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THE VISOR

JULY 1972

BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE
HIGH SCHOOL

The more observant of our regular readers will have noticed already that something odd has happened to their favourite magazine. They will be complaining that the size, cover and layout have been altered out of all recognition. Even the spotless scholar in the Bibby and Perkins advert has bought his first pair of long trousers during the year. Nothing is sacred! We hope, however, by the time they have read the magazine they will agree that the general hard work has been worthwhile.

We were delighted by the response of the school this year; excellent material has been received from boys of each year. Thanks are due also to the people who undertook the more tedious jobs of typing and proof-reading.

D.A.Y. R.M.

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JIM MORRIS

I'm going to your school next term.
You don't want to come to our school:
it's lousy! Park's better, it's got girls.
I don't like girls.....yet. Mummy says they
distract from work.

Are you staying school dinners, then?

Yes, what are they like?

Oh, great. We get a choice now.

Yes, you either eat them, or you don't.

Doesn't seem much of a choice to me.

Well it wouldn't, you being just a kid. Wait
till you're as old as I am.

What year are you in?

Oh, the second year - but I'm tall for my age
— it's all the P.E., you know. It builds you up. They
say if we train hard we can be fit like our P.E. teachers.

That bad, eh? What's your school mag. like?

Well, turn the pages and find out.



HEADLINES

Another year has almost gone — remarkably quickly for me, perhaps painfully slowly for others — but looking back now, from what must be the most miserable June weather I can remember, to those few fine days in September seems but a step. We began the year with a mere sprinkling of newcomers, so that the nucleus of 70-71 was given the opportunity of becoming a closely knit community in 71-72. Next September we welcome 180 new boys, and this will be the pattern of the future, but already the flag that waves bravely over Tollemache Road is becoming of ever-increasing significance to the many that walk below it. We are beginning to make our mark in the North end of the town. From time to time we receive a set-back, but the outlook is bright.

Our greatest double blow of this year, the deaths of two of the staff, was a bitterly sad loss. Both Denis Hughes and Alan Lewis will be greatly missed for their enthusiasm, but never forgotten by their many friends. To their families we offer our deepest sympathy.

The highlight of the Autumn Term was undoubtedly the Open Day on 21st October, when the school threw wide its doors to parents, prospective parents and pupils, and displayed what was being taught and done. This was a great success. Even in our closely-knit community there were surprises for sixth-formers and lower-set boys alike, when each discovered how the other half lived! To those who worked so industriously this Open Day we owe a great debt.

In all branches of Physical Activity this year the school has done well. It would be difficult to single out outstanding successes, but perhaps I should mention two. The first year soccer XI which won the inter-school competition and trophy in 70-71, repeated the dose in 71-72, and of four swimming trophies to contest in inter-school competitions, the school won two. Both successes augur well for the future.

This article is being written a few days before the School's Summer Fair is held. Let us hope for a fine St. Swithins, and a profitable day for those who have striven so hard to make it so.

At the end of this term we say good-bye to Mr. Smith who leaves us for Noctorum High School, and we bid a temporary farewell to Mr. Dickson who is spending a year on teacher-exchange in Canada. We also say good-bye to our Editor, Mr. Yates, who embarks on three years' study at Liverpool University without whose efforts, none of this magazine would be possible. We wish them all well. To their successors, to the 180+ new boys we offer a genuine welcome, realising that it is only with their efforts plus ours that we can make this school one of which we can all be justly proud in 1972-73.

S. Denerley

Mr. ALAN LEWIS

It is with some difficulty that one writes about a colleague and a friend who is with us no more: to be morbid or over-sentimental is all too easy and I feel sure that Alan would not have wanted that — in fact, it would have embarrassed him. Perhaps the record of his career might be largely permitted to speak for itself.

Alan Lewis joined the staff of the former Grange Secondary School as a newly qualified graduate teacher, from Hull University, in September 1967. He was appointed to the Geography and History departments of the School. Very soon the walls of room 13 were covered with a multiplicity of charts, each one dealing with some aspect of his subjects and interests. Nor was this interest confined to the text-book or the classroom, as those boys who have trampled with him around parts of North Wales will testify. Before each outing, the party would be provided with a wealth of relevant information, printed on the staffroom duplicator — an instrument of whose moods and temperament, he became an acknowledged expert!

His interests were, however, wide and by no means confined to the academic; for sport in general and for soccer in particular, he had a great love. During his first year of teaching he accepted responsibility for the 'first year' football team. The skill and enthusiasm which he brought to the task played a significant part in the run of victories which that team enjoyed in its first, and in succeeding seasons. Of particular satisfaction to him were the occasions when his team was successful in inter-school competitions — these were when the boys shared the 'Birkenhead Schools' Knock-out Competition Trophy', for first years, and two years later when they won the corresponding trophy for third year teams.

Alan continued to coach the team as it passed through the school, and also when Grange amalgamated with Birkenhead Institute to become the new Birkenhead Institute High School in September 1970.

On two occasions during the past five years, he and I, together with other members of staff, took parties of boys abroad during the school holidays; to Lugano in 1968 and to Luxembourg in 1970; on each holiday his knowledge of the country and his friendly way with the boys proved to be of immense help. Strange cuisines, not all of which were to his liking, he bore with fortitude.

During his long illness Alan remained cheerful, and his interest in the school never diminished. Throughout that twelve months he strove constantly to recover his former health and vigour, looking forward eagerly to the day of his return. It was, unfortunately, an ambition which was not to be realised.

To his family goes the sympathy of his many friends, among both staff and boys. In the years to come, Alan Lewis will be remembered by us all, with gratitude and affection.

Michael A. Murphy.

Mr. J. D. O. HUGHES

Mr. J.D.O. Hughes came to Birkenhead Institute in November, 1952 as Woodwork Master and served the school faithfully for nearly twenty years. Many are the boys who have cause to be grateful for the help and advice he gave them in the Workshop.

The foremost memory, however, must surely be of his enthusiasm for, his passion for, his skill at, all forms of physical education. Having played soccer for North Wales Schoolboys in his youth, he took up Rugby and quickly became conversant with its skills. Tales are often told in the Old Istonians' pavilion of his days with the Colts and later with the 1st XV. He captained the Staff Cricket Team for many years with a tenacity and cunning bred in him "up the Valley" in Glyn Ceiriog. As House Master of Westminster, his drive and energy, particularly in preparation for the Athletic Sports, became legendary.

Birkenhead Institute has good reason to remember him with gratitude and affection.

L.T.M.

DIARY OF A SCHOOL MOUSE

While pages of Latin are slowly turning
And solemn-faced kids attentively learning,
I sit still, watching, and give a quiet laugh,
For a mouse has no intellectual path.

Four o'clock rings and school is over,
Off with the blazer, tie and pullover.
Now I can roam through desks and chairs
Munching the cores of mouldering pears.

Now I'm alone and my heart's at rest
Lounging about in my luxury desk
Amongst old books, a cloak, a cane
That helped old pupils find acclaim.

Dodging past abandoned papers
Well composed rhymes from devious creators
Here I imagine in mouse's games
Girls to be frightened, cats to be slain.

A mouse's life can be so grand
With such fine places so near at hand,
Here where no-one ever comes peeping
But dawn, after the night's darkness, creeping.

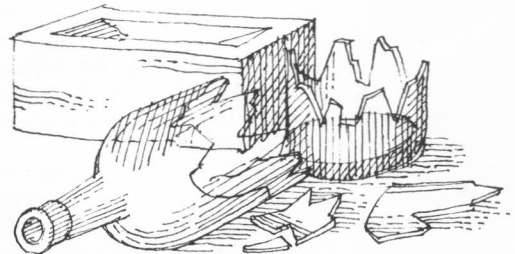
Andy McKie
2nd Year

MESS'N

Bored in the street,
Can't do no less.
Crash open a bottle,
Just having a mess.

Around comes a copper,
takes our address,
"What were you doin'?"
"Just having a mess."

John Coulthard
4th Year



I'VE ASKED YOU TO STAY BEHIND

With the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen, the educational system must be re-organised from next year, to include many out-of-school activities, which will incorporate visits to various industries. This will be a typical scene perhaps:

I'VE ASKED YOU TO STAY BEHIND

after assembly, Lower Fifth, to discuss yesterday's visit to the coal mine. Now I've been a Headmaster for many years, but I must admit I've never had so many 'phone calls about a school outing before in all my life. I know I said the school needed some publicity, to put us on the map as it were, but there's publicity and publicity.

Well, to begin with, the Pit Manager 'phoned, just after you'd left. Now look, lads, you know how fond I am of animals so it'll be no surprise to you to find that I'm very annoyed about the pit-pony incident. Now these are shy, nervous creatures, as you know. I don't know whose idea it was to organise the race but I find that type of behaviour despicable. Despicable! And the lad who nobbled the favourite doesn't say much for the sporting spirit of the school, now does it? It's the game that counts, lad, not the result. And then there's the other point he mentioned. Now granted I told you to bring a packed lunch, and perhaps it did seem a sensible idea to have a picnic under-ground, but the fool that lit the fire to boil the kettle — words fail me! Anyway, you'll be glad to know that after a great effort, they've rescued the vast majority of the night shift.

Now to the journey back. You may have noticed that Plumley is missing this morning; And it's hardly surprising, is it? Thirty-five miles on the roof of a coach is no joke — especially in a rainstorm. It says a

great deal for our P.E. Department that he managed to stay up there as long as he did. That shows he has SPIRIT, and INITIATIVE. It's just a shame he had to fall off where he did. The tunnel police were very kind, though, and didn't charge for towing him out. Just as well. School Funds are low enough as they are, what with one thing and another. Anyway, his mother was understandably irate about the whole incident.

The coach firm rang me a few moments ago. The driver only stepped down to pay the funnel toll for a second or two, apparently. Now listen carefully. Forget all silly ideas about schoolboy honour and the like. If anyone knows where the coach is, come and see me at break. No questions asked, lads. Let's just get this little matter cleared up as soon as possible. Incidentally, while they were on, the driver had a word with me. He asked me to thank you for the collection. He said if he ever needs to go to the toilet in Dublin it will come in very handy. And, by the way, whoever put axle-grease on his sandwiches is the sort of boy this school could well do without.

Now we come to the final, most serious matter: Mr. Bishop. Now you all know Mr. Bishop's history of bad nerves, and I must admit that I wondered before I put him in charge of the party, whether or not I should do so, but I looked round at you lads and thought, "They understand Mr. Bishop's problems. I'll trust them. They'll do the right thing."

STAND UP THE LAD WHO LOCKED MR. BISHOP IN THE BOOT!

No-one owns up, eh? It wouldn't be so bad if we could find the coach!

Good staff are hard to find.

Anyway, I'll be watching you very closely on your visit to the brewery next Friday, Lower Fifth. Off you go!

D.Y.



DEMOLITION

Tall towers
of bureaucracy
stretch over
dying
life-shells.
Hammers thump,
bricks crumble
into dust.
The metallic
final-blow
swings;
swishing
it crashes
into heart
and home,
shattering, splintering
destroying
last defences,
sending
twisting
turning
dust-figures
up
into the air,
where,
writhing,
wriggling,
they die
away,
leaving
only
the taste
of
bitterness.

JIM MORRIS

JIM MORRIS' PAGE
(JIM MORRIS, HIS PAGE)

BREATHE
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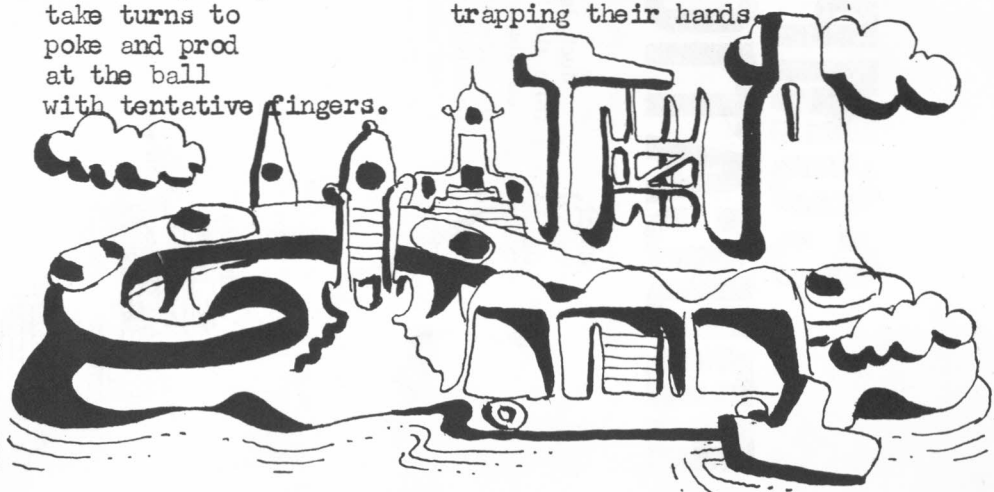
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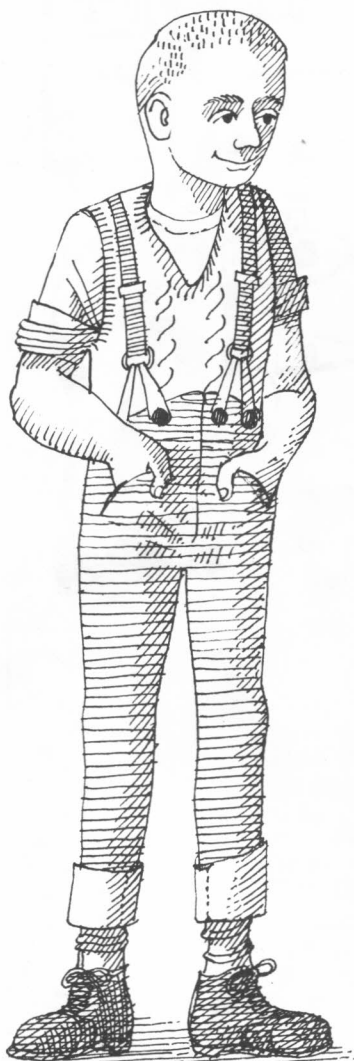
CLAY

Generations
of
redevelopment-schemers
have turned Birkenhead
into
a ball of clay.
Architects, builders,
comedians, designers
take turns to
poke and prod
at the ball
with tentative fingers.

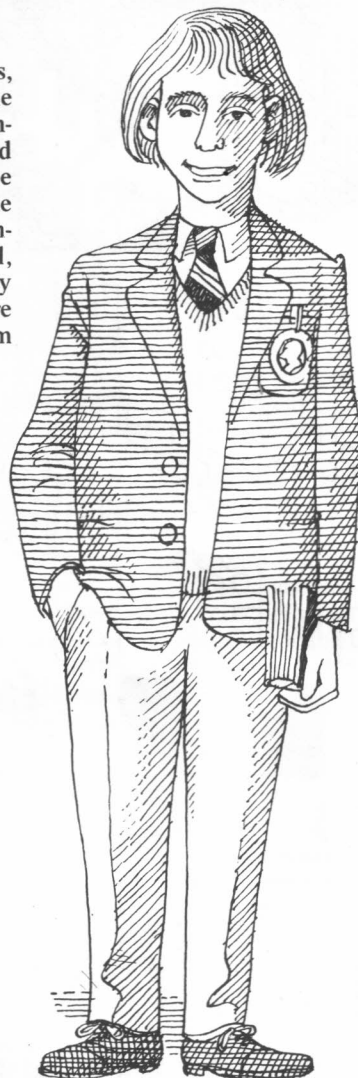
But no-one
dares
to seize the ball,
roll it
and mould it between
their palms,
just in case
the clay sets,
trapping their hands.



COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION—A SCHOOL SURVEY



Much has been written in various publications, from the 'Times Educational Supplement' to 'The Sun' about the controversial subject of Comprehensive Education. Teachers, Educational Theorists and parents have all had their say. We thought it might be a good idea to ask those most directly concerned; the boys themselves. From our point of view, comprehensive meant the fusing together of a traditional, well-established grammar school with a secondary school in a different area of the town. Below are some uncensored replies, chosen at random from those boys who have experienced both systems.



THIRDS

I used to be at Tollemache Road Secondary School and the comprehensive system has given me a chance to learn more. In the old Tollemache School we never had the chance to do Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Metalwork. Also we did more sports and craft work and not Latin like we do now. The lessons

were quite easy and we had a few periods to do as we wished so we did not learn a great amount.

When Birkenhead Institute came I worked hard so I could go up into the top two classes. I expected that the lessons would be hard, and they were until I had time to adjust. Now we do Physics, Chemistry,

Biology, Metalwork, Latin and Pottery and I have a chance to learn lots more than I did in Tollemache Road. I can take G.C.E. now so I will have a good job when I eventually leave.

The news of the merging of Birkenhead Institute with a secondary school came as a blow to me. To think that I had taken an unnecessary external examination, fighting to get to a grammar school and then finding myself back to square one. I must admit that the equipment is slightly better than in the old building but I was much prouder to say I attend a grammar school than I am to say I attend a comprehensive school with nine hundred other names on a piece of paper. In the old system there was still the chance for late developers to get into grammar school, and the standard of work hasn't been raised by the constant threat of leaving the grammar school stream. If anything, it has suffered.

I do not think that the change from Whetstone Lane to Tollemache Road has done the former Birkenhead Institute School any harm whatsoever; in fact I think it has done the school a power of good. The town used to have not only 'posh' grammar schools but also many 'unsavoury' schools, the old Tollemache Road being one of them. Now that the transfer has taken place, however, I feel that some of the 'stuck up' people from the old B.I. can see how the other half live.

I am sure though, that the Tollemache Road boys now have a chance to prove themselves to their so called friends the B.I. teachers.

When Birkenhead Institute came to our old school things changed. We did metalwork and pottery. The teaching was done in more detail. And, of course, the school uniform came in. This made every boy in the same dress, and recognisable to his school. It also made a lot of the boys look quite a bit smarter.

I think the old Birkenhead Institute was better because we did not have to move around the different classrooms for different lessons, we stayed in the one classroom all day, because all the teachers came to us in our classroom. Here we are rushing around all day from lesson to lesson. There was more room in the old Birkenhead Institute because there were not as many boys there as there are here

On the other hand, some of the boys in the old Tollemache Road school were good enough to be in a set of the old Birkenhead Institute, so when the schools were merged those boys had their chance to prove themselves as good as some of the old Birkenhead Institute boys, even better than some.

I think that there should have been thorough monthly examinations in both schools and those with very bad marks in the old B.I. should have transferred for at least one month, to the Grange, and those getting very good marks in the Grange should be transferred to the old B.I. for at least a month.

It is my belief both schools would profit greatly from this and the scholars would have a much better chance to show their skills.

Admittedly there are better facilities here at Tollemache Road, with a plateau and a new dining hall about to be erected, but personally I miss the old crumbling 'ruins' of B.I. Whetstone Lane.

But I have nothing to grumble about at this school as, we are really getting taught the same things and with a more exciting range of lessons with Metal-Work, T.D., Pottery and the like.

I think that the school's name (B.I.) has been blackened, a small amount, by moving to Tollemache Road, as the district around our school is a rough one and people immediately think that the boys that go there are all rough, when, really most of the boys, that attend the B.I., are eager to work and get on in their lives.

All of the character of the school has disappeared and the old customs are now diminishing rapidly. The choir has gone and rugby is no longer played as much as football.

In my opinion the school's reputation has been brought down to that of the old "Tolly". It's a shame that the move ever took place.

Pupils are combining together very well, not only in sport by competing against each other, but also in friendship.

Comprehensive schooling has not really made any difference to me, but it may have done to someone in a secondary modern school who has taken rather longer to develop his intelligence. They may, two years after the scholarship exam, reach a satisfactory standard at which time they can be put into a grammar school stream, whereas before they would have had to stay in their secondary modern school and not have half the chances they would have got if they were in a grammar school.

It has also proved useful in that pupils who have wasted their time and are not intelligent enough to be in a grammar school are taking valuable places up while some intelligent pupils could be taking their places and getting their deserved chances. Now that we have the comprehensive system boys can be moved up and down according to their intelligence and their approach to work.

FOURTHS

In the new school there are so many different sets, that no one bothers working hard as there is no chance of being thrown out of the school. The facilities may be better at our new building, but due to our unity with the Ex-Grange School, many people have sold their shares in B.I.

Besides the setbacks, the new B.I. has definitely become one of the leading sporting schools in Birkenhead. This was not so whilst both the schools were separate. In my opinion, the new B.I. is a good school which will obviously get better, but, perhaps this change-over should have taken place in a few years' time, when Birkenhead's Comprehensive System would have had better facilities to cope with the change.

Although Grange might not seem a patch on the new B.I., I still think that Grange was a great place. For a start, there was no compulsion to wear school uniforms. This meant you could relax more, instead of sweating it out on hot days, and you also saved your parents some money. There weren't as many books to carry around either. One thing many of us used to look forward to at the end of the terms were the house quizzes. These were organised by a few members of staff, and everyone joined in on them, including the teams!

Homework is another thing we didn't get too much of, although many of us didn't mind that. Now, though, we spend most nights and weekends doing homework, although I suppose it's for our own good that we're doing it.

One thing the school should do is try and organise more quizzes and the like so as to take the tediousness out of work. The idea of a summer fair is one way in which we can enjoy ourselves, and there could be more school outings.

Even though standards of teaching and sorting out the clever from the not-so-clever have improved, you can't help not forgetting our old Grange.

What used to be the old Technical Drawing room at Grange is now a very well-equipped workshop complete with lathes etc. On the site of the old

bike-sheds we now have an impressive room complete with forge and welding facilities. The Science departments have seven specialised laboratories furnished with modern benches. Neither the old Grange or B.I. had these advantages when they were separate.

The most noticeable differences are in discipline, clothing and academic work. In Grange, there were not so many masters taking care of things such as truancy or mis-behaviour. No masters patrolled the corridors to stop shouting or pushing.

In the old B.I., although it wasn't well-equipped, the teachers seemed more friendly and willing to help you. In the new school, the intelligent, well-mannered boys like myself build up a good name for the school which those less-deserving use to get a job.

In Grange, we had an almost unlimited amount of freedom: there were not many rules, and dress differed according to what stream you were in. The school had a general 'free and easy' atmosphere. Birkenhead Institute brought a certain amount of discipline with it. I think there are now better teaching facilities and you seem to depend more on a teacher than before. You are competing with other boys and there is a general urge to get on with your work.

It was especially hard for the former occupants to conform with the new establishment and overcome a feeling of inferiority which set in after many of the old Grange names, ways and customs were dropped in favour of the Institute style of things. All traces of the old Grange quickly disappeared. The atmosphere of the school changed rapidly: masters donned gowns, and other forms of unnecessary formality crept in with every new rule. The funny thing about the whole issue is that it's worked better than anyone expected, and everyone seems to have accepted the changes and are trying to improve the present system.

FIFTHS

From my point of view, the best result of the merger was that I can take those subjects I'm best at in G.C.E. now. At Grange I would have taken C.S.E. only. Although life was easier at Grange it didn't help

our education much by being so. One thing we have gained, though, and which definitely does not help with our education is "Straighten your tie! Hold your head up! Hands out of pockets!" This arrived with B.I. as part of the deal.

Now we have the new school name behind us, and this can be an important advantage when job-hunting. Employers would often sniff at the name of Tollemache Road Secondary, I've been told. A good school name counts a lot and since the merger the school has kept a good reputation locally.

Before they arrived to join us here, we were issued with new stationery with the B.I. insignia on it. Then the hall was fitted out with spot-lights, scarlet velvet curtains and a number of expensive-looking chairs which have been seldom used since. A T.V. was installed also. This was very exciting but we in the fifth year haven't benefited from these sort of changes at all. Into the bargain we lost a lot of the free-and-easy atmosphere of the old school and have to wear uniform which most of us resent.

Previously, in our old school, the accent was on practical subjects and at B.I. they had a more academic system. Now, with the amalgamation, the brainy ones from our old school are happier doing

SIXTHS

• For the Sixth Form, the new move proved, on the whole, quite beneficial. We left the dull, musty prospects of a sixth form classroom, next to an extremely noisy music room, and inherited our own self-contained unit. Although regarded as something akin to a rabbit hutch by many, it offers a degree of essential privacy that makes work a lot easier. It offers protection from most of the undesirable elements in the school, although we do see one or two strolling in now and again. The whole atmosphere in the new Sixth Form is a lot more liberal than the old school. The administration is generally fair, and is appreciated by most in the block. One criticism may be that the Sixth Form tends to be physically isolated from the rest of the school, and the impulse to work could perhaps weaken, the further you wander from the staff room. Another annoying thing is the number of prefects. In the old school a prefect's badge was hallowed, respected and an achievement. Now, with double the number of prefects, the honour has decreased considerably and a badge means very little.

The old B.I. seemed a school steeped in tradition, decaying with age, but too respected ever to broach interference. Masters, old boys and most pupils seemed to comply with this sense of tradition, in which they were helped by the gloomy rooms and antique furniture which bred a sort of homely atmosphere not evident in the present High School. However, the system at heart was a bad one and as

academic subjects and the boys from B.I. who were good with their hands are learning trades like joinery and carpentry. The bright lads from Tolly can take 'A' levels and become doctors and other things like that. There are already a lot of them in the sixth form and that's something they could never have done because we didn't have one here before the merger.

I viewed the amalgamation with alarm. Joining a tough secondary school hardly seemed as if it would help me two years before my 'O' level. However it hardly affected me at all. I still got the same standard of teaching and was in a stream with many of my mates from B.I.; in fact the sciences are better here because of newer equipment and labs. Some of the teachers from Grange seemed glad to be able to teach 'O' levels and put a lot of energy into it. Another thing I like is seeing lads from the other school, obviously brighter than most of our lot, getting up into the top sets and passing exams. There are already half a dozen in the lower 6th which is terrific for them and for the school.

outmoded as the unsuitable buildings themselves. The new school is indeed the better, both educationally and materially. Our Sixth Form unit, for example, is new, light and airy and represents a vast improvement, giving us a place of our own within the school itself. We have sacrificed tradition for better conditions and a happier atmosphere in which to live and learn.

A much-voiced criticism of the Old School was that, since numbers were few, organised sports and inter-school house matches were often weakly supported, too one-sided to be enjoyed; interest was confined to a precious few who had to try and stimulate enthusiasm in order to raise 15 people from a Saturday lie in. When the move was announced, the increased numbers were seen by many to herald the dawning of huge sporting revival in the school — 15 men turning up on Saturday! Massive waves of enthusiasm! Trophies by the bus-load! What has happened to destroy this hope? In our first year at Tollemache Road, there was no sports day, no senior full side Rugby or Cricket Tournaments, a few pathetic 5-a-side football tournaments for the Junior School, and a general feeling of apathy, especially amongst the seniors, concerning the house system. If, in future years, the school's sporting reputation is to be maintained and furthered, a little bit of the vitality shown by masters and pupils in the old school must be captured and kept. Otherwise, we may as well give up now, and start needlework classes.

LITERARY GEMS SECTION

The 'Oxford Book of Quotations' bulges with extracts from the works of Shakespeare, Keats and other such writers, but its compilers seem unaware of the fact that a rich vein of cultural material goes unmined each year. We refer, of course to the English examination essays. Perhaps there is something about the magically original titles on offer ('The Best Day of My Holidays') which produces such a great fund of philosophical insight and canny wit from the candidates. Below is a selection from the second forms' masterpieces to show the Editors of the 'Oxford Book of Quotations' just what they are missing.

1. NARRATIVE SKILL.

A man with two big fangs and a black cape came to the door and said "Enter!" So I did and said I would like to use his telephone.

In the middle of the night we were awakened by howling noses.

Suddenly I heard creaking. I looked round and John had gone with the entrance.

I threw my bike over the tree and ran for the police.

A man came to the door. He was rather small. Nevertheless, I asked him for a room.

I asked him why I had to put soft shoes on. He said his master had powerful ears and could hear your heartbeat.

2. IMAGINATIVE POWER.

My parents died at the age of 32; I was twenty-two at the time.

My housekeeper, a clever and constructive man, ran and cooked the house.

Inset in the wall was a fireplace which was, I thought, a good place for a fire.

I climbed onto Jim's back and soon managed to unblock it.

The firemen were soon there, aiming the jets of their horses at the fire.

I could feel my stomach rambling with hunger.

3. SKILFUL LETTER WRITING

Dear Mum and Dad,

Having a great time here in Loch Lomond
.....

Dear Mum,

To-day the teacher told us we would be going out next Wednesday on a school tripe.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Having a really great time here. I've had some terrible stomach-aches. Ian was attacked by a barn-owl and a long-eared bat and he cut his leg badly. It had poison in it

THE SPECTATORS

The icy-cold wind blasts across the paddock,
The snow falling like confetti.
People, standing with hands in pockets,
Stamping their feet to keep them warm.

The men, huddled together like witches
At Black Masses, breathe hot breath.
Like frozen snowmen, they stand, silently
Thinking their own cold thoughts.

Peter Haresnape, 4th year

RICH MAN

I saw a rich man yesterday;
He was eating chips.
He ate most of them
And threw away the crispy ones.
Richie McKie

SURVIVOR'S TALE

By Kevin Jones (3rd Year)

ANOTHER 'MARIE CELESTE'? KINGSTON, JAMAICA. DEC. 29th 1971

A luxury yacht, 'The Miranda', was picked up by local fishermen earlier today. There was no sign of its six crew or its eight passengers, all friends of its wealthy American owner, Humphrey Johnson, the Colorado Insurance millionaire. Police say that no signs of any violence or catastrophe were revealed by their preliminary investigation.

'Times',
30th Dec. 1971

'MARIE CELESTE' CASE SURVIVOR?

A man in his late thirties was rescued from the sea early this morning. Papers found on his person indicate his identity as one of the missing guests of the 'Miranda' found adrift in mysterious circumstances five days ago.

'Jamaica Daily Gazette'
4th Jan. 1972

I didn't mean to hit the guy; I just had to. After all, he was about to shout "Cops!" I had to save myself you see, I just had to.

It was about twelve hours before that I'd busted out. The cops were hot on my tail. Evenutally I'd made my way to the town, Portillo, about fifty miles from Kingston, along the Jamaican coast, and I'd just ducked into this alley to catch my breath. To my horror I saw this guy coming out of the shadows. Well, I thought, this was a cop, so I punched before I looked. The body fell on to the sharp end of an old plank, protruding from the rubbish in one of the bins.

As the body hit the floor a small trickle of blood eddied across the ground, among the filth and debris. The body, a man, was obviously dead. My throat dried up and my stomach turned. I felt an overpowering desire to give in, give myself up.

I glanced back to the bright light of the alley's entrance. No one was there, so I weighed the facts. The cops were hot on my trail because I busted out. If they found me here with the body the consequences would be worse. However, I had to dump the body somewhere and he was roughly my size. I swapped clothes. This was a break, I thought; the wallet contained thirty pounds of Jamaican money and an invitation to a boat-trip or something.

I took the lid off the nearest trash can and removed some of the filth therein. The guy's body fitted perfectly. As I left him, I looked at the tired white face and I felt sorry for him. After all, he was only taking a short cut. The lid banged down.

Brushing my new clothes down I stepped into the warm sunlight, and a little more sure of myself. The was hot and the sky was deep blue and clear. A solitary gull circled, howling like a ghost for food. The people were busily moving in the streets, thronging in and out of the consuming buildings, colours merging.

Anyhow, I was still wanted and I merged into the shadows under the colourful awnings under which gullible tourists ogled and bought. Now and again a cop car would crawl along the street, faces peering, searching from within its hot confines. When this happened I'd cough and look at the nearest window.

I'd had my break but it didn't last. A cop was strolling down the street in my direction, looking at every face as it bobbed past. My nerve gave and I panicked. As the cop looked away I ran down the next street.

I was surprised. The sea stretched a blue mat before me, necklaced with white pearls which broke and reformed on the bosom of the shore.

"Hell!" I thought. I had to duck the cops. Surely I could rob a I then remembered the invite in the wallet. I took out the white oblong and read

Mr. Humphrey Johnson invites

RICHARD GREYSTON

to a party and cruise on board his yacht, 'Miranda', from the quay at Portillo at 4 o'clock Monday Afternoon, December 27th.

"So that's who I am!" I thought. "Richard Greyston".

I decided to try and bluff my way on board. This was my second break. It was Monday, December the twenty-seventh.

Fortunately, there were few boats on the Quay and I soon saw the 'Miranda'. It was a fairly big yacht, a cabin cruiser really, but on a larger scale. I could see people moving about on deck, and music sounded softly from the stereo on board. I gave a quick look around. No cops. I went ahead with my plan and last hope.

I walked boldly up the gangway and gave my invitation card in to a man sitting on the rail clutching a martini. It looked cool.

He glanced at the card. A flicker crossed his face.

"Greyston?" he queried.

"Yes," I replied. My skin had begun to itch; my fingers twitched.

"I don't recognise you," the man on the rail said.

Another man, likewise clutching a martini, came over. "Greyston? Richard Greyston?" the newcomer asked. His brow knitted, puzzled.

"Yes", I replied. I smiled wearily but to my relief a huge smile split his face.

"Hal's friend! Pleased to meet you!" he reached out his hand which I shook. "Where is Hal by the way?" he sipped his drink.

"Hal? He, er, couldn't make it. Sick.!!" I stumbled that out. I couldn't help but notice the dubious look on the first man's face.

"I'm John Stone," he said, "and that's your genial host, Humph".

"Hal talks a lot of you," I said. "I'm glad you invited me to come." I hoped to hell Hal wouldn't.

My third break: he didn't. The yacht pulled out of the harbour dead on four, the bow breaking the waves. Bags of bread were passed out and thrown to the ever-hungry gulls which wheeled and dipped, gullets open for bread.

"Humph likes birds," giggled one of the women next to me.

"Yes," I agreed, looking at her generous proportions.

My nerves gradually subsided and I mingled more with the guests; All except Stone, who kept giving me doubtful looks. From then on my luck changed along with the rest of the crew's.

Round about twelve, when the air was cool and the moon gave the sea a gift of diamonds, we were all clustered around the stereo, now tuned to the radio.

"..... and that con One moment! We have just received the following request from the Police. A man, five foot six, grey hair, has been found in a trash can in an alley in the small village of Portilo. Any information from possible witnesses, or people who saw him in the vicinity earlier today, will be gladly received by the police at Portilo. End of flash." The voice crackled away to be replaced by soft music.

My face probably whitened at that. I know I shook and spilt some gin over Maureen, who was on my lap.

"Hey," she said, "who's got nerves?"

"Sorry. Talk of dead bodies gives me the shakes. I think I'll go to bed." My eyes caught the look on Stone's face. I stayed for a moment hidden in the cool shadows. The air escaped me as I heard Stone tell them I was the killer. He just came out with it, supporting his statement with pretty convincing evidence.

A fire burst among the listeners and they stood up. The men at least.

"Calm down," said Stone, gesturing. "Don't let him know. We'll get him tomorrow. Act normally."

"No wonder he was nervous," said Maureen. "The creep."

I slid into my cabin. My faith in my luck was gone. I felt cheated, robbed. A primeaval instinct surged into my consciousness. My eyes blazed, dripping fire. I'd killed once, I'd do it again. Fourteen people. I'd then get the boat, head for, for ... I had no destination. I thought I'd play it by ear. But first I needed a weapon. I lay on the bed, waiting for the rest to sleep.

Later I searched for a weapon. It took five minutes to find a flare gun and fourteen flares. I must have been mad. Mad? Wasn't that my trouble all along? Mad! Mad!

THE PATIENT HERE BROKE INTO HYSTERICS. IT WAS LATER HE WENT ON, HAVING RECOVERED SOME COMPOSURE:

"Deciding not to sleep in my cabin, I hid under the tarpaulin covering the lifeboat. It was dark and cramped and I was relieved when the probing fingers of the new dawn showed underneath the canvas.

The other guests eventually made their way up to the deck, talking and rubbing their cold arms. Rifles were passed out.

Stone suddenly burst on to the deck, emerging quickly from the dark well of the inside of the boat.

"He's gone!" he shouted. "His bed's not been slept in."

Choosing my moment I ripped back the tarpaulin and brandished the flare gun.

"Freeze!" I commanded. "Over to the rail, guns above your head. No talking!" The guests and crew reluctantly complied. I caught a whispered 'Mad', which didn't help my temper. If I'd been unsure before, that settled it finally. They just stared ahead, helpless.

"R-Right. Get into the other life boat. Move! No funny business!" My hand was wavering; I hoped my nerves didn't show.

The guests and crew got into the life boat. The morning was bright and blue, the sea sparkled and heaved with a regular monotony.

Making sure the occupants knew I had a weapon, I pointed the flare gun at them as I lowered the boat. I lashed the

rope leading from the bow onto the rail. The boat trailed, a lost pup, behind the boat.

Everyone looked at me, staring, I raised the gun and took careful and deliberate aim. You could see the terror scrawled across their faces as the realisation dawned.

The sun danced across the copper barrel of the gun lazily. The first flare ploughed into the uncertain mass. The colour was green. Billows of downy smoke blossomed forth as each successive flare lit up the pyre. Red, Blue, Green, Green, Yellow people died.

The glare from the flares showed the guests and crew choked and burnt, screaming, pushing, shouting for mercy, help, God, the devil!

Finally, the corpses finished their Dance Macabre and lay still, smouldering. The life boat began to burn and I watched with gruesome interest as it sank slowly in to the sea, great gouts of evil steam fountaining forth as each part of the fire was doused.

One by one the empty human husks dislodged themselves from the fusion of death and walked the current of the sea on their separate ways.

I watched with too much intensity and interest. I leaned over at a sharp angle and, as the boat pitched suddenly, fell over the side. With a yelp I plunged under the sea. The 'Miranda' ploughed on crewless, leaving me in the middle of the ocean. I screamed for help. There was no one left to offer any.

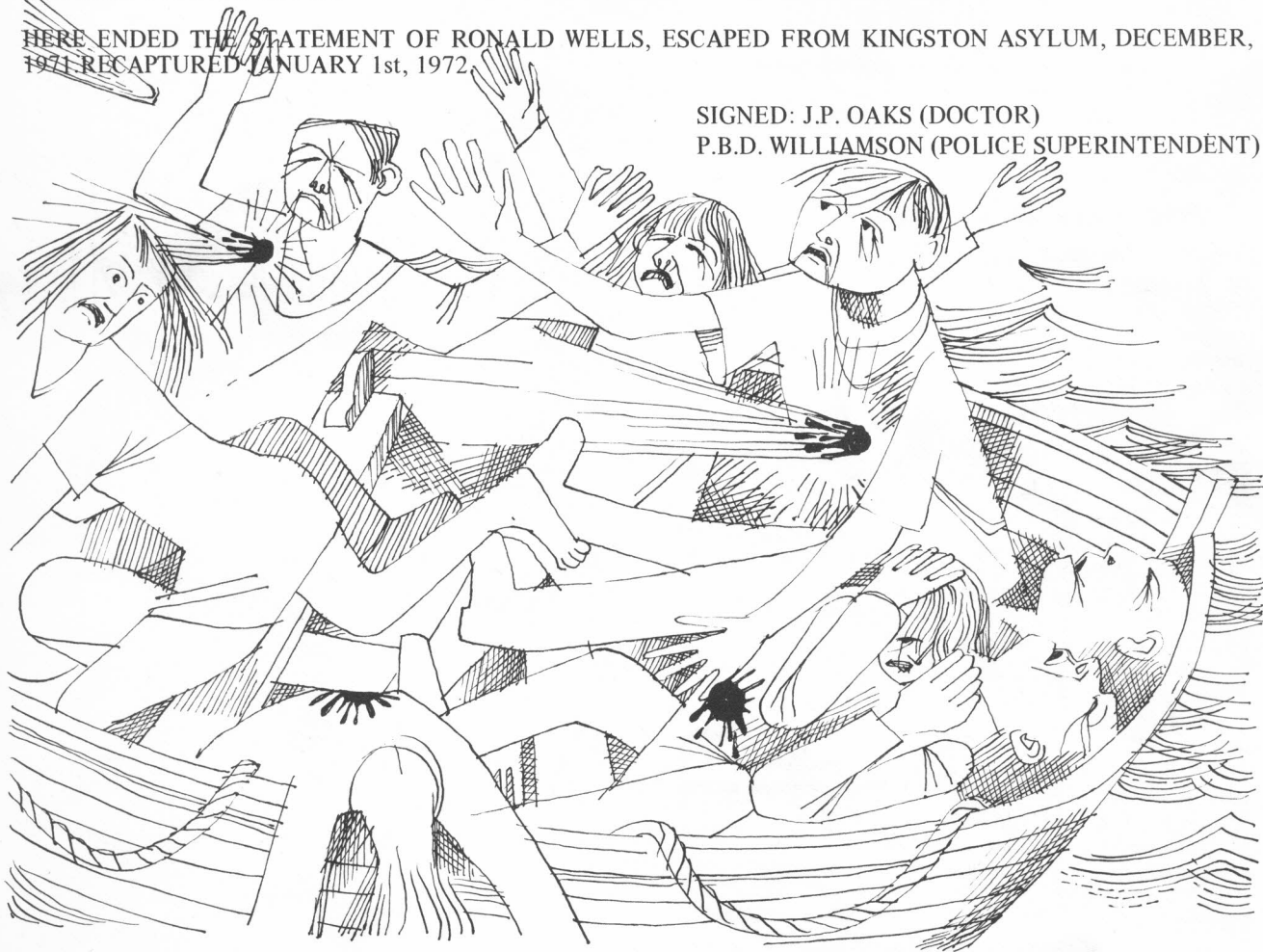
I grasped, a suckling infant, or should I say "Enfant Terrible", at the piece of wood, part of the burnt boat, which came my way. My eyes closed. I was cold, exhausted and nauseated.

I awoke screaming, the luminous orb of a light bulb probing my eyes. I realised I'd been netted and given to the authorities. You know the rest.

HERE ENDED THE STATEMENT OF RONALD WELLS, ESCAPED FROM KINGSTON ASYLUM, DECEMBER, 1971 RECAPTURED JANUARY 1st, 1972.

SIGNED: J.P. OAKS (DOCTOR)

P.B.D. WILLIAMSON (POLICE SUPERINTENDENT)



BIRKENHEAD ATT

Thirty third year boys, armed to the teeth with lethal ball-point pens and destructive felt tips have rampaged through the town this term, let loose from a secret training-camp somewhere in the foothills of Bidston, it is rumoured. Here are some of their targets.

THE M53 MOTORWAY

Suddenly, as a bomb exploding in a quiet graveyard,
The stillness of the warm, fresh countryside
Is shattered by the progress of man.
Fields are filled with workers,
Most are cursing Irishmen,
Wielding shovels to dig trenches;
Lorries arrive full of cement and tar.

Months pass by, then
There lies across the torn
Meadows, a huge concrete carpet;
The M53 is born.

Gary Wigfield

THE DUSTBINMEN

Every Tuesday, sharp on nine,
The dust cart pays a call,
So that its inhabitants
Can empty our refuse,
One week old,
Rotting in our dirty bins.
There's one man I watch
Who wears no cap.
His dress is none too poor.
He lifts our bin, like Atlas,
On to his sturdy shoulder,
And lunges forward thus.
He tips away our refuse
Into the back of the dustcart,
Then he returns our bin,
And he's away. He'll be back
Next week, or will he?
We never meet this man,
But I watch him,
He's pleased to think,
So he can flex his muscular arms,
To show his watcher
That he has had some practice
At the thing he knows best,
Carrying,
And emptying,
The bins.

Larry Q. Jones



TRACKED BY POETS

THE MARKET-PLACE

The dirty cobbles,
The hungry cats and pigeons nesting,
Broken glass,
The dirt and debris.
The smell of fish on makeshift stalls,
Blends with the clamour of children's calls.
The vegetable stall with fruit and flowers,
The hag who sits for all the hours.
Desultory boys among the crowd, seethed, bewildered,
Wander round.
The bits of litter that blow about
That smelly market-place.

Keith Hudson

'OLD' BILLY

'Old' Billy is in his thirties.
But why does he look so old?
He sleeps in his own four poster—
A bench in the park.
He has finest linen—
Yesterday's newspaper.
He only eats when he can
Get food.

Some people eye him with pity,
Others look on with laughing eyes.
But no one does anything to help.
For why should they?

Birkenhead is good to Billy.
After all, we do have a very
Fine park.
Billy is lucky.
Not everyone has fine majestic
Pillars of grey stone at the
Sides of their front gates!

Peter Reeve

ONCE DYING — NOW DEAD

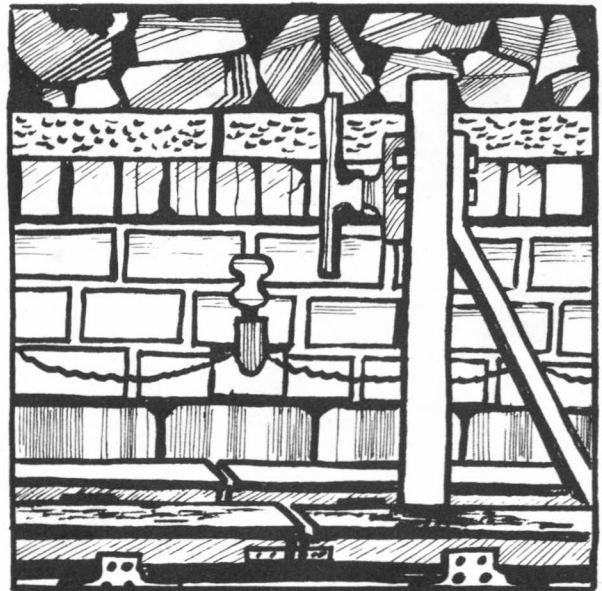
The rubble-strewn platforms,
The weighing-bridge ripped out,
The derelict office.
Paint-blistered doors,
Behind which clerks and office boys used to sit,
The grimy walls bear nothing now.

Twenty years in the past,
Prosperous and growing,
Steaming, wheezing loco's.
What's time done to them?

The decaying, rusting buffers,
The tracks torn up and gone.
With it the track of Hinderton Road;
Time's killed, antiquated all of them.

The black diamond's era ends,
The toppled steam will die,
No longer the broken-nailed merchants laugh.
Coal was doomed to die!

Bruce Boden



FLAYBRICK ROAD CEMETERY

Now I can see the old church,
Its barbed-wire fence surrounding it,
The old broken windows glitter in the moon light.
A few worn out steps,
Some with moss covering them.
Then there is an iron gate,
With a coat of rust enclosing it.
There are many old graves,
A few new ones,
But all look the same at dead of night.
Some are rough,
Some smooth,
Some are cracked,
Some even open.
To the right I see the clock,
Its great black hands showing on the white face,
Like two cracks across an egg shell.

Christopher Caton



THE PRIORY

Once Birkenhead's nucleus of power,
Its walls now cracked by industry,
Like a spider being strangled by its
Own web.
Its atmosphere smelling of decay and death.
It seems the persevering spider is dead,
Yet people just look on.
After all, it's of no importance to them,
So they disregard it;
Their rejected son.
But still the priory remains uncrushed,
Showing that maybe there is still
Some hope.

Ian McCann

NORTH END – DEAD END

They stand on a corner, swearing and jeering
And their parents leave home
Every once and again.

Nothing to do – sitting on the step of some
Dirty old pub
Near Ilchester Square.

Nobody wants them, nobody cares –
Crowded together, bad eggs
In one basket.

They mope around the chippy, hours on end,
A home from home.
Just mooding around.

Never buy any chips unless their Mum has
Won on the nags.
But she's got no luck.

Some call them night prowlers – but there's nothing to do
Except beat up small children.
A fine way to live.

Sometimes we wonder, are they really all bad?
Yet we'll never find out,
For we simply don't care.

Paul Shakespeare

THE FLOWER WOMAN

"Flowers for sale!"

She cries in vain to the rippling crowd,
Which passes and pays no heed
As it hurtles into the subterranean warren;
Gateway to another world.

She remembers the past,
And a youth long gone,
And a Birkenhead so clean and gay,
A place for the young.
Now it's a place to forget.

The whirling days of a tempestuous youth,
In a town so full of theatres
And a busily throbbing market,
Flood her mind with a tide of memory,
Which is washed ashore
On a bank of closed-down signs and
Concrete stillness.
She sits with her flowers and forgets.

Kevin Jones

OUR BACKYARD

Our backyard is a dismal place!
My father tries to cultivate it,
But in vain, for although
Some flowers grow there, it yields little.
My grandmother tries to grow chives,
Mint and parsley,
And though she puts plenty of seed down
Not much is produced.
My mother is content to watch the efforts
Of my father and grandmother,
Whilst I sit back and hope it will
Be made into a room that I can use.
I look down at the dismal
Blackened walls,
And I think of its melancholy plight,
For it's stood 60 years and will probably
Be down in 10.
And while my spirits rapidly deteriorate
My grandmother has of late,
Decided to leave it as it is, and
Try yet again to produce something there.
Anthony Oliver

THE LIBRARY

The Library has a haughty air.
Its glossy books along the shelves.
A place for enjoyable quiet,
While wide oak shelves offer their books,
Like goods in the supermarket.
Each packet has its own label,
And each its own free gift
To offer to the people.
But foods and books don't feed the same.
One feeds the stomach, and one the brain.
Stephen McLaughlin



CENSORED!

In compiling this splendid publication, several articles were handed in to the editors which, for various reasons, we couldn't publish. These various reasons may be found at break each day in a large room a few feet due east of the Headmaster's office Nevertheless, we defy the vice-like censorship of our eminent tutors and produce, below, the HEADLINES FROM STORIES WE COULD NOT PRINT!

"I WALKED INTO MR. EDGAR - AND LIVED!"

"I HAD 9 O-LEVELS AND 3 A-LEVELS; BUT DARE I WALK INTO THE SIXTH FORM WITH A NEW HAIR CUT?"

"I PEEPED INTO THE ROOM. IT WAS HORRIBLE - A BIOLOGY TEACHER FENCING WITH A SEMI-DISSECTED RAT!"

EXCLUSIVE:- Was he the bravest man in the world? "YES!" say those who saw him ripped to pieces trying to make a collection in the staff room!

CONFESSIONS:- "I know what really happened to last year's activity fund - we bought a packet of chalk with it."

EXTRA - CARETAKER MAULED BY A HORDE OF HELL'S CLEANERS- "SHARPENED MOPS" - accusation to be investigated.

REVEALED: WE NAME THE DOMESTIC SCIENCE TEACHER WHO RODE A LAWN MOWER DOWN THE M53 MOTORWAY - WITHOUT BRAKES!

"EXAM PAPERS THAT MADE EVEN ME FLINCH IN HORROR" by Mr. X, a retired maths teacher.

"THE LIMP THAT MADE CORRIDOR DUTY UNBEARABLE".

"WHY I PUT FOREIGN BODIES IN THE STAFF TEA" - THE STORY OF A REVENGE-CRAZED FRENCH MASTER.

THE DAY THE P.E. DEPARTMENT WENT NAP, STORMED THE KITCHENS, AND SAVAGED A LARGE STEAK PIE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SCHOOL BULLY WHO CHALLENGED MISS ROBERTS, THE PRIM LIBRARIAN, ARMED WITH AN EMPTY SQUEEZY BOTTLE.

SCHOOL DENTIST DENIES BLACK AND DECKER SPONSORSHIP CLAIMS, "I've had my fill," says Dr. A. Jones, after resignation.
R.M.

DAVIES'S MOTOR TUITION

(Est; 20 years)

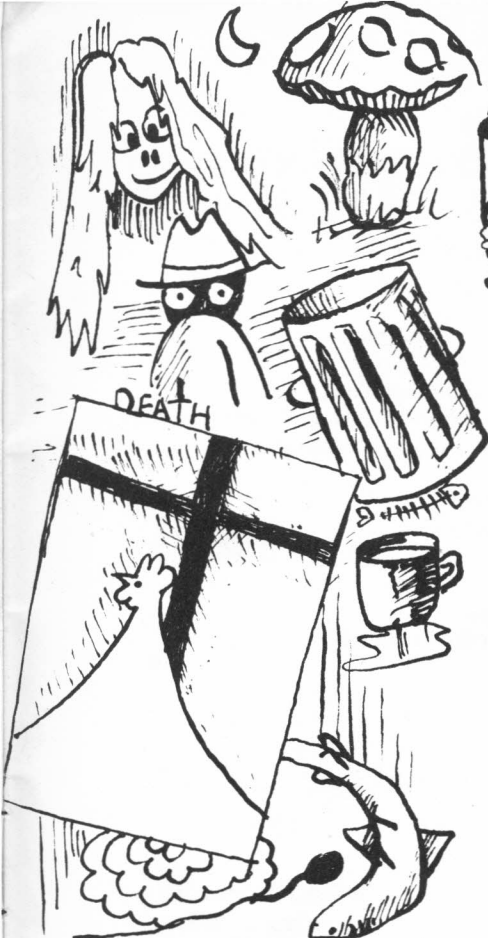
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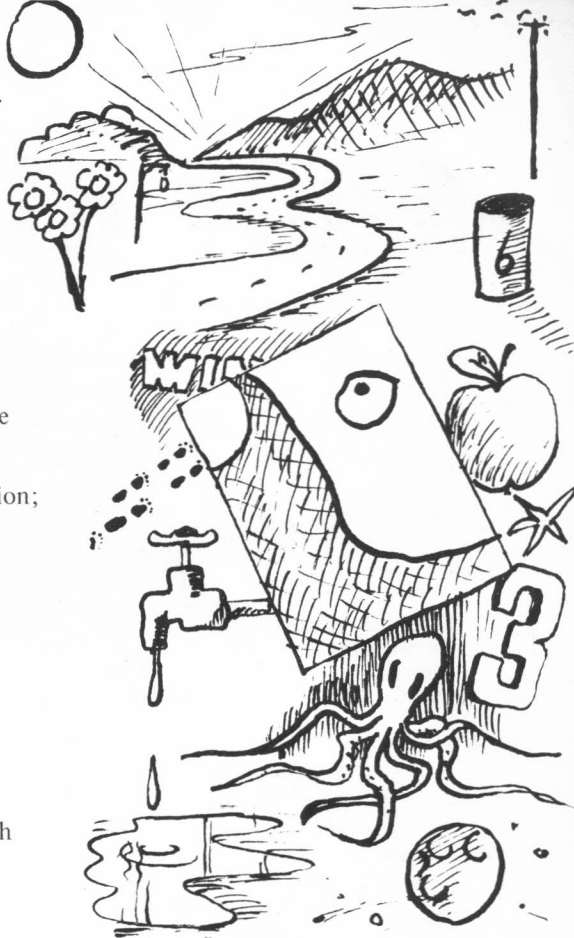


DOODLE-ING

To remove myself from an atmosphere
of depression,
A pen and paper will suffice,
Making weird patterns, showing emotion;
A will to travel, to leave,
To become something else,
Demon, angel, tree or bin,
Depending upon my mood.

In lessons, notes more notes,
Dislike, need, need a change,
Pencil in hand,
Drawing the pathway to eternity,
Loving, hating, cursing,
In a code as yet undecipherable.

Ron James, Upper 4th



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BIDSTON AVENUE

NEW DAY

Morning comes for Swithun;
New day, rising slowly;
Rising, raining, dawning.
Morning.

Swithun welcomes New Day
Politely, slightly
Shy of the stranger he's met before
Yet never met.

Rises, dresses, shines his toes
And cleans his teeth meticulously,
Disowning Morning Face upon the wall.
Swithun prepares.

Life returning now
And Swithun even half enjoys
New Day,
Company.

Laughs to think that yesterday
He, Swithun,
Thought too much what New Day
Would present and what withhold.

Philip Hall, Upper 6th

THE SEASIDE

The sand like gold,
The sea like glass.
In the scorching sun
A beach buggy buzzing round
Like a bee,
Hovering over the sand.
Seagulls floating,
Wheeling,
Down,
Round.
Crabs like heavily armoured tanks
Stagger across the sand.
Boats bob up and down
Like ducks on a lake.
Jellyfish floating on the sea
Like patterned balloons.
White surf monsters
Rising from the deep.

Colin Stephenson, 2nd year

THE SUPER-HEROES OF YESTERDAY

How do you plead now Superman?
Your attempts to catch my imagination are futile.
You only just cling on to the crumbling edges of reality.
The Atom has shrunk away to nothing.
Pollution has finally caught up with the Sub-Marina.
And I have finally outgrown Giant man.
My imagination has been harnessed;
So too have the powers that you possessed.
They are no longer strong enough to hold me down in the
world of fantasy.
The years have passed since we first met.
My imagination has thrived on the comic books.
Reality killed you, my friends,
Reality and I.

Paul Wylde, 4th year

DEATH OF A ONCE POPULAR SEA-SIDE RESORT

When I look around,
I marvel at the work of man.
The efficiency of how he stands,
kills, destroys, corrupts, and himself dies.
Yesterday, I watched the sea
crawl in, and leap, then smash and lie
like broken eggs on the sea wall.
I watched it swirl, cruel and black.
And even at death a dawning call
the people of this dying place
drive their earth train,
into oblivion, without a trace.
I feel the rose passed them by;
they chose a plastic novelty instead.
I stand and watch the sea by the side
of steps, leading down,
down into a dream drowning reality.
If only they would walk down
these steps, beyond, into the swirling,
biting, bitter water. Stop killing yourselves,
and us, and old men who sit swearing
at us for carrying these weights.
Their lives are steep
With confusion. They are decaying sights.
I look down beyond that last step.

Martyn Williams, 5th year

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AFTER THE FIFTH FORM

From next year, all boys will stay on at school until the age of sixteen. At that age they must then decide, with their parents' and teachers' help, what they will do next. Two alternatives are considered below by members of staff whose job it is either to guide the school leavers into suitable careers or to organise their sixth form studies. An anonymous contributor has provided us with a third, chilling, alternative.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Career work in our school is being carried out against a background of widespread unemployment, with present figures indicating a million out of work. The figure on Merseyside shows that the area is particularly prone to a lack of job opportunities, with unemployment well above the national average. Despite all this, we have achieved a great deal in finding suitable places for school leavers.

The lessons to be learnt are obvious. With dozens of applicants for each vacancy, an employer will tend to select from among the better qualified. Therefore, any boy who is able to enter for external examinations in 'O' level G.C.E., and C.S.E. should seize the opportunity to do so and work hard towards succeeding.

To help them choose a suitable career, during the year senior pupils have visited factories, apprentice training centres, the Nautical Training College and local police and fire stations. They have also been able to attend talks and film-shows by representatives from all the Armed Forces, the building, electrical, engineering, sugar-refining and catering industries and the Social Services. In addition to all this, boys are able to use our large career library, which is open every afternoon (except Wednesday) until 17.30 hours. Here they will find information on all trades and professions and a huge stock of interesting books and pamphlets. It is vital that boys should make best use of these facilities while making up their minds which job to choose.

All senior boys who wish for advice on careers, or help in writing letters to firms or colleges, are invited to contact the careers master at any time.

To conclude, it must be said that boys who wish to have happy and successful lives in careers that will

interest them should make full and regular use of the facilities available in the careers library; they should also realise that politeness, honesty and hardwork are demanded by all employers today.

F.T.

THE SIXTH FORM

There is, unfortunately, an almost total ignorance within the school as to the nature and function of the Sixth Form. To many it is simply a collection of young men who congregate in a pre-fabricated appendage to the bricks and mortar of the Institute building proper.

It is most important, then, that people who contemplate entering the sixth next year should understand fully what they can gain from such an undertaking. Four questions are normally asked by prospective sixth-formers, the answers to which could serve as an introduction to our mode of operation:

- (a) What is the sixth form?
 - (b) What has the sixth form to offer me?
 - (c) How do I enter?
 - (d) Why should I bother?
-
- (a) The Sixth form is an almost self-contained teaching unit consisting of three classrooms and a library, although use is made of labs and practical facilities elsewhere. Its prime function is to prepare students for 'A' level and 'S' level G.C.E. examinations, but it also provides opportunities for boys studying one or two 'A' levels to increase their number of 'O' level passes.
 - (b) The major benefit we offer is, of course, the qualifications at 'A' level which will enable a

student to enter further education or, perhaps, to choose a well-paid and interesting job after school. One advantage of the comprehensive system has been that we are able to offer a choice from 15 subjects at 'A' level, which compares very well with other schools in the area. The more boys who enter the sixth means the more subjects that can be offered.

We also offer an interesting social life which again will expand as our numbers increase. This year bridge lessons were given in the first term and competitions have already been held. Regular discussions and debates have proved popular, whilst social evenings and dances have been a regular and enjoyable feature. Visits to theatres and other local functions received popular support.

The Unit's library to which boys have access at all times is excellently stocked and offers scope for private study and research. It is dedicated to Wilfred Owen, a scholar at the Institute in the first decade of the century, and England's most famous war-poet. We are visited by scholars from all over the country who are researching Owen's life and poetry.

- (c) The Sixth form course lasts for a minimum of two years in which the normal candidate will study for 3 'A' levels and General Studies 'A' level as well. To qualify for this type of course, designed principally for University candidates, you would ideally need at least 5 'O' levels. However, opportunities are given for candidates to improve their score of 'O' levels whilst at their 'A' level studies.

Others use the Sixth prior to entering business or commerce, as a way of getting one or two 'A' levels as additional qualifications and of increasing the number or quality of their 'O' levels.

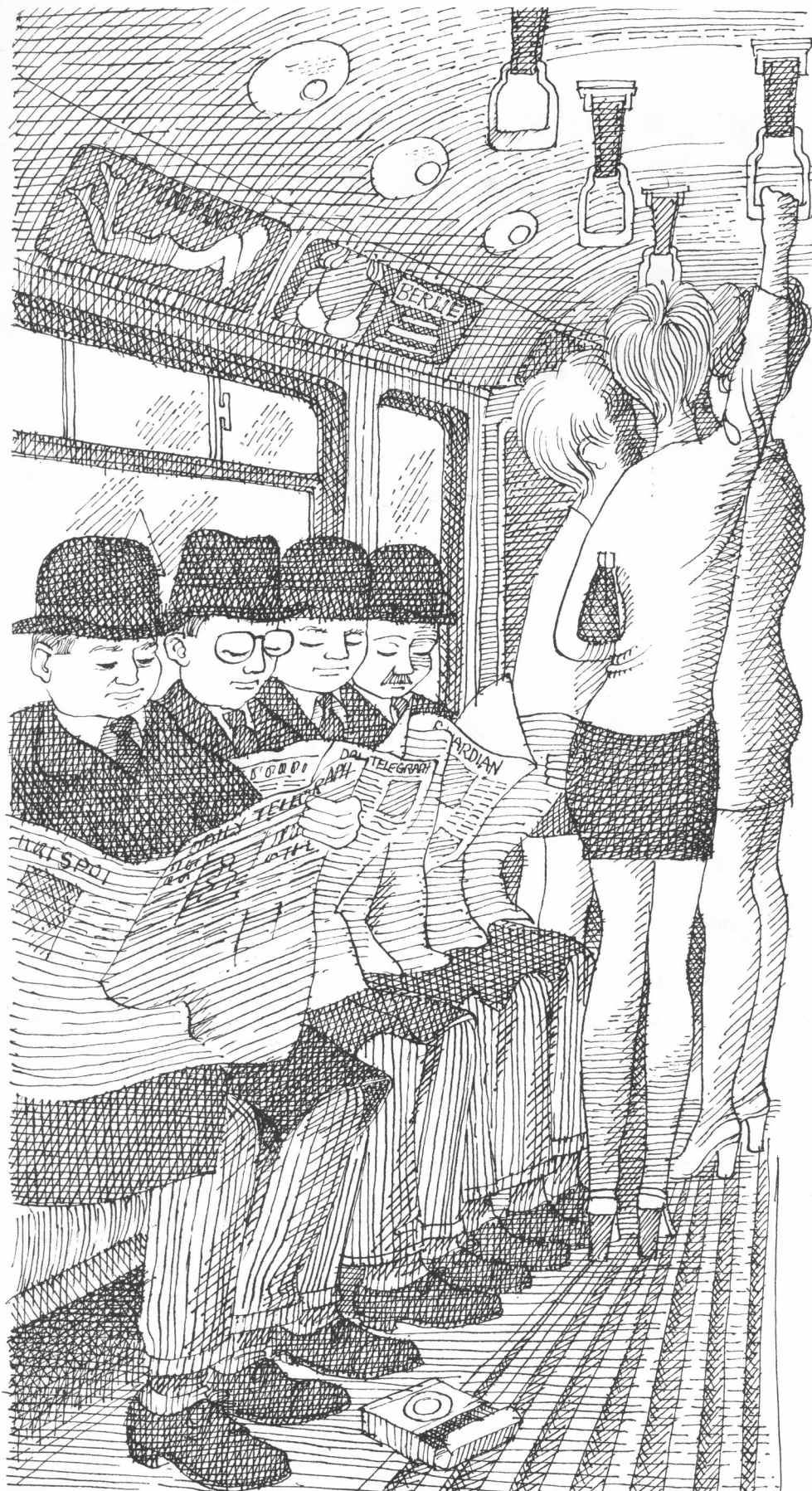
- (d) Why bother? For entry into further education, sixth form study is essential. It's as simple as that. In many professions — notably banking, insurance and surveying — the sixth form course is seen as almost essential and will give entry at well above the minimum level in promotion and wages. In industry and the forces, an 'A' level qualification often leads to an opportunity of gaining a degree whilst being paid wages — through sandwich courses at Polytechnics and Universities. In fact, if you are able enough, you cannot afford to forgo the opportunity of completing your career at school in the fullest way possible.

THE SUBURBAN MAN

And when they've all left to get their degrees and careers and jail-sentences, I wonder how many will eventually emerge from the cocoon of school-blazer and grey flannels to dazzle the world in the form of that common and gaudy insect, the Suburban Man. Looking about at the present upper school, I can see the likely ones already undertaking that startling metamorphosis: they are competitive yet conservative, hard-working and unimaginative with plenty of drive but nowhere to head towards. A further period of pupation in a middle-class sixth-form and University and they will disappear from view for a while to re-emerge, fledging their newly-acquired and hardly dry pound notes in some convenient suburb.

A close study is needed to explain the enigmatic workings of this specie's mind. It seems to devote a life trying to appear more wealthy and generous than its neighbours and will expend enormous reserves of energy on doing so. They meet in a continuous round of committee-meetings, coffee-mornings, golf matches and country clubs, all of which allows them to be seen with the right people. This they can turn to their advantage: contacts help in their business lives and enable them to earn more money. And indeed, spending this money takes as much hard work and ingenuity as earning it: the longer their cars, the more exotic their holidays, the denser their children (and consequently the more expensive their schooling), the happier they appear to be. A bigger wedding with more guests, a bigger colour T.V. set, a better weekend cottage, outboard motor, second car, and pony for the daughter would appear to be the only goals in Suburban Man's life — a pitiable routine of earn and spend.

This unsavoury creature, I'm afraid to say, is also cannibalistic. This is hardly shocking as such a dreadful life-cycle is sure to bring out the worst in any animal. Suburban Man, however, is particularly unpleasant in its habits: it is given to back-stabbing, trampling others underfoot and other nasty tricks in order to gain social superiority. Dislike and envy, smoothed over neatly with a polished hypocrisy, are the dominant characteristics which make this creature so easily recognisable.



What emotions must simmer and boil behind similar doors of identical houses in the stereotyped avenues of suburbia! Mon repos — Mon chapeau!

So if you're due to leave school and feel the instinctive urge somewhere deep in your brain telling you that suburbia is the place for you, fight it with what remains of your intelligence. If you find you don't believe a word of this objective criticism, it's probably too late to save you anyway. Good luck; you'll need it!

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

There are strange boys in every school who are not sufficiently intelligent to see the obvious pleasures of being sat upon by large men on muddy rugby fields, or having lethal leather balls aimed at their tender parts, or risking insanity by tedium at chess congresses. For these despicable dropouts there exists a wealth of alternative activities to which previous editors have chosen not to give prominence. Bravely, acting on our democratic principles, we have decided this once to publish their annual reports. We advise our younger readers, or those easily offended, to pass on to lighter things on other pages.

The Ascent on Bidston Hill!

EXPLORATION SOCIETY

The coach came to pick us up at 1.30 p.m. and we all took our places, preparing for the long journey ahead. We passed the famous Flaybrick Cemetery at 1.32 p.m. and arrived at base camp 1, under the Northface, at 1.33 p.m. We stood about in awed amazement. We were beholding the most difficult climb since the coach steps. It was BIDSTON HILL! Clouds encircled the dizzy heights. Our hearts were pounding — none of us had attempted anything so dangerous before. Indeed, three boys needed a sniff of oxygen to calm them down because of the altitude and the tremendous excitement!

We hauled our equipment out of the boot, and waited for our guide, Hilary Tempting, to disentangle himself from the miles of rope and ice axes that swaddled him. We slept a troubled night through howling gales and blizzards, exposed as we were to the strong east wind blowing up from Laird Street. In the morning we fought our way through virgin crisp packets and ale bottles, littered with trees, trying to reach base camp 2. It was there the **real** climbing would begin. We reached our destination, distinguished by small patches of land cultivated by the natives and called "allotments" by them.

The next morning found us huddled together in frenzied anticipation, while Hilary tried to put us into some order, preparing for the assault on the Northface. Suddenly, two boys panicked, and threw themselves off a precarious bridge into the icy depths of Vyner Road South. Presuming them dead, we donned our oxygen masks and began the climb.

Sir Hilary swung himself confidently up the first 10 feet of rock, only to stop suddenly, white-faced, screaming something about a protruding tree stump. Our Sherpas, under the impression that he was possessed by some evil spirits, dropped their packs and fled, leaving us to carry our sandwich boxes and thermos flasks single handed. We spent the next 2 days inching our way up dangerous crags, around deadly overhangs and, being somewhat carried away by our enthusiasm, over the top of an ancient windmill, which Hilary told us to our later amazement was the only one on the top of Bidston Hill.

We eventually managed to reach the wind-blasted summit. Sir Hilary raised the school flag, and we stood to attention, drawing in great breaths of exhilaration from the clean air. (What a superb view! Why, from there, the Mersey actually looked like water!).

Truly a memorable moment for the School, and a worthy expedition.

by A. Survivor (L.VI)

AN INTERESTING DAY OUT

CAREERS TRIP

On the 29th May, the whole of our form, 4 XY, went on a most informative visit to Neston Sewage Farm. On that chilly morning, thirty excited boys sat on the school bus clutching their Education Committee Gas Masks and tablets of rat-repellent. Soon we reached our destination in sunny Neston. It was interesting over the last few miles to see how the driver put away his maps and put his nose out of the window instead. A true professional!

We were all stunned by the beauty of the ponds and it was all we could do to contain X. Crimond from donning his trunks and leaping into this warm, viscous sea. Only the thought of those neutralising, pulping and liquifying machines deterred him, but he insisted on a happy paddle before we went on our way — “Quelle Joie!”

Later we explored Birkenhead — underground! Looking around the magnificent system of sewers and pipes some of us concluded it was even nicer down there than up above! The guide told us that even in the event of a full-scale nuclear attack, Birkenhead's sewage needs could be met adequately. This marvellous reassurance seemed to settle our wheezing group and we sat down to eat our pre-packed lunches in the slimy cool of pipe 414, North Branch — “Quelle Vie!”

In the afternoon we visited the impressive new chemical fertilizer converter in which our unfortunate Biology Teacher and Expedition Leader was to meet his doom. Mr. F. Luent will be much missed, but still continues to give valuable service to the field in which he served throughout his life. The lock of hair, watch and shoelace rescued from the whirling green and silver blades of the vast machine are to be installed in a special showcase in the Biology Laboratory.

Time flew and our valuable trip ended as scheduled at 5.30. A plastic bag full of souvenirs was a welcome gift from the Head Sewerman as we wearily boarded our homeward bound coach, the heads of more than one of our members cleansed of all thoughts of useless ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels and instead filled with hopeful visions of a happy future in the Sewage Disposal Service.

Indeed, a most enjoyable trip and certainly no waste of time.

S. Pfpinhacker (4XY)

ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOOL WITCHCRAFT SOCIETY

Are you interested in turning Latin Masters into blocks of stone, — or blocks of stone into Latin Masters for that matter? Had you attended our informative meetings this past year, the power to do both might have been yours.

The first meeting of this popular society was on October 31st when the annual dinner was held in our regular meeting-place, Flaybrick Road Cemetery. The dinner ladies are to be congratulated for their superb dishes — the rabbit entrails with just a soupcon of bats' blood being particularly applauded. Chief item on the agenda was the presentation of a school cap (black, pointed,) to thirteen members of the school coven who did wonders for the esteem of the school at the International spell-casting event in Transylvania last June. Twelve sixth-formers and a frog have never looked prouder!

Speakers included Croker of the Fifth, who spoke at length on the new publications “Schoolboy's Guide to Bloodcurdling Screams” and “The Oxford Book of Curses”.

He spoke at such length, in fact, that we all breathed a sigh of relief when Mr. President turned him into a beetle and stamped on him.

Our annual dance was a great success. Bidston Hill by firelight is a spectacle few of us will forget, and the spirited dancing and singing was enjoyed by all. Members of the local covens gave warm thanks before flying home and we received several invitations to other local events because of our efforts.

Congratulations to P. Whippet and G. Hound who have both been made Queen's Witches. We are proud to have you in our little society.

Another cause for pride was the needle-match between our own society and that of Corpus Christi, which we won, 5 spirits to 1. Well done team!

The match was not without incident, and we were glad to see that their captain was sent off in the second half for turning the referee, Mr. Boore, into a six-inch cube of blood-shot slime; the only decision possible in the circumstances.

Future events include a trip to Stonehenge next Halloween (a special forty seater Crosville Express broomstick leaves school at 9 p.m.) and a host of other social functions. Our local social help scheme includes a plan to turn Ilchester Square into a tropical seaside resort by spell-casting.

by a Society Member

SPORT

SOCCER

SECOND YEAR

RESULTS

Played 10 Won 9 Lost 1
Goals for 40 Against 10

WINNERS, BIRKENHEAD TOWN CUP

This has been a very successful year for the team. Captained by A. McKie, the team have played adventurous football which has brought excellent results.

In the Birkenhead Town Cup the team won the trophy for the second year running, beating St. Hughes 4-3 after extra time in an exciting final. The team did very well to fight back to win in both the semi-final and final.

It is hoped that the team carry on the performances through their school careers, as there are lots of promising players among the squad. Congratulations to all members of the team are richly deserved for their season of outstanding successes.

THIRD YEAR

This season we played 11 games of which we lost only two. Our best win was 10-2 against Wellington School, whilst our worst defeat was suffered at the hands (or feet) of Pensby, 5-2. However, we produced our best team effort to beat this same team 6-0 later in the season. Another notable effort produced a win against St. Hugh's, a very strong team; after being 4-2 down, we pulled back to a 5-4 victory.

The season's top scorer was centre-forward C. Skillen. He has been top scorer for three years running.

Altogether, then, this was a satisfactory season, but it was a great pity that the one occasion when we could find no form at all was the match against St. Hugh's when we were knocked out of the cup 1-0. Otherwise we would certainly have had a good chance to go on and win the trophy.

FOURTH YEAR

This year the fourth year XI was a very strong team, having had six of the team chosen to represent Birkenhead Schoolboys at the same time, the six being P. Sheridan, J. McKie, G. Turner, K. Whittingham, G. Knight and C. Dawson.

The school team was one of the best, if not the best, in Birkenhead and Wirral. The fourth year XI beat Woodchurch High School, unbeaten in three years, twice this season, once in the Birkenhead Schools K.O. Cup. During this game Phil Sheridan received a serious eye injury and this kept him out of the semi-final of the Birkenhead Schools Cup - in which we were beaten by Corpus Christi - the eventual winners.

The team reached the quarter finals of the Emberton Cup but were beaten by Fisher-More School, Widnes.

All in all, it has been on the one hand a successful season, and on the other rather disappointing, being denied as we were, of any trophy worthy of this excellent team.

John McKie (Captain)

FIFTH YEAR

Despite the enthusiasm shown by the team, the season could scarcely be considered a success, as only one win, and one draw were gained from ten matches.

Lack of success cannot be attributed to a single fault, but it would be fair to say that a marked tendency to play as

individuals, rather than as part of an attack or a defence, contributed to several defeats. Much useful work by a forward was often wasted; for, when finding himself under pressure, he was unable to get the necessary support. Nor did the defence always do what was expected of it, as was evidenced by the School's 6-0 defeat by St. Hugh's.

Jackson worked well as captain and good support was given by Honey, Edwards, Tregoning, McFarlane and Ithell.

In the first round of the Birkenhead Schools Knock-out Competition (5 years) the school lost to Park High 3-1. It was, incidentally, against Park High, on another occasion, that the school gained its solitary victory, 3-2.

HOUSE SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

Tate	16 points	Westminster	10 points
Cohen	12 points	Atkin	8 points
Stitt	11 points	Davies	6 points

RUGBY

FIRST XV

The early season was marked by the tragic illness of Mr. Denis Hughes who brought so much enthusiasm and competence to the schools' rugby that his absence at the beginning of the season was a bitter blow. The most obvious and serious problem, which presented itself throughout the season, was the very limited number of players available. However, the arrival of Merry and the return from premature retirement of A. D. Lewis helped to ease the problem. Very few old colours had returned, though most of the pack had some 1st XV experience. The squad never numbered more than 16. However, we were fortunate not to suffer many serious injuries; D. L. Williams broke a collarbone towards the end of the season, Heyworth already having suffered a broken leg through a motor-cycle accident. Consequently most of the players had a 100% playing record.

The lack of many real class attacking backs, combined with a very fine pack determined the style of game we were forced to adopt. Danger lay in the fear that an opposition pack would dominate and gain a tremendous monopoly of the ball, whereby putting the backs under constant pressure. However in a season of generally very high scoring and with the introduction of the 4 points try, no school managed to score more than 25 pts. against us. This speaks volumes for the character and spirit of a side who, realising their limitations, never spared themselves, always tackled courageously and gained the admiration of all opponents. Typically, some of the best performances were against the very strongest schools. The match against Grove Park in Wrexham was lost 18-15 to a try in the very last minute after being 10pts. down in the opening 5 minutes. This was a tremendous performance, as was the effort against Ellesmere Port Grammar School, the strongest school XV in Cheshire, where the entire side played magnificently giving the Port one of their hardest matches of the season. Particularly pleasing was to record victories against our local rivals Park High School and Rock Ferry High School.

It is invidious to single out players for special mention as the entire squad gave everything, showing tremendous loyalty to the school. However, Griffiths proved to be an inspiring captain, earning the respect of his team through his personal performance and his regard for the team, while L. Davis was an inspiration to all in the backs, well deserving the trophy as best player against the Old Boys.

FIRST XV SQUAD

Griffiths (Captain), D. L. Williams, Foxon, L. Davis, R. Davis, Roberts, Sephton, S. Morris, Arch (colours), O'Hanlon, Merry, A. D. Lewis, McKie, Parke, Russell, Nugent and Heyworth.

Record:	P	W	D	L
	15	6	0	9

SECOND XV

The 2nd XV strove manfully with an even smaller number of players. It is to their great credit, and to the credit of Messrs. Davis and Jones, that they completed the fixtures, being able to withstand heavy defeats, improving, and finally delighting everyone, particularly themselves, with a famous victory against West Derby at the end of the season. The 2nd XV promises to be much stronger next year with a considerable influx of talent from the present Colts XV. The Colts XV has been extremely successful due in the main to the enthusiasm and influence of Mr. Morris. The squad of players available has increased significantly; most will be available next season. The Bantams XV and especially the Junior Bantams show considerable promise.

E.E.J.

COLTS

The Colts XV enjoyed a successful season, losing only three times, and winning ten times. Their defeats were by the slightest of margins and in two cases were undeserved. Only a very capable Wirral side showed itself their superior in a fine open game which ended with a 21pts. to 16pts. victory for their opponents.

In many of the victories the winning margin was overwhelming and the team ended the season with two big wins over Rock Ferry and Park High, both by 40 points. In both these games the team played with a spirit and determination that had built up over the year, and over-ran their opponents.

The team was well served by Parke, an enthusiastic captain and strong-running centre, and by McKie whose play showed flair and imagination whatever position he filled. Other features of the back play were the fine tackling of Bennet and Griffith, the elusive running of Whittingham and the coolness of full-back Sheridan. Heydon, who acted as a utility player, never let the side down and was a great asset. In the final games Hobden returned to the side and showed how capable a player he can be.

Of the forwards Haresnape was undoubtedly the pick, but Turner had some good games and Jones A., who won his place half way through the season, was certainly the 'find'. His work was solid and unspectacular, but he added much-needed stability. The other forwards all did their part and by the end of the season had become a workmanlike eight.

In the Cheshire Sevens, played at the end of the season the Colts squad made of Boden, Whittingham, Bennett, Parke, Hobden, McKie, Turner, Williams, Haresnape and Jones P.R. put up a creditable performance. They lost only 14-13 to Lymm Grammar School, a much fancied side, and only an injury to McKie cost them the game against Sandbach. They had easy wins over Eastham and Oldershaw Grammar School.

In all, the season was a pleasing one and should bode well for the future of senior rugby. Practices were well attended by and large and the squad had increased to some twenty five boys. Indeed, only unwillingness on the part of opponents prevented us fielding a 'B' side towards the end of the season.

N.M.

BANTAMS

The Bantams season this year has been one of construction and development. Due to selection problems during the pre-Christmas period we suffered several heavy losses. However, even during a particularly poor match at Wirral one or

two moments of genuine team work began to indicate that better things were to come.

After Christmas the hoped-for change took place. The pack, always physically strong, began to link up and obtain possession which allowed the backs to show their talent.

Towards the end of the season improvement continued, and the remaining matches, mainly against local rivals, were won by large margins of points. Most pleasing was the number of tries scored by forwards of a very fit and mobile front row had more than its share.

It is to be hoped that the improvement shown will continue next season in the more serious field of Colts rugby.

K.D.

HOUSE RUGBY RESULTS

All House Rugby took the form of a serious competition, with the exception of 15-a-side for the 2nd Year. Next season the 2nd and 3rd year competition will be for 15-a-side.

Overall Championship

Atkin	}	Joint Champions
Tate		
Westminster		
Cohen		
Stitt		
Davies.		

E.E.J.

ATHLETICS

AMATEUR ATHLETIC AWARDS

This term an AAA 5 star award scheme has been introduced with encouraging results. The aim of the scheme is to encourage all boys, from the very average performer to the competent athlete. All the results have not been finalised as yet but the indications are that several hundred boys will gain a good grade of award.

E.E.J.

Congratulations to Geoff. Foxon who won the 100 and 200m. in the Cheshire Athletic Championships and was subsequently picked to represent his county in the All England Championship. Robert Harrison won the Cheshire triple jump, and Phil Nicholas was second in the 1500m at the same meeting. Both of them have been selected for inter-counties meetings.

SWIMMING

The school entered three teams for the Birkenhead Schools' Gala, winning the intermediate and being runners-up in the senior trophies.

Congratulations to David Minks who was 1st in the freestyle team race in the English Schools' Championship and third in the 100m crawl and 100m backstroke in the U/16 Cheshire Championships. Also to John Morgan (Cheshire U/16 100m back crawl champion and 2nd Cheshire U/16 butterfly 100m event) and David Foo (Cheshire Championship 100m butterfly, 3rd; Liverpool and District 100m back crawl 3rd).



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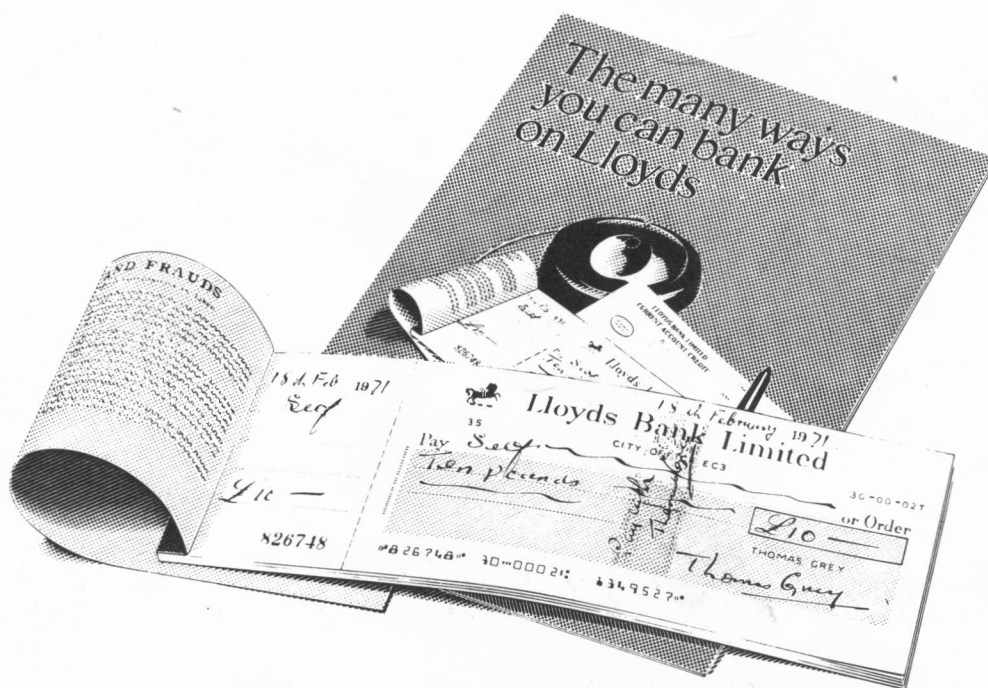
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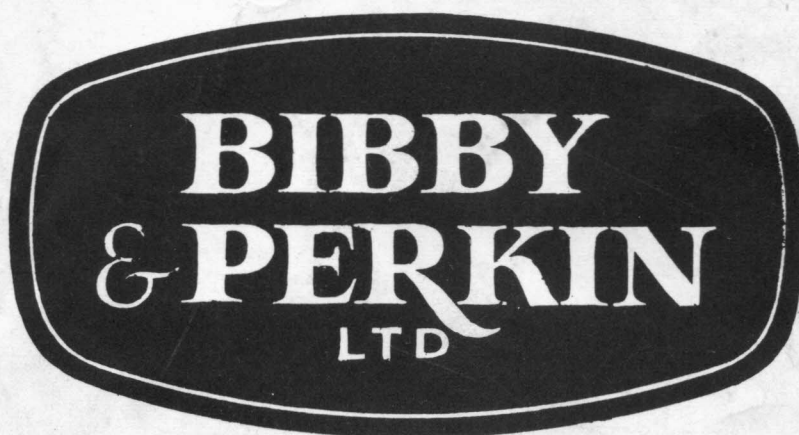
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