

THE VISOR



**MAGAZINE OF
BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE**

EASTER, 1963.

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J. A. McLaughlin.

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Assistant Scoutmasters:

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D. A. Jones.

R. C. Brookes.

P. E. Ogden.

Troop Leader: D. L. Thorn.

Patrol Leaders:

P. Watson.

M. J. Shaw.

P. Vaughan.

J. C. Reid.

S. Dawson.

Senior Scout Leader: J. Clarke.

SCHOOL CALENDAR.

Spring Term ends	April 10th
Summer Term begins	April 29th
Half Term	May 31st to June 5th
"A" Level begins	June 10th
"O" Level begins (written exams)	June 17th
School examinations begin	June 27th
Summer Term ends	July 19th
Autumn Term begins	September 2nd

EDITORIAL.

"A cold coming we had of it.

Just the worst time of the year

For a journey

The very dead of winter."

THESE sentiments of T. S. Eliot's *Magi* were also the sentiments of the Editor when he came as a complete new-comer to Birkenhead in January. But in spite of the rigours of a record-breaking winter, the spiritual welcome at the B.I. has been warm enough. There is a friendly spirit in the School which counts for much and which is lacking in very many schools. The reason for this may be that it is a small school but certainly the personal relationships among the boys, especially between the older and the younger ones is good and this is one of the valuable characteristics of the best English Grammar Schools.

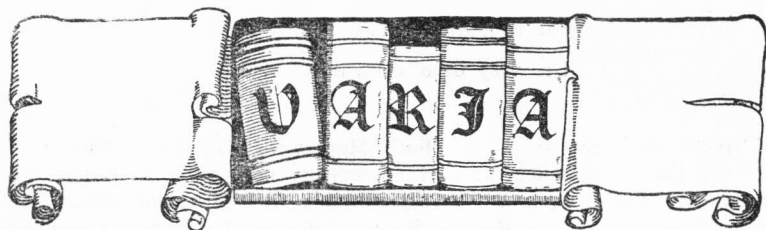
The prospect of editing a school magazine is a daunting one, especially when the school is seventy-four years old, and for this edition at least there has been a policy of no change even though this means that the magazine is duller than it ought to be. One cannot become part of a tradition in a few weeks; it takes time to feel one's feet. Of course, there has been no avalanche of articles (there probably never is, for a school magazine) but an interesting characteristic of much that has been written—and of what has been rejected—is its freshness and vigour, marred unfortunately by its being undisciplined. In this age of journalism, it would seem that the traditional school magazine is too staid and restricted an outlet for what boys want to write and some way must be found to absorb the considerable amount of ephemeral, slight and topical writing which boys can produce. For the present, this volume is just a slim and "typical school mag." For its shortcomings we apologise but "stay with us" and we promise something better next time.

STAFF NOTES.

THIS term we welcomed to the Staff Room Mr. H. L. Gray, the Senior English Master, and Mr. S. B. Pierce, the Senior Languages Master.

Mr. Gray graduated at Manchester University and has taught at Stretford Grammar School and Urmston Grammar School, while Mr. Pierce graduated at Oxford University and came to Birkenhead via Oswestry High School for Boys, an establishment well known to many Old Instonians as their enforced home during the early period of the last war.

It is particularly pleasing to record that both gentlemen have joined the post prandial coterie, the Times crossword school. With this reinforcement and regular practice, the team should soon be achieving the success which has been eluding it of late.



THE School is to hold an Easter Fair on Saturday afternoon, 6th April, in order to raise funds to purchase a trampoline. The Fair will be opened by the Mayor of Birkenhead (Councillor J. Kennedy, J.P.) at 2 p.m. and will include a fully operational amateur radio station and a judo exhibition.

In order to help the fund, the prefects have been holding record sessions for the School every Friday lunch time this term while members of the Sixth form have been serving tea in the Music Room to those who have stayed to dinner.

* * * *

On Thursday, 14th February, members of the Fifth and Sixth forms were able to see a series of R.A.F. films in the Physics Laboratory. This included films depicting life at Cranwell, the R.A.F. college, the flying of the Javelin fighter, the Hunter aerobatic team and the mountain rescue unit.

* * * *

Members of the Upper and Lower Sixth forms visited the mechanical engineering laboratories of Liverpool University on Wednesday afternoon, 20th March.

* * * *

Two parents evenings have been held this term, one for the Fourth forms and one for the Third forms.

* * * *

We were delighted at half term to receive from Mr. W. L. Cottier, an Old Instonian who lives in Wolverhampton, a newspaper cutting in connection with the hundredth birthday of Mr. J. H. Crofts of Church Stretton.

"A former headmaster of Whitchurch Grammar School, Mr. Crofts is thought to be the oldest graduate of Cambridge University. He was at Corpus Christi College in 1882 and after three years obtained his B.A. degree. In 1891 he obtained his M.A. degree and later the B.A. and B.Sc. degrees of London University.

He was second master at Birkenhead Institute from 1889 to 1893 and assistant master at Nottingham High School until 1903, when he went to Whitchurch. He remained there as headmaster until he retired in 1926."

Mr. Crofts thus serves as a link with Birkenhead Institute in its earliest years and can be seen on a photograph of the boys and staff, together with Mr. George Atkin, which was taken shortly, after the school opened. A telegram was sent to Mr. Crofts congratulating him on his anniversary.

* * * *

Visor congratulates C. D. Gracey Esq., J.P., an Old Instonian who has recently been appointed secretary to the State Assurance Company.

* * * *

In the poster competition held in connection with the Easter Fair, the first prize was awarded to Holt of 5A. Other prizes were awarded to Shaw of 3Bx, Walton of 3By, and McBride of 5B.

* * * *

It is hoped to produce one or two One-Act Plays next term under the direction of Mr. Pierce and Mr. Gray. It is rumoured that the Sixth form may be persuaded to produce a Revue.

VALETE.

Adv. Evans, A. F.

L6th. Duncan, I. M.; Edbrooke, P.A.

5B. Jacobs, M. A.; Bunbury, P.; Fogg, P.; Maskrey, D.E.

SPEECH NIGHT.

SPEECH NIGHT was an agreeable occasion and rewarding enough to those who braved the blizzard for the reasonably warm hall of the Technical College.

It is the boys who are on show on this occasion, not the parents or teachers, and they showed up pretty well—they were neat and tidy, and well-behaved. Boys' singing is always a delight and the Choir sang well but this cannot be said for the singing of the whole school, because the older boys seemed to leave the singing of Non Nobis Domine to the junior boys.

It was good to hear the Headmaster express his faith in the younger generation because only too many Heads take Speech Night as an opportunity to shie at the currently popular Aunt Sallies of watching television, going to Youth Clubs, and bad manners.

Professor Goodwin, who presented the prizes, is an Old Boy of the School and he spoke well about our need to help those much less fortunate than ourselves who live on the borderline of starvation. He is an agricultural chemist and his words carried weight.

PRIZES, CERTIFICATES and TROPHIES.

JOINT MATRICULATION BOARD.

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION, 1962.

AT ADVANCED LEVEL—

Form Upper VI.

Davies, A. Mathematics, Physics.
Edwards, D. G. Mathematics, Physics.
Fraser, J. S. History.
Glynn, S. J. General Studies, English, French.
Goodwin, D. A. General Studies.
Gregory, G. O. General Studies (Distinction), French (Distinction),
Geography.
Gurden, J. R. M. Geography.
Hansen, C. Mathematics.
Harding, K. C. General Studies, English, History, French.
Lanigan, M. J. History, French.
Oxton, J. E. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry.
Rushton, M. Chemistry.
Steedman, A. English, History.
Tooley, P. W. General Studies, English, French.
Williams, J. A. G. English, History, Art.
Wood, B. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry.

AT ORDINARY LEVEL—

Adamson, J. S.; Anders, K.; Archard, A. J. F.; Armstrong, I. G.;
Birchall, D. D.; Blair, A.; Blythe, W. K.; Campbell-Kelly, M.;
Case, E. R.; Cowderoy, D. W.; Davies, D. J.; Davies, N.; Dixon, R. N.;
Dodd, R. C.; Duncan, I. M.; Dunne, A. P.; Edbrooke, P. A.;
Evans, E. F.; Fitch, E.; Gethin, A.; Gray, M. N.; Green, F. W.;
Hamlet, J.; Hart, J. D.; Henderson, G. L.; Hodgson, G. W.;
Hodgson, T. V.; Hollaseter, G. M.; Hughes, D.; Jacobs, M. A.;
Johnson, J. T.; Jones, M. G.; Kellett, J. F.; Landsberg, T. S.;
Lewis, R.; Llewellyn, R. G.; McKittrick, L. R.; McLaren, D. P.;
McManus, T. J.; Maskrey, D. E.; Millardship, D. H.; Murray, B. J.;
Parry, D. W.; Pulford, M. C.; Quail, R. F.; Raba, A.; Randles, J. W.;
Ratcliff, D. R.; Smith, L. K.; Stewart, G. W.; Thornton, C. J.;
Thurgill, A. R.; Wade, W. J.; Walker, R. W.; Waters, J.; Willan, A. K.;
Wilson, A. R.; Winder, M. W.; Yates, L. E.

Henry Tate (School) Scholarships

Douglas, R. J.; Fox, J. R.; Halligan, D. L.; Woodfine, E. T.

Henry Tate (University) Scholarships

Davies, A.; Glynn, S. J.; Gregory, G. O.; Wood, B.

Headmaster's Initiative and Endurance Test

Senior—Davies, J. D.; Swift, T. P.

Junior—McNulty, M. F.; Pye, E. L.

**Price Davies Scholarship, value £40 per annum, to University College of
North Wales, Bangor**

Gregory, G. O.

PRIZE LIST, 1961-62.

First Forms—

Leeming, G. R.; Williams, M.; Whitehead, P. R.; Hall, P. W.

Second Forms—

Watson, P.; Vaughan, P.; Coey, B. G.; Reid, J. C.

Third Forms—

Elliott, A. J.; Hayes, A. E.; Shaw, W. K.; Hayman, M. L.

Fourth Forms—

White, M. G.; Newbold, G.; Pye, E. L.; Walker, B. W.

Fifth Forms—

Campbell-Kelly, M.; Duncan, I. M.; Johnson, J. T.; Kellett, J. F.;
Llewellyn, R. G.; Pulford, M. C.; Ratcliff, D. R.; Thornton, C. J.

Lower Sixth—Subject Prizes—

English and French—Halligan, D. L.

History and Geography—Woodfine, E. T.

Mathematics and Chemistry—Douglas, R. J.

Physics—Fox, J. R.

Upper Sixth—Special Prizes—

The Forshaw Memorial Prize for Art—Williams, J. A. G.

The Old Boys' Memorial Prize—Steedman, A.

Connacher Memorial Prize for English—Tooley, P. W.

"J. E. Allison" Prize for Geography—Gregory, G. O.

The George Holt Prizes—Languages—Gregory, G. O.

Science—Wood, B.

Mathematics—Davies, A.

Special Prize for Chemistry—Rushton, M.

Special Prize for Good "A" Level Certificate—Harding, K. C.

Special Prize for Good "A" Level Certificate—Oxton, J. E.

Headmaster's Prize for special service to the school—Steedman, A.

Wayford Willmer Prize—Lanigan, M. J.

SPORTS—

Victor Ludorum—Fraser, J. S.

Silver Cup for Games—(Senior) Steedman, A.;

(Junior) Howarth, A. J.

House Trophies—Athletics—Westminster.

Cricket—Westminster.

Chess—Westminster.

Cross Country—Senior—Westminster.

Senior Champion—Fraser, J. S.

Intermediate—Tate.

Inter. Champ.—Keating, A. G.

Junior—Westminster.

Jun. Champ.—Williams, J. H.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Cup for Rugby
Football—Westminster.

His Majesty King George VI Coronation Cup—Westminster.

(Awarded to the Champion House for the year)

ENTRANTS TO UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING COLLEGES.

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A. Steedman.

WELSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, CARDIFF —

J. A. G. Williams.

THE PREFECTS AT THE BIRKENHEAD INTITUTE SCHOOL.

THE Prefects of the B.I.S.

Are brainy almost to excess,
And, in the zeal for mathematics,
Perform such mental acrobatics
That one must ask, in some alarm,
May not these efforts do them harm.
Deplorable would be their fate
If, in the heat of some debate,
Their vast, but finely-tempered, brains
Gave way beneath these heavy strains,
And helster-skelter, with refrain,
They poured out into Whetstone Lane
Waving their arms in frenzied glee,
Muttering dreadful formulae
And shouting to the people there
"I am a circle, you're a square!"

D. J. STEELS, 5A.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

THE HOVER COACH.

A MASSIVE structure blue and white
Hovering over the ground in flight,
Taking the sea in plumes of white,
Causing the spray to dart in flight,
Whilst cruising over the creamy white.

The vanes erect, guiding the flight.
The blades spinning, bright and white.
The engines' roaring flight,
On upright tripods sparkling white.
Whilst hovering ever in level flight.

Spectators waving 'kerchiefs white.
Passengers answering whilst in flight.
As into sight hovers the blue and white
Craft, rests from its flight
On salt rimmed concrete, sparkling white.
Each person with his face a-light,
Descends from this pioneering flight.

W. J. GREGORY, 5A.

WESTERNERS — FACT AND FICTION.

WHAT are cowboys? According to the television and films there is a strict division of western population; the bad men, in the form of melodramatic villains, and the lawmen, in the form of tall dark and handsome marshals who always do things in a predictable way and who, each week, gain a poetic revenge against some sharp-shooting, undisciplined bandit.

In fact this is absolutely nonsensical, for at that time the criminals formed .019% of the population, and numbered to approximately six hundred.

Another thing that is suggested is that the days of the early westerner were spent entirely in pleasure; in the town saloon with a beautiful young lady, drinking and gambling all the time. This is another distorted fact, the population of pioneers was extremely hard working, who spent most of their time building up railways and communications.

In every western programme there is a high ratio of violence; people get shot in the streets, and of course there is the old favourite, the fight in the saloon. Almost every western programme televised contains a saloon brawl. Nowadays, when asked of the early West, we think of a lawless society, an extremely efficient organisation of crime as against a law system which devolves upon a number of gifted individuals. This so called "rip-roaring west" lasted for only ten years, and the element that was publicised was most insignificant. The only reason it is popular is because it has been proved that evil is more interesting than virtue.

I would now like to take the legends of Wyatt Earp, Billy the Kid and Buffalo Bill, in that order, and discuss the truth of their legends.

Wyatt Earp was, according to television, a respected lawman, made famous by his Buntline Specials, who was concerned in the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral. There, he and his three brothers fought a ruthless family who were consistently breaking the law, and won, to become acclaimed as heroes throughout the land. In reality, Wyatt Earp was a dangerous criminal who used his badge to murder people out of revenge, for he had many personal vendettas. The infamous gunfight at the O.K. Corral was, in reality, an ambush against a local family by Earp and his brothers. The family was killed out of sheer revenge, and the only injury sustained by the Earp family was a slight flesh wound to one of Earp's brothers. This incident has been dramatised in Western literature but was in reality a cold blooded murder.

Billy the Kid was not, as we are led to believe, a young, valiant hero but a complete embodiment of tyranny and cowardice, a personification of all that is evil and black. He was a juvenile delinquent at 16 and because of his psycnopathic tendencies was shot by the law at the age of twenty-one.

Buffalo Bill was another cowboy who was responsible for distorting the true facts about the era I am discussing. He tried to build up the legend of the west with his touring company.

Out of a decade of western history which produced a number of ruthless criminals the era has, because of commercial interests, been built up into an extremely distorted picture. I believe now that even the Chinese are making Westerns, and so I suppose now that we shall see such programmes as "The Pekin Kid". The real incidents in American History, like Custer's Last Stand, have been magnified out of all proportion. Perhaps the Americans exaggerate because they have such a short history relative to other countries. I do not know.

R. NETHERCOTT, 4B.

THE WATERFALL.

CASCADING waterfall, crystal clear,
Rushing down towards the mere
Surging on, its path it weaves,
Over tree stumps and old, dead leaves.
Creshing, thundering evermore.
On the mighty waters pour,

Foaming bubbling, swirling round,
On and on the waters pound.
From the zenith down they flow,
To the black, sharp rock below
Over which the great waves break,
To the calmness of the lake.

L. J. JOHNSON, 3Bx.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

THE Lighthouse,
Tall and White,
With scanning beams of light,
That keep the ships' hulls off the rocks,
And sees them safely to the docks.

Shining, shining, shining out,
In sailors' hearts there is no doubt
That the bright beams of gleaming light
Will never cease through all the night.

There it stands, just past the cave,
Never cringing from the wave
That crashes on the craggy shore,
Bringing seaweed and pebbles galore.

The men in that towering house of light,
Hardly sleep through all the night,
For if the light should flicker out
Ships would be wrecked without a doubt.

TREVOR GRIFFITHS, 3Bx.

THE ALLEY-CAT.

SEATED on a back-yard wall,
Wailing out his hideous call,—
Suffer good people to sleep no more —
Did you not know, he was drowned in the thaw?

His tabby hide, so stained and scarred,
His tattered, red collar which he would not discard
No more will you see, nor his pearly white teeth;
No more will you cry out, "Stop, you thief!"

The black, damp alleys, his home so sure,
Against intruders his cry "To War!",
Amongst the garbage, amidst the bins,
These are the scenes of his most famous wins.

But now he is gone, but his ghost still remains,
Haunting the bins, haunting the drains.
If you are lucky, his spirit you might see,
Sitting on the wall, by the old entry.

MICHAEL SHAW, 3Bx.

A SEA ADVENTURE.

THE stately clipper, "Queen of Sheba", lay at harbour on the small island of Tago. The exotic fragrance and scenery were enhanced by the bright, clear weather. The palm trees rose from the sand, their beauty by no means nullified by the almost stifling heat. The musical splendour of the birds came sweetly and clearly over the sea, somnolence prevailing in the small harbour. The small craft rocked majestically in the swell, riding her sea-anchor easily. An air of expectancy hung over the craft, as a cloud over the earth.

At precisely twelve noon the clipper, well handled by the practised, boisterous crew slid across the waves and gently glissaded from the harbour. At a distance of several miles, the prim, scrupulously cleaned sails were furled and the heavy anchor weighed. Aqualungs and skin suits etc. were produced and swiftly donned, a series of splashes ensued.

Beneath the surface of the sea they had entered another realm, the realm of Neptune, stone-fish and other mysterious animals abounding. The notable activity of the coral polyps was evident in every direction. The weird and excitingly coloured coral is made by these creatures, their activity exciting, as they are microscopic in size. At a little distance lurked several tiger sharks. One of the divers killed a large fish and they were galvanised into action.

Instinct made one of the divers turn; fear and surprise were mirrored on his face in an instant. He alerted the others and they all tore at small waterproof bags on their ankles; these bags contained shark-repellent. On normal sharks under normal conditions, it may work, but on these blood-crazed beasts it had no effect. Peter, leader of the divers, surveyed the scene with growing concern. He dived to one side as a voracious beast lunged at him, driving his knife into its side. He was amazed by the facility with which he missed a jagged gash.

Suddenly a disturbance in the water made him look up. His mouth widened to a grin, until water began to enter his mouth! Several dark-skinned men caused this hapless mirth, each carrying a sturdy spear. The spirits of the party soared immediately and the sharks disappeared with astonishing speed. Nobody was seriously injured although cuts and gashes were plentiful.

On the deck of the ship they had a good laugh about it, but at the same time they vowed to go prepared next time.

M. BRADLEY, 4B

SPRING.

THE Apple trees with rich white bloom,
The sweetly smelling heathland broom.
The Daffodil with golden horn,
The Frisky lamb now newly born.
Birds' voices in the treetops ring,
Surely 'tis a sign of spring.

The lapwing in the ploughed land curling
The cuckoo from the wood is whirling
The squirrel comes from hibernation
From branch to branch jumps in elation
The nightingale and robin sing
Surely 'tis a sign of spring.

The noisy rook with raucous cry,
Pitch, against the pale blue sky.
The moorhen with its white horse-shoe tail
Through the weed beds leaves its trail,
Then fluttering it takes to wing,
Surely 'tis a sign of spring.

Snowdrops and golden daffodils
Dotted o'er the vales and hills,
Bluebells in their woody glens,
Yellow Flag among the fens,
Busy bees with buzzing wing,
Surely 'tis a sign of Spring.

A. ROBERTS 3Bx

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SMOKING.

SMOKING began in this country when Sir Walter Raleigh stepped ashore in the late sixteenth century and lit his pipe. At once a well-meaning neighbour threw a bucket of water over the gallant knight, thinking him to be on fire. This did not deter Raleigh who promptly filled his pipe again. This act was the start of the habit which has led to thousands of deaths.

Tobacco used for smoking comes from the dried and "cured" leaves of the plant "*Nicotiana tabacum*", which, although native to America, now is grown in many semi-tropical and tropical countries, so great is the demand.

That tobacco is the sole cause of cancer is a fallacy. Tobacco acts as a catalyst which speeds up and encourages the growth of cancer cells. In Jersey, cigarettes are cheap. In Jersey, the cancer rate is the highest in the world. A comparison can be drawn between a car and the lungs. If it was only possible to have one car to last a lifetime, would a person put sand into its bearings? The answer is, of course, no. Yet, although the lungs we possess cannot be replaced and must last all our lives, many people fill them with deadly smoke which irritates their delicate tracery just as sand in car bearings. If a person had a sore on his arm and rubbed it continuously it would not heal and, if left unprotected, would become infected. Thus, in the same way, when a person smokes, the way is made clear for germs and infection to enter and breed in the lungs.

The young person is led to believe that smoking is beneficial and often can be heard saying such things as, "Everybody does it, why shouldn't I? There's a risk in crossing the road so why worry about a few fags?" The people who do not appear to suffer from smoking are, taking things to the extreme, murderers in that they push others along the road to ill-health and death.

What is this cancer that causes men and women in their prime to become ill and die agonising deaths by coughing away their lives? What is this cancer which **will** kill over nineteen thousand British men and women this year? It is a horrible, formless mass of primitive cells, a fungus-like mass which invades healthy organs and destroys them. Strength and vitality are drained from the body and intense agony is caused. To die from cancer is like being eaten alive. Modern surgery can alleviate the pain a little but cannot prevent death. Deaths from heart disease and other illnesses are far more common is smokers because the nicotinic poison affects the whole body. Let's face it, smoking is to an adult as a dummy is to a child.

When the Royal College of Physicians published their report "Smoking and Health" a year ago, tobacco shares fell by three shillings and retail sales fell by as much as twenty per cent. But the scare did not last long and after one month cigarette sales were back to normal. However; the sale of plain cigarettes fell considerably while the sale of cigars and tipped cigarettes boomed. In 1962, the total number of cigarettes sold was over 110,000,000,000 and cigars 400,000,000, equivalent to 1,000 people each smoking 120 cigarettes or cigars per second.

Smoking is a bad habit that once started cannot be stopped without much difficulty and expense. It is a slow painful way to suicidal death and yet so many people enjoy indulging in it. Why? They think it calms the nerves: it does but it also dulls the brain and breeds infection in the lungs. Yet cigarettes are still smoked increasingly and always will be until something else, perhaps the tranquilliser tablet, takes over the role of "nerve-calmers."

G. NEWBOLD, 5A.

ON FORM.

A thousand chop sticks in Tientsin,
A thousand cranes all picking up tin,
A thousand devils wallowing in sin,
Don't equal 5A at making a din.

D. J. STEELS, 5*

BEAT POEMS.

THE following short poems best reflect the thinking and feeling of the Beat Generation.

Poem A*

Ugh
Ooh - h - h - h - h,
Ee - e - e - e,
Ow - w - w - w,
Eh - h - h - h - h,
Oy - y - y - y.

This poem expresses all the sounds of pain uttered by mankind since the beginning of time.

Poem B.

I went out.
Got some beer,
Came right back,
And, man —
I went to bed.

This poem represents the futile striving and sameness of man's day to day meagre existence.

Poem C.

Howl!
Yell!
Scream!
Rant!
Rave!
Shout!
Rebel!
Attack!
Howl!

This poem brilliantly captures the warm, lyric thinking that reflects the spirit of the Beat Generation.

Poem D.

Go
Go Go
Go Go Go
Go Go Go Go
Go Go Go
Go Go
Go

This symbolic study of movement completely captures the dynamic pace of modern living.

Poem D.

! / ? @ ‡ & * ¶
@ ‡ \$ * / ? ¶ !
! / ? @ ‡ 4 * ¶
@ ‡ \$ * / / ? ¶

This poem successfully communicates the release of hostility in beautifully, lyric graphic terms.

And here endeth the lesson.

* As the names of all poets are being with-held pending their release the poems will be referred to by letters.

P. L. SCOFFIELD, 4A.

IS THIS HOW LIFE BEGAN?

WE all know that all living things are made from cells—tiny globules of cloudy jelly which in their thousands and millions make up the bodies of human beings, insects and plants. We also know that any two cells were once the two halves of one cell. Cells reproduce themselves by splitting into two. These two cells each split again into two, making four new cells, and so on. Obviously, say the scientists, all the cells at present existing in all the living things of the Earth must have come from just a few cells sometime back in the far distant past. But where did these first few cells come from?

Just ten years ago a brilliant American biologist named Dr. Miller performed an exciting experiment. Dr. Miller worked on the theory that many millions of years ago the Earth was a very different place from what it is today. No living thing grew on the wastes nor swam in the turbulent oceans. Torrential rains fell continuously and violent lightning storms raged. The atmosphere consisted of the stifling fumes of ammonia and a marsh gas called methane. Now Dr. Miller knew that marsh gas and ammonia, mixed with water vapour, contain atoms of carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen and oxygen. He also knew that these four kinds of atoms make up the bulk of all living cells today.

But how did it happen? There must have been energy of some kind, thought Dr. Miller. Perhaps the energy came from lightning! So Dr. Miller got to work. He mixed together ammonia, methane and water vapour in a large glass bottle. He sealed into the glass walls of the bottle two metal wires. He connected the wires to a source of high voltage electricity so that a spark passed through the mixture of gases. For a whole week Dr. Miller kept sparks passing through the bottle. At the end of the week he noticed some drops of strange liquid on the walls of the bottle. He hastily analysed them and to his surprise found traces of chemicals called amino acids. There are the chemicals which go to make proteins, which are part of all living cells.

Dr. Miller tried his experiment again and again. He used different sizes of bottles, he used different proportions of gases in the mixture. He let the sparks pass for different lengths of time. Yet in spite of all the changes he made, he always ended up with samples of amino acids. Today scientists have analysed most of the important proteins occurring in living cells. They have found they contain just the amino acids that Dr. Miller's experiment produced.

A. J. ELLIOTT, 4A.

BIRD-WATCHING AS A HOBBY.

THERE are not many sports or hobbies which combine an interesting pastime with a healthy outdoor life; bird-watching is one of few.

As man makes progress, so the birds go rarer and rarer until extinct. The Red or Welsh Kite for example, which was once common all over the British Isles, is now on the verge of extinction and is confined to a few hill districts of Central Wales. It was persecuted by farmers and its nests robbed by egg-collectors until there were only about three pairs left. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (R.S.P.B.) and other ornithological societies then started to protect it. Myxomatosis then spread among the rabbits, the Welsh Kite's chief food; this reduced their numbers greatly. Then came the bad winter of 1947; Carrion Crows and high winds all took their toll, and today there are still only twelve pairs of Welsh Kites left.

Until recently, all hawks except the Sparrowhawk were protected; now every hawk is protected, but still game keepers shoot every hawk they see including the comparatively harmless Kestrel.

Falcons were always shot in the war for fear of their killing Carrier Pigeons with valuable messages, now falcons are used on airstrips to clear the runways of birds which could cause a plane to crash by being sucked into the propellers; this happened with starlings on an American airliner and about sixty three lives were lost.

Recently six birds were crossed off the official British Bird list; these are known as the "Hastings Rarities".

This winter has been as bad as that of 1947 in some places, but in Cheshire it has not been too bad, with the result that winter migrants from Scandinavia, the Redwing and Fieldfare, have been abundant in the North West of Cheshire and in fact over most of Cheshire. The first Redwing that I saw was in Clatterbridge by a stream near the hospital. I would have passed it off as a Song Thrush but for the creamy white eyestripes above and below the eyes. The Fieldfares that I have seen have been concentrated around the Storeton area; these birds look like Mistle Thrushes with grey heads and rumps.

Last year my friend and I found a Herring gull transfixed to a barbed wire fence. It was dead but I climbed up and took it off the fence. On its leg was an aluminium clasp ring with an address and a number on it. We sent the ring to the address given and we later received a reply showing some useful data, such as the ringer and place ringed, and the date when it was ringed.

Bird-ringing is a study technique which demands certain skills in the art of catching and handling live birds, and the ability to identify a wide range of species. For these reasons standards of entry into the ringing scheme are necessarily high. The rings are in eleven sizes and are issued in packets of fifty.

The age-old sport of falconry, too, is now making a revival, and full details can be obtained from:— Mr. M. H. Woodford, Esq., Summer Lodge, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset.

The secretary, Mr. Woodford has published a book which he compiled. It is full of invaluable information for those who are interested in the sport. It deals with the hawks, diseases and method of training different falcons. The book is called "A Manual of Falconry", and is a bargain at 31s. 6d., including postage.

K. CALLISTER, 4B.

THE LESSER YELLOW-BREASTED RUSTLER.

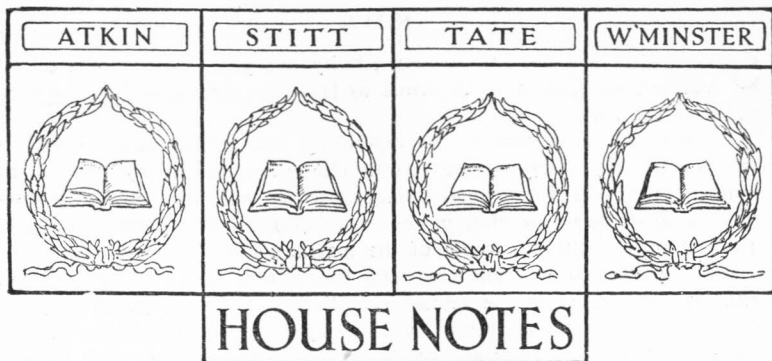
THIS bird can be seen, as its name implies, rustling up or down Whetstone Lane at 8-55 or 1-55 every day. On hearing the school bell, it finishes its meal, utters a squawk of horror and flies down or up the Lane. This bird, although common in this district, is seldom seen between 4-15 p.m. and 8-0 a.m. when it stays as far away as it possibly can from its nest.

It has a black body with golden breast, grey legs, and a yellow and black band round its head. During winter its beak is a bluish-red. When summer comes it migrates for six weeks. The old-birds are too exhausted to come back, but some fledgelings come along to take their places.

D. J. STEELS, 5A.

STOP PRESS.

It
is an
amazing fact that
nine out of ten people who
begin to read this triangle no matter
how obvious it may become that there is no
point so doing will never the less continue to
read on to the inevitable and absolutely bitter end.



ATKIN.

SO far this term the weather has dominated the house competition and no activities have been possible at all. However, since the last notes appeared, we have seen the completion of the Senior Chess and Senior Rugby competitions and one Junior Rugby match.

The Senior Rugby game against Tate was a very exciting and hard-fought game. At half time Atkin were leading by a penalty goal to nil but soon after a Tate try made the scores level. As the match drew to a close a draw seemed the most likely and the fairest result, but in the last seconds of the game Tate scored a second try and thus won by 6 points to 3. The House put up a good performance against a stronger and more experienced Westminster Senior team and lost a close match by 11 points to nil.

In the Junior Rugby game the house beat a bigger and stronger Westminster team by 14 points to 5. This was a very good win and the whole team deserve congratulating but particularly outstanding were McKay, Birss and Williams. The remaining Junior matches when Atkin play Tate and Westminster oppose Stitt will decide the final positions in the Rugby competition.

In view of the fact that the house contained 3 members of the school team the Senior Chess results were very disappointing. Atkin beat Tate by 5 games to 2 but narrowly lost to both Stitt and Westminster by 4 games to 3. So the Seniors finished in 3rd position and it now falls to the Juniors to improve the position of the house in the Chess competition.

Later this term the cross country and athletic sports will take place and it is to be hoped that all boys will give of their best in order to maintain the early progress that Atkin has made.

A. K. JONES.

STITT.

SINCE there has been no House activity this year because of the cold weather, we shall have to resort to last term's chess and rugby competitions for items of news.

We could have won the championship but instead came second — this was a very disappointing result. However the Rugby played by Stitt, both in the Junior and Senior schools, was very encouraging — played, above everything else, in the right spirit, with everyone giving of his best throughout the whole of the matches.

Surely the House can now take heart from the excellent example and do even better in the remaining activities. Let us hope that by the time that these notes appear we will have put up fine performances, both in the Cross country races and on Sports day and be able to look forward quite confidently to the Inter-House cricket during the 'warmer' months of the Summer term.

E. T. WOODFINE.

TATE.

SINCE the Christmas report, the House has seen the completion of the Senior Rugby and Chess, and is at present in third position for the Coronation Cup.

In the Rugby competition so far the results have been extremely encouraging. The Seniors finished second in the table after beating Atkin 6-3 and Stitt 6-0. In all three games McKittrick, Walker and Davies have set an example to the team with their outstanding performances. The Juniors also have fared just as well. They beat Stitt 11-10, and are at the moment joint second with one game to play against Atkin.

The results of the Senior Chess have been disappointing. The team has shown enthusiasm, but it has generally lacked the experience of the opposing players. However Howarth should be specially congratulated on winning two of his three games.

The weather over the last few months has hampered the training sessions, but now it has ended I would like to see all the Tate boys making full use of the training facilities at the field in preparation for the cross-country and athletics.

G.W.C.

WESTMINSTER.

SINCE the last House notes, Westminster has achieved a fair measure of success, having won all but one of the phases of the competitions which have taken place.

In the Senior Chess, the seniors continued to play excellently and opposition quite decidedly by the score of 34-3. McNulty and Aspinall were prominent, though in fact the whole team played quite well.

The Junior Rugby match versus Atkin proved to be quite a travesty, because although the forwards played excellently and gained at least 95 per cent. of the ball, the House lost 14-5. One feels that the result could have been quite the reverse if a little thought had been exercised.

To complete the rugby picture there was the Senior Rugby win over Atkin by 11 points to nil. Though Cotgrave, Caplin and Brown scored the vital points, the issue was a very close one.

In the Senior Rugby game against Stitt the House trounced the defeated the strong and experienced Stitt team by 5-2.

A closer match developed in the Senior Chess game against Atkin, where the House eventually won 4-3 after a hard struggle. Hayman and Scarisbrick in particular have played consistently well throughout the series.

When the Arctic conditions finally disappear, the House will be putting at stake the Cross-Country Shield and the Athletics Cup. Regular training facilities at the field are available and these should be utilised to the greatest possible extent.

P. KEVAN.

SPORT

GAMES SPRING TERM 1963.

THE second half of our rugby season was completely wiped out owing to the severe weather. Thick ice and snow covered the field throughout January and February and keeping warm was almost as difficult as keeping fit. After a little thought it was decided to use the Cross Country Courses whenever possible and to go for walks through Storeton Woods. The former was often impossible and on many days boys ran round the school field and played touch rugby in the snow. The rambles were very popular and Storeton Woods provided some thrilling experiences including slides down the 'Ninety-Niner' either on foot or on seat. Eventually a party was organised to go sledging in Victoria Park but this was frustrated by a heavy snow storm. Not wishing to be deprived of our fun the school yard became the Cresta Run and the residents of Hollybank Road were entertained by numerous brightly-dressed characters flying through the school gates on sledges. Despite the fact that the winter sports were enjoyed by all it is hoped that the rugby programme will be completed next season and that the staff will be able to give their annual lesson, in the finer arts of Rugby Union, to the First XV.

J.D.H.

SECOND XV.

I SHOULD like to take this opportunity of thanking all members of the 2nd XV for their support during the season even though it was regrettably short. Although the team did not have a very successful season, as many players had to compensate the 1st XV which suffered severely from injury, I am sure I can speak for the whole team when I say that everybody enjoyed himself and played extremely good rugby, even in the face of opposition from schools many times larger than our own. Thank you.

D. FORSHAW (Capt.) VIS.

TRACES OF A ROMAN ROAD FROM CHESTER TO THINGWALL.

NEARLY six hundred years ago in 1397 part of Wirral history was made. A certain gentleman named Hugh Hales obtained a licence to close two roads on his land. One leading from Thingwall to Thornton Hough, and the other from Brimstage to Thornton Hough. It is not known for certain which roads were actually closed, but traces of an old track still exist, which is most interesting.

The general line of this old road leads through Raby and Willaston and heads towards Chester, and experts wonder whether this is a remnant of one of the oldest Roman highways, from Chester into the Wirral peninsular.

There is no doubt that at one time in Wirral history the highway from Chester came down Benty Heath Lane to Mount Road, and then on to Mollington about half a mile parallel to the present main-road. This line of road is so old that it almost disappears, but there are still several bits of highway that could have been part of the old track. One piece runs into Capenhurst Lane, and there it is lost again, but is picked up near Willaston, one of Wirral's oldest villages, and continues towards Raby and Thornton Hough.

An even older and just as interesting road can be seen not far from Barnston Dales, on the Lane to Storeton, a footpath on the left hand leads to Thingwall, and heads directly for Cross Hill. On the right there remains a short section of a forgotten lane which now serves as a cul-de-sac. In this direction the right of way has lapsed. The path from Thingwall ends here in a "T" junction, and again it is obvious that the old road did not start nor end at this point, and in maps published a century or so ago record that this footpath to Thingwall originally came from the direction of Thornton Hough, (Thornton Road already mentioned) and a "foot road" was so shown.

Whether the road Hugh Hales closed is part of this old highway we do not know, but it is certain that this track from Chester is the forgotten road to Thingwall in the days when Thingwall was one of the most important points in Wirral.

SOCIETIES

ART SOCIETY.

MANY of the members of the Art Club are busy at present preparing posters for the Easter Fair Competition, Mr. Malcolm having kindly offered to provide prizes for the most promising efforts.

Other members of the group, mainly from the lower school, are preoccupied with a first world war mural which they hope will be accepted for the new Wilfred Owen Memorial Library, which should be ready for use early in the next school year.

At the Friday Evening sessions there are three boys who, having had to drop out, as it is an optional subject, are now concentrating on achieving the required standard for the G.C.E. in their own time. We applaud their spirit and wish them luck and hope that more of the fourth form will join them at the Art Club.

D.S.W.J.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

THIS term the Society's members have been entertained by two very enlightening talks, one by our French student Monsieur Redonnet and one by a local lawyer, Mr. Scragg.

Monsieur Redonnet first outlined the reasons for his visit and then gave the 35 members present a detailed, precise account of the history, geographical position and present day life in Moscow and Leningrad which was admirably illustrated by an excellent set of colour slides which he had taken of the cities during his visit.

Mr. Scragg, our outside speaker, gave the group a most interesting talk on Roumania, a country in which he had spent a considerable time during the summer. After discussing the economic and political position of the country he illustrated modern-day conditions in the country by using colour slides.

J. KELLETT, L6.

THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE Geological Group of the Geographical Society has been meeting every Wednesday dinner-time during this Easter Term. The meetings have been held in the Geography room under the chairmanship of Mr. Taylor.

Having made a late start because of the Mock G.C.E., at our first meeting Mr. Taylor showed a number of colour slides depicting different geological features, many of which were taken locally, and were therefore of great interest. Our next meetings were devoted to the study of the different types of mineral ores to be found in Great Britain. We were informed not only about how to identify the different ores, but also where to find them and this we have found to be a great help.

In conjunction with the Sixth form Geography set, we hope that some of our members will be taking a trip to Ingleborough during the Easter Holidays. This should prove a very interesting and enjoyable excursion.

On behalf of the Society we should like to thank Mr. Taylor for his interesting slides and talks, and we should be glad to see more people come along next term to listen to them.

SCOUT NOTES.

OWING to circumstances beyond our control (Paul's memory) these notes have not appeared since Easter, 1962. This breakdown in communications does not indicate a lack of activity within the Troop for at no time since the closure of the Junior School deprived it of a Cub Pack has the Troop been so large and so active.

During the past months we have camped at Thornton Hough, Overchurch, and Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain. We have hiked in Cheshire, Flintshire, Montgomeryshire and Denbighshire. We have celebrated Christmas and Hallowe'en in an appropriate manner. We have swum in Galas at Birkenhead, Wallasey and Chester. We have attended Parades at Birkenhead and Chester. We have undertaken a bicycle exploration of the Wirral Peninsula and last, but by no means least, we have experimented in various obscure ways of preparing food. As a result of the latter we are able to state that not only is the cooking of custard on a length of wet string possible but it is very tasty too!

The Troop exchequer benefited from a fine effort during Bob-a-Job Week and also by the sale of Cards and Calendars at Christmas. I would point out, however, that the Scout Hut Fund is still far short of its target and all contributions, however small, will be very welcome.

On the academic front David Thorne gained the First Class Badge and has since become Troop Leader. Also worthy of note was a fine performance by Jonathan Cottrell in the Town Swimming Gala.

Members of the 23rd who were in the cast of the Town Gang Show were Messrs. Jones, Brookes, Ogden, Dawson, Reid, Mort and Cottrell, and I conclude by expressing the hope that, if you saw the Show, you thoroughly enjoyed it.

P. E. OGDEN,

Asst. Scoutmaster.

SIXTH FORM SOCIETY.

AT the beginning of last year, following discussion by the staff with boys of the Lower Sixth, a society for Sixth Formers was established. The need for such a society was accentuated by the lack of any social life inside school and by the numerous discussions which were a natural result of early Sixth Form life.

The nucleus of this society was composed mainly of Arts students but those scientists who wished to could attend. The first meeting took place on the 7th November 1962. Millardship, who was elected chairman, circulated a questionnaire prior to this meeting and the various answers that were received were discussed. Since that time there have been three meetings. The subject of the first was "British Birds" and D. R. Ratcliffe gave us the benefit of his knowledge on this ambiguous topic.

The second was a Christmas party for which J. F. Kellett (Treasurer) squeezed a substantial sum from the members in order to purchase a Bacchanalian feast. A musical interlude was provided by several scientists.

The third meeting which was held this term featured a very interesting talk by Mr. Evans on his experiences as a teacher in Nigeria.

There have been many difficulties in the way of the Society, the chief ones being copious homework, rival Geography and Science Lectures and the debating society. Nevertheless the Society looks forward to a bright future and at our next meeting it is hoped Mr. Malcolm will reveal his opinion of "angry young men". We invite all Sixth Formers to join us in our activities.

I. T. JOHNSON (Secretary).

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Committee Members:

J. F. BELL, Esq.; B. ELLISON, Esq.; P. ROBINSON, Esq.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at the Association Headquarters, 40 Argyle Street, Birkenhead, on Friday, 22nd February, when the officers and committee members for the coming year were elected.

The Chairman, reporting on the state of affairs within the Association and on the events and activities of the past year, began by saying how pleased he was at the continued progress of the affiliated sections, the Old Instonians' Association Football Club and the Old Instonians' Rugby Union Football Club.

The relations between the Association and the School had continued to be most friendly. Wreaths had been laid on the two war memorials in the School on Remembrance Day. At the end of the summer term, Mr. J. R. Crowe, an Old Instonian who plays rugby for Cheshire and who captains Birkenhead Park Rugby Union Football Club, went along to the School to represent the Association and to present the Old Boys' Sports Prizes to J. A. G. Williams of Tate and A. Steedman of Westminster. The School had its Speech Day recently and yet another distinguished Old Instonian was invited to present the awards. This year it was the turn of Professor T. W. Goodwin.

Turning once more to the sporting side of Old Instonian activity, the Chairman referred to the cricket match which had been played against the School and to the annual golf match for the W. J. Pyke Cup. This had been held at the Wirral Ladies Golf Club, the cup being won by Mr. P. P. Simpson. After the match players and guests sat down to a buffet supper and spent a most enjoyable evening together. The thanks of the Association were due to Mr. H. H. Owen who had organised the event.

A Reunion Dinner was held in October in the Masonic Temple, Clifton Road, and this was very well attended.

The Chairman ended by appealing for greater support for the Club premises. His report and that of the Treasurer were adopted.

OLD INSTONIANS R.U.F.C.

Chairman: G. A. THOMAS,

181 Huddersfield Road, Newhey, Rochdale. (Milnrow 55458).

Secretary: K. I. SMITH,

45 Edinburgh Drive, Prenton, Birkenhead. (Mountwood 1287).

Treasurer: P. A. RYAN,

96 Highfield South, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead. (Rock Ferry 6681).

Ground: Woodchurch Road, Prenton.

THE Ice Age having prevented any sporting activities between December 15th and March 2nd, there is comparatively little to report. In some respects the frost was a blessing since it allowed us to make some much-needed improvements in accommodation and facilities at the pavilion and allowed the players to get over the misfortunes of the initial playing period. Against Leigh on March 9th, we did very well to hold them to one penalty goal and one dropper goal and, in fact, with a little steadiness near the line would have won.

There is great hope that the remaining few games will give us success to engender confidence for the "sevens" to come and the strenuous Easter programme when, on Easter Saturday, we are at home to Birkenhead Park second team, on Easter Sunday to Old Fulmerians from Hemel Hempstead (k.o. 5 p.m.) and on Easter Monday when we play Leigh (k.o. 3 p.m.)

We look forward now to the future and the first season at our new ground and not least of all to our Annual Dinner on Thursday, 11th April when Mr. Hall, fresh from his retirement, will entertain us once again with one of his famous perorations.

P.A.R.

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