



THE
UNOFFICIAL
MCBS
MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1943

EDITORIAL

CERTAIN OBSTACLES have arisen. Fate, with a malicious grin, has stood, like Giant Despair, across our path. Yet, despite the failure of the printing press, despair has been dispelled and I am proud to present to you : the School Magazine.

Many members of the school have written articles, to all of whom I am grateful, but to those whose words do not appear I offer my condolences, for they have no compensation. My thanks are particularly due to the friend in need who saved us from the disaster of non-publication.

The scope of the contents of this issue has been extended to include contributions which not only may or may not demonstrate the literary abilities of boys but give some idea of the extra school activities and will therefore give the parents and others an idea why Tom, Dick and Harry is later home from school than has been expected. It is also quite possible that critical youth, in later years, may be amused, or interested by its early efforts.

As with previous editions, this one is branded with the title " Unofficial." It is hoped, however, that we shall acquire a prouder title and that we may again see an official M.C.B.S. Magazine in the not too distant future.

E. P. WARD.

17th December, 1943.

CHRISTMAS MORN

The stars look pale and silvery
Against the winter sky,
The moon shines on the frosty way,
And drowsily the dawning day
Creeps forward with a sigh.
The sun climbs slowly to his place
In clouds of mist enfurled,
The children in their best array,
Are running out of doors to play.
And greet the waking world.
At last, at last the day has dawned,
For which the children pray,
A day of merriment and feast,
A time of joy for man and beast,
Be ours this Christmas Day.

A. DELIN (IIIa).

THE BOXING AND GYM CLUB

The Boxing Club has completed its first, and thus most important, year's work with vigour and success. The period of formation and stabilisation has been happily survived and those who have passed will have completed the prospective course in about four years. The Club now contains about thirty members.

The past Term has witnessed the formation of a Gymnastic Club with good results. It has been necessary to limit the membership to those passing a special test, as we aim to perform before audiences of parents and friends during the coming terms.

E. P. W.

SPRING

The crocus springing through the lawn,
The palmy night and pearly dawn,
The tender bleat of lambs new born,
All tell that Spring is here.
The rooks who're nesting in yon tree,
The brook that tinkles merrily,
The maiden's smile, the children's glee,
All tell that Spring is here.

S. KIRWIN (IIIb).

MEMOIRS

A.T.C. CAMP 1943

AT camp this year I was a fortunate being and viewed life from a higher plane, for I had at last received recognition after two and a half years devoted service.

Within the first hour at camp a florid W.O., seeing my sleeve, allowed that perhaps I, and other fortunates could have a tent to ourselves. In the mess, in the company of those forceful N.C.O.'s known as Flight-Sergeants, the latest gen came quickly to us. This was necessary, for what is more demoralising to us than to queue for an extra cake in the company of our equivalent of an A.C. Plonk?

When Orderly duty came my way, the Orderly N.C.O. could have been seen dozing in the warmth of the late summer sun, having used the initiative usually associated with that rank. The fatigue party, for which I was responsible, were drinking tea in the cookhouse, while the rest of the camp was being drilled on a road below, accompanied by the customary "Hip, Hipe, Hip, Hipe: Keep the step going."

I visited the camp cinema and cat-calls greeted two M.P.'s who appeared on the screen escorting the hero. The next film was melodramatic, and soon pocket-torches appeared and books were produced to while away the time. Finally the film broke down, and so did the restraint on the voices of the R.A.F. The lights were turned up, and there in the light stood two S.P.'s very much in the flesh. Immediately there was a guilty silence, broken only by the nervous coughing of someone at the back.

Towards the end of our stay at camp a dance was held, and here we saw those lads who had told us so many times what eventful times they had; now they appeared retiring in the face of the W.A.A.F. Many of these gay young dogs sampled the joys of strong liquor for the first time, and prudence being thrown to the wind, some had no recollection of reaching tents; others slept in their uniforms that night. Our flight had only one black sheep in the fold, but fortunately not a member of our unit; he was viewed with pity and terror by those of more temperate tastes.

The stay at camp gave an opportunity to see how the representative of a County School stood up to a butcher's boy from St. Pancras. I found that at times he was no better than the crowd but was certainly more ingenious at inventing excuses.

SERGEANT.

HOUSE REPORTS

1. BLACK.

For many years Black House has felt a latent pride in its position in the competition for the work cup. Notwithstanding our improvement in effort our position remains the same. Valuable enthusiasm has been shown for athletic activities, and there has been a keen attendance at the Gym and Boxing Clubs. Junior Rugby practices have given evidence of the keenness of the junior team. The first XV was more fortunate than the juniors, gaining a clear victory over the corresponding team of Blue House, not by the efforts of individuals, but by a display of team spirit. I deprecate the unwillingness of an element of the seniors to sacrifice their spare time.

E. P. W.

2. RED.

The year 1943-1944 seems a promising year for Red House, with its strong junior XV. As always the apathy of a minority impedes our progress in the Work Cup. Yet despite this we hold an ever-improving position. There is a perceptible laxity in the middle school; markedly evident in the forced attendance at cross-country running, but the subversive element in the third and fourth forms was soon checked. It is gratifying to note the high membership of school societies and the all-round keenness of most juniors. With red as our house colour we have much to work up to.

J. H. G.

3. GREEN.

Despite the extremely poor results gained in last year's inter-House competitions, I think I can safely say that the house spirit is as strong as ever. Just as the indifference of the individual was responsible for the failure last year, so the renewed vigour of the individual will, this year, if not ensure success, at least make Green House far stronger and a better rival for Cock House.

W. E. K.

4. BLUE.

Although this term there have been remarkably few House activities, already the newer and junior members of Blue House have shown a commendable enthusiasm. The seniors have, however, been somewhat handicapped by lack of this enthusiasm.

The results so far of Inter-House Rugby have been puzzling. Both Juniors and Seniors did well against Black, but not Green. A spurt in effort and we will have better success next term.

P. B. T.

THESEUS FAREWELL AN IMAGE

(Inspired by Catullus).

There upon Dias, ever-echoing shore,
Sweet Ariadne stood in fond dismay,
With wild eyes watching the swift fleet that bore
Her loved one far away.
And yet she gazed incredulous, and still,
Like one awaking from beguiled sleep,
Found herself standing on the beachy hill,
Left there alone to weep.
But the quick oars upon the water flashed,
And Theseus fled, and not a thought behind
He left; but all his promises were dashed
Into the wandering wind.
Far off she strains her melancholy eyes,
And like a Monad sculptured there in stone
Stands as in act to shout for she espies
Him she once called her own.
Dark waves of care swayed o'er her tender soul.
The fine-wove turban from her golden hair
Had fallen; the light robe no longer stole
Over her bosom bare;
Loose droop'd the well-wrought girdle from her breast
That wildly struggled to be free. They lay
About her feet, and many a briny crest
Kissed them in careless play.
But nought she reck'd of turban then; and nought
Of silken garments flowing gracefully.
O Theseus, far away in heart and thought
And soul; she hung on thee!
Ah, me! that hour did love unravel there
A never-ending torrent of wildering woe;
And twining round that heart rude briars of care
Bade them take root and grow:
What, then, from old Piron's curved strand
Dared chivalrous-hearted Theseus to bring
His vessel far away into the land
Of the unrighteous King?

L. WILKS (VI).

SCHOOL NOTES

THE School has shown its great gratitude to and respect for Mr. Stephens, whom we are sorry to lose this term. Much enthusiasm has been evident in contributing to a farewell gift of a reading lamp along with book tokens.

THE FRENCH CIRCLE.

The French Circle began this year with an unexpected outburst of enthusiasm. Although so far we have not been honoured by visits from the President's distinguished friends, we have been lucky to obtain some much-coveted seats for the Theatre Moliere, where we saw "La Malade Imaginaire" and "L'Anglais telle qu'on parle."

THE SCHOOL CHOIR.

During the past term a pleasant series of meetings have been held, at which arias and choruses from the Messiah and Christmas Carols have been rehearsed. The choir gave a performance of these items at the end of term.

THE GRAMOPHONE CONCERTS.

The new institution of lunch-time concerts in the Art Room seems to be proving a success. Performances of well-known classical music have been given to large audiences of the senior school. It is hoped that the junior school will have an opportunity of listening next term. Extremely varied requests have been made and it must be understood that we must cater for all tastes.

CHARITIES.

The School has shown great generosity in giving to charities in the past months. A donation of £5 12s. 6d. was sent to Earl Haig's Fund. A total of £33 was gained for the hospital, including the proceeds of an excellent auction of lost property and of a raffle for a hamper of foodstuffs.

THE GEOGRAPHY HISTORY SOCIETY.

The formation of the G.H.S. has resulted in a number of interesting meetings, including a profound inaugural lecture by Mr. Doig and an educational lecture on the Baltic States by a visitor from the Polish Embassy. It is hoped that despite the loss of Mr. Peach, activities, including half-term rambles, will be continued in the New Year.

An article by L. D. H. Tenner is to appear in the local press and we shall be pleased to reprint it in our next edition if per-

mission is obtained.

The term has witnessed an extremely well attended parents' meeting and the formation of a parents' committee.

Many old boys have been seen wandering about the school with broad grins and fervent shaking of hands with all within reach.

The societies and activities of the School provide something for every individual and may be a source of great benefit to those willing to participate. Pericles, the Athenian leader, said to an assembly in the Market Place: "We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs not as a harmless, but as a useless character."

E. P. W.

DEBATING SOCIETY

During the term four debates have been held on motions of political and educational interest. Those who have attended have reaped an immeasurable benefit; the benefit which is only too acutely realised by those to whom it has been denied. The Debating Society enables its members to hear all sides of an argument, to express their ideas and make a decision. Plans are well in hand for the Spring Term. They will probably include a full dress trial of Mr. Bevin and his coal-mine recruitment.

The committee earnestly solicit the support of new members.

L. W.

MISTS

Drifting mists like wisps of wool come floating through the
water-meads,
Curling round the stooping willows where the weeping branches
trail,
Clinging to the river banks amongst the rushes and the reeds,
Blanketing the sodden pastures; rolling softly up the vale.
Over every farm and cottage hangs a haze of smoky grey.
O'er the silent countryside the night is creeping, chill and damp,
On the hills and in the hollows trees and chimneys fade away.
Close the door and draw the curtains, pile the logs and light
the lamp.

A. DURANT (IVa).

THE SCHOOL HARVEST CAMP 1943

ON Saturday, 28th August, a group of Mitchamians, with cases and rucksacks hiding the unfortunate bearers, made their way to the station.

At 11.16 a.m., the train slowly moved out of the station, and we prepared for a long journey. It was not long before Mars Bars, sandwiches, and cakes, neatly wrapped up in white paper, were displayed. Speculations as to the nature of the camp were discussed uneasily; that feeling of suspense was prevalent amongst a majority of the prospective farmers.

We were met at Cheddar Station by a lorry which conveyed us to our future lodgings. The tents were situated in a field adjoining the farm, and much to the discomfort of the tent-dwellers, the same field was also inhabited by sheep, cows and an old mad horse who was known as "Tom."

The pioneers of the camp demonstrated their superiority and showed the precise nature of clothing to be worn.

During the week-days, work, which was performed at near-by farms included sweding, forestry, and later, "hauling," which met with general approval. Sometimes it rained, so groups of boys would be seen inside the tents playing cards, some writing letters, and others, braving the weather, ventured far into the fields.

Week-ends witnessed excursions into Cheddar and expeditions into the caves. Others would visit Weston, which was only three-quarters of an hour's journey by cycle away. Our hearts ached for those poor 'orderlies' who were scheduled for duty on those free days. How those concerned dreaded the sound of "Orderlies" at about 7 a.m.!

Their day began in this way and duties often included lighting fires with wet wood, preparing and serving meals and washing up. Awards were granted to the most proficient ones, or, at least, they were mentioned in despatches.

Days concluded with cocoa at dusk and a weary retreat to the tents. On arrival, however, life broke out once more with riotous sing-songs. About midnight everyone was asleep.

The end of camp showed scenes of pulling up and filling in, taking down and covering up, but at 1.30 p.m. on the last day,

carrying food for the journey, we were conveyed to the station in a cattle van, which, although odious, was effectual.

An interesting and speedy journey brought us to Paddington at 7.45 p.m. Late at night we made our way to our individual beds, missing our companions but knowing a strange peace.

L. H. DUNKLEY (IVa).

ITALIAN MUD

It came from the earth,
It came with the rain,
The rain gave it birth
Again and again.
The generals cursed,
The soldiers they swore,
Machine-guns did burst,
And field guns did roar,
But still the mud—
The terrible mud.
But the men kept their courage,
The general his head,
While the murderous barrage
Rained death from o'er head.
Then up went the cry,
And forward the tanks;
While the murderous fire
Still tore gaps in the ranks
And still the mud,
The terrible mud.
They slipped and they slithered,
They cursed as they fell,
But the brave British tommies,
They fought through this hell.
Till the battle was over
The day was well won,
The rain was all over,
At rest was the sun.
But still the mud,
The terrible mud.

R. KATESMARK (IVa).

SYMBOL OF HOPE

DATE—11TH NOVEMBER, 1943.

To-day is Remembrance Day, recognised not only as a time for remembering those who fell during the Great War of 1914-1918, but also as a time for remembering those who have fallen in this war. Our French allies likewise remember this day for it is the time when the two countries pay homage to their dead countrymen who have fallen during both wars.

I had just bought my Poppy at Fair Green when I turned into Commonside East. There above me in the distance was the sun, a golden ball of fire in the early morning, rising from behind the grey muffled clouds. I was looking eastwards towards France, the largest enemy-occupied country and indeed towards the whole continent. The sun struck me as symbolising the fiery feeling in the hearts of those subjected peoples. It was rising from behind the darkness of surrounding clouds as surely the countries will rise again from the clouds of death and destruction around them.

P. WOOLAS (ex-VI) ✓

O QUIRITES!

WE do not stare at pieces of fused quartz,
love conquers the devil's damned,
the peril of life is not to crawl through clouds of cotton wool,
but blindness rolls on wooden wheels to those who
wave wooden swords.

a polar bear is made of glue.

Logical bestiality begs the flowering rose to kiss the pungent
mud,

golden oriols trust the new-found silver scissors,
the soft black velvet hangs in shreds,
who can tell if she love him
for the animal has ears of steel which rhyme.

The Unexpected is, in the long run, violet,
Inquisition is a chequered trysting place
and paranoia inhales the beggar's tears;
warm oil impells the flame which hangs from the burning astral
shell,
man is a frame of fumbling nerves and a glass eye.

W. KENSDALE (VI) ✓

A PORTABLE ELECTRIC WELDING PLANT

THE only place at which I saw one of these machines was at Stratford and was owned by the L.P.T.B.

There were about five men operating it. I should mention that it was being used to weld lengths of rail together. It was shaped like one of the ordinary Underground passenger coaches and it ran on the railway track.

A small electric crane was used to lift the lengths of rail onto some rollers along which the rails were pushed into the plant. I could not clearly see what happened next but one of the operators put two of the rail ends close together, fixed them rigidly and then stood clear. There was a loud pop from the motor and a show of sparks came from the plant at the spot where the rails had been joined. This continued for about five minutes, those pops and the showers of sparks, then, just as an opera comes to a finale, so did this, and sparks were flying from the plant continually for about three minutes. When this had stopped the two rail-ends, which were, of course, red hot, had been joined together. A mark was made with white paint on either side of the join, presumably to show where they had been joined, and then the rail was removed and the join was ground down level. "FIVER."

THE SCRUM

THE whistle was blown and somebody yells "Scrum down!" There is a loud chorus of groans and a crowd of players are piled into the heap commonly known as scrum. In the middle of this mass, horrible yells are heard. After about five minutes, the scrum-half says "Coming in right, forwards!" and the ball shoots in one side of the scrum and out the other. Somebody mumbles something about "Never in," and the scrum waits in a cramped position while the ball is being retrieved. Eventually somebody whispers "Coming in left, forwards!" and the ball is thrown in from the right-hand side. The ball now is rolling around in the middle of the scrum.

The two hookers kick at it while all the other forwards lean on one another. Everybody talks at once and the offensive blighter behind always demands to know why you squashed his head and punctuates his remarks with a kick in the shins. Eventually the ball rolls out of the scrum, somebody yells "Break!" and everybody stands up and staggers out into the fresh air once again.

M. BUTLER (IVb).