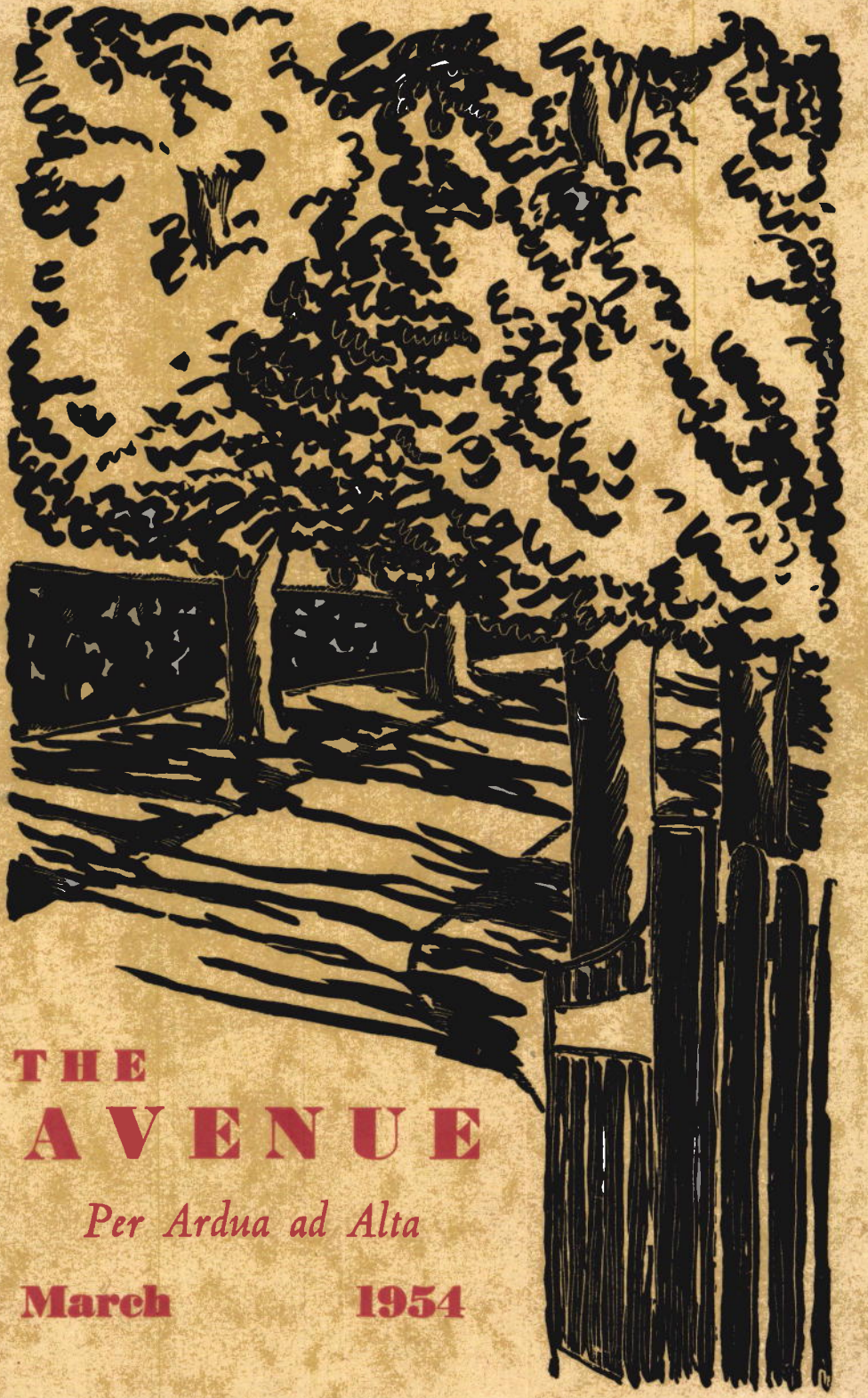


THE AVENUE

Per Ardua ad Alta

March 1954

THE AVENUE

The Magazine of the Friends' School, Saffron Walden

VOL. 41 MARCH, 1954 NO. 121

EDITORIAL

TWO major changes on the staff are impending : the retirement of Mr. Littleboy in July, 1955, and that of Miss Yapp at the end of next term. Miss Yapp will have been Latin teacher at Walden for thirty-three years, and Senior Mistress for only a slightly shorter time. Further reference to both Miss Yapp and Mr. Littleboy will appear in these pages in due course.

On this occasion we shall refer to one aspect only of Miss Yapp's varied and unobtrusively sustained service to the school ; that of her work for this journal. She has served in various capacities on the *Avenue* Board during most of her time here, and has been a ready source of help and advice to a long line of editors and contributors. We present Avenue colleagues of hers, on behalf of ourselves and our predecessors, are glad to record our thanks to Margaret Yapp for all she has done for *The Avenue,* and to express our warmest wishes for her future in Bristol, where her father's ill-health necessitates her presence at home.

INTER ALIA

THIS last year has seen a great deal of work done towards brightening up the school, and the drab war-time colours of the buildings are fast disappearing. The "rumour" reported in our last edition concerning possible new Science Laboratories is now a confirmed fact. These are to be erected between the Biology Lab. and the Avenue, and it is hoped that building will commence in a few months time.

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Last term the school Dramatic Society gave a performance of Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost," a report of which will be found elsewhere. The total takings amounted to £64, of which £20 went towards Quaker Relief Work in Korea.

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Eclipses of the moon come but twice a year, and this fact was sufficient to induce two members of the staff and three of the school to stay up and observe one in the small (and cold) hours of the morning. We admire their fortitude, and regret that their attempts to photograph it were not successful.

As has been the case for a number of seasons now, a group of girls attended the Cambridgeshire Junior Hockey Trials. We should like to congratulate Ruth Hatch on gaining a place in the 1st team, and Jill Baker, Janet Rice and Jeanetta Mabbott on being selected as reserves.

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You will hardly have escaped noticing the rash of little notices, appealing for contributions to the *Avenue,* which has broken out in the school. There has been a noticeable, but not considerable increase in the number of contributions and we hope that this improvement will continue.

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Last term the Photographic Society announced a competition for the school. The first prize was won by Anthony Wallis, whose entry will be found elsewhere in this edition. Trevor Hurrell gained the second prize, and John Skelton the third. Mr Haselgrove very kindly offered to judge the entries.

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This year a number of scholars attended a series of Extension Lectures at the Training College, under the title " History of the Keyboard." There was also a very interesting debate on the problems in Africa, at which the speakers included a Nigerian and a European settler.

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Miss Whiston left us last term, and we welcome in her place Miss Brereton—the sister of two old scholars—who will be assistant Housekeeper for two terms. We have also been pleased to have with us this term Miss Cook, a student teacher in mathematics from the Cambridge Training College.

* * * *

We have had several visitors during this school year. Mary Tee gave a talk on " University Women's Camps for Schoolgirls," and James Strachan spoke in an evening meeting about the Bible. Dorothy Bristol, an American Friend, visited the school, and Edgar Dunstan spoke in evening meeting. This term Christopher Holdsworth, an Old Scholar of Bootham, and the Rev. E. J. Tidball, who is secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, visited us ; also Helen Neatby, who has just returned from Uganda, and John Reader, Old Scholar, now Headmaster of Great Ayton School.

Recently we were privileged to receive a visit from a party of African students, who spent a Sunday afternoon looking round the school.

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Films shown at the school this year have included " Where no Vultures Fly," " Elephant Boy," " Never Take No for an Answer," " Spring in Park Lane," " Royal Journey," " Everest, 1933 " " Appointment with Venus," and " Harvey."

During the Christmas holidays the "Council for Education in World Citizenship" 1953 Conference was held in the Central Hall, Westminster. This is now an annual event sponsored by the *United Nations Organisation.* The subject this year was "The Challenge of Africa," and seven Sixth Formers from the school attended the conference.

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In place of our usual end of term concert last term we had a very interesting lecture by Mr Hutton, a friend of Mr Cadman. He illustrated his talk on Africa with some short films.

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As is usual now at Easter Parent-Teacher Week-end, the Saturday evening entertainment was provided by the school. This term it took the form of an orchestral concert. Piano solos were given by Margaret Shepherd and Diana Weeden, and a violin solo by Malcolm Harvey. Finally the orchestra performed Haydn's "London Symphony." This is the first time the orchestra has attempted a complete symphony, and the whole evening's entertainment was a striking success.

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We should like to congratulate the following scholars on obtaining University places:

Una Millett, at Bedford College, University of London ; Janet Rice, at University College, London; Judith Foster, at Sheffield University; Christopher Brown, at Bristol University; Christopher Wood, at the London School of Economics. Special congratulations to Nigel Watt, the first from Walden to obtain a Minor Scholarship at Oxford or Cambridge, in his case at St. John's College, Cambridge.



THE KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

MANY railway enthusiasts heard towards the end of November that the Kent and East Sussex Railway was to be closed: all the line to passengers and part to goods as well.

This ancient Kent by-way rambles from Headcorn in Kent to Robertsbridge in Sussex. The only place of any size on the line is Tenterden, a fairly prosperous rural market town.

When I heard of the closure of his line, I was at once determined to visit it—for the first and probably the last time. I made arrangements, and eventually Jamieson, a friend of his, and myself climbed aboard a train at Charing Cross, Headcorn-bound. We arrived at Headcorn and found the Kent and East Sussex train awaiting us. It occupied a separate platform at Headcorn. The train consisted of a very dilapidated locomotive and one rather ancient coach, which had in all probability seen better days. The train soon started, or rather lurched forward and rounded the sharp curve out of Headcorn. Before long a loud and vigorous whistling indicated that we were approaching the first of the many cart tracks which had obviously not been used for some years.

Frittenden Road, the first station, was a request stop; as we were unfortunately looking out of the wrong side of the train we did not see it. (It should be noted that all Kent and East Sussex stations except Tenterden Town and Salehurst were some distance from the villages of the names they bore). Biddenden came next followed by High Halden Road. Between here and Tenterden Town was what we thought the prettiest section of the line. After several severe climbs and descents the train rounded an exceptionally sharp curve into a cutting, and dived into St. Michael's Tunnel, which was in fact a rather elongated bridge. Soon afterwards came Tenterden St. Michael's Halt, another request stop. Fortunately we were watching the correct side and saw that it consisted solely of a short platform with a nameboard. After some more very picturesque curves we trundled into Tenterden Town. By now we had realised that it is essential to pay attention to the notices warning you not to lean out of the window, as the track was thickly surrounded by trees and bushes. Tenterden Town had quite a number of sidings, as well as a passing loop. There were three platforms here, but needless to say only one was in use.

After obtaining a very good lunch in the town, we strolled on to Rolvenden, the next station. The village of that name, however, lay two miles to the south-west and the station in reality serves the extreme west of Tenterden. At Rolvenden the engine shed was situated, and we obtained permission to inspect the engines. After waiting some time we caught the next train to Robertsbridge. It was now dark. The first station was Wittensham Road (where quite a large number of people got on or off) followed by Northiam

Bodiam (where everybody alighted and besieged the station-master for tickets), and Junction Road Halt, a request stop where two people got on. A large sign board said "Junction Road Halt. Alight here for Hawkhurst." As a matter of fact, Hawkhurst was six miles away and served by its own railway. Salehurst Halt was next, and then Robertsbridge, the end of the line.

As the train back to London moved slowly out of the station, we sadly said goodbye for ever to this line, about to join the long list of closed branch lines.

Adrian Smith, Form II

FRENCH SCHOOLS

HOW different French schools are from English ones! Last autumn term I attended a French school and first of all I found that their school hours are nothing like ours. They began at 9 o'clock with prayers in a little Roman Catholic chapel where we recited a whole stream of prayers in parrot-fashion. Morning school went on without a break until 12 o'clock. Then there was a two-hour break for lunch which we could have at school or at home. I tried the school lunch once but quickly decided that French school food was not very good. At the lycée where my brother went they served beer with dinner. After the lunch hour there were another three hours of school. At 5 o'clock school finished and we could go home. But school work still continued when we got home because there was ' prep ' to do, and what a lot of it! Every night there were at least three subjects to work at. Some of them took about an hour for the French girls to do, and at least two hours for me.

Hand shaking seems to be very popular, for you even shake hands to say ' Hello ' in the morning and ' Goodbye ' in the evening to your school friends. There is no fixed school uniform but all the girls have to wear an overall; even some of the mistresses wear them too. There is no school on Thursday and this was the day we found most time to visit and do a lot of sight-seeing: for example, we went round Paris, St. Germain and Versailles.

The French schools do not have any sports worth speaking of; once a week a woman came to teach us gym. out of doors, which incidentally was in the lunch hour but compulsory. Singing also took place in the lunch hour but both of these are very elementary compared with the courses we take here. The discipline in French schools is very high indeed and the pupils are completely detached from the staff out of school hours, and have a very impersonal relationship with them. I personally think that, even after the "all work and no play" schedule of nearly all French schools, in the end we learn the same amount here, and even more how to face the world with a more modern and practical attitude to life.

Kristin Shackford, Form III

A LATE EVENING IN SUMMER

THE sky is a deep blue with wisps of pink and orange here and there. The black clouds of darkness are passing over the sky to cover up everything belonging to the evening. The rooks have gone home ; the bees have stopped their buzzing ; except for an occasional twitter the birds are quiet. In places the gnats are still flying and the moths and bats come flitting along looking like dark shadows. All is cool and quiet.

The honeysuckle and the roses give out their scent whose beauty no-one can smell except at late evening, for it is not noticeable in the day. The trees sway a little in the soft breeze; a bird turns over. All is quiet and sleepy, until the dawn comes bringing new life to everything.

Linda Smith, Form I

MOZART BY INVITATION ONLY

THE words, "before an invited audience," which one may find under the announcements of certain programmes in the *Radio Times* have long held a fascination for me. I, too, wanted to be one of that select company—not merely by an application to the B.B.C. and a ticket months later to some indifferent radio show, but to be invited to a concert of good music to be given by some of the best musicians in the country. Such, indeed, is the weekly Thursday Concert.

When therefore I found very recently that through the kindness of an influential friend I was able to exercise my curiosity, I seized my chance. Armed with a buff ticket to admit two, and someone to share it with, I presented myself in the foyer of the B.B.C. Concert Hall at the back of the buildings in Portland Place. A sumptuous commissionaire tore the ticket in half, and we were allowed to enter the hall.

The Concert Hall is wedge-shaped, with the broader end rising in tiers of well padded seats and carpeted gangways. From the middle to the narrow end there is a low platform on which stood a grand piano, miscellaneous chairs and music stands, and a table for the annoucer. The walls, covered in artistic friezes, are designed with artificial stone or cloth for better acoustics. Above all hang strategically placed microphones. At the far end are two doors, each with an imposing array of coloured light bulbs above them. Between these there hangs a large electric clock with a second hand that moves imperturbably around the dial

It was through one of these doors that a suave and polished announcer in a boiled shirt and tails appeared a few minutes before half-past seven. Coming to the front, he announced that, although

he imagined that we had all seen the programme in the *Radio Times,* he would repeat it for the benefit of those who had not. " Tonight's Thursday Concert, given before an invited audience in the Concert Hall, Broadcasting House, London, will consist of two works by Mozart. The first is the Sonata in F (K.497) for piano duet, played by Denis Matthews and Howard Ferguson. The second is the Quartet in F (K.370) for oboe and strings, played by Leonard Brain (oboe) and the London String Trio—Emanuel Hurwitz (violin), Watson Forbes (violin), and Vivian Joseph (cello)." This announcement, with slight modifications such as " you have just heard," was repeated before and after each item, so that by the end one had begun to know it by heart.

Having delivered himself of this piece, the announcer sat down at his table, also equipped with a microphone, and, having said " 15 seconds now," exactly at 7.30 by the second hand of the electric clock a row of red lights blazed out and we were ' on the air.' A little while later, the first two performers straggled on to the stage. Everybody clapped, a white-coated stage hand opened the piano, and the music having been arranged, the performance began. It is not for me to judge the players, but as they are all among the best in the country, their performance seemed good. Those who listened may judge for themselves.

When the duet was over, everybody clapped, the players wandered off, the announcer repeated his spiel, the quartet ambled on, everybody clapped once more, and after the quartet had tuned up, arranged chairs and music, and the annoucer again repeated his set piece, the performance continued. At the end, amid further applause, the players, like penguins, bowing in their boiled shirts, wandered off, took an encore, and wandered off again. The announcer again repeated his performance, adding the programme for the following week's Thursday Concert. The red lights went out, and in another part of the building Alistair Cooke's recorded letter from America was broadcast. We were left in an emptying hall, everyone donning overcoats and furs ; we followed suit.

JOHN WILSON

THE SNOWDROP

THE Snowdrop is a flower fair,
She cometh early every year,
When all the world is grey and dead,
And skies are dreary overhead.
Her slender leaves she gracefully holds,
Her pure white petals carefully folds .
So there she stands in flower bed,
And humbly bows her lovely head.

Clare White, Form I

THE SACRED RIVER

" Where Alph the sacred river ran,
Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea."

THE starting point of the journey was at the edge of the sacred city of Vela on an isolated planet far away in space. The great, silent monster which rested against the banks of the river was to carry a party of explorers down the sacred river Alph. The explorers had landed at Vela several years earlier on an expedition from Mars. They had found much to interest them and had stayed and founded the city. Now they were starting a journey down the Alph to try and discover where it ended.

There was no sunlinght on this planet for it was too far away from the sun. There was a weird half-light which never altered. There were no days as distinct from nights, and the explorers slept when they felt like it. The large monster slid away from the river bank and gradually Vela disappeared. The men were silent, wondering what lay before them. There was a uniform temperature all the year round on this mysterious planet, but it was impossible to tell what it was as the instruments did not register anything.

When the death-like vessel had been gliding through the silent, almost unmoving water for some days the scenery began to change. Before there had been odd rock formations close at hand and then rather porous looking fungi and nondescript bushes. Now great caverns loomed ahead and the river disappeared into them. The vessel glided on and on and soon the caverns were enveloping the explorers. The light was now more silvery with a faint pink tinge in it. The rock was soft, yet no instrument the men carried could bore into it. It felt rather like coarse rubber and make no sound when it was tapped or even when, being driven by fear of the uncanny atmosphere, one of the party flung a spade at it.

At last one of the men spoke. He whispered very softly as if afraid to push away the mantle of silence. Immediately a great roar as of thunder filled the cavern and seemed to echo through it for many miles. It seemed to go on for a long time, until gradually the vast mantle of silence fell again. The caverns seemed to go on for ever and the explorers wondered when they were going to reach the open spaces again. They dared not speak and when one of them saw an odd plant or rock formation he only pointed.

After many weeks the nearly forgotten grey light took the place of the eerie light of the caverns and soon the explorers had emerged from them. The water still made no sound nor moved much faster, yet the vessel was being carried down a very steep incline. Ahead lay a great expanse of water which the explorers thought must be a sea. They had travelled the length of the river Alph and were gliding into a vast sunless ocean. The men hardly

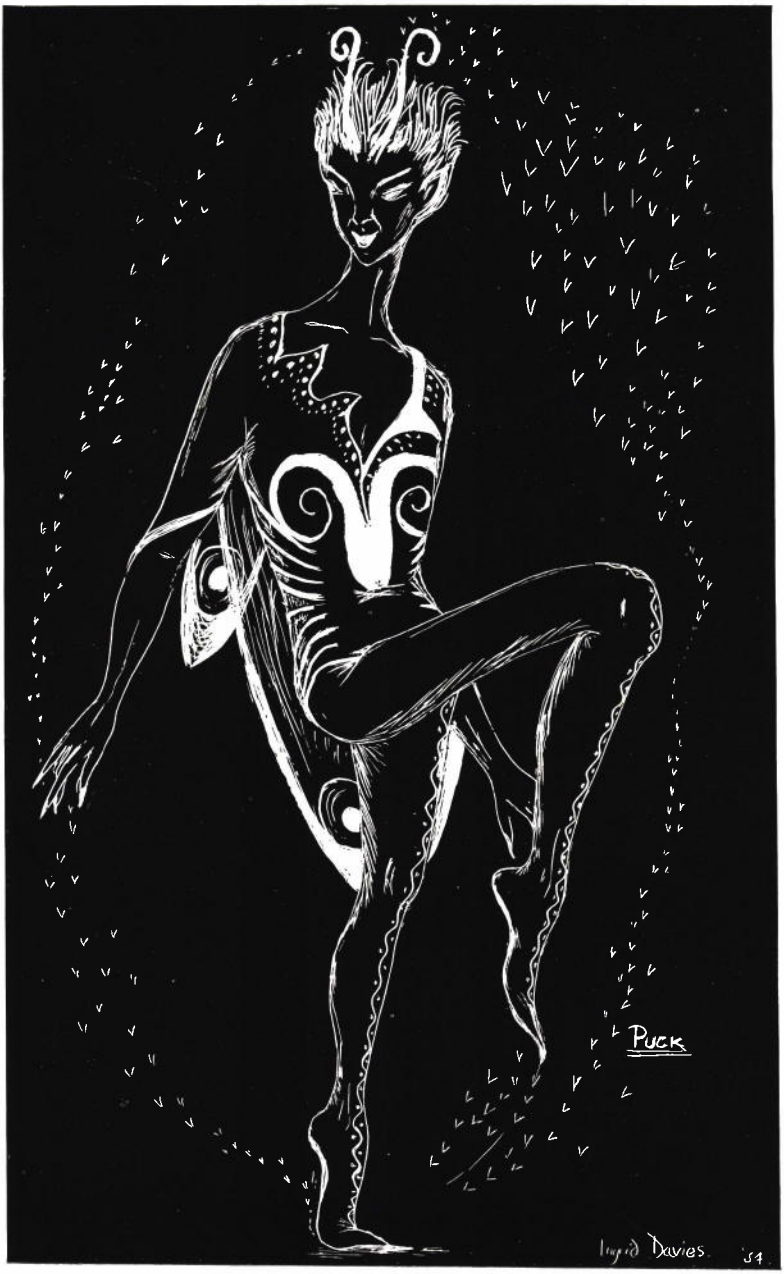


The School from the Mistresses' Walk. *John Skelton, Form VI*

First Prize in Photographic Society Competition



Michaelmas Daisies. *Anthony Wallis, Form VI*


PUCK
Ingrid Davies '54

spoke and still the vessel glided on as if some force was guiding it slowly into eternity.

Sometime later the beginnings of a coast-line could be seen. The explorers steered their ship towards a break in it, and were relieved to discover that there was a river which flowed towards the city of Vela. None of the party believed that the river would take them to Vela itself, but they hoped to be able to reach the city fairly easily from this river. But, to their amazement, they arrived at the sacred city without leaving the river. They had travelled right round the planet.

Margaret Shepherd, Form V

A REMINISCENCE OF THE 250th ANNIVERSARY

IT was the last night of the pageant—a bright summer evening. Having nothing better to do I wandered on to the front drive and got into conversation with a coach driver who had driven a party down from London.

We exchanged views on the weather, and then he asked (in a marked cockney accent) " What sort of place is this ? " indicating the school. I told him that it was a Quaker school. " A what school ? " he said. I informed him once again that it was a Quaker school. He gaped. " Eh ? " was the only sound he made. " I thought all them Quakers was dead and gone long ago." Then, as the possibility dawned on him : " You really mean to say I brought some of these 'ere Quakers down 'ere tonight ? " I informed him that he probably had. " But they looks fairly normal to me," he said. This rather took me aback, and I just agreed that they were normal. He went on : " I thinks it was some religious outing like 'cos it has on my instructions ' No boozers allowed,' which means," he said with a sigh, " that I'll have to go without my drink." He now seemed to want to turn to a more cheerful topic and imparted the information that "last week I took a lot of lunies out, but I never thinks this week I'll be taking out some Quakers ; but then, yer never can tell what's going to happen to yer in this world." I agreed that you could not, said " Good evening," and drifted off, leaving him to dwell on his new-found topic of Quakerism.

Stewart Main, Form IV

JAMAICA INN

ON the old coach road which runs from Launceston to Bodmin stands Jamaica Inn, in ancient times the haunt of smugglers and highwaymen. The road has kept up with the times and is now the A.30, but the Inn has changed little in the last hundred years. The cobblestone courtyard over which the stage-coach would rattle,

the swinging sign creaking in the breeze, the lantern over the porch, all these remind one of the days, not so long ago, when it was dangerous to travel on a lonely road unarmed.

The great oak door beneath the porch leads into the lounge, a large stone-flagged room with a roaring log fire in the huge open grate and an amazing collection of swords, muskets, lanterns, and brandy barrels hanging from the beams. The room is comfortably furnished in period style, and it is not difficult to imagine the passengers warming themselves with a glass of hot punch before continuing their journey across the bleak moor.

In the far corner of the lounge is a doorway leading to Mary's Bar, so named after Mary Yellan, the heroine of Daphne du Maurier's book " Jamaica Inn." The high backed wooden settees, the bottle-glass windows and the fire crackling in the granite fire place are all just as they were at the time of Joss Merlin and his rascally band of smugglers. Even the hook from which Mary Yellan thought she saw a body hanging may still be seen firmly embedded in one of the great beams. It was at this bar that a stranger stood drinking a pot of ale that he was fated never to finish : upon being summoned outside he left his half-empty tankard on the bar and disappeared into the night. In the morning he was found murdered on the moor. A previous landlord has, on more than one occasion, heard ghostly footsteps passing along the passage to the bar, and these are thought to be those of the dead man returning to finish his drink.

Michael Tebbit, Form V

ON GETTING UP

AS soon as the bell goes, you shiver inwardly and try to turn a deaf ear to the awful summons. About five seconds later you arrive at the dread realisation that some beastly little prefect has stripped the layers of warm covering from above you, and is now attempting to remove the layers which lie beneath you. Having lashed out at the tyrant, you suddenly feel a piercing draught down your neck from a half-closed window, and before the resultant numbing coldness has had time to reach the rest of your still comparatively warm body, you hastily snatch the remnants of the bedclothes from the cold, uninviting floor in order to cover yourself and keep the blood circulating. To avoid frostbite, your feet particularly are moved to a more congenial climate under the bedclothes, but even with such precautions the only thing that will stop your teeth chattering is an immediate application of will power. Suddenly you realise that a brave child in a neighbouring bed is attempting to dress. All but his shoes having been put on in bed, he summons his self control, takes a deep breath and with a few quick movements jumps out of bed, flings on his shoes, seizes his clothes and runs shivering from the room. After having

jealously watched this show of bravado, you venture out a little toe on the leeward side of the bed and satisfy yourself that life is possible at such temperatures. Thus reassured, you quickly begin to put on your socks, only to discover that some obliging soul has tied the loops together. This having been remedied, amid appalling arctic conditions, and dressing (during which you curse the invention of pyjama cords) completed sufficiently for you to be able to go down to the washroom, you depart thither. Eventually shivering miserably, numb to the core, and vowing destruction on anyone who speaks to you, you arrive fully dressed at the playroom. You then discover that you have three marks : one for being late out of the bedroom, one for being late out of the washroom, and one for being late into collect.

Was it really worth getting up ?

John Edwards, Form IV

A MIXED AND HAPPY FAMILY

A CHILD that lives in a home without a dog may never be able to go near a dog confidently. A cat that has never been treated kindly by a dog, but always bitten, chased or had things thrown at it by rough people, will soon die of exhaustion because it always has to be on the alert. The same can happen to dogs, or to chickens that have no safe warm coop. Our home, however, is very happy, where all the animals so far mentioned live together although I must admit that neither the dogs nor the cats play with the chickens.

Once when our house was being repaired, one of the workmen said to my mother, " Mrs. Barclay, do you know that one of your dogs is playing with a fur glove ? " My mother replied that she did not and went to fetch the so-called glove. As she was passing a window she saw Pola, the dog, throwing something furry up into the air and catching it again. She was about to leave the window when Pola dropped the plaything—which ran away ! It was our kitten.

Our dogs are Old English Sheepdogs, or Bobtails for short, and we have four at the moment. They are lovely dogs and have long, coarse, shaggy coats of grey and white hair. Pola is the eldest, being five years old, and has a rather short coat that looks a bit motheaten because her undercoat shows through a different colour to her topcoat. She is the smallest dog but she is very nimble and often the first over a gate or a fence, although she cannot jump very high. Sally is the biggest and has a long coat except on the top of her head where the hair has been pulled out in their play. She is a very large and beautiful dog and Pola can walk right under her quite easily ! She is not as nimble as the others but can jump the highest. Tiny is Sally's twin sister and my favourite : she has

a lovely coat but also has short hair on her head. Tiny has a very small head and is slightly shorter than her sister. She is quite as nimble as Pola and can jump about the same height, but she is a much faster runner. She is very obstinate and mischievious. Thunder, the only man of the kennels, is an extremely good looking dog with lovely hair, fine bones and eyes. He is very obedient for his age (eight months) and a very fast runner, although not as fast as Tiny. He is very affectionate and loving.

Besides these four dogs, we have two cats (a Persian and a tabby) and sixteen chickens. The animals are not at all afraid of each other and we are just a very mixed and happy family.

Naomi Barclay, Form I

CHRISTMAS POST

THE morning was cold and damp. A thick mist was drifting sluggishly about as the light began to strengthen. As I cycled along, fine threads of moisture appeared on my coat, and at every bump in the road, drops of water were shaken from the handlebars and frame. The only sound was the hum of the dynamo as it bravely tried to dispel the darkness ahead. The centre of the town was silent, except for a few vans which suddenly loomed out of the mist and disappeared again. Turning down a side street, I dismounted and left my cycle leaning against a wall, and entered a covered yard. A ramp led up one side and disappeared through double doors. Up the ramp I went, and once inside the room, turned left to be "clocked in." The heat inside the room was stifling after the cold outside. A confused murmur of voices announced the presence of men who had been working since half-past four. The time now was half-past seven, and having received my armband I set off up the aisles to search for my sorter. Never had I seen so many letters or parcels. They were stacked over the cubby holes in great mounds, and men sat at their desks and sorted, sweated and swore.

Eventually I came across my sorter, only to find that he was about half-way through, and all the parcels were in a ghastly mix-up. So I helped him, and in two hours time I was able to stagger out of the office with a mailbag slung across each shoulder. The mist was, if anything, slightly thicker, and after completing the tricky operation of mounting a bicycle, I pushed off and wobbled unsteadily up the road. I had to cycle two miles, one of which was along a narrow path that wound its way between suburban houses, and as my lateral measurements were considerably increased only one-way traffic was possible! At last I reached the main road and conditions improved. I knew the road and had no windscreen. All the cars had their screens thick with grime and before long I realised that I was leading a little procession that was hanging grimly on to my tail light!

Soon I arrived at my first port of call, and rummaged for the bundle. All the letters are tied in bundles, each bundle representing a section of the route covered, but number one had fallen to the bottom. However, after an hour the load had lightened considerably and I began to walk upright. After two hours I became quite cheerful, and at one house lost my sense of caution completely. I balanced a large pile of letters on the bag in front of me in order to get two hands free for a stiff letter-box. Well, you can guess what happened. After fifteen minutes I was ready to continue and not in the best of tempers. At half-past eleven I started on my last road. This road is long, and at the time consisted of two muddy pathways with a lake in the middle. When my last letter was delivered my cycle and I were in a sorry plight! But now was the homeward trail, and at a quarter-past twelve I was back at the office, only to find two more gorged mailbags grinning at me from the desk.

John Robertson, Form VI

THE PIGEON SHOOT

WHEN I went down to my pigeon hide
One April in the sun,
I sat very quiet till a bird I spied,
And took careful aim with my gun.
A flurry of feathers and down it came,
And fell with a bump on the ground;
Soon Susan, a springer of gun-dog fame,
Had scented, retrieved and found.

John Barnard, Form I

WHAT'S BEHIND THOSE LITTLE WINDOWS?

AT the beginning of term we wondered whether it would be possible to go and see the projection room at the Plaza. We did not think that it would be, but we made enquiries at the Plaza and the manager said that we could come if we gave him notice.

The result was that on a Monday evening during February we went down to the Plaza to see what we could see. We asked for the manager, who appeared at once. He led us out into the night again and round the corner of the building. Before we started to climb he warned us that the iron steps were a little dangerous, and suggested that he should go first. At the top we were confronted by a big door on which were various notices informing us that smoking was not allowed and that there was a high voltage current

about. Inside this door was our goal. The manager opened the door and we passed through. Here were the projectors, seven-foot monsters, completely dwarfing the projectionist, who, we saw—much to our surprise—was a lady. There were two projectors erected on massive stands seven or eight feet in length. The technical details, in comparison with those of the school's portable projector, were overpowering, and there was so much to see that we did not know where to start.

The lamp, which took up about half the actual bulk of the projector, looked like a gas lamp. We were, however, informed that inside that case there was neither gas mantle nor electric bulb, but two carbon sticks which were charged with a tremendous current. This formed a very bright electric arc, and the carbon sticks were gradually burnt away and had to be moved up by the operator turning a knob. The heat attained by this electric arc was about 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit.

We had been there about ten minutes when the light in the second projector was lit by a male operator who had just come in. He started a buzzing in his projector, and the lady turned a knob on the wall. Then the man, who was looking out of the observation window, pulled a lever on his machine which automatically moved a lever on the other one. The lady operator then turned another knob on the wall. We realised that now the second projector was in action, while the first one was ready to have its spool changed. These spools were twice as broad as those we use at school and considerably heavier, but only take twenty minutes to run through, whereas the school's last thirty-five minutes.

About five minutes after the second projector had taken over, the lady operator went to another, much smaller, projector for showing 'stills.' She started the lamp (an electric arc similar to those of the larger machines) and we, who were looking out of the observation window, saw that it was showing "Next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday" on the screen, while the larger projector was showing the trailer of "Niagara."

We asked the manager what would happen if a projector broke down, as there was no spare. He replied that they broke down only very occasionally and that they were cleaned thoroughly every Wednesday. We could see that they were certainly spotless. He also told us, to our amazement, that the actual projectors were dated 1935, although the sound equipment was post-war.

We stayed there, discovering, examining, questioning, for over an hour, after which we left the little room with the big door and went down the iron steps once more. We thanked the manager to the best of our ability and went off back to school thoroughly satisfied.

James Elsworth and Glynn Byles, Form IV

ASTRONOMY

AN unusual subject, stargazing. Astronomy—please do not confuse it with fortune-telling, which is Astrology—was one of the first sciences of the kings and queens of old.

Astronomy in its origin was the art of understanding the seasons and telling time. The Egyptians (1500 B.C.) calculated a 365 day year and took note of such phenomena as comets, eclipses and shooting stars. The Babylonians (2000 B.C.) went further : they could explain and predict eclipses of the sun, moon and planets. Some of the ancient Greeks tried to measure the distance to the sun, in terms of diameters of the moon.

For some 3,000 years there was a lapse, partly because of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. The dark ages during which the sciences withered were broken by Copernicus, who started to contradict the ancient theories, but it was really men such as Galileo (inventor of the telescope), Kepler (great mathematician and astronomer), and Brahe (a very accurate practical astronomer) who started a new era of science and made many discoveries.

From the 16th century onwards many discoveries were made. People were not afraid of breaking down old theories, and the many sciences are now developing very rapidly in this ' atomic age.' Since Galileo's time the distances to the stars have been measured, and many new and better types of telescopes have been invented. We have just recently discovered radio-stars (which can be detected only from their radio waves) and radio-telescopes are being built. In fact in the last two years certain discoveries have proved many old theories wrong, and many astronomical ideas need to be reconsidered. There is much to learn and the only way we can learn to understand these mysteries is to start at the foundations, the rock on which the house is built. Astronomy is one of the few sciences left in which the amateur can make discoveries. It is such people as you and I who have found new stars, comets and shooting stars, and who have found bridges on the moon.

This school possesses a telescope, which has long been hidden in the Biology Lab. Please give it a little air ! There are not only the stars to look at during the night, but also such things as the moon and its eclipses, and during the daytime there is the sun, and perhaps its eclipses, or the crossing of a planet over the sun's disc. Finally, if you are interested in finding out why you had a warm Christmas and a cold January, then look at the spots on the sun once a day if the sky is clear, and so lend a hand towards solving the curious problems of ' weather,' for every little assistance helps.

Jan Berny, Form VI

DUTY

IT was snowing thicker now, the milling flakes dancing and reeling about him. The shrieking wind tore at his clothes with a savage clutch, and he could feel the cold biting deeper and deeper into his body. The darkness muffled his movements and seemed to be an enemy, driving him into snowdrifts and laughing at his pain. He trudged forward, fighting his way step by step.

Out of the snow loomed the solid bulk of a tree. He staggered gratefully towards it, and collapsed against its ice-covered trunk. It was a respite, but he knew that he must go on, so shouldering his load he groped wearily forward into the darkness again. There was a strong temptation to lie down in the snow and die alone out there, but just as he was about to succumb to this he caught a fleeting glimpse of a light through the blinding snow. It revived him and he struggled to his feet to battle onwards again. He realised that he could not stop now; whatever happened the San. Tea *must* go through.

Alan Sillitoe, Form VI

"SAILAMPING"

ONE Easter holidays my father, brother and I went sailing. Our nickname for it is "sailamping,' for we go sailing and camping in our little 12 foot dinghy. We first went to Wisbech, which is on the river Cam. It was a lovely warm day and it was windy. We set sail up the river towards Ely. It was a lovely sail and we saw herons, wild ducks and swans. It was great fun. When we reached Upware we stopped to see a friend but as we had to reach Wicken that day we could not stay. When we reached a little river with a lock we had to take down the mast. We put on the outboard motor and went on our journey. Soon we arrived at Wicken Fen which is National Trust property where in the summer people go to study birds, butterflies and plants. The earth is very rich and black near Wicken. There are lots of bog oaks which are very old hard oaks that have gone black. Wicken is a very small village where our uncle and aunt live. We had no idea as to exactly where they lived for they had just moved, so when we reached Wicken we found their house and stayed to tea. At 6.30 p.m. we had to leave as we were going to bed in the boat. You can imagine how excited we were.

When we had put the little tent over the boat I got supper ready. We had tomato soup and bread. Then we all went to bed in our funny beds. We had no sleeping bags as we had ordered them but they had not arrived, so we slept in a few blankets, lots

of clothes, and other queer things. We were very hot but we all knew that we would certainly not be when we were asleep and it got colder. About 4 o'clock we all woke up frozen cold. Daddy turned on our Primus stove and made some hot cocoa which was beautifully warming. After that we tried to go to sleep again but could not. Michael and I got up and went to hide Daddy's Easter eggs as next day was Easter Sunday. After breakfast Uncle, aunt and our cousin came down and hid their Easter eggs too. We had a lovely time finding them and enjoyed eating them as well. Then it started raining so Daddy decided that we would accept the invitation to stay with our aunt. That day Daddy caught a bus to Wisbech and he brought back the van. We put the boat in the van and went home next morning. We had collected many pretty weeds for our aquarium at home. We also enjoyed getting wet and cold, and we had a jolly good holiday.

Jill Wicksteed, Form I

INNS

IT all began in the summer holidays really—travelling down to Cornwall on the back seat of our little Morris eight wasn't exactly a comfortable journey especially for 326 miles! Still my twelve hours on the road were not quite as bad as I had expected. Passing through numerous small villages, I began to notice some rather queer but interesting names of inns and taverns. After a while I decided to list them down. Later on I copied them up in an indexed book. That was how my hobby started, but I continued it during the Christmas holidays. Some of the most interesting ones were " Jamaica Inn " at Bolventor near Bodmin, Cornwall, which was the setting of Daphne Du Maurier's novel. The inn itself, which we visited, has been kept in its original form. Another was the " Engine Inn " at Halsetown, Cornwall, which is out in the bleak countryside opposite an old disused tin mine working. Some names, although uncommon, seem to be popular in certain parts of the country — for instance I came across " Three Cups " at Harwich, Essex, and again at Little Oakley. Similarly " Plume of Feathers " at Blackwater, Cornwall, which I found duplicated at Hayle. At Land's End I thought that the " First and Last Inn " in England was very original.

Last holidays in the Nottingham district I found a few more. In Nottingham itself there is " Trip to Jerusalem," one of the most historic inns that is still standing. Together with this, " The Royal Children " and the " Salutation " also in Nottingham are quite the gems of the collection. And during the Easter holidays I hope to continue collecting when once more I shall be " on the road ! "

Pat Smalley, Form IV

THE LURE OF THE ISLANDS

YOUNG Jim had always been keen on rowing out to the little uninhabited islands about three miles to the south-west of Finistère. He never told me why he was so keen on going there because three miles is quite a distance to row. But one day towards the summer of the year 1743 Jim told me why he would go to those islands by himself.

" Well, John," he said " It's a long story, but if you're keen to listen I will tell you."

" Go ahead," I said.

" Well," he began, " as you know, not many people go to those islands. I believe I am the only one who has been there for years. There are dangerous reefs and they can only be approached by one way, and I think I am the only one who knows that way. There are three islands altogether and the largest one shelters the other two from the huge Atlantic rollers. On the largest not a blade of grass can be seen. Not a single plant or tree or anything will grow there. Here is the supreme will of God. Not a thing will live. In the middle of this island there is a hollow and at the bottom of that hollow there are seven skulls representing the seven deadly sins. They are white with age showing how long these evils have been in the world. Here I think about God and his angers and it serves to show that this could happen to the world if only God unleashed his wrath.

The second island is different. It is green and lovely but there are animals that strive to kill each other. There are no birds on this island, only animals. One animal I have seen is a huge thing that seems to have been a horse but has developed into a savage brute representing greed. Once he was a placid creature but now he is greedy and has huge nails and savage looking teeth that could bite a hunk of flesh from a man quite easily. These animals will breed and exterminate everything else and then they will savage themselves till only one is left. This represents the ultimate end of the world.

The third island is the smallest of them all but it is the most lovely. There are animals on this one and birds that will sing you to sleep. I spent a week on this island last summer. It was wonderful. But to show you just how lovely it is I must describe it to you. The centre of the island goes up to the summit of a little hill which is covered with trees. At the top of this hill there is a small fresh water lake which I swim in. On the northern shore there is a large rock from which you can dive. On the other side is the den of a huge white dog which will guard me while I sleep. I call him Duke. Then there are the birds which will feed from my hand. There are fish in the lake which provide my food. Poverty and savagery are not known on this island. I have known

Felix, the little black cat, sit on Duke's back perfectly happy. I walk in the woods with Duke walking in front. I gather wood and build a fire and cook a fish. Then I sleep on the grass and then perhaps I will go back to the lake and swim again. To get dry I run about and have a friendly fight with Duke. Then I may climb the tall elm that is beside the lake and see the other islands, and I thank God for giving me such a happy time. If I cannot sleep at night I go for a walk with Duke and explore the cliffs at the southern end. Perhaps I climb by moonlight and watch Duke growling at the bottom until he finds he can run round the end and join me at the top. Then we go back to the cave and I will sleep happily. In the morning it will be time to go, and I will go down to the boat and row away. Felix always stays by the water-side but Duke swims out until I tell him to go back. The birds follow further and then fly back. As the islands recede in the distance I see Duke on the shore probably wishing that I should soon return. It is these things that lure me to the islands. I can see the ultimate end of the world in two of those islands but in the third I see eternal happiness and peace for the righteous."

Colin Hill, Form IV

SPACE TRAVEL

I AM a little snowflake and I live with my family and lots of other snowflakes, some bigger, some smaller, than myself. My home is situated in Fluffyville, a small town on a big, spacious cloud which is usually stationed just above Snowdon. Life is pretty boring and we only live to hear our names called out by Father Crystal, the chief of the snowflakes. This is because he has a big scroll with all the names of the citizens written on it, and every now and again some lucky people's names are called out and their task is to assemble together and jump down from Fluffyville into the space beyond. They have to go down to the earth, the human cloud, and it is their job to see that they please the human snowflakes (children, I believe they are called), because these children love the snow and always shout joyfully when they see some of us float down.

This morning, Father Crystal assembled us all together and said, "Today is Christmas Eve, which, as you all know, is a human festivity, and a very important one too. I have been asked to send a special quantity of you down today because snow is a typical characteristic of Christmastime." I held my breath while he read out the names . . . "Dame Icey, Lord Freeze, Snowlet (junior)!" I did not wait to hear any more, the last name was mine, yes, my very own!

It is 6 a.m. on Christmas day and I am now floating down through the dawning space with the rest of my companions, down, down, down. It was slightly scaring waiting to jump off the cloud and say good-bye to Fluffyville and my inside gave a lurch as I jumped down. Whoosh! We have just passed a huge silver thing; I wonder what it was? Probably a more advanced snowflake. We are getting nearer the earth now, I can see the wonderful fields all different shades of green and brown, rather like a patch-work quilt. The sun is rising steadily, throwing its wonderful rays on to other clouds. I should not think that snowflakes live on these clouds, it would be much too hot for them, they would never live through it. We are getting even closer to the earth now and we can see more details. The sheep in the fields look like little white dots from here. I wonder what time we shall reach the ground!

I am amongst my friends on the hard ground, it is not at all soft like Fluffyville. I am beginning to feel rather uncomfortable. It was a terrible sensation coming down to earth; the land came nearer and nearer until—bump! The jolt was so hard that some of my crystals came off. Ugh! I am in something hot and wet, it is suffocating, I am crushed up with my friends, no I'm not, I'm whistling through the air, a few inches from the others. Oh! I'm by myself now, I wonder how the others stopped so suddenly? I am going down towards the ground now—oops—how wet it is. Hey! my crystals are disappearing one by one, I'm getting hot, hotter . . . . .

Jennifer Dollin, Form III

S.R.U.B.L.U.K.

THE Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom is of particular interest to those connected with this school because it is the brain-child of two old scholars—Adam Kendon and Nigel Watt, both of whom most of you will remember. The honorary treasurer is another young old scholar—Tim Whitmore.

The Society is of recent foundation and its immediate aims are threefold: Firstly, to preserve the Kent and East Sussex Railway (for more about which see another page of this magazine); secondly, to encourage the use of local railways by the use of posters and so forth, and by suggesting improvements to the appropriate authorities; thirdly, to collect information concerning small branch lines, "including such topics as patronisation, technical details and costs," to quote an official communication.

SRUBLUK at present has a small organising committee and a number of ordinary members, and later this year the first annual general meeting will be held, at which gathering the Society will be formally constituted and a committee elected. It is also hoped to consider plans concerning the Kent and East Sussex Railway. However, if it proves impossible to preserve this line, the Society nevertheless feels that "there is a place for our Society as an organised rallying point for those who are concerned at the apparent disintegration of British Railways," to quote once more.

As far as details of the Society are concerned, the motto is *Ad finem ferro,* which appears on the official notepaper underneath a picture of an ancient railway engine (rather like the *Rocket*) which bears the name of *Fury.* The address is 1 Blenheim Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.8, and the subscription, we understand, is five shillings per annum (two and sixpence for junior members—under sixteen). The membership card which this payment brings you is a little rectangle of green cardboard which "entitles holder to the privileges and facilities afforded by the Society."

So if you are interested in reinvigorating unremunerative branch lines in the United Kingdom you know what to do, and in any case we hope you will applaud the enterprise of its founders. We wish them luck in their self-appointed task!

BROADCASTING TO DENMARK

DURING the Christmas holidays I took part in a programme produced by the B.B.C. Danish Service for listeners in Denmark. The idea was to tell about the various arrangements made by the London County Council for school children living in or near London. A boy from Dulwich and I were asked to attend some lectures; I heard two, one on sailing ships and one on the care of animals, both of which were illustrated. I was also asked to go to the Schoolboys' Exhibition and to a "Peter Pan" performance at the Scala Theatre in London.

In the broadcast I was interviewed about one of the lectures, and about my impressions of "Peter Pan" as a theatre play, as compared with Walt Disney's "Peter Pan" film. An interesting point is that the producer was asked by one of his colleagues whether he had a recording car, or a portable tape recorder at the theatre. Even he could not tell that the interview was made in an ordinary talk studio while the effects, such as the murmuring audience and the orchestra tuning up before an act, were fitted in with the interview by a studio manager in the next door cubicle. It really was like the noise you would hear in a theatre.

Mogens Mervild, Form I



LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Left to Right: Robert Dunstan as *Nathaniel the Curate,* Alan Sillitoe as *Dull,* Christopher Wood as *Holofernes,* Donald Atkinson as *Costard,* and Joyce Coffin as *Jaquenetta.*

Photo by courtesy of Saffron Walden Weekly News

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

PERHAPS one day Walden will put on Shakespeare out-of-doors. A "grassy sward" in the foreground, "shadowy glades" in the distance, some genuine earth and flowers to give the rural atmosphere; these would be excellent properties for some plays. The Avenue would be most appropriate for "Love's Labour's Lost." The idea suggests all sorts of possibilities. When the king and the three lords, each thinking himself unseen and unheard, reads his love letter to himself, the eavesdroppers could be hiding behind the trees. When Boyet tells the queen and her ladies how:

> "Under the cool shade of a sycamore
> I thought to close mine eyes some half-an-hour;
> When, lo! to interrupt my purpos'd rest,
> Toward that shade I might behold addrest
> The king and his companions; warily
> I stole into a neighbour thicket by,"

we could imagine it happening. But perhaps the idea is a flippant and irrelevant one, and the only point in making it is to suggest that just occasionally in the actual performance indoors there was lacking a little of the lightness and quickness of touch in the acting and of word in the speaking, which a rural setting might have helped to inspire.

Though the play, as a weighty member of the audience afterwards said, is not one of Shakespeare's best, it can still be very enjoyable. Some of the jokes are still very funny and some of the situations still amusing. When the actors could see the joke or appreciate the situation, the play was very well done. If this was not always so, the fault, one is inclined to say, was inexperience, and that can be remedied in time. The obviously comic parts were played with gusto and enjoyment. Donald Atkinson's Costard was good yokel stuff:

> "An your waist mistress were as slender as my wit,
> One of these maids' girdles for your waist should be fit.
> Are you not the chief woman? You are the thickest here."

More than any other actor he was at ease and happy on the stage. Jaquenetta (Joyce Coffin), "a child of our grandmother Eve, a female," was just right as a sort of disordered milk-maid wench. Dull (Alan Sillitoe) was solidly and rustically dull. Moth, so small but so voluble, was well played by Karin Fernald. She was indeed "a most acute juvenal." Her voice was a little too brash for her to be "free of grace," as she is described by Armado (Kenneth L. Whitlow), and as the more mellifluous of the passages require. The contrast between Moth and Armado was excellently sustained: he, rather tall, affected and refined in his gestures; she, stumpy, cheeky and short.

"The schoolmaster is exceedingly fantastical." He was; and so was Nathaniel the curate (Robert Dunstan). The doddery, book-crammed pair were skilfully caricatured. They both used a lot of ingenuity in portraying the learned in their dotage. The king was manly, and the queen gracious. But their parts, and those of their attendants, are difficult to play. The plot that they are involved in is altogether too flimsy, and to be effective has to be played with speed, timing and much sophistication. But after all the oath of the king and his lords, "Not to see ladies,—study,—fast,—not sleep" is one that would be impossible to keep at Walden, even for the most obstinate misogynist or the most studious swot. This, perhaps, prevented the actors from approaching the situation as half-fantastic, half-probable, which was required to make it come to life. A lack of ease prevented the lords and ladies from enjoying the light flirtation of the play. Elizabeth Weaver as Rosaline alone among them spoke the verse with real imagination and had the right air of sophistication. The promise of these actors in their difficult parts was shown in the scene of the mock pageant before the court, which they made very entertaining.

"Love's Labour's Lost" gave a welcome opportunity of seeing a Shakespeare play only infrequently produced. And, with the high standard of production that is rapidly becoming a tradition at Walden, its delights could be readily enjoyed. We cannot finish, as the play so delightfully did, with a song, but only with our thanks.

RICHARD BROWN *and* GEORGE ROSENBERG

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

ON December 5th of last year, we visited a performance of Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" at the Princes Theatre, London. Like the invasion of Britain by the Angles and Saxons, and the Industrial Revolution, it can be termed, in a phrase familiar to history classes, a process, not an event.

This process began with the departure of Mr. Evens on the early train to London to obtain gallery stools. This made it possible for the process to be completed by the arrival (somewhat later) of a party of four boys and seven girls at Liverpool Street Station.

It may be a rough and ready criterion to judge the success of the play by the fact that it made us all forget, while watching it, that we are "doing" it as a play for advanced level, but this was so. The acting, particularly that of Michael Redgrave and Peggy Ashcroft, had the breadth and vehemence which the play required, while the production was skilful without being obtrusive. We especially admired the scenery and décor, which was rich and

opulent in the Egyptian scenes, but conveyed a grey and business-like atmosphere in the Roman scenes.

For this and the delights of a day in London, we must thank Mr. Evens, who made it possible for us to enjoy the outing so completely.

Isobel Jones, Form VI

GIRLS' READING CLUB

FOR many years now Senior Girls have been watching the activities of the Boys' Reading Club with some envy, and when last year's 5th Form decided to start a play reading group Miss Hall suggested that we re-opened the Girls' Reading Club. The original Girls' Reading Club closed in 1943. Mrs Littleboy was approached and she agreed to organise and generally direct our society, with the meetings being held at Robin's Acre. We decided to hold the meetings near half term and as the Summer Term was almost ended we chose to prepare only one book for our first meeting: Richard Llewellyn's "How Green was My Valley."

At the end of the Summer Term we held a meeting to read Shaw's "Pygmalion" and in the Autumn Term we read "The Guinea Pig" by W. Chetham-Strode. Books chosen for the Spring meeting were "Who Walk Alone" by Perry Burgess, and "Old St. Paul's" by W. Harrison Ainsworth.

Jeanetta Mabbott, Form VI

BOYS' READING CLUB

THE Autumn Term being the first of the school year, the Club was joined by several new members, namely Jan Berny, Peter Nash, Martin Holmes, Antony Newton, John Robertson and Alan Sillitoe. They were officially welcomed at the first meeting of the year, the play reading held at half term.

The meeting held at the end of term for the discussion of books was started by Mr. Mummery, who introduced Shaw's play, "The Devil's Disciple." Apart from a basic historical fallacy and weak characterisation of Judith, one of the main figures, he found little to criticise. He did, however ,warn members of Shaw's habit of setting himself up as an authority on matters about which he knew little. As an historian, Mr. Mummery was concerned about the effect of Shaw's historical theories which are dangerous because they are so near the truth and not obviously incorrect, as are Shakespeare's. The majority of the members agreed with Mr. Mummery's remarks, and soon engaged in the provocative if perhaps futile task of trying to locate the basis of Shaw's genius. The conclusion was that half his appeal was derived from the debunking of contemporary ideas; the rest derived from his

flowing but piquant prose and dialogue, and from his mastery of the drama as a literary form. For these reasons it was felt that his popularity would wane as the ideas he ridiculed became unfashionable, but that because of his literary gifts he had a permanent place in English literature.

The second topic of discussion was the book "Sailing Alone Around the World," by Joshua Slocum. John Skelton in opening the discussion said that he had found the book disappointing after the first few chapters. It seemed to him to be little more than a series of badly linked anecdotes about visits to and contacts with Very Important Persons. While he did not doubt that to Slocum these experiences were very important, to the general reader they tended to become as uninteresting as the proverbial Family Photograph Album. Most members endorsed this view, and it was pointed out that a man prepared to live in what amounted to solitary confinement for three years was unlikely to have the gift of imparting the excitement and interest of his experiences to other people. As in the case of " Ten Years Under the Earth," which the Club read last spring, the author had the requisite knowledge but little writing ability.

The third book was Charles Reade's classic " The Cloister and the Hearth." It was introduced by Bryan Pickard. Owing to the length of the book few members had been able to finish it and the discussion was correspondingly short. Those who had read it agreed with Pickard that Reade was prone to over-dramatisation; the hero's adventures would not have disgraced Dick Barton. Nevertheless, the novel was very enjoyable, and though long, there was sufficient action for modern readers. In this respect, Reade compared favourably with Scott, whose books are often padded with long descriptions. As an historical novel " The Cloister and the Hearth " was better on its period than any other similar book members knew of or had read.

The last book was the most controversial, though the discussion soon abandoned the book in favour of its hero. " Mr. Churchill," by Philip Guedalla was the book in question. Christopher Wood gave an introduction which was as politically unbiased as possible on such a subject, but when the general discussion opened, the ardent Socialists metaphorically tore Churchill to pieces. Undaunted, the Tory diehards rushed to the rescue with metaphorical First Aid. The supporters and opposers of Churchill naturally failed to reach any agreement about him, but members did agree that Geudalla's book was of little historical or literary value. It omitted large and important portions of the hero's life, and the writing was full of clichés.

The most popular of the four works read this term was undoubtedly Shaw's play, " The Devil's Disciple."

Christopher Brown, Form VI

SENIOR LITERARY SOCIETY

THIS year the aim of the Senior Literary Society has been to improve the general standard of the Society itself. Noticing the unwillingness or inability of certain members of the Society to express themselves during meetings, it was decided by the committee at the beginning of the year to try and make people have more confidence in themselves by seeing that everybody took some part in meetings during the year.

To this end, the first meeting of the year was devoted to a reading of " Androcles and the Lion " by Bernard Shaw. It was well read and enjoyed by members of the Society. Hilaire Belloc, who had died a few weeks previously, was the subject of the second meeting organised by the committee. Belloc's life was first considered, then his achievements as a historian, as a poet, as an essayist and as a writer of nonsense verse.

The next meeting was on more traditional lines. Short essays were read by these members of the Society: Antony Newton ("Travel "), Julia Mace (" Did Marlowe write Shakespeare ? "), Robert Dunstan (" American Comics "), Nigel Weaver (" The Customs of the House of Commons "), Margaret Webb (" My Last School ") and Margaret Shepherd (" Twentieth Century Literature ") which helped to give us a very enjoyable evening.

The last meeting of the Autumn Term unfortunately coincided with the dress rehearsal of " Love's Labour's Lost," and some members of the Society who were in the production had to miss the meeting. It was given over to the reading of short descriptive passages from novels. This was the culmination of the aims of the committee for all the remaining members of the Society took part.

At the first meeting of the Spring Term the first two acts of "Caesar and Cleopatra" by Bernard Shaw were read. It was hoped that the reading could be finished at the next meeting which was to be held just before the G.C.E. " mock " examinations. Owing, however, to the failure of the books to reach us in time from the County Library, the meeting had to be cancelled.

The committee decided that a month left too long a gap to continue reading "Caesar and Cleopatra," and that people would wish to let off steam after the end of the examinations, so a meeting of light literary games was arranged as a surprise for the members of the Society.

The members of the committee during the Autumn Term were Nigel Watt, Judith Foster, Una Millett, Christopher Wood and Joyce Coffin. Nigel Watt and Judith Foster have now left, and Una Millett has resigned owing to pressure of work ; their places have been taken by Alan Sillitoe, Elda Gale and Donald Atkinson. It is hoped that a meeting on modern poetry and music will be arranged this term.

Christopher Wood, Form VI

DEBATING SOCIETY

THE Society has held three meetings in this school year, on the 12th November, 10th December and 25th February.

For the first meeting the motion that " this house believes that Guy Fawkes is a barbarous custom which should be abandoned by all intelligent Englishmen " was debated. The speakers for the motion were Martin Holmes and Margaret Shepherd. Opposing were Joyce Coffin and John W. Robertson. There was a lively discussion which covered a wide range from bonfires to snowmen. The motion was defeated.

The meeting of December 10th was of a more serious nature. The motion before house was that "this house believes that the present day education is but the temporary acquisition of unwanted knowledge." The proposer was Nigel Watt (that day returned from Cambridge where his "unwanted knowledge " had secured him a scholarship) assisted by Jill Baker and opposed by Alan Sillitoe and Antony Newton. The motion was defeated. The four main speeches on this occasion were by far the best we have had so far. The large attendance at this meeting was very pleasing, but the quantity and quality of speeches from the floor were not encouraging. We hope that members realise that a lively discussion depends upon small contributions as much as on the main speeches of the evening.

The last meeting before going to print was on 25th February, 1954. The motion was that "this house sees a better future in New York than Moscow." Proposing were Jan Berny and Antony Newton. Robert Dunstan who was given double time, opposed the motion. The meeting could not be finished in one evening and as there were many floor speeches still to come, and a second meeting is to be held in conjunction with the Senior Literary Society, to whom many thanks are due. The result was in favour of New York.

The Committee of the Society have taken it in turn to act as chairman and secretary. This year's committee is: Hilary Jackson, John Wilson, Joyce Coffin, Alan Sillitoe, Jill Baker, and Nigel Weaver.

Nigel Weaver, Form V

LIBRARY REPORT

LAST term 1140 books were borrowed from the Library, compared with 716 for the corresponding term last year, hitherto the term with the highest number of withdrawals. Among the most borrowed books were Paton's " Cry, the Beloved Country," Forester's " Lieutenant Hornblower," Margaret Mitchell's " Gone

with the Wind" and Shute's "A Town like Alice." Personal narratives about World War II also proved extremely popular.

Since the last issue of *The Avenue* fifty-one books have been added to the Library. For the fourteen of these which were presented we are indebted to Jill Baker, Ethel Cove, Harry Frost, Margaret Hall, Maurice Haselgrove, Geoffrey Pilliner, Stanley Pumphrey, Alexander Robinson, Patsy Rogers, Olga Sheeran and John Woods.

In December Nigel Watt left after more than three years' service on the Library Committee. Succeeding David Matthews as statistician, he has done fine work in this and other departments of Library service. We are lucky in having John W. Robertson to succeed him.

C.A.M.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SINCE the last issue of *The Avenue* the Society has held five meetings. On October 13th Miss Pumphrey visited the Society She spoke about a Nature Reserve at Gibraltar Point in Lincolnshire, where a considerable amount of bird ringing is carried out, and also told us about the origin of Golden Hamsters and their excellence as pets. As a result of her talk we have since purchased a pair of Golden Hamsters and they have reared seven young. The evening of October 27th was devoted to the reading of papers by certain members : Pamela Camburn on tiger moths, Jill Baker on the coelacanth, Dennis Lindsay on fungi, James Munro on slugs, Richard Higgs on budgerigars and Glynn Byles on his locust observations. On 24th November we had a brains-trust. The "brains" consisted of Mrs. Mummery, Mr. Ilsley, Mr. Haselgrove, Mr. Pumphrey, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Beeson. Janet Rice took the chair. Questions had previously been collected and the team answered a wide variety of them. The final meeting of the Autumn Term was devoted to a talk on the flora of East Anglia. It was given by Dr. Walters, a visiting speaker from Cambridge University Herbarium. He described some of the common plants found in this region and illustrated his talk with some excellent colour slides and a short ciné film.

Owing to the recent exams only two meetings have been held so far this term. At the first one, on January 26th Commander Robertson spoke about birds. Firstly he told us about the water birds which are found around Saffron Walden and secondly he described in detail the life and habits of the wye neck and crossbill. He brought with him a selection of his own slides, including a series of a pair of tree sparrows. He concluded by playing us a record of the crossbill's song and one of a dawn chorus. On

February 23rd Mr. Ilsley came and spoke to us about farming. He brought with him a film strip which outlined the various types of farming, showed the skill of the hedger and the method of thrashing by means of a thrashing machine—a method which is rapidly declining, owing to the increased popularity and efficiency of combine harvesters.

At Parents' Week-end last term there was a small Natural History Exhibition in which several members had interesting exhibits.

The weather recording group has become considerably larger and its members have continued keeping accurate day-to-day observations of the weather.

Jill Baker, Form V

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Editor of *The Avenue* wishes gratefully to acknowledge the receipt of the following magazines and at the same time to apologise for any inadvertent omissions :—

The Beckside, The Georgian, The Leightonian, The Magazine of the Friends' School, Lancaster, and School Echoes.

EDITORIAL BOARD

We have been sorry this term to lose Nigel Watt and John Wilson, and welcome Antony Newton to the board. Other members are Margaret G. Yapp, Kenneth L. Whitlow, Tim Evens, Hilary Jackson, Una Millett, Joyce Coffin and Alan Sillitoe.

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YOUR
article should have been

Contributions towards the next issue of *The Avenue*
should be handed to any member of the Board

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WALDEN