

RENDCOMB COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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SCHOOL NOTES.

Michaelmas Term, 1935.

The beginning of the Michaelmas Term, perhaps because it means the commencement of another school year, is always a little different from the start of other terms. We come back to changes, to new faces. And to find there are faces that we miss. To many of the new boys it means a settling down into quite a novel way of life. But whether one comes to Rendcomb for the first time, or returns to a scene that has already grown familiar, one thing undoubtedly must strike everyone, and that is the beauty of our surroundings. Our Founder certainly had an eye for landscape when he chose this site. And early Autumn, with its increasing richness of colouring, sees Rendcomb in one of its most lovely aspects. A modern poet has remarked on what he terms "the slow influence of natural scenery." It is part of our heritage here, and it is right that we should remember this. It is one of the impressions that will last long after we have gone away from this unspoilt corner of England.

The chief innovation this term has been the introduction of a revised time-table. The object in view has been to secure a free Monday afternoon, and give more time for pursuits other than organised games and actual class-work. The number of weekly periods has been reduced from thirty-two to twenty-eight, three being dropped on Monday, and one from afternoon school on Friday. At the moment the alteration does not apply to the School Certificate form. But in future it will be introduced for the whole school. The School Certificate examination will be taken five years after entrance, instead of as at present in four school years and one term. This will mean that approximately the same number of periods will be available for preparation for School Certificate, but their being spread over a

longer space, will ensure a greater amount of time for activities other than academic work.

M. M. Wilson has won a Demyship in Natural Sciences at Magdalen College, Oxford. We congratulate him on his success and hope that when he leaves us, he will continue his distinguished career.

Two cases of mumps entailed the cancellation of football fixtures at a time when the team was an unusually good one—but otherwise did not interfere with the normal routine.

R. O. J. Cooper left the College at the end of this Term.

The following boys entered at the beginning of this Term: P. Binks, S. J. Curry, F. R. Dobbs, P. G. Forrest, J. R. Gurdon, P. F. Gurdon, J. E. B. Houston, B. J. Lumby, A. R. Margetts, J. Owen, J. G. Sterry, S. A. Trayhurn, C. E. H. Tuck.

In the School Certificate Examination held in December, 1935, all the candidates passed.

P. L. Field obtained an honours certificate.

E. R. S. Gillham, D. G. Morison, B. H. Peacock, R. L. Short and W. A. Wyon matriculated, and P. J. Dyke, E. R. Cooper, R. O. J. Cooper, W. J. Harris, R. M. Ingleton, T. W. Kitchen, H. H. Selby and P. Tuft passed.

LECTURES.

Michaelmas Term, 1935.

MOUNT EVEREST.

The first lecture of the season was delivered by Colonel Haddick, who had gone as a photographer to the first Mount Everest Expedition. He gave us an interesting account of his ex-

periences, illustrated by lantern slides. Colonel Haddick has an innate love of adventure; is, one might say, something of the born adventurer. And he lives up to the Englishman's conception of the romantic Irishman. His first slide of Everest, which he manipulated with a super-imposed colour effect, to show the sunset touches on its eternal snow, set, as it were, the keynote of his lecture, which was an account of stern facts, illuminated by a somewhat romantic imagination. He described the long trek up through Himalayan gorges, dense with flowering trees and shrubs, to the treeless heights of Tibet, inhabited by a fanatic and superstitious people.

The assault on Everest is a proof of the indomitable spirit of man. Stage by stage the advance becomes more arduous. The conditions of the higher camps are well-nigh intolerable. The limbs sag. In that rarefied atmosphere the effort of walking, let alone climbing, becomes a torture. Even the resources of modern science have as yet been of little avail. He told the story of a defeat that was in reality a victory. And he was singularly modest about himself. That is one of the reasons why we look forward to his return visit next term, when he will tell us of his more recent experiences in Germany.

ABYSSINIA.

Captain Blunt's lecture on "Abyssinia" was excellent, but for the fact that its title was a misnomer. Had he described it as a "Survey of the Sudan," he would have done more justice both to himself and to his audience. For, in fact, he had never set foot in the territory of the Negus, and a "Times" map of that country, thrown on the screen was a somewhat summary substitute for what his pretensions had led us to expect.

We were conducted by an airliner over the Levant. Regaled with views of the Pyramids, of the tombs and temples of Lower Egypt. At Khartoum he was full of reminiscences of the late General Gordon, who was a relative of the lecturer. Then followed an account of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. His description of angling in the Nile was amusing. We learned much of the collection of gum Arabic. Of trees that condensed water and conserved it in their trunks. Of big game shooting. A plethora of elephants before breakfast, a pride of lions in the afternoon, and of fowl in such profusion that one cartridge resulted in a massacre.

Much of this sport, he hinted, was illegal, for traffickers in wholesale ivory are apt to get it in the neck. But it furnished a racy background to an otherwise conventional story.

Of Abyssinia he confessed first-hand ignorance, and fell back upon information that might have been gleaned by any armchair traveller.

THE ENGLISH CLASSICAL PLAYERS.

The English Classical Players are certain of a welcome when they come to Rendcomb. They visited us on Thursday, 21st November, 1935, and gave a performance of Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man."

It is a good example of the early Shaw. He never allows his didactic purpose to get the better of his sense of comedy. We are not subjected to the sermonising that mars certain of his later plays. He has his sallies, to be sure, at various and sundry foibles of mankind, the megalomania of small nationalities (after all he is an Irishman), the blusterings of the military minded, and the infatuations of the human species when in love. But "the play's the thing," and his real appeal is to our sense of laughter.

The action takes place in Bulgaria, where a Balkan War is in progress. A Serbian officer (who is a Swiss mercenary) takes refuge in the room of Raina, the daughter of a provincial dignitary. He has been driven to this extremity by a foolish but lucky cavalry charge, directed by none other than Raina's Serbian betrothed. She conceals the refugee, whose name is Bluntschli, in her room, and from this somewhat disconcerting situation the main plot develops. There is a sub-plot concerning Luca and Nikola (two servants in the family). In the end Luca marries Raina's betrothed, while Bluntschli carries off his fair protectress, after a series of Shavian misunderstandings.

Mr. Ray played Bluntschli with verve and ability, and our interest in his machinations never flagged. He is the pivot round which the action revolves, and he kept the pace moving at the right tempo.

Raina, played by Mrs. Ray, was beautiful, singularly so for the usual Shaw heroine, but she lacked a certain mischievous quality that this part requires. Shaw rarely (if ever)

succeeds in creating a really convincing woman character. They are all apt to be puppets that he enjoys manipulating in a provocatively masculine manner.

The other parts were acted adequately rather than brilliantly, but the team work was good, and resulted in a very agreeable whole.

Mr. Ray's use of facial expression is worth noting. It is a difficult art, and we have much to learn from him in this respect.

We look forward to welcoming these players when they pay us a return visit. Their advent is indeed becoming a Rendcomb institution.

ACTING.

Michaelmas Term, 1935.

Two plays were produced for the Christmas entertainment at the close of this Term. Each in its own way represented a departure from the type of play that is usually chosen for this event. In "Allison's Lad," by Beulah Marie Dix, we are introduced to Colonel Strickland, his friend Captain Bowyer, and Lieutenant Goring, Winwood and Hopton, all Cavaliers, talking together in an inn, where they have been lodged subsequent to their capture by the Roundheads. Winwood is the son of Strickland's old love, who married a coward. The old Colonel conceals the circumstances of his father's death from the boy, of whom he has great hopes, but Tom Winwood, thinking his father died for the king, wishes to follow in his footsteps: he does so only too literally. It becomes evident that he, Goring and Hopton have all broken their parole, and Colonel Drummond, the Puritan commander, demands that one of them be shot as an example. He suggests that they dice against death. Tom Winwood throws last and lowest. The play reaches true heights of dramatic achievement in the last few minutes, when Tom is bracing himself for his ordeal. Colonel Strickland bids him die bravely for his mother's sake, and when Bowyer runs in to tell him how well Tom faced his death, he comes to find the strain has been too much for his friend. Colonel Strickland is dead.

M. H. R. Dowding as Tom Winwood, was excellent. In a tricky part that called for considerable insight into an unbalanced mind, he

did well to maintain so high a standard. Of the others, J. D. Sinclair as Colonel Strickland, gave a very sound performance; R. H. Betti-son, as Captain Bowyer, D. C. Richardson as Lieutenant Goring, and A. C. Magor as Hopton, gave good interpretations of their respective parts, while J. B. Whall, as Colonel Drummond, imparted an appropriately sombre note to this well-turned production.

"X = o," by John Drinkwater, has for its subtitle "A Night of the Trojan War." The action takes place between the Grecian tents and the wall of Troy. The theme is as old as the history of mankind, dealing, as it does, with the tragedy of war.

From the very outset the beauty of this play made itself felt. The setting, designed by Mr. Molineaux, was very lovely. The blue background of a summer night. The white tents illuminated by a faint golden glow. When the curtain goes up Pronax and Salvius, two young Greek soldiers, are talking together. Salvius, a poet, is in his tent, reading by a lighted torch. Pronax, watching the night, is getting ready to make a raid on the Trojan wall. All is still, save for the pacing of a sentry.

The war has dragged on now for nearly ten years. Nightly are enacted scenes of pitiable slaughter, and Pronax, as he goes out, bitterly regrets the fate that sets him to such a task, and keeps Salvius from his verses. Both of them are idealists caught in a snare.

Then the scene changes. We are on the wall of the city, looking down over the starlit plain. Two young Trojans, Capys and Ilus, are keeping guard. Ilus is about to slip down the wall to claim some victim from among the Grecian tents. They, too, have the same youthful dreams, the same bitterness at the thought of futile bloodshed.

The action of the play is as simple as it is poignant. Ilus slays Salvius, the young Greek poet, and his friend Capys is slain by Pronax. The tragic equation works itself out, X is equal to o. The curtain goes down on an emptiness and void. It is difficult to convey the moving intensity of this piece, and the actors will not mind if we just give their names, and say that they did well and were worthy of their fine parts.

They were: Pronax, W. Y. Willetts; Salvius, G. M. Wilson; Ilus, R. O. J. Cooper; Capys, D. Haig; a Sentinel, D. Morison.

FOOTBALL REPORT, 1935.

This past season will be remembered mainly for two reasons: first, the 1st XI. had a very successful season, and secondly considerable changes were made in the organisation of games.

The school has been divided into four groups each consisting of boys of about the same size and approximately the same standard in playing. The first group, the senior game, consisted of 25 boys, while the other three groups consisted of 16 boys apiece. Each of these three groups (they are called games) elects two captains of its own, whose duty it is to pick sides and to post them on the board. They also keep a record of what every boy in that game is doing for that afternoon. Subsidiary captains are elected to function when the other captains are unable to be present. The captain elected by the General Meeting directs the first game. The decision as to what games are to be played still rests with the Games Committee.

It will be noticed that the three smaller games play with eight or less a side. This was tried as an experiment, as it was thought that eleven a side on the two smaller pitches was detrimental to good football.

The system has two main advantages. It enables the games to be started earlier, thus not breaking up the afternoons as much as had been done formerly, and it also enables the games to be more under control, as the captains have the power to bring persons who misbehave, before the Council. One other benefit of the system is that the Captain does not now have to spend so much time arranging the other games, but can concentrate on the first game.

It is only fair to point out that this system is still experimental. Being in its infancy details were bound to go wrong (as they occasionally did), but it is my firm belief that whatever we do we must not go back to the old system, which led to considerable inefficiency and waste of time.

Throughout the season the 1st XI. had only five matches, of which only two (on account of our being in quarantine) were with other schools. The first match against the Old Boys was our worst game, as we only drew 2 all with a weak Old Boys' team. We should have won, but instead, we missed many golden opportunities. However, this was the first time the team had played as a whole, and to that extent they had some excuse.

The next match was against a team got together by Mr. Hosken, consisting of staff and villagers. We won, 5 goals to nil, luckily, because we did not deserve any of our goals.

Our third match was with Dean Close 2nd XI. The result seems staggering, 7 to nil to us. With all due respect to our opponents, we deserved to win, for we were better than they were in most phases of the game. The passing between the halves and forwards was particularly good.

Our hardest game came next, a renewed fixture with Marling School. We expected a hard game, and got it, but we managed to scrape through by five goals to four. This was the first time that the defence had been pressed considerably, and they came through the ordeal satisfactorily. It was also the first time our opponents had been beaten that term.

On the same day the Junior XI., playing against Marling Juniors, lost by 8—2.

Our last match was with another team of Mr. Hosken's. This team proved much less liable to make mistakes than the previous one, but even then we won 2 goals to 1.

Results:

1st XI.		
versus	Old Boys, h.	2—2 draw
”	Mr. Hosken's XI. h.	5—0 win
”	Dean Close 2nd XI. h.	7—0 win
”	Marling S., a.	5—4 win
”	Mr. Hosken's XI. h.	2—1 win

Junior XI.

versus	Marling Junior XI.	2—8 lost
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The Group Games proved a very close affair, the East just winning. The results of the games were:

South v. West	1—1
West v. East	2—3
East v. South	3—2

Thus the East had two wins to the other Groups' none.

The composition of the 1st XI: when it was finally settled, was: Bettison; Ingleton and Haig; Wilson G, Brain, Gillham; Thornhill, Wilson A, Cooper E, Willetts, Selby.

As results show, it proved a very successful combination. As far as the first game goes we had some quite good material, but it was on the whole somewhat below the standard of the XI. As quite a few of the team will have left by next year, it will probably be difficult to maintain this year's standard. But we look forward to our next football season with every hope. A. E. B.

SCHOOL NOTES.

Lent Term, 1936.

Our English climate is nothing if not fickle. To adapt Dryden's epigram. " 'Tis everything by starts, and nothing long." Having cheated us of a white Christmas, snow came to welcome us back at the beginning of term, and tobogganing of a sort became seasonable sport. Enthusiasts began prospecting for ice, and furbishing up rusty skates, but, as always, the thermometer started to rise, and although we were visited by several cold spells, skating was impossible. So, unfortunately, was almost everything else. Hockey was held up, and finally we resorted to having afternoon school on games' days, thereby accumulating free periods, which enabled us to have a whole holiday on St. Patrick's Day.

One historic event dwarfs everything else that has occurred this term—the death of King George, and the beginning of a new reign. It is not necessary to add anything to what has been publicly said at that time. But two things ought to be set down. Quite spontaneously the boys felt that a telegram of sympathy should be sent to the Queen at Sandringham. This was done quite simply, and was acknowledged by an equally simple and sincere reply.

The other fact that came home to us was the place that broadcasting has taken in our national and personal life. By his Christmas broadcasts King George had probably grown nearer to his people than in any other way. The school listened in to the funeral ceremonies on the 28th January. But this was not all. For some days we had grown accustomed to the solemn strokes of Big Ben reverberating as the prelude to some announcement of weight. And, although robbed of its colour and pageantry, the proclamation of Edward VIII. came through to us in a way that made us feel we were taking part at history in the making.

A memorial service was held in Rendcomb Church on Sunday, the 2nd February.

The first round of the County Drama Festival took place in Cheltenham on the 18th February. A team from the College competed presenting Drinkwater's "X = o." Although we did not succeed in getting into the finals,

it was a good effort, and the comments of Mr. Robert Newton, the adjudicator, were well worth hearing. Briefly, he contended that our production was too lyrical, and missed the requisite dramatic speed. He had nothing but praise for the beautiful setting Mr. Molineaux had provided. It would be hard to imagine anything more simply effective.

Acting looked up considerably during the term. Four plays were produced, and an encouraging spirit of rivalry for dramatic honours made itself manifest. Spontaneity is half the battle, and we must not forget that we have a tradition of self-help in such matters.

On March 6th the Sixth Form, accompanied by certain members of the staff, paid a visit to the Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House. An account of the day's outing appears elsewhere. We should like to thank the Headmaster and those concerned for this memorable experience. It suggests the tempting possibility of future excursions, planned on a larger scale. A visit to London, in itself, is of no mean educational value.

A welcome feature of the term has been the revival of the cinema. On Sunday afternoons films were shown in the Big School. Most of them originated from the Post Office films' department. Some were good, some indifferent, but the outstanding event was the showing of Eisenstein's remarkable film "General Line," made possible by the energetic action of certain friends. The Headmaster gave a short introduction, explaining the propagandist nature of the film, an attempt to convince an incredibly backward peasant population of the advantages of co-operative and mechanised farming. Accustomed as we are to the slick and facile productions of the commercial cinema the tempo of "General Line" seemed decidedly slow. And one wonders if the almost American worship of the machine is going to bring the salvation Russia looks for. But there were passages of beautiful photography and moments of grotesque humour, and the whole thing was illuminated by a sincerity of purpose and closeness to life that puts Hollywood and Elstree to shame.

The acquisition of a gramophone fitted with an electric amplifier has given the Entertainment's Committee a valuable asset. It enlivened the cinema shows, and made it possible to dance on Saturday nights with the music, going round and round and not confined, sotto voce, to one corner of the Big School.

The weather has not been propitious for Field Athletics. The pits and take-offs were sodden and did not encourage record-breaking, but in spite of these disabilities the College acquitted itself well in the contest with Clayesmore on the 17th March. One lesson we should certainly have learnt from that event is the importance of a good style.

N. B. This applies to the mind as well as to the muscle.

C. D. M. Barnett, and M. H. F. Fischer entered the College at the beginning of the Term.

LECTURES.

Lent Term, 1936.

YOUNG GERMANY.

On the 10th March, Colonel Haddick paid us a return visit, and lectured on "The New Germany." Having heard him last Term, we had an inkling of what to expect from this versatile Irishman. He has a vivid sense of situation (sometimes a little dramatised), but he knows how to make the most of randomly gathered material. He began by introducing us to a German boy and girl, and following their careers from home, through school, and out into that vista of life which Nazidom has decreed shall be presented to youthful citizens of the Reich.

It is a very different scene from our English one. The State looms large from the very beginning. Discipline—of the sergeant-major kind—an intense seriousness of purpose, far surpassing the utmost "be-preparedness" of the most rabid Boy Scout, takes charge from the earliest years. Relaxations, such as hiking and youth-hostelling, take on the nature of route marching and the patriotic travelogue. Germany must be welded into one. Hitler has undoubtedly achieved this sense of corporate unity and singleness of aim. Yet at a

certain cost, one feels, when it comes to individual liberty.

The gilt on this rather dry gingerbread was provided by appeals to a somewhat Teutonic sentimentality. The picturesqueness of Nuremberg cast its shadow across the barrack square. The trees of the Black Forest lent a Gothic mystery to the fatigues of the labour camp. And those who were carried away by Colonel Haddick's flights into poesy, might well have seen the heroes of Valhalla mingling with the storm troopers, and the Rhine maidens reconciling their modern sisters to that state of life to which God and the Führer had called them.

But most of us would prefer our own unemotional method of muddling through.

The lecture was illustrated by a variety of slides which were at their best, as were Colonel Haddick's remarks, when they were not too highly coloured.

STAGE LIGHTING.

"Coming events cast their shadows before." So runs the well-known adage. It could be applied appropriately to Colonel Kirby's talk on "Stage Lighting." Before the lecturer arrived, a lorry load of electrical equipment had been unloaded from the asphalt, and the wits of our physicists had been applied to the problem of constructing a transformer that would stand the strain of reducing the grid voltage to Colonel Kirby's requirements. Mr. Fell is to be congratulated on his achievement, and he has the satisfaction of knowing that his labours were well worthwhile. Colonel Kirby gave a most interesting lecture.

On the stage had been assembled a switchboard, equipped with dimmers, and every possible sort of control. Sight was supplemented by sound. Noises off, from the roar of a crowd to the pealing of bells and the chanting of a Cathedral Choir were reproduced and superimposed by a dually controlled gramophone amplifier. Effects of spectrum flood-lighting were demonstrated. But the most valuable part of Colonel Kirby's lecture lay in the fact that he described how many of his most intriguing appliances could be manufactured by the enthusiastic amateur.

And when he went, he left his apparatus behind to be experimented with, to be played about with, one might almost say, by those interested.

The size of our stage—as indeed does the matter of cost—sets a limit to the lighting equipment that could be used with profit. It is only the more spectacular type of drama—the thriller, and the revue—that requires all the resources contained in Colonel Kirby's repertoire. But we have much to learn from him. And doubtless we may expect his visit to bear fruit.

ACTING.

Lent Term. 1936.

Four plays were produced this Term. In addition, a team was sent to compete at the County Drama Festival. "X = o" was the play selected. The cast was the same as at the Christmas performance, with the exception that in the absence of R. O. J. Cooper, R. H. Bettison took the part of the young Trojan soldier, Hus. One of the difficulties in the production of this play lies in the necessity of quick scene changing, and in spite of some smart work on the part of the stage hands, the Festival production did not go with the same speed as the earlier one. The choice might be questioned on other grounds. We were pitted against teams playing comedy and character pieces, and by contrast our work seemed lyrical rather than dramatic. At all events we did not get into the finals, and we must hope for better luck next time.

On March 7th Form II. gave a performance of "The Grand Cham's Diamond," by Allan Monkhuse. It is an interesting little play, part thriller, part character study. We are shown a humdrum suburban family idling away a rather boring evening. Mrs. Perkins, the mother, alone manages to preserve a sense of adventure. "Age cannot weary her or custom stale." She still has romantic ideas, and these are stimulated into life by the account of a jewel burglary in the evening paper. When the missing diamond comes hurtling through the window, to be followed by a mysterious "man in black," she rises to the occasion. Her middle-class morality takes a back seat. This is a chance too good to miss. She is determined to hold on to her miraculously come-by acquisition, no matter how the rest of the family may cringe. She stands up to the thief, and only gives way when Scotland

Yard appears on the scene in the person of a young detective, who is engaged to the daughter of the house. For the sake of all concerned, she surrenders the jewel, and the curtain goes down on her consolatory remark, "Well, I 'ad my bit of fun for once."

H. Palmer had the leading role, and gave a good rendering of the part of Mrs. Perkins. J. H. Neads was the stolid husband, M. A. C. Levett, the daughter, A. R. Tenty played the burglar, and R. F. Boyland the matter-of-fact and business-like detective.

A double bill was presented on Saturday evening, 21st March, 1936. "A Social Evening," a farce by A. J. Talbot, and "Banquo's Chair," a thriller by R. Croft-Cooke.

Neither of the two pieces had any value from a literary point of view, but they provided a Saturday night's entertainment, even though it was of a somewhat low-brow nature.

"A Social Evening" is a sketch, not a play, and the amusement is provided by a mistake whereby a Professor of Entomology arrives in the green room of a company of variety artistes, gets, fuddled with strong waters, and in this condition proceeds to give a lecture on "The Departure from Type of the Elater Agriotes Obscurus." He manages to finish off what had been a rather "dud" show on the part of the professional entertainers. Everyone is thoroughly annoyed, especially the star comedian, who had failed to make a hit with his turn, and who finds himself in the embarrassing position of being minus his trousers as a result of an alcoholic mishap on the part of the unfortunate professor.

The cast was as follows: Henry (a waiter), A. E. Godsell, Hobday (a secretary), D. F. Gallop, Simpkins (an elocutionist), F. J. Willis Professor Percival Brown (an Entomologist), D. W. Stone, Allardyce Murgatroyd (a Low Comedian), E. R. Morris, Miss Hildebrand (an Accompanist), M. H. F. Fischer, Gladys de St. Croix (a Soubrette), G. Constable, Lord Huxwin (a Scientific Peer), J. F. Spencer.

"Banquo's Chair" exploits that well-known device, dear to every detective, from Hamlet down, of facing a suspected murderer with a dramatic reconstruction of the circumstances of his crime.

An elderly lady has met a tragic end in her ancestral home, and the suspicion has fallen upon her young nephew, a certain Mr. Bedford.

Sir William Brent, who has taken the investigation upon himself, devises a rather gloomy card party, to which Bedford is invited, along with two other guests, Mr. Stone (a gentleman at large), and Mr. Gandy (an artist). Lane, the family butler, is in the secret, and the climax is reached when the lights go out and the ghost of the murdered relative makes her appearance. Incidentally, the manner in which this occurred, must have given a considerable shock to the host himself. It was too much for Mr. Bedford, coming, as it does, on the top of a prelude of Scotch whisky, a most unsociable rubber of bridge, and an evening during which the weather behaved as it did on the night of the murder in Macbeth. Storm without and a ghost within. Not even the most hardened aunt-killer can face up to such, and Bedford had begun to display rather ominous symptoms even before the skeleton was unearthed. His guilty conscience gets the better of him, and the play ends with his arrest.

D. R. Gillham gave a very disquieting rendering of the murderer's part. D. G. Morison was the detective host, W. J. Harris the butler, and R. L. Short and R. M. Ingleton the two other guests at the card table. The strong arm of the law was represented by Police-Constables H. H. Selby and E. R. Cooper, and W. A. Wyon was the ghost.

The best vintage of the dramatic season was kept for the last week of Term. It turned out to be a very fine old crusted port laid down in the reign of her late Majesty Queen Victoria, and proved a generous, not to say a heady, potion.

Sweeny Todd, the barber of Fleet Street, was as notorious in his day as was Jack the Ripper. He was a tonsorial artist in more senses than one, and his outwardly innocent looking shop witnessed from time to time some very peculiar goings-on. For Sweeny was not satisfied with merely shaving his customers. He had a trap-door under his chair. Disappearances took place, facilitated by the proximity of a baker's oven, which not only consumed, but was capable of cooking his victims, and turning them into very delectable meat pies.

It is scarcely credible that a play which makes use of such Grand Guignol effects could ever have been received as a serious drama. But it was. The horrors that convulsed us

with laughter on Saturday night, the 26th March, when Norman Slade got going at his job, once drew tears from audiences that came away purged, one must suppose, in the truly Aristotelian sense.

It was a happy thought to revive this superb melodrama. The production was staggering. We were spared nothing. It went with a go and a swing that left one breathless. Slade as Sweeny worked himself up into a fine frenzy. Here was a murderer with a real zest for his craft. And when it came to Harris (the baker's apprentice) sampling one of the nefarious meat-pies, and finding human tit-bits in that succulent mouthful, our enthusiasm knew no bounds. This was the real thing beyond a question.

The play, of course, has a heavy moral. Sweeny polishes off (or attempts to polish off) one customer too many, in the person of Mark Ingestrie, a returned sea captain. He has a quarrel with Mrs. Lovett, his accomplice, and shovels that good lady into her own oven, where she meets a not untimely end. The apprentices, Tobias Wragg (in the toilet saloon), and Jarvis (in the baked meats department) begin to smell a rat. And a foppish young Colonel Jeffery, head-over-heels in love with Joanna Oakley, whose affections, however, are centred on the sea captain, has his suspicions aroused, though he is determined to make the most of his rival's mysterious disappearance. Between them all the human vampire is brought to task. We are regaled with a full-dress trial scene, in the midst of which Sweeny, in an excess of remorse, relieves the hangman of his job by committing an appropriate and jugular *felo-de-se*. So, justice triumphs, the lovers are united, the 'prentices set free, and the audience disperses thrilled and edified.

We have already mentioned Norman Slade's spirited performance in the title role. He was ably supported. P. Jackson gave a good study of Tobias, the bullied barber's boy; R. H. Bettison of Mark Ingestrie, the sea captain, who wins Joanna. P. H. Tuft was an excellent lapidary. At his best, M. H. R. Dowding, as Colonel Jeffery, was the supreme fop. His affectations were inimitable—so much so that at times they defeated himself. J. R. Billany, as the emotional Joanna Oakley, looked the part, and quite frequently carried it off. She had a difficult time, poor young lady. Harris was positively gruesome. (We have already mentioned the most savoury of his exploits). J. D. Sinclair as Mrs. Lovett, R. Thornhill as the

Judge, and H. Palmer as Clerk of the Court, all gave realistic performances, and the cast was suitably completed by an assembly of incredulous and open-mouthed jurymen

A VISIT TO THE CHINESE EXHIBITION

It was a good day. To begin with the weather was kind, a Spring morning with frost giving place to sun. The three cars showed their paces well. I was in the Swift, and I am not so sure that I would like to repeat our performance of running the Alvis so close. It was, however, no small feat, both for the car and her driver.

All the way from Uxbridge I found myself deploring the approaches to London. Coming by rail, you see the backs of jerry-built houses. Coming by road their fronts, with innumerable filling stations and chain stores, and cinemas, and aseptic-looking modern factories. The traffic jam grows denser. The delays at coloured lights more tedious; and then you bump into some well-known landmark, the White City (which is anything but white nowadays) or Olympia, or the great shops at Kensington. Not until the Park was reached did we escape from the commonplace. And then, suddenly, the charm of London opened out like a flower. Hyde Park Corner, the long vista of Piccadilly with its air of money, of luxury, of ease.

The courtyard of Burlington House was packed with cars, and a seemingly endless stream of visitors was passing through the turnstiles and up the stairs to the crowded galleries. And amid this modern bustle one came face to face with bronzes and pottery dating back to over a thousand years B.C. Their quiet skill and craftsmanship met one's gaze from behind the glass cases on every side. Animals, birds, squatting gods, seen with a vivid sense of vitality, often with a grotesque humour, set one thinking of the amazing and age-long fertility of the mind of man. In perfection of finish these Chinese artificers have never been surpassed.

The paintings next claimed one's attention. The subtlety of their conscious conventions—nature wrought upon and refined, leaf and tree and cloud and mountain, set down with a delicate economy of colour and line. Birds and animals, the fur and feathers transcribed with an almost tactile fidelity that never trespasses upon commonplace representationalism. Always there is that oriental refinement and sensibility.

The later exhibits, with their increasing elaboration, did not appeal to me so much as the primitives. They are matters for the connoisseurs, these jades and ivories and sumptuous fabrics; the gloss and glow of lacquer, the intricate botany of jewellery, the sensuous richness of silks and brocades. To one without specialised knowledge the effect was somewhat bewildering.

One left with a feeling that to speak of Progress in such things is to dally with an illusion. Perfection is not a thing of the present or even of yesterday. It roves back through the ages. Our little understanding of Art has been so largely shaped by European tradition. Here was a whole Eastern world, with its own conventions, its own way of seeing things, and above all its own almost miraculous refinement of execution. In two hours one cannot hope to do more than merely catch a glimpse, to come away with an impression, rather than with knowledge. But what an experience it was.

We lunched in the Mall, St. James' Park on one side and the massive urbanity of Carlton House Terrace on the other, looking out across the trees and Guards' Parade Ground to the Aladdin's dream that is Westminster.

The afternoon was spent at the play "Romeo and Juliet," produced with a richness and colour that would have surprised its author. Some who had seen it before sampled the Auden-and-Isherwood "Dog Beneath the Skin" at the Westminster Theatre. This play, which is really not a play, but a curious mixture of revue and melodrama and pure poetry, possesses a strange vitality and awareness of the modern scene.

But time was running late. There was a fearsome scrum of cars outside the Lex garage, where we reassembled. And the drive out to Guildford in continuous traffic, illuminated by dazzling and rapidly moving lights, was a species of modern trial by ordeal.

The halt at Guildford was more than welcome. And we came away feeling very much indebted to Mrs. Gross for her hospitality. She has a proper appreciation of school appetites, and she cannot be ignorant of our response.

The rest of the journey reminded me of the drive back from Aldershot last year. I drowsed most of the way, only to be awakened by the prospect of more food in the Headmaster's dining-room. A late meal, a welcome pillow, and so ended one day to be marked in the calendar with a merited red letter.

R. N. D. W.

CLAYESMORE ATHLETIC MEETING.

On March 17th we sent a team of ten to Clayesmore School in Dorset for an athletics contest. The sixty-eight miles between the two schools was covered in three cars (and a trailer); we set out at 10:30, and after a pleasant drive we arrived at our destination at 12:30. After dinner we were shown over the school, and looked at the athletics field, and finally the contest began at 2:45.

The first event was the 100 yds, in which we surprised ourselves by securing the first three places, points being awarded for the first four places. We thus started with a lead of 9 points—1 point, and we never lost this lead throughout the afternoon.

In the next event, putting the shot, we won 1st and 3rd places, but we did not do as well as we might have done. Here the ground was against us, for our people were used to cinder pits, and Clayesmore had grass. The result being that the spikes in our running shoes tended to catch in the ground and overbalance our shot-putters.

In the quarter mile that followed we won 2nd, 3rd and 4th places. This race was very slow, the winner's time being 59 1-5. The next event was the high jump, in which we won first place, and tied for the 2nd and 3rd places. Thornhill won this for us, with a jump of 4ft. 11½ins.

In the javelin we did not do so well as we had expected, and only managed to get equal points with Clayesmore. We had 2nd and 3rd places, and they the other two, making a total of 5 points each. In the long jump that followed we won the first three places, the best jump being that of Brain, who jumped 19ft. 9in. We had hoped to do well in the discus, but, just as in the case of the shot, the difference in the material of the pits told heavily against us, and we only won 1st and 4th places.

The last event was the mile, and in this we did not expect to do much; in fact, just before the start we had only two men in for the race. The third entrant, A. Wilson, fulfilled his part as a pace-maker. After two rounds he dropped out. After another round Bettison suddenly fell down, and our only runner to finish was Gillham, who ran a very good race and finished second.

The final score was 491 points to Rendcomb against 301 points to Clayesmore. We had not only secured the victory, but also some surprises for ourselves. For where we had

hoped to do well, that is to say in the field events, we did not shine, whereas our successes in the track events were unexpected.

Of individual performances, that of the captain, A. E. A. Brain, was easily the best. He entered for four events, and won them all outright, thus securing 16 points out of a total of 49, no mean performance. The general standard of the athletics was, however, good.

After a most enjoyable tea we left Clayesmore and motored back to Rendcomb through the darkening countryside, and arrived home at 9. The team thoroughly enjoyed the fixture and we look forward with keen anticipation to further encounters with Clayesmore School.

RESULTS.

100 Yards: Brain, Selby, Cooper, Clayesmore, 10 3-5 secs.

Shot: Brain, Clayesmore, Willetts, Clayesmore, 35ft.

440 Yards: Clayesmore, Selby, Willetts, Cooper, 59 1-5 secs.

High Jump: Thornhill, Clayesmore, Bettison, Clayesmore, Wilson G., Clayesmore, 4ft. 1 li ins.

Javelin: Clayesmore, Willetts, Ingleton, Clayesmore, 115ft.

Long Jump: Brain, Selby, Cooper, Clayesmore, 19ft. 9ins.

Discus: Brain, Clayesmore, Clayesmore, Wilson G., 105ft. 7ins.

Mile: Clayesmore, Gillham, Clayesmore, Clayesmore, 5mins. 12secs.

HOCKEY.

The standard of the hockey in the first game this term has been higher than in any previous year and the attainment of this higher standard was evidenced by the fact that for the first time we had an official fixture with Dean Close 2nd XI., and not only gave them a game, but very nearly beat them. In this match, which was played at Dean Close, we scored a somewhat lucky goal in the first ten minutes, and for the next three quarters of an hour the play was indeterminate, being generally between the half-way line and the Dean Close "25." About ten minutes before the end, owing to some misjudgement on the part of our backs and goal, and helped by the speed of their

forwards, Dean Close equalised. For the rest of the game we were pressing very hotly, but did not succeed in getting another goal. To start with, the pace was very fast, but it flagged steadily until before the second goal of the day, it was definitely slow; however, after this it quickened appreciably, though it did not recover the initial speed.

We had two other matches during the season—one against Hanley Castle Grammar School and one against the Old Boys. The former was played at Hanley on a very muddy pitch with great enthusiasm, and resulted in a win by 4 goals to 2. The Old Boys' match, however, was very different, and we were decisively beaten 4-2, by a team that was both better and (in many cases) faster than ourselves. The result was something of a surprise, as in the morning it was very problematical whether or not there would be anything like enough to make up an Old Boys' team at all. However, when the time for the match came, the Old Boys had made up a full side, with the help of two members of the staff.

The team, as a whole, worked well, and there were very few changes. The backs and goal were good, and the halves were even better. On the other hand the forwards were not so good, and lacked combination.

Boys who were chosen to play in games higher than their usual ones were able to hold their own. This bodes well for the future, and we look forward to some really good hockey, if next Spring treats us well in the matter of weather.

GROUP GAMES.

The Group Games were more interesting this term than for some time past. Though the West was not expected to win, the issue between the other two groups was uncertain. The West lost rather unluckily to the South 0—3, and to the East, fairly representatively, by 2 goals to 7. The South v. East game was very hard and fast, and provided, in the opinions of those who played in it, the best hockey we have ever had amongst ourselves. The game was played in a very pleasant spirit and resulted in a win for the East by one goal to none. Though the East was slightly better, a goalless draw would better have represented the view of the game.

RUNNING.

The running this term was of a lower standard than usual, at any rate in the Lodges Race, where competition was very slight. In the junior Lodges only five people competed, and it was won in the very slow time of 16 mins. 4 secs. Had there been a complete entry it is possible that the record would have been broken. Shortly before the Senior Race only two names were up, and when actually seven people started, there was only one who might definitely be called a runner. Consequently, as may be seen, the times were slow, and Willetts, though he ran well to win, was actually slower than he was last year.

In contrast to the lack of interest in the Lodges, the North Cerney was well supported, several people not having gone in for the Lodges in order to give their best to the race. It was run in good time, at quite a steady pace, the relative positions of the runners being practically the same from start to finish.

The results of the three races were as follows:

North Cerney.

- 1st. Selby, 23 minutes 29 seconds.
- 2nd. Gillham, 23 minutes 40 seconds.
- 3rd. Willetts, 24 minutes, 24 seconds.

Senior Lodges.

- 1st. Willetts, 14 minutes 12 seconds.
- 2nd. Magor, 15 minutes, 13 seconds.
- 3rd. Dowding, 15 minutes 31 seconds.

Junior Lodges.

- 1st. Forrest, 16 minutes 4 seconds.
- 2nd. Gurdon P., 16 minutes 38 seconds.
- 3rd. Tenty, 16 minutes 51 seconds.