THE HISTORY OF
ALTRINCHAM COUNTY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FOR BOYS

1912-62

by

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THE OPENING, 1912-14

ON Saturday, April 12, 1912, Sir Alfred Hopkinson, the Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, unlocked the south door with a silver key and the School was officially open. Speeches followed in the new hall before a distinguished gathering of educational and cultural leaders from Cheshire and Manchester and, as the spring sunshine poured in through the long Gothic windows, one of the speakers said that it was emblematic of the sunshine of progress. The south door has long since been blocked up and forgotten in the very centre of the modern school, the hall has been sliced horizontally and vertically to form the present library and two classrooms, but the development of the School over the fifty years of its existence has shown that the speaker's simile was apt enough. There had for some time been a need for such a school, for in the past fifty years Altrincham had changed from a modest market town to a busy industrial and shopping centre, Bowdon from a church with a huddle of cottages at its foot and Hale from a land of farms and hamlets to thriving residential suburbs. The population had risen from 5,000 to 30,000. No ancient grammar school providing secondary education had established itself in the area and those institutions which from time to time assumed the name were private business ventures that sprang up, died and had no continuity. Timperley, Sale and Knutsford, also growing rapidly as dormitory areas, were no better served and from the beginning they too sent boys to the new school. Ever since the passing of Balfour's Education Act in 1902 its creation had been the dream of the man who presided at the opening ceremony, Judge Bradbury, the Chairman of the Governors. He pursued his aim unwaveringly, often in the face of considerable apathy, and it was a tragedy that he did not live to see out even the first year of the School's life. He died early in 1913 but the Governors, recognising the vital part he had played, perpetuated his name in the prize offered every year for the boy who, in the opinion of his fellows, had contributed most to the life of the School.

Teaching began a fortnight later with 57 boys and three masters; Mr Laver, the head, Mr Cawood, his deputy, and Mr Hamblin. The latter has recalled his lifting of the heart when, arriving from a school where the atmosphere had been sombre and severe, he heard his new headmaster lay down at the first staff meeting that above all
he wanted this to be 'a happy school'. It certainly burst into immediate and joyous life. Numbers rose steadily—there were 89 boys in the second term and 127 in the fourth—and new masters were added correspondingly; even so the diversity of activities verged on the incredible. By September, 1913 cricket and football elevens had been organised, achieving results that were by no means despicable considering that there was as yet no VIth form. (It came into being in the autumn of 1914 when its solitary member reported in the form notes of the magazine that he was too modest to send in an account of his own doings.) The first swimming sports, the first cross country steeplechase, the first athletic sports had all been held and a house championship organised round the three houses of Gordon, Marlborough and Nelson. One of the first duties of the original house captains was to write potted biographies for the magazine of the national heroes, whose names they had adopted, in order to stimulate enthusiasm. This was even more effectively done by the presentation of a challenge cup by Mr F. B. Dunkerley, a Manchester architect and the new Chairman of the Governors. The third number of the magazine contained reports of house contests in football, cricket, cross country, athletics and swimming and of a system of awarding points for them according to their relative importance in the life of the School; a system which has been altered many times since, growing ever more complicated with the increase of numbers and still capable of arousing the fiercest controversy among the house masters and those responsible for the games.

But on the cultural side there was equal activity. The first concert, containing excerpts from Hamlet and Julius Caesar was given on December 12, 1912, the first meeting of the Literary Society held on January 24, 1913, and the first volume of the magazine issued in the following April. The latter from the start contained original literary material as well as very full reports of school activities and throughout the history of the School has shown astonishing permanence; not even two world wars have been able to prevent its regular production. The Literary Society showed a high seriousness, debating with great zest and considerable knowledge such highly topical subjects as the strength of the navy and the necessity of conscription, both involving an assessment of the reality of the menace of Germany. It quickly established itself as an integral part of the School life and later expanded into the Union Society with a Junior and, for a brief time, a Middle section and a general patronage over all cultural and scientific activities outside school hours. But change in fashions of entertainment and the desire of the more scientifically minded of its members to break apart led to a gradual decline and its final extinction with the outbreak of the Second World War. Its various successors have flowered brilliantly from time to time but never achieved permanence.
From the outset it was obvious that the outlook of boys, masters and, above all, the Headmaster was fresh and adventurous. This was shown most obviously in the creation of a Scout Troop (the 3rd Altrincham) when the School was barely a year old and the whole scout movement in its infancy. Apparently here even the zeal of the Masters wavered and they expressed their doubts to Mr Laver as to the wisdom of attempting this new venture at so early a stage. They were much mortified and very apologetic to find that he had accepted their protests but was still determined to found a troop and had gone outside for a scoutmaster. On May 13, 1913, a dozen boys were enrolled with Dr Percy Stocks as scoutmaster. But before very long two new masters, Mr Whitaker and Mr Sheriffs, had taken over the regular duties with Dr Stocks remaining in an honorary capacity. Their adventurous spirit must have delighted their Headmaster. In the very morning of wireless telegraphy the Scout Troop acquired an installation, from which, as Mr Sheriffs proudly reported later, the messages from Poldhu could be heard eight feet from the instrument. Ten years later (for half the interval the installation had languished in the police station for security reasons) when there was a wireless craze the original crystal in the field set was still usable. To raise funds for this and for camping equipment a most elaborate Fancy Fair was held on March 10 and 11, 1914. There were stalls, the 'wizard's den', the 'severed head', the 'gypsy tent', games and competitions, six 'grand concerts', two dramatic entertainments, a 'cafe chantant', scout displays, afternoon teas and suppers and, for a grand finale, a hot-pot supper. Already the first of a long line of School Camps had been held at Bont Newydd near Dolgelly in September, 1913, and although many non-scouts were present, the main organisation was the work of the Troop. Even this does not complete the tale of these early activities. There was such intense interest in photography, which included that startlingly new form of entertainment, the cinema, that a photographic society was begun. Although to move outside the classroom for teaching was a very novel idea in education there were school visits to Manchester docks, the Adelaide Salt Mines at Northwich, the Gas Works on Hale Moss and the Electrical Works on Broadheath.

There is no doubt about the tremendous enthusiasm of the boys in those early days; everyone was expected to take part in everything regardless of their talents. Thus in the first concert 70 of the 89 boys then in the School took part. Literary men played in the cricket and football teams, despite the sometimes severe criticisms of their ineptitude by the games masters; athletes, although their lips might remain sealed, nevertheless put in an appearance at the Literary Society. But among the early pupils was one who besides enthusiasm had also remarkable versatility and, in one particular direction, a great talent that was later to make him a national figure. Ronald
Gow was one of the original editors of the School magazine, the first president of the Literary Society and a star actor in the early dramatic productions. But he was also a successful sprinter and hurdler, eventually becoming Victor Ludorum, and a dashing if somewhat erratic member of the soccer and cricket elevens. But in the very first assembly it was his friend, E. J. Horley, who attracted the attention of his Headmaster by his age and height and so became the first of the long line of school prefects. He very soon showed that these were not his only qualities; although apparently he persisted in kicking a football with his toe and in cricket showed but mastery of one stroke, the leg glide, his steadiness and hard work both on and off the field soon made him an invaluable secretary to the School teams, a house captain and a member of the Committee of the Literary Society. He left four terms after the opening and was to show the same qualities first as the architect of the Old Boys Association (formed as early as May, 1914) and then as councillor, alderman and mayor of the borough of Altrincham.

By August, 1914, besides the arrival of additional masters, another change had taken place in the staff. Mr Cawood had left to become headmaster of Oswestry Grammar School and Mr Hamblin had taken his place as Second Master. Mr Mason and Mr Chorley whose connection with the School was to last almost as long as Mr Hamblin's had arrived in 1913 and there was therefore already around Mr Laver the nucleus of the group that was to shape its destiny.
THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914-18

The First World War descended on the young school and profoundly affected it. At first there was merely the fun of suspecting civilians to be German spies and the thrill (not too realistic) of a possible invasion. At the summer camp at Criccieth in August, 1914, a peaceful steamer waiting to cross the bar was rumoured to be a German mine-layer and two camping artists, German spies. With the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915 more reality began to creep in. Soldiers wounded at Mons, Charleroi and the Marne convalesced in the Ashley Road Congregational Church Hospital (an enterprising editor culled some of their experiences for the magazine) and masters left to join Kitchener's great volunteer army. Among them were both Mr Mee and Mr Mason, who had run the games of the School. Mr Mee had an arduous and dangerous career: rising from the ranks to be a captain in the Hampshire Regiment, in his six commissioned months he was intelligence officer, observation officer, bombing officer, went right through the dreadful offensive of the Somme, was twice mentioned in dispatches, and finally so seriously wounded that he had to be invalided home and given a position as a cadet instructor. His comment after the battle of the Somme expresses the gulf that had now opened up between those that had been through such experiences and the civilians who had not. "Life is less strenuous now", he wrote, "and I am beginning to look round the world, finding it is still intact and moving along in just the same old way as if nothing had happened. I confess I am rather disappointed; after the cataclysm in which I found myself I somehow expected to see a shattered universe and a changed order of things. Perhaps after all the 'scraps' weren't so extraordinary". Mr Mason was for some time an instructor in the Royal Fusiliers; then experienced some of the grimmest horrors of winter trench warfare in the Ypres salient and was finally, to his intense delight, moved to the comparative calm and scenic grandeur of the Italian front. In their places and those of masters who subsequently enlisted were brought several mistresses, many of whom stayed on long after the conclusion of hostilities and made a deep impression on the life of the School. One of them—Miss Nichols—did not retire until the summer of 1938 and narrowly missed joining up with the much smaller group of her own sex who entered the School during the Second World War.
It was not long before the youthful Old Boys (the Vlth Form still had no more than three members and the faces of the first Old Boys Cricket XI look more like an Under 15 XI of today) were being drawn in to the forces. Some twenty of them saw service in the Army, the Navy and the recently formed R.A.F. In the German offensive of the spring of 1918 and the victorious allied advance that followed it, two Old Boys—F. C. Russell and G. Thomas—won Military Medals, and three—J. O. Carter, R. C. Paterson and J. C. Tattersall—lost their lives. By this time the School itself was considerably involved. A School platoon (No. 3 of the East Company, First Territorial Cadet Battalion, Cheshire Regiment) was formed, concerts given to wounded soldiers, a party sent to work on a local farm and part of the School field dug to grow potatoes. Anyone who has had any acquaintance with the stiff clay of the field will know why the digging was not popular, but the harrowing that followed it provoked great enthusiasm. "A crowd of boys rushing along at full speed, dragging a solitary harrow and cheering when it made an extra large bound over some depression". As an Old Boy, P. H. Allen, has reminded us, the time of war was not all gloom and horror, particularly for a schoolboy. "We did not realise the horror and sordidness of war; we were children whose toy armies and history books had come suddenly to life. Exciting things that mattered and that we could really understand were happening every day. I think that my generation got the best out of the war—at the time; we have had to pay for it since". He recalls the arguments between lessons on strategy and the size of armies, often followed by demonstrations on the blackboard, the farm work and above all the entertainments to wounded soldiers. "I don't think any have gone since with such a swing as these."

But the War did not stop the growth of the School and, if it curtailed, it by no means ended its manifold activities. In the speech day of 1917 the Headmaster reported 176 boys in the School and said that it could have been 200 but for the inadequacy of the buildings. (This was the first appearance of what was soon to become with the briefest of intervals an ever-present problem.) At the same time he outlined the organisation of the School into a preparatory department of Forms I and II, a pre-matriculation main school of Forms III, Lower and Upper IV, Lower and Upper V; and a Vlth Form. With minor alterations this lasted until 1945, although the lowest form disappeared in 1933 when the entry age was raised to ten and the Vlth had developed enormously. In 1917 also the first boys whose secondary education had been entirely in the School sat the Cambridge Locals and the very satisfactory results presaged the many scholastic successes in the years ahead. The sports although shorn of some of their pre-war splendour were nevertheless held, the cricket and football elevens continued to function and the Dunkerley
cup to the winning house was awarded without break. The August camps were a casualty: that of 1914 was held at Black Rock, Cric-cieth, and the boys heard of the outbreak of war while under canvas; that of 1915 was held in the same place but in a deserted farmhouse and with special War Office permission; thereafter no such permission could be obtained. The Literary Society continued to hold meetings that despite—or perhaps because of—their high seriousness were packed. Debates on whether the war could be won on the western front, whether the Russian Revolution was a blessing or a curse, whether the time was ripe for a League of Nations, drew attendances of between 50 and 60 from the upper part of the School. There can in fact have been very few who did not attend. A Junior Literary Society was equally flourishing, its programmes consisting mainly of lectures which Mr Hamblin and Mr Chorley delivered with amazing erudition on topics ranging from Ancient Greece and Rome to the existing far-flung British Empire and the many fronts of the war. They were strenuously supported by the magic lantern and its operators—two of whom showed over a thousand slides in the 1917-18 session—and fortunate that some provident person had laid in an enormous stock of carbons, which had by this time become unobtainable elsewhere. The two societies had already formed the habit of combining at the end of the session and giving a concert to boys, Old Boys and parents. This was the origin of the Easter concert, the earlier ones given at Christmas having now become an epilogue to the speech day proceedings. The programmes were very representative of an age of entertainment that has now vanished—a long list of songs and recitations by the various forms, interspersed with solos, both said and sung, and the occasional sketch. But a very large proportion of the School took part and any failings in technical skill were covered up in the general enthusiasm of the packed audience. Canned professional entertainment within easy reach of man, woman and child was still a thing of the future. The proceedings usually closed with slides of the School which produced an outburst of wild cheering. At the same time the Scout Troop, taken over by Mr Chorley in the emergency, showed no sign of declining and a craze for chess spread so rapidly that players stayed on after school until quite late in the evening and jokes were made that this was all part of the new national rationing scheme, as through so doing they were induced to miss their tea.
THE TWENTIES, 1918-33

A S the sirens sounded at 11 o'clock on November 11, 1918, without direction and by common accord boys and masters abandoned work and flooded out to the flagpole in front of the School. Amid wild cheering the School captain, A. K. Brierley, Victor Ludorum and one of the finest athletes the School has ever known, hoisted the flag to the very top of the pole by the simple expedient of swarming up it himself. This excitement over, the rest of the term was somewhat blanketed by the terrific epidemic of the Spanish 'flu which swept across the world. Sporting fixtures were cancelled, the Literary Society reported its lowest attendance ever at its December meeting and the speech day was postponed until February, 1919. No fatalities, however, resulted here. After the first joy of welcoming well-known masters home again—Captain Mee, Mr Mason and Mr Sheriffs—and of taking up again annual festivities—the School camp, the sports once again gay with bunting and attended with refreshments—it became obvious that there could be no return to pre-war conditions and that a new world was dawning. The last of the original 57 entrants left in 1920 and the Headmaster's almost casual war-time remark—that they could have had a larger intake but for the insufficient buildings—developed into an almost ceaseless campaign, waged behind the scenes at all times but on the platform every speech day by himself and Mr Dunkerley. The Board of Education granted the School recognition for advanced courses in Mathematics and Science and soon the years of careful preparation, maintained despite the War, began to tell and there was a steady stream of university entrants and an expanding list of scholastic honours. A notable pioneer was A. J. Murphy, who combined his brilliant scholarship with a many sidedness that had still not died out among the School leaders. After winning a scholarship to Manchester University he gained a First Class in Chemistry and an Industrial Research Scholarship. From there he went on to the National Research Laboratory at Teddington and accounts of his valuable research appeared from time to time in the Journal of the Institute of Metals. But while at School he was Editor of the magazine, President of the Literary Society, an actor in the speech day plays, captain of Nelson House, a member of the football team and—one feels that few could have more certainly deserved it—a Bradbury Prize winner. His literary flair was considerable; he wrote many articles for the magazine and gave a paper to the Literary
Society on "The Theatre in Shakespeare's Day" which astonished everybody with its patient research. Most of the early Vth Formers, like Murphy, went to Manchester University but immediately after the War the first Old Boy went to Cambridge; it was 1926 before there was one at Oxford also. In the early thirties a sprinkling went to London but none to the other Universities until the Second World War. Through the patient work of Mr Crabb, who had joined the staff in 1918, the Science Vth was built up so that many more followed in Murphy's footsteps, but at the same time the work of Mr Laver and Mr Hamblin resulted in an equally strong Classical Vth. S. A. Male rivalled Murphy, obtaining an Open Scholarship at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, a 'Stewart of Rannoch' Scholarship while he was up and a First Class in both parts of the Tripos. He was followed by a rapid succession of winners of scholarships and exhibitions at Oxford and Cambridge. But on the classical side too there was no addiction to purely academic learning. J. R. Thompson, now happily for many years a well-known figure among the staff, was in his days at school not only a most able scholar, winning a Classical Exhibition at Queens' College, Cambridge, but wicket-keeper to the Cricket XI, a full-back in the Soccer team and a great star in the athletic world. Principally a sprinter and hurdler he was for three years Victor Ludorum. But this was by no means the end of his activities: he acted in the School dramatics and was twice awarded the Good Service Cup for work in the Union Society. He must have made a most magisterial, judicious and witty President and it is no surprise to find a contemporary vignette of him in this role, in which he is represented as frequently unable to speak because of the excellence of the joke he is about to make.

The games of the School, now coached with renewed vigour on their return by Captain Mee and Mr Mason, made notable advances. Swimming flourished, new records were constantly made and then broken in the sports and a much steadier level was reached in both cricket and soccer. Gone were the days when the School played Bury Grammar School's 3rd XI and lost by 13 goals, or the entire cricket side were more often than not dismissed for under fifty. It is interesting to notice that an all-round improvement in the cricket was closely connected with another boy who has since given long years of service on the staff. Mr G. W. Sutcliffe. There had been individual high scorers before (notably P. H. Wood whose vigorous hitting brought him 80's and 90's in the 1922-23 seasons) but it was not until G. W. Sutcliffe's eleven of 1925 that it could be said that in all departments of the game, including the team spirit, there had been a marked advance. Much of this was due to the steadiness, enthusiasm and all-round skill of the captain. (It will no doubt come as a great surprise to later generations of small boys, trained through many hours in the nets with Mr Sutcliffe to distinguish a googlie from a leg
break, to learn that he was then a fast bowler.) Five years later the School produced a really strong XI under T. N. Wardrop. Himself a sound wicket-keeper, he was an adept at placing his field and changing his attack. This was nicely varied with an 'express merchant' and a slow left hander backed up fielders that were swift and keen. There were half-a-dozen useful batsmen and a real match-winner in A. H. Carmichael, who was merciless on anything over-pitched. He scored a century against the Fathers, rarely failed to reach double figures and ended the season with an average of 46. The football XI of the same year also reached a high degree of efficiency under a captain who has also been closely connected with the School ever since this time. N. H. Ankers, for many years one of the pillars of the Old Boys football club, was centre-half as well as captain, although it was only in the previous year that he had been promoted from the Junior XI. His strong and clever play held the team together throughout a season in which all the old rival grammar schools—Stockport, Lymm, Warrington, Stretford, Bury—were met and most of them defeated. Against one of these who had often inflicted severe defeats on us in the old days it piled up the monstrous total of 15 goals. Some credit for the improvement, particularly in the cricket, must undoubtedly be put down to the new pitch which was laid in the winter of 1927/8 under the supervision of Mr Mason and with the boys themselves digging trenches for the drainage. It will no doubt be no particular surprise to later members of the School, knowing how the weather and obstinate Cheshire boulder clay defeat the best laid schemes of drainer and turfer, to learn that the athletic feats of the twenties were carried out on what was often little better than a mud heap.

At the beginning of 1930 a change was made in the House system, which, although to the outside observer it may have made no vital difference to the organisation of the School, caused much heated argument and lamentations over old traditions abandoned. The size of the School, now approaching 400, meant that few were likely to be represented in its three houses and there had been a considerable falling off in enthusiasm. It was decided to double the number of houses and so bring in a larger number of players and this undoubtedly had an immediate effect, something like three-quarters of School representing their houses in some branch of sport and enthusiastic crowds appearing once again on the touch lines. But it was also decided not to add names to the existing ones but to make a clean break and choose six entirely fresh ones. Names with a local connection were preferred to those of our national heroes—dis-enchantment with national glory is a phenomenon of the twenties well-known to social historians—and Nelson, Marlborough and Gordon vanished to be replaced by Stamford, Bradbury, Dalton, Massey, Tatton and Chester.
But undoubtedly by outside standards the outstanding sporting activity—if it can be so called—of this period was chess. In 1922 the British Chess Federation presented a shield to be played for each year by the houses. In that year the membership of the Chess Club rose from 6 to 68, the School team, besides playing several friendly matches, entered the newly formed Altrincham and District League and headed its championship table and two players, H. Sutcliffe and P. N. Wallis, competed with great success in the Cheshire County Individual Championships. "Chess, chess, chess. There seems to be nothing else in the School during the winter months", wrote the club secretary in the magazine, while another contributor described the players thus: "With Spartan fortitude they spurn the fresh air and without even taking off their coats they play in an atmosphere surcharged with the odours of a recently served dinner!" (Games were played mostly in the dinner hour in the old dining room). Five times in the first seven years of the Altrincham League the championship was carried off by the School team. In 1923 with great temerity ('bounce' the Headmaster called it in his speech day report) the School entered the Cheshire championship. Doubts were expressed by at least one rival as to whether this would not lower the standard, but in the first year the School reached the semi-final and in the second won the cup. Some attempt seems to have been made to salve wounded pride by suggesting that the schoolboys won their victories by wearing their more aged opponents down by the slowness of their play but this was indignantly repudiated by the chess correspondent in the magazine. "Surely this is unlikely when we remember that some of us are taking part in this hard mental exercise at a time when we should be in bed and asleep; also a boy of fifteen needs time to think out things which to a man of forty are mere matters of rote. Age, which in other things brings retardation, will in this bring acceleration". But it should in all honesty be admitted that not all members of the School team were fifteen year olds. Several members of the Staff took part, one of the keenest being the Headmaster himself, who in the 1926-7 season had the honour of being elected President of the Cheshire Chess Federation. Another great enthusiast was a young mathematics master from Cambridge, Mr A. I. Gregory, who spent much time in coaching new players.

But the non-sporting outside activities of this period were even more remarkable and gained considerable attention from the outside world. Mr Sheriffs, the handicraft master, returned from the War to rescue from the police station and re-erect the wireless installation of which he had been the co-founder. A transmitting licence was obtained from the Postmaster-General and its official title became Radio Telegraph Station No. 2 i K. Mr Sheriffs himself wrote a series of articles on its development for the magazine. The
mild interest in it envenced during the early twenties became a craze with the beginning of broadcasting in 1923. The Old Boys Fancy Dress Dance held on December 15, 1922, was danced to music broadcast by the Manchester Broadcasting Station at Trafford Park and relayed by the School installation. This had its drawbacks for the dancers—the first fox-trot was ruined by atmospheres and although the waltz that followed was clearer, discordant noises continued to intrude—but it certainly reached the headlines. A photograph taken of the apparatus, complete with monstrous loud speaker precariously balanced on a chair in front of the dancers, was published in the northern edition of the Daily Mail and repeated in the Altrincham Guardian. Mr Sheriffs suddenly found himself guide and mentor to dozens of small boys constructing their own crystal sets and the Headmaster had to intervene to preserve the stucco of the recently erected 'semi-permanent' buildings against eager penknives in search of the invaluable galena.

But the publicity value of the wireless installation in the twenties was far outshone by the School dramatics. As already mentioned these had settled down into a December performance given at the end of speech day and an Easter performance under the aegis of the Literary—now renamed the Union—Society. Both took the form of songs and recitations, solo and in chorus, but the speech day performance usually ended with a short dramatic selection from Shakespeare and sometimes a French play as well, the Easter concert with slides of the life of the School. The atmosphere in which they were conducted differed considerably; with the former the presence of distinguished strangers ensured a certain amount of decorum; from the latter, according to one spectator, "one carried away somewhat chaotic impressions of musical sounds and noises; of packed masses of people cheerfully enduring discomfort—which professing keen enjoyment—of a physical atmosphere by no means conducive to perfect singing; of cheers and laughter; but running through all, a vital enthusiasm for the School!" Early in the twenties the more dignified speech day concerts showed considerable variety in the foreign excerpts: a short German play (Eigensinn) and extracts from Plautus's Menaechmi, Sophocles' Philoctetes and Racine's Les Plaideurs, if they must have been incomprehensible to the majority of the audience, at any rate enhanced the reputation of the School for learning and versatility. In 1923 Ronald Gow, who had taken his B.Sc. at Manchester University, came back as a member of the staff and began to aid Mr Mason, who had hitherto borne the chief burden as dramatic producer. In the next Easter concert the programme contained a modest little play entitled "The Three Wishes" written by him and acted by his form, the Third. In the same summer he began his film career by taking scenes of the life of the School camp at Swanage. In 1925 the speech day performance after the
briefest of independent items launched into a very ambitious pageant of the drama, in which scenes from Aristophanes' *Clouds*, William Morris's *Death of Sigmund*, the Chester Miracle Play, *The Deluge*, Shakespeare's *Tempest* and Sheridan's *Rivals* were strung together by Mr Gow and prefaced by impressive prologues written by a VIth former, J. P. Angold. In 1926 Gow's own *William Shakespeare*, a chronicle play in three acts showing its hero as a boy of eleven, a playwright at the height of his fame and a middle aged gentleman dying in his country mansion, was presented. The Easter concerts for these years ended with *The Skull and Crossbones*, a riotous burlesque of his. By this time the shape of these concerts had changed for ever. Not only was there obviously a desire for more drama as against the old individual items but the size of the School had made alterations inevitable. In 1924 for the first time all outside visitors were excluded and the organisers not liking this 'closed shop' principle experimented with two performances in 1926. This proving successful there were three in 1927 and four in 1928. Solid fare was required to fill the Hall four times over and the 1928 concert had only one solo recitation and no solo songs. The greater part of the programme now consisted of a variety of form items: a few of the old songs and recitations, but added to them playlets, a charade, an impersonation of a circus, and a broadcast of a football match (a form of entertainment just beginning to be popular). In addition the Scout Troop gave an exhibition of fencing and the whole was rounded off by Mr Gow's operetta on the life of Higgins, the Knutsford highwayman.

But by this time the outside world had heard of the histrionic activities of the Altrincham County High School. In the summer of 1926 Mr Gow began shooting scenes of Neolithic life during the camp at Swanage and called it "The People of the Axe". He had already obtained the permission of Lord Stamford, one of the governors of the School and always keenly interested in its activities, to take shots of his deer against the 'forest' background of the great park at Dunham and these were afterwards cunningly interwoven into a deer hunt. A visit was paid to one of the greatest archaeological experts of the day, Sir William Boyd Dawkins, and his enthusiastic co-operation obtained. "I had feared", wrote Mr Gow, "that in his wisdom he might discourage us. But no such thing. Not only did he outline on the spot a theme for our film, but he also spoke of the other films we might make". In fact Sir William assisted in the next film on the Bronze Age, gave lectures at the School and visited it on several occasions before his death in 1929. He paid it the high compliment of saying that it 'abounded in mental fresh air'. In 1927 Mr Gow moved on to the Bronze Age and a complete lake village was constructed at the new camping site at Westward Ho. Much work was accomplished beforehand by boys, masters, parents and well-wishers. A vast scrap-heap of household rubbish was amassed
and from it objects constructed based on exhibits in the British Museum. Dustbin lids were converted into highly decorated shields, parents made costumes, a miniature dye works was erected, and a real dug out canoe (familiarly known as Oojiboo) constructed by the skill of Mr Harry Killick, who although an old boy not of ours but of Bowdon College had early identified himself with our interests. He was mainly responsible also for the building of the Lake Village amid the Burrows outside Westward Ho, where during Bank Holiday week its inmates were ferociously attacked by wild tribes from the hills urged on by Captain Mee. Not un-naturally the holiday visitors—several hundred of them—were attracted by this strange spectacle and with them the press. "Rival bands of painted savages, uttering piercing shrieks, fall on each other in deadly combat several times a day in the more rugged parts of this glorious Devon coast-line. The unwary stranger is likely to be taken aback by the bloodthirsty spectacle until he realises that the savages are the boys of the Altrincham County High School", said the Daily Express. "They have turned the Burrows into a miniature Hollywood, through which roam savage lake dwellers". But far more serious consideration was given to these films shortly after than as mere diversions for the sightseer. They were shown alongside commercial films in the Altrincham Picture Theatre, noticed by the national press in France and the U.S.A. as well as this country, singled out for special mention in a paper read before the British Association on "The Cinema in Education", and carefully analysed and criticised in a book on the Value of Films in History Teaching. Two more films followed in the next two years: "The Man who Changed his Mind" shot at the 1928 camp at Westward Ho and "The Glittering Sword" at the 1929 one at Dartmouth. The archaeological and historical approach was not maintained. The first was a play on a scouting theme and with superb showmanship Mr Gow approached Baden-Powell himself who consented to appear for a few moments in it. The second was a moral fantasy, based on human lust for power and its inevitable concomitant, war. Both had more story than the previous ones and involved even more complicated preparations. The Hale Fire Brigade (since defunct) was pressed into service to put out a fire which occurred—some time later—in a disused house in Westward Ho. Mr Killick's ingenuity was once more employed to construct a medieval street through which he rode in full armour on a horse. Both continued to arouse interest in the press but the era of the 'talkies' was arriving and nothing that educationists, artists or film critics could do could maintain public interest in the old silent films. A 'talkie' at this stage was beyond the reach of the most ingenious and enthusiastic school and so as the thirties began there was a return in the School to the more modest drama. Gone were moral and mental uplift and
even before Mr Gow had his tremendous success with *Gallows Glorious* at the Manchester Repertory and left to become a professional dramatist, a new master, Mr Galloway, had brought back the music hall touch with "La Revue Magnifique" and "Heigho Everybody".

None of Mr Gow's films would have been possible without the existence of the School camps and although these still remain a considerable feature of the life of the School they were probably at their most glorious and their most adventurous during the twenties. In 1919 a return was made to the pre-war haunts of Black Rock, Criccieth, and it was with infinite delight that the small band of masters and Old Boys who had been on the earlier camps gazed once more on that wonderful panorama of sea and mountain. That year everyone was happy. Personal freedom was the keynote of the camp. (This policy, which owed much to Mr Laver, who although always present kept himself carefully in the background unless needed, has remained a guiding principle of later camps.) "No one", wrote Mr Hamblin, "under such conditions found time heavy on his hands—we all seemed eager to do something, even if it were nothing more than to find a soft patch of grass and sleep in the broiling sun". Many were a great deal more energetic than this and delighted Captain Mee and Mr Mason by making almost a clean sweep of the prizes at the Criccieth sports. Four more years at Criccieth, although none could be considered a failure, never quite recaptured the total bliss of this camp. The weather in 1920 was very bad, being both wet and cold; 1921 was overshadowed by the death in a canoeing accident of A. K. Brierley, the 1919 Bradbury prize winner and hero of the Armistice Day celebration; in 1922 and 1923 the weather, although no wetter than elsewhere in the north, was cold and sunless, and the body of opinion which for some time had been advocating a move to the south continued to grow. In these early days the camp equipment was by no means what it became later. The marquee was small and on one occasion was found on unpacking to be parts of three different marquees that had accidentally been put together; the kitchen smaller still so that all washing up had to be done out of doors, "standing", as an Old Boy remarked, "in six inches of mud on what was once a Welsh wall". The tents frequently leaked and there was a lack of indoor amusements for wet weather. (Table tennis—or ping pong, as it was then called—saved one camp, but the entire resources of Criccieth could only rise to four balls and two of these went in the first evening.) So in 1924 the School went south—to Swanage in Dorset—and has continued to do so ever since but for the interruption of the Second World War.

seventeen
There was no doubt that in the main respect they had found what they wanted. The 1924 party left Manchester, as was normal on these occasions, in rain. They found Captain Mee waiting in sunshine on Swanage platform, bronzed like an Indian chief. "Rain", he said, "We've not had a drop all the week". In that first camp down south there was just enough rain for them to savour the large new marquee, bring out of storage the ping-pong set and appreciate the fine weather when it returned. The splendid site on Ballard Downs with a large field for all types of games (one camper especially recommended those whose rules were made up as they went along by Mr Gregory), the extensive views of rolling downland and cliffs, the expeditions on foot to Studland village or Corfe Castle, by boat to Lulworth, Poole, Weymouth and Southampton further recommended the change. The size, organisation and influence of camp during this period grew quite amazingly. In 1926 180 boys and 10 masters went—nearly half the School. In all these years a camp supplement appeared in the magazine, sometimes extending to 32 pages with articles, poems and illustrations contributed by boys, Old Boys and masters. The articles ranged over the organisation, the finance, the best tent competition, the cricket, fine days in the field, wet days in the marquee, the expeditions, the average camper, the idle camper, the Old Boy in camp, the explorer, the naturalist, the fossil hunter, the museum. It had a preface by the Headmaster and a retrospect by Captain Mee. To him camp was something more than one short incident in the School year; its planning, its anticipation ran through the entire year, its influence extended far beyond the few short weeks of August, becoming a nursery of character and a training ground of responsibility and authority.

Many would have been happy to go on at Swanage despite its pebbly beach. But building operations began on the site and in 1928 another was found at Westward Ho. Its beach was if anything more pebbly than Swanage but the flat green triangle between the river Torrance and the sea provided an excellent field and the expeditions were as good as Swanage with an added touch of the romantic in Clovelly and Tintagel. But the health of the camps on this site was not good and this was finally put down to a polluted stream that ran through it and the chilly evening mists that descended after a hot day. So in 1930 yet another site was found near Dartmouth. This was set among the sweet-smelling steep-sloping pine woods and fields that climbed up from the dark red cliffs of Start Bay. It looked idyllic and the excursions were more thrilling than ever: by steamer up the Dart to Totnes, by bus to Kent's Cavern and Brixham, by coach to Plymouth and the dockyards and the circular tour over Dartmoor. It was a strenuous country and was met by equally strenuous conduct on the part of many of the campers. The Scout
trek became exceedingly popular and was indulged in by several who were not Scouts. This consisted of going in small parties pushing a trek cart loaded with all the necessary sleeping and cooking equipment up and down the narrow, steep Devonshire lanes to Dittisham, six miles up the Dart and home of the famous Victoria plums. In 1931 over 300 campers spent the night there and it became in effect a subsidiary camp. But not all were so strenuous and there were some who from the beginning criticised the site for its hilliness, the long trek to the beach and the steep and stony nature of this when it was reached. (Bathing was conducted within a safety rope.) So in 1932 another move was made and the sixth and final site was found at Ladram Bay south-west of Sidmouth. Here at last seemed to be the perfect site—a smiling open countryside neither intolerably steep nor monotonously flat, a beautiful safe bathing beach sheltered by warm, red cliffs only a hundred yards or so from the camp field, a hinterland studded with lovely old towns and villages and the famous cathedral city of Exeter within striking distance. Disadvantages, of course, were discovered in the course of time but they weighed so little with the advantages that, although a move has been discussed from time to time, it has only once got as far as a serious reconnaissance and was then abandoned because every site examined was so obviously inferior in one way or another. With this new stability, inevitably something of the spirit of high adventure went out and the School camps became a normal if exceedingly pleasant part of the yearly routine.

Both dramatics and the School camp owed a great deal to the Scout Troop which during this period grew almost fantastically in size, reputation and range of activities. It began quietly enough in the early twenties with a troop of between twenty and thirty—no larger than it had been in 1914—carrying on regular activities but, except for the re-erecting of the wireless installation, not attracting a great deal of attention in the rest of the School. In 1922 it doubled its size and started on an ambitious scheme of training which involved members of the staff not normally connected with the Troop. This preparation bore fruit later when for two years running it became the champion troop of the Altrincham and Sale district which in all comprised 17 troops. An Easter training camp was established on the river Birkin for patrol leaders and attracted a good deal of notice in the movement in general. By 1927 the total in the Troop was 74; in the next year the Rover crew began to develop enormously under Captain Mee and Mr Galloway initiated a Cub pack. Over half the campers at Westward Ho were scouts, the film "The Man who Changed his Mind" was entirely made by them and the treks and the first class journeys (in which scouts in pairs made their way across country for several days on their own) were a most notable feature of this camp and the ones that followed at Dartmouth. (There was, however, a scandalous story, spread of course
by non-scouts, of one patrol at Dittisham conducting an enthusiastic exercise in the defence of the camp site, in the middle of which the local Nogood Boyo walked in unobserved and stole the bacon.) At the World Jamboree of 1929 at Birkenhead the Troop selected from the Altrincham, Sale, Lymm and Knutsford districts to attend had as its Scoutmaster Mr A. V. Brook and its Assistant Scoutmaster Mr Galloway, both from the School Troop, and Mr Brook was awarded the Medal of Merit by the Chief Scout. By 1930 when the Troop consisted of 150 Scouts, 40 Cubs and 60 Rovers it was felt that they deserved a building entirely of their own and so a Garden Fete was held in the summer and on November 28-9 a Grand Trappers Trading Post. The latter, held all over the School buildings, was a combination of bazaar, amusement hall, exhibition and theatre. Virtually all the staff and many parents and non-scouts helped in the enormous labour of putting it on; in fact the Scout Troop itself was surprised at the extent of the support. "There were some enthusiasts", they remarked, "the source of whose inspiration remained a mystery since they had no obvious interest in Troop or School". The whole was a triumphant success; over 2,500 people visited it and £850 was raised. Two years later the present Scout Headquarters, a log hut with modern requirements of heating and lighting, built to the design of the Altrincham architect, Mr F. H. Brazier, was officially opened. The Scouts themselves had decorated the interior and the six supporting posts of the verandah, then left rough-hewn, have since been most impressively carved and gilded as totem poles by the Rovers. During this great period of development Mr Hamblin was the Scoutmaster and he received great support from an Old Boy, Mr A. V. Brook. The latter had been Senior Patrol Leader just after the War and the first member of the Troop ever to become a King's Scout. He returned a year or two after leaving the School as Assistant Scoutmaster. As the Headmaster remarked at the opening of the new Headquarters, "When Mr Brook decided that something needed doing then it had to be done".

Equally closely connected with the major School activities was the Old Boys Association. Many returning from the War were enthusiastic both to pick up their old link with the School again and to belong to some society in their home area which could cater for their peace-time interests. This enthusiasm naturally tended to ebb sometimes as the war years drew further away and the members became more and more scattered over the face of the globe. (As the twenties changed into the thirties the number of Old Boys in the Empire and in foreign parts grew impressively.) That the ebb was never too serious and was soon followed by another flow was due primarily to the interest taken by the Headmaster and many of the
OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION: CRICKET ELEVEN, 1915
THE OLD BOYS" FANCY DRESS DANCE, 1922
To music relayed from the Manchester Broadcasting Station, Trafford Park

THE CAMP FIELD AND SWANAGE BAY, AUGUST 1924
(From Ballard Downs)
masters, particularly Mr Mason who was for years the Association's President, and the unwearying devotion of a number of Old Boys who made their careers in Altrincham itself and were hence always at the centre of things. Mr E. J. Horley and the first generation of Old Boys who founded the Association were eventually able to hand on the work to those of the second generation such as Mr Norman Ankers and Mr Brian Wallis, who were no less devoted. Soon after the end of the War the numbers in the Association rose to 80; by the end of the twenties they were over 200. A football club was formed which regularly ran two elevens in the Palatine Amateur League; the chess club had a more varied existence, bursting into brief activity and then fading into obscurity from time to time; of the rapid development of the Rovers we have already spoken and the Old Boys contingent was always a notable feature of the School camp. Their characters and habits had infinite variety, which often broke out into alarmingly individualistic costumes (alarming that is, to the natives of Dorset and Devon who were not then attuned by film and television to be as blase about visitors as they are now) and they joined in as much or as little of the ordinary camp activities as they felt inclined. They also ran a club for such members as cared to pay an additional subscription; it had premises in Market Street and its main features were a card room and table tennis and billiard tables. But their outstanding activity in the twenties was undoubtedly dramatics. They produced full length plays, which was something the School itself had not yet attempted (they had, of course, the considerable advantage of being able to introduce ladies into their casts), with their own equipment on the makeshift stage in the School Hall. They obviously included among their members, besides actors of ability, critics with high standards, for the latter frequently attacked with some severity in the magazine the quality of the plays produced, but these—mostly farces and thrillers—undoubtedly gave great pleasure to actors and audiences and were a sufficient draw for the School hall to be filled for the three or four nights that they ran. The production of these plays over a period of ten years argues great tenacity of purpose and zeal on the part of all the organisers (a glimpse of what could go wrong is shown in one of the extracts given at the end of this history) and it required the advent of the 'talkie' to destroy them, as it had the School films.

During all this period of furious activity the numbers of the School increased without pause and the Headmaster and the Governors were faced with the problem of having to persuade the authorities to provide new buildings and then, almost as soon as they had been provided, to persuade them that they were in fact inadequate and more were urgently needed. A separate account of the growth of the School premises is given at the end of this history so there is no need to do more than summarise developments in this
direction in the twenties. In 1920 there were 211 boys in buildings intended for 125 and numbers were being turned away each year. But the Geddes axe was falling and when the first new buildings did arrive they were the stuccoed 'semi-permanent' classrooms of the Outside Buildings. More solid laboratories, art room and manual room followed soon after and four acres were added to the School field. But the town had grown faster than the School and by the early thirties the numbers were over 400 and the need was again desperate. Plans for new buildings were almost through when the Great Depression arrived and with it an apparently indefinite postponement.

It had been hoped that the new buildings would be erected in time for the twenty-first birthday of the School. By the time this arrived in addition to the disappointment of their postponement another blow had fallen. It had been known to a few that Mr Laver's health had not been as good as usual recently; none realised that his condition was serious. On the morning of January 18, 1933 he was in School; by the evening he was dead, and his death marked the end of an epoch in the School's history. He had laid its foundations in such a way that his influence is everywhere even thirty years after his death and is obvious to many, like the writer of this history, who never knew him personally. In the early days he had shown tremendous energy and initiative in starting all kinds of outside activities, which he considered essential in teaching the growing boy how to co-operate with his fellows, how to respect points of view different from his own, how to work for the community. This attitude has become almost part of the educational jargon of today: in 1912 it and the activities that resulted from it, such as camping and scouting, were revolutionary. In later years with these—and other activities that he had never dreamt of—blossoming all round he was able to withdraw somewhat, leaving to others the details, and becoming the guide and umpire, looked to for general policy, for wise guidance when things were going wrong and, in the last resort, for infallible justice when there were divisions and disputes. It would be a great mistake, however, to think that Mr Laver put what are now called 'out of school activities' before the teaching curriculum. He himself, in the midst of all his other duties, taught Greek to the little group of the Classical VIth—in the shortage of accommodation their desks were moved into his study—and the brilliant results of the twenties are a sufficient testimony to his quality as a teacher. On one of the rare occasions when he spoke about educational beliefs, the speech day of 1916, he took to task the false interpretation of the public school code—that character was more important than learning—and showed that the two should never be considered as opposites: that the practice of learning, entailing as it did hard work and concentration of purpose which came naturally to hardly any of us, was the most important of all the means of moulding character.
EVEN without the break caused by Mr Laver's death the School in
the Thirties was bound to have become a very different place. Its
mere size and the fact that it had now passed into comparative
maturity had their inevitable effect. With 400 boys it was not possible
to preserve the jolly family atmosphere; one obvious sign of this was
the weakening of interest in the Fathers' Match, which now became
little more than one foregone victory in the 1st XI's programme.
The sheer rapture of starting something entirely new and launching
out into the unknown had gone also and with it something of the
many-sided enthusiasm which marked the early days. Boys became
more specialised in their activities and it was no longer considered
the proper thing—nor was it indeed possible—for every boy to take
part in everything. Open criticisms of the all-embracing cultural
monopoly of the Union Society began to appear in the magazine,
side by side with ominous propaganda to bolster up its once packed
attendances. The traditional form singing and even the whole
speech day programme came under fire as well. Subjects hitherto
regarded as of minor importance in the School life and their attend­
ant outside activities began to attract enthusiasts who clamoured
for greater attention. New masters with fresh ideas joined the staff
and many of the old guard departed. Mr Shawe, the German master,
had died suddenly in 1928. He was a lovable and eccentric character,
so fiercely concentrated during the lesson that neither boy nor master
dared disturb him, so kindly and amusing outside it that boys and
Old Boys delighted to go on the long tramps that he unobtrusively
organised in the Yorkshire dales and northern Spain. (One of his
favourite stories was how, in the more casual times before 1914, he
had gained entry on the spur of the moment to a famous German
University by means of a Cambridge Junior Local Certificate which
they took to be evidence of a Cambridge degree.) Captain Mee left
to take up a business career in 1929 and shortly after Mr Laver's
death Mr Gow turned his great talents from the amateur to the
professional stage. Only Mr Hamblin, Mr Mason, who now became
Second Master, Mr Chorley and Mr Sheriffs remained of those who
had laid the foundation of the School.

twenty-three
The outside world had changed greatly too. Although the Great Depression had put a question mark in front of the career of every boy who left and therefore an added responsibility on those in charge of his training, at the same time the cinema, the radio, the motor car had widened horizons greatly and made many of the old amusements seen tame and limited. When the Governors appointed Mr Hamblin to succeed his old chief as Headmaster—a most unusual step for the period when it was usually considered that such a situation demanded 'fresh blood'—they had certainly ensured continuity and a respect for the traditions on which the School had been founded, but they had in fact taken the very smallest of risks that it would get into a groove. For Mr Hamblin, although intense in his admiration for his old Headmaster, was himself a man of great initiative, keenly aware of the changing world and determined that the School should keep pace with it.

One of the notable features of the short period between Mr Hamblin's appointment and the outbreak of the Second World War was the organised School outing. Mr Hamblin took full advantage of the facilities now provided by cheap buses and coaches in competition with the railways, and himself organised most of these mammoth trips. The first expedition to London, made by about a third of the School, was carried through in heavy and almost continuous rain but as much of the time was spent in the Abbey, St. Paul's and the Tower it was sufficiently successful for it to be repeated, the second expedition being more fortunate in the weather and better provisioned on the return at Euston by the serving of a hot meal instead of the mounds of meat pies which had caused such hilarity (as well as danger to passing platelayers) on the first. Another more adventurous and highly successful expedition was made in a fleet of buses to the recently opened Whipsnade. It is doubtful whether the cloistered calm of the Oxford Colleges (always a little dank and not at their best in the kind of downpour which greeted this fourth expedition) had quite the appeal of either, at any rate to the younger boys. In addition two parties of senior boys went on Easter cruises, the first on the Doric in 1935 to Naples, Capri, Rome and Vesuvius, the second on the ill-fated Lancastria to the Azores, the Canaries and Casablanca. And all the time more modest and less spectacular visits were being carried out. Mr Dodman, assisted by Mr Boon, regularly conducted a summer tour of famous Cheshire churches such as Mobberley, Peover, Gawsworth, Great Budworth and Prestbury: the visits were instructive as well as pleasurable, photographs were taken, sketches made and architectural details noted. Mr Jackson took parties to Dunham Massey, where Lord Stamford revealed the treasures of the house and the
long history of its owners. Mr Hale organised visits to Shakespearean productions in the Manchester theatres and Mr Crabb continued the scientific trips to works in the neighbourhood which had begun in the very early days of the School. Special occasions called forth special expeditions, such as the one to Chester to the newly revived medieval Mystery Plays, which were attracting a great deal of attention in the country at the time.

But as the School rose to this more joyous side of the Thirties it had its answer to the grimmer aspect also. This was the time of the Great Depression, of ten men chasing one job, instead of the other way round as it is nowadays. It was the ordinary boy, not particularly brilliant at anything, who made his way through the School and left with a moderate certificate (or sometimes none at all) without reaching the Vth form who was in danger here. For him the School organised a Careers Bureau to tell him what jobs were available when he left and to arrange useful contacts between him and intending employers. This bureau, which was one of the first to be set up in schools in this country, was under the management of Mr Kemp, who taught Mathematics and Spanish; in magazine after magazine it recorded the jobs in which those leaving recently had been placed and added the satisfying footnote: "No boy on the Bureau Register, who has left school during the past three years, is without a post."

The academic successes of the School continued to increase. Every year Mr Hamblin was able to announce from the platform Open Scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, State and County Scholarships and something between twenty to thirty per cent of the old Intermediate and Junior scholarships awarded by the County authorities. New subjects rose to play an important part in the School curriculum. History and Geography, which had up to this date been regarded as rather Cinderella subjects, advanced swiftly under the tuition of Mr Jackson and Mr Boon and to the ranks of the classicists and the mathematicians, who gained scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, were added the historians. Not very much had been heard of Art until the arrival of Mr Dodman, whose own skill was such that he had work accepted for exhibition in the Royal Academy, but from now on frequent art displays were held, an effort was made to improve the standard of appreciation by the purchase or loan of good prints to be displayed about the School and the work of pupils began to appear in the magazine. All this delighted the heart of the Chairman of the Governors, who had always felt that Art had not yet had sufficient attention paid to it and the result was the provision of the Dunkerley Art Gallery when the new buildings were put up. But Mr Dodman's interests extended to music also, where throughout the twenties Mr Shawe had striven largely on his own to inculcate some appreciation by playing the classics on a none-too-
perfect gramophone. Mr Dodman formed an orchestral society and with great labour and patience trained up sufficient players to form an orchestra eventually capable of giving a concert on its own. Whatever the technical standard of the orchestra (and he made no great claims for it) the Society gave to a considerable number of boys an appreciation of orchestral compositions never possible before. But by this time others were working in allied fields. Mr Boon was a keen musician also and with the arrival of Mr W. A. Brown in the mid-thirties there was now a properly organised Choral Society, instead of the old hearty shouting, and the birth of a considerable interest in opera and ballet.

The games had now become really strong with the return of two noted athletes of former days, Mr Sutcliffe and Mr Thompson, and the arrival of Mr Hammond (the 'General') as Gym. Instructor. The coaching in the Junior School was now so much more thorough that, however many of the stalwarts of the previous year had left, their places could be filled; it was very rare to have a really poor year at either football or cricket and some elevens of this period were outstanding. The football team of 1936-7, despite losing its captain, vice captain and goalkeeper before the season was half-way through, gained 16 wins and 1 draw as against 2 losses and was defeated by only one Cheshire school. Next year P. A. Johnson's XI played twenty games of which it lost only 3 and drew 1. On March 26, 1938, an unofficial Cheshire championship match was played between this School and Nantwich Grammar School which had the best record for south Cheshire. After a stern first half, at the end of which we were one goal up, we had the better of the second half and won by 4 goals to 1. The whole eleven had a nice balance of old experience and fresh enthusiasm but its great strength was undoubtedly in its centre-half, W. Bale. Tall and powerful, he rarely tired and dominated the play by his cool, watchful game. The cricket elevens of these years were equally successful. The 1937 team lost only 3 of 13 matches, the 1938, which kept the same captain (P. A. Johnson) and vice-captain (W. A. Bale) only 1 of 8. The batting was particularly strong; Johnson and L. G. Hanscom opened and, while having excellent defences, could score rapidly once they were set. But behind them, right down to number 6, were even more punishing batsmen such as Bale and A. Spence. able to take terrible toll of a tiring attack. That these teams did not win more outright victories was due partly to rather limited bowling (particularly in the second season) and to a ground that through additions, relayings, drainage and an appalling summer, was once again a mud heap. Fortunately, another notable athletic development of the period did not depend so much on ground or weather. Under Mr Hammond, gymnastics reached a standard far in excess of anything attained before; monster
displays, requiring hours of training, took place on the field and smaller ones, including exhibitions of fencing, became regular features of Easter and speech day concerts.

These were great years for the Old Boys; even if the Association was not quite the closely knit body it had once been and Club, dramatics and chess section all faltered and failed, the deeds of individuals showed what men of character and talent the School had sent out into the world. The Old Altrinchamian Editor might lament the shortage of material (one issue reached 25 pages as against the normal 5 or 6 of today) and Mr Brian Wallis, already the faithful Football Secretary, might write vitriolic reports on the morals of O.A.s who asked for a game and then failed to turn out when picked, but notices of high appointments and letters from Colombia, Nigeria, East Africa, Palestine, New Zealand, Australia and Fiji rolled in with reasonable regularity and the number of sports at which Old Boys distinguished themselves was wide. Swimming—one of the pioneer sports of the early days which had never declined but never dominated—had the honour of providing the first 'Blue'. M. J. Clow, the School captain of 1932, her swimming champion and the Junior Cheshire champion also, represented Cambridge at Swimming and Water Polo in the years 1933-5. In the summer of 1933 G. V. Fontes played tennis for Cheshire and was one of the pair that won the Northern Doubles Championship, an event won a short time before by players as world-famous as Austin and Olliff. Although there was no Old Boys Cricket Club, cricketers from the School played for the first teams of half-a-dozen of the best-known local clubs and dominated Ashley. On August Bank Holiday 1933, while H. W. Kenyon was knocking up one century for Timperley against Cheadle Hulme, A. H. Carmichael was collecting another (and no mere century but 148 not out) against Chorlton. At that time also Gwyn Evans was playing first class football for Bury and Huddersfield. In actual fact football was the one sporting activity, apart from the Rovers attached to the School Troop, which continued to flourish inside the Association. The latter put two teams into the Lancashire Amateur League in 1936 and at the end of the season the 1st XI headed its division. Both teams came very near to doing it again the following season and the 2nd XI have done it on several subsequent occasions.

The solid business appointments recorded during this period show that the older generation of Old Boys as well as the new ones were coping very well with the unemployment situation but perhaps more remarkable was the adventurous spirit that drove many of them to the far corners of the globe. "The open-air life of the Hacienda with its horses and encounter with 'bravo' cattle is difficult to surpass; and so to the City and office I gladly say Adios" wrote

twenty-seven
one Old Boy and it will come as no surprise to know that so colour­ful a character married the daughter of a Colombian general, a feat (as far as we know) never rivalled since. "I occupy a mud-walled low-roofed house" wrote another from Nigeria, "and it is advisable to have a boy with a lantern with you after dark to look out for the snakes". A third trained police dogs in Palestine where the British maintained precarious order between Arab and Jew, a fourth was a wireless operator on the new Imperial Airways route to Singapore (long distance air travel was in its infancy) and there were a dozen or so on the high seas. One of these was apparently 'gold hunting' and having brushes with irate Spanish-American customs officials. It was no wonder that one O.A. editor speculated as to whether this was not the result of boyhoods spent with Mr Gow and his stage savages, pirates and highwaymen.

A very strong section of the Old Boys at this period was the Rover Crew attached to the School Troop and it was from the Rover Crew that Mr G. W. Sutcliffe became first Assistant Scout Master and then, when he returned permanently to the staff in 1935, took over the Scoutmastership from Mr Hamblin. The long reign of 'Squirrel' had begun and very exciting and invigorating it proved to be. Squirrel's main characteristics were abounding energy, amazing ingenuity and an impish sense of humour, and he was supported by like-minded officers and Rovers. The great feature of the period was the \textit{Indaba} or preliminary training for the Patrol Leaders' Easter Training Camp, held at Headquarters in the chilly month of January, and at that or indeed any camp or meeting 'a state of emergency' was likely to be proclaimed. This might involve almost anything: flood, fire, power failures, riot, bombing, personal accidents of all descriptions, and in these circumstances the patrol leaders and sometimes the ordinary scouts were expected to find their own solutions. These were varied by 'wide' games, in which the whole Troop took part, treasure hunts, observation tests, murder mysteries. (One pair of Rovers, canoeing along the Shropshire Union, did in fact find a suicide and are reputed to have stunned the local police by the range and accuracy of their evidence.) As the international situation worsened, the Spanish Civil War began and the Japanese attacked China, added reality could be given to many of these emergencies and to rather remote Indian braves and Zulu impis could be added German and Italian spies and Jap bombing planes.

But it was not war and destruction that occupied the minds of those controlling the future of the School at the moment; rather peaceful expansion and development. As the worst of the depression passed Mr Dunkerley and Mr Hamblin went to work once more on the county authorities and the urgency of the accommodation
problem. They found sympathetic treatment there and with considerable speed plans were drawn up, passed by the Ministry, and actual building began in 1936. The new Hall was in use in the autumn of 1937, the remaining buildings were completed in the following year and formally opened on October 29, 1938. This time the planning was on a generous scale and, although some might wistfully regret the disappearance of the charming south entrance and complain that the new buildings were too severely utilitarian and built of brick obviously inferior to that of the original ones, yet all had to admit that these were small losses in comparison with the new spaciousness and comfort. The whole School when assembled was now almost lost in the new Hall; the Staff, long over 20 and crammed into a room originally housing 2, scarcely knew themselves in a light airy room with French windows opening on the playing field. There were specialist rooms for the Historian, the Geographer, the Musician, free from the philistine influences of the ordinary form room, and new laboratories converted from rooms in the old building. In addition the enlightened policy of the County authorities had allowed the School to acquire over the last ten years an additional 12 acres of land, so that the playing fields now stretched right up to Heath Road. All this had now been drained and levelled, so that the Altrincham Grammar School (its title had been changed in 1934) appeared to be one of the most fortunate schools in the whole area for accommodation and could look forward to a long period of halcyon calm and spacious development.
WORLD WAR II - 1939-45

His dream of the future did not last a single year. In September, 1939, Hitler struck at Poland and a week later the School opened with 830 boys instead of its previous 500. These additions, it is true, were evacuees of the Openshaw and Newton Heath Technical Schools and they returned after little more than one term when the expected blitzkrieg had not materialised and air raid shelters had been built near their own schools. But war time conditions with the black-out and other restrictions overlapped with the enormous increase in communal feeding, the Butler Act of 1944 and eventually the 'bulge'. Comfort and spaciousness had in fact fled and have not yet returned at the time of writing.

In some ways the impact of the Second World War was very similar to the First, in other ways very different. There was the same restriction on many of the School activities—this time the School camps ceased from the very beginning of the War, the Sports lost some of its social aspect, the more distant fixtures disappeared from the football and cricket lists to save petrol, young masters such as Mr A. J. V. Page volunteered at the outbreak and there was a steady stream of masters leaving for the services from then on. But in some ways, after the initial dislocation and with the return of the two North Manchester schools, the dislocation was very much less than might have been expected, even with the interruption caused by constant visits to the air-raid shelters throughout 1940 and 1941 and the enormous amount of war-work undertaken. Nor, as with the First World War, was the picture by any means one of unrelieved gloom. The upsurge of spirit which everyone noticed with Dunkirk and the period of the nation's greatest peril in 1940 was obvious in the School and Mr Hamblin put it on record that no year would "seem so well worth having lived as the year 1939-40". Even if it was followed by a certain amount of restlessness later, there were never more out-of-school activities, both connected with war work and of the normal kind, yet the School's academic record was well maintained. War-time concerts with a variegated programme went with a tremendous swing, but Mr Brown, Mr Jackson and a new master, Mr Bird, were by no means content with this and staged complete plays and operas: The Beggar's Opera, She Stoops to Conquer, The Duenna. Music in fact flourished in the School as never before. The London blitz had at least one good effect; it drove the
London stage out into the provinces; there was much worth seeing in the way of opera and ballet and Mr Brown ensured that those who wanted to see it did. In 1943 Miss Ninette de Valois gave a lecture on Ballet in the hall to a crowded audience from our own and the Girls' Grammar School. Much added zest was given to these concerts and other School functions by the presence, first, of wounded soldiers—French, Belgian and English—from the battle of France, and later of Americans from a nearby camp. (In the summer of 1944 the School field witnessed an event that bordered on sacrilege. Two American teams played a game of baseball watched by a large and curious crowd drawn from the School and the whole district; the proceeds went to charity.) Chess, which had been dormant for a time, revived with the coming of a great enthusiast, Mr Owen Pritchard, to the staff. So did the film shows (but not yet the making of School films) under Mr Bird. In athletics the House contest went on as keenly as ever and much more was made than ever before of Junior football and cricket. As for the Scouts their activities grew both more hair-raising and more topical—Indabas and Training Camps included commando exercises, the shifting in the middle of February of an entire camp at a moment's notice, dealing with time bombs, 'the defence of Chungking'. There seemed to be camps at all times; at Loweswater, Coniston, Wincle, Arley, Whitegate, Sandiway: some were justified on the grounds of war-work (who remembers the slogan "Is your journey really necessary?") but many were devoted to scouting, pure and simple. A School printing press was set up and so many poems and imaginative prose articles flooded into the magazine that it was possible to reprint them in a separate publication, *Reveille*.

But the impact of war, both the glory and the tragedy, was much greater than in 1914-18, for although the overall casualties, despite the bombing of civilians, were much lighter the School had grown to maturity and its Old Boys were infinitely more involved. When the final toll was reckoned, 62 of them had died for their country as against 3 in 1918. It was symptomatic of the far greater range of the Second World War that in the first casualty list none were soldiers in the firing line. K. Pimlott was a merchant seaman, C. N. Walker a pilot in the R.A.F. and A. L. Grice an air raid warden, killed on our own doorstep during an air raid in Lymm. Old Boys served or were involved in all the far-flung theatres of war: letters to the *Old Altrinchamian* include a particularly vivid account of the great *blitz* on Coventry and others of the evacuation from Dunkirk, the defence of Crete, the retreat from Rangoon, imprisonment under the Japanese, the push through Holland in 1945 and the surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay. All these were punctuated by notes from the Old Boys' Secretary, Brian Wallis, in the Western Desert, spiced with his own particular brand of laconic humour and heavily nostalgic for
the delights of Ladram Bay. One Old Boy, D. F. Bentley, even succeeded in serving with the U.S. Army. The training that they had received in brain, body and character stood out on countless occasions. Let one instance suffice. Surgeon-Lieutenant M. J. Clow put to use the skill and stamina which in the days of peace had won him many championships and a Blue to rescue the survivors of a torpedoed ship from the waters of the Mediterranean. When he was finally pulled out the effects of his long ordeal were so severe that he never recovered from them, but his heroism was recognised by the high award of the A.M. (in gold). Seventeen Old Boys received decorations and seven were mentioned in despatches. That boys of the School had been taught to think and act for themselves was shown by a number of Conscientious Objectors, but among these too the ideal of service ran strongly, as is shown by the career of W. B. Thompson, who although he could have remained untouched in his teaching post, volunteered for Overseas Relief and at the end of the war was working with U.N.R.R.A. in Italy.

A Mention in Despatches was also awarded to Mr Gregory, who in addition to his normal teaching duties undertook the tremendous task of organising and commanding the No. 145 (Altrincham Grammar School) Squadron, Air Training Corps. This sprang from a voluntary Air Defence Cadet Corps, formed at the wish of several of the boys, before war broke out, under Mr Gregory and Mr Hammond. For a time after war was declared, the Air Ministry had little time to spare for such voluntary organisations and the most vital work they did was to assist the R.A.F. to man some exceedingly dreary balloon sites at the week-end. The picture changed considerably when the Air Ministry itself adopted the A.D.C.C. in 1941 and refounded it as the Air Training Corps. Three other masters, Mr Brown, Mr Boon and Mr Jackson, had already joined and recruits poured in from the School and the town (for although it remained the Altrincham Grammar School Squadron it was no longer confined to boys of the School). Training became much more exacting with Navigation, the Theory of Flight, Aircraft Recognition, besides parade ground drill, subjects in which Mr Gregory as commanding officer took great pains to become proficient by attending R.A.F. courses. The great dream of all members of the Corps was, of course, to obtain the coveted wings and follow in the footsteps of the great few who had won the Battle of Britain, but so widespread was this desire over the whole country that many were disappointed. Numbers of these, however, found a good use for the technical training they had received, in the Tank Corps, the Signals or the Parachute Regiment. In all, some 684 passed through the Squadron and 27 lost their lives on active service.
A vast amount of war work was done outside the A.T.C. Even the Juniors took part, collecting salvage, including 12,000 books and magazines for the forces, and assisting Middle School boys in cultivating some seventy small allotments. In the very first term of the war the School acquired land for cultivation and Mr Hamblin ceremonially cut out the first sod. But by the summer of 1941, in addition to this and their A.R.P. work, Senior boys were helping in the gardens of parents and during the vacations on farms. The latter developed into a campaign during the summer months and there was a stirring story in the magazine of a seven-acre potato crop on land wanted immediately for the services that was saved by a telephone call during the week-end and the appearance of a School working party the following Monday. Mr Hamblin was able to give some fantastic figures of the boy-hours worked during 1942, 43 and 44 (some 30,000 per annum) at the respective speech days. These included the Scout Troop's forestry camps at Loweswater and harvest camps at Yockleton and Benthall in Shropshire run by Mr and Mrs Thompson. There was much hard work here too, but also some joyous relaxation, as the Yockleton report in the magazine makes plain. "In the evening some bathed in the stream, others ascended the local mountain, Pontesford Hill, or sought refreshment in a remote chip shop, while the less adventurous stayed at home and played French cricket, or talked with friends from the village; two ardent disciples of Mr Borrows no doubt amazed the natives by displaying their skill at Pontesbury." (Their friends, to whom they later bade a sad farewell, included the village blacksmith, Bruno and Mario, the Italians, and Doris, the beautiful land-girl, while Mr Borrows, who had already begun his famous career as a teacher of dancing, was at that time on the staff of the School.) All in all it was not surprising that when hostilities were over Mr Hamblin, with his well-known flair for an occasion, used this record to divert Field Marshal Lord Montgomery from his schedule on a very official visit to the City of Manchester, so that he could spend a few minutes chatting to masters and boys in Marlborough Road. "More than 500 boys, you say," grunted the Field Marshal. "Are they all good boys?" "Yes, sir, all of them", replied Mr Hamblin, and the great man drove off amid cheering.
THE POST-WAR YEARS, 1945-62

The end of the war with Germany in 1945 did not burst unannounced upon the nation as in 1918 and had not the finality of the earlier victory because we were at war with Japan for another three months. There was therefore no frenzied excitement on the School premises, no impromptu climbing of the flagpole, and the holiday, which was decorously granted, had been foreseen. Furthermore, when back in 1944 it was obvious that the tide had turned and eventual victory was certain, educational developments had already been planned that were to change the School far more than any war-time emergencies and they were already being put into operation before the guns ceased firing. It was difficult to credit that a few years back the future had been so dark that a secret session of the staff had considered in all seriousness a total evacuation to Canada, and that an event which otherwise would have attracted considerable attention—the passage of the first son of an Old Boy through the School—had gone almost unnoticed in the global uproar. Now under Mr Butler's 1944 Education Act the School passed more completely under the control of the county authority, became the Altrincham County Grammar School, ceased to be fee paying or to have any special scholarships awarded to any of the boys who attended it. Its entry became controlled by the now famous—or perhaps notorious—11-plus examination and that meant the entire disappearance of the Junior School, which had been there since early days, and with it Mr Galloway's Cub Pack.

For all this the five years of Mr Hamblin's post-war headmastership saw a glorious renaissance in many of the old School activities. Mr A. J. V. Page returned from the war to take up the organisation of the School sports and in the era of Holt and Hickford a whole crop of new records were established. The football XI of J. Ainsworth went through the whole season of 1947-8 without defeat and in the following summer the cricket XI under the same captain lost only 2 of its 17 matches. Besides this the Under Fifteen and Junior XI's, particularly those of cricket under Mr Sutcliffe and Mr Bird, received more conscientious and well-directed coaching than they had ever had before. The infectious enthusiasm of Mr Pritchard continued to spur on the chess club and in these years the range of its activities was quite bewildering: the Altrincham League, the Cheshire County League, the individual county cham-
pionship, the Cheshire Schools Challenge Shield. With the Scouts there were more camps than ever, in the October break as well as the Easter and Whitsun ones and a great development of winter climbing (the Grenfell Winter Expedition undertaken by the Grenfell Senior patrol) in the Lake District, the Peak and the Lakes. Although Mr Jackson left, Mr Brown received powerful support in the cause of music and drama with the arrival of Mr Millard and Mr Hodgkinson and the permanent appointment of Mr Mills, who had come temporarily as art master during the war. An astonishing series of full Gilbert and Sullivan operas were produced: *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1946, *Ruddigore* in 1947, *Princess Ida* in 1948, *Patience* in 1949, *The Mikado* in 1950 and, after Mr Hamblin had gone, *The Gondoliers* in 1951, *The Yeomen of the Guard* in 1952, *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1953 and *Iolanthe* in 1954. From a humble piano the accompaniment grew to a full orchestra, kept together from year to year, and the performance extended over a whole week. Each production will have its own supporters for the best ever but all will remember the unearthly beauty of Alan Mayalfs "I built upon a rock" in the third act of *Princess Ida*, so that even the rowdiest of the Daughters of the Plough, packed into the green room behind the scenes, was hushed into stillness, the pathos of the closing minutes of Barry Wood's Jack Point in the *Yeomen*, the dazzling charm of the Three Little Maids in the *Mikado* and the richness of voice, characterisation and humour that Mr Mills brought to all his many roles from Sir Roderick Murgatroyd to Pooh Bah. By the time the cycle had been completed the combination of Mr Brown and Mr Millard was almost as inevitably connected in the vicinity with these operas as was that of the original composer and librettist. The scholastic work of the School was as good as it had ever been and every year there were State, County and Open University Scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge. Literature flourished and poems and articles of a high standard filled the magazine. In place of the old Union Society to which the war had administered the final blow, there was Mr Hale's Athenaeum. This had a strongly international flavour in its many activities and did much good work in acquainting boys of the Upper School with the viewpoint of foreign nations. In one session it heard addresses from a German, a Czech, a Pole, an African, a Chinese and an Indian, besides sending delegates to the youth groups of the Manchester International Club and the Altrincham and District United Nations Association.

In 1950, having seen the School through its immediate post-war difficulties, Mr Hamblin retired and for the first time in its history there was no one in it who had been there from the outset. Many of those who had played important and in some cases outstanding parts in its development had already left or were to go soon after. Mr Sheriffs and Mr Crabb had retired during the war, Mr Mason,
Mr Galloway and Mr Jackson left in 1946, Mr Chorley, Mr Hammond and Mr Kemp retired a few years later. Mr Mason's and Mr Chorley's lives had been as much interwoven with the whole history of the School as had been Mr Hamblin's. Mr Mason's powerful personality and organising ability had impressed itself upon the games, the camps and the Old Boys Association. He had stunned and delighted His Majesty's Inspectors back in the thirties by demonstrating that algebra could be a 'jolly' subject. Mr Chorley had in his time played many parts, both on and off the stage, taking on from a sense of duty, particularly during the stress of war, activities that might otherwise have perished. No man combined in one person stronger religious convictions and sense of moral responsibility with wide tolerance and sense of humour. He delighted in telling stories, aimed mainly at himself: the small boy that he heard whispering hoarsely outside his book-room office "Is Joe Egg in there?" and whom he greeted in mock majesty a moment later with "Come in, Sir; Mr Egg, at your service"; the cockney caretaker who was scandalised by the irreverence of the boys in referring to one of the masters by his Christian name of "Chorlie". Mr Kemp was another great personality on the staff. His complete imperturbability in the most hair-raising situations, his perpetual youthfulness, his anecdotes of devastating conversations with the educational lions of the county, his unconventional conduct at the bridge table, delighted the fresh arrivals on the staff from the start and put them thoroughly at their ease. Mr Galloway had done great service in the Junior School, the Cub Pack and the dramatics; Mr Jackson and Mr Hammond (the 'general') were both formidable perfectionists in their own spheres. Mr Jackson raised history to the pitch where scholarships in it to Oxford and Cambridge were as common as they had previously been in classics and science. Mr Hammond put gymnastics on a par with cricket, football and athletics, both as an educational force in the lives of the boys and as a skill to be displayed before the outside world.

It is typical of the nature of these members of the old staff that built up the School that although many of them were near or over retiring age this was by no means the end of their educational services to the neighbourhood. Mr Hamblin, whom a hapless inspecress had infuriated by suggesting shortly before his retirement that he could now potter about harmlessly on educational committees, set out on his own to build up an independent grammar school from nothing. The story of the astonishing rise of the North Cheshire Grammar School is outside the scope of this history and is in any case well enough known. Mr Mason took over Altrincham Preparatory School and has made it as notable an institution in the locality as the School itself. All the other masters except Mr Jackson gave their
THE LAKE VILLAGE
Erected at Westward Ho, 1927, for the film, “The People of the Lake”

CHRISTMAS, 1935
The South Entrance before the New Buildings were erected
THE SAILORS' CHORUS, H.M.S. PINAFORE
Easter Concert, 1946

FIRST ELEVEN, 1958-9
Seated: E. Griffin, J. J. Crosby, B. D. Hutchinson, E. R. Smith, Dr P. B. Houldsworth
services to one or the other of their old chiefs. Mr Jackson—a much younger man—started on a successful career as a headmaster which has brought him back to the area in charge of the Boteler Grammar School, Warrington.

A year before Mr Hamblin's retirement another link with the beginnings of the School was snapped. Mr Dunkerley, who had become Chairman of the Governors in the very first year of its life and had only resigned his position because of ill-health in the previous year, died. His name is known to generations of boys because of the challenge cup that he presented for the Houses and the art gallery that he sponsored in the New Buildings, but he was a modest and retiring man and few realised then and none know now how much they owe to him in the provision of buildings and playing fields concentrated in one place.

So a new era began under a new headmaster, Mr Crowther, with Mr Gregory as second master, and Mr Bancroft Turner as Chairman of the Governors. With Mr Bancroft Turner, who is Manchester's stipendiary magistrate, the School has returned to the legal profession for its chairman of governors and he has carried on in the tradition of his predecessors, combining a quiet and self-effacing bearing at its public functions with hard work in its interests behind the scenes. Mr Crowther, like Mr Laver and Mr Hamblin, is a classical graduate of one of the older universities and, although his methods and personality are very different from theirs, there have been a balance and a broad humanity in his outlook that have meant that through all the difficult changes that have had to be made the essential School traditions have not been lost. For the twelve years since Mr Hamblin retired have seen changes as great as any that have occurred since the foundation. The numbers have risen from 500 to 850 and the family spirit of the early days has inevitably disappeared. (It is symptomatic that one of the first casualties since the war was the Fathers' Match.) It is almost impossible for a master to know every boy in the School and only too possible for a boy to pass right through the School and never come into contact with certain masters at all. The headache of overcrowded buildings—rarely absent from the School life—has returned probably in the most acute form it has ever known. The 'philistines' have at the moment won an overwhelming victory: the History Room, the Geography Room, the Music Room, the Art Room and now even the Dunkerley Art Gallery have become form rooms. If there is the slightest dislocation, if a medical or a dental officer arrives for an inspection, the Headmaster's study has to be pressed into service as a classroom and he himself made a wanderer upon the face of his own school. New members of staff smile incredulously, as they weave their way through the throng in the staff-room, to be told
that this same room was once airy and spacious. But shortage of buildings has not been the only problem resulting from the 'bulge'. Uneven entries—six forms in one year, three in the next—have resulted in enormous difficulties in planning syllabuses for the individual subjects, in ordering text-books for them and maintaining from year to year a time-table consistent enough to allow each boy continuity in his studies. Then again large numbers of boys, whose parents in time past would never have been able to afford a grammar school education or thought of providing it for their sons, are entering the School. Of these a considerable proportion seek to continue their studies at a university and, as this is happening all over the country, the tremendous pressure has meant that it is almost as difficult to gain a place at Oxford and Cambridge as it once was to obtain a scholarship and that places at the provincial universities are no longer to be obtained for the asking and the possession of the now vanished matriculation. Virtually every boy in the enormous VIth form (80 on the science side, 40 on the arts; we hope the solitary member of 1915 will note) has in his last year to go through a gruelling round of applications, travelling the length and breadth of the country and undergoing exhaustive and exhausting interviews, which enquire not only into his academic attainments but also his part in the general life of the School. At the end of all this he must gain an advanced certificate with the percentage of his marks rising in proportion to the general popularity of the subject he wishes to study. The admission of 37 boys to a wide variety of universities in September, 1961, shows that this difficulty like its precursors in the School life is being surmounted. But at the other end of the scale also great efforts have been made to see that those members of the School who have no academic aptitude shall benefit from being here and not feel that it was so much time wasted at an institution that had no real time for them. Metal-work has been added to Woodwork and Mechanical and Engineering Drawing introduced as well. A beginning has been made with examinations not too severe as the various Boards of the General Certificate of Education. It is particularly interesting to note that since the School began preparing a certain number of candidates for these examinations (with remarkably successful results) the Government has taken up the idea that they should be made of national application. This can now be added to the long list of ventures in which the School was a pioneer—the Boy Scouts, summer camps, wireless telegraphy, educational films, careers bureau. But as well as this, although it means that every year he is faced with a time-table of bewildering complexity, Mr Crowther has introduced a far greater range of subjects into the curriculum, so that each boy at a fairly early age can have a considerable choice and feel that (within limits) he is learning what he would like to learn, while at VIth form level arts subjects for the scientists and science
subjects for the art students do something to combat the curse of over-specialisation. The VIth form time-table of today with its Biology, Botany, Zoology, Geography, Geology, Economics and Russian should cause as much astonishment to our single VIth former of 1915 as the rise in numbers.

Similar changes have come in the games. In 1953 a group of VIth formers who had no especial liking or aptitude for soccer were allowed to knock a hockey ball about on Wednesday afternoons. Next Rugby was started for such seniors who wished to play, so long as they were not in the running for any of the soccer elevens. The rugby was bolder than the hockey, or perhaps being surrounded by schools that did play rugby thought it would appear pusillanimous to refuse fixtures. At any rate they were soon producing regular sides and bearing up even though these received some astronomical defeats at the hands of Helsby Grammar School. (To a soccer school largely unaware of the difference between goals and points these results at first seemed frankly unbelievable). In 1955 the more cautious hockey players risked a modest fixture list against the lower elevens of neighbouring clubs, but they too had nothing but the consciousness of their own enthusiasm to reward them in most of their earlier matches. The future of both games remained in doubt until 1958, when the great growth in numbers and the obvious enjoyment of many who had never shown any athletic enthusiasm before made the staff decide that it would be possible to allow a free choice from the start as between soccer, rugby and cross-country (an old School sport which had recently seen an astonishing growth) with the addition of hockey in the IVth forms. Mr Bushell, who had replaced Mr Hammond, was a warm advocate of this more liberal policy, believing that it is better to provide a variety of games where each can find the one for which he is suited rather than to achieve excellence at one from which only a section can gain enjoyment. (So far only one of his innovations has been turned down by the sports committee: this—canoeing on the Bollin—after an astonished pause during which most members were trying to decide whether they had really heard what they thought they had.) Nor has this been the full tally of the new games. Outside regular school hours the old favourite—chess—has had to compete with strange new rivals—judo for the more robust and badminton for the more refined. All have now been brought to the standard when they can compete on equal terms with other schools. No longer are the rugby and hockey teams afraid to have their results read out in Monday morning assembly; on balance they give as good as they get. In one assembly last term (1961) the astounding total of 15 results were read out: 7 soccer elevens, 3 rugby fifteens, two hockey elevens and 3 cross-country teams.

thirty-nine
In the summer such a wide variety is not possible, but athletics now absorbs far more boys than it used to do and for a much longer space of time. Fascinating new events such as the javelin, the discus and the pole vault have been introduced and the enthusiasm by no means departs once the Sports—now held early in the summer—are over. There are triangular matches with rival schools and county sports, so that the track is in use almost the whole of the summer, causing great consternation to the cricketers as the practising runners flash between the bowlers poised for action and the waiting batsmen in the nets. Although shortage of courts and instruction has prevented the School from running a tennis team, many Vth formers find it an excellent game, as it combines the maximum of exercise with the minimum of time, for their examination year. The old School sport of swimming too has shown no decline, as the annual crop of bronze medallions, life-saving certificates, bronze crosses, awards of merit and distinction awards show.

The fears of many that the traditional games of the School, soccer and cricket, would deteriorate because of this dissipation of energy have not been realised. B. D. Hutchinson's soccer eleven of 1958-9 went through the season with only 2 defeats and had 4 players in the Cheshire Schoolboys side. Some of the cricket elevens of recent years have contained attractive, forcing batsmen and have on two occasions held a Lancashire Club and Ground Side to a draw and on another got within an ace of beating them. All in all the School games have now become an enormous organisation for which a very large proportion of the staff give up a considerable amount of their spare time. Mr Thompson and Mr Sutcliffe still maintain the link with the traditions of the past, reinforced now by two younger Old Boys, Mr Thornton and Mr Hayward, the latter a Bradbury prize-winner and captain of two cricket elevens. Mr Howard, Mr Gorton, Mr Tilley, Mr Nodding and Mr Bushell provide a solid phalanx of experience and skill that goes on indomitably from year to year, while younger members of the staff, often birds of passage, bring enthusiasm and novel ideas that ward off stagnation. (In the year of writing the house system is once again exercising the minds of the organisers of sport; iconoclasts threaten it with the melting-pot and traditionalists hurry to its defence.)

Nor have the School dramatics been allowed to remain in a groove. With the cycle of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas completed, there has been much striking out in new directions, combined with a partial return to old traditions. Mr Millard's revival of the pure drama, both his full scale production of Macbeth and his very daring and successful staging of The Skin of our Teeth, would have pleased his predecessors of the twenties. So too would the reappearance of forty
native authorship with the delightful operetta, *Gay Bohemia*, composed, written, designed and produced by Mr Hodgkinson and Mr Mills, and of film production with Mr Sugden's series of thrillers and more serious historical, *The Spartan Boy*. (It is rumoured that there is still wandering about Macclesfield a dazed schoolmaster who imagined he had come to umpire a hockey match and found himself being shot as part of a frenzied crowd scene.)

The wind of change has affected the Old Boys also. Their numbers continue to grow, their annual reunions get larger, the beliefs of the recent members that the oldest ones could never have been boys anywhere—let alone in this School—stronger every year. Some things, such as the Club and the Dramatic section seem gone for ever, but there are now six soccer teams and, a strange omission of earlier days, two cricket elevens. After years in which Old Boys provided notable players for most of the local clubs, the Old Boys Cricket Club was formed in 1954. In 1956 as a result of the enthusiasm and hard work of its members it had its own ground ready for play, most appropriately in the year when Mr Horley was Mayor of Altrincham, and with due ceremony he opened it on May 21. Within a year they won the Stanway Trophy for a knock-out competition between local clubs.

And so the School changes and goes on changing. A few years back, to the great sorrow of his colleagues and those whom he taught, ill health forced Mr Pritchard to retire and the School lost one whose pure enjoyment spread to all around him, whether it was playing bridge or chess, hunting for frog spawn in the spring days or umpiring in enveloping darkness the hectic end of some staff evening cricket game.

Then Mr Hill, who had since the middle twenties taught French with unwavering efficiency to generations of Altrinchamians and impressed all new members of staff with the courtesy, calm and wisdom of an elder statesman, retired. He was followed, just before the Jubilee, by Mr Hale. The latter had championed many causes with ever youthful zest for many years and given to the staff room a touch of flamboyancy and eccentricity which it would otherwise have lacked, so that those who most often disagreed with him were heard to say that it would be unbelievably dull when he had gone. But no doubt in time other 'characters' will rise to take his place. In the year of writing, after a few years in which mushroom classrooms have sprung up overnight to keep the 'bulge' from the door and a solitary laboratory has stood forlornly beyond the north end looking for its mates, a really big building expansion seems to be imminent. Among other things the School should get a new gymnasium, the old one

*forty-one*
having done duty for the 57 who were here in 1912 and the 850 who are here today. And, who knows, someone may pull down Room F (alias the *Monkey House*) which began life as a bicycle shed before the first World War and was already invoking the curses of staff at the end of it.

But whatever else, good or bad, can be said of Altrincham County Grammar School for Boys, it has certainly not stood still. Fifty years are small enough in the life of a school and, as one member of staff said when this little history was suggested, "Is it worth while calling attention to the fact that we have just begun?" The future of the School alone can decide that, but in the short time of its existence it has crammed much in and moved with and often ahead of the times.
THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The original block of 1912 was that section of the present main buildings north of the steps that lead to the space between the Headmaster's Study and the Secretary's Office. The Hall, which included the present classrooms L1 and L2, the corridor outside them and the Library above, had in the manner of nearly all the local authority schools built at that time, classrooms opening off it above and below. On the ground floor were Classrooms 1, 2, 3, and 5, the last being the Library and the form room of the VIth when it was eventually built up. Above, opening off an open gallery that has only recently disappeared, was the sole laboratory, another classroom and, with windows at its northern end, the Art Room. Over Classroom 5 was yet another classroom, later named the Geography Room, although it never had much specialised equipment. At the north end Classroom 4 was then the Woodwork Room and with its annexes and cupboards occupied virtually the whole area on the right side of the corridor beyond Classroom 3. On the left at the far end was the Prefects' Room, now the Matron's Office, a cloakroom and wash basins as today, and, off a small corridor, the Masters' Room, now Room H. Apart from the Dining Room, converted some ten years back into the Senior Chemistry Laboratory, there was no second storey at the north end. Further north still were a set of detached buildings, the Caretaker's House, lavatories and the Gymnasium. The south entrance, now right in the heart of the School, had a pleasing porch and a flight of steps which led down to a tennis court, the far side of which marked the limits of the School to the south. On its eastern side the asphalt inner playground already existed but was open on two sides with a fence and a steep bank dividing it from the field. The north end of this bank was, during the First World War, the home of two pigs kept by the caretaker, Mr Astles, as part of the School's war effort. (The full rigours of the law had to be invoked against those who fed the pigs improperly or shot paper darts, barbed with pen nibs, against their hinder parts.) The playing fields only went as far as the brook which marked the boundary between Hale and Bowdon, roughly opposite the spot where Scout Headquarters now stands. Unfortunately the workmen in levelling what was a very rough and uneven piece of ground carried away all the top soil and left the boulder clay on the surface, thereby creating a still unsolved problem for generations of games masters and groundsmen.
At the end of the First World War, the accommodation problem being already pressing, some desperate expedients were adopted in lieu of solid buildings. The bicycle shed against the gymnasium was roofed and walled with timber and became the notorious Room F or 'Monkey House', still in use as a classroom. An army hut was planted on the tennis court with the intention that it should become a Woodwork Room, but the strong protests of Mr Sheriffs prevailed with Mr Laver and it was eventually used as a Sports Pavilion. The Library became a classroom and the still small V1th Form was shifted partly to the Dining Room and partly to the Secretary's Office. (During this period of stress the Secretary worked in the Headmaster's Study and it is a striking commentary on the changed times that she came in the morning only and was told to bring her knitting in case there was not sufficient to occupy her time.) The Junior School was farmed out in St. Baldred's Hall, Hale. In 1923 after some frantic lobbying by the Governors, new buildings were authorised but the Geddes' Axe was falling and Mr Dunkerley dolefully told a speech day audience that "They must not expect marble halls, pillared vestibules or any great architectural conception. The buildings were to be created in what was called semi-permanent material. They did not quite know what that was. (Laughter)". Eventually it proved to be a long one-storied building with a framework of steel and timber covered by stucco, containing five classrooms, A, B, C, D and E on the right of a corridor; on the left, two small cloakrooms and at the south end an additional Masters' Room, now the Prefects' Room. This Outside Building (as it has been called ever since), although 'semi-permanent', is still heavily in use and, as a very senior member of the staff remarked on hearing of its approaching destruction in the new building scheme, "I'll believe it when I see it." But hardly had it been completed in 1923 when more permanent buildings were under way and these, of a solid red brick construction like the original block, were completed by 1925. A new Woodwork Room with an Art Room above it was put up to the north of and connected with the Outside Building. At the same time an upper storey was added at the north end of the main building, the old Art Room and its adjoining classroom merged to form a Physics Laboratory (S2) and two extra classrooms added beyond.

By this time the County authorities had conferred another great boon on the School. They had purchased a further four acres of ground and so brought the School up to its present southern boundary and extended it eastward across the parish boundary and brook. A year or so later the 1st XI cricket pitch, which in the early twenties had moved to a rather narrow patch of ground at the south end of the School, was brought back onto the main field and relaid very much where it is now.

forty-four
These were the last extensions of any note for ten years despite the fact that Mr Laver began agitating for fresh classrooms almost immediately. His wish was apparently granted by the county authorities and then just before his death in 1933 it was announced that because of economies considered essential during the Great Depression the Ministry had refused permission. So the only building put up during this period, the Scout Headquarters in 1932, was the result of voluntary subscriptions and the proceeds of the Trappers' Trading Post. But in 1935 with improving conditions the county authorities purchased another four and a half acres and the boys themselves turned out to assist in removing a hedge, filling in a pond and levelling the hump that stood near the present Junior cricket square. With the School field extended to its present boundary, Heath Road, a great new building programme followed with commendable rapidity. Plans were passed at the end of 1935, the new Hall was in use early in 1938 and the whole New Building officially opened in October. At the south end were changing rooms over a brick bicycle shed and more lavatories, at the north, jutting out at right angles, the new Hall, complete with permanent stage and green rooms below; in between came another cloak room and wash basins, an extra classroom, a Music Room and a Geography Room (Rooms 7, 6 and 8) and a new Masters' Room with french windows opening out on to a second playground. On the first floor a History Room (Room 12) was directly over the Geography Room and three more classrooms (11, 10 and 9) extended southwards. At the north end opening from the balcony of the new Hall was the Dunkerley Art Gallery. Fresh use could now be made of the classrooms in the original block. The old Geography Room became the Senior Chemistry Laboratory (S5), the two further classrooms a Senior Physics Laboratory (S3) and a Lecture Theatre (S4), while the old Hall, by the building of a partition to make a corridor between it and the classrooms, became an exceedingly pleasant Library. Unfortunately the retention of the open gallery above as a main thoroughfare meant that it was rarely quiet.

The School enjoyed its new spaciousness and comfort for only one year and since then war-time conditions and the 'bulge' have led to one temporary expedient after another. When the War caused the collapse of the Hale Methodists' Cricket Club, by the foresight of Mr Thompson the School stepped in and rented their old pitch, the 'Donkey Field'. At the end of the War additional ground was rented at Grange Road and so, with the aid of some ingenious replanning of the pitches by Messrs Thompson, Howard, Tilley and Gorton, the nightmare of so many urban schools with playing fields miles away has been averted. Another chronic crisis has been the Dining Room. Through the spread of communal feeding some 400 boys were crammed into a room intended for 50. They overflowed
into the laboratories above, trays were carried perilously back and forth and long queues of boys under the supervision of masters collected in the Hall and at the foot of the stairs. To end this state of chaos swiftly, in 1953 Mr Crowther accepted a temporary canteen on the ground known as Garner's Nursery to the north of the School. (If this had not been acquired shortly before, all future buildings would have had to be around and upon the playing fields.) Despite the courageous attempts of Mr Mills' pupils to brighten it up by gaily coloured frescoes, nobody is likely to pretend that it is a building for which they have much affection. Overcrowded almost from the start, its thin walls hurl back the multitude of shrill voices inside and its heating system is smelly and ineffec­tive. Although it has served its term it is good news that it is to be replaced in the new scheme.

The old Dining Room and its kitchen were converted into the Senior Chemistry Laboratory (S6) and the old laboratory (S5) taken over by the Biology Vllth which Mr Pritchard had built up and previously housed in the converted Lecture Theatre (S4). Flooring was put across the old Hall, the open gallery incorporated and the Library housed upstairs. There in quieter if darker surroundings Mr Hodgkinson has been able to acquire and organise a really impressive collection of books. The ground floor below has been divided into two new classrooms (L1 and 2). At the south end the new bicycle shed has been walled in—this time with bricks not timber—and a temporary home found for the long promised Metal Work. In the last two years three new 'spooner' classrooms have appeared almost overnight, one between Scout Headquarters and the Woodwork Room and the others alongside the Canteen. Despite their tem­porary nature they are as yet attractive rooms to work in and the first commands the best view in the entire School of the playing fields. But on the other side of the Canteen there appeared two years ago a building which we all hope is of greater significance. The Junior Physics Laboratory (S7) should be the herald of the third great building period of the School: a northern block to contain a new Canteen, other laboratories, new Art, Metal and Woodwork Rooms. Once it is put up, the Scientists, headed by Mr Lodge, may get the accommodation for which they have planned so exactly and fought so stubbornly. Mr Mills, Mr Gorton and his erstwhile pupil, Mr Thornton, who work so hard in the cause of the less academically-minded, may be housed more as they desire, in the main block the Dunkerley Art Gallery may return to its proper function and, if the Masters' Room is allowed to extend into Room 6, it may even be possible to see right across it during the mid-morning break.
There are high hopes that the approaching summer will see a resumption of work on this great plan. It should also see the completion of the latest of the big voluntary efforts for the improvement of the School. A few years back a Parents Association was formed for just this object and through the hard work of its officials and committee, who every winter have held a programme of lectures and dances and every summer a highly successful fair, money has been collected for a cricket pavilion. The old army hut vanished when the New Building was put up, previous attempts to provide a proper pavilion failed for one reason or another; now at long last through the energy of this latest of the School voluntary associations it looks as if this deficiency will be remedied.
THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

(A series of extracts from the School magazine)

THE FIRST EDITORIAL, APRIL 1913

This is the first number of our School Magazine and we realise

We have tried to offer an accurate record of school events and to report fully the proceedings of school societies and the progress of games.

But a school magazine should be more than a chronicle of events. It should reflect the inner life of the school; and we met with a most generous response when we asked for contributions to the literary side of our Magazine. We thank those who have "toiled their unbreathed memories" in our behalf, and hope that others will be encouraged to assist us in our earnest attempt to make the Magazine worthy of our school.

We would remind any adult who may glance through our pages that we are inexperienced, and some of our contributors particularly are of very tender years. We hope, however, that even in this first number there are the seeds of a nourishing Magazine which will do honour not only to our School but to Altrincham.

R. Gow, F. C. Russell, Editors

EARLY RUGBY AND HOCKEY

(Winter, 1912-13)

During the football season, frequently after a football match which has failed to tire us quite out, many of us have contrived to get immense enjoyment out of a game which we call "Rugby". This code consists of bouts of passing according to the Rugby code, of punt and drop-kicking, but principally of tackling and wrenching at one another while wallowing in the mudiest parts of the field. However from the exuberant vigour and keenness displayed in these wild scappings it seems safe to argue that Rugby football, if ever instituted as a School game, would become highly popular here. Then, again, for the last two weeks the Junior football pitch has been converted daily into a hockey ground, and has resounded with clashes of sticks and roars and squeaks of excited players—incurable wranglers these hockeyists are. The two games, Rugby football and
hockey, have so clearly demonstrated their popularity that the Headmaster is seriously considering the advisability of adopting one or other of them as an alternative to association football during the latter part of next winter, perhaps as the chief School game for the second term of the season. For it is important to note that the most enthusiastic of the players of these games are those to whom our present football has far less attraction.

(It was not to be. A crop of injuries at rugby, perhaps due to too much 'wrenching', the accusation that it was girlish to play hockey, and the rising fortunes of the School at soccer meant that the last code had a monopoly of the winter games for forty years.)

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE LITERARY SOCIETY — FEBRUARY 1913

(At an enthusiastic inaugural meeting on January 24, 1913, officers and committee were elected)

On February 9, with F. C. Russell in the chair, A. J. George moved "That in the opinion of this House the annual expenditure of Great Britain on the navy is insufficient."

The Hon. Member attacked the very vitals of the question. He declared that Great Britain depended for her existence on the Navy. He drew a lurid picture of the quick death by famine that awaited the House if our fleet were decisively defeated. Disquieting statements of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Winston Churchill) about the unpreparedness of the fleet were quoted. The House was then caught in a vortex of figures and statistics dealing with the meteoric growth of rival fleets and our own naval weakness as compared with the naval strength of the Triple Alliance. The Hon. Member in an attempt to relieve the gloom which he was casting over the meeting, then assured the House that there was yet time for a change of policy if it was fundamental and relentless; and after some patriotic allusions to Nelson and Beresford, he concluded with a moving appeal for a standard of two-keels-to-one.

R. Gow opposed the motion. He began by admitting that all the Hon. Proposer had said about the importance of our fleet and the famine that would follow its destruction in time of war; but he pleaded with the House that a superiority of 60 per cent in battleships over the German fleet was quite sufficient to ensure the safety of these islands. The Hon. Member declared that it was criminal to waste on unproductive engines of destruction a penny more than was necessary when so much money was being required for social reforms. His opponents contended that battleships were cheaper than
battles; but an enormous fleet would not make for peace, because foreign countries, believing that it was intended for aggression and not for home defence, would find means to increase their own standards, and perhaps would be driven through fear into forming a defensive alliance against us.

A. E. Kent supported the Hon. Proposer. He was not satisfied with a superiority of 60 per cent and even that standard existed only on paper. In reality we had at no moment such a superiority over the German fleet in ships ready for instant action. The Hon. Member pointed to the battleships presented by the colonies as proof of the urgency of the problem, and said that the high standard which he advocated was rendered necessary by the widely scattered nature of our Dominions, and was not a "counsel of fear."

A. J. Murphy, in opposing, accused the supporters of the motion of being panic-mongers. He maintained the navy scares were of frequent recurrence. The "deep designs" of France and Russia had caused needless panics in the past, and the present fear of German policy was as baseless. In conclusion the Hon. Member ridiculed the attempts at prophecy made by the Hon. Proposer.


Upon division there voted: Ayes 14; Noes 5; the motion was therefore carried.

EARLY DAYS — A MASTER REMINISCES

(The following extracts were written by Mr W. S. Chorley for the twenty-first anniversary of the School in 1933)

My acquaintance with the School was made in June, 1913. In those days there were still ignorant people who thought that Altrincham's only High School was in Cavendish Road. Consequently an unnecessary walk all round Bowdon had added to the weariness of a hot train journey from Somerset. Happily I had decided against wearing the frock coat and silk hat which were at that time regarded as the appropriate costume for candidates for appointments, but it was a relief to find myself at last at my destination, and to be assured by Mr Astles (the Caretaker) that the Headmaster would see me in a few minutes. How restful was the Library in which I waited. For 'library' please understand the present VI Form classroom (now Room 5) furnished with a carpet and a large table and surrounded with glass cases full of new and handsome books. Complete ease of mind came with the genial welcome of the 'Head'
and as he talked (we were now in his room) I felt that here was a school in which I should very much like to work. Boys, now released from school were in the field. Voices sounded through the window, one a shout—'Eh! Gow! You're a prefect. Why don't you stop—from fooling?' I was introduced to Mr Hamblin so that I might avail myself of his extensive knowledge of empty houses—my first of countless experiences of the helpfulness of Mr Hamblin.

There came a day in July 1914, when the Head remarked in the Common Room: 'If this comes to war, we may not get to camp at all.' It did come to war, but not to the abandonment of the camp, either of 1914 or 1915. Even in the following war years, although we did not go far afield, small parties, usually of Scouts, arranged local camps, thus maintaining a valuable nucleus of experienced campers.

School in war-time. Memories come flocking here. We were too young as a School to have many old boys but these were soon heard of in various training camps and two passed straight from school to Sandhurst. Mr Sheriffs' services were in early requisition for munition work. Mr Mee and Mr Mason (who joined us in 1914) quickly 'joined up'. The Headmaster, Mr Hamblin and I enlisted under the 'Derby' scheme, thus becoming liable to be called up whenever the authorities decided that our services as soldiers were likely to be more valuable to the country than our services as teachers. Even so a constable arrived one day at School, armed with a warrant for the arrest of one of us 'for evading military service' and the Headmaster had some difficulty in persuading him that there had been a mistake. But he succeeded at last, and a respected member of the staff was spared the ignominy of a journey to the police station. What excitement was missed that day, especially by the Junior school, of which Mr Thompson was then a promising member. The vacancies on the staff were filled by women teachers, of whom at one time there were eight, for war did not prevent the School from growing. We endeavoured to maintain all the activities of the School, although it brought unusual tasks to some of us, e.g., Mr Hamblin became a regular and efficient football referee; I was for a time in charge of the Gym and for several years was Scoutmaster.

Games went on as usual; house competitions were never keener; the annual sports lost nothing in popularity or enthusiasm, though there were no prizes. Nor was the School work allowed to suffer, as a glance at the matriculation board will show. It was about this time that a Third Form boy, A. V. Brook, joined the Scouts—a lucky day for the 3rd Altrincham and many other troops besides.
We became agriculturists. Portions of the field were dug up and vegetables, mostly potatoes were grown. At first digging was regarded as a welcome alternative to gym, but on the part of the boys at any rate enthusiasm was short-lived. Mr Astles reared pigs in a sty under the end wall of the gym.

Occasionally we received visits from old friends on service: Mr Mee (now Captain) from the Somme, Mr Mason from the Italian front, Mr Gow (not yet a master but a keen 'old boy') from an officers' training camp.

EARLY DAYS — A BOY REMINISCES

(The following extracts were written by an Old Boy, P. H. Allen,
for the twenty-first anniversary in 1933)

My first clear memory of the County High School is of sitting as a small boy in a field on South Downs Road in the summer of 1912. The School games were played there then, and Mr Cawood came up and spoke to me, asking me when I was going to join the School of which my brother was already a member. Then came a test (Entrance Exam, we called it, but competition was not very severe in those days) in the Easter holiday of 1913 and I was soon one of a happy band of insignificant youngsters whose excitement varied between the old Form I room (now, alas, only a memory) and a mound of earth in the far left-hand corner of the School field, where endless heroic battles were fought at break and before afternoon school. One vivid remembrance is of keeping wicket with a pair of gloves so much too big that if I threw the ball back to the bowler one glove went with it. So I passed the ball to slip—and he returned it.

What heroes the big boys — Russell, Gow and Horley — were to us in those days. I remember cycling home with the last two, one afternoon (an importunate little pest they must have thought me) and feeling that I had reached the height of human importance. There was some bullying too, chiefly, I think, by boys who wished to feel that they possessed more power than was the fact. It usually took the form of ordering small boys to do some useless task, such as walking round the School or half-way round the field and back. If the victim refused, some form of torment followed, and I can remember vividly lying gasping on the grass beneath the Library window, and feeling that my last moment had come, while the bell was ringing for the end of the break. This idyllic period ends in a highlight—the first Scout Fancy Fair, 1914. My impressions are
THE RUGBY FIFTEEN WORKS THE BLIND SIDE
Against Stockport School on the Grange Road Field, 1961
THE PREFECTS, 1961

partly vague, partly vivid; a general sense of excitement, of sunshine, crowds and bustle—the Mock Turtle (Glynne Tripp) falling off the platform in the Gym—the tune of 'Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?'—Mr Sherriffs and the Bodyless Head. There was a miniature Post Office, to which I was attached as messenger, and our great joke was the report (I don't know yet if it was true) that one of our members had accidentally delivered a note from a senior boy to the mother of the young lady to whom it was addressed.

Then came the War and I entered into my heritage as a Middle-School boy.

I think the years spent in the Middle-School are the most glorious in the whole of school life. You have been at School long enough to feel thoroughly at home, to feel that 'you belong' as Mr O'Neill would say; you know every one in the School, above and below you, there is no prospect of any of your friends leaving and the responsibilities of examination and prefectship are still far distant. To have entered that period of School life with the outbreak of war was a stroke of luck: to the natural excitement and high spirits of boyhood was added a background of constant excitement and significance. We did not realise the horror and sordidness of war, we were children whose toy armies and history books had suddenly come to life. Exciting things that mattered and that we could really understand were happening every day. I think my generation got the best out of the war—at the time; we have had to pay for it ever since.

And I can remember voluble arguments between lessons as to the size of armies and the rest with blackboard demonstrations; digging trenches for potatoes in the School Field; queuing up in the evening for work at the Saver Clutch, chaffed by the munition girls as they left their labours; and above all the entertainments to the wounded soldiers. Of all successful School entertainments—Speech Days, Easter Concerts, Camp Concerts, Literary Society Socials—I don't think any have gone with quite such a swing as these. Audience and performers alike entered into the proceedings with the utmost zest and enthusiasm.

My happiest recollections of School concerts are connected with these days; and the tunes of 'There's a Long, Long Trail', 'Give Me a Little Cosy Corner' and 'Let the Great Big World,' can still evoke with amazing vividness the scene and even the sensations
associated with those performances — the last rays of the sunshine streaming into the Hall, lighting up the singer, E. V. Rowland, the happy crowd of boys, munching, whispering and applauding, and the long line of war photographs from the illustrated weeklies along the side of the Hall.

Here, too, are most of my memories of the Literary Society—the hurried teas, rapid finishing of homework, most of which had already been done in the dinner-hour, the rush back to School through the frosty or misty darkness, the eager game of 'Daddy' on the field and round the old shed, and then the hot, excited, happy crowd, streaming in past Mr Hamblin (bell in hand) for lecture, debate or Mock Trial. The 'pictures' had not yet spoilt our delight in these simple pleasures. And if a younger generation is inclined to look scornfully at our game of 'Daddy', I can only recommend them to try it, on a dark night, with the biggest boy in the name-role, armed with a fine hefty stick—there will be thrills enough.

Rather strangely, many vivid memories are connected with winter rather than summer. Another is that of snowy mornings, the wild snowballing at break, the sudden raiding party led by Mr Hamblin, and then the chattering crowd, clustered round the form-room fire, while red, numbed fingers slowly began to glow and the stamped-off snow melted into little pools and all fervently hoped the master would be late in coming—and the hope was not always disappointed.

But it is high time to speak of life in the Sixth—of the dignified participation in the Cross-Countries, which turned into undignified grunts and groans, as we toiled up that nightmare hill by Bowdon College; of the awakening interest in music which led us to ask Mr Laver's permission to hold a 'Musical Evening' (he looked rather surprised, but after a few moments he agreed—with a smile); and above all those strange 'private study' periods in which we discussed everything on earth except the subject we were supposed to be working at. I had many fine times in the Sixth but it was under a shadow. Already many friends had left and more were leaving, and the School was half-full of juniors whose very names I did not know. The last years were rather a personal life among half-a-dozen of us than a communal life with the School in general. So the end came. But with me, at any rate, passing years have purged out the many troubles, boredoms and disappointments that must have existed in School life, and left only the fine gold of happy memories. And for that also I am duly grateful.
"THE CHINESE PUZZLE"

(This was a play produced by the Old Boys on Nov. 15, 16 and 17th, 1924. The following extract gives some account of the troubles that beset it)

At the outset of the rehearsals accidents befell three of the members of the Dramatic Section. Mr T. N. Jackson was cycling to Altrincham, when his cycle broke in half and he was thrown to the ground. He was examined later at the Altrincham Hospital, and was found to be suffering from facial injuries, but was able to proceed home. Forty-eight hours later Mr D. W. Price, who had been cast for the part of Sir Roger de la Haye, was motor-cycling to business and was near Gatley when he skidded. He was thrown violently to the ground and was removed in an unconscious condition to the Stockport Infirmary. After five days he regained consciousness and we are glad to say he made a surprisingly quick recovery, but was not able to take his original part. On the evening of the day on which this accident occurred, Mr F. Berry, a member of the stage staff, cut his wrist deeply with a chisel. He was rushed off to hospital where his wrist was stitched. Mr A. Calderbank, we are told, made an efficient nurse, but the tourniquet, which another O.B. had put on, was placed at the wrong end of the cut. After all these mishaps a horse-shoe was placed in the shrine of the drama worshipper and nothing else occurred until the first day of the performance. Then Mr A. I. Gregory was taken suddenly ill and unable to perform, but we were fortunate in obtaining Mr S. Kerridge to deputise; he took the part each night and did it very well.

The final performance on the Saturday was not a pleasure to the stage management, although the audience were not aware of the various mishaps except one. The lights fused for the second time in succession on a Saturday performance and there was a great deal of unnecessary running about before the fused part was found. It spoilt the best act of the play.

The stage staff were heavily worked and completed the change of scene for the last act in quick time, but later they were all in a very tired condition. After the audience had dispersed we held a short dance for the cast and their friends, and Chi Lung (Mr A. J. George), in jumping off the stage, caught his foot in the footlight wires and fell heavily on his wrists. He was medically examined, and it was found that he had severely damaged the sinews; later he had to have X-Ray treatment to see if there was any breakage, but fortunately there was none. No other disasters occurred, but it may as well be put on record that at the first dress rehearsal someone broke a large mirror near the stage. But WE are not superstitious.

fifty-five
IV B FORM NOTES, JUNE 1926

(Form notes were a regular feature of the magazine from the second volume in April, 1914, until March, 1941, when shortage of paper forced their abandonment)

Everything has gone wrong this term. It happens like that sometimes, doesn't it? To begin with we were moved from the Geography Room (S5) which had been the home of Form IV B longer than anyone can remember, to the room under the clock—for reasons we do not intend to state in public.

Then we determined to do wonders in football as an outlet for our energy, but Form IV A would not let us beat them.

Thirdly, we tried to start all kinds of clubs—'Sports', 'Cross-Country' and 'Cycling' among others—and plastered the board with appeals for membership. People thought the notices very nicely worded and attractive, but they did not join the clubs.

Fourthly, playground football turned out to be a very expensive hobby for some of us.

Fifthly, one boy jammed his hand in the door, and unfortunately it was his left hand.

However, it's a faint heart that never rejoices. Let us look at the right side of the picture. It is true we experienced a change of room, but at the same time we experienced a change of temperature—that was all to the good. If our new room is more liable to unexpected visits, it is also nearer the buns at the interval.

If IV A beat us at football, our coming victories over them in cricket will be all the more delightful.

Think too of the Scouts; if we did not provide the Troop with twelve members it would make but a paltry show. And how would the orchestra at the Concert have managed without our two violinists? Finally everyone will agree that D. Beck stands quite by himself as a reciter. Some of us actually came to the Concert twice just to hear him a second time.

THE BURYING OF THE GUN, JUNE 1926

Men talk of Austen Chamberlain, but how many have heard of the Altrincham County High School for Boys? How many who read in the papers about the Locarno Pact knew that Mr Astles and a toiling form would bury the hatchet (which is, in modern warefare, a gun), far more successfully and irretrievably than the best-known politicians of today.

And yet these obscure schoolboys have done it. They have buried the gun which for seven years has frowned upon our noble School.
An interesting history is no doubt attached to this gun. It was used in the Great War and so it has obviously seen plenty of excitement. How many times has this gun held up an English advance? How many times has it delayed the retreating Germans? Was that bend in the swivelling wheel done by a piece of shrapnel at Ypres?

Then, its day of action over, it came into the hands of some Englishman who thought that, to show to all that Germany was really conquered, it would be 'nice' to have a German gun aimed in a threatening manner now at the Headmaster's study window, now at the topmost spike of the ornament on the pointed turret, according to the whim of the small boys to whom it was abandoned, who were in every moment in danger of falling down the barrel, there to end their days in darkness. And now? It is reposing in a sandy bed, laid there by none too gentle hands and covered with a blanket of earth. A poor termination to such an eventful career.

(The writer goes on to speculate that after all it may have a worthy end, dug up two thousand years hence by archaeologists who might correctly deduce that its burial was symbolical of the peace between Germany and England. Alas, its end, although eminently practical, was symbolic of something diametrically opposite to the high hopes raised here. It was completely forgotten until the darkest days of the Second World War, when scrap metal was urgently needed and the School's front railings were being commandeered. Then, providentially, its snout appeared above the ground. Gleefully, Mr Laver had authorised its burial; equally gleefully Mr Hamblin engineered its removal, the only difference being that whereas the School itself had to undertake the former the authorities themselves were only too willing to carry out the latter).

OLD BOYS IN CAMP

/*—A Diary (from the 1927 camp at Westward Ho)

The following is a page (accidentally acquired) from a diary kept by one unfortunate inmate of the second O.B.'s tent (counting from the Staff tents):—

a.m.
7.30 Wakened by Geoff, who wants me to get up and roll my blankets.
7.40 Wakened by Geoff, who is brailing up the tent and wants me to move various articles.
7.55 Wakened by Geoff, who has returned from washing and wants to sweep out the tent.
7.59 Wakened by Geoff who wants to sweep out tent.

fifty-seven
8.01 Smart shower, which has compelled Geoff to bring everything in and let down the skirting. All this makes sleeping very difficult.

8.05 Grumbled at by Geoff for dropping cigarette ash on the floor. He has a special box for this, it appears.

8.15 Grumbled at by Geoff for dropping chocolate paper on the floor. He has another special box for this.

8.18 Geoff brails up tent again. Enjoyed listening to Captain's remarks to next tent. Thanks to Geoff he never comes near us. Query: Do we gain anything?

8.20 Looked everywhere for a needle—must mend these shorts before breakfast. Luckily Geoff had one.

8.21 Couldn't find any cotton. Luckily Geoff had some.

8.22 Hunted everywhere for scissors. Had to borrow Geoff's.

8.26 Cut myself while unwrapping new razor blade. Luckily Geoff had some iodine.

8.29 More rain. Geoff letting down the skirting. Started to dress.

8.30 Reveille. Breakfast (fruit).

(There seems to be no reasonable doubt that the Geoff of this extract was none other than Mr G. W. Sutcliffe, now Senior Chemistry Master at the School, noted cricketer and for many years Scoutmaster of the Troop.)

2—Character Sketches (from the 1929 camp at Dartmouth)

I must confess, then, that I am quite incapable of providing any homogeneous picture of Old Boys activities: instead I can only attempt a brief sketch of a few typical figures. 'X', slightly disillusioned by life and knowing the vanity of tramping the countryside and roughing it, arrives in a car with a useful if unheroic air-cushion and two suit-cases. He manages to appear at breakfast with his hair brushed, though he has not washed. After breakfast he has a careful shave, dresses elegantly but not gaudily, and drives down into Dartmouth for morning coffee or its equivalent, much as he would drop into Sainsbury's or the Kardomah. In the afternoon he reads in a deckchair in front of his tent, and after tea disappears quietly until 10.30 or 11 p.m.

'Z' has had a hard month and comes for a real rest. He arrives at breakfast wearing a pyjama jacket and shorts, and refuses to shave for two or three days at a time. After breakfast he returns to bed for an hour or so, and then strolls leisurely down to the beach, where, after a short bathe, he basks for hours in the sun, wearing the veriest minimum that decency requires. His afternoon is modelled on his morning, and after tea he indulges in a moderate game of football, strolls into Dartmouth and ends his evening at the chip-shop.
To young 'Y' the restraints of city life are still irksome, and at camp he bounds back into the unbridled freedom of his schoolboy days with a vigour that is almost embarrassing. Only the most hideous cacophony of glaring colours and grotesque garments can sufficiently express his contempt for the convention of stiff collars and well-creased trousers. He is excessively noisy, shouts people's nick-names across the camp-field unnecessarily, is always buying liquor of poisonous hue from the canteen and keeps an assortment of strange eatables in his tent.

T is probably a Rover; not much is seen of him in camp. He and one or two pals of like mind disappear immediately after breakfast and are not seen sometimes for two or three days. Neither is it easy to get much information as to how the interim has been spent; only hints of prodigious tramps, climbs and explorations are forthcoming.

'S' is a seasoned camper and takes part in most of the camp activities. His tent is always neat, and he somehow naturally acquires those sugar boxes and biscuit tins so coveted by other people. Except for expeditions he is not usually far from the camp-field. He bathes, plays cricket or football, knows the time of buses and mails, can always lend a hand with the canteen or in serving out food, makes a cricket shirt and shorts his invariable costume, has an item for a camp concert and is a mine of camp tradition.

So one might go on; for our camp is a true microcosm and all types may be found. Indeed 1 sometimes think that the secret of the camp's success lies in the liberty it gives to be ourselves.

P. H. ALLEN

THE WORLD JAMBOREE OF 1929

Arrow Park, Birkenhead

(\textit{The writer of this extract was a son of Mr W. S. Chorley—J. W. A. Chorley—who has since had a brilliant career in the Civil Service. He was one of six King's Scouts and four others who represented the School Troop at the Jamboree. Among the other King's Scouts was M. J. Clow, the Swimming Blue.})

My experience at the Jamboree and, I suppose, that of all those in my patrol at least, arranges itself under four heads: friendship, mud, food, rallies.

First, of course, comes friendship, and, in spite of the fact that all the papers said so, the Jamboree proved to us how well the old phrase 'world-wide brotherhood' fits the movement. For wherever we went all we had to do was to smile, shake hands, ask: 'How do you like this weather?' and we were firm friends immediately. And from a discussion of climate it is an easy step to a discussion of camping, and thence to the Scout Associations of other lands, which in itself proved interesting enough.
Along with friendship came naturally 'trading', to use the American term. Badges were flying thick and fast after a few days, and great was the competition to get hold of some foreign emblem especially coveted. Imagine the effect of three or four English Scouts trying to bargain with a Polish Scout, when the English and the Pole could only converse in the French they had learnt at school; that is what happened on one occasion. One of the best evenings our Patrol spent at the JambBree was one at the French camp. Our fencers went over there and, after a length search, found some French scouts who could fence — imagine the sensation of fencing with a dashing Frenchman who, as he dons his immaculate white fencing 'veste', tells you he is undergoing the 'preparation militaire' at Bar-le-Duc. We learnt some valuable hints from this gentleman's style, however — also another hint from another fellow who, in the middle of a bout, changed his foil from his right to his left hand and carried on. The fencing spread, a crowd gathered and by the end of the evening excitement ran high, as inter-province fencing was taking place. 'Attendez. Languedoc a gauche. Bretagne a droit. Allez, messieurs.' We finished up with French tea and horribly English biscuits. Incidentally Mr Hill will be glad to know that our much abused French proved quite useful.

(According to our author the other three heads proved less exciting, although — it being Cheshire and a wet summer — the mud was phenomenal.)

THE EASTER CONCERT 1930

The gentlemen who made goat-like noises in the fair land of Hellas have a great deal to answer for. The Easter Concert must be one of their gifts to posterity, for Spring never comes to this School without its appropriate Dionysiac ritual. Once more we have sung our goat-songs, the blossom is smiling again, and there is £67 in the treasure chest. 'The apple-tree, the singing and the gold', chanted Euripides, and no doubt his eye was on the box-office when he wrote it.

An amazing procession. First the smaller boys with sweet voices and those looks given them by the gods so that they may steal jam and yet appear as angels. Then the boys get bigger and the sounds more goatish. Form IV B in a thriller — Form II B daringly satirical with the help of Mr Chorley and Mr Williams — Form V Lower B in a comedy of manners (mostly bad) — Form III A in the past and III B in the future — Wallis, supported by V Upper Y, in his inimitable study of a Victorian gentleman — Form IV A in a nightmare — and then the V1th Form in a blaze of real Drama, which we are able to think out in the interval.

sixty
The lights go down (electrical effects by Hitchcock and Co.); the band pulsates feverishly (rhythm by Carmichael and piano by Good Luck); and the revue is upon us (Mr Galloway and Chorus). There is no time for thinking now. Who would be so gross as to think during a revue and expect to keep his reason? There is magnificent dancing, the costumes are superb and the audience is thrilled. Mr Galloway has worked well and we look forward to his next revue. We can only ask for 'the mixture as before'.

It is all over once again. The procession has passed by and we shall not see it for another year. But the spirit of spring was among us, as surely as it was in the hearts of those who danced and sang and laboured in the valleys of Greece. Perhaps the memory of its fun and turmoil will linger with some of us for a long time, when we shall have need of such thoughts, and we shall better understand the meaning of 'the apple-tree, the singing and the gold.'

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<tr>
<th>PROGRAMME</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 FORM SONGS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Heigh Ho the Morning Dew'</td>
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<td>'The Mermaid'</td>
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<td>2 FORM SONGS:</td>
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<td>'If Time is Up' and 'Forty Years On'</td>
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<td>4 SONG: 'An Eriskay Love-Lilt'</td>
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<td>5 SKETCH: 'An Alarming Night'</td>
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<td>9 SKETCH: 'School in 1999'</td>
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<td>10 SKETCH: 'Nightmare in IV A'</td>
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<td>11 PLAY: 'Four Characters in Search of an Author'</td>
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<td>12 INTERVAL</td>
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13 GRAND REVUE: 'HEIGH-HO, EVERYBODY'
(i) The Stage Staff (Mr Gow and Mr Mason) will introduce themselves, and there will be a little trouble with the Producer (Mr Galloway).
(ii) The Producer and Chorus will sing 'Heigh-ho'.
(iii) Form V Upper X will show what the future may hold for us.
(iv) The Producer, F. Ashworth, D. Cahal and Chorus will visit Southport.
(v) The Stage Staff and Mr Chorley will sigh for the songs of yesterday.
(vi) F. Ashworth and Chorus will give each other a pat on the back.
(vii) Mr Gow, Mr Mitchell and the Producer will show that the Master doesn't always win.
(viii) Form V Lower A will trip upon the light fantastic toe in a 'Ballet des Sports'.
(ix) The Producer will tell us how he comes to School.
(x) The Stage Staff will warble of customs old and new.
(xi) Form II A will show what happens when they are left to produce themselves.
(xii) We shall not go back to Dixie, but we can still play 'The Banjo'.

sixty-one
(xiii) P. Jones will 'Let the Curtain Fall,' and.
(xiv) We shall all say 'Good Night'.

Chorus of Survivors.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Music by LES MISERABLES BAND.

Stage Electrician: G. HITCHCOCK.

IN MEMORY — L. SAVILLE LAVER

(This poem was written by Ronald Gow for the June magazine, J 933, which was at one and the same time a memorial to Mr Laver and a commemoration of the twenty-first anniversary of the School.)

In Wales we saw across a sunlit bay
The great blue mountains standing bare and free,
He said 'I think in such a manner too,
The hills of Greece go down into the sea.'

And once we watched the runners on the field,
Pacing with light limbs flashing lightly clad,
He said 'They're like the runners on an ancient frieze,
Or some old Grecian vase' and he was glad.

Or when we pushed from off a single shore,
And turned our boat's nose down toward the West,
He said 'Now we are like Ulysses and his men',
And youthful hearts beat faster for the jest.
O Attic city, gleaming young through Time,
He never saw your stones nor wandered there,
But builded here a School and bade Youth smile,
And dreamed another Athens, still more fair.

THE SCHOOL v NANTWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Played on March 26, 1938

This match was of particular interest as it was the first of what we hope will be a regular fixture. It was also important as the schools concerned had the best records in the South and North of Cheshire, as far as 1st XI Football is concerned, and the match was, therefore, virtually for the championship of the county.

The School was represented as follows: West; Crabtree, Hirons; Hancox, Bale, Johnson; Woolley, Bennington, Wilkie, Hanson and Price.

sixty-two
Johnson, the School Captain, lost the toss and Nantwich, therefore, had the advantage of a strong breeze, but the home forwards attacked strongly. Play soon went to the other end, however, and Bale and Hirons were prominent in defence. The ball continued to move rapidly from end to end, but the Nantwich goalkeeper was the first to be brought into action, for Bale put in a great shot from about twenty yards range, which the 'keeper just managed to turn round the post for a corner.

The Nantwich defence was playing well, but Woolley should have scored, when from five yards range he shot high over the bar. However, after 25 minutes, Altrincham went ahead. The Nantwich goalkeeper was only able to beat away a shot from Woolley and Wilkie, following up, hooked the ball into the net. Nantwich attacked strongly but there was no further score at the interval.

After the restart play was rather uninteresting, but after 15 minutes Hanson hit the post with a smashing shot, and Wilkie, gathering there bound, put the ball safely into the net. After a further ten minutes, however, Nantwich reduced the lead by means of a good goal by their outside-right, but they were beginning to feel the pace. With five minutes to go Hancox took a free kick on the half-way line, and Hanson, cleverly unsighting the goalkeeper, flicked it in.

The thrills were even then not over. With the last kick of the game, Price scored a typical goal when he crashed in a shot, following Woolley's centre.

_result_: Altrincham 4; Nantwich 1.

Finally, we must thank Mr Taylor, the ex-English international, for so kindly refereeing the match for us.

C. E. COLTON

A WAR-TIME EDITORIAL

November 1940

We shall not be in error, just unoriginal perhaps, if we say that the past year has been the strangest in the history of the School. We look back on our first experience of war, which is fortunately different from what we expected, at least so far as we personally are concerned. Our part has been more in the nature of preparation than action. Even the elaborate air-raid rehearsals have faded into calmly trotting into the shelters, which are now actually completed.

It is amusing to think that this time last year, lunch was at 12 o'clock one week and 2 o'clock the next—the result of the skilful system to accommodate 300 visitors in a School which is not a hotel. Still, we accustomed ourselves to it; we carried on.
Reference to the winter can only conjure up fears for the next. The beauty of winter's "snowy mantle" was somewhat eclipsed by 30 degrees of frost. Fuel was not abundant and pipes burst. Still, we were among the few secondary schools in the county which did not have to close temporarily in the coldest weather; we carried on.

We recall black-out nights and the consequent disappearance of evening detention. This has never been revived and we hope it will not be found necessary to do so. We trust we are capable of carrying on without it.

And now we have air-raid warnings in School hours. It seems a pity that we cannot carry on after the sirens have sounded — "spotters", for instance — (Perhaps we are on dangerous ground — we fear that few supporters of the scheme will be found in the School.) Let us conclude then with a different topic.

Examination results have not suffered because of changed circumstances. As many boys have been successful as in past years, indeed more. The high percentage of scholastic successes which has always been maintained has not been allowed to drop. May we remark that this is proof that "we carried on."

F. C. LINDARS, Editor

NORTH, EAST, WEST, SOUTH

(A letter from Private B. M. Wallis in the Western Desert, printed in the magazine for November, 1942.)

It is three o'clock and I'm drinking tea made of salt water. The wind blows steadily and is hotter than the sun itself. In the shade the wind is almost cooling. There is no shade. To the east there is a sheet of smooth, refreshing water to be seen, with tall, green trees on the far side of it — only faintly is it visible in the shimmering heat haze; but we don't go over there. If we tried it would recede in front of us and then vanish altogether, and there would only be endless dusty, hard-baked desert — little stunted shrubs and no water — no green trees. Life is crool 'ard' these days. I wish I was at Sidmouth with plenty of cold sea about . . . great days those. It was nearing the time for a change of camping site I've always thought. Things were becoming too familiar. Same old faces, same field with same row of clean, white tents. Even the pigs in the orchard greeted us almost with contempt. Time was when a trip through the orchard was a thing of moment, a hazardous journey to be undertaken only by the most intrepid of us. But of recent years the big black pigs scarcely bothered to cast us more than a fleeting glance before continuing with their endless rooting. Yes — I think the adventure has gone out of Sidmouth. But the time taken up by this ridiculous conflict in which we are participating has perhaps caused a change. There may be new houses, different shops . . . maybe a new camp site. Maybe the things that have not changed will seem better and
more interesting than they were before. Perhaps we can recapture that spirit of adventure that was lost. But the old black pigs are still in the orchard, I hope.

Thinking of camp with all the various luxuries that appertain to camp has almost refreshed me. Beer, incidentally, is a thing of the past. We are supposed to receive a ration. One bottle per week, per man, perhaps! It rarely arrives. There are no pictures, no books... no nothing except sand and dust and sun and more dust. Dust fills our ears and noses and eyes and mouths. Our hair is solid with it. Our grub is cooked in it. We shake our blankets and they are full of it, immediately. In the end we tire of trying to keep things clean and a thick red coating covers everything, to rise in choking clouds at the slightest disturbance. It is too hot to work or move about; we just lie on our beds and sweat. Lizards and flies come and go as they will. Even a tortoise looked in just now. There are no buds out here, no flowers. The sounds are made by insects and the "khamseen" wind that blows steadily through our tent with its biting particles of red-hot sand.

I suppose sometime all this will come to an end, and we shall be able to look back on it almost regretfully, remembering only the brighter moments, forgetting the discomforts and hardships we have had to endure. Perhaps it won't be so long before we are at Sidmouth again. There's a lot of old faces I want to see again — and a lot of sea to make my acquaintance with. The first thing I shall do when I get home is to turn every water tap on in the house and listen to the cool water running down the sink.

THE MAYOR OF ALTRINCHAM

Councillor E. J. HORLEY

(An appreciation written for the July 1956, number of the magazine by Ronald Gow. E. J. Horley was the first School prefect, the virtual founder of the Old Boys Association and the first — but we are sure by no means the last — boy of the School to become Mayor of the Town.)

If I say that Edward J. Horley was my friend long before the School was built I think I shall have established the right to tell you about so august a personage as the 666th Mayor of Altrincham. He and I shared some odd but similar boyish ambitions. We looked forward to a full life as cinema operators, press photographers and private detectives. Perhaps there would also be time for a little secret service work. We were inclined to address each other as Sherlock or Dracula according to our mood. We moved stealthily about the streets of an unsuspecting Altrincham — an Edwardian Altrincham with horse carriages and very few motor cars — making back street sixty-five
detours to avoid the enemy or pressing invisibly into doorways to give the slip to foreign spies. I once pressed our future Mayor right through a pane of glass. That cost us $1/11/2 each, a serious matter in those days. I am prepared to indicate the spot to any historian.

Later when we presented ourselves for admission to this new school we were puzzled by a remark the Headmaster had made about each of us. We compared notes afterwards. Mr Laver had said the same thing to each of our parents. "He has an honest face — I shall make him a prefect." Surely the man had made some mistake, we thought. However he made Edward a senior prefect, while I was only a junior, which shows that some faces are more honest than others.

I forget Edward's scholastic record — and I shall continue to do so as long as he leaves mine undisturbed. But I remember that he was our first bell-ringer and put the School on a firm basis. Even the Staff were in awe of him. He was the first boy to leave the School and it is commonly held that he formed the Old Boys Association, drew up the rules and voted himself into all the key positions before any of the rest of us were able to join him. This, I suppose, was the first indication that he would make an able Town Councillor.

Perhaps I ought to say, in case this is not emerging clearly from what I have written, that this is an appreciation of Edward Horley, and that we are very proud of him now that he is Mayor of Altrincham. But I must not — I dare not — speak of him pompously or conventionally, as one is inclined to do when praising civic virtue. I would always be afraid of that wry, dry humour of his — so bewildering to those who don't quite know him. That is why I season my admiration with the salt of reminiscence. Many of us have had a few scraps with him, some of us have retired with sore heads, but there are very few of us who have not remained his friends. He has always been a fighter but always for some unselfish cause. Edward is definitely worth his salt.

I cannot think of any one better fitted to be Mayor of Altrincham. He has always had the town at heart — he has known about it — he has cared about it. One of the delights of going home for many of us has been to call at a certain wooden office and ask him what's new in the town. It is on record that when he visited New York and the new and fabulous Roxy Cinema he told an attendant that it was a disgrace to show white light on the screen between the reels. "That", he declared scornfully to the puzzled attendant, "could never happen at Altrincham Pictures!"

May we assure Ted Horley that we are just as proud of him as he is of Altrincham.
THE PRODUCTION OF H.M.S. PINAFORE

Easter 1946

(This was the first production of a full-length Gilbert and Sullivan opera by the School; from then on until 1956 one was produced every year. Now after a gap of some years this particular opera is being revived to mark the School's fiftieth anniversary.)

A full-length Gilbert and Sullivan operetta is an ambitious undertaking for any school dramatic society and one fraught with pitfalls of varied and intricate nature, but the team which so delighted audiences in the partly experimental "Trial by Jury" last year has equalled and, in fact, surpassed its previous effort in the lengthier and more difficult task attempted in this Easter's show. In fact one may without fear of contradiction go so far as to say that this performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore" was undoubtedly one of the finest entertainments ever provided on the School stage. So many were its excellencies and so well did each member of the cast from the principals down to the smallest member of the chorus fulfil his part that it is difficult to single out any particular feature or individual for special praise.

Probably the most striking and pleasing characteristics of the whole show were the perfect team-work and the slick timing of the action. The players gave unstintingly of their best to a great cooperative effort in a spirit of camaraderie that precluded any overshadowing of one actor by another. Song, dialogue, action and gesture fell into place unobtrusively with the precision of the pieces in a jig-saw puzzle, while the pace of the whole had a pleasing briskness which quickly imparted much of the zest and enthusiasm of the actors to the audience. It was obvious that every member of the cast was at home in his part and thoroughly enjoying himself.

(In this production Mr Mills was Captain Corcoran, Mr Sutcliffe: Ralph Rackstraw, P. E. Garratt: Sir Joseph Porter, D. Taylor: Josephine, Ian Chippendale: Buttercup, D. E. O'Mulloy: Dick Deadeye, D. W. Cohn Hebe & J. B. O'Mulloy: Bill Bobstay, Mr Brown was musical director, Messrs Jackson and Galloway producers, Mr and Mrs Frank Borrows, directors of dancing and Messrs Dixon, Gorton and D. A. Clark responsible for the scenery and lighting. Of this team only Mr Brown, Mr Mills, Mr Sutcliffe and Mr Gorton remain in the forthcoming production.)

sixty-seven
## Captains of the School

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<tbody>
<tr>
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## Football Captains

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## Cricket Captains

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<td>P. N. Milnes</td>
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<td>P. A. Borsay</td>
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---

sixty-eight
TROOP LEADERS

1920-1 H. Sutcliffe
1921-2 H. Sutcliffe
1922-3 R. Ewan
1923-4 G. A. Fontes
1924-5 K. M. Doming
1925-6 H. S. Young
1926-7 M. J. Clow
1927-8 W. J. Clarke
1928-9 W. J. Clarke
1929-30 T. N. Wardrop
1930-1 T. N. Wardrop
1931-2 M. J. Clow
1932-3 J. Pilling
1933-4 J. Pilling

1934-5 T. C. Graty
1935-6 R. I. Mackay
1936-7 R. I. Mackay
1937-8 K. Coppock
1938-9 K. Coppock
1939-40 R. A. Chorley
1940-1 J. W. Sutherland
1941-2 A. E. Nicholson
1942-3 T. Davies
1943-4 D. Lawton
1944-5 P. C. Dannatt
1945-6 P. C. Dannatt
1946-7 W. H. Chapman
1947-8 P. E. Garratt
1948-9 K. L. Scott
1949-50 J. W. Provan
1950-1 K. A. Salmon
1951-2 D. M. Waller
1952-3 B. A. Sidebottom
1953-4 M. D. Harter
1954-5 W. R. Deem
1955-6 P. Brookes
1956-7 A. J. Schofield
1957-8 A. J. Schofield
1958-9 M. T. Rowe
1959-60 P. A. Cook
1960-1 M. J. Thompson
1961-2 M. J. Thompson

EDITORS OF THE MAGAZINE

1912-3 R. Gow
1913-4 R. Gow
1914-5 R. Gow
1915-6 A. J. Murphy
1916-7 A. J. Murphy
1917-8 C. F. Reford
1918-9 G. Chadwick
1919-20 G. Chadwick
1920-1 G. Chadwick
1921-2 J. F. Dunning
1922-3 H. Sutcliffe
1923-4 H. Sutcliffe
1924-5 R. Keogh
1925-6 A. M. Turner
1926-7 A. M. Turner
1927-8 J. W. A. Chorley
1928-9 J. W. A. Chorley
1929-30 R. F. Jackson
1930-1 R. F. Jackson
1931-2 W. B. Thompson
1932-3 P. E. Thompson
1933-4 E. F. B. Davies
1934-5 J. E. de C. Meade
1935-6 J. P. de C. Meade
1936-7 D. H. Lowndes
1937-8 G. C. Wardle
1938-9 J. K. Barratt
1939-40 F. C. Lindars
1940-1 F. C. Lindars
1941-2 P. Knight
1942-3 F. Burrows
1943-4 V. C. Bickley
1944-5 C. G. Bennett
1945-6 P. C. Dannatt
1946-7 R. K. Mottram
1947-8 P. R. Evans
1948-9 R. Lowndes
1949-50 R. Lowndes
1950-1 D. B. Phillips
1951-2 A. Bird
1952-3 A. Bird
1953-4 J. M. Gregory
1954-5 C. J. Talbot
1955-6 B. V. Clegg
1956-7 B. V. Clegg
1957-8 D. B. Williams
1958-9 I. Nicholson
1959-60 I. Nicholson
1960-1 N. H. Ludlow
1961-2 J. S. Morrill

BRADBURY PRIZE WINNERS

1913 R. Gow
1914 F. C. Russell
1915 T. N. Jackson
1916 G. Lomas
1917 A. J. Murphy
1918 C. F. Redford
1919 A. K. Brierley
1920 F. Taylor
1921 F. N. Woodhead
1922 J. P. Thompson
1923 B. P. Robinson
1924 Sutcliffe
1925 G. W. Sutcliffe
1926 K. M. Doming
1927 R. A. Buvillant
1928 N. F. Dickinson
1929 G. Andrews
1930 F. N. Wardrop
1931 W. B. Thompson
1932 P. E. Thompson
1933 E. F. B. Davies
1934 J. E. de C. Meade
1935 J. P. de C. Meade
1936 D. H. Lowndes
1937 G. C. Wardle
1938 J. K. Barratt
1939 F. C. Lindars
1940 F. C. Lindars
1941 P. Knight
1942 F. Burrows
1943 V. C. Bickley
1944 P. C. Dannatt
1945 P. C. Dannatt
1946 P. C. Dannatt
1947 P. R. Evans
1948 R. Lowndes
1949-50 R. Lowndes
1950 D. B. Phillips
1951-2 A. Bird
1952-3 A. Bird
1953-4 J. M. Gregory
1954-5 C. J. Talbot
1955-6 B. V. Clegg
1956-7 B. V. Clegg
1957-8 D. B. Williams
1958-9 I. Nicholson
1959-60 I. Nicholson
1960-1 N. H. Ludlow
1961-2 J. S. Morrill

VICTORES LUDORUM

1913 F. C. Russell
1914 T. N. Jackson
1915 T. N. Jackson
1916 R. Gow
1917 D. K. Meldrum
1918 J. K. Allen
1919 A. K. Brierley
1920 A. K. Brierley
1921 F. N. Woodhead
1922 J. R. Thompson
1923 P. H. Wood
1924 J. R. Thompson
1925 J. R. Thompson
1926 W. A. B. Nicholson
1927 R. A. Buvillant
1928 J. B. Trippett
1929 R. F. Jackson
1930 G. Barratt
1931 R. F. Jackson
1932 G. B. P. Evans
1933 J. L. Williams
1934 F. I. Ashworth
1935 K. Rimmer
1936 R. A. Carmichael
1937 A. Spence
1938 W. A. Bale
1939 J. K. Whalley
1940 J. W. Sutherland
1941 W. A. Hay
1942 D. R. Melville
1943 D. J. Jackson
1944 J. C. Marsden
1945 K. F. Learey
1946 P. C. Dannatt
1947 J. A. Perkins
1948 F. E. Kuhner
1949 J. A. Adair
1950 M. E. H. Smith
1951 J. M. Hutchinson
1952 J. A. Carroll
1953 D. F. Hayward
1954 A. E. Jackson
1955 S. H. Portman
1956 F. B. Taylor
1957 E. J. W. Smallridge
1958 B. D. Hutchinson
1959 I. Crosby
1960 C. A. H. Riggs
1961 B. R. Clark

sixty-nine
1941—J. M. Logan, F. R. Nobes, P. Smith
1942—J. M. Logan
1943—W. A. Hay
1944—S. Mackay
1945—D. Menzies
1946—F. J. Hickford
1947—D. Menzies
1948—F. J. Hickford

Since 1953 the School has competed in the Inter-School District Sports and from these many representatives have competed in the County Sports. The following have represented Cheshire in the National Sports:


UNIVERSITY AND STATE SCHOLARSHIPS

1924—University: S. A. Male (classics).
State: S. A. Male (classics).
1927—University: J. P. Angold (Oxford—classics).
1928—State: G. Litherland (maths & science).
1931—University: F. H. Shaw (Oxford—classics).
1932—University: T. B. Shorter (Manchester—modern subjects).
State: M. J. Clow (maths & science).
1933—University: A. Litherland (Cambridge—science).
State: R. Wakefield (maths & science).
1936—University: S. Grace (Manchester—medicine).
State: D. F. Kelsall (maths & science), P. C. W. Copeman (modern subjects).
1937—University: K. W. Copeman (Cambridge—history), J. P. de C. Meade (South-West—modern subjects).
State: J. P. de C. Meade (modern subjects).
1938—State: D. West (maths & science).
1939—University: D. West (Cambridge—science), D. Penrose (Cambridge—science).
State: D. Penrose (maths & science).
1940—University: R. Dunsmuir (Engineering).
State: R. Dunsmuir (maths & science).
  State: R. E. Crabtree, P. Knight, A. E. Nicholson, F. H. Robertshaw,
1943—University: R. H. Gibbon (Cambridge—science), G. V. Butler (Manchester School of Art), J. H. Hopkins (Royal Manchester College of Music).
  State: L. Buckley, P. H. Oliver (maths & science).
1944—State: N. Parker, P. F. Morton (maths & science).
  State: H. L. Freeman, J. L. Houlden (modern subjects), D. A. Clark
         (science).
1947—University: J. L. Houlden (Oxford—history), B. H. M. Hargreaves
         (Cambridge—science), P. C. Dannatt (Cambridge—science), M.
         Edge (Liverpool—art & architecture).
  State: A. R. Rickard, R. K. Mottram (modern subjects), M. Edge (art),
         D. Menzies, C. S. Whitehead (maths & science), W. O. Parkinson
         (modern languages).
  State: G. O. Pritchard (maths & science), P. R. Evans (modern languages).
1950—University: P. J. Hart (Manchester—science).
  State: R. Lowndes (modern subjects), J. C. Sheldon (science).
         science), P. Gent, F. S. Jones (modern subjects), D. M. Waller
         (classics).
1953—University: P. R. Gent (Oxford—history), K. R. Lea (Oxford—science),
         P. A. Bird (London—classics), H. A. J. Champ (Nottingham
         —science), G. Williams (Nottingham—science).
  State: J. Gough, J. M. Gregory, B. A. Sidebottom, P. R. Whitehead
         (maths & science), G. D. Dick (modern subjects), C. Saunders
         (modern languages), M. R. Blease (classics).
1954—University: C. Saunders (Cambridge—modern languages), G. G. Douglas
         (Oxford—maths & science).
  State: M. D. Harter D. Hyde (maths & science).
  State: J. C. Talbot (classics).
1956—State: G. S. Leadstone (maths & science).
1957—University: E. J. W. Smallridge (Manchester—science).
  State: M. Johnson (maths & science).
  State: M. Quinton (maths & science).
1960—State: I. Nicholson (modern languages), N. G. Shepherd (maths & science)