

MITCHAM  
COUNTY SCHOOL  
FOR GIRLS



1952

part 1

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### School News

There are always feelings of loss as well as expectation at the beginning of the Autumn Term, and we came back to welcome ninety new people in the II forms, but to miss some very familiar faces from the VIth and Upper Fifts. We also missed Fraulein Wolter, but have been pleased to have Fraulein Gruncisen and Mlle. Rodière with us. There were no other Staff changes until Easter when Miss Young left to be married and go to Nigeria. Our good wishes go with her. In her place we have Mrs. Cobon who is, we hope, already quite at home.

At Christmas we received some South African Chincherichees which brightened our wintry landscape with sunny blossoms. They were a present from Miss Cockburn who is still enjoying Rhodesian life and is now the proud owner of a motor car.

The School is already familiar with Alison Barford who was born in October and paid us a visit when her mother came to judge the VIth form Dramatic competition.

They say that the country is happy which has no history, and so our School should be happy, since this year there is so little to record. Mr. Lay continues to make the School look beautiful for our return from holidays and we continue to undo his work. Mr. Harris has achieved wonders with the gardens, only interrupted by too friendly dog visitors. Mrs. Mears cooks us meals which we appreciate, although amidst the noise and clamour of the Canteen.

We are almost entirely back in our proper uniform, the blue and white but seldom diversified by red shoes or a cardigan of less sombre hue.

The Domestic Science Room is now firmly established at the other end of the corridor and a Biology laboratory has risen in its place like a Phoenix from its ashes. Here everything is shining and bright, and we hope the mice and frogs and rabbits will enjoy their new home.

### The Loan and Gift Fund

This fund is growing slowly but steadily. The only donations this year have been those received on the School Birthday when we made our usual collection, which was augmented by some very welcome gifts from old friends. We made gifts or loans to the girls who went to College last year so that they could buy books for their courses. We hope that many of these gifts will be returned to us in due course as presents to the Fund.

An audited account is presented below. We have to thank Mr. Alderman for auditing and for his continued interest.

		£ s. d.				M.D.	
DEBIT				CREDIT			
Paid to Leavers ...	11	11	0	Balance ...	150	19	10
Balance ...	184	11	10	Gifts ...	16	3	0
				Interest on Bonds	29	0	0
			£196				£196
			2				2
			10				10
				Balance brt. fwd.	£184	11	10

In addition there is £1,000 invested in Defence Bonds.

## Charity Report

A new system of collecting charity has been tried this year, that of asking the whole school to subscribe for a certain period to a cause about which some girl is keen enough to tell the others. When either the cause has fired the imagination of the school, or the girl or form sponsoring it has been particularly keen, the response has been extremely good. As in previous years, however, without some special stimulant the unexciting weekly giving could be very much better.

In the Christmas term the two efforts arousing the most general enthusiasm were those in aid of the Animal Health Trust and the collection of goods and money for parcels to the Diepholz School for children of Displaced Persons. Various efforts and competitions collected a total of £24 16s. 3d. for the former, amounts of over £1 being raised by UV's Treasure Hunt (26s.), LV's calendars and cards (54s. 6d.) and LV's pantomime (53s. 7½d.). The sale of cards bearing the school crest and printed on our own press made a further profit of £5 19s. 6d. Eleven parcels were sent to the Diepholz school and further money was raised by the Vith form carol-singing parties. Many special Christmas efforts were also made for various causes. Form II sent parcels to an Old People's Home. The proceeds of the carol service were again given to the Parish Church Restoration fund, and we also made a very successful carol expedition. The posting of Christmas cards in school stamped with the Tuberculosis Care Committee seals was as popular as ever and raised £9 13s. 0d. A total of over £60 was finally sent to various charities including, apart from the sums already mentioned, £5 12s. 6d. to the Blue Cross Section of Our Dumb Friends' League collected towards the prevention of illicit trading and cruelty to horses, £14 6s. 6d. to the British Empire Cancer Campaign, £1 16s. 0d. to the National Children's Home and Orphanage, and 13s. from IIa to the Sunshine Home for Blind Babies.

The greatest excitement of the Spring Term was the enthusiasm aroused by some of VI 1 for the Unesco Coupon Scheme and £13 was sent to provide equipment for a school in Gaza, Palestine. £8 was also collected for the Jamaican Hurricane Relief Fund to help to provide books for a school library destroyed by the hurricane. A further £3 10s. 0d. was sent to the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals and £4 7s. 6d. to the Invalid Children's Aid Association. We hope during the Summer Term to continue collections for outside charities while doing all we can to support our own Ockenden fund to which a number of girls have already contributed money they have raised by their own efforts.

## The Parent-Teacher Association

We are now in our third year of existence, and whereas last year was definitely one of consolidation, this year might be described as one of progress. The Annual General Meeting was held on 3rd October, 1951, when new Committee members were selected and the programme for 1952 discussed. We owe thanks to retiring members, and especially to Mr. Hampshire who has worked untiringly as Secretary to the Association since its inauguration.

The Christmas Social on 12th December, 1951, took the form of a seasonable play acted delightfully by some of the Juniors, followed

by carols sung by Senior members of the School and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Mrs Catlin, Lecturer at King's College of Household and Social Science, was able to give us another of her interesting lectures on 5th February, 1952, this time on "Girls Growing Up", which was most enlightening. On 11th March, 1952, we had three talks on Careers, given by Miss S. Evans, M.C.S.P. (Principal of Guy's Hospital School of Physiotherapy), Mr. Jaundrell Thompson (Chief Radiologist at St. Bartholomew's Hospital), and Mr. Hoffe, a Civil Service Commissioner, respectively. These talks proved most helpful and interesting to parents and girls, and it was very encouraging to have such enthusiastic audiences at both meetings. The Open Evening on 15th May was enjoyed by a large number of parents, who may have been surprised to discover what talented daughters they possessed!

Many interesting ventures are being planned by the Committee of the Ockenden Fund, and we feel sure that all parents will give their full support and co-operation to this very worthy cause.

Lastly—we cherish the hope that in the Cricket Match between parents and girls on 3rd July, 1952, we shall see gallant Fathers, the gleam of battle in their eye, again prove victorious. However, in all fairness, we must sadly admit that our victory last year was largely due to the fading light.

DIANA L. WINSLADE, Hon. Sec.

### **The Old Girls' Association**

The O.G.A. held its Annual General Meeting on 17th October, 1951, and the following Committee was elected: Barbara Seadon (Secretary and Treasurer), Joan White, Joan Field, Irene Hogg, Joyce Dawson (Hockey Secretary) and Audrey Cronin.

In January members were invited to a Party held at School with games, competitions, square dancing and a quiz programme. For our Summer meeting this year we are joining the School on Fete Day, when we shall be having a stall, which we hope will be a focal point for many Old Girls and their families.

The Association is anxious to contact as many Old Girls as possible, and all inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to the Secretary at 2 Meadow Close, Sutton, Surrey.

### **Mitcham (Old Girls) Hockey Club**

(Affiliated to the A.E.W.H.A.)

The results of this season's matches were as follows: wins, 6; draws, 1; losses, 9; cancelled, 7; and one match abandoned. Although this record is not as good as we had hoped, we were playing clubs of a high standard, and the games were most enjoyable. The standard of play in the team has been good, particularly in the defence. Our goal-keeper was selected to play for Surrey 3rd XI and we hope to send several members of the Club to the Surrey Trials next Autumn.

As a few members are leaving us, we shall be particularly pleased to welcome people who are leaving School in the Summer. Girls who are interested should contact either J. Dawson, 2 St. James' Road, Mitcham, or Miss Haddow.

Our activities this year also extended to the operatic field, when

we gave an original musical version of "A Hockey Afternoon" at the Surrey Fair. Once again we should like to record our thanks to Miss Dunn and Miss Haddow who have helped so much to the success of the Club.

B. SMITH (Captain),  
J. DAWSON (Secretary).

### The Fête

Contrary to the usual pessimistic prophecies of the less cheerful members of the Mitcham County School, 21st July, 1951, was the ideal summer day. (We would like to record here our grateful thanks to the barometer for not dropping a day earlier and allowing the heavy storm of the following day to play havoc with our efforts.) The fete was opened at 3 p.m. by Miss E. S. Mizen, daughter of our first Chairman of governors and herself a governor of the school, and the proceedings were soon in full swing.

Half an hour after the opening, a few girls who studied German and members of the twelve voice choir gave a delightful rendering of German folk songs and other part songs. In this programme also considerable talent was shown by the girls of the second forms in their miming. Following this was a performance of "Wayside War" by Margaret Napier, in which all the characters were well portrayed, but we feel special mention should be made of Rita Brown as Lady Alicia Pemberton, and of Dorothy Dawson as the Colonel. Another highlight of the afternoon was the "Gymnastics Display" by twelve selected members of the upper fifth and sixth forms, who demonstrated to us how neatly and efficiently gymnastics can be performed. The same neatness and accuracy were well illustrated by the third forms in their intricate exhibition of figure marching on the field.

Among the lesser attractions of the afternoon were stalls for the sale of garden produce, household goods, sweets and a toy and gift stall; the last produced over £9. A running buffet in our spacious "Cafe and Tea Gardens" provided welcome refreshments for our visitors. Among the many amusing side shows was form IVa's "Fortune Telling" by Madame Psycho, and although she was well attended, we noticed a distinct tendency for Upper Fifts and the second year Sixths awaiting their examination results, to steer clear of this feature, preferring to let the future take care of itself. Opportunities to show one's skill were provided by the clock golf, darts and the skittle alley.

There were many other side shows, which although not mentioned here by name, all contributed to the success of the fete. Our total of £142 could not have been achieved without the untiring efforts of the fete committee, the staff, and the help of the fathers who were on duty at the gate.

H. HOPTON, M. SNELLING.

### Speech Day

Speech Day, 8th November, was held once again in Mitcham Baths Hall. In his opening speech, Mr. Clark, Chairman of the Governors, told the girls that they must realise the great advantage they had in attending Mitcham County School, and that they must make the best of their opportunities.

Miss Dunn began her speech by welcoming Mr. J. Hood-Phillips.

Secretary to the Senate of the University of London, who had attended a former Speech Day when Miss Winifred Holtby was the guest-of-honour. Miss Dunn stressed the advantages to be gained by remaining at school for one or two years in the sixth form. "I think that any parents who have allowed their daughters to do this have become well aware of the marked difference shown in the development of the girls' characters and minds", she said. "Even if a girl is not going on to college or taking further training, she who has spent some time in the sixth form is usually far more capable of taking on responsible work and exercising authority." Parents were urged to help girls who wished to take up scientific work, nursing and domestic science, in which there were many openings. The school had acquired, and made good use of in the course of the year, a film projector, a printing set and a wireless set with loudspeakers and a gramophone. Miss Dunn ended her report by giving thanks for all help given to the school in the past year.

The Headgirl, Margaret Jones, recalled school events in the year 1950-1. She spoke of the painting of the school, the re-organisation of the School Council and the flooding of the hockey-field. She thanked Clayton Hall Grammar School for their gift of pottery to the school. Gladys Ayre gave a short account of the school expedition the previous Easter to Grenoble, and Betty Aslen spoke on the visit by girls from Clayton Hall for the Festival. Mr. Hampshire, Secretary of the Parent Teacher Association, said that their position had been consolidated and their financial position was good.

After the distribution of prizes, Mr. Hood-Phillips addressed the school and parents. He evoked laughter when giving an account of a boy's essay on "What should be taught in schools". This boy said that the only careers girls could follow besides shorthand and typing were laundering and bakery. Mr. Phillips emphasised, however, that the choice of careers was narrow if girls left school before seventeen, and that we should let school be a grounding for home-making as well as for a career. At school, too, there were great opportunities for making friendships that would last, so long as they were unselfish and loyal. Mr. Hood-Phillips ended by wishing the school a good year.

After the school's rendering of "Far Away and O'er the Moor", a Scottish tramping song, and the votes of thanks, Mr. Clark ended the occasion by announcing that the school was to be given a day's holiday.

### The School Birthday

The festivities in honour of our 23rd school birthday on 2nd June, 1952, began with a short service in the morning. After dinner, the school assembled in the hall for the customary presentation of purses containing gifts for the Loan and Gift Fund, and then the real birthday celebrations began, when an entertainment was given to the school by the school. This entertainment varied widely, including such items as: "Alice in Wonderland", "The Jackdaw of Rheims", "The Boat Race", and "Bells Across the Meadow".

The climax of the day came with the production of "Gertrude the Governess" or "Simple Seventeen" presented to us by the staff. Everybody declared that it was quite the funniest thing they had



ever seen. To see Miss Newman with flowing locks as a girl of seventeen was not so strange, but to see Miss Curtis as her college-cad lover and Mrs. Jones resplendent as a Duchess were things that we shall not forget for a long time.

V. MASON, UV alpha.

### Ockenden

Mitcham has many close links with Ockenden and many of us feel that it is really a part of the school. Not only have various members of the VIth form visited it for Week-end Courses, and to renew acquaintance with Miss Pearce, but also it has many occasional Mitcham visitors who come hot from cycling or walking to sit in the garden or play with the puppies, now, alas, disbanded, or to see the children from Europe.

Last summer there were staying at Ockenden, seventeen of these "Displaced Persons"—boys and girls—who found the holiday much to their liking. Some of the older Mitcham girls came to help with domestic chores during this time, and found that in the intervals of cleaning brass or dusting stairs there was plenty of opportunity for conversations in a variety of languages, for swimming and for music. The Good-bye Social will always be remembered by those of us who were there for the Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian songs, a plethora of coconut cakes and jelly, and a bedtime extended to one a.m. Most of the boys announced their intention of staying up all night—an old Lithuanian custom, so they told us, at a leave-taking; but it was quite difficult to wake them up in the morning.

Courses on such diverse subjects as "Pipes and Pipe Making", "The Nature of Man", "Modern Painting Through the Looking Glass", have been held and been well attended. There was also a pleasant Reunion Party at Christmas, with Carol Singing on Saturday night and a Carol Service on Sunday afternoon.

In July, after the University examinations are over, there will be another Social Studies Course similar to last year's. Visits will be paid to factories, newspaper offices, a hospital, a Remand Home and other places, and talks and discussions will be held. Any members of the VIth form are welcomed.

One week end this term the Nine Voice Choir is going to Ockenden to sing together. There will also be future Week-End Courses on Dramatic Work, and the Colour Bar.

We hope Mitcham girls will continue to take a lively interest in Ockenden which owes so much to the pioneer work of their fore-runners in the VIth.

### Our Latvian Guest

I left my Latvian school two years ago. The school consisted of seven classes altogether, and we had to learn all subjects. I began my schooling in Latvia when I was seven years old, but some children began when they were six. My school in Latvia was in the town Felgavia, and the school in Germany in the D.P. camp at Eutin. The school in Germany was the same as in Latvia, but there was not so much room, and there were only about a hundred pupils.

We started work at eight o'clock in the morning and finished at one o'clock. We also went to school on Saturdays as well. School began on Monday mornings, with prayers in a big classroom which

was used as a hall, but during the rest of the week, each class had prayers in its own room. The lessons each lasted for forty-five minutes, and we had five or six a day. In my class there were seven girls and eleven boys.

In examinations, five was the best mark and one the lowest, but very few people obtained only one. We had examinations before we left school in Latvian, mathematics and either history, geography or biology. Each year took it in turn to be examined in one of these three last subjects.

Now two years later, I am going to school again but in another country, and I find it very interesting to see the difference between English and Latvian schools.

BRIGITA PLUME.

### Riding

And it's jolt and away for mile after mile,  
Until speech is a waste of time,  
And sense is dumb and feeling numb,  
And you cease to notice the grime,  
And you settle so close to the saddle  
That you practically wear in a groove,  
To fall has become an impossible thing,  
And muscles protest if you move.  
You might be asleep for all you know  
Or care of the world around,  
And it's on and on till your thoughts are gone  
And your knowledge of sight and sound.  
You are grown so used to the sound of hooves  
It is silence you seem to know,  
And you ride and ride, your horse as your guide  
And choosing the way to go.  
Hunger and thirst are things of the past  
And muscles and reins are slack,  
And you're numbed and blind to the dust and the wind  
And even the crick in your back.  
But your horse! What a friend!  
Though your lone way you wend  
Through the sandhills, the blizzard, the hail,  
Borne along by his stride, as a conqueror you ride—  
Trust him, his power will not fail.

V. STUBINGTON.  
Lower Va.

### Winter Sports

At eight o'clock on 31st December last year, Miss Mostel, Miss Haddow and twenty-eight of us met at Victoria Station on the first stage of our journey to the French Alps. We were all thankful that the day had really arrived at last; one girl at least, had had her case packed for the last six weeks.

We were too excited to feel tired during the long journey through Paris and Annemasse, but were glad when we arrived at Samoens. Those who had worried about the mildness of the winter, were

relieved to see that the snow was quite deep. The chalet was on the lower slopes of a mountain in a most beautiful valley.

The day after we arrived we were fitted with skis, boots and sticks. When we had received our outfit, a group of us decided to go tobogganing, with the result that we got lost, and were late for dinner. The instructor gave us general hints on skiing; they were in French, but Miss Mostel came to our rescue as interpreter. Then we were told to put on the skis, and with the help of Monsieur Jean, we walked a few yards, and then skied for the first time in our lives. What a thrill! until we fell down and found it impossible to get up again without help.

We soon settled down to the life at the chalet. We got up at 8, and dressed for breakfast by 8.30. There were various household jobs to be done before getting ready for the skiing lesson at 9.30. On skis we learnt to run, stop, and do kick turns. At first these turns appeared to need elastic joints, but later they proved to be fairly easy. We seemed to spend most of the time struggling to get up after continual falls, but it was thrilling when at last we managed to complete a slide, and still remain on our feet. After dinner we were usually confronted with huge baskets of potatoes to peel. At first the prospect amazed us, but the peeling party soon turned out to be a very popular sing-song.

One day we visited Megeve, which is a fashionable winter sports centre near Mont Blanc. The coach ride was exciting, as we went over a mountain range into the next valley. In the town the taxis were horse-driven sleighs, very gaily painted, and I know most of us were longing for a ride. We had brought our dinner with us and we ate it in a cafe. We had tins of sardines, pork paste, bread, cake, chocolate and tangerines; it was a peculiar mixture but we enjoyed it. After dinner we went either shopping or skating on a large open air rink.

January 6th was a very special day because it was Doreen Jones' and Barbara Brookers' birthday. The cook made wonderful cakes, complete with candles, and we all drank champagne and joined in singing and dancing afterwards.

The following day was, for most of us, the best day of all. We took our skis by Telebenne, an aerial lift, to the top of the mountain. It was an amazing sensation as we swung in space, and gradually froze on the long journey up. When we arrived, the sun was shining brilliantly, and it was so hot that we soon discarded coats and scarves. During our lesson, we were shown the summit of Mont Blanc. Our skiing had been gradually improving, until we were trying fairly difficult turns, and our falls were less frequent.

Our last day was very hectic and many sad goodbyes had to come at the end of it. Our last chance of seeing the familiar scenery was when we walked to Samoens by moonlight to meet the coach. Once the journey for home had started, we were all looking forward to telling our parents about the unforgettable holiday.

We should all like to thank Miss Haddow and Miss Mostel very much for making the holiday possible, for I am sure we have learnt a great deal besides the preliminary stages of skiing.

SOME OF THE PARTY.

## Friendship

Theirs was the ideal friendship. For many years now they had chattered away or remained silent as the mood caught them. They would stand close together and whisper to each other and twitter over the silly little things that friends do find amusing. They both felt glad that they should live so close together as they could not easily make friends, such was their situation.

They had known days of sunshine and days of storm. The days of sunshine were all very much the same, languid days of dreamy reflection, and bird study (when there were any birds). What shade they could, they derived from each other, drooping in the heat to a degree that could almost be called wilting, until the cool evening breezes fanned their hot arms and they dropped into easy slumbers.

But the days of storm entirely dispelled this easy picture, and it is one particular day, or rather night, that quickly comes to mind. The day had been warm but not sultry, as the winter was fast approaching, and they had conversed as usual all day long, on as wide a range of subjects as they usually found to occupy them, until they were both struck by the fact that instead of getting cooler (for it was now evening) the air was fast becoming heavy with humidity, and they could see on the far horizon an imposing display of colours in the sky. They wondered at this and for a time it occupied their conversation, until like a flooded river the conversation washed over the sides of the subject, and raced on in a new and entirely different stream.

The friends had been asleep for some time, and it was possible that the storm had been raging for some time, but it had not been of sufficient force to wake them until a particularly loud peal of thunder seemed to rocket all round them. They were both soon awake and prepared to watch this storm wear itself out as they had seen so many storms do. They stood in the slashing rain with heads slightly bowed, so that they should not feel the full effect of the wind and the rain upon their faces. But the friends were not prepared for the sudden flash of lightning, which struck one of the graceful arms that the smaller of the two held out to feel the first drops of the clear, thirst-dispelling rain. The poor limb was shattered right across and the wound was sobbed and moaned over as much by the sufferer as by her friend. But worse was to follow. The storm gradually beat itself out, and they went back to sleep—a sleep which was slightly troubled by uneasy dreams.

It was already well into the morning when the storm, as if it had just been resting, again began to rage, and circle round the place where the friends were standing close together, the one supporting a drooping limb. There was another roar followed by another blinding flash and the smaller of the two was again hit by lightning, this time falling with a heavy thud on to her friend, and causing the friend to rock where she stood, with the impetus of the fall. Quite possibly she would have been able to support her friend had not a third thunder clap caused her to go crashing down, with the other on top of her. Soon after this, the storm, as if satisfied with its night's work, withdrew, leaving the two friends lying there, still together; and that was how the little native children found them the next morning, just two broken-down palm-trees lying on top of each other on the beach of a Pacific island.

S. WILKINSON. Comm. VI

### Visitors from Clayton Hall

On Wednesday, the 25th of July, 1951, the rest of the school having been let out early, much to their delight, the chosen few, of which we were two, assembled at the bottom of the drive, to await the advent of our visitors from Stoke.

We all felt rather like prize Pomeranians at Cruft's Dog Show with slips of paper bearing our name and form pinned to our persons. Although we had corresponded with the Stoke girls beforehand, we felt very shy when we sighted them at the top of the drive. As soon as we had each found our own visitor, however, our shyness wore off completely. While we were having tea in the canteen, we exchanged stories of our school life and by the time we reached home we were firm friends.

In the evening many of us took our friends sight-seeing; this included everything from the Festival Gardens to a 10d. ride on top of a 'bus. Nine o'clock the next morning found us collecting our lunches from the canteen and setting off for the South Bank.

Once there, we split up into, first official, and later unofficial groups; to look round the exhibition; for many of us as well as the Stoke girls it would be our first and last visit, so we determined to make the most of it. The places we visited were too numerous to mention, but the things which we will always remember are the grandeur of the Dome of Discovery, the beauty of the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion, and the heat and aching of our feet at the end of the day! Although we would have liked to remain there longer, all school-parties had to be out by three o'clock, as we were constantly being reminded by the announcer, so we reluctantly took our leave. The more energetic souls in the party went elsewhere in the evening, but for ourselves we were content to stay at home and talk.

The next morning we staggered to school half-asleep, worn-out with the previous day's exertion. After special prayers in the canteen, we bade farewell to our friends and took our way somewhat sadly back to school, and ordinary, every-day lessons. One thought was in everybody's mind: we had made friends, and we had not seen or heard the last of the Clayton Hall Girls.

V. TOLCHARD, H. ANDREWS.

### Back to The Land

The names of many schools under the London County Council have been replaced by more dignified titles—hence Streatham Grammar School has become the Rosa Bassett School. If such a thing should happen in Mitcham could we expect our ancient traditions to be remembered and such a name as the Old Tithe Barn School be given to us? It would be interesting to institute customs which would be suitable for a school with such a name and which would be handed down to those who came after us and remind them of our illustrious past. Indeed a reporter to some newspaper or educational magazine might write an article such as this about our school.

"The most interesting innovation is that the school is run on the lines of a model Norman farm. Instead of allotments each girl has a strip of land and is responsible for growing food which is used to replenish the school dinner. She also owns a cow or goat which is milked daily and replaces the milk supplied by the county.

Prefects are called 'freemen' and have the advantage of a larger

strip of land which is farmed by one of the common herd or 'villeins' as the other girls are called. Their badge is a sheaf of corn and a sprig of lavender crossed with the Latin inscription 'Qui cessat esse agricola cessat esse bonus'. They also carry pitch-forks as a sign of authority.

When the headgirl is elected the prefects swear allegiance to her, and her authority as Lady of the Manor is very great. She has power of death over the villeins and also is given a share of their profits. The punishments which she and the 'freemen' administer are very interesting. Besides being put in the stocks or the pillory a malefactor may have to clean out the pigsties for such an offence as spilling water at dinner or letting weed spread on to another's 'strip'. Trial by ordeal is also used. A girl caught talking when she should be silent and who protests her innocence is thrown into the pond and if she sinks she is innocent, whereas if she floats she is guilty.

Lessons are very different from those in other schools. Any operations in the 'lab' or 'dark-room' reminiscent of alchemy are punished by trial and burning at the stake on the back netball court. Latin and Greek are the main subjects taught and naturally all well-bred people speak French rather than the vulgar English tongue. School games are interesting:—Steeple-chasing over the haystacks and jousting with pitchforks are very novel entertainments, while cock-fighting and shinkicking toughen up the weak-hearted.

In accordance with these advanced ideas the school song is 'To Be a Farmer's Boy' which is sung on all important occasions.

By combining farm work with intellectual exercise the girls of this school realize the dignity of manual labour, the importance of history which they are actually reliving themselves and the joy of supporting themselves by their own efforts. They have set a fine example for other schools to follow."

#### THE "FREEMEN"

#### A Visit to Spain

If you had been at St. Paneras Station early one morning last July you might have seen a very excited girl boarding the boat-train taking the passengers to Spain, Portugal and South America. I was that girl and I was on my way for a three months' stay in Spain where I was going to live with a family, to have a glorious holiday! Most of the other passengers on the train were dark and Latin-looking, and I soon heard snatches of Spanish, which I tried to understand, in vain I'm afraid, as they seemed to talk so quickly.

At Tilbury I climbed the gangway with a quaking heart, wondering what was in store for me, but I received a pleasant surprise. A white-coated steward took my cases and showed me my cabin which I was to share with another English girl going to Spain, and then directed me to the dining-room. After doing full justice to the delicious food, I went to stand up and noticed, with a shock, that we were moving slowly down the Thames; we all rushed on deck and watched the capital pass slowly out of view, then departed to our cabins to unpack and get to know our room-mates. I was lucky enough to have a very nice girl in with me, who was reading Portuguese at Oxford and who taught me my first rudiments of that language.

We had a lovely voyage with perfect weather. I had ample time to practise my Spanish with the other passengers as we played deck-games, and danced, and listened to Spanish music played by some girls who had just taken part in the National Eisteddfod.

After three days, we reached Vigo, where my friend lives, and at nine-thirty in the morning, I had packed and was waiting on deck for Maria de los Angeles and Senor Garcia, her English tutor. As I stood there I had ample opportunity to study the town. Vigo is built on the slope of a hill, and is very ancient. The buildings are mostly tall and white and from a distance seem to be clustered together hap-hazardly. The poorer people are mostly all fisher-folk and you can always see the women walking slowly through the streets with huge baskets of fish on their heads, crying mournfully, "Faneca! faneca! quien quiere faneca?" Maria's father belonged to this sturdy race of sailors; he owned eight huge fishing-boats, which gave our house a ceaseless supply of bacalás, the delicious cod-fish which are so plentiful on this part of the coast. Here also abound lobsters, crabs, mussels, crawfish, salmon, herrings, sardines and every type of fish possible.

So immersed was I in my study of my future home that I was greatly startled to hear a voice saying, "Senorita Thornton?" from behind me. I turned and there were Senor Garcia, Maria and her father, and her little brother Jose generally known as Pepito. After many elaborate introductions and cheek-kissings, we were soon in the car speeding towards what was going to be my home for the next three months. The journey was all too short for I was fascinated by my new environment, but at last we drew up in front of an imposing wrought-iron fence, backed by an ever-green hedge which successfully blocked all view of the house. The chauffeur rang the bell and the gate creaked open to disclose a very Spanish-looking maid who welcomed me with a torrent of "gallego" the local variation of the Castilian Spanish. Once inside the garden I perceived a huge house, also Spanish in appearance with a red-tiled roof, set in a beautiful garden full of exciting tropical flowers and palm-trees.

I was ushered into the house, which looked enormous and very dark because of the wooden shutters which were nearly always pulled across the windows to shut out the glare of the sun, and was introduced to the two remaining members of the family: Concha, Maria's mother, and Eduardito, the baby, who was tiny and brown and had huge coal-black eyes. I soon received my first taste of Spanish hospitality when we all sat down to breakfast, although I had eaten heartily not an hour before. During the meal, almost the only subject of conversation was food: would I like the olive oil in which their food is cooked? did I eat much? I certainly looked in need of a good meal by their standards and Concha immediately decided to "fatten me up".

At last however, I was allowed to unpack and have a luxurious bath, after which I was shown over the house, and what a house it is! Although it had four storeys, we lived on only two floors, the top one consisting of two immense rooms which were used for parties and dances, the servants having the rooms on the ground floor. The furniture throughout was heavy and dark and added to the sombre effect given by the inevitably drawn shutters. There was an abundance of paintings, from a huge reproduction of one of Goya's better-known works in the dining-room to the innumerable portraits of the

family in almost every other room; also in every room there were little shrines and statuettes of the Virgin and Child; there was one over the head of my bed, and it is surprising what a sense of security it gave me. Some of the things which impressed me most were the elaborate chandeliers in every room; the one in the dining-room unfortunately, was too low and every time I got up from the table, I gave it a knock with my head, which set the whole thing rocking and tinkling alarmingly.

Now began a life of leisure. Almost every day we went to the many beaches around Vigo, where the sand is wonderfully soft and the water cool and inviting, danced, went to the theatre or parties at friends' houses, and went sailing on the bay of Vigo. On one disastrous occasion, the wind died down when we were in the very middle of the Bay, and we reached land at about two o'clock in the morning after paddling with our hands, the plates on which we had brought our "tortillas" for tea, and anything else we could find. Once we went to see a bullfight with all its traditional colour and spectacle, which although it was rather repulsive because of the nature of the "sport" was also curiously fascinating. We went to the famed Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the body of St. James the Apostle is supposed to lie, after being washed up to the shore on a huge stone, and now lies encased in a wondrous tomb of gold, and where we listened to a very moving concert of religious music conducted by Leopold Stokovski.

But you must not imagine that every-body in Spain lives like this. It is a country of great contrasts, where the fabulously rich live side by side with the poorest of the poor. Even living as I did with a very wealthy family, I saw a good deal of the lives of these poorer folk, and I am grateful that I live in a country where the standard of living is so high, and where one is not handicapped by lowliness of birth. Although I greatly enjoyed my stay in this fascinating country, I was glad when I returned home, for, after all, there is no place like home.

BARBARA R. THORNTON.

#### The Cat

Two green eyes, gleaming bright,  
Soft grey fur touched with white,  
Long sleek tail, curled around  
A mass of fluff upon the ground.

MARIAN GORDON  
Form IIa

#### French Holiday

The French girl was on the doorstep, I was in the middle of the housework, and my calculations were just twelve hours out. To Victoria and from Victoria to Mitcham, unescorted and, I discovered to my horror not a single word of English: not even "yes" or "no". However, here she was, for six weeks to be my constant companion. For three weeks she saw England through rose-coloured glasses, and then the great day arrived. On a drizzly, dull Saturday night, I left England by the midnight ferry from Dover to Dunkerque.

My French holiday, the realization of my ambitions, had begun. It was raining at Victoria—it was raining at Dover, it was raining at Dunkerque, at Armentieres, at Lille and at Mouvaus—my destination!



The thirteen hours' journey was one great puddle. Letters written to calm my parents, and my holiday had begun.

Now it was sunshine, red tiled roofs and cobblestones. I never could understand how the toddlers in the street spoke French! Even the dogs barked with a definite nasal twang. I can't tell you how different it all was from Mitcham. Everything, everything was charming—Romantic. For three weeks I lived a different life, ate strange—and horrifyingly fattening food. At first, intimidated by the unintelligible flow of language directed at me by curious indigènes, I could only stutter "Oui" or "Non", but gradually I began to outshine even the French in gibberish. We visited parks, palais de danse, museums, cinemas, and most exciting of all, the Belgian frontier, only about thirty miles from my "home". Here the country was flat, and the houses modern and gay; so different from the rambling old house in which I lived.

I must admit I admire the French customs, especially that which decrees wine and other intoxicating liquor as necessary to life. Every mealtime I sat at table with a deliciously light head, marvelling at my neighbour, a fifteen-month-old baby who swallowed with alacrity large glasses of beer.

My days were dwindling. I began to tick them off the calendar which hung in my "boudoir", with feelings of pleasure at my forthcoming reconnection with England, but mingled with my pleasure were suggestions of regret that three weeks could not be stretched to three months.

The last morning dawned; it was raining. I could not bear it. Good-bye France! Hello again Angleterre! I looked back at a period of great pleasure; absolute happiness.

I looked from my bedroom window, and shouted at an astounded English dog, "Va t'en".

H. BROWN. VI 1.

### The Seven Ages of Man on The Beach

The beach, to most of us, on a hot summer's day, is a magical word, bringing visions of warm sand, cool breezes and sparkling water. Here are found all the ages of man, intent upon their own enjoyments.

First the infant. This is carried, by a proud parent, onto the beach, and firmly settled on a rug in the soft sand. But does he stay there? Oh no! He bangs on the ground, rolls over and starts to crawl to the edge of his domain. Off the rug and onto the sand he rolls, scattering sand everywhere. But he gets no further for he is firmly picked up and placed back on the rug. This time he sees a sand-castle being laboriously made by a small neighbour. It looks so smooth. He turns round and rises unsteadily to his feet. Oh good gracious! there is Mummy. He sits down hurriedly right on top of the sand-castle completely flattening it, to the accompaniment of furious yells from the rightful lord of the castle.

The next age is more adventurous and not so much under the eye of his mother. He goes down to the sea and timidly runs back at each wave, not knowing whether to be frightened or pleased; then when in, splashing about with loud cries of "Daddy, look at me swimming!" His favourite occupation is digging a hole, placing himself in it and covering himself with sand. Then all that he wants after that is ice-cream and more ice-cream

Next comes the mischievous age. His favourite occupations are putting sand into his parents' shoes, spoiling his sister's sand-castle and dropping empty ice-cream cartons, from the promenade, down onto the heads of the people below. Instead of swimming he prefers the more dangerous occupation of walking along break-waters or portable landing-stages and jumping off the end or pushing other people off. A more peaceful game is trying to dam up the sea, which is of no avail, as it still comes in with the same relentless force.

Fourthly comes the adolescent age. For him, swimming and cricket are the only things to do. In swimming he is always trying to improve his speed and to have races with his neighbours. On coming in from the sea he puts up the stumps and rouses all the family to have a riotous game of cricket. When father bowls or catches him out, he strongly protests that it is not being played properly.

Now comes the young man. He spends a lot of time in the sea or deigning to play cricket with the younger members of his family. At other times he stretches himself out full length upon the sand, and gets his front nicely browned before turning over to give his back the same treatment.

The middle-aged man comes sixth. His day on the sand is packed very full. He helps to dress the children in bathing costumes, then sets off with the youngest member down to the sea. There he holds it above the water, letting its feet dangle, or helps it while it tries to walk, pigeon-toed, along the edge of the waves, splashing water over the trousers of the patient father. When the baby is taken back, father next has the job of digging holes or building sand-castles which he enjoys just as much as the children. He does most of the building, and sends his children to get water, sea-weed or other requirements. After this he has to trudge the beach, stepping over holes and castles, to the ice-cream stall, then walk all the way back with melted ice-cream running all over his hands. After this he may be permitted a short rest before he is called to "come and bowl".

The last age is the old man. He has a restful time and sits back in the deck chair to read the paper, or for a quiet snooze. Sometimes he is awakened by baby treading on him, or as I have seen happen, banging him on the back of his head with a wooden spade. He does not go in swimming, but sits watching the others at play, remembering, perhaps, all his six former ages.

G. BRAILEY. Lower V.A.

### Would You Like To Go to a German School?

I have been asked to tell you something about German school-life. That is a very large subject, and I am going to talk only about the "Oberschule" which corresponds to your Grammar School. We enter it at the age of ten after four years at a Primary School, and a very difficult entrance examination.

Before you come to the end of this report you will thank your lucky stars that you were not born a German girl. How would you like to get to school at 7.55 a.m. on six mornings of the week? For there is no such thing as a free Saturday in German schools. Of course there are compensations. After you have enjoyed six lessons of 45 minutes each, and deplored the shortness of the breaks in between, you go home for dinner at 1.15 p.m., and you seldom have to come back in the afternoon, and then only for games and out of school activities. But there is the drawback of a very considerable

amount of homework—and it is no use trying to shirk it, for if your work is not good enough—but yours would be good enough, of course—you would be mercilessly expelled from school; the state will not pay for lazybones, neither will one's father. You would be sent to what we call a "Mittelschule" (something like a Secondary Modern School). This school does not provide the higher general education necessary as a foundation for a University training.

The general education at the "Oberschule" does not leave so much scope for specialising as your schools. But there are three branches with the stress on either classical languages, modern languages or science. I say stress because you would go on learning something of all possible subjects which would fill your time-table for six lessons a day until you pass the final examination after nine years at the "Oberschule". If you want to leave before that, when you have reached the age of fourteen, you can do so. You get your report, and that is all, for—and now is the moment when you regret that you are not German—we have no examinations at the end of each term. Oral and written tests are given throughout the term. They may be set on any day—so you had better be prepared—and there are several of them so that you can try and make up for a blunder.

Both educational systems have their pros and cons. I would certainly like to transplant some of your ideals to our school-life.

ADELHEID GRUENEISEN.

### Fairford

Fairford, a little village nestled amongst the Gloucestershire Cotswolds—that was my first impression when I arrived there, very hot, very tired, and very excited.

Our house stood in the centre of the community, and was the largest farm-house for miles around. There were about fourteen men, twelve women, and twenty-four children in Fairford, and they thought it was a vast population. Most of the men worked on my father's farm, although one, Mr. Todd, kept THE shop. It was the most fascinating shop I have ever been in. It sold everything, and smelt of almost everything, and was very untidy. Mr. Todd, however, always seemed to find what you wanted without any hesitation.

Then school, this was a wonderful affair. It was held in one of the large attics in our house, so I had only to walk upstairs to go to school. A Mrs. Smithson came every day from Cirencester, fourteen miles away, in her car, an ingenious contraption of cloth and scrap iron. How it kept together I really don't know, but it did. We only had lessons in the mornings, as in the afternoons we were expected to help in the farm. On the Fridays before market days, we had no school at all; we had to run all the errands, find all lost property, and at the same time keep out of the way.

Market days were wonderful affairs, and, once you had been to one you could never forget it. The eggs, butter, cheese, vegetables, fruit, and any other parcels, were loaded into carts. The children sat at the backs of these carts and held the ropes tied round the necks of the cattle or horses which were to be sold, or saw that the chickens or ducks did not escape. I, however, rode my pony, and very proud I was too, I used to trot beside my Father as proud as a peacock.

On Sundays after the rush of market day, things were much quieter. In the evening at half past six every-one went to church. No, you could not call it a church, because the service was held in our

house. Mr. Filden, a Nonconformist preacher, came from Cirencester to take the service. My Mother played the harmonium, I gave out the books and my father rang the bell. Yes, we had a bell. At a quarter past six my father would go to the well in the middle of the courtyard, with a handbell and ring it as loud as he could.

After the service the entire population of Fairford, would sit round the fire in our large kitchen, eating fruit and cakes, and telling many stories of country life. The fire danced, the candles flickered casting weird shadows on the walls, and the whole house had a warm glow, as if even the walls were declaring how happy they were. Outside the pale moon was rising over the tops of the trees, the rabbits were beginning to poke their noses into the open, a fox barked, a nightingale sang and as the poet said, "God was in his heaven, all was right with the world."

M. CURTIS. Lower VA.

### The Commercial Sixth

No study, no homework, no trouble you are told;  
And then you arrive, how quickly you grow old!  
To manipulate the typewriter your efforts are in vain,  
Your fingers are all thumbs and you're driven quite insane.  
And then comes the shorthand; how terrible that is!  
You put down one word and then ten you miss,  
Realizing at the end of one hundred words a minute  
That perhaps two or three words might be more your limit.  
Over book-keeping one sits, and studies with a frown—  
Really on what side must this item now go down?  
Is it debit or credit? Oh! what shall I do?  
Ah! why should I not give up book-keeping too?  
You poor, simple souls who are thinking of coming  
Next year to this classroom of leisure and sunning.  
Think again and do not be misled by tales of ease,  
For here you must work as busily as bees.  
I am sure life should not be all trouble and sorrow,  
So look out for another career for the morrow.

J. BAMBER. Com. VI.

### A Holiday in Holland

It was in December, 1950, that I received a tentative invitation from my Dutch penfriend, Anny, to spend part of my next summer holidays as her guest in Holland. On August 9th, I left Liverpool Street Station and crossed, by night, from Harwich to Hook van Holland. Then began a long train journey to Oldenzaal, the last Dutch station before the German frontier.

The first thing Anny's mother offered me when we arrived at Bentheimerstraat, was a cup of tea, and how welcome it was! Anny and her elder brother Henk spoke English, but her parents and younger brother had to make do with sign language. If I failed to understand them, they called for Anny or Henk to act as live dictionaries. As for Johnny, he used to delight in performing weird contortions of drawing series of pin figures on odd bits of paper, to explain what he wanted to tell me.

One day Anny and I cycled to the German frontier. It was difficult to remember that the small, fair boy, who stood the other side of the

red and white striped barrier, had a different nationality and way of life from the equally small, fair Dutch boy on our side.

During the second week of my stay, Oldenzaal held a Fest week. One day I was startled to see a band of farmers digging up the cobbles in the main square, erecting a model farmhouse and farmyard, complete with trees, and a few horse-drawn carts. There were festivities every night. On the first day, the farmhouse was opened as a cafe and a play in verse was performed in the open air in the 'English Garden'; the audience sat on one side of a pond and the play was performed on the other. On Sunday, the local rifle-range club held their 'Koning Shietin', or 'King marksman' Competition. Each contestant had to try to shoot off a wooden duck from the top of a narrow pole that swayed continually in the wind and driving rain. The winner was crowned and, accompanied by attractive maids-of-honour, was driven in state through the town in an open landau with two uniformed footmen, and preceded by a band.

Later in the week there were two nights of an open street market. All the small children were dressed up, either in authentic national dress or home-made costumes. The passer-by was continually scalped by fearsome Red Indians complete with warpaint and choppers or held up by masked highwaymen and pirates who sported ominous black eye shields; an armed cossack charged up and down the cobbled streets, wearing, I suspect, his mother's best fur hat; many cowboys rustled dogs, and savages ran everywhere. To add further to the general noise and confusion, most of the children had acquired loud-noised trumpets, and squeakers, balloons on sticks, with which they hit any unsuspecting passer-by who did not duck soon enough. A miniature train clattered madly through the streets crammed with children.

The country around Oldenzaal is very lovely, with trees everywhere. It reminded me of a gentler Surrey, the few hills could be classified as mere bumps. From one of the higher bluffs, on a clear day one can see the hills of Germany. I only had one disappointment, I never saw a windmill. There were a few ruined ones, with no second and third storey, but I never saw one complete with sails. Next time I go to Holland, if I still cannot find a windmill, I will build one myself.

A. V. TREACHER. VI. 3.

### Complaint

It isn't fair that I should be  
Doomed for all eternity  
To live as a kind of deity.  
Other people aren't like me.  
I am a strange unnatural daughter,  
Able to rule the wind and water.  
I am tired of always knowing  
Whither people's steps are going,  
Tired of knowing their stories through  
And knowing that what I know is true;  
I know, and understand too well  
What will befall and what befall.  
And I'm tired of voices in the night  
Of astrology and second sight.

Even at birth they called me queer  
 For I gave them a strange, uncanny fear—  
 Little and thin, black-haired, green-eyed,  
 And I never kicked, and I never cried,  
 But lay, and seemed to see and hear  
 Things which were far beyond their sphere.  
 When I was a child, I walked alone,  
 No friends or companions of my own.  
 I passed through doors that were not there—  
 To them, I vanished into air,  
 And in the garden I knew ways  
 Closed to them for eternal days.  
 I talked to those they couldn't see  
 Or hear, and how they stared at me!  
 My little brother took sick, and died,  
 After I had prophesied;  
 They were afraid, and I was sad,  
 For of human things they were all I had.  
 Then I went to school one day,  
 And had to learn to shout and play.  
 I hated playing, and getting hot  
 And knowing whether I'd win or not.  
 I hated learning things all day,  
 When I knew most of it anyway.  
 That's another thing wrong with my faculty too—  
 No surprises and nothing new,  
 And reading stars, and palms, and clouds—  
 All it leads to is so many shrouds.  
 Now I'm full grown and the years slip by,  
 And I must live while others die,  
 Knowing the secrets of earth and sky,  
 Speeding others on their way,  
 They unheeding of what I say.  
 My life is a darkness as black as pitch.  
 I never asked to be born a--Witch!

VALERIE STUBINGTON. Lower V A.

### The Fauna of Mitcham County School or Queer Fish

The lowest form of animal life can be classed as Huttiferosa. These small animalculae are to be found in swarms in their natural habitat, the Hut. They vary in size and colouring. In September they are very timid, but within a year they have nearly all become hearty Tertians. (If some have not developed as expected, they are thrown back in the pool to mingle with the newest batch of Huttiferosa.)

Tertians inhabit the main buildings. Though occasionally found on the upper corridor, they mostly cluster like barnacles round the Hall. At first sight they resemble Huttiferosa, but a short acquaintance dispels this impression. For one thing, the occasional shriek of the Huttiferosa has now developed into a steady roar mingled with yelping. They move in a Hurly-burly, or turbulent revolving crowd. They can walk backwards and sideways and talk at the same time—and invariably do. Collisions with others are therefore a frequent

occurrence. They never notice this. Modern authorities think this indicates a loss of brain function.

A year later, and we see the well developed Quartusae. They make quite as much noise as the Tertians. Something happens to their hair at this stage. It develops into a hanging growth over the eyes and suffers much from the depredations of a larger beast of prey. This is proved conclusively by the chewed ends.

Next there develop Quinzies. Inferior Quinzies are merely over-developed Quartusae, but Superior Quinzies are easily distinguished by their liability to a melancholia known as Gencertimania. This affliction deepens as the year progresses, the sufferer not beginning to recover till July. Some creatures disappear altogether at this stage. Those remaining metamorphose into Sixiana. These creatures know everything, or possibly more.

By some process of selection a few emerge as the more superior Praefectoriana. These Olympians are rather fierce and cause terrible damage among the smaller fry. If you are lucky, you might even glimpse the Praefectoriana Gloriosa Superba. Such a magnificent creature floats detachedly down corridors, and at the wave of a languid fin shoals of Huttiferosa scuttle for shelter, and even formations of Quartusae dissolve and melt into the distance.

Unhappily, this brief account has no time to deal at length with the interesting groupings that run through all classes. Do we not all know the Missmisshouters, the carefree Prepomitters and the large army of Tardisnaillia? Any sunny day we may see the Tennisa Furiosa—(beware the variety, Backcourtibus—they are exceedingly dangerous, being both blind and deaf)—or the Slaphappiericketania, and as the onset of evening in other districts brings with it the song of the marsh frogs, so here at Mitcham we see the emergence of the Choraluniacs wandering lonely as clouds in the merry month of May.

NATURE OBSERVER.

### The Common Cold

The common cold, unlike common sense, is an affliction which nearly everybody gets at one time or another.

A cold usually catches a person unawares: you go to bed perfectly happy, and wake up next morning with a suspicious stuffy feeling, and a sense of depression. At first most people deliberately ignore the feeling, and hope that if they refuse to believe they have a cold, then in some mysterious way it will disappear. By the end of the day, however, it is no longer possible to ignore it. One creeps home, snaffles one of father's handkerchiefs, and proceeds to sit around with the expression of a martyr about to be led to the stake.

The disappointing aspect of a cold is that nobody ever sympathises with you. There is nothing romantic about a cold, it is not bad enough for you to be able to hibernate in bed for a week or so, and it is rather hard to look like a calm but tragic sufferer, when you have watery eyes, a red nose, and punctuate every sentence with a loud sneeze.

A cold is a determined thing, and it will pursue its natural course, resisting every effort to eliminate it. The first stage of a cold usually makes it necessary to use about a dozen handkerchiefs a day, and then it creeps on to a bad cough which necessitates the sucking of vile tasting black pills commonly known as "cough drops". It is

usually when you are required to be quiet, that the coughing begins. A small tickle forms in the back of the throat, and you are suddenly aware of an irresistible desire to cough. You do so but it only makes it worse, and you are soon reduced to a pitiable object, who is vainly trying to smother her coughs in a handkerchief.

Suddenly one day you awake feeling much less sorry for yourself, and from then on your cold begins to disappear. Then you recognize an all too familiar sound, a despairing sniff, followed by a loud sneeze, and quite dispassionately you turn round and realize your next door neighbour has somehow contrived to catch your almost forgotten cold!

D. CLARKE, Com. VI.

### The Pleasures of Hostelling

I have often wondered why more girls do not avail themselves of the opportunities for an adventurous holiday at very little cost offered them by the Youth Hostels Association. If you are keen on walking or cycling Youth Hostels offer a variety of companionship and accommodation unequalled in any other form of holiday.

Let me tell you of the highlights of a holiday I spent as a hosteller discovering for myself that rural England is still unspoilt. I went with a friend for a fortnight's holiday touring south-west England and we stayed at ten hostels widely different in character.

The Mill at Winchester is owned by the National Trust and was built in 1744. The 15th century timber appearing in the present structure was salvaged from a derelict mill on the same site. I had a close-up of some of these ancient beams when I lay in my bunk immediately under the sloping roof. My particular beam was held in one piece by an iron staple and I am convinced that had this staple given way the whole mill would have collapsed. The water for washing is obtained from the mill rush by a bucket attached to a length of stout rope. An island jutting out from the building bears a willow tree which is grown from a cutting taken from Napoleon's burial place at St. Helena.

Patcham Place was built in 1588 and was a Tudor structure until 1764 when the owner altered it after the fashion of the day so that outwardly it appears as a fine Georgian house. It is surrounded by open park land and only six miles from the coast. As it is so near to the Channel the presence of foreign students in the hostel is only natural and this greatly adds to its attraction. I have met young people of many nationalities who use the hostels as a means of seeing other countries while still at college.

The most unpleasant night I ever spent was in an old workhouse with barred windows, spiral stairs, and doors with grills. My friend and I slept in an immense double bed with a feather mattress. The warden of this hostel was an extremely fat old woman with a black beard!

The hostel at Holmbury St. Mary has everything a hosteller needs after a hard day's cycling; hot showers, drying rooms, comfortable bunks and good food.

These four hostels may serve to show the variety of accommodation one may expect while hostelling, but can give no idea of the kindness and friendliness one meets, the comradeship of the road, the singsongs after supper, the sense of achievement as one ticks off the miles each day, and the things of interest to be seen.



There is only one drawback to this type of holiday and that is not felt by the hosteller but by the parents who not unnaturally worry about their daughter's safety and well-being, remembering that they are constantly on the move and should misfortune overtake them they are likely to have to spend a night out of doors. I try to overcome this in two ways. Firstly by never setting myself a longer distance between two hostels than I can manage. Secondly by supplying myself with a set of postcards stamped and addressed and ready to be dispatched daily to my home. My mother says she still worries but the postcards are very welcome.

P. HALL. VI 2

### A Cultural Holiday in Paris

Last Easter I spent a fortnight in a 'lycee' on the outskirts of Paris, attending a course arranged by the British Institute for sixth formers from schools all over the British Isles. There were almost two hundred of us and we were separated into small groups of about fourteen for the lessons which were held in the mornings. The staff were French professors of the British Institute, who gave us rigorous instruction in pronunciation, translation into French and critical appreciation. Most of the afternoons were spent in visiting Paris with a French guide. What I found most fascinating were the quaint book-stalls, which line the banks of the Seine.

One afternoon we climbed to Montmartre, where the narrow winding streets and colourful cafes provide a haven for artists. From Montmartre there is a fine view of Paris, which, although seeming to sparkle in the sun, still retains "un air gris" to which Anatole France so often alludes. Easter Sunday was spent at Chartres, which is famous for its cathedral with beautiful stained-glass windows relating the stories of the New Testament.

"Les jeunes filles" of the party had the opportunity to visit the Maisons de Couture. We were invited to attend a display of the latest Spring fashions. Almost everyone hoped that she would be one of the fortunate ten to go to la Maison de Christian Dior; however we enjoyed the parades of the lesser known designers.

During my stay in Paris I was able to meet Mademoiselle Gorin, who was the French assistant at school two years ago. She is still studying at the Sorbonne, so she showed me around the University and the Latin Quarter, the home of the students.

At night the city, although still "fairy like and sparkling" with gaily lit cafes, becomes more real. Tramps are to be seen sleeping under bridges and on seats along the Seine, whilst regardless of them the traffic streams on its way. I shall always remember Paris for its many cafes and patisseries, which elicit the visitor's every franc. London seemed extremely dignified and calm after the continuous eddy of "la vie Parisienne".

Y. SHORT. VI 2.

### Settling Down in Nigeria

Our bungalow is 4,000 feet above the sea-level on a green plateau, there are large heights of granite but the soil is chiefly a red laterite. There is at the moment only one other white woman in our camp, but plenty on the plateau generally.

The bungalow is large and will be attractive when we have our

own furniture. Outside as a separate building is the boys' kitchen where all the cooking is done. This worries me as I should find it much easier to do the cooking myself, but that isn't done here; the stove is a native one which burns wood as fuel and smells atrociously.

Our steward boy, Sylvanus, does everything except cooking; he washes and irons much better than a laundry; he uses a flat iron heated on a charcoal "Kettle", the floor is his board and he reminds me of a beetle—but the finished article is excellent. He is willing and remembers things ONE at a time. It is rather like teaching Forms II! Attached to and provided with the house is the wood and water boy. We have three large tanks which have to be filled by hand from the local stream. This one African takes a water can and at about one yard per hour walks to and fro filling and filling. He carries everything on his head. I feel quite sorry for him for I am sure that no sooner does one can go in than I use it the next moment to wash or bath.

This water is very brown and cannot be used as drinking water, all has to be boiled and then passed through a filter. It has a queer taste even then—but it is safe. We get lots of fruit: bananas 4 for 2d. and pineapples nearly as big as netballs for 1/9d. There is a local fruit called paw-paw which is very sweet and when eaten with the juice from limes is delicious. There are some beautiful flowers especially on the trees; one in particular is just like a scarlet geranium in colour and grows on a flowering tree like mountain ash. The birds too are almost like a picture—bright blue and vivid reds and yellows. BUT the "creepycrawlies"! My one *bête noire* is the flying beetle which has a body about two inches long and makes a noise like a jet, and then suddenly it descends and flop! usually on me—it sticks and has to be dragged off. I am becoming quite expert at a backhand drive when they are in the air. When we have dinner it is a full-time occupation keeping all these things out of the soup: they are attracted by the light and suddenly fall on to the table on their backs.

Despite these attractive little creatures we are very happy here; I shall enjoy getting this place into running order and like a home. As we came by air our heavy luggage has not yet caught up with us, but I am looking forward to using the linen—now still on its way—which was bought with the generous gifts from all at Mitcham.

E. BENNETTS (née Young).

### Dramatic Chronicle

There has been a great deal of activity in the Dramatic Society during the past year, partly owing to the fact that many more girls are now interested. As usual the climax of these activities was the School Play, this year, "Quality Street" by J. M. Barrie, which was performed in Mitcham Baths Hall on 28th, 29th and 30th of November. Some of the profits from it as well as from previous plays are to be spent on much needed improvements to the school stage.

There have been several expeditions to the theatre for the senior members of the school, including three to the Old Vic Productions, "Othello", "King Lear" and "Tamberlaine the Great", as well as John Gielgud's productions "A Winter's Tale" and "Much Ado about Nothing". Last summer the LV's saw a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Regents Park Open Air Theatre. Members of the society have taken part in many play readings in-

cluding "The House with the Twisty Windows", "The Shirt", "Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure" and "The Boy with the Cart". At the end of the Spring term members of the Staff and Vith forms gave a reading in costume of "Julius Caesar" both as an entertainment and as a form of revision for the UVth forms. Another enjoyable meeting was "I want to be an Actor" in which groups of girls were given situations to act without rehearsal.

In the Dramatic Competitions this year, everyone has displayed great keenness. On July 12th, 1951 the UV competition was held and Mrs. Keen judged that UV alpha with their performance of "Nicholas Nickleby" were best, although the other productions of "The Winslow Boy" and "The Dear Departed" were also very good. In the 1952 competition the LV's acted the trial scene from "The Merchant of Venice" and form LV alpha won. The UV's had to produce the court scene from "St. Joan" and UVa proved to be the best. The first act of "King Lear" was set for the Vith formers and VI 2 and 3 were successful with a well-planned production. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all the people who gave up valuable time to judge these competitions and the staff without whom there would be little activity within the Society. We hope that members will continue to display interest in the Dramatic Society and thus make next year as enjoyable as this one has been.

D.W.

### Drama in the Basement

Life here at drama school is not as dramatic as the above title suggests, but most of the action certainly takes place in the basement. Each day we sink to the depths, and only ascend from them for various classes and private lessons. For the first six weeks or so classes are all one comes in for, and in between them there is nothing to do but walk along the embankment, or have something to eat—if you can afford it. But as the term advances other ways of spending time and money, become apparent.

Every few weeks various scenes are presented by the students for the criticism of one of the professors, and generally everyone has a part in one of the dozen or more scenes, so rehearsals for one set of scenes after another continue throughout the term. For most students, except the very new, there are also public show rehearsals. There are three public shows a term, produced by the three principal professors, and it is everyone's hope to get a lead in one of these. Then there is one student's production each term, and every so often a students' repertory production. Add to this that one has to learn several pieces each week for one's private lessons, learn parts for Shakespeare class, concert scenes for drama class, and it becomes clear that all the spare time one once had has disappeared. On the other hand, life here has a few tranquil moments. A long period of quiet is possible late at night, when introspective discussions take place around the common-room gas-fire. But during the day there is a constant stream of people coming in and out, with the door slamming to and fro, and the interminable sound of practising music-students. Concentration becomes impossible! The most hopeful place for any learning is walking up and down the corridor between the rehearsal rooms.

To a visitor the worst and most obvious characteristic of the Guild-

hall would be the restlessness and constant movement. But to me, now, it is apparent that this restless activity is the outward sign of a directed determination, not only to get the sets for the next public show finished in time, nor to learn a poem ready for a private lesson, but harder and more important, to fit oneself by first hand experience for life in the theatrical world.

Maybe this seems a very limited life to you, but our business is with people—their ways of thought, their ways of life, their actions and their motives—and this includes “all the world”.

MARGARET BAILEY

### Upon Saint Crispin's Day (The Mock Election, 1951)

The feast of Crispin is generally associated with the Battle of Agincourt, but in our memories will henceforth be associated with the Battle of the Polls at Cranmer Green. This mock election differed from previous ones, in that besides the usual Labour, Liberal, and Tory candidates, we were able to boast a Communist. Each was supported by two committee-members, who, although theoretically there to answer queries, in actuality sat in front of their candidate sporting bullet-proof pullovers, to shield her from the missiles of opposing parties. Unfortunately these pullovers were of the sleeveless variety, and so for long afterwards, committee members would roll up their blouse sleeves and proudly say “These wounds I had on Crispin's day”.

The first sign of the awakening of the political consciousness of the school, was the appearance of lurid posters at various vantage points in the corridors. The slogans thus displayed were, to say the least of it, rather trite, but the general enthusiasm was such that this mere triviality was ignored.

To open the election campaign, each party held a meeting, to which all and sundry were invited. At each of these meetings the opposing parties were loud in their attack on the presiding party, but unfortunately lost their power of speech when similar queries were directed at them, at their own meetings. Some items of party policy stated by the candidates, would, we feel sure, be greeted with mild surprise at the party headquarters. Each member in turn dwelt lyrically and at length on the Utopia which their party would create if elected.

The dawning of election day found everyone in a state of barely suppressed excitement, and all the candidates in highly nervous conditions. The polling itself took place in the alcove and the counting of the votes, in the hall. When all was said and done, the Tories were found to have an overall majority of 17—strangely enough the identical majority of our present government. The Tory candidate polled 100 votes, the Labour candidate 88, the Liberal candidate 32, and, much to her surprise the Communist candidate polled 7 votes.

The defeated parties greeted the news with the sporting attitude typical of our noble race—“We demand a re-count!”

S. KEEN & V. TOLCHARD., Form VI 1

### Swimming, 1951

This year for the first time after many years, the school had its first junior swimming gala. It took place at Mitcham Baths, but as only the second and third forms take swimming lessons the senior school did not compete. There were many racing, style, and diving

competitions and in the interval we were given a life saving demonstration This was followed by a perfect display of strokes by Sheila Bracken. She showed us with what ease and smoothness the breast, front and back crawl, and butterfly strokes can be done. At the end of the afternoon Mr. Bailey, who gave the cup to the school in 1931, presented it to the winning form 3a, and the individual cup was won by Marion Wing.

The number of non-swimmers is gradually decreasing, and in time we hope that everyone in the school will be able to swim.

J. SAMPSON.

### An Evening

The tea-table's cleared and I've homework to do,  
My last piece of music needs practising too,  
And I find that I need a new lace in my shoe,  
Oh! when shall I get to my bed?

My hair needs a brush and my socks need a darn,  
I must play with my sister and read her a yarn,  
About a wise old owl who sits in a barn,  
Oh! when shall I get to my bed?

Supper is finished, I've cleaned up my plate,  
My jobs are all done and it isn't so late,  
It's only a minute or so after eight,  
And here I am tucked up in bed!

G. HALL. Form IV Alpha.

### Lament of the "Arts" (with apologies to Browning)

Oh, to see the library  
Now that THEY are there!  
Whoever strays to the library  
Sees, some morning, unaware,  
The zoologists' dish with opened frog  
And heart of sheep, with the skull of a dog  
Stand on the table, with eye of a cow—  
In the library—now!

Two "Suts uz"

Two rather backward zoological students.

### The Sketch Club

During the past year the Sketch Club has been very busy. The activities have ranged from visits to the Ballet, to outdoor sketching. Altogether two visits to the ballet have been made, one to the Davis theatre, to see "Swan Lake" by the Sadler's Wells company and the other to the Festival Ballet, a modern performance by Dolin and Markova. The Club has had opportunities to see the work of a great master at an exhibition of Holbein's pictures at the Royal Academy and some of the work of local artists at an exhibition at the Church Book and Art Shop in Carshalton. This exhibition also included a collection of all the latest books on art and artists. Practical work has been usually

limited so far to indoor work but during the summer several sketching expeditions will be made.

A considerable amount of the success of the Sketch Club is due to the enthusiasm and support of the fourth forms. In common with other school societies we have found that few of the seniors are interested in the opportunities offered to them. The Sketch Club sincerely appreciate the help and encouragement that Miss Webb has so readily given us, and thank her for arranging the excursions and meetings.

M. SNELLING.

### The School Choirs

This year has provided many opportunities for the school choirs. The three choirs have performed on School Speech Day, at the Carol Service in the Parish Church, around the Rotary Club Christmas Tree and in the Vaughan Williams Concert at Central Hall, Westminster.

After Christmas we heard that David Davis of Children's Hour was coming to hear us and for the following three weeks rehearsals took place at every available minute in preparation for the audition. Although we did not receive any reward, in the form of a broadcast, our increased repertoire has since proved useful. We were able to use some of these Songs for the short programme given by the choirs at the Parent Teacher Association meeting in May.

The delightful singing of the nine-voice choir in "Three Kings from Persian lands afar" at the carol service gave much pleasure. This choir was pleased to be able to sing for the Invalid Tricycle Association party at Bromley and are looking forward to a weekend at "Ockenden", in June, as a climax to their year's work.

### The Library

Although there has been a slight increase in library attendance during this year, we still feel that the school in general and seniors in particular do not take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school library.

We have bought many new fiction books in addition to books on music, science, travel, geography and history. We greatly appreciate books given by members of the school, and we would like to thank Miss Battersby for Cassell's "History of England", Miss Newman for two books on music, and Mrs. Elce who unfailingly supplies "Punch" and "The New Statesman and Nation" for the magazine rack. Barbara Brooker, Claire Morris, Susan Green, Margaret Bull, Joan Westbrook and Nina Bliss have also kindly presented books to the library.

We find that girls often neglect the magazines provided every month for their use. These include "Plaisir de France", "Out of Doors", "Studio", "Art and Industry", "History Today", "Figaro", and "Greece and Rome". There has, however, been a plea for a daily newspaper preferably non-political, to be bought by the school and displayed in the library.

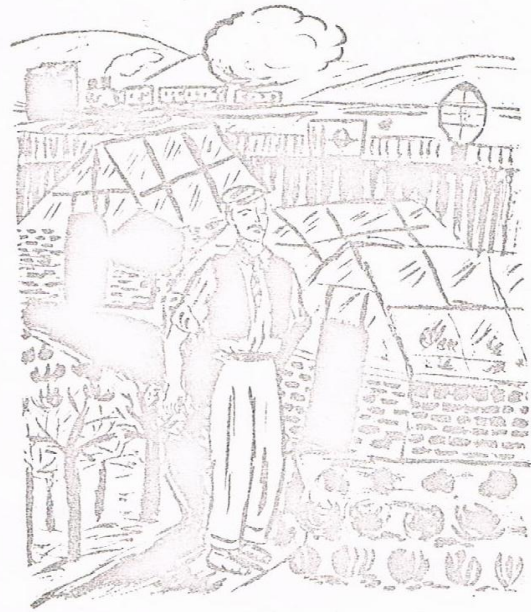
We should like to thank Miss Rowlands, Dilys Watkins and Yvonne Newton for their help and interest in the library and we also appreciate the help of the sixth form librarians who relinquish their dinner hours for their library duties.

S. KEEN, G. AYRE, VI 1.



SPRING.

C. CRADDOCK, II A.



THE GARDENER.

J. BLOGGS, II A.