Gymnasium. Of all these locations, the latter, once the monks' graveyard and now an echoing barn, shows the least capability for a School production. How would the actors, with but three weeks' rehearsal for the whole show and only occasional access to the eventual stage, cope with the acoustics? How would the audience cope with the damp and chill of mid-winter? And the director with the play? *Measure for Measure*, like *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, is a collector's item of a different kind from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, in that one goes to see how the director handles it rather than what the leading actor makes of his part. In one way, David Summerscale's problems of interpretation were eased by the restricted space available for performance - literally, the width of a basketball court. There would be no room for hobnobbing courtiers in the opening and closing of scenes or for the pestiferous gaolbirds in the prison; if the audience, like the Duke, was to see 'corruption boil and bubble Till it o'errun the stew', its imagination would have to be worked on by the words alone, assisted by the set, costume and lighting.

In this respect, Andrew Bateman's handsome setting, atmospheric and practical, was of great assistance. The mélange of medieval stone and nineteenth century brick that formed the back wall of the stage, with its blocked-up archway and blanked-out windows suggestive of hell with a lid on, was continued in his construction of wrecked door frames, broken balustrades, and shattered windows closed up with corrugated iron: the ramshackle debris of a blitzed city, amid which the spectres of an earlier age were permitted to tell their story. Thoughtful design allowed easy entry and exit, assisting the play's naturally swift pace. *Measure for Measure* is unusual in that only two scenes, the first and the last, open formally, and that the stage is cleared formally only at the very end - for the rest, characters largely enter conversing, and on this occasion they were able to do so as their predecessors left. Thus the production was allowed to glide along, triumphantly achieving the 'two hours' traffic prescribed by the author.

Costume and lighting helped here, too - the simple line of the Jacobean-style clothes gave freedom of movement and made for effective group statements, while the lighting responded sympathetically to the transition of scenes. Appropriately, while a cold, clear light held up the characters for analysis on stage, the hellish implication of the play's undertones was emphasised by the fierce glow of electric fires around the auditorium. However, unlike the condemned souls of Claudio's vision, the audience was quite content 'to bathe in

fiery floods'; content, also, with raked seating that gave a fine view of the action and, when fully accommodated, as it was on all three nights, entirely cut out the place's inbuilt echo.

Whatever support the production might be afforded by technical expertise, it was on the commitment of his cast that the director relied for its drive, and in this he was well served by a company that blended veterans and relative newcomers. The theatre and sport have much in common and have been long related, and it was possible to see in David Summerscale's disposition of his players the astuteness of a captain drawing up a batting order. The Duke of Wellington once praised the reliability of Westminsters on the field of battle. Who, in our present community, could be found to hold together an innings on such a tricky wicket? It was not surprising that he turned to College for his two leading actors.



In some of Shakespeare's plays, two roles are so antithetical that they invite the exchange of performers. So, on successive nights, Othello has swapped with Iago and Hal with Hotspur. One was tempted to do the same in imagination with Alastair Sooke's Duke and Thomas Wood's Angelo. Cast conventionally, Wood, with his height and authority, and rich, musical voice, might have been thought suitable for the enigmatic Duke, while the more open faced, incisive Sooke might have been given Angelo. In the event, the director's choice proved wise for the production. This Duke brought no distracting history with him: he had made errors in the past and now he was going to clear them up, not be haunted by them. There was a directness in Alastair Sooke's playing that cut through irrelevant speculation and fulfilled the part's true purpose - to tell the story.

In Angelo alone, therefore, we were invited to consider the darkness within without a challenge, and for this Thomas Wood, his eloquent eyes belying the taut, enclosed face, and a voice that reached to all moods in the sensitivity of its inflections, was excellently suited.

The strength of the leading men were matched by those of the women - by Tara Hacking's Isabella, in particular. As clear and direct as the Duke (for once, one did not wonder how the

couple would fare when married: there would be no nonsense on either side), in her interviews with Angelo and Claudio she conveyed a passionate integrity that entirely convinced.

In her relatively few lines Charlie Ashcroft gave Juliet real substance: the apparent submissiveness masked a defiant indignation and contempt for the arbitrary power that had humiliated her. Mariana, too, portrayed by Amelia Walker, showed more resoluteness than she is usually allowed, and Georgina Burley as Mistress Overdone tore into the pallid drones of Viennese society with venom. Altogether, the distaff side of the play was given powerful representation.

Outstanding in the comic underworld of the piece was Nick Clark's Lucio. He was the first to let the audience realise that there was room for laughter as well as reflection in the play, and his duel with the disguised Duke, culminating in his downfall, was clearly enjoyed. Saul Lipetz was an austere and purposeful Escalus, Alexei Calvert-Ansari an intense Claudio, and Howard Gooding gave robust menace to Abhorson, the executioner. Benjamin Lehmann as Pompey and Nick Levene as Elbow, both skilled character actors, gave good accounts of their rôles, though Pompey was sometimes too preoccupied with removing a dark, unidentifiable substance from his finger ends, and Elbow's rural accent was rather alien to the estuarine cockney of his fellow citizens.

In all, this was a clearly defined, well-spoken and sure-footed production, whose swiftness of pace did not obscure the play's issues or the interaction of the characters, and which was performed to full and appreciative houses.

It marked a farewell to the School stage of one who has consistently promoted the performing arts in his time as Head Master, and who, as on the field of sport, has been ready to engage himself in the action, with all its hazards. When the opportunity comes for the history of the past twelve years to be written, whatever may be said of the School's achievements academically or athletically (and they cannot lightly be dismissed), surely its artistic record deserves most honourable mention: to those who were involved in such enterprises, or were audience to them, they will remain among the brightest memories of the time.

Peter Holmes

PHILOCTETES

February, Drama Studio

College is probably the House most associated with tradition at Westminster: Scholars wear gowns to Abbey, say grace before lunch, and every two years perform a Greek play. Breaking tradition, this year's Lower School jumped the gun and put on *Philoctetes* a year early. Every member of the Fifth form and Lower Shell was involved, whether acting, or performing Sinan Savaskan's custom music, or doing the lighting. Unlike past College productions, which have all been Aristophanes comedies with large casts and choruses involving the whole house, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, one of only seven of the hundred tragedies Sophocles wrote which remain to us, is a much more serious play with a small cast, which seemed more at home in the intimate surroundings of the drama studio than it would have done up School. Unfortunately, that meant that not everyone who wanted to see it could, especially since it only ran for two nights, but at least the actors got the full houses on both nights that they deserved. However, Sinan Savaskan's eerie music, echoing round the set, helped create an atmosphere that was at once engaging.

The plot is deceptively simple: Philoctetes (Alex Mackenzie) was accompanying the Greek expedition to Troy when he was bitten by a poisonous serpent in the foot. Crippled and in agony, he was abandoned on the deserted island of Lemnos. ten years later his companions realise that only he and the invincible bow of Heracles which he carries can take Troy. Odysseus (Jonathan Goldsmith) must persuade Philoctetes to return to Troy. However he knows that Philoctetes would die sooner than help the man who had abandoned him 10 years earlier, and so he brings Neoptolemus (David Reicher), the recently come-of-age son of Achilles, to help persuade Philoctetes to return.

Odysseus and Philoctetes are to a certain extent polarised characters: one simply trying to use his superior circumstances and devious nature to trick Philoctetes into returning against his will, and Philoctetes himself a victim, weak physically, but on the moral high ground: but it is on Neoptolemus that the play is really focused. It is here that Sophocles showed his skill in painting the character and feelings of the young man. An idealist, he is loath to abandon his principles to deceive Philoctetes and feels shame and regret in the face of the injustice he has perpetrated. Jonathan Goldsmith ably portrayed the cruel, pragmatic, selfish logic of Odysseus, while Alex Mackenzie showed the injured pride and self-righteousness of the betrayed Philoctetes. However the play rested on David Reicher's Neoptolemus, about whom the play revolves, and he carried it off excellently, showing the inner turmoil of the youthful idealist confronted with the ugly pragmatism of Odysseus. Ultimately neither is sufficient, and a divine intercession from Heracles (Martin Malinowski) is necessary before the play can reach its conclusion. Ably supported by a well-characterised chorus of sailors (Alexander Fry, Alexander Brenchley, Murat Kerimol, Imran Coomaraswamy, Thomas Morrow and Edward Waddingham) and directed by Jonathan Katz and Sharon Newman, this was an enjoyable addition to College's repertoire of Greek drama.

Thomas Baranga (College)



DRAMA FESTIVAL

March, up School: First Night

The drama festival is an annual chance for anyone to stage just about anything. This year, the opportunity to act or direct seemed to attract more interest than ever. From the many plays that were originally submitted, Philip Needham chose ten to be performed, meaning that an extra night had to be added to the festival to fit them all in. The result was a festival that was as diverse in its content as it was in its audiences that came each night. The atmosphere is like no other event the School does, relaxed and informal and where nobody can be threatened by a full length play.

It was the job of Nick Levene, Abi Conway and Will Stevens to open the festival with the first act of *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne. The play is a modern classic and, I thought, a brave choice, especially doing only one act; but it turned out to work very well. Nick directed and also starred as a slightly neurotic Jimmy, giving his opinion on just about everything while either sitting in his armchair or stomping around the stage. During this, Will as Cliff spent his time

reading a paper while Abi as Alison moodily ironed in the corner.

It was all very watchable. Nick took a difficult script and not only made sense of Jimmy but also the act as a whole: I particularly liked the ticking clock at the beginning and the fade-out at the end. Will was very funny with his flat responses to Jimmy's rantings, perfectly expressionless throughout. Abi as Alison was also just right, passive to everything going on around her, until she was alone with Will. The sexual tension between her and Will was electric, climaxing with the finger sucking bit; in fact the whole room got quite sweaty. As a play, I thought it did suffer from being only the first act but despite this, the sombre social message did come across and the final fade out was to a completely silent, transfixed audience.

Next was *The Death Trap* by Saki, the only non-Sixth form offering of the night, and it was more of a comedy sketch than a play. Ferdinand Koenig was impressive as the lead, as were all the cast - Julian Elliot, Tom Dawson, Ben Rhode and Nick Brough all show a lot of promise for future School productions. Lionel Laurent directed the simple piece very effectively got the punchline ending just right. It was a good contrast to the long play before it and it was very funny, perfect for the festival.

Third was a play that was written by, directed by and starring Alasdair Donaldson and Tom Munby and was, for me, the best comedy of the three nights. *All in the Mind* was the only original play in the festival and it appealed to the Westminster sense of

humour perfectly. It concerned a boy (Neil Fisher) chasing a girl (Katie Pantling) and not knowing what to do. Georg Ell - 'the poet' - and Tom Munby - 'the big hairy chieftain' were the boy's good and bad consciences with Alasdair as the 'Third man' who arrives who arrives at the end with a machine gun and goes off with the girl. Charlie Ashcroft also made an appearance as 'Carlotta the Queen of Blood' in a generally insane and hilarious play. Not only was all the acting good but the script was both clever and completely mad and very funny - maybe there is a future there for the two writers.

The final play was again just the first act of Tom Stoppard's comedy, *Enter a Free Man*. This had the biggest cast of the night and even a directing team - Anthony Aiken, Miako Smith and Fleur Gorman. The result was a very professional production. The stage was split into Riley's (Nick Akle) house and his local pub and the switching between the two sets worked very well. Nick was very much the lead and gave a very strong, energetic performance. Also impressive was Ben Warner as the pub joker Harry; the exchanges between him and Nick were when the play was at its funniest. There were also nice bits between Nick and his wife and daughter, Bella Schlepe and Veronica Vasco, when the play got more serious. Mark Brenchley, Ben Jarman, Neisha Santamaria and

Robert Marsh were all convincing, contributing to an uplifting end to the evening.

It was thanks to Philip Needham that the drama festival was again possible and partly why it is always such a success, as well as the other members of staff who helped in its organisation, especially Robert Wilne. It is also worth mentioning the hard work of Timothy Vale and Raghu Nandakumara on sound and lighting and the stage management of Henry Newman and Edward Rugman.

Sebastian Billings (Hakluyt's)

Third Night

The extremely accomplished Lower Shell trio of Statten Roeg, Jullian Elliot and Doug Shaw started the evening with James McLure's *Lone Star*. Overall it was a riveting performance, with the cast displaying an amazing maturity for what was not the easiest play to carry off. Despite losing some momentum towards the end, I look forward to seeing these actors in the future, particularly Statten Roeg, who was completely enthralling in the main part as the bullying, aggressive, yet somehow vulnerable Vietnam veteran.

The action then moved north from Texas to New York, in Edward Albee's disturbing *Zoo Story*. Daniel Pimlott and Adam Ing played off each other well: the former a 'content' middle class businessman, the latter a wild eccentric who dominates the proceedings with his macabre tales. The result was gripping drama, and the tragedy at the end produced a palpable reaction. At times some of the speech was lost (both actors tended to neglect the audience on the left and right) but overall cast and director deserve praise for their ambition and effort.

In what was a night of superbly maintained accents the evening finished in cockney for Hanif Kureshi's *Outskirts*. Superb acting made what is not the most thought-provoking of plays into a superb climax to the evening. Sebastian Billing's sharp direction made this tale of brutality and lost opportunities in South London moving and arresting. It was also extremely interesting to see Tara Hacking, Alastair Sooke and Thomas Wood, whom I had seen not long before in *Measure for Measure*, take on completely different roles with the same great success in this contemporary 'morality' play.

Neil Fisher (Milne's)



'MAKIN' WHOOPEE'

November, up School

We've been to a number of jazz clubs in our time. Most fade into hazy memories of smoky basements and seedy underground dives, the clientele nursing their coffees and lonely bachelors drowning their sorrows in stiff martinis. But on this occasion the billboards proclaimed 'Up School' and we suspected that this would be an evening with a difference.

Once there, it was clear that this was The Place To Be. One's gaze was drawn immediately towards the enticing bar at the far end of the room, and who could believe their luck when they found that the drinks and canapés were on the house? By then the club was almost full, so we made our way to the last available table, which, as luck would have it, was right at the front. The lights dimmed, the Big Band was in place; the evening was about to begin.

A group of gifted musicians kicked off the show with some classic favourites, and there were outstanding solos from Simon Ruda on the clarinet and Ed Roy on the trumpet. This was followed by the smooth, sultry sounds of two gifted solo female vocalists with distinctly contrasting styles. Kendal Gaw performed one of her own numbers and *Makin' Whoopee*, while Olivia Tebbutt ('all the way from Kingston') delivered a cool rendition of *Cry Me a River*. She later made a guest appearance singing *Lover Man* with the talented Parliament Square Sextet, who also treated the audience to a lively collection of modern classics.

The evening went on to include a stunning piano medley by Ben Arnold, and a spirited rendition of *Green Dolphin Street* by Toby Benton on guitar, Jon Sells on bass and Ed Stevens on drums. Toby returned later on to bewitch the audience with a moody rendition of *Summertime*. We were seduced by the mellow tones of another recent newcomer on the jazz scene - Olly McGregor, a solo vocalist with his own quartet featuring Benji Lehmann on double bass, Ben Arnold on piano and Ed Stevens on drums.

Throughout the evening, drinks and conversation flowed freely, feet tapped to jaunty tunes, and many found the temptation to get up and dance almost irresistible. All seemed to go according to plan, as performers were expertly guided through their paces by the inimitable Ken McAllister, who discreetly masterminded and organised the whole affair. The music ended all too soon, and we found our feet dragging in reluctance to leave such an evening of laughter, high spirits and, of course, fantastic jazz.

*Olivia Tebbutt (Grant's), Katherine Kingsley (Liddell's)
& Clare Fraenkel (Milne's)*

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

November, up School

For the Play Term concert on 19 November the orchestra sat at the organ end of School, percussion under Athens, fiddlers before the Roman theatre; the audience entered at the far end, via Ashburnham Garden, to sit in rows stretching back to the stage and up into the Shell. The experiment worked very well acoustically; the orchestral sound carried with exceptional clarity to most parts of the hall. Visually it was not quite such a happy arrangement, as a large gap was left between the front few rows and the raised seats at the back, giving the impression, perhaps unfairly, of a rather small audience. There seemed to be few pupils attending, but those who did come were well rewarded by an ambitious and exciting programme, and by some beautiful playing.

In Gabriel Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* Suite, which opened the concert, the present strengths of the orchestra were immediately obvious - above all a lovely, accomplished warmth of string tone and accurate intonation in the *Prélude* and the *Sicilienne*, where *tempi* were well measured and a delightful lilting rhythm was sustained. Despite a few initial problems in woodwind tuning there were no really weak sections, and the players conveyed a sense of genuine commitment and enjoyment.

The centre piece was the first movement of Beethoven's Triple Concerto in C, Op 56, for which the orchestra was joined by Charlie Stevenson (violin), Edwin Cook (cello) and Xandi Imboden (piano). With an excellently judged tempo and secure lead from the orchestra, this was a good performance. The violin and cello, perhaps a little nervous and tentative at the start, soon warmed to their roles and the solo group presented a good balance of 'inward' private playing and, at appropriate moments, something more public and extrovert. A programme note drew attention to the contrast between the grand symphonic scale of this movement and its elements of 'chamber-like intimacy'. The clarity of this contrast was helped by the carefully phrased, coherent reading of the soloists. Their ensemble owed a good deal to Imboden's steady and reliable rhythm; in significant passages the piano emerged, and led the others, out from the 'chamber' atmosphere to achieve considerable bite.

The second half of the concert was devoted to a complete performance of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony in E minor, a work which surely few school orchestras would take on with any great confidence. It was clear that the major part of rehearsal time must have been spent on this work, and it was time well used by all those involved. Generally well prepared and 'safe' even in many very taxing passages, the performance had moments of enormous verve and excitement without any sense of insecurity. Here again the strings sounded exceptionally well, but there was some excellent

sectional and solo playing from all parts of the orchestra - a truly moving and memorable horn solo in the *Andante* (this movement was perhaps the highest point of the evening), fine trumpet solos and brass ensemble, and the constant feature of excellent woodwind, especially the clarinets which figure so prominently in this symphony. (The beautiful opening clarinet passage of the first movement was well played but was effectively wrecked by a protracted, hideous and astonishingly unstified cough somewhere in the ranks.) Guy Hopkins steered the orchestra confidently through this enormous work without taking any risks - he applied careful *tempi* that really worked, and well graded and controlled dynamics. This was a memorable concert, and an orchestra to be proud of.

Jonathan Katz



CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CONCERT

February, up School

As always, this year's chamber and orchestral concert provided an opportunity for pupils to perform their own compositions, as well as the possibility of incorporating some pieces by other composers who might otherwise, by their nature, not have been included in more mainstream orchestral concerts. As such the Chamber and Orchestral Concert is always a varied and colourful event due to the wide range of unpredictable diverse styles juxtaposed in one evening. The compositions by pupils come from members of the Upper Shell, Sixth Form and Remove and many formed part of the pupils' A level and GCSE submissions.

The evening began at 7:30pm with Meera Kumar's *Variations on 'Lauda Jerusalem'* arranged for string octet led by Clemmie Burton-Hill. This was an interesting approach to such a task in its orchestration and thematic development and the small ensemble of players was very effective due to the close proximity of many members of the audience. The first half was in fact dominated by compositions for small ensembles or soloists such as Paul Bailey's highly contrapuntal and rhythmically varied *Sonata for Oboe and 'Cello*, Jonathan Sells's stunningly performed *Trio for Flute, Oboe and 'Cello* and finally Benjamin Lehmann's *Fantasy No 1 for Piano* which was very well received as well as being fiendishly technically difficult; indeed, the soloist, Jonathan Katz commented that the composer 'requires the performer to have twelve fingers'! Interspersed between these pupil compositions were *The Lamb* by Tavener, authentically sung by the Henry VII Singers, despite its pure refined use of such techniques as retrograde and Weber's *Overture to Peter Schmoll*, op 8 sensitively arranged by Kenneth McAllister for wind ensemble.

After the interval Toby Benton's complex piece *Love/Persecution* was performed, interestingly scored for voice, guitar, strings, woodwind and percussion. However, unfortunately the acoustic of School did not do it justice. William Robertson's highly ambitious piece *Metamorphosis* surprised everyone with its totally unexpected piano entry and was followed by Ed Stevens's varied and ephemeral *Nimbus* and Daphne Harvey's *Study for String Quartet* which was mildly atonal and technically demanding. The penultimate piece, Jenny Haydock's *Lament* for string ensemble, horn and flute, contained some beautifully performed solos and was rhythmically original. The Sibelius *Swan of Tuonela* op 22 no 3 was exceptional in the beautifully phrased and sustained cor anglais solo and the orchestra, in particular the timpani, maintained the tension, dramatically released in the moving climax.

The success of the concert shows, once again, the great musical talent of certain pupils at the School, and the result was a thoroughly impressive evening.

Tim Vale (College)

EVA MEIER SINGS BRECHT

March, up School

In a year when the centenary of Bertolt Brecht's birth was largely ignored in this country, it was admirable to see Westminster recognising some of this remarkable man's achievements by inviting the renowned cabaret singer Eva Meier to perform some of his poems in arrangements by Kurt Weill and Hans Eisler. The audience who packed School enjoyed a most thought-provoking evening.

The fascinating programme, which Ms Meier has been performing all over the world to great acclaim, gave a real insight into the different aspects of the man and his times. Each song was preceded by an English translation read by an actress - anathema to those from Richard Stokes's German classes, but no doubt a great help to many in the audience.

Songs which the Nazis labelled degenerate like *Barbara's Song* from the *Threepenny Opera* and the *Bilbao Song* show a humorous desire for imperfection and vice (after all it is the Germans who say that a woman who cannot be ugly is not beautiful) and were relayed with charm and seductiveness. Other songs from the 1920's, like *Pirate Jenny* and *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, continued the theme of the hedonism of Weimar democracy. Others however varied from the sentimentality of the *Matrosen Tango* (which nonetheless manages to slip in Brecht's atheism) to the absurdity of *Mother Beimlen* and *Jakob Apfelböck*, but Ms Meier seemed totally in control of the subject matter at all times.

Of course a large proportion of Brecht's output was socialist didacticism and it was here that one could really see that Ms. Meier was very much an actress who sings rather than the other way round - as Brecht would have wanted. Songs such as *A Horse Complains* and *Supply and Demand* - the first tragic, the second witty and cynical, compose a passionate attack on capitalism. As the dark years of Hitler's rise to power approached Ms Meier reached a new level of interpretation in Eisler's setting of the gloomy but haunting *Lullabies* from a mother to her unborn children. It is ironic that Brecht treated women so sympathetically in his poems but in real life treated them quite differently.

At no time was Brecht as eloquent and moving as when describing the Third Reich. The evening had begun with Brecht's own recording of *To Posterity*, recited in the manner of the author's alienation theories, which, for me, was one of the most penetrating attacks on the Nazis ever written. Eisler's settings of his other anti-Nazi poems were similarly scathing: the *Song of a German Mother* and the *Ballad of the Nazi Soldier's Wife* look at the war from points of view not often explored. They were a shocking end to this absorbing evening.

We are indebted to Richard Stokes for arranging this evening to celebrate the life of an outstanding artist, and to Eva Meier for bringing his work to life.

Neil Fisher (Milne's)

CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

March, Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey provides a magnificent setting for a concert, visually speaking. Acoustically, the building is a mixed blessing. Sound is absorbed, echoed, dispersed or reverberated depending on the weather, time of day, the phases of the moon. Under such circumstances Mendelssohn can mutate into Mahler.

Fortunately, this was not the case with the *Hebrides Overture*. This can be a tedious piece at the best of times. Once you've spotted the main tune, very little happens to further excite the imagination. You just keep listening for it to turn up again.

Guy Hopkins conducted in a sprightly and elegant fashion: more surprisingly, the orchestra responded with sprightly and elegant playing. Although the Abbey muddled the strings a little, the woodwind was audible, accurate and convincingly bracing. From first to last, the piece remained energetic.

John Baird's *Passacaglia - Carnival Time* was an ambitious piece: eclectic, intelligent and entertaining. It opened with an arresting solo for tenor (Toby Benton) which floated cleanly above. As the orchestra picked up the *passacaglia* theme, the noise became dense and constricted. The quality of the invention was self-evident but the Abbey churned the detail and what emerged was a sort of Tippet-Sibelius gloomy soup. Through this the *Greensleeves* melody shimmered 'like a good deed in a naughty world'.

The next movement, *Samba*, surprised with its vibrant cacophony. The percussionists propelled themselves through the audience with dancing relish. For once, the Abbey helped, throwing the noise out into the distant arches and returning it to a bemused audience. Great fun.

The last movement restored calm as the tenor contemplates the future. The music is slow and introverted, quietly ending on notes of unambiguous sadness and regret.

Mozart's C minor Mass transcended the Abbey's worst intentions. Guy Hopkins conducted another graceful and swift programme as the choir sang with great enthusiasm producing blocks of sound that shook the stonework. There was also much beautiful singing in the solos: Kendal Gaw, Edwin Cook and Max Grender-Jones all phrased their contributions with charm and delicacy. The Mass, which can sound like a lump of mock-baroque fancywork with solemn doodlings for extra emphasis, came across as a genuinely religious experience. And you can't say (or review) fairer than that.

As ever, the Music Department must be congratulated on producing a concert that was both exciting and varied. What will it do next?

Gavin Griffiths



CONCERTO CONCERT

April, up School

An awed hush filled School on 20 April as Westminster's finest soloists prepared for the most prestigious concert in the calendar. Concerto playing is no easy task at the best of times, and these young players had the added pressure of knowing that this was their last big chance to show what they were made of before leaving school. What followed was a fine display of musicianship and, perhaps more important, showmanship.

The evening got under way with Brahms's *Overture in D minor (Tragic)*, with Clemmie Burton-Hill leading the orchestra and Kenneth McAllister wielding the stick. There were some very well controlled dynamics here, and excellent woodwind playing. The band soon found its stride, and delivered a dramatic build-up to a spirited climax.

Now that the orchestra was warmed up, it was time for Miles Copeland to take centre stage for the first movement of Matthias Monn's 'Cello Concerto in G minor. Sinan Savaskan conducted a confident and well-balanced string orchestra led by Max Grender-Jones, and Copeland put on a fine show. After one or two initial signs of nerves, he swept through this rarely performed work with panache.

Flanders and Swann aficionados can seldom listen to Mozart's Horn Concerto in Eb, K495, without imagining the lyric 'I lost that horn'. Jonathan Monroe, however, gave the Finale a serious and accomplished performance under Kenneth McAllister's baton. The orchestra, too, was sounding very polished with Michael Garnett in the driving seat.

Following seamlessly on from the Mozart came Haydn's G major Violin Concerto - the whole thing. Considerably shorter than later concertos, this slotted neatly into the programme and featured the excellent solo playing of Florrie Evans. Guy Hopkins directed and Clemmie Burton-Hill took her turn leading the string orchestra, which seemed to be going from strength to strength. The piece had the intimacy and precision of a chamber work, with Evans executing every detail with verve and conviction.

After the interval, a change of musical scene came in the form of Bruch's G minor Violin Concerto. Guy Hopkins and Clemmie Burton-Hill resumed their positions, this time with Laura Bender soloing. This is a very difficult piece, and an ambitious choice for a young performer, but she assaulted it bravely and with no apparent signs of nerves. The band

provided an accurate accompaniment in spite of the technical challenges of the *tutti* passages, offering the soloist some much-needed support in such a tricky work.

Violist Adam Kaye took to the limelight for Ralph Vaughan Williams's Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra. This was a thoroughly enjoyable performance, with a great deal of sensitivity and, in the last movement, humour. The viola is a notoriously difficult instrument to get a good sound from, but Kaye seemed to rise above any potential problems with it.

Meera Kumar sang Richard Strauss's *Allerseelen* and *Zueignung*, with the orchestra led by Florrie Evans and conducted by Sinan Savaskan. The orchestration of *Allerseelen* was a little unsympathetic to the soloist - Strauss himself had only written a piano accompaniment - and Kumar's softer low register was a little swamped once or twice. The second song, however, sounded much happier, with the singer getting a chance to show off her higher range. Interestingly enough, this was Strauss's own orchestration, and seemed to work far better than the first.

To close the evening's proceedings, the orchestra played Puccini's *Intermezzo* from Act III of *Manon Lescaut*, with Meera Kumar now leading and Guy Hopkins back at the helm. This was an apt finale to a very entertaining concert - everybody simply enjoyed playing a good, very hummable tune, and it sounded self-assured and triumphant. There was a richly deserved torrent of applause, and an all-round sense of a job well done.

Christian Vaughan



DESERT ISLAND DISCS

May, up School

This seemed an apt kind of farewell to the Head Master from and organised by the Westminster Parent's Committee. The amount of talent and effort that went into presenting the *Desert Island Discs* evening only really struck me on the afternoon before we were due to go on stage, during the dress rehearsal. Over the preceding weeks Tara Hacking, Thomas Wood and I had been trying to piece together an excerpt from Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* under the skilful guidance of the Head Master. The scene that he chose and directed, about fifteen minutes long, was exceptionally depressing; with all the three characters - a drunken doctor Astrov, Uncle Vanya himself and his niece Sonia - each speaking of the monotony of their tremendously harsh lives. When we were presented with the running order for the evening in the dress rehearsal it soon became clear that the Head Master's choices for the 'luggage' he would take with him to the Desert Island was of an equally evocative nature. A Chopin nocturne, a Beethoven quartet and a late Schubert sonata were among his most widely acclaimed choices. Each slot of the eleven pre-arranged choices was performed beautifully by the sixteen pupils as well as Jonathan Katz - whose Schubert piano piece, incidentally, was so exquisite that the Head Master chose it above his other choices to take to his 'Island'. The haunting voices of all the singers involved utterly enraptured the audience - notably a duet sung by Kendal Gaw and Meera Kumar.

The most daunting role in the evening, however, undoubtedly fell to Thomas Wood who not only had to play the manic depressive Uncle Vanya, as well as the twisted autocrat Angelo in a small scene from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, but was also asked to play one of Chopin's Nocturnes. As a piece of music this was so wide-rangingly poignant that it encapsulated the sentiment behind the evening. The most impressive performance of the evening had to be, though, from the Head Master himself who, despite being thoroughly grilled by an extremely capable, witty and manipulative interviewer - James Naughtie - managed both to avoid much self-disclosure while absolutely holding interest of the three-hundred strong audience. The applause at the end of the evening seemed to show the audience's appreciation of the evening which proved to be both an entertaining and a nostalgic insight into David Summerscale's life, as well as a fitting tribute to his time at Westminster.

Alastair Sooke (College)

FEATURES

LABOUR ONE YEAR ON

Annus mirabilis?

On 1 May, Tony Blair's New Labour decimated a hamstrung and lacklustre Tory government, and swept triumphantly into power after 18 years in the political wilderness. Today the Tories are still reeling from the shock, a shock that was all the more powerful given that only five years earlier many political commentators had written Labour off completely as a party doomed to perpetual opposition. Now those same commentators are predicting that the Tories will be in opposition for a generation, a fate that seems ever more likely as the Tories have been able to offer no riposte to a party that has so successfully cannibalised many of their own most popular policies. And yet while New Labour has effectively stolen the soapbox from under the Tories, leaving them without a voice or political power base to speak from, Tony Blair has created a party that is still fundamentally different from the Conservatives, despite occasional outraged accusations of betrayal.

Meanwhile, all the Tories' energy is being absorbed in the infighting to shape the heart and soul of the New Conservatives (possibly a contradiction in terms), and Paddy Ashdown and Tony Blair increasingly seem to be speaking with the same voice. The result is that parliamentary opposition, one of the few checks and balances on an already powerful executive, has been silenced, a potentially worrying development. The torch of opposition has been passed from the Tories (appropriately enough they are abolishing the torch as their logo) to the media and a small band of veteran Labour left-wing backbenchers.

It is undoubtedly the first of these which is, at the moment, the most important. The politics of the past, dominated by parliamentary debate between two antagonistic parties, seems to have come to an end. Traditionally the debating chamber was the forum where the opposition could scrutinise the government and make ministers responsible for their actions. However, with a majority as massive as the present one, and a completely neutered opposition, the importance of parliament has rapidly deteriorated. The most telling sign of this is perhaps that Tony Blair has cut down his parliamentary appearances to often as little as one half hour session a week. Instead it has become the sole responsibility of the media to report on what the government is doing and to point out its failings. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that so much of the political focus in Labour's first year (a focus directed by the media) has been on the government's relationship with the media.

Ironically for a government so driven by image management, the government's image on this issue is remarkably poor. We have been bombarded in the past year with endless stories of Labour spin-doctoring, of soundbites, and of Tony Blair's somewhat too cosy relationship with Rupert Murdoch. The amount of press attention directed towards Peter Mandelson, 'The Prince of Darkness' and leading government spin-doctor, has been vastly disproportionate to his nominal duties as Minister without Portfolio and co-ordinator of the Millennium Dome project. That the government is so concerned about its image and presentability to the media shows how much influence the media has acquired.

Soundbites - New Labour, Cool Britannia, the People's Princess - have become the order of the day. Ironically however Peter Mandelson, the doyen of spin-doctoring probably has the poorest image of all, largely thanks to the secondary opposition of that hard-core of Labour backbenchers.

Much was made before the election of the disciplined silence of Old Labour, which was meant to be using Tony Blair as a Trojan Horse into Downing Street. So far these fears have proved to be groundless, as the huge size of Tony Blair's majority has rendered them powerless in terms of influence and policy making. There have been no widely forecast major revolts. The biggest clash has come over single mothers' benefits. Blair could afford to whip Labour MPs so forcibly into the lobbies thanks to his majority - any MP who doesn't conform to government policy has a bleak five years ahead on the backbenches. However, the policy dramatically polarised the party, and the hidden influence of the Labour left can still be seen by the fact that since there has been a quiet U-turn through the back door.

However, the split between Old and New Labour has shown to be deep and fundamental, and not just a pre-election tactical ploy. Blair has proved his New Labour credentials - there has been no Old Labour spending binge, single mothers' benefit has been cut (if only in name) and the Iron Chancellor has stuck toughly to Tory spending commitments, and bravely given independence to the Bank of England to set interest rates. Yet despite the criticisms of the Britpop brigade that Blair cultivated so actively at the beginning of the year, this is not just a Tory government in Labour's clothing. The abolition of PEPs and TESSAs will hit the middle classes, child care arrangements and welfare to work as well as the windfall tax on utilities are all intended to help the disadvantaged in society, a group the Tories had been neglecting, the new 'ethical' foreign policy, and above all the massive constitutional reform that is now in progress are all definitely New Labour policies.

An ethical foreign policy was the brainchild of Robin Cook, perhaps the minister whose performance has disappointed the most. That Harriet Harman has not shone has perhaps not surprised many, but Cook was one of Labour's pre-election leading lights, as was reflected in his appointment as foreign secretary. However, his brusque manner, while well suited to keeping Paxman at bay, has ruffled rather too many international feathers. A trail of diplomatic gaffes, climaxing in the Queen's disastrous tour of India and Pakistan, has been a testament to his lack of diplomatic skill. The fact that he divorced his wife under instructions from Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's bruising press secretary, shows something of Cook's character and the power and influence of Labour's chief press liaison officer.

Like all governments there has been a mixture of good decisions (giving independence to the Bank of England), controversial projects such as regional devolution and reform of the House of Lords, and a few gaffes, such as the blatant bribing of Labour to allow Formula One tobacco advertising by Bernie Ecclestone. Although some people undoubtedly will have expected more from what was once such a stalwartly socialist party, Labour has lived up to its manifesto promises. What is perhaps most interesting is not what

Labour has done, but the personalities of the people who have been doing it.

Aside from Blair, Gordon Brown is undoubtedly the most powerful member of the cabinet. He controls almost all areas of economic policy and shown himself to be a responsible chancellor. However, there are definitely tensions surrounding him in the Labour team. His previously close friendship with Tony Blair has been strained by the publishing of his authorised biography in which he says that he believes still that he should have been leader instead of Blair. He is also known to be an implacable enemy of Peter Mandelson, Robin Cook and John Prescott. Such major tensions among such important people could become interesting in the event of any strain on the Labour team. Blair himself has been an extremely dynamic leader with huge personal popularity. He has revived a strained transatlantic relationship (at the price of what seemed obscene sycophancy) and intervened in Northern Ireland, even though cynics may have felt that 'this is no place for soundbites' did not lie well with 'I feel the hand of history on my shoulder'.

Their first year has seen Labour enacting pretty much what they promised in their manifesto, and they will be very much in control for the next five years. What would be interesting would be if the Tories managed to raise themselves out of their dispirited, lacklustre state to offer a proper challenge at the next election. Labour with a much smaller majority would be extremely interesting to watch as those internal tensions surface. Blair might regret having rubbed the left-wing's nose so firmly in the dust over single mothers' benefits. New Labour may yet be a Trojan horse for what comes next.

Thomas Baranga (College)

I LOVE LONDON TOWN

What the School says:

Westminster School 'is the only long-established school to remain on its original site in the centre of the city. Its proximity to Parliament and Westminster Abbey, and its close relationship with the Abbey, together with the stimulating diversity of the cultural life offered by art galleries, museums, concert halls and theatres which are all close by, account in part for the uniqueness of the School's atmosphere and outlook. The School makes good use of these opportunities both within the timetable and in the evenings'.

(Extract from the Westminster School Prospectus)

What the pupils say:

'Aren't Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral the same thing?'

'What's the point of School theatre trips when they never take us to see musicals? I've still never seen *Grease*.'

'I never knew the Tate Gallery was near School. What? You can actually walk to it?'

'Yeah, but it works out too expensive to go and see art all the time.'

Sorry to show you up lads, but the Tate and National Galleries are both within easy walking distance and have free entrance. It is apparent that claims that living or attending school in the centre of London is bound to broaden your child's cultural horizons are a little inaccurate.

Admittedly not all pupils make little use of the School's location, but a disturbing number of them are happy to remain in the 'School bubble'. That bubble includes Yard, a row of shops (obviously including McDonalds - which, for any confused Fifth Formers, is next to Westminster Cathedral!) and a large area of grass with an artificial lake

(commonly known as St James's Park). Take these three ingredients and move the School anywhere and the majority of pupils wouldn't mind - or so we claim.

We conducted a survey of pupils including members from each year, some boarders and some girls and then compared the results to those achieved when tourists were asked the same questions. The results showed that the opportunities offered by London are used by pupils, but not by all pupils. For the majority, especially those pupils lower down in the School, the School's location is used only minimally. Amongst



these boys, art galleries are visited on average once a year and museums are used far less. But the older pupils, especially those in the Sixth Form and Remove, use facilities far more. The theatre in particular is visited on a regular basis and not just to go and see musicals. Perhaps as pupils grow older they appreciate more and more the benefits of London's culture. As they mature their interests change and it is not so incredibly uncool to go to a gallery after school as is feared by the younger boys. The change may be encouraged by the arrival of girls, especially those who begin boarding. These new Sixth Formers often wish to take full advantage of their new location as they are used to living in the suburbs or even further out of London. It's not that the boys don't use the area well; our survey suggests that they are just more reluctant to broadcast the fact that they are cultured, at least until they are higher up in the School.

Of course, there were plenty of pupils, of all ages, who use London for the parks, pubs, cinemas and shops. These aren't necessarily a part of London life, but of any city centre. But the variety of these locations, for example, of parks, is generally acknowledged to be exceptionally wide in London and easily accessible by using the London Underground. In fact, the Underground system is one of the only areas which was widely used by tourists as well as pupils. It is not surprising that tourists visiting London do not fit into the 'cultured' category or the 'city life' category (parks, pubs, cinemas and shops). Tourists in London use art galleries and sports facilities far less than pupils but visit museums and the 'sites' far more. They go to musicals in the West End rather than plays on the South Bank, they use the parks not for football and for sunbathing but for a lunch-break and to take photographs of the animals.

But one of the most disturbing differences between tourists and pupils is that the foreigners know the Abbey better than most of the pupils. Many pupils are taken on their first tour of the Abbey when they enter the School and never look round again (except when trying to keep their eyes open during one of the more boring morning services). By contrast the tourists go round as much of the Abbey as possible, reading information guides, tombstones and plaques and remembering much of what they see. We have a beautiful, historic building right next to the School which we attend every day and it is the visitors, who see the Abbey for one day only, who get the best out of it.

So, although pupils make better use of London's culture as they go up the School, the opportunities offered are still not used to their full advantage. Subject-related theatre trips and visits to galleries encourage wider use of the area but it is those pupils who have been used to visiting galleries, museums and the theatre with their parents who are most likely to influence their contemporaries to do so. As one Sixth Form girl said, 'Before I started boarding I had never visited an art gallery in my life; now I come into School and talk about the Bonnard Exhibition - I can't believe what a change it makes living in the centre of London.'

Nisha Makan (Purcell's)

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES

Thank you for the days...

A day in the life of the School which allegedly turns out some of the very finest of minds is fraught with many perils, usually of the 'I thought this was for tomorrow, Sir', 'That's not a regulation sweater' and the 'I need to borrow a pair of trainers' kind. Nevertheless it is precisely these dangers that drive a Westminster Pupil to be What He Is.

FIFTH FORM - 'The way to Eden, perhaps'

In the Fifth Form, one word features heavily in your mind - LARGE. That seems to be the case with everything at the School. Being a new recruit in this 'Westminster Society', all is new to you. The buildings all around you are large; the older pupils are large too, or at least very grown up, and the day has to be spent trying to avoid getting run over by them as you try to cross Yard - in itself a great challenge. Your uniform is even large and oversized, courtesy of parents who buy clothes you will 'grow into'.

When in the Fifth Form, especially at the start of one's Westminster career, punctuality is of immense concern to you, as are the teachers' impressions of you. As a result of lessons beginning after morning break and lunchtime, you always feel the need to leave at least ten minutes early to get to the lesson on time. However this need for accurate time keeping diminishes at an alarming rate, until in the Remove, you more or less leave at the time when the lesson actually should be beginning.

Time for period one - you arrive early to find everyone else already there, just as eager to get there on time. A single lesson seems to take one hour to finish, and before you know it, you are back at the Tuck Shop - that haven for lost souls and hungry Fifth Formers - probably due to the novelty of having a newsagent's slap bang in the middle of School. Usually in breaks you find yourself in the queue through rain or snow, waiting to buy that one Snickers Bar, or a packet of Jolly Ranchers that will see you through to lunch.

When lunch actually comes, you thank yourself for the precaution of buying all that food at break. Lessons after lunch nevertheless seem to go very quickly regardless of the year group, and in the Fifth Form you are thankful not to have work piled onto you by the shovel. Trying to get to know a winding and meandering school such as Westminster is homework enough.

In the Fifth Form you are not free until you have taken part in your LSAs - extracurricular activities that should broaden your horizons. These can be fun, but for some make the day a little more tiring, especially after a long and dreary orchestra rehearsal. Then it's Home Sweet Home, and preparation for a new day.

LOWER SHELL - 'Up the long ladder...'

Well, the Lower Shell is a year when work is not over-abundant and one is not yet revelling in the joys of GCSE workloads. It is the year in which you finally make it out of the Fifth Form, ending your turn of office as the Westminster neophytes.

In the morning, having dragged yourself to school - you are only just about getting used to the concept of Saturday School and the ridiculous times you may or may not have to

get up at - one thing dominates your mind before Abbey begins - pool. In the Lower Shell, you just cannot get enough of it. It is also the first year where it becomes possible subtly to encourage others to agree that they want to let you play pool. Not everybody appreciates this new-found confidence, especially Fifth Formers.

Nowadays in the Lower Shell, since the age of personal computers has been finally embraced by the school, you have to go to the computer room after lessons and in lunchbreaks. No one really knows why, it's just that everyone in the Lower Shell is doing it. Lessons no longer hold your interest, and all events in the Lower Shell form a big blur until breaks, when the Lower Shells can obtain their fix. Perhaps related to this computer obsession there is a distinct apathy towards sporting activities by many Lower Shells - other than amongst the elite members of the Water Station and football junkies.

Come the end of school proper, you still can't go home because of those pesky LSAs that are still around. When you finally find an LSA which looks particularly appealing, either it is over-subscribed and inevitably you, having put it as your first choice are not given it, while somebody who put it as their sixth, is; or, the LSA is so under-subscribed that it cannot take place at all. The dust then settles as the day finally draws to a close.

UPPER SHELL - 'That which survives...'

The Upper Shell represents a major stepping stone in your Westminster Life. Not only is it the half way mark of your five year stay at the School, it is the year in which you have to sit your GCSEs. The day usually starts with that same journey that gets even longer and more tedious and, once in school, you find that there is another one of those Latin Prayers or Abbey Services, which take up much needed time for finishing that maths prep due in next lesson. After two years' experience, you have finally mastered the art of being able to sit in Abbey looking thoughtful and attentive without seeming to be on any illicit substances, and the art of concealing your German vocab book somewhere convenient from where you can learn how to order a book of *fünf pfennig* stamps.

Then come those lessons, those portions of time set aside for learning, that seem to stop you from going home. They still feel more than the length they should be - a long and often tiresome 40 minutes, unless it's a subject you enjoy. In some you end up accepting whatever information is handed out without question, either because it all seems too complicated and unfathomable that it is best just to take the teacher's word for it, or because you are just too tired after staying up to finish that Physics Investigation, which involves something to do with Paper Helicopters or diffraction of light

Time for lunch. One of the universal constants for this school is the lunches themselves. Lunchtimes will never change. Suspicious trays of uncatalogued elements and compounds are handed to us, having been given elaborate labels, and you can only pray as you take a mouthful. Be it the Upper or Lower School, lunch is always the same - the one moment that the House is really together. By the Upper Shell and beyond, lunch is merely a

pit stop - breeze in, breeze out, and then get back to that essay or practice paper for prep.

Lessons after lunch take on a more surreal quality. People seem a lot more relaxed, and in the summer of the Upper Shell, you get sunny afternoons with lessons outside, teachers actually treating you nicely, mainly out of sympathy for you in the face of forthcoming public exams which are only a matter of weeks away.

SIXTH FORM - 'The Ensigns of Command'

In the Sixth form a lot progresses, not only in the sense of workload, since that almost triples for some, but so do the numbers in your year. New people have joined the flock - let the intrigue begin.

Following registration, which still has to be done (and without which Sixth Formers would never actually go to their respective Houses in the morning), is Latin Prayers or Abbey. Both now just seem to fly by - the levels of interest the two provide appear to have reached such low levels (no offence to the wonderful revered Chaplain) that you scarcely even notice them save as opportunities for pondering problems of Coursework for upcoming maths modules, or even more coursework on such stimulating topics as Ethelred the Unready. All your good intentions about using Private Studies profitably usually fly out the window as soon as you see a friend and start chatting.

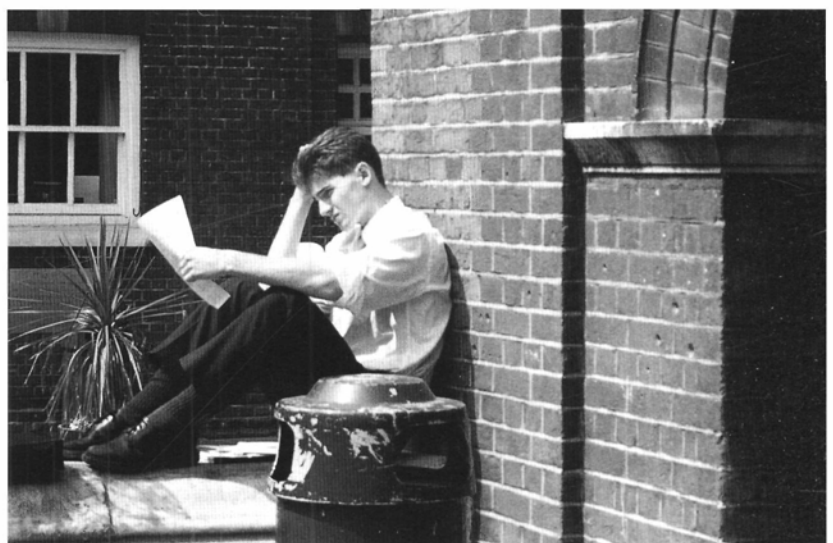
Yard is also very important in the Sixth Form. It is a place of mingling, a place where you moan about work and ask questions such as 'Is it legal to set a 3000 word essay on why the Balance of Payments always balances?'

The School takes on a new feel once again, with the new batch of people and a new-look timetable, but not so unfamiliar a feeling as in the Fifth Form. Days stream by and amidst all the frenzy about UCAS forms the Remove appears and catches you completely off guard.

REMOVE - 'Let that be your last Battlefield.'

More work, more difficult, more hassle. UCAS, Mocks, a creeping sense of sameness matched by a creeping sense that anything else induces terror and panic. Come June and the start of study leave, you begin to really miss those endless days, those sacred days Westminster gave you... Thank you for the days.

Aqib Aslam (Dryden's)



LIFT UP YOUR EYES

To all pupils, even the old Westminster hands of the Remove, who now have the psalm *Ad te levavi oculos meos* firmly engraved in their memories and who no longer find the concept of being 'up School' quite as amusing as they did in the Fifth Form, the Common Room remains a realm as mysterious and inaccessible as the deepest, darkest tropical jungle. Everyone has stood among the perimeter shrubbery (that curious hallway in which one waits) and glanced inside, but no one enters. They can be seen only in the zoo-cages, where they are paraded for 40 minutes at a time in front of classes, which sit rigidly, anxious not to draw the attention of the ferocious beast, or else jeer and goad it, matador-like, while it snorts and stamps in frustration. There are many species of these creatures (the genus *magister*) and a few of the more exotic examples are described below.

The Enthusiast (*magister fervidus*)

The enthusiast has a calling in life to the transmission of knowledge. His pleasure in the teaching of his beloved subject, whatever it may be, can be seen in every gesticulation, every furious scrawl of a diagram, every impersonation of a historical figure or demonstration of a scientific principal using his own person. In vain do conscientious pupils attempt to turn him back to the syllabus (for his beloved subject is usually the Vietnam War, quantum theory, or something equally far removed from the course that he is, theoretically, teaching). Once the gleam has entered his eye, only the end of the lesson or the approach of an exam can rein in the flow of interesting, though irrelevant, facts. The enthusiast, cheerful to the point of extreme tolerance while happily immersed in his subject, is generally a popular teacher until the moment when, shortly before an exam, his class suddenly realises, in horror, the limited extent of their knowledge. Fortunately this deficit can usually be made up in a short burst of very high intensity teaching, since the class is cowed into attentiveness by panic.

The By-the-Numbers Man (*magister obstinatus*)

The by-the-numbers man, denied strict religious devotion by the independent-mindedness that derives from intelligence, instead takes as his Bible the syllabus. With grim determination he makes his pilgrim's progress through it, beginning his teaching on the first page and ending on the last. He never omits any part of it. He never turns aside from it. He never teaches any part of it with less than the greatest thoroughness, shouldering resolutely the burdens of re-test heaped upon re-test and the endless marking of prep. Generally he starts the term with the approval of the more diligent element of his class but, alas, as he imposes upon his pupils the same self-denying virtue which he enforces upon himself, his popularity begins to wane. Nevertheless, he is always open to discussion. He is always prepared to listen to ten minutes of piteous entreaty against the setting of a particularly large prep, before repeating, in his steady monotone, the same prep as if no protest had ever occurred. In the inculcation of every detail of the syllabus, his teaching is as

inexorable as the approach of old age and, although effective, scarcely more enjoyable.

The Classroom Wit (*magister ridiculus*)

To the classroom wit, a lesson is not so much an opportunity for teaching as for verbal duelling. With a tongue like a rapier and the dextrous speed of a master fencer, he is proud of his ability decisively to out-quip and thoroughly to put down the targets afforded by pupils, who are tied to the spot by the etiquette of the classroom and prevented from retaliation by the threat of punishment. There does exist that sub-species of teacher which will receive and accept, with grace, a riposte from a member of his class. Not so *magister ridiculus*: he shuns the benevolence of his milder cousin, which he regards as weakness, and carefully guards his dignity. Thus it is that, as the lesson ends, he can leave triumphant, the unquestionable champion of his classroom, with all potential opponents, no matter how large, hairy, or utterly gormless they may be, outwitted.

The Nice Chap (*magister timidus*)

It takes a hard man to kick a bunny rabbit, and pummel it until it lies gasping and helpless. But then, to be a hard man is the fondest aspiration of many Upper Shells and they seldom have the opportunity to practise. So when a target is noticed, friendly, new to the School, more prepared for education than for autocracy, no quip is left unmade, no paper aeroplane unthrown, and no abuse unhurled. The nice chap, who had come expecting, if not enthusiasm from his pupils, at least some interest in their education, rarely knows how to react and most often freezes, like a small animal in the headlights of the oncoming juggernaut. The fate that awaits him has the same sickening inevitability and is, unfortunately, probably unsuitable for inclusion in a family magazine.

But who are these brutes who brutalise *timidus*, the morons outwitted by *ridiculus*, the workhorses put through their paces by *obstinatus*, and the young minds expanded by *fervidus*? Here we move from the realms of zoology into those of primitive anthropology.

Thomas Munby (*Milne's*)



The Origin of the Species

Scarcely, it seems, have prototypes mastered their first tentative steps along the evolutionary road towards *homo sapiens* than they are forced into enormous suits and packed off to the Westminster Fifth Form. These early hominids are occasionally to be seen mewling and puking across Yard to the perceived safety of cavernous day-rooms. Their primitive art is visible in all the House loos - as is evidence of the discovery of the dangerous secret of fire. After two years they have evolved into Upper Shell - bloated to enormous size through malnutrition caused by years of School food. These huge, hairy hominids emerge squinting into the sunlight aggressively to assert their claim to territory outside. Their chins are protruding, their facial hair is unlikely, their manners antediluvian and their language positively paleolithic. Now they have outgrown their clothes - which hang off them with careful dishevelment.

What missing link connects these adolescent *Australopithecus* with modern man? What cataclysmic evolutionary event could conceivably transform these noxious Neanderthals into the civilised humans who leave the School?

Some learned authorities point to the seasonal arrival of a small number of females in the autumn. Whether or not it can be linked to tiny groups of timid girls, the transformation is as sudden as it is remarkable: hair is washed (even brushed), razors employed (with varying efficacy), ties tied, and even foreheads appear to flatten and chins to recede.

The alleged aetiological agents have themselves undergone transformation. Not six months previously they had doubtless visited the School on that embarrassed day when, each year, two single sex gaggles meet. They stare at each other, as if shocked by the unequivocal empirical evidence of such bizarre sub-species.

Over the course of the next six months these very girls (for we are told that they are the same individuals) will evolve spectacularly from embarrassed, misshapen, big-haired lumps into the confident, bright young girls of the Westminster Sixth Form.

It is largely as a result of this meeting of two groups that the rigid tribal networks break down. Old chiefs whose power lay in their perceived strength or hairiness are now deposed by previously unconsidered pupils whose social skill is greater. The old spectrum of rebellion is irreversibly fractured, from those who expressed their angst-ridden adolescent non-conformity through studied stupidity or direct disobedience of rules - and who are now paradigms of exemplary behaviour - to those whose extreme non-conformity drove them to rebel against their rebel peers and maintain an intellectual aloofness - and who now will break any rule to assert their new-found conventionality.

Now the Neanderthals can quote Nietzsche and, as if by accident, the people whom the School is ready to throw out are now - despite being such unpromising starting material - almost recognisable as advanced human beings.

Alasdair Donaldson (Milne's)

GIRL POWER

Psycho Spice

The subject of this article is Girl Power, a phrase guaranteed to send a shiver of disgust down the spine of any self-respecting Westminster - male or female. After all, its popularity in the mouths of the Spice Girls, who could only be considered hip by those devoted to seeking their niche in the halls of kitsch, is unlikely to find favour among devotees of the smart North London teenage scene. But what does, or might, the essence of the phrase suggest for a Westminster pupil, particularly a female one? Being adolescent we find our lives dominated by stereotypes, inevitably media generated. So what is the outside view of Westminster girls?

When I was offered my place here, it was met with considerable surprise from many of my friends. How was it that I would be going to such a renowned establishment? After all I was not tall, blonde or beautiful, although of course I am now. At first I was a little sceptical about this theory, but on arrival and discovery that all new girls were to have their photograph taken, it was confirmed. These photographs are kept for a long time after we leave, somewhat suspiciously, in a locked filing cabinet.

Westminster's very own Spice Girls are prominent in the Common Room. Frances Ramsey is now Director of Studies, which is possibly the highest position attained by a woman at the School; Gilly French is in charge of LSAs (Baby Spice); two Heads of Department are female (Biology and History of Art); and then there is the celebrated position of Sporty Spice. This title is hotly contested between Fiona Freckleton - the School's first female Housemaster, who chose to retain the title of Master in place of the more politically correct 'Mistress' ('Good for her,' we all cry) - and Claudia Harrison, who is not only on the Common Room's football and hockey teams, but is also on the Exams team, in a prominent midfield position.

One thing all girls at the School would be fascinated to know is the average Westminster boy's idea of Girl Power. One indication of their attitude to girls in the light of Girl Power is reflected in the 'Spice Lists' that appeared on the boys' toilets' walls in the Lent Term 1997. Were the boys expressing their admiration of their pop heroines and their female peers? Or were the lists just a way of venting pre-adolescent spite?

I will leave you to judge for yourselves by presenting a somewhat abridged list:

name deleted: Curry and Rice Spice

name deleted: Think Twice Spice

name deleted: Think Thrice Spice

I myself have been called Psycho Spice on many occasions.

What is it that the boys have against the girls? Is it that, as statistics suggest, the girls are intellectually superior (even if there are exceptions) or is it simply that they are much more attractive than the boys? Or are there elements of the girls' life at Westminster that make them unwitting targets, set up by a sense of injustice? There are certainly advantages to being a Westminster girlie: not having to wear uniform for example, although even this can be a problem - after all one cannot wear the same clothes more than once in a term. Then of course there is the risk of disagreement with Mr Smith and other Common Room on what actually constitutes regulation

clothing. Girls are often blissfully unaware that they are wearing illegal clothing until they are told to take it off by a member of staff - not necessarily then and there. As a sideline to the clothing issue, and a matter of minor interest, I have seen girls 'busted' for wearing a skirt that is too long, but never for wearing a skirt that is too short. Perhaps I have just been leading a sheltered existence.

Maybe the boys are jealous of girls getting away with blue murder by resorting to a woman's most powerful weapon... I mean of course, turning on the waterworks at the first sign of a teacher's wrath. Girl Power often means pretending to be subject to girl weakness whereas the macho Westminster male, foolhardy if he uses aggression in the face of authority, merely has to take his medicine like the man he pretends to be.

The girls do not have it all their own way. The range of sports available is fairly pathetic - no football, no rugby, both considered far too dangerous for young ladies (has anyone actually experienced a game of Lacrosse?) - and those which are offered are woefully under-exposed. Girls' rowing will barely credit a mention, yet any boys' crew which even starts a race will have its virtues extolled until Judgement Day. However there was a ray of light this term as girls were offered the option of playing cricket on Station days. Cricket, so favoured by John Major and other such rôle-models, the last bastion of English manhood - not to be confused with Australian manhood (nor for that matter with Indian, West Indian etc) - and the reason why, ever so often, eleven seemingly normal boys adorn themselves with ridiculous blazers, complete with big gold buttons. Proof, if ever there was need of any, that boys like jewellery even more than girls.

All this is in stark contrast with my previous school, a South-West London Comprehensive, where the general ideal of Girl Power involved sitting around at Hammersmith tube station pulling faces at the girls from Godolphin and Latymer. Hardly surprising when all one had to rebel against was a forward-thinking Spice Girl of a headmistress (not really so much a Spice Girl as a Herb Girl as she enjoyed nothing more than communing with the fresh basil and thyme at her local Sainsbury's).

During my period at the School, my rôle-models have changed somewhat. I now aspire to be like one of the wonderful cleaning ladies. From the terrifying Ivy to the eccentric Celia they hold the affection of their charges. I cannot imagine a day without the latter informing me of my resemblance to her son's girlfriend Ellie (who happens to love her pork pies). Girl Power: make what you will of it, some of us do not need an excuse to assert ourselves over our male peers. It just happens.

By the way I have a new album coming out in August...

Katya Aplin (Liddell's)

Bird's eye

Twenty five years on and still going strong, what effect has the introduction of girls to Westminster had on the School, apart from the establishment of dance classes, high pitched shrieking in Yard, and tears in maths classes? Having spoken to some of the School's male population, one might be forgiven for thinking 'Nothing much.' The more official responses include the promotion of healthy competition and a

motivated atmosphere in the classroom, which means that unless they want the girls to show them up, the boys realise that they will have to start handing in work. This attempt to prove themselves academically is also demonstrated in the cocky classroom banter which succeeds in intimidating the girls for the first week, after which they begin to realise that neither the boys nor the teachers really have a clue what this impressive sounding waffle actually means. Another common response is that the girls boost the School's position in the league tables. This, if indeed true, can also be attributed to the male ego. We arrive eager to make a good impression, subsequently spending hours on our prep. The boys witness this novel behaviour and although they outwardly scoff and laugh at us they begin to try too and consequently 'What did you get?' becomes a commonly heard phrase. If these are the only reasons for the introduction of girls to the School, then what's in it for us? What does it mean to be a girl at Westminster?

The first few weeks at Westminster are at times terrifying. Undoubtedly coming into a male dominated environment, at a time when you need stability most, is daunting. You have to grit your teeth and jump in, with the lingering thought that the first few days and even weeks are going to make you catch your breath rather like a sudden immersion in icy cold water. The arrogance and confidence of the boys can be intimidating, and at times we have all wondered whether we are just here to encourage the boys to work and to provide a constant focus for their continuous jokes and sarcastic comments. Most of us found it easier initially just to ignore the boys and make friends with the girls. After this initial fear the girls began to realise that it was only the boys who truly believed in their stunning intellectual capabilities and that they did not all possess the minds and thoughts of a genius. Once we realised this, it became easier to like the boys and friendships between the sexes started to form. This is when the advice we were given on our first day (apart from 'your skirt can never be too short') became useful: 'Don't get married in the first week'.

The crawling pace of these overwhelming and emotionally exhausting first weeks led some of us to believe that this would be typical of our time at Westminster and that we would never truly lose this feeling of exclusion. Most of us still, after almost three terms, have nightmares about the 'fishbowl' which is Yard. However, with hindsight, there has not been a dull moment thanks to an endless string of opportunities to get involved in an eclectic collection of plays, concerts, societies, and sports. It is a wonder that we manage to juggle all this with three or four A levels, a vigorous social life, and even the occasional romance under the watchful eye of the rest of the School, Common Room included.

It is hard to say anything vastly original about girls in the Sixth Form - we have been around for twenty five years without many complaints, and few girls can have very much to complain about. Westminster offers those of us from all-girls' schools the new experience of mixed classes and also those of us from mixed schools a challenging environment specific to Westminster and entirely different to any other school. Despite the varied backgrounds, aspirations and interests of the girls at Westminster, we all have one thing in common in that we all feel privileged to have been a part of and leave our mark on a school as unique as Westminster.

Olivia Tebbutt (Grant's)

Boarding Spice

Any girl who is told that the House she is destined to join is full of 'corduroy-wearing bearded feminists' is bound to be slightly apprehensive about what the last two years of school is going to offer them. Could a school like Westminster, which seems to promise to open so many avenues of opportunity, really be a bastion of girls building shrines to Germaine Greer and giving a strong impression that all their clothing was in fact pillaged from the upholstery of a sofa that had not seen the light of day since 1972?

As it was I was pleased and relieved to find when I entered Number 2 Barton Street that Purcell's girls clearly study shaving advertisements with great aplomb and, if they are feminist, it is probably in the same way as many of the girls who join Westminster in the Sixth Form: micro in skirt length but macro in ambition. If a girl really wants to throw herself in at the deep end she need look no further than a coach ride to Putney and the Westminster boat house (fondly called hell by some). Here, in the winter, taught to control teeth chattering, you can just about see your hands turning blue through a thick white blizzard. In the summer you try to suppress the whinging about the dreaded pink lycra, which looms even more ominously when the girlies realise the total calorie count of all those doughnuts, consumed amidst hasty excuses about how awful the lunch was today.

If you really want a bird's eye view of Westminster, a girl can simply join Henry VII choir and sing Madrigals from the top of College Roof on May morning, looking down on all the smiling, happy faces of black clad Elizabethans. Few other schools give its pupils this great opportunity.

Amelia Walker (Purcell's)

Down the Tube

I cried for a week when I was offered a place here. I had to decide whether I wanted to leave the mixed school where I was completely happy to undertake an hour's train journey each way and Saturday morning school at Westminster. Despite those tears and apparent uncertainty I think I had decided to accept the place as soon as I opened the envelope. Occasionally when the alarm goes off at six on a Saturday morning or when I am squashed between a hygienically challenged businessman, evidently partial to garlic and allergic to deodorant, and a screaming two year old in a crammed tube carriage, I ask myself why I decided to come - but never long or hard enough to alter my decision. In fact, I have not yet spoken to a single girl who would change her mind if she could.

Abi Conway (Liddell's)

FOOTBALL MANIA

For the Love of Football

Walking into the light of Barcelona's Nou Camp stadium last summer, it struck me that this 'pilgrimage' might be comparable to that of lovers of architecture or opera entering Rheims Cathedral or La Scala for the first time. And this is for a football club that I do not even support, and whose team were on the other side of Spain playing a league match against Deportivo La Coruna. The Nou Camp is on first appearance one of the dullest buildings in a beautiful city, and yet is still an incredibly powerful and inspirational monument to an organisation whose motto is 'More than a club'. Barcelona's favourite football team not only represents Catalonia against the rest of Spain and the world, it was a symbol through which the Catalonians could vent their anger against Real Madrid and its biggest fan, General Franco, Catalonia's greatest oppressor. Just as FC Barcelona is more than a club for many Catalonians, football is more than just a game for a great proportion of the world.

Why should a game that is so often belittled arouse so many emotions in mature men and women? Emotions that compel people to chant, scream, cry and even kill. The world's best footballer, Ronaldo, was transferred from Barcelona to Inter Milan this past summer for a fee in excess of £25 million. How could a football club pay this much for a single player, made from skin and bone just like the rest of us? Will he score £25 million worth of goals? Will he win £25 million worth of silverware? Probably not. Instead, players like Ronaldo attract sell-out crowds, 60,000 season ticket holders and phenomenal sales of the No 9 *nerazzuri* and unsurprisingly Inter are expected to recoup their original outlay within one year. Players of his calibre command these excessive fees and wages because of the perceived chasm between them and mediocrity. Mass media and sponsors recognise and highlight this difference and transform the players into icons, their marketable value swelling to dwarf the rest. Modern communication technologies enable billions of people around the world to view these events. Recently the match between Barcelona and Real Madrid was televised in over 60 countries; we watch it because nowadays 'people value shared cultural experience more than diversity' (*The Economist*, Nov 1995). When a single league game can reach that many people, why continue to question whether football is an industry?

John Major, in a rare moment of insight, spoke one of the great, if banal, truths some months ago when he said on radio that 'one doesn't have to be good at sport in order to love it'. Maybe in this case sport is a metaphor for politics, but he stumbled upon something that remains universal. People will continue to love something despite the fact that they remain inept. As people age, football players especially, they become aware that they will never be able to score goals like Van Basten, never be able to drift past players like Maradona and never develop the vision of Hoddle. This realisation is compounded by the slow dawning that the players you idolise are the same age as you and starting to get younger. These facts do not get in the way of people playing football. Just go along to any park at the weekend or sports centre on weekday evenings and you'll be able to see people playing as if their lives depended upon it, while they struggle with dodgy knees, cramp and a spare tyre. They continue to play as long as they



continue to be inspired by watching the game whether in a stadium or on television.

I suppose these are some of the reasons why we take up the game. Right now it is everywhere we look and the source of many conversations. During my last year at school, I realised that I was going nowhere while fencing. I wasn't improving and the younger fencers were starting to beat me with alarming regularity and the lure of football was all too strong. Being a member of the fencing team didn't give you the opportunity of going on holiday/tour to Croatia to get turned over by teams of waiters all in the name of Corinthian spirit and international relations. Fencing, although a great sport, suddenly lost all its glamour. So for the last two terms I struggled to get a grip with football, although at Westminster that means you're a regular in the Second XI. The last fixture of the year loomed, and with the First XI's season already lying in ruins the leavers were allowed to represent the School in one final blaze of glory against City of London. What followed was one of the greatest performances of total football the world has ever witnessed - Johan Cruyff himself would have been impressed. Leavers XI murdered City 7-0. As Bobby Charlton says, 'football is God's game'.

Nick Clifford (Dryden's 1987-92)

Doing a Bunk

Although not the most sporting school in the country, at Westminster there is a whole range of activities in which the boys and girls can involve themselves on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. From the frequently sculled waters of the Thames to the lesser known but (in its own way) equally exciting shooting range in the attic of College, there is, or should be, something for everyone.

But if every registration list of every Station was checked on a weekly basis, and unexplained absentees were ruthlessly placed in SAP, more than the usual two rooms would be needed on Saturday at 2:30pm. Station Masters are undeniably enthusiastic about their sport, but have not been always uniformly strict in the past in terms of who turns up and who doesn't. The perfect example of this laid-back attitude is the title given to five-a-side football at the Queen Mother Sports Centre. Ironically Leisure Football is one of the most over-subscribed Stations in the whole list, and measures are being taken to curb the huge number of unwanted applicants.

So what are the reasons behind this apparent listlessness of the pupils? Is it a lack of facilities? Not a visibly significant one; admittedly the area owned by the School is no match for country boarding schools such as Eton or Winchester, but we do have access to four football pitches (more if you count Battersea, Chelsea Royal Hospital etc.), a swimming pool, tennis, fives and squash courts and most other necessary places on which to release pent-up energy.

Is it a lack of motivation? Again this is not obvious, and since the majority of Stations at Westminster are supervised by members of staff who take an active rôle in their sport, there is naturally an in-built interest in the Station which can be transferred from teacher to pupil.

Is it laziness? This seems a stronger possibility, but can it really be argued for when there is ongoing conflict in Yard as to whether to play football, basketball or cricket? The reactions of the boys as a teacher confiscates the ball on a parents' party evening is testimony to the enthusiasm and willingness of pupils to play and play and play...

Is it lack of choice? There are the sports for the 'lads' - football and cricket; for the not so macho - water; and there are sports for the girls - netball and dance. Even if none of these categories suit you, your tastes will surely be catered for by the very-fulfilling Community Service, and if you're still at a loss, sitting around in the gym for half an hour pretending to lift some weights isn't too tall an order, surely?

I can think of only one other explanation for the lack of ticks on the lists. Being right in the centre of London as the School is, there is simply too much to do. Many day pupils live less than half an hour away from the Sanctuary, and if they can get off Station without being noticed, why not go home to do some work, watch some TV or catch up on some sleep?

The only solution to this problem, if you can call it that, is to tighten up the registration process, although this is only a short-term remedy. Unless the School resorts to a tagging system where all are monitored between the hours of 1:30 and 4:00 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, the pupils will always find a way.

Charlie O'Farrell (Rigaud's)

AESTHETICS AND WESTMINSTER

When I was originally choosing Westminster one of the points my parents drew my attention to was whether I enjoyed the architectural surroundings there or, on the other hand preferred the more conventional and, undeniably, more spacious surroundings of various country public schools. What implication the architecture of an educational institution has on the value of the education received is a moot point. However it can definitely be said that the great variety of styles in art and architecture at Westminster does contribute to the individuality of the place.

The architecture of Westminster can be divided into two distinct parts: pre-war and post-war. Pre-war architecture in Westminster stretches back to the middle ages: Liddell's Arch and the Dungeons being the best examples from this period. College Hall is Elizabethan and hence is characterised by stone, heavy wooden doors and long wooden tables. The 17th Century portraiture is not incongruous and the overall impression given of the hall is that of one of the better Oxbridge colleges. This is, in my opinion, in direct contrast with Westminster's newest architectural addition- the new dining hall up Grant's. The new dining hall, which was what actually inspired me to write this piece, is an example of both the best and worst elements of modern utilitarianism. The utilitarianism is evinced by the kitchens' being right next to the dining room on the same level and the fast-moving efficient canteen system. The room is airy and light (being somewhat hemmed in by other buildings) and the green and blue chairs attractive in themselves. But one asks the question 'Are they appropriate for a school with 400 years of history?' Such a question is made more pertinent when one compares the modern utilitarianism to the sturdy tables of College Hall which, legend has it, were made from the beached tables of the Spanish Armada. I am more agnostic about the yellow and black outfits now worn by the amiable and helpful College Hall staff which, in their garishness arguably complement the nursery food that is served up Grant's - about which I am not complaining, for it is of a remarkably high standard.

Further examples of modern architecture include Hakluyt's, which is actually very much in tune with the surroundings and is hardly noticeable. I only noticed that it was new when my father mentioned that it was not there when he was at Westminster. Such a building does show that it is possible to build modern buildings which are not only inoffensive to the eye but also virtually indistinguishable from the partly medieval surroundings. Further into Yard, Numbers 2 and 3 Little Dean's Yard provide good 18th Century façades to blend with the 17th Century Ashburnham house opposite. Rigaud's on the other hand was built - or at least fronted - in 1898 and much more recently cleaned. Such a building is attractive in itself (with the omnipresent London yellow brick) due to its two shade façade but one can only imagine that Little Dean's Yard would look smarter if the façade were of the same brick and style as Numbers 2 and 3.

The oft-mentioned showpiece of Westminster is the Ashburnham library (or at least those rooms decorated in the original style). The staircase and drawing room are both magnificent reminders of the house's previous incarnation as an aristocrat's London pad. The School has been able to furnish the drawing room in a suitable style as well as adorning the walls with further paintings associated with the

School. One is inclined to ask whether it really is necessary to have so many prints and paintings of Westminster and its events actually within the School. We, the pupils, are there every day of our lives and there must be other artistic subjects suitable to a scholastic environment. Historical or classical scenes, such as those to be found up School, fit the ideal of being associated with scholarship but also refreshingly unconnected with the School itself.

Further examples of art devoted to the School can be found inside the main door of College. The murals here are the work of Dale Inglis, a highly talented member of the Art Department. To admirers, these are ironic, restrained and appealing. Other opinions veer from the agnostic to the hostile, as is the way with art. Moving further up the College staircase one finds the classical look further reinforced in the stone-slab style *trompes l'oeil* which list the names of the *praelecti* - this is in tune with College's classical tradition and represents the better side of modern décor within the school. College as a whole had to be rebuilt after the war, although the wall facing College Garden largely remained and, despite the desperate circumstances the School was in at that time, it has been restored well; some of the old names engraved in the wall are still visible. The beautiful 18th Century façade facing College Garden (best caught in the sun) is unfortunately rarely available for normal (i.e. oppidan) members of the School to see.

Moving right across to the other side of the School, the Robert Hooke Science Centre, which was born from a relatively dull 1930's office block, achieves another triumph of utilitarianism which is in tune with its *raison d'être*. The colour coding of the various subjects within it may be thought by some to be vulgar, but in my opinion it gives the place a futuristic feel, while also ensuring that Fifth Form are less easily lost.

One does, occasionally, get a glimpse at the School's forbidden fruit (in terms of art and décor): the houses in Barton Street, the Busby's girls' floor and also the Common Room on the ground floor of 17 Dean's Yard. The Barton Street houses I have never been inside but from the outside they are small 18th Century town-houses of the best kind. The Common Room's main drawing room is very capacious and well furnished and so, I imagine, is the Head Master's drawing room above. Like much of the School, the building is 18th Century with the characteristic wide painted door and elegant windows. The girls' floor of Busby's comprises cell-like rooms (I fear that it was badly partitioned) which have, in some cases, a big natural-light problem. Some good modern art hangs in poster form along its corridors.

Overall, therefore, the art and architecture of Westminster from the oldest (Liddell's Arch) to the newest (the Grant's dining hall) is a hotchpotch but nonetheless a fairly good one. The architectural design and (very necessary) adaptation of existing design is on the whole good, in that it serves its purpose as well as looking in some ways beautiful and in others, at the least, impressive. Artistic design throughout the School does sometimes leave something to be desired: better colour choices, more variety of subject, more pictures and, frankly, a few Old Masters, would make for genuine improvement.

Max Usher (Busby's)



A LEVEL FEVER

The Easter holidays just seemed to pass me by, a muddled mixture of chocolate egg and daytime television. They started optimistically: at the end of term you feel mentally disciplined and draw up to a very specific timetable of work allocated for each week. However, from that point on, for me anyway, it was all downhill. I assured myself it was the holidays and I deserved a short break. What I didn't realise was that once you get out of the habit of working, it is almost impossible to get down to it again. My 'short break' grew longer and longer, mostly made up of the thrills of daytime TV. It is worrying to say that when work becomes a possible alternative to lethargy you can convince yourself that programmes as mundane as *Richard and Judy* are compelling, even important. *Countdown* becomes the alternative to English Revision, but you don't get nervous.

The only problem with this lifestyle is convincing your Mum that you are actually working. When daytime TV becomes unbearable the next step is to lie on your bed all day listening to music until you have heard your CDs far too many times. The radio comes next and you begin to realise that the state of popular music is diabolical and the adverts become your biggest comfort. You end up hearing the same news twice an hour.

Of course, after all the hours spent in your room your parents are very impressed with your apparent dedication as they haven't seen you at all. Guilt sets in, but when you realise the amount of work that actually has to be done, tidying your room is a more plausible option.

By this stage you decide to start seeing how your friends are coping, desperately relying on their indolence to match yours. Caroline rang me to ask about the extent of my work: 'Oh, not enough really, what about you?', I say. 'I'm really worried. I've done nothing, Alex,' So I ask her about the Spanish holiday work, as it is the only subject we share. 'Well, I've done all that and...'. 'Excuse me? What? I'll call you later.' When someone says that, serious depression sets in - I had relied on her laziness.

Other friends were more reassuring. Over a three week period I repeatedly spoke to George on the phone and it is no lie that all that time he was reading *The Tempest*. The play literally put him to sleep. When finally he broke the news that he'd finished it, it seemed a great achievement.

Over the holidays I began to discern a certain pattern in work attitude and these two examples demonstrate it. There seemed to be a clear distinction between the girls' and the boys' approach to work. This is obviously a crude generalisation but the boys seemed much more laid-back about the whole thing, or it could also be described as utterly disorganised. In contrast, the girls were much more focused, getting their work done and being very efficient about the whole thing. I began to wonder whether they felt they had something to prove. Is this a consequence of their relatively recent emancipation or are they just more sensible? Whatever the reality is, I settled for the former explanation - less troubling.

There are obviously the occasional parties as well, which are intended to relieve the pressure of this apparently stressful period. As is often the case, they are nothing special - people staggering around after a lethal mixture of different types of alcohol, some clearly very anxious about the exams. The

social losers make themselves very recognisable through their highly unpredictable question: 'So, how much work have you done?' Nothing really results from these parties except that the next day it is self-evident that work is not an option.

Another pattern that I observed was beginning to develop really disturbed me. The most conscientious were invariably those with the least need to worry - either through being highly intelligent, or through having done nothing but work for the last two years. This paradox really confused and, in truth, angered me. I suppose that is just the way things are.

The Easter Holidays didn't produce the necessary anxiety to get me to be as productive as I had expected them to. You get a bit of work done, mainly the holiday work rushed off in the last few days, and you make more promises to yourself: when term starts, so will my concerted effort. I told myself what I knew was true - I won't be able to work thoroughly until I panic. After a fortnight of term what has actually kicked me into working is the panic that I might never actually panic. It's got to be done, so I'm doing it.

Alex Cochrane (Wren's)



PAGING THE NEW HEAD MASTER

It was 12 midday... I was resting on the sofa, a Latin vocab book lying rather unproductively on my lap, watching *Light Lunch* on the television (the one true testament to not doing any work during the Easter holidays - knowing its theme tune). Suddenly the phone rang.

'Hello?'

'Hi, is James Clifford there please?'

'Yes it's James.'

'Ah, James, it's David Hargreaves from Westminster School.'

Shocked as I was to be talking to a teacher during the holidays, I managed to carry out a (fairly) sensible conversation, in which I was told that I had been chosen to write an article on 'what changes the new Head Master should introduce.' I had been selected because of my yearbook entry which, a few rude words aside, was apparently more amusing than Caroline Newte Hardie playing football. Please may it be noted, however, that when I

become the next Michael Palin, I was the funny one at school. Anyway, to get back on track, I had to write this article, which had to obey the following constraints:

1. The proposed changes had to be witty yet sensible and constructive. For example, demanding that the future 'Peter Coles' of Westminster try to remain single for more than two weeks would be impossible.
2. I was not allowed directly or nastily to give anyone a verbal lashing, staff or pupils. I must therefore apologise for most of what follows.
3. I was not allowed to criticise anything the present Head Master had introduced, not even Mr X. However, I would never have done so - the Head Master is a very pleasant man who, I am sure, will do his best to get me accepted by Oxford, even if I do not obtain the grades specified in my offer (which, given that the Latin book remained unproductively on my lap, that I know the theme to *Light Lunch*, and that I am now spending huge amounts of time on this article, is unlikely).

The constraints had been set, and it was up to my imagination to produce the goods. My imagination fizzled out five minutes later. I had had one thought during that time, but it was about Kiko Stranger-Jones, so did not really help. I decided to go out for some inspiration, and so visited Ben Conway. (Here I feel I must interrupt myself to confess - Dr Morris, it was me who did Abi Conway's Mechanics paper). The combined brain power of two people in Economics Set 1 only managed to come up with a few amusing anecdotes, but they were about Busby girls (they were mainly his idea) and as he is now dating one of them, shall never be repeated.

Thus the article did not get off to a good start. The only ideas that were floating around in my head were either changes that benefited me or disadvantaged future generations of Westminsterers. I liked the idea of introducing Sunday school; enforcing the existing School dress regulations, even on Busby girls (this was actually another of Ben's ideas).

However I felt that these changes were not constructive enough, and I started to think about what was, if anything, seriously wrong with Westminster life. The first thing that occurred to me was that the evenings were often less exciting than watching one of the School bridge team's training sessions (which may I add, I have never done, but am sure would not find exciting). There are a limited number of activities on offer, those being television, football in Yard and pool. Everything else seems either to take too much effort and time to get organised, or costs money. The majority of boarders agree that this is the case, and I believe that the new Head Master should do something to change this. It would also then be up to the boarders to use their imaginations and think up some creative ideas, which, recently more evident than ever, seem limited to finding a partner and by the way, if on the off chance there is anyone still unattached, may I say that I am single at present.

The lack of creative ideas of boarders led me into another thought that being the lack of creative ideas by pupils at Westminster in general. The School is meant to be the best in the country and yet, no offence meant, produces newsletters such as *The Word*. Now, I am sure that a creditable amount of effort went into producing it, but many of its articles, and let's be fair to them, were less exciting than the evenings at Westminster, and in a completely separate (lower) league to

the School bridge team's training sessions. For what is clearly the top school in the country, surely that is fairly poor. I mean, it is not as if we don't have imaginations and thoughts is it? The problem, I think, is that pupils are not taught to use their supposedly vast minds to the extent that they should be being used. For many, their conversation revolves around which boy/girl they are going to chase next, and how they are going to dodge the usually over-enthusiastic (any other adjective would have, I am sure, been edited out) Mr Smith to go out for a cigarette. If some philosophy and psychology was taught at Westminster, as part of the timetable, and taught in an exciting manner the thoughts of some people would dramatically improve. Timetable restructuring would not be required - just replace General English, which was as useful as a third testicle. For those who do not believe such a change is needed, read *The Word*.

I have now made what I believe are constructive changes, and will stop moaning. All I have left to offer are commiserations to the first person TJP shouts at on his return - and you thought Mr Smith was a cantankerous regulation enforcer. I shall also warn future pupils about the vein on the side of your new Head Master's forehead - I can still remember from the Fifth Form how it starts throbbing when he gets a little stressed, and thus, as anyone who has watched *Stressed Eric* will know, it would be sensible not to get him very stressed or something unpleasant might happen. My penultimate message goes to Andrew Bateman and Amanda Jørgensen, you are my most favourite teachers in the whole wide world - it is never too late to upgrade my exam result. Finally I would like to say '*Bonam fortunam habeas*' to TJP. You see, I did do some revision after all.

James Clifford (College)

NB May I stress that while I have tried to make some serious points, the jokes are not to be taken seriously. For example, Caroline Newte Hardie can play football - and 30 football-playing boarders have the bruises to prove it.



COMMON ROOM

Mark Williams

1997 was a summer with a difference. There was, as usual, the leaving drinks party for the Remove in Vincent Square, relaxed and pleasant in the June sun, and, as usual, on the stroke of 8 o'clock, Gavin Griffiths called hush and encouraged the Remove on their way with those warm-hearted words: 'We'll miss you, now get lost!' But the usual exodus of staff and pupils to a local hostelry for the rest of the evening failed to materialise as a large number of staff disappeared... off to the final summer party Mark Williams hosted annually to mark the end of the academic year.

I suppose my abiding memory of Mark Williams is of him sitting in his garden, with Carolyn and his children, Sam and Ellie, pouring wine down his colleagues and laughing at another Common Room joke. He was a generous man, not only with his wine, but with his time in support of the Common Room, as a successful secretary of which he organised meetings and a succession of successful 'jollies' and he was a vociferous spokesman for us on the TSAB committee. Both these jobs he approached with care and professionalism.

He was equally generous with his time in his teaching, methodical in the extreme and a great stickler for accuracy. Canada and its rich French speaking culture fascinated Mark, and as Head of French he introduced his pupils to this world, staging in 1995 *Un Simple Soldat*, a powerful play about the impact of the Second World War in Canada. He was admired and liked by his pupils, some of whom remained in contact with him long after he had administered that final grammar test.

As for his many other contributions: GCSE administrator, valued tutor in Wren's, the Common Room's only fully qualified football referee, we remember him for these also. But back to the summer evenings in his garden...

James Gazet

Michael Allwood

Michael came to Westminster as a young teacher straight from Oxford and developed his career here very successfully: by the time he left he was Assistant Director of Studies, one of the most experienced maths teachers we had, and a reliable and valuable tutor in Dryden's.

As Assistant Director of Studies he did the administration efficiently, but also made sure, calmly but firmly, that his colleagues were implementing the arrangements that he has made: getting it all to work without antagonising us, nor giving way to the special pleading of those who would have liked to have seen the Election Term Exeat as the end of their working year.

Outside the classroom Michael's greatest interest was in music, where he was multi-talented, singing to a professional standard (he had been a Choral Scholar at Oxford) and playing both the piano and several different wind instruments.

The reason for Michael's departure was that he and Anne have uprooted themselves and gone to work in America: they were both looking for new challenges and a change of

environment and they hope to find both in their new jobs in the States.

Michael and I arrived here together thirteen years ago and a year or so later I can remember Maurice Lynn saying that if he had to take O level Maths again, he would much prefer Michael to me, describing him as 'the human face of the Maths department'. Michael spent eleven years trying to live down what he assumed, given its source, must have been at best a two-edged comment but I am glad that he did not succeed. He had a great deal of patience with even the most tiresome Westminsters. He was a good colleague and a good friend, to me and to many other members of the Common Room, and I am sure that they would all want wish him and Anne the very best of luck in the next stage of their lives as well as their careers.

Michael Davies

Peter Hamilton

Few at Westminster who had the good fortune to know Peter Hamilton will forget that distinctive zing and vitality his presence brought to any gathering, be it up House, in class or indeed in the privacy of the Common Room. Nor would they have failed to sense immediately his love of French language and letters - an abiding affair the seeds of which were sown at his *alma mater*, King Edward's, Southampton, whither he returned in September 1996 to become Head Master.

In a previous 'collaboration' Peter had been my stalwart colleague and friend at Radley College for two very happy years prior to my defection to Westminster in 1984. When I in turn left Westminster for the country in 1989 it was safe in the knowledge that Peter would be succeeding me as Head of French. Within months David Summerscale had asked him to take up the reins of the whole of the Modern Languages Department. Simultaneously, Peter was establishing himself as a popular and highly respected resident tutor in Busby's. His 'open-door' approach to tutoring, for which he was renowned at Radley, was readily appreciated by the boarders, though he did not insist on them taking the evening cocoa which had been compulsory in Oxfordshire. His friendly, reassuring presence and availability at all hours became the hallmark of his Housemastership of Wren's which he held for two all-too-brief years before his return to Southampton with his wife Sylvie and baby daughter Anna-Juliette.

Peter had his likes and dislikes which he was not afraid to publish: among the former were sailing, squash, skiing and martial arts; and among the latter, woolly thinking, apathy, unkindness and mobile phones (with the exception of the one owned by the magnanimous member of Remove who would use it to ring his chauffeur during First School French to order coffee and hot croissants for the whole set!).

Inevitably, as Head Master, he has had to shift somewhat the shape of the zen, though in doing so he has most emphatically not lost his deep affection for the Westminster ethos and the Westminsters he knew. Nor have we for him.

Maurice Lynn

Charlie Barclay

It must be strange to return to your old school as a teacher, but when the opportunity arose Charlie took it: he had fond memories of the place and knew what it offered (both

academically and on water, if not in terms of accommodation). He also knew, if his anecdotes about Expeditions were true, what perils lay ahead. As a student here he was up Wren's where his Housemaster was Rory Stuart and his tutor Robert Court. He enjoyed rowing, expeditions and (after contemplating a life as a classicist) physics. He was praised by Peter Davies, my predecessor as Head of Physics, and had remained in touch with Westminster through Water and his return visits to the Tizard Lecture. He joined us mid year as the department recovered from the tragic loss, the previous summer, of David Hepburne-Scott. It is probably fair to say we 'poached him' from Clifton, where he had taught physics for two years.

After Westminster Charlie studied astronomy and astrophysics at St Andrews and the passion he had for that subject informed much of his physics here. In fact we had begun to plan an astronomy course for this year and if the project is ever recommenced it will certainly owe a lot to Charlie's enthusiasm. When I visited him recently at Marlborough College (he was hosting an Eton Group meeting for Heads of Physics Departments) he was greatly excited at the prospect of dismantling and rebuilding a large telescope that had been donated to the College by Oxford University in the nineteenth century. We squelched through mud and climbed about in the shell of the old observatory high above Marlborough contemplating the possibility of clear skies and late nights looking at the stars. His teaching here was characterised by a caring approach to his students and a willingness to pick up any additional pieces of cover or teaching that arose with never a word of complaint. Above all he was a gentleman, quiet by nature but prepared to stand his ground with a difficult pupil, at his best discussing ideas or problems with one or two students outside class. But his contributions to School life did not stop in the laboratory. He played a major rôle in Water and is Safety Officer for the Schools' Head, he was our Radiation Protection Supervisor (the obvious choice, since he had worked at Harwell), he organised several expeditions, organised Lower School Activities and was particularly pleased to run the Brock Lecture. The list goes on...

I will also remember other things - dinner at the Saddlers, or drinks at the Travellers' Club before a lecture at the Royal Institution; Charlie's support of Write Away (a charity for children with special needs) and a wonderful Christmas visit to the Cotswolds when we took the children fossil hunting in a magical frozen landscape in sub-zero temperatures.

Glancing at his CV I remember he was single when we appointed him. He soon did something about that, cementing his ties to the School by marrying another Old Westminster, Nicola, and during their years here they had two children, Henry and Beatrice. The difficulties of fitting a growing family in School accommodation was certainly a factor in Charlie and Nicola's decision to look elsewhere. I was a little surprised that he was attracted by a Head of Department post, since I had assumed his ambition was for a more pastoral rôle, but speaking to him and seeing him in action at Marlborough convinced me he has made the right move. He is thoroughly enjoying himself, Nicola has a more active rôle in school life, and Sam, Henry and Beatrice relish the sun, space and air quality we all lack here in London. Mind you, they are still trying to sort out their accommodation.

Steve Adams

Tim Jones

There probably are awkward, naïve, earnest and hyperactive Old Etonians. Tim was not one of them. Even Westminster boys regarded him as laid back by their standards, which is quite an accolade, and he certainly stood out here in a somewhat more than averagely excitable Common Room.

In fact, however, Tim was very busy about the School, organising the work placement scheme and Sixth Form Entry exams, tutoring in Ashburnham, running the Chess Club: he just did these things with so little fuss that you were not aware of them.

Tim had very wide ranging academic interests of his own - his first degree was in Maths and Philosophy, and while working full-time at Westminster managed to fit in study for a further degree, this time in Literature - and he enjoyed sharing these interests with his pupils. Those who were lucky enough to be taught by him were not only gently coaxed into an understanding of mathematics, but regaled with his latest ideas and enthusiasms.

Tim left Westminster to escape into the countryside and start a family, and he is now teaching at Tonbridge, where I am sure he will be an equally untypical but valuable colleague.

Martin Cropper

Thoroughly professional, concerned for the moral welfare of his pupils, keen on games, interested in the development of children's personalities as well as their intellects, insistent on courtesy and consideration for others, Martin embodied the traditional schoolmasterly virtues. In the Westminster Common Room, therefore, he stood out as an unusual figure, though a very welcome one.

He had worked as an accountant before entering teaching and although he had managed to avoid most of the supposed characteristics of that profession, this gave him an unusually businesslike approach to his work and he was rarely to be seen joining the last-minute panic at the photocopier at two minutes to nine. His calm manner stood him in good stead in dealing with those who were immature or abrasive or bumptious - so he coped well with his Head of Department. Pupils found him helpful and sympathetic, even avuncular, and those to whom he taught mathematics were very appreciative of the trouble he went to to help them when they found ideas difficult.

Martin was very active about the School, particularly on the Games field, where he helped establish Rugby in the School and run Tennis Station. He enjoyed playing and coaching and required of his teams high standards both of commitment, and of behaviour, on and off the pitch. He spent a year helping John Troy to plan the starting of Milne's House and he also established Westminster very successfully on the inter-school quiz circuit.

It was no great surprise when, after relatively few years of teaching experience, Martin was asked to be Head of Mathematics at Shrewsbury School, where he now is and which perhaps offers an environment where his style of schoolmastering is less unusual, and where we very much hope that he will be happy and successful.

Michael Davies

Jon Strong

'The best Queen's man who has gone into teaching in the last twenty years' was how Jon Strong was described by his Director of Studies at Queen's College, Cambridge.

He was not exaggerating. The son of a doctor and a Head Boy of Durham School, Jon went up to Cambridge in the mid 1980's to read French and German but was persuaded to take up Spanish *ab initio* in place of German. Thereafter Spanish became his passion. His interest in Latin America began in his third year abroad which he spent in Mexico, and the main reason he has left Westminster was to enable him to travel around South and Central America with his wife Ellie, before returning to their roots in the North East and starting a family. A first class degree was the fruit of his four years at Queen's and, before he took up his first appointment at Harrow, this wanderlust had to be satisfied by a ten month trip to India. This passion for travel he puts down to his father's peregrinations throughout Britain as a GP in Jon's childhood. Maybe his very strongly developed and sophisticated appreciation of other cultures has something to do with it as well.

Jon is a very resourceful teacher and leader of men. Just hours before he took his first language course to Spain the organiser tore a calf muscle and was unable to travel. Jon immediately took charge, and within minutes was handling the check-in like an experienced campaigner and did an excellent job of leading the course. He also has a very droll

sense of humour, is very sharp with his wit, and sees through a lot of the empty pretence of what goes on around him. Which Sixth Form Spanish pupil in March 1997 will forget the way he guided them around Central Spain with such common touch communications as:

'This is the belfry form which in the Middle Ages the townsfolk experimented with the laws of cause and effect by throwing live goats to the ground one hundred feet below. Surprise, surprise, they never survived the fall.'

And:

'Juana la Loca was a little unstable, but who wouldn't be? A plain girl married at such a tender age to 'drop-dead gorgeous' Juan the Fair!'

Jon's ease of communication is a very valuable aid to his profession as a schoolmaster whether in the classroom, on a Spanish language course or expedition, coaching a football team, or even as a representative of the Green Party on the hustings in Spring 1997. Without patronising he can reach any level of pupil whose language he speaks. As a valued colleague and fellow traveller he will be sadly missed. He leaves a hole in the Modern Languages department and the Common Room which will be impossible to fill. Our loss is the North East's gain.

Graham Bartlett



LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

REVELATION

Nicolas Levene (Ashburnham)

Raznevsky's chosen drinking house was a dingy, low-ceilinged establishment on Nevsky, absolutely crammed with customers from all walks of life. A dense layer of smoke clung to the ceiling like a second layer of skin. After the appalling carriage ride and Raznevsky's stream of verbiage, Mikhail collapsed into a chair around the only apparent free table in a corner while Raznevsky ordered some drinks.

The rest of the time spent with Raznevsky was irrelevant to Mikhail. They went through the motions of two ostensibly friendly people having a quiet drink but said nothing of any consequence or even interest to each other. This is the way that the majority of our free time is spent. Mikhail had already decided that Raznevsky's sole purpose in dragging him here was as an escape from the rigid, Orthodox household he shared with his dreary wife. After about an hour of trivialities and rantings, Mikhail had had enough and began to explain why he would be forced to go. However he was saved this ignominy as Raznevsky announced he would have to depart and begged his leave to go. Mikhail had no hesitation in denying this and relished the thought of his much sought after tranquillity. After the usual pleasantries, he watched Raznevsky leave, declining accompanying him in order to avoid any further conversation.

Alone and now quite drunk. Mikhail let his mind wander as one does when there is no fixed direction for it to go in. Why, he wondered, would God in His judgement create such people whose only function appears to be to work at an unnecessary job, achieve nothing by the time of their death and hinder others? Surely a perfect God would create just those who had a certain purpose. However, he reflected bitterly, if this were so, then the world would have much more room and Russia would be almost empty. So, do I have a purpose? A destiny? Or is there no such thing? Come to that is there a God? All the great philosophers could not answer that and I am not so arrogant as to assume I am better than they. But if there was no God, there would be no point in living. There would be no heaven and no hell and therefore if one is not morally punishable, one need not live by society's rules. Perhaps this is all we can expect from life; marriage, job, child and finishing work and gaining liberty when we are too old to enjoy it.

Tired and despondent as a true Russian is prone to get, he leant forwards on the soiled, ash-blackened wood and rested his chin upon his hands. Is it easier to ask questions than to be satisfied with the way things are? he pondered.

'Are you all right,' sang out a deliciously sweet voice.

Without moving his head he swung his eyes upwards. Before his drunken eyes stood a vision. She was beautiful, not conventionally so but beautiful nonetheless. Yes, she had flaws. Her nose was a little pointed and her eyes quite dull, but before him in her cream and rose dress with the elegant sash about the slender waist, she was the loveliest creature he had seen beyond his own imagination. Her greatest asset was her smile as it lit up her face, every feature complementing the others.

'...only I saw you from over there and I thought you seemed the worse for wear and I wondered if there was anything I could do.' She was awkward but this only served to make Mikhail like her more, for he hated over-confident types. He felt immensely flattered that she had noticed him and deemed it terribly kind of her to aid someone she did not know.

'Your name is Mikhail Rostornik, isn't it?' she continued. His illusions were shattered. Probably a friend of his wife's. He felt resentful again. Something of the instant wariness in his eyes conveyed itself to the girl.

'I'm a friend of your wife's,' she said, as if this was in some way an excuse. If these words were supposed to magically bridge the divide between them and make their conversation natural, as many often attempt to do, he was not having it. Why should they naturally connect my wife and me? Her friends are not mine, nor mine hers. Marriage does not make of two people, one. We are individuals, he argued to himself.

'You cannot be one of my wife's friends,' he said 'You are far too young.'

She laughed at this and it came to his ears, like the apologetic tinkle of a little bell. The self-conscious laugh softened Mikhail towards her and made him feel somewhat more gracious.

'I'm not as young as I look,' she explained 'and I suppose I'm not really that much of a friend...I....I mean that we get on but we're not that...erm...'

Mikhail smiled, causing her to do likewise. He felt a tremendous surge of feeling for her.

'Don't worry. You don't have to justify yourself to me. What's your name?'

'Natasha.' The smile did not leave her face. He cynically wondered whether she was aware of its power to enhance her features, but he quelled the ungenerous thought.

He was experiencing a sensation that had not been aroused in him for many years. One that could not be ascribed to any emotions. He used to feel this way towards his wife before she changed. And he felt this to be the fundamental iniquity about life. Why must people change? Do we do it or is it done for us? Tametsky always remarked on the astounding adaptability of humans. But think of a river. As a stream in the mountains, it plays merrily and childishly among the foliage but then, all innocence lost, it cascades mercilessly downwards yet does it continue like this endlessly? No, it reverts to its placid, mature version of its former

self as it goes seawards. Why, as humans could we not similarly revert, once changed instead of bringing misery to others around them?

Maria cannot possibly have changed so irrevocably, merely over the death of our son. That was three years ago and does she not remember he was as much mine. Perhaps this was the way a woman's mind worked.....

Aware of having been asked something, he abandoned these thoughts and creased his brow questioningly. She laughed again and after that it did seem natural. Therefore they talked for about fifteen minutes (though it did not appear so). Of the weather and of society. Of people they both knew and of the bold, new Russian composers. And Mikhail felt uncomfortably happy, like the meadows clasped in the passionate embrace of the sun. Why am I so inspired? Perhaps there is an empathy and warmth with her.

He was starting to learn of the incomparable joy at discovering someone, to whom you can express your views and have them reaffirmed. A blessed relief from the social circles, nowadays, where the fashionable pastime is to disagree as fervently as possible in the hope of declaiming some revelatory idea which, while frequently implausible and easily controvertible, might anger the men and shock the women and gain one's entry to the halls of some 'ism' or another (be it the fatalists, nihilists, materialists, all pursuing their ideals in the public of a ballroom or two). Mikhail's most popular belief was that it was easier to dispute and refute everything than to accept anything wholeheartedly.

However an interlude, no matter how wonderful, will end and Natasha apologised but said she would have to rejoin her companions. Mikhail had not realised, though thinking about it, would she have been alone, gazed over at where the other two men and a girl sat around a bottle of wine, summoning Natasha. Mikhail detested them, in their oh-so-fashionable, pleased with themselves clothes. But he could see he would have to lose her.

'Wait...erm...' He stumbled over his words, flustered and confused at what he was doing. 'I'd like to...er...see you again... I... that is, if you want to. Each syllable was a confession. He might well have said 'Wait, I love you. I'll divorce my wife and marry you.'

She did not laugh, frivolously, for which he was gratified. Her eyes still gave a glimmer of amusement but not mocking his words.

'Do you fancy a stroll tomorrow at around three o'clock?' she asked.

'Certainly I love walking.' (Oh God, how pitiable).

'Well, then. Perhaps you or you and Maria... (is she teasing me or...)... under the Bronze Horseman in Senate Square?'

'Certainly, but Maria may not...'

She smiled coyly. 'Then come alone.'

She stood up. Kiss her hand, you fool, quickly before the moment's lost. But it was gone. It was a pity he was not as bold as he desired to be but still tomorrow...

... In God's name, why do I want to kiss her hand? I'm married and she's a friend of my wife's. I'm chained to this circle of gold for ever.

Outwardly, he appeared as calm and composed as ever but he wanted to scream and he wanted to flee this smoky pit. But he remained. He sat enervated, shoulders slumped. His cold, unfeeling reason was no match for the fiery emotions of the common man. Happiness became disbelief, disbelief became fear and so on until his mind was ablaze with images and words burned upon his brain. And on the back of all these feelings lay envy as he watched the other men tease Natasha, much to the chagrin of the other girl. Jealousy is a creature that lies inside, gnawing on the marrow of your sanity until you go mad. Othello fell to it, Troy was fought for it and thousands are afflicted everyday. How many pointless duels and rivalries does it create?

This far, he could reason. Reason prevailed and he told himself that Natasha could laugh with her inconsequential friends as much as she wanted. For he was married 'for better or for worse'. He would see her again tomorrow. We shall talk of politics, exchange anecdotes, laugh and be on our respective way. For it would be rude to turn her down, especially as I suggested it.

Yet this forced logic let him down. At every perceived, stifled yawn, he rejoiced as if he had gained a spectacular triumph and with every laugh he wanted to thrash these arrogantly superior young men, with their affected grins and complacent twists of the head. Mikhail realised he could not possibly continue here. As a madman, he threw the vodka down his throat, relished the burning he endured and flung several roubles onto the table before rising, contemptuously glancing over the assembled company. He forced his way out, blind to the revelry of all around him.

The night air was cool but all was emptiness and desolation. The silence was eerie and discomfiting, and the echoes of his steps mocked his loneliness. Joy and laughter was elsewhere. Where conversation had flowed unremittingly below the warm sun, it had now ceased. And what is a street without people? Merely a line on a map. It surrenders all its vitality and dies as the people leave. Yet the life would return, he knew, the stone rolled back and life emerges and yea, shalt there be rejoicing. But for the present, this is no consolation. Does one chase the people or sit and wait in the hope that they will return.

How long have I been away from home? he wondered. Hours? For he carried no pocket-watch, the symbol of the class divide. Ignore all the clothing differences, the accents. It all comes down to whether you have a pocket-watch or not. Although aware that this reasoning was ludicrous, he allowed himself to be led by it.

There was an expectancy amongst the moneyed classes that you should carry one. The irony is that those with, who should be elevated from mortal concerns by dint of their wealth, are painfully aware of their own mortality and the loss of every second and

those without remain blissfully ignorant. This is ridiculous! Am I so affected that I just argued for minutes, with myself, on unimportant drivel?

A bedraggled peasant with a stoop, so pronounced, he appeared to be scouring the pavements, shuffled past and noticed him. Taking Mikhail for a nobleman, the peasant turned two burning eyes upon him and made a sudden entreaty.

'Spare a couple ah roubles, if yah can, yer honour. I gets an awful thirst at night,' he mumbled.

To Mikhail there was something inexplicably frightening about this spectacle and he shrank back in disgust and fear. Though it did not relate to his position in any way, this normal request drew back every recent emotion and brought on an awareness of his position in society which rankled him. If he was so placed above in society, then why was this position so hard. Should he not entertain happiness with his privileges? See Natasha if he wanted to and hang the consequences? This was the ultimate conflict of life and society. He wished he were a man of action, a Byronic figure. Damn society and my position! This is not freedom. But what other choice do I have? Run away? This struck him as attractive. Yes, become a soldier, gaze from the white mountains of Georgia over the rolling vistas of forests, seas, leaving this pathetic town and its miserable harbour. The image transported his imagination and momentarily lifted him above the doubts as to his bravery and his infirmity of purpose.

But such an image must always bring on another. He saw his wife, not screaming at him and destroying the china, nor lying vacantly on a couch, staring out through the smeared glass to the thunder and rain (images all too frequent in recent years) but he saw her on a summer's day laughing and screaming with glee, barefoot amongst the fallen leaves in the woods, just outside Petersburg. Intruding unbidden, he guiltily recalled the pleasure of flirting with a friend of hers. No, he had not been a socially acceptable husband nor a model partner recently, but did she deserve this?

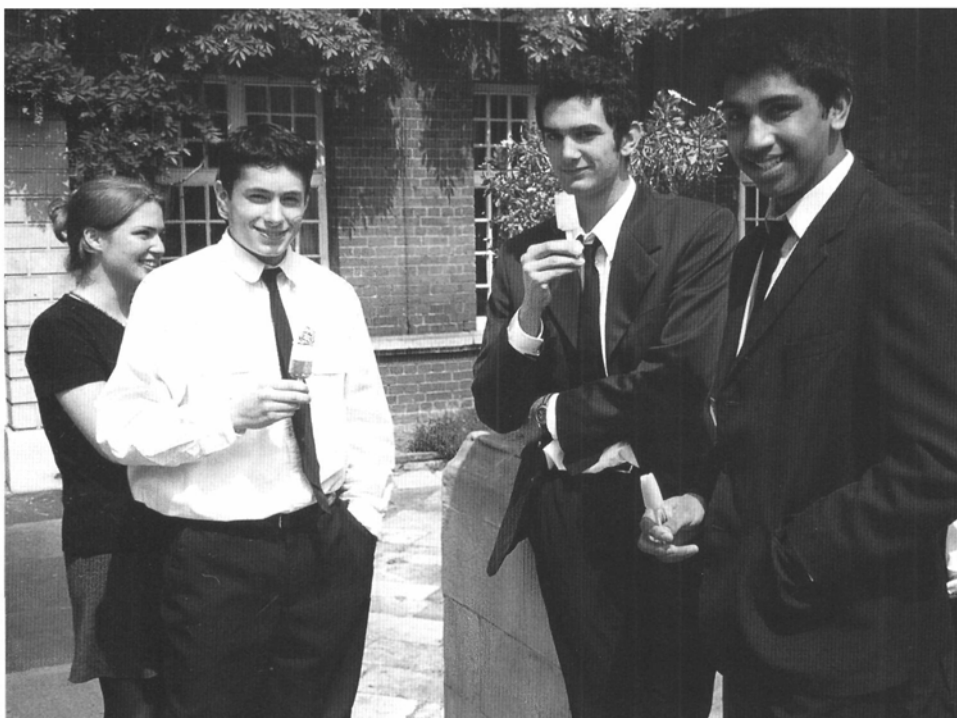
Mikhail had stood still for some time, fixed towards the point at the end of the road where the darkness began. He had been oblivious to the old man's cursing for his lack of generosity and it took the din of a carriage, tearing by, to awake him from the stupor. A fresh idea had been granted. Nikolai Petrovich, of course, the perfect fellow.

Suddenly the distance seemed no longer so great. The cool night air and gentle warmth from the houses, pleasantly contradictory. He sped on, posture restored, tunic buttoned up, his dignity returned. He smoothed down one side of his thick, wavy locks. For it is remarkable how one can fail to resolve a problem but merely by unburdening oneself, one's hopes are reborn.

Some twenty minutes later, he caught sight of his carriage outside the offices. Unlike Nevsky, which followed a worker's time cycle, active while it caught the sun's rays, then retiring till the sun's next stand, Bolshoy and the district of the 'bourgeois' (a nicely onomatopoeic word, recently coined that he had liked hearing, meaning the middle class) thrived no matter the time of day; night, dark, dusk, dawn, always the same pointless business of those busy with nothing to do and nowhere to go.

His driver, a lean, handsome Serb, stood carelessly against the door; the horses were stamping the ground, impetuously, in front of the carriage that Maria had insisted they get, as it befitted his 'position'. Seeing Mikhail, he flicked away the cheap cigarette and made an imperfect salute that smacked of haughty arrogance. Clearly he was indignant at having been left waiting so long, though from the smell inside the carriage, Mikhail deduced that a bottle of cheap vodka had obviously shared his vigil.

He instructed the driver to a house in the Petrograd region across the bridge. Mirroring its occupant, the carriage unsteadily took off and drunkenly rocked around, down to the bridge. Pairs of midnight lovers, arm in arm, happily shared the crossing of the Neva with them and from the window, Mikhail torn between a smile and a grimace, stared on them, dispassionately.



SHUSHMA (CHAPTER III)

Nisha Makan (Purcell's)

Shushma hitched the sparkly blue lycra skirt a little higher up her thighs. She looked back at her rejuvenated image in Maisy's full-length mirror as she applied blue glitter eye-shadow heavily to her eyelids. The thickly pasted make-up was the final touch. She took a step back from the mirror and scrutinised the particulars of her appearance. Well, her foundation didn't match her skin tone, but then she never could find affordable make-up for dark skin. She slyly did up a button of her silky shirt only to have Maisy turn swiftly and strut across the room, swinging her hips to the beat of the club mix CD which blared violently out of the vibrating speakers. Maisy wagged her finger teasingly at Shushma and undid the button of her shirt so that her compact, brown cleavage reappeared, protruding from the lacy push-up bra. Shushma giggled and effortlessly moved to the music, but somehow lacked the provocative glamour of her friends. Having buckled Sarah's Posh Spice-esque, Gucci imitation heels round her ankles, Shushma stalked down the stairs behind the other girls. She looked like an awkwardly balanced bean-pole in drag.

As they waited shivering outside the off-licence, Shushma watched Maisy's shimmering lips reiterate her annoyance at having to lie to her mother about them going to the cinema. They both knew that Maisy's mother would not cover for Shushma, especially having assured her parents that she would pick up their daughter from the cinema. She had even added that she understood and respected their wishes to ensure their daughter's safety. Maisy was unimpressed and forced to keep her true destination from her mother.

'The party better be worth it,' she muttered darkly.

'What d'ya wanna drink darlin'?' asked the handsome host.

'Just an orange juice please,' replied Shushma sweetly.

'Well, what do you want in that then? Vodka?' he smiled, as his mates grinned drunkenly at him.

'No thank you, I don't drink alcohol.'

'She don't drink alcohol! Did ya hear that?'

The smile increased to engulf his offensive face. He laughed roughly with the other lads. Most of the girls tittered insanely as if they were hiccupping. Their high-pitched, girly giggles bore down on Shushma and she felt herself shrinking to insignificance.

She flushed under her dark skin but no-one could see beneath the flesh that trapped her and controlled her life.

'Why don't you drink?' continued the host, enjoying the attention and laughs he was getting.

'I just don't. I never have. Alright?' replied Shushma hotly, trying to appear uninhibited. She tossed her hair impetuously and slunk across the room, head high.

Shushma talked self-consciously to a school friend. She felt as if the many eyes on her would burn a hole in the back of her head. Her discomfort was still visible ten minutes later when she was greeted by an apologetic host.

'Sorry about that, love. Don't take it personal. 'Ere's the orange juice you asked for.' Shushma thanked him, relieved that she was not seen as such a freak after all. She stopped being so bashful and began moving around, happily sipping her orange-juice. There was no more trouble from the host, he and his friends smiled and chatted to her, regularly refilling her orange juice.



POEMS

Max Hildebrand (Grant's)

Why must the lights be out?

Why must the lights be out
for me to look into my soul?
If confrontation must come,
and I to find myself,
Why not by the Isis on midsummer's eve,
Watching love and its burden punt its way down river?
Or perhaps at the summit of
Some majestic peak in the Caucasus,
and I, arm in arm, could converse time
Away with the world at our feet
Or simply sitting, seeing, contemplating.
There is the possibility, of course,
That we shall meet on a crowded avenue
In some antiquated Spanish fortress town,
and glancing mercilessly at one another
While heaving overweight tourists pant gazing at the
Alabaster souvenirs, shall move on with disdain.
Perhaps on meeting I shall turn away,
not worthy of myself, or ashamed to look up.
Perhaps, en rendez-vous, one of us shall hesitate,
and the other, with ruthless scorn and head held high
Shall walk away in satisfaction,
That I, a better person than the figure in front of me,
Did not.
If I am truly unfortunate, and cowardice befalls me,
I shall find myself shipwrecked and sunburnt
In a tropical stereotype,
and I am forced to sit, humiliated, and talk
While we sip coconut milk on the beach
and wait for rescue, deciding that perhaps
Given the choice, I would not be saved.
If I am a coward,
Then I hope for darkness when I find myself,
So that I can peer into my soul in solitude,
and if ashamed, then be shamed alone.
However, I hope I am not a coward,
And find myself riverside, or atop an African summit,
So that on seeing myself, I shall have a good view.

The Penguin: An Angel Lost Away From Home

They say he was just confused: The man
who jumped today.
They say he was a lost cause: The man
who tried to fly.
They say it was his childhood: The man
who flew his life away.
They say it was all too much for him: The man
who wished to die.
They say he was experiencing difficulties: The man
who jumped today.
They say he was in need of love: The man
whose mind was ill.
They say he was an angel: The man
who tried to glide away.
But he did not soar, he did not rise: The man
who now lies still.
But they did not say he longed for flight,
They did not say he tried for home: The man
who now lies still...
But only pity this wingless bird - this fallen man
or penguin if you will.

Silence

Why must we discover the lost art of conversation
When it must have been forgotten
For good reason?
And yet it is said that a true friend can be comfortable
In silence,
Yet we must chatter inanely to keep up appearances:
Why must we commentate on the most mundane trivialities,
When the conveyance of an era can be made with
A glance of the eyes?
And yet
It is said that you will know more from a man
From what he does not say,
Yet to keep silent is to be considered
Hostile and unwelcome:
So: we must sit and endure what society deems suitable,
And I must sit in paradise
And complain about the world.



SOCIETIES

HENRY VII SINGERS

It has been another splendid year for the Henry VII Singers. Now well-established, we have the advantage and good fortune to have a group who are well-used to singing together, and it shows in the quality of the choral sound. The four members of the bass section have now been singing together for three years and provide a solid choral quality which would be the envy of some adult choral societies; we are also fortunate in having had the strongest alto section possibly ever. Combined with a tenor section of real tenors and a large and enthusiastic group of sopranos, we have had a good year.

We continue to enjoy our commitment to provide the music for School Communion services in the remarkable Henry VII Chapel, which has included some beautiful psalm singing and a memorable Ascension Day service (partly in honour of our Chaplain, who retires this year). For the third year running we have sung at the School Confirmation service, this time part of Mozart's celebratory Mass in C; and the May Day madrigals, sung in bright sunshine from College roof, were probably the best yet. Our 'Musics in Abbey' have enabled us to sing some of the more adventurous repertoire, including choruses from Handel oratorios, Mendelssohn's eight-part *Ave Maria* and Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia*. We learned and enjoyed John Tavener's *The Lamb* for the Contemporary Music concert and Leighton's *Lully Lulla* for the Carol Service, and we had our first outside gig - to provide half the music for a concert, in St Margaret's, in aid of the St Thomas' Lupus Trust. Outside concerts like this enable us to sing programmes that a ten-minute Abbey slot could not possibly allow.

So in many ways things are, as I said, going splendidly. The most remarkable aspect of this is that we manage it all on only twenty minutes' rehearsal a week. With some singers being committed to other parts of School life, the vagaries of the Station programme mean that about a third of our number have to leave the rehearsals early. Yes, the rest of us sing for another twenty minutes or so, but in a choir of this size (16-18 singers) the best progress can only be made with everybody there. It is to my continued amazement, and gratitude, that we manage to do so well.

Gilly French

JOHN LOCKE SOCIETY

Another year of John Locke Society was packed with diverse personalities who attracted considerable turnouts. However varied and controversial the opinions, each speaker presented persuasive arguments, keeping the audience interested.

The year began with **Caradoc King**, who gave us a picture of life as a literary agent, which seemed to consist of long and expensive lunches with the rest of the time spent in the office reading the odd book. **Ray Wilkins** required a change of venue to School, so great was the turnout: he managed after a ten minute run-through of his life to fill the rest of the time fielding questions from angry Arsenal fans. **Piers Gough** showed us slides of all his buildings ranging from huge waterfront houses to designer loos. **Meirion Thomas** finally told the Upper School who John Locke was - it was

surprising how few of us knew. He went on to discuss cancer treatments and the controversial placebo effect conveying his views passionately and persuasively. **Sir George Russell** defended the Lottery to a sceptical audience: he even attempted to justify his huge salary. **Matthew Fort** took us away from the horrors of College Hall and talked about his enviable job eating the finest foods and being paid for it. When he finished and lunch break began there was an audible sigh.

Next came two men who have both confronted sleaze in British politics in very different ways: **Alan Rusbridger**, editor of *The Guardian*, vehemently defended the press's right to investigate the corruption in our political system. **Martin Bell**, delighting the audience by wearing his customary white linen suit, impressed us with his magnificent presence and his ability to talk eloquently without any notes about his life first as a war reporter and then as an Independent MP. In between came **Jim Cogan**: at short notice he gave an informative talk about gap years and the choices that exist. **Christina Odone** tried to convince us of the importance of genuine religion in modern times and warned of the unhealthy alternatives, like Diana-worship. **Simon Hoggart**, political sketch-writer and satirist, amused the audience with his anecdotes about Parliament: the picture painted didn't seem too far away from Little Dean's Yard. **Murray Walker** once again packed out School as pupils swarmed to see the face behind the distinctive voice: most memorable was his self-deprecating wit. **Ben Pimlott**, the eminent Professor of Politics, spoke about the relationship between the monarchy and the people over the century, and also touched upon the hysteria shown over Diana (which was a common theme this year). **Hugo Young**, with his left-wing views, closed the term by shedding some important light on the complex and turbulent relationship between Britain and Europe.

A real high point followed as **Michael Palin** packed out the gym to reminisce about his life and times. His anecdotes brought the house down but he also had a surprising message: going to Oxford University serves no useful function unless you want to be a comedian. A quite different speaker came the next week: **Janet Inglis** confronted incest head-on and her unflinching and thought-provoking analysis of this 'last taboo' impressed all who heard her. **Nicholas Roeg** gave a long-awaited and enticing look at the world of motion pictures. **Doris Lessing** exhorted us eloquently to read more and refused to budge from this position despite a fairly cynical response from the audience, who seemed more interested in quizzing her about her story used for the 1997 GCSE paper. **Gitta Sereny** was spellbinding as she deconstructed the mind of Albert Speer with intelligence and reasoning, having interviewed him extensively. The term finished with **Chris Woodhead** trying to convince us that OFSTED did a good job and that Winchester was a model school. The audience found the latter rather harder to believe.

Another crowded lecture room received **Ian Haworth**, who, armed with sheaves of papers containing the 100+ alternative names of one particular cult, warned us of the dangers of beautiful women coming up to us on the tube. When he revealed to us the true extent of the damage cults can do, based on personal experience, we started to take notice.

Hazhir Teimourian, renowned journalist on Middle Eastern affairs, informed us about the perils of his profession; his lively anecdotal style ensured we were always kept amused. **Stuart Hampson**, chairman of John Lewis, gave us all something to think about when he explained why John Lewis is so successful: the secret seems to be that all employees are allowed to complain about him anonymously. **Professor Lewis Spitz** gave us a vivid and exciting insight (complete with slides) into the difficult subject of separating Siamese twins. **Irina Ratushinskaya** was one of the finest speakers of the year: her unflinching account of life in a prison camp in Siberia, where she would be told regularly that she did not exist, was simply awe-inspiring. She turned out to be the final speaker of the year when **Ken Livingstone** failed to turn up. This has probably lost him 180 or so votes from the Remove, not convinced by his promise to reform the Underground if he is incapable of using it himself. Nonetheless with Ms Ratushinskaya's speech the year finished on a triumphant note.

Thanks are due to all those who came to speak, and to David Hargreaves for somehow convincing these busy people to come. Special mention must be made of Howard Gooding's concise and amusing speeches introducing the speakers and summing them up. He was consistently the linchpin that held the Society together.

*Neil Fisher (Milne's), Jenny Steven (Liddell's)
& Lucy Davis (Wren's)*

DEBATING

This year, Westminster debating achieved substantially more success than last. Although all the debaters who represented the School were inexperienced at the start of the year, as the season went on, and the team gained experience and confidence, our performance improved.

The standard in the internal society remains high as ever. Attendance is always rather disappointing, and this year we had additional problems due to the reluctance of many pupils to stay after school, combined with the iron grip of the Music Department over lunch-times. However, those who do come are more committed than the members of most societies. Internal motions varied from *This House would abolish government funding for the Arts Council* to *This House would look before it leaps*; there have been many speeches memorable for their wit.

We achieved only small success at the Observer Mace - a very variable competition. Thomas Munby and Laura Bender made it through to the second round, where we finished second with one to qualify, after debating censorship and Robin Cook's 'moral foreign policy'. The University Competitions were much more successful. Thomas and Laura reached the Finals Day of the Cambridge Union, where we were placed eighth out of the twelve finalists, and out of about 150 teams nation-wide - a very satisfying result, especially considering neither of the two debaters had ever spoken at a finals day before. Issues there included EMU and the Millennium Dome, in which Thomas put the floor into hysterics by his forensic analysis of the possible motives for celebrating the millennium. Our greatest achievement was in the final competition of the year, the Oxford Union, where Mohan Ganesalingam and Laura not only got to Finals Day, but qualified for the Grand Final, finishing in the top four of

over 200 schools across the country. The day began with three preliminary rounds, followed by a semi-final which covered topics ranging from the ethics of trade to proportional representation. The motion of the Grand Final was *This House condemns the role of America as policeman to the world* and, although challenging, led to a very stimulating debate.

The final event of the debating calendar was The Common Room Debate: held at the end of May, on the subject *This House believes that a woman's place is in the kitchen* it lived well up to all expectations. Sharon Newman and Laura Bender spoke well, but - brutally - Michael Davies, Robert Wilne, James Gazet and Thomas Munby so much better that, while the motion was roundly defeated, the sentiment which informed it still seemed to have some resonance. The future of debating, even as mixed sport, is potentially very bright, with Thomas Munby taking over the reins of the society, and he and others currently in the Sixth Form poised to form promising teams for next year. Many thanks to Jonny White for his support and encouragement during the year.

Laura Bender (Grant's) & Alex de Jonquières (Rigaud's)

JUNIOR DEBATING

Advertised in the Choice form as 'Training for future Observer Mace', Junior Debating is, perhaps, one of the more exemplary LSAs. Though scorned by some, it is in fact a fortnightly hour of stress relief by way of open confrontation. It is the perfect way to end a heated afternoon spent thrashing out the finer points of Rectilinear Propagation.

The year kicked off with the - at the time - topical motion of *This House would canonise Diana, Princess of Wales*. Despite a fluently convincing case for the motion from Frederick van der Wyck, victory went to Arash Taheri with his argument that it would be inappropriate.

At the height of the furore over the British nurses in Saudi Arabia, Junior Debating reflected the feeling with the title *This House believes a country's system of justice is its own concern*. Tempers ran high and in the end Ferdinand Koenig, our resident Dennis Skinner, defeated the motion on the side of national sovereignty. The Christmas debate over the Festival's own abolition was beaten down by some captivating arguments from Alexander Rubner.

Generally speaking, the results of many of our debates and the well-structured contributions from the floor show Westminsters to be fair, just and morally conscious individuals. Sharyah Raza carried the motion that *Charity should begin at home* while the Debating Society stubbornly beat down my own argument against the Free Press. It was therefore interesting when Frederick van der Wyck convinced the House that *Cheating to win was better than losing honestly*. Clearly Westminsters are open-minded enough to interpret ethics according to need.

Julian Elliot (Dryden's)

AMNESTY

Westminster's Amnesty Group has been a subject of some controversy recently, with pieces both for and against it appearing in the School's new fortnightly publication *The Word*. The anonymous reply from a member of the Amnesty Committee which appeared in *The Word*'s second edition may yet prompt replies from those who feel that a proper defence of Amnesty is necessary - the article left as many allegations unanswered as denied.

As always, the letter writing has been taking place on Friday lunch breaks in the Camden Room, with people turning up both to write letters, and to attack the week's cause - there are regulars in both groups. Friendly and caring as all Westminsters are, they appear to need their precious Friday lunch breaks, and although the letters continue to be written, they do not appear in such volume as the Committee might like. The causes vary from Human Rights' abuses in Colombia to arms sales to Indonesia and all manage to provoke some criticism, but few seem to invite the compassion of potential correspondents, and many are shunned by them as far away and irrelevant. It would be a welcome change to write to someone whose name does mean something, but this does not necessarily mean that the other causes are meaningless and unworthy.

Perhaps a change in the format of Amnesty might be welcome, and new ideas would be appreciated (and indeed a link up with the Abbey's Amnesty Society is a possibility currently being investigated), but it is a worthy cause and should continue to function as a charitable society organised by the pupils for the pupils.

Alex de Jonquières (Rigaud's)



HOOKE AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY 1997-98

Now we are six! Issue 12 has just been published and I am wondering once again how I am going to replace a brilliant team of editors. I felt the same way this time last year, but there is no doubt that Sapna Jethwa (editor), helped by Murray Rogers and Jonathan Monroe have done an outstanding job in producing two issues packed with interesting articles and good graphics. Of course, I had to say that, but I was told only this morning by a Head of Department that she had been so engrossed in the magazine that she'd missed her stop on the tube. We even managed to sell some copies to St Paul's.

Articles this year came from all parts of the School and covered a diverse range of subjects extending from a simple (?) explanation of quantum mechanics (Richard Lim and Murray Rogers) to bread making (Gilly French) and from addition (by Henry Newman - not about rowing) to Henry Tizard (Zeno Houston). Bevmann and Robbo were skilfully avoided, but the Borg did make an appearance and Issue 12 had an excellent picture quiz supplied by Alvin Chuang. More seriously, *Hooke* reported the very impressive achievements of Westminster scientists and mathematicians in the various Olympiads; surely no other school can match these. It also reviewed books, the Tizard lecture, the CERN trip and the engineering course, not to mention scientific society lectures.

Actually, I *am* supposed to mention Scientific Society lectures. This year was rather different from previous years in that we took greater advantage of external lectures and arranged fewer events here. In retrospect this was a mistake. Whilst lectures at the Institute of Physics or Royal Institution are usually good fun and well presented, it meant we never really developed the feeling of belonging to a group who meet together regularly - I particularly missed the arguments and discussions with visiting lecturers over supper in the Hastings Room. Next year Scientific Society will be firmly based in school (but not to the exclusion of all external lectures). The other problem this year was the imbalance of subjects having a strong physics bias (sorry!): we celebrated the centenary of the electron at a lecture given by Professor Sir Brian Pippard, learnt about the physics of skiing with Guy Bagnall (well-known to finalists in the Physics Olympiad), enjoyed an excellent lecture by Chris Buckley on medical imaging, an afternoon of particle physics at the Royal Institution (with Professors Kalmus and Close and Dr Wyatt) and further lectures on the nucleus (Dr Al Khalili) and superconductors (Dr Islam). Dr Michele Dougherty, a mathematician engaged in planetary research gave an illustrated lecture at Westminster on the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn (read about it in *Hooke* 12). In addition to these activities several sixth formers attended a Particle Physics Master Class at Imperial and another group are preparing to travel to CERN to visit the LEP accelerator near Geneva. Meanwhile the Biology Department has been invited to provide final training for the British Biology Olympiad team in school during the summer holiday, and we are beginning to plan for a sixth form conference at Westminster in conjunction with the Scientific and Medical network entitled *Beyond the Brain* (Play Term 1998). Watch this space...

If you are not already a *Hooke* subscriber it costs £2 per year (2 issues) and you can browse past editions on the web via the Westminster School site.

Steve Adams

THE 1998 TIZARD LECTURE: WILL OUR GRANDCHILDREN BE HUMAN?

Lord Winston of Hammersmith.

Last year consciousness, this year genetics and its manipulation - two hot ethical potatoes in a row. The audience for the 1998 Tizard Lecture was substantial, and as is customary gave an enthusiastic reception to the lecturer.

Robert Winston, Professor of Fertility Studies at Hammersmith and a pioneer of IVF studies, is well known for his often trenchant views on his many interests. Following the year in which Dolly the sheep had been cloned, and in which an unknown and presumably wildly optimistic physicist had promised to do the same for humans, Robert Winston had a solidly attentive audience, expecting clear guidance on a number of genetic issues. They were not disappointed.

Lord Winston started historically, relating some of the earliest ethical views of human reproduction as well as the story of Jacob and Laban and their sheep (Genesis 31), an early example of genetic manipulation. From this he moved on to IVF, genetic engineering, the scientific illiteracy which means that such advances are often misrepresented, and the degree to which ethics must guide science.

The effects of genetic engineering are frequently presented in a 'Brave New World' context; it is as if the techniques are so solid that enormous changes can be brought about simply by fiddling around with the genes. The genes have to be expressed, however; their effects have to be seen. The introduction of a gene does not necessarily mean that that trait will appear in the organism; not only is the success rate often low (in many cases less than 1%) but is also extremely expensive.

This may be true now. But technology improves, and science develops, and perhaps one day the problems of gene expression will be overcome. IVF, for example, is still a less-than-certain technique but is much better than it was. The ethical problems must therefore be considered.

Ethics in science is often presented as something which the scientist is not equipped to consider. The scientists are seen, sometimes by themselves, as totally dispassionate observers of nature, value-free. This is nonsense; scientists are people, with creative urges, prejudice, emotion, excitement and self-deception present in their work, just like everybody else. To be sure there are some constraints - a scientific theory must bear some relationship to perceived reality, after all - but the scientist who ignores or disdains the ethical implications of the science does so at considerable peril. Apart from anything else, the science may then seem more of a threat than it really is. Thus Robert Winston addressed the ethical problems of his interests and, quite properly, offered no pre-digested solutions. He was eloquent on one particular concern, shared strongly by me, which is that the problem of general scientific illiteracy in the population at large militates against sensible public discussion of the issues. This is despite an enormous increase in scientific education; I wish I could report that either of us had a solution.

The purpose of the Tizard Lecture is to inform, but more it is to challenge. The success of it is measured largely by the amount of post-lecture discussion that occurs. On this test, Robert Winston scored a considerable success, and one

achieved with much modesty and self-effacement. We were privileged to hear him.

Rod Beavon

If you would like an invitation to the 1999 Tizard Lecture and are not currently on the mailing list, please send your name and address to Dr Rod Beavon, 17 Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3PB.

SCIENCE OLYMPIADS

In each of the Science subjects - Mathematics, Computing, Physics, and Chemistry - an annual national competition is held to find the most talented students in the country in the discipline. There is also a set of International Olympiads, for which the competition is used to select our National Team. Westminster has been very successful in these in the past but the last two years have been quite remarkable ones for us, with two of our students dominating all of them.

In Mathematics, Jonathan Monroe (AH) reached the Final in 1997 and 1998 and Mohan Ganesalingam (QS) is in the National Team this year.

In Computing, Mohan was in the National Team last year, and is this year.

In Physics, Jonathan was in the National Team last year and both he and Mohan reached the Final this year and would have been in the team but for a clash of dates with their other commitments.

In Chemistry, Jonathan is in the National Team this year.

It has been a great privilege to have two such remarkable boys in the School, and I am sure we will have more to be proud of them for in the future, at Cambridge and beyond.

Many of our other students have also done extremely well: in this year's Physics Olympiad, Murray Rogers (HH) obtained a Gold medal; in Mathematics, Alexander Imboden (QS) was in the top 25 nationally and in the Computing, Nicholas Krempel (AH), who is only in the Fifth Form, would have been invited to the final, but for his age.

A Biology Olympiad has also recently been set up, and Westminster has entered this for two years with an impressive degree of success. In 1997 Dora Wood reached the final ten nationally and we won the School Shield for the best overall results, and this year Davina Bristow (LL), Jacob Kenedy (DD), Miles Copeland (BB) and Meera Kumar (PP) all won Gold Medals.

Michael Davies



EXPEDITIONS SOCIETY REPORT

The Society has had a year of mixed fortunes. 1997 saw the departure of a fairly large contingent of keen Expeditions Society supporters, and it was always going to be difficult to replace that level of dedication. However, plenty of keen expeditioners have crawled into the open over the last twelve months. This year's Chairman, Adam Wood (AH) has been all one could want in a Chairman. He has led the Society by example, taking part in almost all the camps and trips on offer.

The year started off with the Sailing Expedition, which has grown so much in popularity that we had two boats for the first time. Aided by Jacob Kenedy's (DD) cooking and Caroline Newte-Hardie's (PP) graceful shouts of 'Lee ho!', this trip was a great success. The other Play Term favourite, the Lyke Wake Walk, was also popular, with 30 participants this year. Only two of the participants failed to complete the walk this year - the best completion rate yet. Conditions for the Walk were almost perfect: a balmy night, not too cold and no rain. The Head Master's arrival on the second day of the Walk conveniently coincided with Damian Riddle's putting one of the minibuses out of commission; thus the Head Master was able to become fully involved in the Walk. This certainly provided a shock to some of the pupils, who thought that the exhaustion had got to them ('Do you know, I was convinced that chap looming up at us out of the fog was the Head Master...').

After such a successful first term, things were bound to go astray eventually. Caving was a great success, but the Exeat trip to Snowdonia had to be cancelled due to the ill health of the leaders. Another casualty was the proposed Easter Camp to Norway. Sadly, the School Ski Trip to Vermont proved more popular than the idea of Norwegian Cross Country Skiing. In its place, a hastily organised Skye Camp saw a party of OWW, Staff and Adam Wood tick off all the remaining peaks on the Cuillin which had not been achieved in the last two years (such as the Pinnacle Ridge on Sgurr na Gilleann and the Cioch). With Skye well and truly 'done', we'll be more stuck for Easter Camps in the next two or three years.

The better weather of the Election Term brought the traditional outdoor Expeditions. A group went to South Wales to do some Riding, and a small party also undertook the traditional Parachuting Expedition in Headcorn, Kent. But again, not everything goes to plan. The final Camp of the year was to have been a Scuba Diving Expedition off the Sinai Peninsula. Again, apathy was to be the downfall of this trip. It seems that Westminsterers are fairly set in their ways: they like the good old favourites such as Lyke Wake, Caving and Parachuting, but are less keen on the bigger camps.

Looking forward to next year, plans are a little uncertain. Of course, the old favourites will be there, and at the time of writing, the two big Camps look like being Gliding and a return visit to the Picos de Europa in Spain. Watch this space...

Damian Riddle

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

At the beginning of the year the baton of WSMUN was handed down to us from some very tired Removes, and we confidently promised ourselves that Westminster School's second ever Model United Nations would build on the successes of the first one and correct some of the mistakes. In November, with a few months to go and no schools signed up, no money and no clue, we suddenly realised how difficult that was going to be.

Eventually however the Second Annual Westminster School Model United Nations was held on the weekend of the 21-22 February. By 1:00pm on the Saturday, schools and delegations were already arriving amid the chaos of end of school for the Westminsters. In the true British tradition the heavens opened and our security guards ushered the delegates into School, catching a few confused Westminsters in the process. There were 28 schools representing 37 countries ranging from the global superpowers to Slovenia and Gabon.

Tempers were a little frayed, but after all, this was supposed to represent the real UN and the abuse that the Greeks and the Turks and the Indians and the Pakistanis hurled at each other demonstrated that some had definitely taken this to heart. Whether this had anything to do with the fact that India, Pakistan and Greece were all represented by Westminsterers is anybody's guess.

Nevertheless some important issues were decided: in the same weekend that Kofi Annan flew to Baghdad our MUN settled the very same dispute. The USA appeared to back down on the issue of weapons inspections - though they reportedly allowed a certain Chinese delegate to inspect their own - much to the chagrin of the Iraqis who were left with nothing to do apart from form an *extremely* close relationship with the Iranians. A security council task force touched down on Taiwanese soil at the end of the Sunday to oversee a five year handover to China, which seemed finally to solve that problem.

Other important events:

- the undignified scramble for walkie-talkies when the committee chairs realised there were not enough;

- the near auto-asphyxiation of an American delegate by means of a plastic bag;

- the removal of an overly irate Greek delegate to cries of 'Free Ferdinand!' from Canada - strangely enough, the only thing they ever said.

Of course a lot of non-political work was done as well. Our UN worked on the basis of different committees: Economic, Social and Human Rights, Ecology and Technology in addition to the Political committee. For example a Food for Oil programme was established in the economics committee, and new international legislation tackling prostitution was ratified in the human rights committee, as well as a resolution banning biological and chemical weaponry in the political committee.

All things considered, the MUN was a great success and we received a lot of positive feedback. Thanks to the Head Master and Brian Smith for giving the go-ahead and for the emergency funds, to Philip Needham for his technical assistance, and to Jonny White for his support and guidance.

Neil Fisher (Milne's) and Aqib Aslam (Dryden's)

PHAB

Before recalling some fond memories of last year's PHAB course it might be best to start with a quick confession: that initially I was not entirely thrilled by the prospect of spending the first few days of my hard-earned summer holidays right back in School - even if it was, as my family assured me, all in a good cause. Although I was slightly reassured by my sister's experiences the year before (while I remembered, with alarm, her returning home after it was all over and sleeping solidly for two days), a glance down the list of participants confirmed that very few of them were close friends of mine.

So returning to Dean's Yard after just a few days of rest, I would describe my state of mind as apprehensive at best, reluctant at worst. But coming through Liddell's Arch I found School totally transformed: not just with ramps, a crowd of new faces, and adjoining rooms set up for all four 'workshops' that would take up the next few mornings, but the whole atmosphere. Dislocated groups hanging about before lessons had been replaced by a mix of frantic activity and laid-back enjoyment of the July sunshine, all played out to a soundtrack of Bob Marley blasting out of somebody's kindly donated stereo. And after the second surprise of the morning - opening a cupboard to find it filled with crisps and chocolate, apparently to boost flagging energy levels later on in the week - I quickly came to the conclusion that maybe the rest of the course wouldn't be all that bad after all...

So with renewed enthusiasm, and all the reassurance five boxes of Wispa Golds can give, I found that I got into the swing of things remarkably quickly - although that is not to play down the problems of re-adjustment to a social situation utterly different from any I had found myself in before. Initially I was not entirely sure how to interact with some of the PHs without sounding utterly false or, worse still, patronising - an issue which, while appearing daunting on the first evening, I was glad to discover became noticeably less significant by the second day over a pint in the Westminster Arms.

I am also proud to identify myself as one of the first of last year's PHAB members to discover the pleasures of sunbathing in St James's Park in the afternoon, with a cold drink in one hand and a pack of playing cards in the other - a trend quickly picked up by practically the whole of the PHAB crowd, bar those who felt the lure of Oxford Street in the sun was just too strong to resist.

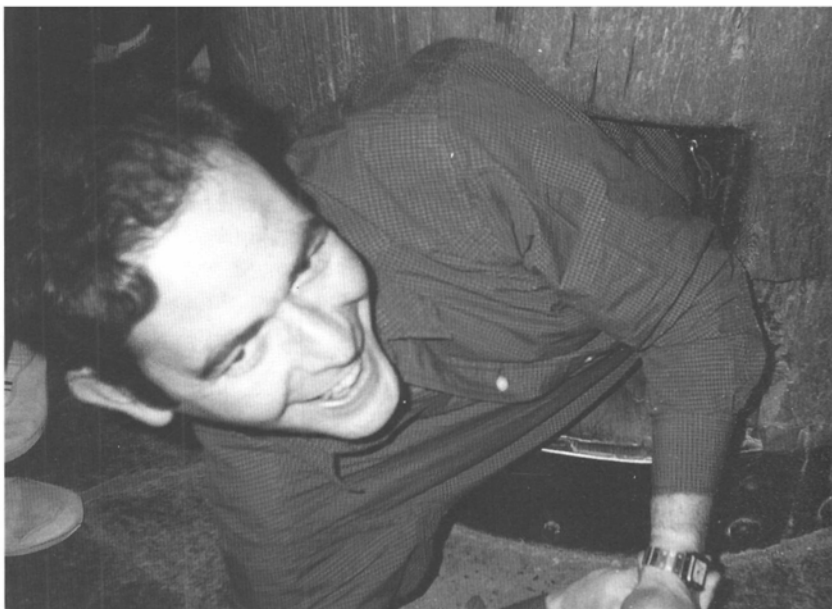
As for evening activities, they ranged from the relatively conventional to the distinctly bizarre - and I would be the first to admit that even I had second thoughts early on in the course, finding myself up School, on stage, with a huge snake wrapped around my neck... But as the week wore on, what originally seemed a little odd became just enjoyable, and by the final show (an Oscar-winning rendition of the Star Wars trilogy condensed into 15 minutes) the idea of 'Hannika' Solo and a video of our 'Special Effects' crew setting fire to model space ships all seemed perfectly normal. Equally imperceptibly, PHAB managed to transform itself from a

'worthwhile' experience before the summer really began, to one of the high points of a truly memorable holiday.

That is not to say it wasn't hard work, and after five days of carrying wheelchairs up and down College main staircase, and a frantic clean-up job on the final afternoon, nobody was denying that. But somehow, on a mixture of pure adrenaline and genuine community spirit and good humour, everybody emerged at the end relatively unscathed.

And as for this year's PHAB course? Even if it couldn't quite drag me away from a post A Level holiday in the Greek islands, to its credit it came admirably close...

Avye Leventis (Dryden's)



LITTLE COMMEN

Little Commem is invariably atmospheric. Guests are guided through the vast silence of a darkened Abbey to their seats in the Henry VII Lady Chapel by a line of junior College members whose angelic faces are lit by the flickering candles in their hands below. Supposedly the select few guests become transfixed by the recital of first Compline and then various prayers in Latin by the Scholars to commemorate the School's foundress - Elizabeth I.

For Keith Tompkins, however, the evening was marred by an event most unbecoming to this 'transcendental' experience. In the limited space surrounding Elizabeth I's tomb just off the Lady Chapel, all the guests are asked to press themselves up against the walls whilst the Scholars sprinkled amongst them recite their Latin verses in thanks to the Virgin Queen. Struck by a feeling of community which all the Scholars generate when singing the responses to the Cantors, Keith Tompkins began to let the Latin words absorb his total concentration. Astonished and amazed at the ceremony of the occasion, he suddenly realised that, straining in an effort to correctly pronounce the predictably quirky version of Latin which Westminster calls its own, the young Scholar standing immediately in front of him had unwittingly broken wind.

Alastair Sooke (College)

TRAVEL

GRANADA

The first thing that strikes you on arriving in Spain is how impotent you can be in the midst of a sea of Spaniards speaking all too often in a high speed mumble completely incomprehensible to the unprepared. This feeling is heightened when you are forced to negotiate the backstreets of a city which all seem uncannily similar to one another, with absolutely no notion of your bearings and only that inadequate asset called sense of direction.

Thus a group of Westminsterers found themselves in the city of Granada, set in the balmy South of Spain, in March 1998. On arrival we were all despatched to our respective families - the four of us squashed into the rear of our señora's car fully prepared for a long journey to the edge of the city, only to find we had gone around the absurd ring road and were only a few streets away from where we had begun. Certainly there were many differing experiences with the host families - never before had I seen or realised the previously unapparent versatility of tinned tomatoes!

Of course, part of the point of being there was the language and I'm sure our own mumblings were much enhanced rather more by the lessons - the teachers certainly enjoyed our jocular company. We also attended a class of *sevillanas* (Flamenco), a tradition that originates from this part of Spain, at the school - which turned out to be highly amusing. Diligent and committed as ever, it has to be reluctantly admitted, it was the girls who triumphed in tackling the complicated footwork employed in the dance, despite the encouragement from the sidelines!

There was plenty of time on this trip to explore and wander the streets of Granada, which has a distinctly Moorish air to it, with the old Arab quarter, the Albaicín, with its narrow cobbled streets, and the Alhambra fortress crowning the city. The exotic elegance of the Palace, to where we trudged on the first day, is a striking legacy of this strong element in Spanish culture brought to the country with the years of Moorish occupation which ended in 1492. The fortress boasts the 13th century military camp or Alcazaba, beautifully decorated palace courtyards and gardens of the Generalife. Not only did we become well acquainted with the café-dominated squares of Granada, where we spent many an hour chewing *churros y chocolate* when many a sane Spaniard had packed up and gone home for the afternoon, but also the varied nightlife including the Arab *teterias* (tea houses) - not to mention the interesting inhabitants - of the Albaicín. You could order anything from mint or mixed flower to aphrodisiac teas, the mention of which, perhaps disconcertingly, made the waitress turn away with a sly knowing smile.

We also took a trip down to the coast which was really well planned as here were these white-skinned British tourists on the beach with no sun, no Spaniards (always a bad sign!) and certainly no Costa Tropical! We enjoyed an amusing (if not professional) football match on a hard court, and some even braved it into the water - sane - but, alas, not a lot of bronze.

So it was that we made our way home armed with tinned squid, local *confiserie*, not to mention the huge, blue (albeit) Mexican hats!

Edward Randall (Rigaud's)

THE LYKE WAKE WALK

No tie in the history of the School can have attracted so much ridicule, incredulity and vented spleen as the lurid purple with cheerful coffin motif of the trophy of the Lyke Wake Walk. Of course, the sort of mind that is prepared to propel its suffering body across 42 miles (actually 49 due to a certain person's 'short cut') of Yorkshire bog, moor and miscellaneous livestock, will scarcely be troubled by the disapproval of the guardians of good taste and regulation uniform.

Nevertheless, this contemptuous dismissal is hardly the heroes' welcome that the blood spattered and exhausted Lyke Wake Walker expects on his return - and, all appearances to the contrary, he/she is human and verging on sane.

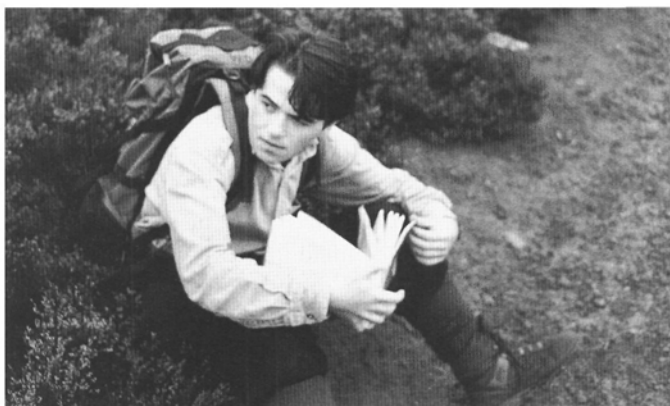
The following account has been dredged out of some of the farthest corners of the 'severe trauma' department of our memories, was collated under extreme duress, and we take absolutely no responsibility whatsoever for the seemingly wild and improbable allegations made therein.

'...after a cheery send-off from those members of staff happening to be travelling in the somewhat ill-fated minibus, we left behind that great and hallowed centre of civilisation, Osmotherly (public lavatories of an award-winning calibre, and an improbably crowded chip shop). Recovering our bearings after an early, unplanned detour 500 yards from the start, we returned to the cross-roads on the outskirts of the village, and took the other fork. The next few hours were filled with steady progress, diligent map-reading and ebullient shouts of support to the other groups who kept striding purposefully past us and into the distance. We checked our bearings by the light of a random telephone box, continued up the road, and started to climb...

Hills. One must ascend, and then descend, and then, all too frequently, one must ascend once more. Two hours of deeply worrying parrot-jokes later, we stumbled down a rock-laden precipice into the welcoming arms of Mark Tocknell. Never have six 'young people' been so glad to see such a benign, benevolent and generally father-like figure loom from the mists, bearing tea and the heartening reassurance that only 36 miles were left. Warned to 'keep moving or you'll lose body parts', the second section passed with remarkable speed. A large fraction of the group caught up on lost sleep, their legs still moving by instinct, whilst the others followed the dimly bobbing torches of the rowers jogging in front.

A splendid, rosy-fingered dawn heralded the start of a day of personally challenging circumstances and the speedy descent of those who stopped to admire it into the bog. The spreading light revealed the small mini-bus camp and the clear morning air carried the aroma of gently frying sausages across the marsh-filled valley that separated us from them. By the time we arrived, all the other groups had left, the tea was cold, and the sausages had congealed into almost College Hall standard black, formerly organic material.

It was a day of flat, featureless, desolate moor, rather reminiscent of how the surface of the earth might look the morning after the apocalypse. Swathes of anonymous heather closed in on all sides. Occasionally some exciting novelty would enter our fog-bound world - a cairn here, a standing



stone there, and on one very memorable occasion we could have sworn a grouse-butt drifted past us in the mist. Trigonometrical miscalculations aside, we sighted the remaining minibus through the mist, only to realise repeatedly that it was a large rock or sheep. Finally registering that large rocks generally don't wave cheese sandwiches, we identified Mark Tocknell. A short luncheon, and we were onto the last lap, feet throbbing limbs aching, post-prandial bursts of enthusiasm waning rapidly ... and the amazing restraint showed by the rest of the group on the observation by one member that 'we'd get there in nine hours if we walked fast'.

The combined sarcasm of geography, meteorology and the Ministry of Defence were much in evidence during those nine hours, as we came upon lively streams, banks of fog and large unidentified radio-communication devices. On one occasion the redoubtable Yorkshire locals proved their legendary hospitality by chasing one member of our party away with pointed sticks. Stumbling on into the ever-approaching dusk, both nature and humanity added the final ironic twist to our trek by the sudden appearance of a ravine and the fact that the radio-mast, which was supposed to be our guiding beacon during the last few kilometres, wasn't on. The Head Master, sallying forth from the dark with words of encouragement ten yards from the end, spurred us onwards, collapsing over the finishing line into the suddenly immensely appealing interior of the school minibus, where we eased off our boots only to discover that large amounts of our feet had become inseparable from our socks...

Thus ended the Lyke Wake Walk. Never has the well-known quote, 'I am going for a short walk and may be some time' rung truer.

Catherine Totty (Purcell's)

RUSSIAN HISTORY TRIP

March 1998

The Tsar Cannon, kept in the Kremlin, is a distinctively Russian firearm; the largest cannon in the world, it has never been fired. Its size is, nevertheless, a source of pride. Like the Tsar Bell which was so large that it cracked when first rung, like the dome of St Izaak's Cathedral which is so cavernous that the paint is flaked from the roof by its own internal weather systems, like even the flea markets, which can sustain their own communities with all the essentials of human existence, the cannon is undeniably big. Indeed, the fleas themselves are of no mean size: to judge by their own nutritional requirements they must have been large enough

themselves to provide a nourishing meal, even an appetising one to those otherwise dependant upon hotel Beetroot Special.

But such discoveries of the grandeur of Russia were still before us when we arrived at Moscow Airport to be met by our guide, the imaginatively named Natasha. The name, old Russian veterans enlightened the rest of us, is rivalled only by Olga for its popularity among Russian guides. Over the next few days, we were to come to know well her devotion to the official itinerary ('your voucher'), her evident nostalgia for the Soviet era, when 'the voucher' was no doubt legally enforceable, and her thus rather incongruous enthusiasm for the purchase of 'extras' from her. These extras, as we discovered, varied from the ridiculous (although, in fairness, it was decided that the performing goats at the Moscow State Circus were lost on us without a translation), to the sublime; the Stanislavsky Ballet's story of boy-meets-swan was, in fact, sublime beyond the belief of many.

According to our voucher, meanwhile, we paid a visit to Lenin, shuffling around the body with the reverent haste which the numerous guards, still in Red Army uniforms, thought appropriate. Outside, we were sold army surplus hats by street-corner capitalists, which were, as they assured us aggressively, as comfortably warm as they were reasonably priced. The cold outweighed our pride and, looking like a real group of western tourists, we were to incur the very evident disapproval of the army battalion, also Red Army uniformed, who left Moscow from the platform opposite our own in Leningrad Station. Intimidated but unbowed, we travelled to St Petersburg in safety, the night train protecting us, if not from the lice, from the ravenous wolves, which, according to some, stalk the moonlit cabbage fields.

To the surprise of many, and the impoverishment of those who had made rash bets with old Russian veterans, the St Petersburg guide was, in fact, called Olga. The encyclopaedic knowledge of the statistics of the city, the quiet contempt for her boorish charges, and the mysterious 'technical stops' at most of the major tourist shops all marked her out as a true professional of her trade.

St Petersburg was universally liked: museums and palaces, whatever they contained, always contained the biggest and best of it; 'extras', including a show of Kazak dancing, the Russian answer to Morris Men, were quite spectacularly silly; refreshments were cheap. An efficient underground, driving Northern Line users to intense envy, gave us comparative freedom of movement, carrying those interested in their stomachs to the food markets and those otherwise interested on pilgrimage to the site of Rasputin's murder. By the time of our departure, the enormous iced fairy cake of the summer palace had fully sated the one group, and the unpleasantness of St Peter's Prison the other. Even the Tsars' political gaol, however, could not inspire a sombre mood for long, when locals were sunbathing nude on the frozen ice of the frozen river outside.

On the passing of the days, suffice it to say that a monarchy of absurd wealth and a government not averse to looting art have left sights that were worth seeing; on the passing of the evenings, that a judicious silence shall be maintained; and on the return home, that it came before we, if not our wallets, were ready. Our deep appreciation to Jonny White, who masterminded the trip, and Brian Smith, his accomplice.

Thomas Munby (Milne's)

MISCELLANEOUS

WORK EXPERIENCE

The Cabinet Office

When, on Wednesday 25 March, I first entered the Cabinet Office, I had no idea what to expect. No one I had asked knew what went on behind the doors of 70 Whitehall. Thus, having been abandoned by my mother in favour of the gym, I approached the building with a combination of trepidation and importance, the latter rapidly dispelled as soon as I entered and came into contact with 'Security.'

My name is Alex de Jonquières. I have been told by many people that it is a wonderful name, but they have obviously never tried getting it understood, especially through a thick sheet of bullet-proof glass. The name of the person I should ask for was Geoffrey Adams. My brother had been shocked when he heard that I was doing work experience with the leader of Sinn Féin, and I had dreamed about being approached by a bearded Irishman after having asked for the wrong guy. Having been reduced to written communication, however, I eventually justified my presence, and was grudgingly accepted into the lobby and thereby passed this, the first test of my civil service career.

From then on life improved, in fact, it improved to such a point that instead of 'work experience, I now believe I could describe my time there as simply 'experience.' From the intensely warm welcome from Geoffrey Adams (who, as far as I know has not a trace of Irish blood in him) to when I yelled my name at Security for the last time, I was welcomed and guided through every section of the building, passing freely by signs screaming KEEP OUT, and reading documents with PRIVATE DO NOT READ scrawled across the top. I was shown round the offices of such publicly renowned and loved figures as David Clark (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) and Peter Mandelson.

I truly enjoyed my brief experience of the Civil Service and the inner workings of government, and would leap at the chance to repeat it. One thing I recommend, however is that all Civil Servants return briefly to school every year. Having heard complaints about the loos, the cafeteria and the technological capability of their office, I investigated all three, and all I can do is invite them to visit Westminster School - they don't know how lucky they are.

Alex de Jonquières (Rigaud's)

WHIZZ-KIDS IN GRANT'S

In the second half of the Play Term 1997, the idea of a Grant's House Charity Fund was suggested by Caroline Edwards, wife of David Edwards, the Housemaster. It was taken up with great alacrity by the House and a committee formed, ably chaired by the Head of House, Peter Cole and Edwin Cook, Head of Hall, became Treasurer. Other particularly active members were Mark Lanyon, Ben Jarman, Tom Browne and Anthony Aiken in the Sixth Form, and Jonathan Randall and George Bitar in the Lower Shell. The Fifth Form proved extremely good at stuffing envelopes!

A House Christmas Card was designed by Will Stevens, and sold to parents and old Grantites, and almost the entire House went singing in the local area. Their musical talents were hugely appreciated by most local residents, but sadly failed to impress the inhabitants of Vincent Square (now voted the meanest in Westminster), or Scotland Yard!

Tom Gentleman had the brilliant idea of hosting a black tie dinner for Grant's parents. Gardner Merchant generously provided the food at cost. Sue Balding, the Grant's Matron, helped supervise a team of amazingly efficient waiters/waitresses from the Remove, coached by Peter Cole's elder brother. Wonderful musical interludes were provided by Edwin Cook, John Hampton and Olivia Tebbutt.

In three weeks, Grant's raised £2,500 for Whizz-Kids, a local charity raising money for mobility-impaired children. This was enough to buy a specially adapted wheelchair for Michelle, a sixteen year old girl with cerebral palsy.



Peter Cole presents a cheque to Anna Roche of Whizz-Kids. Tom Browne, Anthony Aiken and Mark Lanyon look on.

Photo by Ben Jarman.



Nadia Rajan (RR 1993-1995)

Born 3 April 1977

Died 5 December 1997

In Loving Memory



M.H. MARSH
1864

GLEGGE
1817

L.M. STONE
G. LAVIE
1854

H.M. STONE
1854

H.M. STONE
1854

P. R. IN
R. G. S.

M. M.

T. H.

N. A.

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