

he plays the game, were all aspects of a terrific team performance. Other contributions came from Simon Johnson, Jasel Mehta, Ian Ratcliffe, David Slack and super-sub Craig McElhinney who never actually made it onto the pitch! The match had to be played on the only Hulmeians pitch dry enough, all the School pitches being once again totally inundated, and thanks must go to Messrs Seddon, Simkin and Britt Hamlin, our American coach, for conducting the Final so correctly and efficiently in such difficult conditions.

The juniors were also granted a bye, and this was probably one of those years when that was the only way we would realistically progress into the second round! Of our limited squad of twelve one had a damaged wrist, one was suffering from concussion and a third had recently left the School, so no-one had any optimism about our chances of containing a full Byrom side groaning with School players. Remarkably the nine Fraser players only lost 7-11, and were even ahead by two goals at one stage. All contributed: Stephen Kellett (capt), Bidhan Ganguly (GK), Richard Porter, Edward Choularton, Riaz Ahmed, Mark Buckley, Andrew Gough, and third-formers Nicky Arthur and Matt Naylor. They should be very pleased with themselves for not being discouraged by the poor odds and sticking to the job from start to finish.

The Hewlett Cup Six-a-side Tournament was once again closely contested and when it was over the first four Houses were within six points of each other. Fraser came third, four points behind the winners, Byrom. Our senior third VI was the only one to win a final and gain maximum points, scoring fourteen goals to only one conceded. The third form VI did well to reach their final but could go no further. This was another exciting afternoon for the participants, despite their annual confusion over timings, pitches and above all, goalkeeping kit!

In the midst of all this frenzied activity the following Lower Sixthformers were made up to House Prefect in deference to the existing prefects' increasing preoccupation with imminent public examinations:

Rizwan Ahmed	Mark Knowles
Rebecca Baron	Andrew Lole
Geoffrey Barraclough	Aarti Nayar
John Foggon	Sarah Porter
Saadi Hasan	Sally Ward
Leila Jalali	James White
Elisabeth Keable	

Running concurrently with the lacrosse knockouts and Hewlett Cup were the senior and junior Netball Competitions. This makes life extremely frustrating for House Masters who naturally wish to watch and support both events, but running between the netball courts and the lacrosse pitches certainly keeps us fit! The younger girls appeared to have little difficulty dismissing Dalton 6-0 and Byrom 9-2 in the preliminary rounds, then reached the Final by beating Heywood 8-4. In the meantime the Dalton girls must have decided that enough was enough and they changed tactics so successfully that we were hard put to maintain our early lead in the Final. Maintain it we did, however, to win 9-7, with excellent interplay between the two year-groups. Rachel Goodwin (capt) and Maame Ankrah shot accurately and Debra Nussbaum was a dynamic and effective goalkeeper. Kelly Bagley, Sadia Ahamed, Laura Smith and Sarah Moore all showed great skill with the ball and a good sense of positioning as they outplayed and outwitted the opposition.

The senior girls were relying on too few strengths in their matches and consequently went down heavily to Byrom, then narrowly to Heywood. In the play-offs we recorded our only victory which fortunately enabled us to avoid the wooden spoon. The girls tried their best, as they have continued to do for four years with little success until this term's hockey. Their loyalty and willingness have been appreciated.

Sally had chosen and cast the House Play before Christmas, and she and Manish had been holding readings and rehearsals on and off all term, but it was not until half term that *A Fishy Business* really got under way. A detailed review by the Adjudicator appears elsewhere. The Cast was:

Mary	–	Rebecca Baron	Emmeline Wagstaff	–	Maame Ankrah
George	–	James White	Nigel	–	Paul Bagnall
Vicar	–	Mark Knowles	Felicity	–	Sally Ward
Mrs Masters	–	Debra Nussbaum	Nurse (female!)	–	Andrew Lole
Uncle Richard	–	Manish Das	{ Stage Management	–	Leila Jalali }

This was a well-chosen little play, straightforward, undemanding on the audience and relatively easy to stage. A great deal of time and labour was required to produce such a polished and entertaining piece, however, and this was appreciated by the Adjudicator and the House Master. Costumes, set and characterisation were very well conceived, and the acting was excellent! It was obvious that the cast were all having as much fun as the audience. Although the play fared only moderately well in the



The Fraser Ensemble.
(From left to right: Manish Das, Laura Smith, Sarah Porter, Sarah Cochraine, Colin Harris, Elisabeth Keable, Sam Burney and Geoff Barraclough.
(Photo: D. M. Fisher)

actual competition, it was a great success for all the boys and girls involved, especially Sally and Manish who orchestrated the entire production and James who deservedly won the trophy for the best individual performance in all six plays.

The last major event in this term's House calendar is always the Music Competition, and with recent tightening up of the format it now presents a serious platform on which the School's best musicians can display their talents to an "invited" and supervised audience. The external adjudicator now summarises his views on each House programme immediately it is over, which benefits those listening as well as those performing. His comments this year were extremely complimentary, although he unfortunately mistook Manish's charming but nervous introductions for obsequiousness. Elisabeth Keable got us under way with a *Prelude and Fugue* (Bach) on the School organ. It's nice to see the instrument being used in this competition, though disappointing that there can be no audience. Colin Harris, that old stalwart of Fraser's House Music for the last five years, opened the afternoon's programme with an extremely challenging Tuba Sonata by Hindemith (whom the Adjudicator doesn't like!). It was hard going for Colin *and* his audience, yet one couldn't imagine it being played with more skill or subtlety. This performance earned Colin the highest mark of the entire competition - 91 out of a possible 100. Next Sarah Porter stood in at the last minute for James Byrom, who, rumour had it, had dashed off to the USA a day or two earlier, whether to avoid performing or not we could only guess. We all look forward to his piece next year, by which time it should be fully rehearsed! (no hard feelings James!) Sarah played two delightful minuets by J.S.Bach on the flute - we were fortunate indeed to have such an accomplished musician waiting in the wings as a stand-in. Sarah Cochrane played an atmospheric Spanish dance on the clarinette followed by Geoff Barraclough on his latest instrument, the alto sax, playing an up-tempo jazz piece by Steve Pogson called *Ska Face*, which he did with his usual confidence and vigour. Elisabeth followed him with the middle movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata in C*, forsaking her clarinette to give more variety to Fraser's programme. It was an extremely competent, restrained and scrupulous performance, further enhanced by her assistant's elegant page-turning! After this another treat - an arrangement for wind group of the evergreen *Pink Panther* theme by Mrs Beggs involving all those who had already performed as well as Laura Smith and Sam Burney. This is so well known that it is not always easy to bring it off with any real feeling or originality, but on this occasion the Fraser musicians imbued it with swing and something like its original novelty to make the ideal finale to a very accomplished programme. The outcome competitively was another win for this experienced team. Elisabeth and Sarah really have brought out the best in them all this year, as Colin somehow managed to do in 1993. Before moving on, it is certainly worth mentioning the written programme which was a combined effort by Mark Knowles (illustration), Andrew Lole (printing) and Geoff "Harry" Barraclough, who wrote the mildly libellous but memorable pen portraits of the *artistes*.

At the end of term the vast majority of boys and girls in Fraser received House Colours, reflecting the high degree of involvement in and commitment to House activities during the term. Additionally School Colours were awarded to the following members of the House:

Hockey:	Sally Ward, Alice Caine, Louise Illingworth and Caroline Ip
Lacrosse:	Craig Simkin, Nick Goodwin, James White, Paul Bagnall, Richard England and Joshua Robinson
Netball:	Caroline Ip
Debating:	Manish Das
Stage Staff:	Sarah Porter, Sally Ward
Music:	Geoffrey Barraclough, Colin Harris, Elisabeth Keable, Sarah Porter and Sam Burney

MIDSUMMER TERM

Nicholas Goodwin was appointed Vice-Captain of School Tennis.

Nobody could satisfactorily explain why there was no Senior Rounders competition this summer. Was the P.E. Department bribed, threatened or ...? This was not a second-rate affair and should not be treated as such. We will have to make sure that, now we have so many different boys' and girls' events, they are all accorded equal status and not allowed to slip by unnoticed.

The Junior Rounders Captain was Sadia Ahamed, and she was lucky to have such a strong group of third and fourth form girls to choose from. In addition their personal organisation was exemplary: there was never any need to worry about their attendance, their kit or the organisation of the team. Many of our other House teams would do well to take a leaf out of their book. Yet we were caught on the hop in our first match against arch-rivals Dalton, and lost our only match three-and-a-half to six-and-a-half. Stung into action by this, the nine girls immediately beat their next opponents by a margin of ten rounders. The semi-final was won by nine rounders, and then it was yet another final confrontation with Dalton. However we were fired up and ready to take on anyone, and the thought of a clean sweep in the three major sports added as an extra incentive. Dalton were worthy opponents and scored six and a half rounders against us again, but our girls' ten and a half ensured our third victory of the year! It had been altogether a delightful competition to be associated with, played throughout in a competitive yet friendly spirit. The swift interplay between Sarah Moore at backstop and Sarah Cochrane at first base resulted in several opposing players being out unceremoniously: Rachael, Debra, Maame and Sadia fielded really well; Rachel Goodwin bowled accurately, but could slow down her over-rate to allow fielders to regain their position and concentration; Maame could have scored even more rounders if she had varied her nifty reverse batting, as she has a tremendous hit - a lesson for next time, perhaps; and Sarah Cochrane, Rachel and Debra scored lots of rounders. In fact Debra started us off in the Final with a hat-trick! This was a year to be proud of for our enthusiastic, talented third and fourth form girls. Congratulations to them and to their captains in the three sports, Sarah, Rachel and Sadia.

Craig Baker and Debra Nussbaum offered to come and talk to our new second/third formers once their new Houses had been announced, a job they undertook with impressive composure. I am sure they created the right impression with the newcomers, with whom they are going to be quite involved from next September. We recorded the occasion as usual with a photo, though unfortunately Lindsey Thornton was away on national table-tennis duty. No doubt she will make an appearance in these pages before long anyway!

Two more byes, as well as bad weather, took our Cricket Knockout XIs into late-May (Senior) and early June (Junior) before they had lifted a bat in anger, and this meant that, with the onset of Exams, much of the impetus had been lost, and apathy had begun to set in. Dalton's Senior batsmen scored 169, a large total on the front square, though we gave them a disproportionate 39 extras! Simon Johnson bowled well, taking four wickets, Mark Knowles took three and Kamron Khan two. Ian Butterworth made a good job of keeping wicket. We could then score only 74 all out, but this was with ten men, our Captain having failed to arrive for the match. Morale obviously suffered because of this unprecedented lapse, and the absence of two other reputable senior cricketers on the feeble grounds that nobody had asked them further annoyed and discouraged our team. Nobody can have any sympathy with people who let down their peers in such a dishonest way, and one would expect to see those involved make a real effort to redeem themselves next year. On a happier note, those who did play represented their House with great credit against a more experienced side. Special mention must be made of Mark and Simon whose last-minute captaincy and support enabled the match to go ahead without the loss of too much face.

Dalton's Juniors scored an impressive 165 in their thirty overs, although Richard Porter temporarily delayed their progress by dispatching the two openers, Newton and Haider. Calderbank then came in to stay for an unbeaten 53 and it looked as if, despite good bowling from Richard, Stephen Kellett (capt), Matthew Naylor, Edward Choularton and Luke Hassett, we would end up being soundly thrashed. Stephen had things well organised, however, and he and Matthew batted well to build a mature opening stand of over 100 before Matthew was caught. Soon afterwards Stephen was run out and our demise came quickly, with only ten more runs scored, giving us a total of 122 (Kellett 75; Naylor 35). We had made a very good game of it in the end, with just a handful of real cricketers to rely on. Dalton had had their revenge!

Sports Day very nearly didn't happen in 1994. The morning's events had gone smoothly enough, but at lunchtime the forecasts of heavy rain proved sadly accurate and the Heavens opened. The last day of term was the only feasible reserve date, so at break the Sports were taken up where they had been left two days earlier. Fortunately only two of our athletes were unable to be there for this second stage, though both were key figures in relay races which could have proved decisive if points had been close at the end of the day. Having been pipped at the post the previous year by one point we were keen to do everything we could to win this time - a real possibility with the influx of such a good group of third form all-rounders. And it was our third formers who tipped the scales: Laura Smith, Chris Johnstone, Rachael Lee, Luke Hassett and Maame Ankrah all won their events (both the 100m and the 200m for Laura), and were supported by Craig Baker, Debra Nussbaum and Tim Barraclough with second or third places. Matt Naylor, Sarah Moore, Amir Tabatabaei, Andrew Yates, Richard Williams and Michael Gale tried hard and had some measure of success. The girls cruised to victory in their relay with a lot of help from Sarah Cochrane and endless trials with the House Master beforehand, and the boys were second and third in theirs. The fourth formers had less talent to choose from, but all gave of their best, the most that can be asked of them. Sarah Cochrane, Mark Buckley, Edward Choularton and Stephen Kellett all recorded first, second or third places, but Matt Healey won all his events (100m, 200m, LJ) and was awarded the Cardwell Cup as Individual Winner (Fourth Year). Other good performances came from Nilesh Patel, Richard Porter, Bidhan Ganguly, Sadia Ahamed and Rachel Goodwin, but the boys' relay teams lacked the strength to make any real impression. The senior Victor Ludorum was also ours: as last year Tonye Adikibi was unstoppable, winning the Triple Jump, 200m and 100m, but was extremely disappointed to miss the School 100m record by 0.09sec. Fraser's only other outright winner was James White (discus), but Sally Ward, Adnan Malik and Josh Robinson gained second or third places, and Craig McElhinney, Mark Knowles, Martin England, Elisabeth Keable, Sarah Porter and Geoff Barraclough all made their contribution. The day ended with the 100m Relays, the senior boys running the very last event. It looked as if we might need to win this to win Sports Day, but a late personnel change resulted in a dropped baton. Happily it fell inside our lane and the team was not disqualified, only overtaken! Mark and James ran well, Adnan began a comeback, and Tonye roared round the final bend to come second in the most spectacular race of the three days. When the dust had settled and the figures were totted up Fraser had won by a surprising margin of twenty-five points.

At the end of term, School Colours were awarded to Tom Donnai, Mark Knowles, Jasel Mehta and Simon Johnson for cricket; to Sadia Ahamed, Kelly Bagley and Rachel Goodwin for rounders; and again to Rachel for Tennis.

The House owes a debt of gratitude to Manish and his team of prefects for presiding over such a successful period, and I would like to record a big thankyou to everyone in Fraser who has, through their willingness and optimism, made all my dealings with them a pleasure, not a chore this year (although in all honesty I have to exclude House Assembly from this!). The very best wishes of the House accompany the Upper Sixth on their way to greater things. I hope they will also take with them some good memories of their years at School, and come back to see us (and gloat?) from time to time!

D M Fisher

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GASKELL HOUSE

Welcome to another group of "Second" formers who have the privilege of joining the cheerful, happy bunch of hard working characters who are Gaskell House. At least some of that is true, perhaps epitomised by Head of House Paul Harrison who has set an excellent example to everyone he has come into contact with. The twelve Upper Sixth have all contributed a great deal to House activities during their time at School. I wish them success in the future. Certainly Gaskell characters from the past seem to be very successful, gaining good degrees and continuing active participation in sport. Two former House Lacrosse captains will be representing England in the World Lacrosse Cup during the summer. Let's hope Paul Foster and Ben Savage can help England win some games.

In September 1993, 20 third formers joined the House. The usual plea was to get involved – ability does not matter – taking part does! Looking at the list a year later they have all contributed to something though Daniel Hesketh's contribution was to an Oxfam collection. To encourage "House Spirit" further next year House Prefects have been assigned to a particular year group with the intention of getting to know the individuals in that group.

The House Rugby Squad responded to Paul Harrison's example and aided by Simon Jones' goalkicking won all their games. This was an excellent effort by all participants with Nick Goddard dragging the Upper Sixth into action. Several players would not call themselves rugby enthusiasts, however they played with spirit. Perhaps that spirit was epitomised by Steve Neary who developed into a sound full back despite having to wear spectacles to see the ball!

The Juniors performed well to reach the Knock-out final but needed more teamwork to be successful, losing 20 - 10 to Dalton. Colin Ogden set a good example to the talented third formers who should be successful next year. The Junior 7-a-side teams were third despite Paul Edmundson breaking an ankle.

The House swimming competition was squeezed into the Michaelmas Term. We were apparently very weak on people but in the pool we put in a great team effort. Individual wins for John Daniels, Simon Jones, Hamza Anwar and Richard Garner, points from all the other qualifiers and good relays dragged us to a creditable second place – especially since Byrom were using an International!

The road race in November provides a chance for many competitors to have a go – five teams with one third former, one fourth former, one fifth former and one sixth former. Carys Edwards set the pattern with a run 30 seconds faster than the other 3rd form girls. Good times by Helen Collins, Abby Hyams, Natalie Mason, Yvonne Schofield and the fastest girl Sarah Sheldon, ensure the girls' team came first and third overall. The 3rd form boys came back in third, fourth and fifth position that were maintained until the fifth and sixth formers dropped back a little. The overall result was a win for Gaskell by six clear points. Twenty runners took part, all ran well – a great team effort. It should also be noted that Gordon MacLeod made his debut in a House activity.



Gaskell victorious relay squad.



Sally Burton, Gaskell shot put.



Gaskell Rugby 7 - 3rd Form.



Gaskell Senior Girls Relay Team.



Gaskell House Play.

The Cox 7-a-side rugby tournament demands the participation of every able bodied male in the House. The emphasis should be on teamwork but there is a tendency to attempt individual glory dashes that often lead to tries for the opposition! However the results overall were satisfactory to give Gaskell third place.

The Lent Term was hampered by poor weather that reduced the lacrosse league to four games. A good start was ruined by the usual University visits and a loss to Dalton in the last game. After several successful years the Seniors were knocked out in the first round of the knock out. However the Juniors compensated by winning their competition. Colin Ogden's effort set a good example, Mark Olden, Guy Brocklehurst and Richard Bell worked hard in midfield and the attack of Rudy Mensah, Robert Hanley and Robert Poll worked up a good understanding. With several third formers available again next year there is no reason why we would not retain the title. The Hewlett Cup was disappointing as teams failed to perform to their potential and lacked organisation.

The girls' team games are restricted to the Lent Term. Once again the Senior girls, strengthened by recent signings Samantha Hutchinson and Sarah Sheldon, won through to the House Hockey finals with goals from Natalie Mason and Philippa Whittle. However the final against Fraser was a close fought 0 - 0 draw though the "winners" were Fraser as they had more short corners. The 3rd and 4th year team had a similar problem – they could not score goals and therefore lost on short corners. They finally came fifth by defeating Byrom 2 - 0.

The Senior netball team all worked very hard for each other and moved the ball about impressively. They won their group section but then struggled against Heywood to lose their semi-final 9 - 3. A 4 - 0 victory over Dalton ensured 3rd place in the final placings – we will have to practise our shooting for next year! Despite a great deal of effort the 3rd and 4th year team were also defeated in the semi-finals to come fourth overall. Vicki Williams was a success as centre with Sally Burton and Jane Lawson as shooters.

The 3rd and 4th years performed well in the rounders competition, finally coming 3rd by defeating Heywood by 2 rounders. The younger girls have grown in confidence during the year – the new fourth year will have to organise the newcomers and pass on their enthusiasm.

The sports heats and finals involved virtually everybody still at School though some 5th and U6th formers returned to compete. The finals were not completed until the penultimate day of term, however there were several outstanding efforts. Gaskell had most success in the field events with notable sprinters such as Tyrone Berkeley and Martin Wan being hit by old age. Richard Bell, Mark Olden, Jeffrey Pearson, John Daniels, Hamza Anwar, Colin Ogden, Vicki Williams, Sara Atkins, Paul Edmundson, James Brocklehurst, Paul Harrison, Bernadette McCurrie and Sohail Aziz were all successful in the field events. This involved virtually a clean sweep in the shot put event. Sarah Sheldon proved she was worth her transfer fee by storming home in the 800m and the girls Senior relay produced an excellent second place. Robert Hanley jogged round the 1500m and trotted home in second place without running out of steam – pity there is a not 5,000 metres event to compete in. Mark Olden and Paul Edmundson were excellent in the fourth form 1500m but the outstanding memory is the boys' 3rd form relay. Zishan Anjum, Rudy Mensah, Robert Hanley and Hamza Anwar really attacked the 4x100m and stormed home to win by several yards.

The major values of Sports Day is the fact that virtually everybody takes part and particular thanks to Daniel Gent, Bernadette McCurrie, Natalie Mason, Jeffrey Pearson and Paul Harrison for making the effort to come into School despite having officially left.

Sara Atkins volunteered to produce the House Play. With assistance from many other sixth formers she completed the job very successfully despite the very short rehearsal time available. The House Plays only exist because many people, pupils, staff and mostly Mr Turner are prepared to devote a huge amount of time to rehearsals, costumes, programmes, properties and all the other running around necessary. Pupils and staff learn so much about each other - and themselves, while producing a play, it is a shame that there is so little time available at the end of a very busy term.

The overall standard was very good this year; the Gaskell Play, "The Patient" by Agatha Christie, demanded electronics and a hospital bed for props. This involves the co-operation of the Local Health Service and interesting trips in a School mini-bus that was then converted into an emergency ambulance. Many thanks to the nurses who helped in this little escapade. Costumes were excellent thank to the local Oxfam shop. Martin Cheung, Adyinka Molajo and Michael Scholes had demanding roles as the chief inquisitors. They had a lot to learn but performed admirably in their first acting roles. James Brocklehurst, Claire Reichl, Stephen Neary and Philippa Whittle were the suspects and put a great deal into their various characters, with some excellent feuding, even lasting into the curtain call. Sarah Sheldon was a very efficient nurse who had to wheel the patient (Sophia Crilly) onto a sloping stage in a hospital bed. Thankfully all went well and brakes were carefully applied, though Sophie looked remarkably healthy for someone emerging from a coma.

Many people helped with the production – Mr Greenall, Mrs Swindlehurst, Samantha Hutchinson, Paul Serrant, Paul Harrison, Steve Greenberg, Abby Hyams, Natalie Mason, Aaron Greenall, Jeff Pearson, Khurram Dar, Frances Edwards, Natalie Mason, David Melmoth, John Daniels and many others. The major bonus from a House Play production is the involvement and the experience gained in organising the whole venture. The production was enjoyed by all involved - even the audience.

Peter Kidd did an excellent job organising the team for the House Music Competition but was then sadly unable to attend on the day. This left the programme a little short though Sally Burton, John Daniels, Natalie Mason, Jon Cunningham, Helen Collins and Carys Edwards all performed well. The major entertainment was a song and dance act by Carys and Sally that will long be remembered by all those who witnessed the performance. Many thanks to Peter Kidd for the quiet effort he has put into House activities over the years - he will be missed.

Stephen Neary and Claire Reichl will be joint Heads of House next year though Stephen will have to keep a firm rein on Claire as she is also joint Head of School. All the Upper Sixth have been involved in House activities – I look forward to their continued support and the fine example they set to the rest of the House.

Mr Greenall is retiring from his post as Assistant Housemaster. Many thanks to his contribution, though we still hope to use his own brand of enthusiasm to House activities. Mrs Hesp has settled into the House this year; thanks for her help and support though lack of time to attend House activities continues to be a problem for us all.

The House system enables pupils to participate in activities they have not experienced before. I hope all present members of Gaskell will gain as much and contribute as much as the people who have recently left.

H N Veevers

HEYWOOD HOUSE

MICHAELMAS TERM

Heads of House:	Jonathan Ghazi and Richard Pimblott
Deputy Head of House:	Matthew McLean
School Prefects:	Jonathan Ghazi, Richard Pimblott, Matthew McLean, Howard Ash, Rajh Das, Jennie Grant, Gareth Roberts
House Prefects:	Jonathan Ghazi, Richard Pimblott, Matthew McLean, Howard Ash, Rajh Das, Zoë Fisher, Jennie Grant, James Goodall, Anna Hope, Vineesh Khurana, Gareth Roberts, Joe Birtwell, Damian Taylor, Iain Warbuton
Senior KO Captain:	Damian Taylor
Junior KO Captain:	James Leinhardt
Senior XV Captain:	Richard Pimblott
Road Relay Captain:	James Goodall
Debating Organiser:	Jennie Grant
Swimming Captains:	Senior: Howard Ash Fourths: Richard Dawson Thirds: Glynn Roberts

At the beginning of the term Jon Ghazi, Rick Pimblott, Matthew McLean and Rajh Das were already confirmed as School Prefects and so it was very pleasing when Howard Ash, Gareth Roberts and Jennie Grant were appointed later in the term. Jon and Richard were made joint Heads of House quite simply because they both deserved it and Matthew McLean was to do the job of deputy. The House Prefects were the ones appointed in the previous Lent and Summer Terms with the exception of Shahid Hussain who left to take up his studies elsewhere and we wish him well.

With the games lockers being relocated to rooms 5 and 6, and the Heywood book lockers being swapped with the old Junior School lockers in the Old Hall, the first few weeks of term were spent buying replacement keys, having locks changed and liaising with Mr Langford to make sure all were working correctly. Once this task was complete my job was going to be considerably easier, as far as lockers were concerned, because I now have master keys to both types and do not need to look out individual keys when people forget them.

The first half-term was spent largely practising for events. Heywood had byes in both the rugby knock-outs and owing to a mix up by the games department, the Road Relay was postponed for several weeks because it clashed with school rugby fixtures. Several lunchtimes were spent at the pool with the third and fourth years to sort out swimming teams and my thanks go to Miss Smith and Mr McIntyre for their help in running these sessions.

The rugby knockouts, on consecutive days, proved to be rather different in outcomes. In the Senior Knockout tries by José Witter and Nick Reading, which were converted by Damian Taylor and José respectively, gave us a 14-7 victory over Dalton, with a very pleasing all round performance from the team and subsequently a repeat of last year's final against Whitworth. The Junior Knockout, again against Dalton, resulted in a 41-0 defeat. Although, to their credit, the team played hard throughout, never gave up and kept the score fairly reasonable.

The Sevens Competitions proved just as frustrating. At Senior level we lost our first team captain, Damian Taylor, and also Richard Pimblott from the second team, both through injury. The first team subsequently lost both matches, although they should have won both; the seconds won both matches 26 - 0 against Byrom and 21-10 against Fraser, but lost the final 17 - 7 to Whitworth and the thirds were outclassed! Our final position of joint fourth with Gaskell should have been better.

In the Junior competition the fourth years, due to injuries and absences, were always going to struggle, and lost 19 - 0 to Gaskell and 26 - 0 to Whitworth but deserved credit for never giving up. The third years played very well in their first taste of sevens. After a comfortable 19 - 0 win against Byrom they lost 24 - 21 to Whitworth, a game they should have won. Each side kept clawing their way back into the match and with 30 seconds remaining Daniel Ellis ran the length of the field to give us a 21 - 19 lead. A poor clearance from the back off let Whitworth score in the dying seconds. However, we finished joint 4th with Byrom despite appalling weather and pitches. Hopefully we should do better in both competitions next year.

The Senior House League side had limited success. Ben Myddelton was absent for most of the term with a broken ankle and was sorely missed from the pack. Fortunately in the latter weeks of the term the House League never completed its fixtures due to the re-arranged Road Relay, cancellations due to weather, a postponement of the knockout final and U6 mocks. Heywood's team probably avoided the wooden spoon, but, when they did play, seemed to enjoy it. The knock out side was still in with a chance in the final despite being the "underdogs". After early pressure from Whitworth, Nick Reading kicked long from his 22 and Neville Clemetson and James Goodall followed up putting pressure on their defence. As they tried to clear their lines José Witter kicked on towards the corner flag and scored. A 5 - 0 lead was never going to be enough but for all their strength in the pack, Whitworth knew they were in a hard game and never completely took control. Dave Grove deserves particular mention for not only leading the pack so well but for helping put pressure on their fly-half, Tim Allen, from his position as flanker. However with three successful penalty kicks Whitworth came back to win 9 - 5. The most pleasing aspect of the game was the manner in which both teams played - hard but fair - and several league players, on both sides, raised their games on the day. Colours were awarded to the whole squad of players from both matches.

The Road Relay once again proved to have mixed fortunes for Heywood. After recording a blistering time last year of under 18 minutes, James Goodall, our captain with flu and Damian Taylor with a calf-injury were unable to run. Dave Grove and Neville Clemetson stepped in at very short notice and, although we narrowly finished 6th overall, there were many creditable performances. Like last year Rachel Westbrook in the girls' fourth year race recorded the fastest time of all the girls, including the Seniors, Halima Kasseum and Tabassum Safdar were 3rd and 5th in the third year girls, James Leinhardt was second fastest fourth year boy and Iain Warburton third fastest senior. In the past, Heywood's girls have often struggled

in this event so second and eighth for their teams was very pleasing. With 9th, 14th and 17th positions the lads had slightly under-achieved and James Goodall would have made a considerable difference had he been fit. Nevertheless, colours were awarded to the entire team which meant new awards to Ajay Bagga, James Higgins, Daniel Ellis, Halima Kasseum and Tabassum Safdar, all of year three.

The remaining sporting event was the swimming. As usual the heats took place over various games periods, for the third and fourth years, and after school for the Seniors. Heywood in recent years have been very short of talented swimmers, so it was pleasing to qualify for three relays and eight individual finals. Although we would have qualified for a fourth relay, but for the stupidity of one of our swimmers who will remain nameless. With only two teams in the heat our four swimmers only had to swim one length each of freestyle, without fly starts, to qualify, yet were disqualified. Our fourth swimmer swam his length under water and emerged in the wrong lane! This was particularly infuriating as this was our strongest relay team by far. Jolyon Guy was our best individual swimmer, with a first in freestyle and a second in breaststroke, and helped us finish 4th in the individuals. Our relay teams had one second and two fourths to finish joint fourth with Gaskell and Fraser - if our fourth year squadron team had also qualified we would have done considerably better. However, the complacency of one individual should not detract from the hard work and effort of the whole team. Colours were awarded to all qualifiers and relay swimmers and included Rachel Aldersley, Glynn Roberts, Priti Shah and Matthew Whyatt as new awards.

The Debating Competition was left in the capable hands of Jennie Grant in the U6 and Christina Barnes - competing for the third year running and still only a fifth former. They were drawn against Whitworth opposing the motion "This House believes the main purpose of education is to equip people to make money". Both girls made their points well, managed to raise several laughs from the audience, particularly with comments about underpaid teachers, and argued their case against strong opposition in what was probably the best of the three debates. Whitworth went on to win the competition and, although I was not there for the adjudication, several people felt that Heywood were harshly treated. Despite there being a smaller audience this year, only L6, both girls did admirably well in what is a very demanding event and fully deserved House Colours.

In the final weeks of the term, the U6 undertook their Mock A' Levels. Louise Borg and Nick Reading were selected to act as Heads of House and Dalia Daud and Ben Myddelton were nominated to serve on the L6 duty rota. These four along with Nicola Miller, Andy Watkins, Neville Clemetson, Dave Grove, Kevin Nolan, José Witter, Muhammed Alvi and Navida Hanif were made temporary House Prefects with the main roles of supervising lunches and taking the places of the U6.

The term drew to a very satisfactory close when Heywood's sixth form 5-a-side soccer team beat Whitworth 4 - 1 in a play-off for the newly formed inter-house league, run by Mr Lord. The only pity was that there is no trophy for this event.

LENT TERM

Senior Lacrosse KO Captain:	Joe Birtwell
Junior Lacrosse KO Captain:	Chris Reading
Senior League Lacrosse Captain:	Nick Reading
Senior Girls Hockey KO Captain:	Louise Borg
Junior Girls Hockey KO Captain:	Rachel Westbrook
Senior Girls Netball KO Captain:	Nicola Miller
Junior Girls Netball KO Captain:	Sahara Dixon
House Music Organiser:	Dalia Daud
House Play Producer:	Louise Borg

With the term starting on a Wednesday, once again Senior games were going to suffer with a shortage of weeks to fit all the knockouts, Hewlett Cup and league matches in. Things were made even more complicated when the first games afternoon, which is normally a practice, was cancelled due to bad weather. Similarly, the first rounds of the junior lacrosse and hockey were postponed twice because the pitches appeared more like swamps than grass! However, in the second week of February they were eventually played.

In the Junior lacrosse knockout Heywood played Dalton and unfortunately had five key players missing through injury, illness or absence. A final score of 13 - 3 did not reflect on the dedication and commitment of the side and I was particularly impressed by James Higgins.

In the Senior lacrosse we had a very capable league side but few squad players. After a bye in the first round we again played Dalton. As the school's lacrosse pitches were in a diabolical state this match took place at the Old Hulmeians' ground. As the girls were playing the 5th/6th play-off at school in the hockey competition I elected to watch the hockey. A result of 11 - 2 in the lacrosse was partly expected and apparently Ben Myddelton scored the best goal of the game. After beating several players he ran the length of the pitch to score a brilliant individual goal.

In the Senior hockey we played very well against a strong Gaskell side and lost 2 - 0. In the second match against an even stronger Fraser side we lost heavily 4 - 0. In the 5th/6th play-off Heywood played Whitworth who unfortunately had only 6 fit players. Nevertheless, in the very first seconds of the match they attacked our goal and almost scored. When we finally woke up and started to play the match was easily won 6 - 0 with goals from Louise Borg (4), Claire Babington and Dalia Daud. Colours were awarded to the whole team and I was particularly pleased for Phillipa Megitt who received then for the first time after volunteering to play in goal.

In the Junior hockey Heywood lost two players through illness and were forced to play nine against eleven. Against a weak Byrom side Heywood dominated throughout, failed to score and won by 6 penalty corners. In the second match, with Fraser, we defended resolutely against the competition favourites and lost 1 - 0, although we hardly managed to leave our own half of the field. In the semi-final we drew 0 - 0 with Dalton and lost on penalty corners. In one break away we could easily have scored but, to be fair to Dalton, it was only stout defending from Tabassum Safdar, Sahara Dixon and Alex Veeder, together with inspired goal keeping from Priti Shah, that kept us in the match. In the 3rd/4th play-off we comfortably

beat Whitworth 1 - 0, with a goal from Emily Hope to finish 3rd. To acknowledge the efforts of the girls, particularly as they had to play with fewer players, colours were awarded to the entire team and to Emily Hope, Duygu Uflaz and Laura Veeder for the first time.

In the netball competitions Heywood were the holders of the Senior trophy and again were in with a very good chance. Despite being drawn in by far the strongest pool, we qualified after losing 11 - 4 to a very strong Byrom side but beat Fraser 9 - 6. These matches were played in absolutely atrocious conditions with a howling wind and occasional sleet showers causing many of the girls to turn blue with cold. Nevertheless, all the Houses played their part and some excellent netball was displayed. In the semi-final Heywood played Gaskell and put on an excellent show to win 9 - 3. However, in the final against Byrom, having already lost heavily to them in the pool matches, we were once more outplayed and lost 13 - 5. I honestly feel we could have made this match much closer. Despite the efforts of Nicola Miller and Louise Borg to lift the team we never looked capable of making Byrom work hard. Too many passes went astray and too many shots were missed. Without doubt we need to believe much more in our own abilities and not enter a match in future believing we will lose. All the girls deserved colours for their efforts and hopefully will be challenging again next year.

In the Junior competition, we had a good side but made a very costly change of positions in our opening match against Gaskell and lost 5 - 1. In the second match the team played brilliantly and beat Whitworth 10 - 1 to go through to the semi-final against Fraser. This mistake could have proved costly and in future we must play our best team in their correct positions and make them worry about us. In the Fraser semi-final we were always second best and lost 8 - 4. However, in the 3rd/4th play-off we exacted revenge over Gaskell with an 8 - 2 victory and third place. Colours were awarded to the entire team for all their hard work.

The Senior league lacrosse suffered particularly at the hands of the weather. An excellent start to the term with a 15 - 1 win over Dalton meant, like last year, we would have a chance of winning the league. It was decided by the House Masters that because we still had two fixtures each to play, before every team had played each other and only one week to fit it in, that we would play two "half" games. Overall Heywood lost to Fraser but beat the other four Houses and when Dalton beat Fraser in the final match, a three way tie, between Heywood, Dalton and Fraser meant that the trophy was shared. Colours were awarded to the team and hopefully we should be challenging again next year as the basis of the side was lower sixth formers and fifth years.

The remaining sporting fixture was the Hewlett Cup and once again we came last by a very long way for the third year running. Our only success came from our third year side who won a match and the second and third teams at Senior level who managed to draw a match each. However, I have no complaints about the effort and commitment shown by the lads who always seem to enjoy this competition, win or lose.

The House Play was to have been a comedy called "Fluff" by John Scholes. As the rehearsals were starting to bring things together one of the cast's father was taken seriously ill resulting in the play having to be abandoned as there was insufficient time to bring in a replacement.

In the Music Competition, Dalia Daud did sterling work organising the Heywood entry. Finding time to practise was very difficult as, like last year, many of the performers were in school games teams, the choir, or the band and so many lunchtimes were unavailable. The adjudicator's remarks were very helpful and were justly deserved after so much hard work. His main criticism was the order in which the pieces had been played and this is something to think about in future. Our final position was fifth but it seems places can be won or lost due to the programme design and balance of entry. We are very fortunate that once again Christina Barnes did all the artwork and design of the programme, although the balance of our entry is rather restricted by the number of flautists. Colours were awarded to all Heywood's musicians which meant Marc Cohen received them for the first time.

At the final assembly of the term colours were presented to all those people who had been awarded them during the term and the U6 House Prefects were thanked for their efforts and relieved of their duties so that they could concentrate on their exams. For the second term running Heywood had won nothing outright and the weather had caused major disruptions. However, everything had eventually taken place and the House had gained a lot of enjoyment and success in many competitions.

SUMMER TERM

Senior Cricket KO Captain:	Iain Warburton	
Junior Cricket KO Captain:	Asif Majid	
Junior Rounders KO Captain:	Alex Veeder	
Athletics Captains:	Senior Boys:	Kevin Nolan
	Senior Girls:	Dalia Daud
	4th Year Boys:	James Leinhardt
	4th Year Girls:	Rachel Westbrook
	3rd Year Boys:	Ajay Bagga
	3rd Year Girls:	Priti Shah

The term began with the appointment of Louise Borg, Neville Clemetson, Dalia Daud, David Grove, Navida Hanif, Phillipa Megitt, Nicola Miller, Ben Myddelton, Kevin Nolan, Nick Reading and Andrew Watkins as temporary House Prefects with Dalia Daud and Ben Myddelton as acting Heads of House.

The first events of the term were the Senior and Junior Cricket knockouts and the Junior Girls' Rounders Competition. The Senior knockout gave us a bye and a second round match against Byrom. Similarly the Juniors were drawn against Byrom and we struggled from the start. Good resolute battling from Ajay Bagga helped us pass the 50 mark but Byrom easily matched our total for 3 wickets with overs to spare.

In the Junior Rounders Alex Veeder did an excellent job organising the side and we won our pool with a 10½ - 3 win over Byrom and a 5 - 5 draw with Gaskell. Rachel Westbrook was particularly effective and scored many individual rounders. In the semi-final Heywood played a very strong Fraser side, who seemed to have a particular dislike of the ball and smashed it all around the field to beat us 12 - 3½. In the 3rd/4th play-off, Gaskell won 8½ - 6, not that many rounders were scored but more a case of untidy bowling and fielding. However the Heywood girls had done their best, they seemed to enjoy the competition and worked well as a unit.

In the Senior cricket, Heywood were drawn against Byrom. We batted first and were scoring well for the loss of two wickets after 26 overs. However, Sujoy Jaiswal and Nick Ghazi were unaware that the match was only 30 overs, not 40 and so for the last four overs had to "throw the bat". Fortunately we reached 165 with Sujoy 73 not out and Nick 48 not out with Iain Warburton and Joe Birtwell having scored around 20 each. This last minute rush actually worked in our favour and Byrom, through tight bowling and good fielding, were restricted to 140 in their 30 overs. In the final against Dalton we batted first and reached 181 - 9. The mainstay of the innings was Iain Warburton's 88 and, after a middle order collapse, Neville Clemetson came in at the end to add 15 very valuable runs when a total over 200 had seemed likely. In reply Dalton looked very comfortable and reached 147 before they lost their first wicket. At 161 - 1, with 5 overs left, it looked a formality. Our spirits were raised slightly when John Hall fell at 162 - 2 and then amazingly Iain Warburton took four wickets in four balls, all clean bowled, as the total went from 164 - 2 to 164 - 6. In the next over Sujoy Jaiswal took two wickets in two balls leaving Dalton on 165 - 8, although they still had a very competent batsman in Benny Woolrych at the crease. In the final over Dalton needed 13 runs to win and after a dot ball Benny scored two fours and a three leaving two runs from two balls to win by losing fewer wickets. In what can only be described as one of the closest finishes ever, Iain bowled their ninth wicket leaving them on 179 - 9. Unfortunately for Dalton their last man had been unable to stay and so Heywood won by 2 runs with one ball to spare. The whole team were delighted and I was particularly grateful to Zia Choudary who filled in at lunchtime to complete the team. Colours were awarded to the team and Irfan Siddique received them for the first time. Also, for the first time in the year, Heywood had succeeded in winning a trophy in its own right.

Either side of the cricket final fell Sports Heats and Sports Day. I was delighted by the response of Iain Warburton, James Goodall, Damian Taylor, Richard Pimblott in the U6 and Andrew Haslam, Viv Priestner and Claire Babington of the fifth year for arranging to come in, especially as the two girls were on work experience. Notable success were, at Senior level - James Goodall, first in the 800m and 1500m, Iain Warburton, first in 400m and fifth in 800m, Kevin Nolan, first in javelin and second in discus and Dalia Daud, first in the girls' shot; at fourth year level - Rachel Westbrook, first in the 800m, second in the 200m and second in the 100m, James Leinhardt, first in the 400m, fifth in the 200m and fifth in the triple jump and Chris Reading, second in the discus and fourth in the shot; at third year level - Daniel Ellis, first in the 100m, first in the 400m and third in triple jump, Glynn Roberts, second in high jump, second in long jump and fifth in the 400m, and Ajay Bagga, third in the long jump and fifth in 100m, despite carrying an injury. At one stage in the relays Heywood were closing fast on the leaders Fraser, and when James Goodall, Iain Warburton, Richard Pimblott and Neville Clemetson smashed the Senior 4 x 400m relay record by six seconds we took the lead in the competition. However, as we were missing several key sprinters through injury or absence due to Sports Day having to be carried over onto the last Friday at the end of the term because of rain, we fell back into second place. I would like to thank the girls who made up the Senior 4 x 100m team and the fourth and third year boys who made up the 4 x 100m teams, as by participating they helped us gain four, two and four points respectively. It is just as important to take the minor placings as it is to win events - the more points scored the better. Colours were awarded to all finalists and relay runners which meant new awards went to Ayyaz Ahmad, Jaime Stockberger, Adam Cooke and Ali Shah. Once again the weather had tried to spoil a major event but fortunately we managed to finish Sports Day on the last morning of term. As a result one or two of the minor placings, particularly on the field events, might be inaccurate due to lack of time to check them officially but the commitment of the House on the three days was first class. Heywood eventually finished second with 260½ points compared to Fraser's 285 - an excellent performance.

I should at this point thank Jon Ghazi and Richard Pimblott for their excellent contributions as joint Heads of House, Mr Gracey for his help and especially Miss Smith who during my absence did a marvellous job looking after the House as well as supporting Heywood whenever possible through the year. At the final assembly of the year the new intake received their locker keys, colours were presented and small thank you gifts were given to Mr Gracey and Miss Smith by Louise Borg and Dalia Daud who were appointed joint Heads of House for next year with Ben Myddelton and Neville Clemetson as deputies. Louise, Dalia and Ben were also announced as School Prefects at final School assembly and fully deserved their appointments.

L Sharp



James Goodall, Richard Pimblott, Neville Clemetson, Iain Warburton. Winners of the Senior Boys 4 x 400m with a new record time.

WHITWORTH HOUSE REPORT

MICHAELMAS TERM

Appointments:	
Head of House	Ian Sherwin
Deputy Head of House:	Matthew Butterworth
Prefects:	Anisa Gilani, Roger Hargreaves, Raffi Haroutunian, Christopher Heys, Alok Jha, Stuart Murray, Nicolas Owen, Daniel Riste, Simon Whittingham

We welcomed into the House Dr J Keable as a House Deputy, plus twenty-one pupils at Third year level and three into Sixth Form.

Tim Allen was Head of School and also Captain of School Rugby. He succeeded Henry Slack also of Whitworth and our best wishes went with him for a successful year. Ian Sherwin was appointed Head of House with a strong team of Prefects to support him. He thoroughly deserved the post and was confirmed as School Prefect along with Matthew Butterworth and Roger Hargreaves.

Senior League Rugby quickly got under way and Nic Owen proved to be a very able Captain. The squad was largely comprised of Fifth and Lower Sixth formers who played with great spirit and enthusiasm. A shortage of strong forwards meant a lack of good possession, but we ran the ball whenever possible. The first three games were closely contested, but lost, before success was finally achieved against Heywood. Ahmed Zeb and Filip Pasterski both made their rugby débuts and added strength and speed to the team.

In the Senior Knock-out we played Gaskell in the second round and in an excellent all round display were convincing winners by 38 - 0. Peter Day was in fine form and scored a hat-trick of tries, two by following up half-breaks from Tim Allen. This set up a repeat of last year's final against Heywood. There was a quiet determination among the team to make up for the unexpected defeat in that final.

The final was a closely contested affair in difficult conditions. There was some consternation when Heywood scored a breakaway try to lead by 5 - 0. However, some determined forward play enabled us to exert considerable pressure in the second half and Tim Allen kicked three penalty goals which saw the team through to victory. Daniel Riste was outstanding in the forward and received good support from Roger Hargreaves and Raffi Haroutunian. Tim Allen and Peter Day were incisive backs and continually threatened the Heywood line.

In the Junior Knock-out we narrowly lost to Gaskell in an enthralling contest. Shortly after half-time the score was 15 - 7 in favour of Gaskell. Then James Jobling made a strong run from a penalty and then put Tim Edwards in for a try. This was converted making the score 15 - 14. The team were now on a roll and after another forward surge, James Silver snatched the ball at the front of a line out and dived over to score. From 15 - 7 down, the team were now ahead 19 - 15. Unfortunately Gaskell recovered their composure and snatched two late tries to claim a deserved victory.

Hopes were then high for the Senior Sevens Tournament. In their first match, the First Seven surprisingly lost to Dalton which meant that they were out of the final. This meant that we eventually finished runner-up overall to Dalton. The Second Seven was in dominating mood and stormed through to their final in which they beat Heywood. The Captain, Roger Hargreaves, was in fine form and scored some notable tries. The Third Seven also played some powerful rugby and eventually lost a close battle to Dalton in their final. Matthew Forshaw captained the side and led by example.

The week after, the House Debating Competition took place and Roger Hargreaves with Nicolas Owen put the proposal, "Education is to enable you to make money." They both spoke very well and presented a clearly argued case. At the end of the debate they were awarded first place and they thoroughly deserved the honour.

In the House swimming we finished third in the relays but were placed sixth in the main competition. We simply do not have enough quality swimmers in the Senior part of the House. The picture is more promising in the fourth and the gap between second and very creditable fourth was very narrow. Andrew Kelly ran the fastest leg in the Fifth Year boys' section, and Tim Allen did likewise in the Sixth Form.

The final competition of the term was the Junior Sevens in December. We were joint winners with Dalton largely because of an outstanding performance by the third year squad. The fourth years were expected to do well and narrowly lost to Dalton in the final. However, the third year squad was untested and only contained three school squad players. In the first game Byrom were comfortably defeated 22-0. This was followed by a match against a strong Heywood team. The tackling was good and there was some strong running from Tim Edwards and Russell Jones. With time running out we were leading 19-14 when Ellis of Heywood managed to break through and score. Heywood now led 21-19. From the kick-off we literally stormed the Heywood line and Tim Edwards snatched the ball and scored the match-winning try. The final against Dalton was even more of a cliffhanger. Most of the time we managed to score under the posts and James Beswick kicked the conversion for a 14-12 victory. A magnificent performance and for the record the square comprised T Edwards (Captain), R Jones, O Farrell, J Haboubi, B Kent, S Sallon, J Beswick, S Flood and D Durrance.

This was a fitting end to a very busy and successful term.

LENT TERM

The term began on a high note when Christopher Heys and Raffi Haroutunian were appointed School Prefects. Both had done a lot for House and School and were thoroughly deserving of the honour.

Roger Hargreaves was Captain of the Senior League Lacrosse and made up for any lack of finesse by his determination and speed. As with the rugby, the squad comprised mainly Fifth and Lower Sixth Formers. All the matches were keenly contested and the team spirit was excellent. Against Fraser it was 3 - 3 at half-time before the team tired and Fraser pulled away to win. The Heywood match was very similar 2 - 2 at half-time then Heywood drew ahead. Against

Gaskell we were 3 - 1 down, but this time it was Whitworth who finished the stronger and were unlucky not to snatch a win. A 3 - 3 draw was a fair result at the end. We then lost to a strong Dalton team, before ending with a 2 - 1 victory against Byrom. Stuart Murray was an imposing goalkeeper, and Tim Allen provided the skill in midfield. In particular it was very satisfactory to see Zulfikar Marchant volunteering to play and making a positive contribution in defence.

In the Senior Knock out, hopes were high because we had a balanced team, captained by Nic Owen in defence and with Peter Day spearheading the attack. Against Gaskell in the first round, the team took time to settle but gradually got on top and were ahead 3 - 1. They then relaxed and let Gaskell back into the game and with a short time left they equalised. The last two minutes were very frenetic and a momentary lapse of concentration let Gaskell in for the winner. Everyone was disappointed, but it shows that there are no easy games in the Knock-outs.

In the Senior Hockey we were once again hit by injuries and in the first round were only able to field a team of eight, instead of the full nine. The first game was a close affair against Dalton and we only lost 1 - 0. Mandy Wheeler was an excellent Captain who worked tirelessly in both defence and attack. Only some stout defending by Dalton prevented her from gaining an equalising goal. Against Byrom, the team tired and lost 4 - 0. In the next stage the team was down to six players and competed very strongly against a full Heywood team. We lost and finished sixth overall, but this overlooks the spirit, determination and effort shown by all the girls.

In the Junior Lacrosse Knock-out, the team were disappointing and did not believe that they could beat a strong Byrom side. They lost several quick goals but then rallied and eventually lost by 6 - 2.

The Junior Hockey competition was very closely contested and the commitment shown by the team was excellent. Rachel Nightingale was Captain, and she was a tower of strength in both pool matches. Both games ended in 0 - 0 draws, but we beat Gaskell on short corners, and lost to Dalton in the same manner.

In the semi-finals we came up against the strong favourites, Fraser. In an absorbing contest the girls were magnificent and ran Fraser to a standstill. The final score was again 0 - 0, and Fraser scraped through on short corners. We then played Heywood and just lost 1 - 0 in another very close game. This meant that the team finished fourth overall. All the girls played a full part and were awarded colours for their efforts.

All age-groups in the Hewlett Cup competition played very well and there were some exciting contests. We eventually finished fifth but this could so easily have been third. The First Six only just lost out to a strong Byrom team who then went on to win their final. A similar situation occurred with the Third Years. The Second Six were in dominating mood and easily won their final. They were extremely well led by Roger Hargreaves and Raffi Haroutinian. Due to last minute withdrawals, the Third Six were left with only three players. Mark Abadi, Joel Lewis and Gareth Mitchell were literally drafted in at the last minute and all played well. Their willingness to play when they realised the situation was very satisfying and their efforts were greatly appreciated.

The Senior Netball Squad was again reduced by injury but competed well in all their matches. Gabrielle Miller was an excellent Captain and was responsible for the very positive attitude in all games.

In the Junior Netball the team suffered from a lack of height, but once again made their opponents work hard. The first two games were lost, but then in their final match they beat Byrom 2 - 1 to place fifth overall.

Practices for the House Music Competition were once again difficult to fit in, but Chris Heys managed to put together a very useful programme. Daniel Durrance, Debbie Mosley, Caroline Shaw, Sam Sallon and Chris all performed individually and a final ensemble also involved Georgina Goodman and Tim Edwards. We were placed a very creditable third. Daniel Durrance on the piano, and Sam Sallon on the trumpet played particularly well and as they are both third formers it augurs well for the future.

The House Play is probably the most difficult of all activities to organise and produce. This year Alok Jha did an excellent job from start to finish and will prove a hard act to follow. He was supported by all the cast, most of whom were from the younger age groups. The play chosen was "Harlequinade" by Terence Rattigan. In it a group of actors are trying desperately to run through a dress rehearsal of "Romeo and Juliet", but generally nothing goes right. To act the part of an actor is always very difficult, but Laura Owen and James Taylor pulled it off in fine fashion. They were ably supported by Michael Birtwistle, Nic Owen, and the rest of the cast. I would like to mention everyone involved but unfortunately am restricted by space. Miss Green's adjudication gives full details (p. 61).

After the performance the Head Master told me that the first twenty minutes was the funniest and best introduction he had seen in a School play for a long time.

The Adjudicator was also impressed and placed us a close second to a fine Byrom production. Laura Owen received best actress award for her role and James Taylor was highly commended.

I would like to thank Alok Jha and all the cast for their dedication and enthusiasm throughout. Also many thanks to the stage staff, Kit Brown for the lighting and Dr Keable for the make up.

MIDSUMMER TERM

This term as usual was extremely hectic but the effort in all competitions was once again first class. In the Senior Cricket knock-out we played Dalton in the first round. Dalton were bowled out for 123, with Philip Sidebottom producing the amazing feat of four wickets in four balls!! His final figures were 6 for 11 off 5.2 overs. With some strong batting available the required total seemed well within reach. However, nothing seemed to go right and wickets quietly tumbled. Phillip Sidebottom with 29, and Shivi De with 30 briefly gave hope but eventually we were 107 all out.

In Junior Knock-out we received a bye in the first round and then faced a strong Byrom team. The bowlers were unable to restrict the Byrom batsmen who raced to 201 for 8. Manish Prasad gave us a glimpse of his cricketing potential with three wickets.

James Jobling and Manish Prasad set up the basis of a fine partnership and gave brief hope in the run chase. Trying to up the run-rate, Manish was run-out and shortly afterwards so was James. Jobling scored an excellent fifty and then Zaki El-Masri contributed 23 not out to a final total of 134.

In the Junior Rounders, the girls competed well and only lost to Dalton by half a rounder before losing to Fraser. They then went on to beat Byrom to finish in Fifth.

Once again the vast majority of the House took part in the Sports Heats and Sports Day. Several Upper Sixth and Fifth formers returned for both days and it was pleasing to see that they still wished to represent the House. I am very grateful for all their efforts. Unfortunately, Sports Day was marred by a serious injury to our star sprinter, Rachel Nightingale. She suffered a fractured hip whilst running the 200 metres, an apparently common sports injury. She now has her leg in plaster and will be unable to compete for some time. When, due to rain, the final were completed on the Friday, she managed to come in and support the House and it was pleasing to see her in good spirits.

We competed well in all events but eventually finished in fifth place overall. Tim Edwards won the Third Year 200m and also finished second in the javelin. Jacob Haboubi won the Third Year Discus and was third in the shot. Dipti Trivedi won a very close race in the Third Year girls 800m. Despite her injury, Rachel managed to win the Fourth Year 200m but was obviously denied victory in the 100m and shot.

In the Seniors, Tim Allen was second in both the 100m and 200m, as was Andrew Kelly in the 800m and 1500m. Mandy Wheeler was second in the Long Jump by one centimetre, and also placed second in the shot.

Near end of term, Kit Brown was appointed a School Prefect and was joined later on by Mark Zeegers. Our congratulations go to both of them.

This has been my first full year as House Master and I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The response from all members of the House has been excellent and the spirit second to none. I would like to express my thanks to Ian Sherwin and all the House Prefects for the support they have given me and for their efforts on behalf of Whitworth. Best wishes go to all leavers and I hope they will be successful in future.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr Keable for all her efforts on behalf of the House. She is always willing to help in any way she can and her overall support has been greatly valued.

D A Myers

* * *



JAMES HICKMAN, DOUBLE COMMONWEALTH GAMES BRONZE MEDALLIST,
WITH THE HEADMASTER

James won two Bronze Medals, one for 200m Butterfly, the other for 200m Team Medley.
He is now off to read Geology at Manchester University.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This poem won the Original Verse Prize Junior Competition

EXCALIBUR

There it stuck, in the stone
The sword to make a King
All the knights and all the Lords
Couldn't move the thing

Many months and years passed by
But Excalibur wouldn't leave
Until along came Arthur
Who gave it an almighty heave

The sword slithered out of the stone
The crowd began to sing
They chanted "Hail Arthur,
He is our chosen King!"

Now all this was quite confusing
For a lad who was only eleven
But the angels had given him strength
He's been appointed by Heaven

So Arthur rushed to his house
And gathered what he'd got
He set off on his father's horse
And rode to Camelot.

Edward Barker (2A)

This poem was runner-up in the Original Verse Prize Junior Competition.

I CELEBRATE

For my eyes, I celebrate
For the wonders of the earth I can see
For the beautiful vibrant colours
For the happy smiling faces of my friends
For this I celebrate

For my hands, I celebrate
For the way they enable me to write
For the sport I love to play
For music I can make
For this I celebrate

For my ears, I celebrate
For the delights of listening to music
For the laughing and the singing
For the chirping of the birds
For this I celebrate

For love, I celebrate
For the caring of my family
For the happiness they bring to me
For the times they share with me
For all this I CELEBRATE.

Jonathan Murphy (1C)

This poem won the Original Verse Prize Senior Competition.

ECHT

I sit, stare and let the feeling swell
Wide, painful space within, around
Mute gestures, empty faces, indolent gazes
People with false images surround
Even the window reflects the sun
Yet beneath it all you are. I am.

Daniel Riste (U6A3)

GLIMPSES

"Hi", she said
"Hi", I said, and stood in platitudinous disgrace
Contemplating how best to say..... how not to say
Lost in confused emotion the moment had passed
Tracking the belief that all was not that bad
Turning, going, my mind cries begging
Leaves me again, and this emptiness sagging
I hear my name, the world seeps back in
Suffocating all that was and "has been".

Daniel Riste (U6A3)

UNCLE JOHNNY

He would laugh
Till tears filled his eyes
I would hold the flabby skin around his neck
for comfort
His eyes, grey and misty, would sparkle
"Tell me a story, Uncle!"
What mystery lay behind those eyes?
Lines of age criss-crossed his ancient face
Clothed in colourless garments
They held no meaning for him
He was a dreamer,

But bitter cold froze his blood
His shaking, aching hands could not take the strain
So old
He, who had found the time to help others
Now those same people would not help him
Cruel world.

Chloe Duckworth (1C)

THE WIND

It started
As a very gentle wind
Circling houses and careering around bends.

Then
It started to get a little stronger
This time scattering dry leaves and rattling doors.

Then
A sudden gust of wind came along
Shaking up trees and slamming rusty gates.

It became
A very powerful wind that
Darted about fields and accelerated around bends.

It then
Rushed into overcrowded streets
Alarming business people and making cars skid.

Then
It became a giant hurricane
Sweeping across towns and obliterating buildings.

It created
Giant waves, and
Capsized heavy tankers.

At last the hurricane died down
The wind became a gentle wind, doing nothing more than
Whistling quietly and rustling leaves.

Emeka Nwegbu (1A)

WIND

The wind flies gracefully
It leaps high in the air
It penetrates holes in fences
A windy day demolishes the gate
The birds fly on it
Wind frolics over fences
It squirms through trees
It bursts from balloons
Let it encircle the little toddlers
See it tunnel through holes in the ground
It leaps up a thousand miles and crashes to the ground

Ben Starr (1A)

THE WORKINGS OF THE WIND

Birds soar and swoop on gusts of wind
Flags in the wind will writhe and flap
Wind pushes sailing boats on their way
Wind helps the farmer to grind the corn.

Wind makes the grass bob and sway
Wind combs waves in fields of wheat
Wind whistles as it darts and frolics between buildings
Wind spirals through staircases and dances around doors.

Wind whisks up litter from the ground
Wind wrenches trees, with violent twists from the ground
Wind slams the door shut
Wind rattles the doors and windows.

Wind whips up the leaves from their resting place
Babies blow bubbles that float in the wind
Wind makes the corn rustle and dance
Wind whips up waves and rushes them along
To burst on the rocks.

Richard Schofield (1A)

THE WIND

When you're hot and stuffy
You feel as if you want a little
Breeze, flustering around you
He blows as hard as he can
The wind dances and twirls
Like a ballerina
The leaves curl as the wind blows
Up down, up down
The tree sways from side to side
As the wind gains speed.

The wind is a pain
As it demolishes plants
And whistles and pushes against the window
Wind is cold when it swirls around you.
It pierces you with its penetrating breeze
The wind is sly and creeps behind you and
Startles you when he races past
He knocks milk bottles over
And flutters newspapers around the street
The wind is a monster.

Georgina White (1A)

DIAMOND

Impenetrable you lie in my hand
Diffracting the the light band from band
Beautiful to the point of tragic
You don't belong in a world like this
They call it science - wrong - it's magic

D Riste (U6A3)

WHEN IS A MUM, REALLY A MUM?

The scream resonated
Echoing round the buildings
We peered blurrily over the edge
Of the Deadly Chasm

The body lay, groaning
Twitching, deformed
We stood, clinging
Motionless

She broke the still
Running for the stairs
In a crazed fashion
Careless for herself

As she knelt over the broken body
She seemed to form
A protective cover; whispering to him
Loving him

She stayed with him
As the breaks were mended
As the groans were stopped
And she cared for him
As he lived again
Like only his mother could.

Jon Howarth (U6A4)

THE JOYS OF LIFE

You sat there
Naked, bare
Your life was full
But you chose to throw it away

You slashed your wrists
Long, thin slits
You sat in your pool of blood
and threw it away

It is not understood
Your life was good
Now, now I only have my shirt
soaked in your blood
to remember you by.

Why?

Jon Howarth (U6A4)

THE LOVELINE

Just numbers, buttons
Yet such magical digits
They can do so much
Excite, thrill, scare, chill

Press those buttons
It's all so easy
(When you know how)
Hear her sounds, feel no bounds

But never that easy
In fact so hard
Turns my heart to lard
I Just can't, just daren't

Fingers go stiff
Head burns, spins
I'm just afraid
Don't want to be alone
But just can't pick up the phone

Jon Howarth (L6A4)

WHO'S THAT WALKING IN MY FUTURE

Cold cuts you through to the bone
Like your flesh be transparent
Shivers through your skeleton
For reasons not so apparent
He who walks across my grave
He who talks, to be brave
The coldness fades away
But are you not aware
That you walk in my future
And I am not yet there

Mark Craig (L6A7)

HUNGER

Look at those children lying there
Must they die in such despair?
Fallen statues within days of death
Fighting to reach their last breath
Many more tonight go through the hunger pain
Their cries for food are all in vain
Tomorrow's menu is more of the same
All captured in a camera frame

No strength to show an emotion
Tears they've cried would fill an ocean
It makes your heart bleed
Children dying for the want of greed
Governments of the world unite
You have the power to end their plight.

Mark Craig (L6A7)

ONE DAY IN MAY

I knew her not as well I might
As I realised one day
It was so dark but yet so light
That was a lonely day in May

I was meant to celebrate it
That thing which shocked all people
I felt I was deep in a pit
Or on top of a church steeple

I watched as she and her new home
Were lowered into the hole
She appeared so alone
Keeping only her soul

We are gathered here to celebrate
One of those mysteries life demands
Nothing we say here can compensate
We let her go into God's hands

It was only then that I saw
We must celebrate every day
For you never know when you'll be torn
From your life, one day in May.

Mark Abadi (5C)

To Lisa, my cousin, who died in May aged 25.

ALONE ON THE BEACH

I turned around with paranoid eyes.
It is only the wind
caressing my body with its icy fingers
Entangling around me
With its transparent sheet of soulless air.
It was only the wind
Whispering its messages of fear into my eyes.

Then a moment of divine hope sweeps through my body.
The sun has engaged in battle with the wind
Piercing its cold form with rays of warm life
Like good against evil
Instantly neutralising its strength
And filling the soulless air with the fiery masses
Cheerful spirit and warmth

I was totally relaxed
The sound of the sea rolling gently
On the soft sandy shore
I look at the sea with furtive eyes
I chuckle under my warm slow breath
I am adventurous
But even I do not brave the sea
The sea is beautiful and inviting
But occasionally has an icy cold sting
The sea wills its victims
Into a sense of false security and peace.

Adam Dignan (2A)

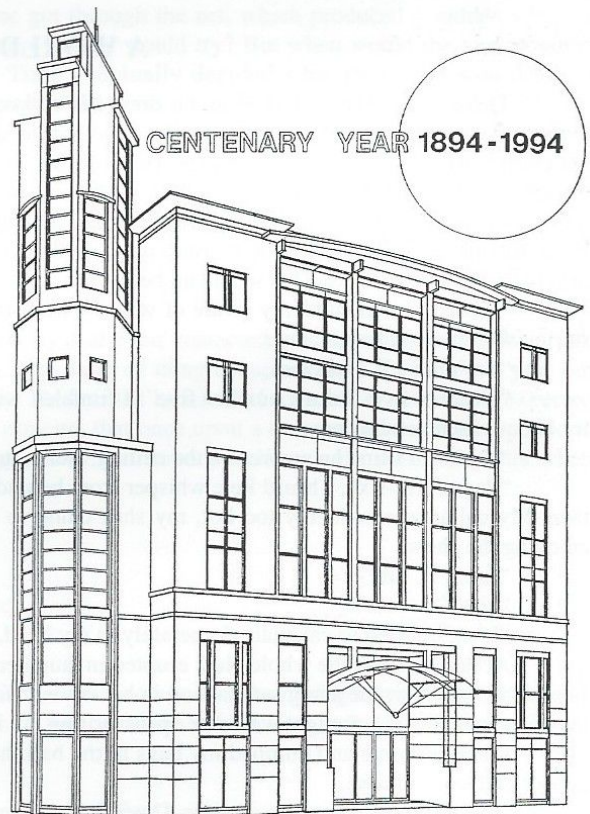
ROBERT NESTA MARLEY (BOB) LEGEND

When you feelin' down man
Turn on my music and feel the redemption
My name is Bob Marley I'm on a mission
To stop the world's racism
I'm a helper of God
I don't know where I'm going
Or where I've come from
But I will always love my people
Men, children and women

If no-one hates me, I hate no-one
I'm here to make friends
And keep up the morale of the Rastafarian
I'm scared of the violence caused by my thoughts
But others are more scared of me and my sorts
My hair shows my originality
But man we're all the same
It's only our minds which make us all different and petty

My music will go on forever
Maybe it's a fool say that
But when me know facts me say facts
My music go on forever
I disappeared in 1981
But memories of me and my music
Won't ever be forgotten
Never believe lies you all have your own belief
Because I swear I didn't shoot the deputy
It was the sheriff!

Georgina Goodman (4A)



HATTRELL AND PARTNERS CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

ARTHUR HOUSE CHORLTON STREET MANCHESTER M13EJ
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A WORLD OF YOUR OWN

The boat drifted silently down the river, and in it, a fair maiden sat gazing wondrously at the picturesque surroundings. She listened to the sound of the birds calling to one another and then

I heard her calling my name distantly. I realised with dismay that it was Mrs Price, the dreaded English teacher. I had slipped out of my reverie now, with disappointment. I was imagining I was the girl in the book we were currently reading. She was a rare beauty, her eyes as dark as night, her fair hair gleaming in the sunlight.....

I jumped. Mrs Price was standing over me like a large looming tower. There was no chance of my getting back to my dream now. Didn't that woman have any imagination? I'm sure she must regret having such a pitiful existence. One can only sympathise with such a person. I wonder if she ever imagines herself to be anything other than the ogre she is now. If I could be anyone other than myself, I think I'd like to be, no, not a person, a dolphin. They are such wise creatures and so much is hidden behind that playful exterior. What I wouldn't give to be a dolphin this very moment. Gliding gracefully through calm waters, without having to explain my inattentiveness to Mrs Price. I was made to write out "I must pay attention in lessons at all times", 500 times!

As I was walking home that day, after school, I tried to transport myself back to the boat scene. The beautiful girl was suffering from a broken heart and was lamenting woefully, but she can't have been too upset, for at the end of the story (I read ahead - patience has never been one of my strongest qualities), she married a rich middle-aged man. I didn't approve of that ending, so instead, I invented my own. The girl devoted herself to the memory of her lover and was so overcome with grief that she did not sleep or eat and eventually died.

So moved was I by this sorrowful account that I had not realised how dark it had become. My mother would be angry. I ran the rest of the way home, the girl with the broken heart temporarily forgotten. My mother was out when I arrived home, so I settled down to my 500 lines reluctantly, but eager to get them finished. I was just beginning line thirteen, when my eye caught the picture on the wall of our living room. It was of the sky at night, the pale moon casting its beams gently over the earth. I imagined I was an eagle, soaring high above the clouds, gracefully easing my way through the sky, effortlessly gliding.... When my mother came home, I was gazing at the picture intently. She called my name sharply and I was jolted out of my dream world, with instructions to get on with my lines, but not before severely scolded for being told to do them in the first place. I didn't even have a chance to imagine myself as the elegant eagle again because I was under the watchful eye of my mother.

At ten-thirty that night, I fell into bed, my hand numb from all the lines I had had to write, and no sooner had my head touched the pillow I was dreaming.....

Geeta Rampal (5Y)

A WORLD OF YOUR OWN

There was a flash of steel as he drew his cutlass but I was quick to draw and parry, sending my foe backwards towards the rail. He leered evilly and the gold tooth glinted in the corner of his mouth. His face was a patchwork of scars, and his clothes were a poor excuse for rags. He came again, fighting with the ferocity of a feral cat. He fought with no skill though and in one elegant movement I flicked him up and over the side railings of the galleon. I watched as he sank into the murky depths and pondered whether anyone would remember him, before racing across the deck, my silk pantaloons shining in the moonlight. I headed for the treasure room, and once inside I had to shield my eyes from the glittering splendour of the jewels and golden trinkets. This would all be....

"Burns!" I was suddenly aware of where I was once more. In a classroom full of fourth years, all turned around and staring with mocking eyes at me.

"Er, Yes Sir?" I offered.

"Number five, Burns, number five". I fumbled with my book, losing the page, desperately trying to find an answer for his question somewhere.

"You won't find an answer on the ceiling, Burns, try in your book for a start".

"Page forty-six", I heard Pete whisper from behind me. As I scanned the page I could feel the heat radiating from my face. My collar was suddenly too hot, my shirt clung to my clammy back, and still everyone was looking at me, waiting, enjoying the show.

"Er.... X, Sir?"

"Yes?"

"It's...", I tried to calculate desperately in my head, "It's four, Sir"

At this moment the whole class erupted in laughter. Above the noise the teacher's voice rang out, "See me afterwards, Burns". I could hear the smug satisfaction in his voice, "You haven't been paying attention, have you, boy?" I sank down into my chair knowing that tonight would be spent writing out lines.

I arrived home and dumped my bags in the hall, heading for the fridge by instinct, but it only offered half a wizened pepper and some cheese.

"Oy! Get your paws out of there, David", it was my mother's commanding tone, "besides dinner will be ready in half an hour". I retreated to the safety of the couch and picked up a magazine.

"So tell me, how was your day at school then?"

"S'okay"

"Did you work well?"

"All right"

"Haven't you got homework to do?"

"No." Then I remembered the lines, "Oh, yeah, I'll just go up to my room now and do it."

"That's a good lad". I was already running up the stairs, taking them three at a time. Once in my room, I pulled out the paper and started writing at my desk. After five lines the room began to fade, now I was in the jungle, the jungle of my mind, where anything goes and million-to-one chances ALWAYS work. There was the enemy patrol approaching, they had a hostage in their midst. It was Karmen White, 9C. She didn't even know I existed, but I had already rescued her from the jaws of death many times, scored the winning goal in the world cup final in front of her, pulled her from in front of onrushing cars. In this world the eyes always met, the light always caught your teeth and made a noise that went "ting". Sunsets were always there to be walked into, hand in hand. Now I had yet another super-human task to do, one that only a tall, dark stranger could possibly pull off.

I jumped out of the tree, unarmed, and landed on the first two soldiers, killing them instantly. Dancing around the oncoming bullets like a deadly ballet dancer, I killed the whole patrol one by one, with a series of bone-crunching punches and lightning kicks. At the end of this, Karmen was left standing in the centre of this carnage, looking coy and grateful. I strutted up to her and cut the ropes that bound her with ease. We were heading towards the rapidly setting sun when....

"For the third time DINNER!" She must have been calling for minutes, and now she was heading up the stairs for my room, and upon seeing my unfinished work screamed at me to get on with it.

"Frankly darling, I don't give a damn", I said. There may even have been a glint of light on my teeth, a faint "ting" hung in the air.

Andrew Kelly (5Y)

TIME

It was a bright sunny afternoon somewhere 200 miles high above London. A lone figure sat watching his terminal, waiting for something to happen. This figure was Time. His back was slightly bent and his eyes looked tired. Time was bored. Time had been bored for a long time. The last time he felt bored he had been on holiday, but unfortunately when Time went on holiday, time stopped. The wind stopped blowing, the birds stopped singing and the sea stopped doing whatever it is that the sea does. Time had been miserable; all the cafés were stopped, all the ice cream shops were stopped, all the people were stopped and even the guided tours were stopped. After some unknown period of time, he came back. Now once again he was sitting in front of his terminal watching the world go by. Maybe if he made a replica of himself and set it where he sat, time wouldn't notice he was gone, and might go on as usual. His job used to be more interesting, but as fewer and fewer people attempted travelling in time, more and more people said it was impossible. Of course it is possible, but Time is there to make sure you don't. Once Time had fallen asleep and someone got through the net, which produced a sudden surge of interest. Maybe if he let the next person to try it, succeed, then more people would try? But when would the next possible candidate be? A day from now? A year? A century? Longer? Time eventually decided what to do. He would hire a replacement. It should be easy to put an advertisement in the local paper. The applicants would roll in:-

Secretary Wanted
No experience necessary
Menial office duties
Long term contract
\$50,000

Two months later Time was beginning to get worried. Nobody had even contacted him, let alone asked for a job. Maybe if he increased the wages, after all, money was no object. This kind of thing occupied Time for almost a year but eventually he became disheartened after receiving nothing in return. He decided to ask God for advice, not that he expected to get anything from him. God was just God, although there were rumours that once upon a time he had been quite active in "making things and the like", but now he just sat around telling stories that nobody believed. He was doing this when Time strode in.

"Er, Hello" said God,

"I haven't seen you in some time, Ha Ha."

"I've been busy." muttered Time.

"Is this a social visit or do you want something?" God asked.

"I would like some advice," said Time.

"Just my forte, fire away," beamed God.

"Well it's like this, I've been doing the same thing for three hundred years now and I'm beginning to get bored," said Time.

"How about a holiday? I always liked walking in the Swiss Alps, or maybe a brief visit to Spain, or maybe Disney World is more up your street", said God.

"No, a holiday isn't much fun without time," said Time.

"I can see your point, er, how about if you got yourself a hobby. I always liked astronomy, when I was younger," said God.

"Yes, all right", said Time.

Time strode confidently back through the corridors of the castle and the faint glimmerings of an idea began to develop inside his head. By the time Time had made it back to his little office, he knew exactly what his hobby was going to be. He had always liked clocks, his fascination with time had led him to his job, but he had forgotten about it, as his fascination became a job.

The first clock he bought was a carriage clock, about a foot by half a foot with gold plating, and it made a lovely swishing noise as its movement swung first one way, then the other. Then he put it on a shelf just above his terminal. He sat watching it for hours. He observed that it kept almost perfect time, losing only a minute every two weeks or so. The next time he went to get a clock he bought two, a huge grandfather clock, which he stood in the corner, and a cuckoo clock, which he soon smashed, as he became irritated by its constant racket. His collection began to grow to inordinate proportions. He could hardly move for clocks, and on top of this, he began collecting watches. He was amazed by the sheer diversity of watches that had been made, plain watches, digital watches, divers' watches, and watches that take your pulse, (he didn't like these too much because they kept saying that he was dead).

Time finally decided he needed a bigger office, so after signing the appropriate papers he moved to an office twice as large. In two weeks this office was full as well, and the noise made by the clocks was so loud that God started complaining about it. Everybody tried to ignore it as much as possible, as they all understood that humans had to understand time-travel, before God would allow them to use it. Until then Time didn't have much of a job. After three weeks of constant complaining it became obvious to Time that he would have to give up his little hobby, so he moved back to his old office. He collected all his clocks together, put them into cardboard boxes and sent them to a firm that advertised in the paper.

Time was bored. This time Time decided he would go and visit his friend War. War wasn't such a bad god, he was just a bit belligerent. Unfortunately it was more than likely that War would be out, War was always out, provoking civilisations into battle, keeping himself busy. Maybe War would let Time go along and see the sights. Then again the last time he had gone along with War he had been sick at the sight of a mutilated child by the edge of the road. All War could say was "Casualties of war, everything has its price". War never did understand the price of life. War was out, there was a little sign on his door saying "Out to Lunch" with a picture of some horrible monster eating at some fast food restaurant. Time had bought him that sign many years ago. It was all brown with age and half the monster had faded into oblivion.

Time walked slowly back to his little office, returned to his seat by his terminal, not even hoping that something would be happening. After forty-five minutes a small blob appeared on his screen.

Time nonchalantly wiped it off with his handkerchief.

Richard Lamb (5X)

THE HILLS

The mist rose gradually to show a cold, chill morning. The sun had not risen from behind the ancient hills, which lay crumpled under the strain of winter time. The ground was completely sodden with the previous night's rain and channels of water gathered, tumbling down slopes. A wind blew across ditches, rippling the silky surfaces of the deep puddles. It travelled on, wrapping itself around the bare branches of the trees so they rattled with fear.

The wind vanished at the sound of life approaching. The barks got louder and a dog came into the valley. He was a small collie, black with frothy white around his legs. His head showed his age, his cheeks grey, his nose brown and wrinkled. However, the tail gave a different story, black, bushy and full of life. The dog's companion was a middle aged man from the countryside. He had the look of a traditional farmer. His head was large and round with a very thick dark brown hair covering his ears. On top of this mop was stuck a green tweed cap, pulled slightly forwards. His face was quite flat. A wide nose covered most of his face. The man frowned and his bottom lip quivered as though he were mumbling to himself. The eyebrows were surprisingly pale and thin compared to his large facial features which gave him a strange appearance.

The dog raced off in front of the man, jumping over streams, kicking up mud as it went. The owner made no attempt to hurry after, but continued walking at the same steady pace. His shoulders rolled from side to side, his neck bent forwards. His feet dragged along the soggy ground as he tried to lift his enormous heavy boots. Clad with layers of hard mud, they fell into the squelchy ground.

His build was of a short, broad man. He was solid, wearing a thick, dark coat, with hands in pocket. He matched well with the scenery and his tough, wrinkled skin was like the unbreakable marsh reeds. Despite his cold, pale face, he had inside him a glowing heart that came from out of his soft, gentle eyes. They showed his great love for the wonderful nature around him. They moved gracefully and shone as bright stars in the sky. The dog came bounding back to his faithful master, a true man of the countryside.

Deborah Johnston (4X)

THE CITY

The city is as quiet as a graveyard when it is early in the morning and then it starts to fill up with the hustle and bustle of cars, trams and buses. The people are armies of ants going from one place to the other. The offices are filled with people making important telephone calls to far off places.

The cars line the roads like a train of elephants. The drivers wait in long queues to get to their destinations, some patiently, while others become increasingly irritable.

The trams move like mechanical snakes through the city and weave their way through the roads filled with traffic. The trains move like mechanical snakes too and are packed with commuters bursting in the cars like sardines packed in their tins.

As the day goes on and the afternoon turns to evening the city lights are turned on and night-life begins. The disco doors open and the beat of the rhythmic music can be heard from the dance floor.

The starched and nicely pressed office workers of the day are now dressed in dazzling outfits. The bars are filled with merry souls drinking to "the end of the day". The restaurants let loose their aromas from their kitchens to lure the hungry workers into their shops and feast their eyes on the delicacies.

When the night has deepened and the sky is as black as a midnight cat, the discos quieten down and the restaurants lock in the scents from their kitchens until they can set them free again the next night.

The city sleeps again like a savage dog being calmed down but only until morning when it is woken up out of its slumber.

Sahara Dixon (4X)

THE BYPASS

The field was still. In the early morning from a distance the scar caused by the swathe of grass, which had been cut away, could not be seen. Looking closer, the area could be seen easily, the completed road tarmacked, but as yet unmarked by a vehicle. Further up, the part of the bypass being built was a knee-deep quagmire, churned up by the giant digging monsters, controlled by men. They were silent in the dawn, like ghosts of a long dead civilisation. Elsewhere, I could see orange cones showing like beacons in the morning light and red tape, meant to warn unknowing people about the danger of the holes and machines, flapping in a light breeze.

As I watched, the building supervisor arrived and set to work. He was a man in his late thirties with short, dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He was wearing a navy parka with fluorescent patches, round the neck, down the sleeves and on the zip, and a pair of black jeans. On his feet he had muddy, black, thick soled Wellington boots, which gave him a good grip on the ground as he stamped about in the mud, checking the machines were in working order for the day ahead. He glanced around at the silent site as though doing a final check that all was well, before turning on his heel and walking into the site cabin by the side of the road, where the builders sat to drink their tea and watch the world go by.

Sarah Cochrane (4X)

UNDER THE SEA

Under the sea there is a beautiful and fascinating world. Its clear, tranquil waters provide a home for thousands of aquatic creatures. The sea bed is rich with hurrying, quarrelling, breeding life.

Small crabs scurry about among the swaying algae. Magnificently coloured fish swim gracefully through the water like models on a catwalk. Jelly fish float gently, their swinging dresses concealing nasty stinging cells. A sea horse swims by rapidly moving its single dorsal fin, its neck and head like the figure of a knight in chess.

An octopus pushes its way along using its powerful arms and then comes to rest on a rock to feed. Effortlessly, it tears away a mussel from the rock and places it inside its mouth, where it cracks the shell and eats the contents.

Slowly the sun comes out from behind a cloud and releases its beams onto the sea to create a glorious pattern of light on the sea bed.

A ray shears through the water like a bullet, in pursuit of a small helpless hatchet fish, leaving rippled water behind it. A plaice drifts down to the sea floor where it lies on its side, and blends into the sand. Here sea urchins have come to rest on a large flat rock in such a way that it resembles a bed of nails. Shrimps scamper around on the sandy bottom, their tentacles searching frantically.

A wave crashes down onto the reef, setting foam and bubbles into the water. A moment later the water settles, becoming clear and ruthless again.

Black eels wait patiently in dark underwater cavities for their prey. The beautiful anemones wave their outstretched arms in the water, tempting weary animals to rest upon them. When a sand hopper or shrimp cannot resist and goes to lie on the anemone, its tentacles pounce inwards and its stinging cells launch tiny narcotic needles into the prey, sending it into a deep eternal sleep.

Andrew Xydeas (4X)

THE WIND

The wind was bitter as it slipped between the moorland grass, and teased the thick layer of snow hugging the plain. The land swept down abruptly into a fertile valley with rich tones of yellows, greens and browns, softening the contours of the hills, so as to be captured as desolate, sweeping lowlands. The wind blew with fervour across the weathered track, worn by travellers, and crossed the fields, running lines across the mustard grass, like rhythmic waves at low tide, bursting into a shower of yellow rain, captured in the dandelions, buttercups and primroses. Out from the peaceful incline walked a rugged man. His well-defined physique stood out abruptly from the subtle mould of the surrounding scenery as the icy wind penetrated the chinks between his jacket-like sharp icicles and blew harshly at his back. One end of a scarf leapt from its solitary position underneath the man's checked, worn jacket and almost as quickly a red, chapped hand extended from its warm confinement and tucked it back in place.

Everything about him shone with neatness from his precisely positioned scarf, right down to the shine on his boots. He extended his arm in an attempt to maintain his already ruffled hair, moving it to one side so that his facial features could be easily distinguished. His face was his most striking feature of all with his perfect square jawline, long prominent nose which complimented his high cheekbones and his deepest, hazel eyes, faintly highlighted with flecks of green.

He walked to the top of the hill, his slow pace, softened by the spongy moss, blanketing the slope from a distance, he gave the appearance of quite an old man. Up close, his features were obviously young, smooth and shining with a healthy glow, fresh from life, yet his pace was slow and dwindling and his stance was haunched, not full of energy and straight of posture, as expected from such a young man. A shrill whistle escaped from the man's lips and pierced the air like a thin blade of steel. A rough collie, patched with shades of brown, bounded into view from among the field of high grass, its enjoyment obviously captured in its deep brown eyes, twinkling in the broken sunlight and the continuous beating rhythm of its tail. The dog immediately bounded after his master, its glance never leaving his side until he had finally caught up with him. They walked along side-by-side, the dog full of attentiveness, bright-eyed and alert, while the man looked around and paused to pick up a rotting stick, long and cracked, the aged, crusty bark, crumbling in his firm grasp. Carefully and swiftly he extended his arm to throw it, the dog's gaze concentrating on the object. He threw the stick, which landed in a clump of heather, some 10 metres to the left of the track. The dog immediately bounded after it, with long, powerful strides, its eyes rooted to the spot where it had landed, leaping into the area in a matter of seconds, sending heather flying in all directions. The man gazed casually on the scene, his eyes showing no signs of emotion. He stopped and bent down, picking up a small piece of heather, the jaunty flower making his hand look large and clumsy and slightly pall in contrast. A shimmer of sadness briefly glittered in his eyes and then passed away again. He turned his hand slightly so that the heather fell from his grasp, leaving only scattered remains on the ground and with a brief glance, the man turned back and walked off, disappearing into the shadows of the hills.

Emma Weeden (4X)

THE SEA

Millions of fish swimming in arrangement and with fluency like a military regiment and the rainbow colours on their backs beautify the sea. Some torn pieces of seaweed rise to the surface and flow hypnotically with the rhythmical pattern of the waves. The sea is calm and clear. On the seabed can be seen, sometimes, the masters of disguises. The Carpet Shark blends in with the sandy seabed and slowly settles in. It waits and when a juicy, succulent fish passes by, it lunges with a sharp thrust, a gaping mouth, and rips it to pieces with serrated teeth. A small cloud of blood appears and attracts a frenzy of sharks. About seven sharks appear, trying to scavenge for food, not realising the prey of the Carpet Shark is being melted down in the searing, caustic, digestive acids. They then realise and a fight emerges, and they try to bite chunks out of each other. A minute later their frenzy is over and a few sharks leave with serious flesh wounds. The sea is now calm and clear.

The algae and seaweed are used as a lure, to unsuspecting fishes by the Moray Eel. Swaying from side to side, showing the mesmerising instincts like the nymphs of Greek mythology, they attract the fish and with one swift, slick assault, the eel gobbles up its victim. In the distance can be seen a large murderous silhouette. The majestic, regal, illustrious, prime hunter and killer. The Great White Shark. It swiftly sails, streamlined as an otter, eating everything in its path; all lesser creatures swim for their lives. This eating machine's hunting instinct is without compare. Only one man can kill this beast, but only with the help of a strong fishing line and a huge chunk of meat. It swims towards the trap and is caught instantly. All the other creatures celebrate the death of this evil killer. Various creatures sprout their colourful tentacles or flash their spots like disco lights. The celebration is temporary as muffled voices like train station announcements from a large vessel above tell of a storm about to explode.

Soon there's a downpour of heavy rain and waves crashing against each other at tremendous velocity. All tiny lifeforms are being tossed and bashed reciprocally and are dragged into different directions. The sand on the sea bed is being churned and cloud masses are formed making visibility for crabs and lobsters difficult as they bump into each other on numerous occasions. Disguises though are sussed out and the hunters haven't got the excellent vision to see through. Masses of bubbles are mixed into the sea for the resultant waves crashing to and fro. Lesser creatures like starfish, barnacles and octopi easily cling onto rocks or algae, like mothers holding their babies. The now dark murky sea is being lit by the flashes of lightning. Several hours after tossing, turning, darkness and confusion, the sea is now calm, clear and the same.

Shabhir Sobhani (4X)

THE SEA

The sea is a picture of beauty when the bright orange glare rests once again on the still waters, and like a golden ship, the sun casts its luminous glow over every droplet of water, transforming it into a shape of beauty and mystery.

I could stand there for hours, just watching the changing shapes of the sea. Slowly a feeling of tranquility washes over me as the echoing sound of crashing waves against distant rocks float all my worries, and let the sea envelope me in its light spray.

The sea for me is the only place I can escape from the real world, so much so that the sea becomes a part of me, and I can almost feel every movement from the light spray, as small waves splash against rocks to the landward breeze, sending ripples across the unbroken water. The more I look at the sea, the more I notice each of its beautiful effects. These effects are not just the way the waves splash and fall in ripples, but also the way in which the light dances with the waves, teasing them and making them sparkle and shine. The movement of the sea also creates beauty even without light. There are so many different motions. Sometimes the water surges into a great swell, like a whirlpool, where breakers cascade and meet in a pool of energy and commotion. There are gentle waves which reach their peak with crests, rich and creamy with foam. Occasionally there are very calm days, where the water is so clear and still you can almost touch the bottom when leaning over the edge of a boat, and I remember how I often used to trickle my fingers in the water so that a line of rivulets trailed behind them, forming ripples and then becoming still and calm again.

The sky darkens and I notice how the darkness draws different aspects to the waves. Cast in the light of the moon, although they are still beautiful, they hold an element of sadness. This sadness is apparent to me not because of the dark, although it does add an element of mournfulness, but the way in which the waves reach their peak of beauty for only a second or more, and then fall and die among the glossy depths. So it seems to me cruel that their beauty is only captured for a short time and then forgotten.

The sky is dark yet it is daytime. The sea oscillates roughly without the rhythmic flow as before. The wind is much more evident now, whipping cruelly at the waves, shaping them into cold, high cliffs. They travel steadily forward, leaning over with their cold, white grasps, just waiting for the right moment as though they are ready to pounce and then plunging over and engulfing their victims. The crest crashes into the water with fervour, explodes into a spray and then splits into billions of tiny droplets like small diamonds with iridescent properties, each seeming colourless until catching the broken light and then bursting into a spectrum of colours, every one glittering with beauty.

The waves become fiercer and quicker, each one slightly larger than the last as the wind howls almost eerie voices dancing across the misty sea. The buoys bob about at their posts, playing a game of chicken with the waves and breaking up the bleakness of the scenery. Finally the roar of the waves dies down and the clouds roll back and the sea becomes a taintless tide once more, calm and full of undiscovered beauty.

Emma Weeden (4X)

IT STARTED WITH DRUGS

The alley was dark and in many aspects spooky. I made my way through the dustbins and protruding back door steps. I tripped over once or twice but all in all I exited the dark dump in a safe manner. The air was somewhat clean tonight which was rather strange for a city like New York. I quickly headed towards my flat which at the time was on the fifteenth floor of the Catol buliding. As the lift was out of order I had to carry my briefcase up the long spiral staircase. Unlike in one of the long and boring detective movies that are often repeated about once a month, this staircase wasn't covered in graffiti, but very well decorated with beautiful paintings of scenic countryside dotted with many animals of the farm. Another easily noticed but effective decorative feature was the bold blue border separating the pink from the yellow border, which to a lot of people might have seemed a bit over the top in a way of colour co-ordination but I (even if I was the only one) enjoyed it. The fact that I had designed and decorated the entire area had nothing to do with it.

The fact still remained however that I was tired and hungry. All this admiring of my own work had made me forget about the time, I searched quickly for my keys and placing my briefcase on the floor unlocked the door and entered quickly to meet my girlfriend who was sitting at the table. She had a smile of her face which was quite a surprise for me as I knew what she was normally like when I arrive home after seven o'clock. I closed the door with quite an alarming slam to see that my girlfriend hardly moved.

"Hi", I said, "How was your day?"

"Great", she said, hardly moving an inch, "How about you."

"Oh just the same a normal, nothing exciting ever occurs in my life."

"Ah, by the way I'm pregnant," she said calmly as she started to stand up.

"What?" I said getting excited, "That's great!"

I jumped in the air with excitement and ran towards her and jumped into her arms. I then sat down at the table and ate the food on the table. Even though it was slightly burnt the T-bone steak tasted delicious but that was probably because I was in no position to complain. After I had finished eating I went and sat down on the sofa and turned on the television. I must have flicked channels about twelve times before I gave up and went to bed. My girlfriend had gone up hours ago as she claimed to be ill which was believable, as all I knew at the time about pregnancy was getting fat and becoming ill.

It was midnight before I finally got into bed and got to sleep but about two hours later I leapt up and quickly got dressed. Sweat was dripping down my forehead. The thing was that I had forgotten about my appointment with Dan Drover (the drug baron). I felt quite unfortunate, however, to have remembered this as thinking about it made me depressed. This often happened, meaning that I bought more drugs and continued to find Dan. He had told me that if I didn't meet him then

he would stop selling me the drugs no matter how much I paid him. The truth of the matter was that he couldn't afford to sneak past the security guard in order to get into my office especially if he had drugs in his coat pocket. I suddenly remembered my girlfriend and became very silent, slipped on my jeans, and carefully picked up my money without trying to make a sound. I scrambled for my wallet and put the loose change in. The leather cushioning inside soon silenced the jangling money. I headed out of the door but quickly came back. I placed a pillow under the mattress, picked up my keys and turned off the table lamp before exiting. I closed the door silently and locked it behind me.

I hurried down the stairs and through the lobby to the gold plate doors. I kicked them with some temper but luckily the foot plate was quite strong and there was no obvious damage created. I hurried down the now dark streets with the traffic lights flashing in the distance. The tarmac on the road surface was gleaming due to the moonlight shimmering on the slippery wet surface. My next stop was the subway. I hurried down the stairs pushing a couple of teenagers out of the way. I felt them following me with threatening gestures. I speeded up and hearing the footsteps quicken as well I hurried in to the gents' toilets. In this gloomy and smelly room I hid behind one of the cubicle doors and waited for the main toilet door to open. As I waited I noticed the toilet walls. They were obviously supposed to be whitewashed but with all the dirt and filth of the public toilets they had become very dirty and the graffiti didn't help the image. I read a few of the disgustingly rude messages before unlocking the rusty steel bolt holding the door from falling off its hinges and popping my head around. I felt something sticky on the bolt and decided to wash my hands. I walked over the filthy wash basin and turned on the tap. The water had hardly enough pressure to power a calculator hydro-electrically. I began to rub my hands vigorously and watched the dirty water as it trickle away down the plug hole. It was then that I noticed the mirror. It was resting precariously just above the sink on a wooden shelf. The (obviously cheap) mirror had a big shatter mark down the middle so instead of seeing an identical copy of myself I saw hundreds of them.

I suddenly stopped washing my hands as I noticed the skin was beginning to burn with the friction due to the speed at which I was rubbing my hands together. I realised the reason for this was my desperation for the drugs. I slowly walked over to the towel dispenser while watching an elderly man standing quietly in the corner looking at the condom machine from the corner of his eye. Sick man, I thought to myself, punching the towel dispenser as I noticed there weren't any towels in it. I picked a handkerchief out of my top pocket and wiped my hand closely followed by the brow of my forehead. It was then that I noticed that my head was in a panic, in fact the rest of my body was panicking as well. Then I quickly hurried out of the toilets, and grabbed a ticket from the machine which I could never understand. I always seem to be the only one who pays five dollars for a one dollar ticket. Next I ran through the turnstiles, got one half of my ticket stamped and climbed onto a train just as it was ready to leave.

The train was just about empty but quite busy for what I expected at this time of the morning. They were mainly drunk youths hurrying home from all night discos for an all day sleep over in a squat somewhere. Gosh, I remember when I was like them and used to annoy my mum with my laid back life and my loutish and somewhat violent friends. I realise now that I didn't really annoy her so much as scare her, but I'm sure she is resting quietly in her grave (Bless her soul) for what I have turned into, a top executive in a big company (God knows how), and I had more important things to worry about than my teenage years. Other people on the train included a couple of business men, obviously wanting to arrive at work exceptionally early, and a couple of workmen, who looked as if they could have taken the night shift. By the time I had scrutinised these people, the train had passed two stops with one or two people getting on and off at each, and it was almost time for the stop that I wanted. There were no lights outside the train as I thought we were not near a platform at the time. Suddenly the train came to a standstill, jolting everybody forward. This meant the people were quite shocked as it was still dark outside. All of a sudden a man in an inspector's uniform came marching down the carriage. I was surprised to find that hardly anybody was panicking which showed to me that nearly everybody on the train had either experienced it before, or was extremely drunk. It was then that I found out that this happened every night at this time. The thing was that the station we had stopped at was in fact closed. The inspector got off the train and seemed to bend over and pick up a torch from nowhere. This seemed amazing as it was pitch black outside, and the only way that I could make out he had bent over was when I saw him stand up in the light of the train and then disappear for a few seconds before re-appearing again.

It was then that the main doors opened and the inspector called everybody up. He guided us with only the light of the torch about 50ft up some stairs. I saw a few lights up ahead. The inspector told us to follow these lights until we reached the road side. I did exactly as he said, followed closely by the other people who had been on the train. By the time I was out of the subway, the temperature had dropped and it was raining quite hard. I walked towards the familiar building belonging to the major computer games company, Electronic Arts. I then passed the building and walked towards the lobby of the place where I worked. I was lucky to find the familiar face of Bob, the security guard. He was just about to leave as the next shift, belonging to a man called Jack, was about to begin. Luckily though, he decided to stay on for a few minutes just for me, not without a lot of persuasion from me however. I had had enough of all the running about so I decided to take the lift. I didn't really like this lift as, even though it was silent and didn't scare me in the way that it might, it still looked as if it was about to stop and fall any moment. The problem with it was the mirror. On each wall there were mirrors. There were even some extremely thin ones embedded into the lift doors. The problem with this was that when you looked into one of them all you saw was hundreds and hundreds of reflections due to the mirror on the opposite wall. This was extremely annoying when there were a few people in the lift as it made me somewhat dizzy.

I stood on the rose carpet for a few moments until the mirror plated steel doors ground open with the thud of the lift stopping. I was on the 80th storey which was about three floors to the top when I finally realised that my office was on the 20th. I pressed the button on the lift twice before hitting it with anger and then with sheer stupidity ran to the door to the stairs. I kicked it open using the shiny footplate, before half falling down the stairs. I also did a bit of bannister sliding on the way. I had always wanted to do that during office hours and became rather excited at the prospect, but the thought of my drugs once again struck me and I carried on running. By the time I had reached the 30th floor, I felt my stomach churning with stitches but somehow I kept on going and reached the 20th. I stopped to rest for about 10 seconds before once again kicking the door. The pain suddenly hit my foot. I found out the hard way that the door opened the other way. I pulled on the door with some force and started limping my way down the corridor. I passed the lift and the Swiss Cheese plant on my way to the large oak doors of my office. I searched all of my pockets for my keys before realising that in all the rush I had picked

up my house keys and left my office keys at home. By now I was a nervous wreck. I collapsed in a heap on the floor and cradled my head in my arms. By sheer coincidence Bob then came walking through the door and started walking towards me. He then tripped over a piece of loose carpet which I had wanted one of the porters to fix for a long time, and came flying towards me almost banging his head on mine. It was lucky for me that my quick reactions allowed me to roll out of the way but unlucky for him in the way that he hit his head on my office door. I almost laughed but the sheer thought of my drugs was haunting me. Looking back on it now I sometimes laugh but never in his presence. He was suffering from slight concussion, so I picked up the keys from his belt hook with no reaction from him. I unlocked the door and walked into my office, which for a change was somewhat tidy. I headed straight for my desk and fell onto my hands and knees searching the floor under my desk for the packet but it wasn't there. I paced the room thinking where it could be before going into a frenzy and tipping out every cupboard and every desk drawer in the room. Suddenly the door slammed from where I had entered. Behind it stood a semi-conscious man who I knew as Dan. I began to laugh as I seemed to be on a roll (that was two people in one night that I had knocked unconscious and they were supposed to be my friends). I suddenly stopped laughing, however when I saw the blood coming from Dan's nose. I quickly ran towards him, got a tissue out of my pocket and took the drugs from him. I then started to run out of the door but tripped over one of Bob's legs which was in a strange position considering he was lying on his back. The leg, in fact, appeared to be at ninety degrees to the rest of his body. This however, was the last thing on my mind as it went blank.

I awoke to find myself in the boss's office which at first confused me but then I remembered what had happened the night before and put my hands to my head to feel a bandage which seemed to be covering a bruise. I looked up to find the boss bending over me, alongside Bob which was pretty amazing as he should have been off shift five hours ago. I stood up but then feeling dizzy fell down again. Bob helped to lift me and put me in his security van before driving me home. This was a much better means of transport than the underground train the night before but this was probably something to do with the fact that I was more relaxed now due to being slightly concussed. This at the time reminded me to ask how Bob felt. The only reply I got was a sort of oomph. I then forgot about Bob and the accident and thought about Dan. I began to sweat as I asked Bob whether anybody else had been seen in the building that night. He gave me an unusual glare and once again just replied oomph. I took this as a no and with relief lay back and began to relax and think once more. The thing was all this oomph business made me wonder whether Bob was conscious enough to drive me home. I then fell asleep.

When I awoke the next morning, I found that I was in my own bed and my girlfriend was fussing around me. She was brushing up everywhere, asking pointless questions, or which seemed to be pointless at the time and fussing over my bruise. I just replied oomph as Bob had done the night before and then started to relax. Suddenly, however, a shocking thought passed through my head and I sat up with alarm. I banged my head on the backboard of my bed but wasn't bothered, as the only thing I could think of was Dan and my drugs. My girlfriend who was sat down suddenly stood up when she saw that I was staring at her. I asked for my coat which she gave me with a little hesitation. I dived under my bedclothes, pulling my coat with me. This must have seemed strange to my girlfriend but at the time I didn't care. The fact was my drugs were still in the pocket. I took them out and hid them in my pillow case before asking my girlfriend to take my coat to be dry cleaned and falling asleep.

When I awoke later that day, I found out that my girlfriend knew about my drugs resulting in the fact that I had lost my job, my girlfriend and more importantly our baby. I was a nervous wreck and after a few months, I had run out of money and had no alternative but to live on the streets. I begged for money which was very humiliating for a man of my qualifications. I made about \$80 dollars a week which also humiliated me as the people on the same doorway made about twice as much, sometimes more. I gave up worrying about this and after two weeks, decided to do something with my saved money. Even though I had spent most of it on cups of tea and chocolate bars, I still managed to save \$30. I walked into the local gas station and managed to swap that money and my fake Rolex watch for one hundred cigarettes and a box of matches which was quite amazing because as I have mentioned before, the watch was fake.

I walked out of the gas station feeling quite pleased with myself and automatically lit two cigarettes smoking both at the same time. By the time I arrived back at my temporary shelter, I had smoked seven cigarettes and was well on my way to getting a buzz about them. I collapsed into my tattered cardboard box which ironically had been a method of transport for a couple of thousand cigarettes. I fell asleep with a cigarette still in my hand. This was quite unfortunate as when I dropped it I accidentally set alight the cardboard box. I awoke with a sudden burst of pain. All I could see however was a glowing cigarette. I put it out and rolled over in the cramped but cosy box to have my face engulfed in red hot flames. I yelled in pain and jumped out of my box before running and for some strange reason jumped in a nearby puddle. This to me was strange as I knew that my clothes and hair hadn't yet caught fire.

After this little time of confusion, or excitement as it seemed to be to the onlooking tramps and shopkeepers, I decided to go and look for another place of refuge. I scrambled around in the ashes and found what seemed to be an intact cigarette box. I jumped with joy and forced my exhausted body on through the streets with the cigarette box in my hand. The thing I hadn't noticed before this moment was that a spark from the previous fire had got into the box through a small hole burnt in the bottom. This however wasn't visible to me when I picked up the box. While I was walking the spark had set alight a few cigarettes which had in turn set alight the box of matches which I had decided to store in the cigarette box for safe keeping. By the time I had noticed anything, the entire lot was burning with a hot red glow in my hand. I gasped and dropped the box before running off, hoping nobody had noticed my stupidity. Another reason for not wanting anyone to see me was some stupid old lady would probably want to take me to court over attempted arson.

I headed through the bustling shopping mall before entering a subway. I noticed there were a few bin liners and Safeway bags down there so I set about making myself yet another temporary shelter. I used two maggot eaten binbags to make the basis of a tent-like structure before placing a few brown paper bags to fill the gaps. I looked at the mess of a shelter but felt quite proud of myself considering the resources I had. Even though I only went for two weeks, I convinced myself that it was the boy scouts that helped. I can look back now and laugh as the only two things I did there was play baseball and bake a disastrous cake.

I decided to try out the shelter and with a little force managed to struggle into the black trash can lining. I still had one complete bag and a few scraps of others left so I decided to go out later and find a cardboard box which I could use to make

more space and more comfort in my newly found shelter. I compared it to adding an extension to a mansion. I chuckled at my joke and drifted off to sleep. I awoke a few hours later to find myself surrounded by other tramps who as far as I was aware weren't there earlier. When I questioned an elderly lady, sitting up reading a tattered Bible, next to me, she said they had all been chucked off the doorstep of a well known building. When I questioned her further, I found out that it was the side entrance to the place of my old work, The Cator Building.

After this short but pleasant conversation, I got up and walked out of the subway to find myself at the Empire State Building. I was quite pleased with this as I knew there was a shopping mall around the corner. I set off to find it. After about ten minutes of walking, I was getting fed up with everybody staring at me, but knew I had to carry on if I was to find a box by nightfall.

I was walking aimlessly through the streets when I came across a shop window in Times Square, in which I saw my reflection. This for me was the turning point. I saw what I had turned into and decided to give up drugs and save my money. This is what I did and after six months was back in decent clothes. It has been two years now and I own my own house, have married my old girlfriend with our baby son and own my own small soliciting agency.

Craig Smith (4A)

Although this story is written in the first person, it is of course a fictitious account. – Ed.

THAT SPECIAL PLACE

"Please wait, I can't go on any more! I need to rest. Please! My feet hurt. Where are you? I can't see you. Please come back." The girl began to sob, she didn't know where she was or where she was going. Her hair got caught in the branches of a tree. She pulled it free and carried on running. All her clothes were torn and her face and hands were cut, the blood matted her hair to her cheeks.

"Please help me".

"Don't worry, we're nearly there. In fact it's just up ahead," said a voice not far in front of her.

The girl caught sight of a bit of blue and white checked material and made one last dash to catch up. She suddenly tripped on something; she could have sworn it was a foot. She braced herself and waited to hit the ground but she didn't - all she could feel was air, and as she opened her eyes, she saw the sharp rocks of the quarry reaching up to her. She didn't have time to scream.

A girl in a blue and white checked dress stood at the top of the quarry, and as the sickening thud of a body hitting the ground reached her ears, she chuckled. She'd done it and she was going to do it again.

Tammy sat at the back of the class, staring at Mr Petersdale. Her long black hair fell over her startling blue eyes, she swept it out of the way and carried on listening. He had such a wonderful way with words, and he made English interesting where all others had failed.

"Tammy, what's your opinion?" Mr Petersdale said turning his attention to her. Tammy suddenly realised she hadn't been listening to his words, only to the sound of his voice.

Beth nudged her, "Zoos" she whispered.

"Eh, I think they're cruel and unnecessary, Sir," Tammy blurted out.

"Okay," he said, an amused smile on his face. "Let's vote. Who agrees with zoos."

No-one put their hand up, made any sick jokes, or even giggled. It must have been a good debate, thought Tammy.

"Okay, I see that no-one agrees with zoos. How many 'don't knows' are there?" Mr Petersdale said looking at Beth. She timidly put her hand up with a nervous smile on her face.

"You always do this Beth, urm.... who do you think gave the most convincing speech?"

"Against zoos, Sir."

Mr Petersdale laughed. He picked up some paper and started to give it out.

"Right class, I'm giving you a holiday assignment". He waited for the groan. There wasn't one. Everyone loved his assignments even if it did mean work.

"I want you to go to your favourite place and write about it. I want lots of feeling. Have a nice holiday, gang."

Tammy put her books in her bag and stood up. She walked to the door and turned around to see where Beth was. Beth was sitting at her desk still, she was always so slow.

"Hurry up Beth."

"Okay. Hey where are you going for that English assignment. I thought about going to McDonalds. That's definitely my favourite place."

"I'm going to that place, you know in Greengate Wood." Tammy answered, a huge grin spreading across her face.

"Not there? The place Joe took you to? I can see why that's your favourite place but what I can't see is you doing a lot of writing if you go there with him."

"I'm going alone," Tammy said solemnly.

"Oh yeah," Beth said looking at Tammy, they both burst out laughing.

Tammy parted the bushes and stepped past them. She lifted her head up and looked around. It was easy to see why she loved the place so much, it was so beautiful. There was a small stream to one side of the clearing and a couple of tree stumps in the centre. The whole place seemed a mass of every shade of green she could imagine and yet it had an eerie, mysterious feel to it. It made her shiver even though it was a hot July afternoon. She made her way to the middle and sat down on one of the tree stumps. She set her bag down on the adjacent stump and got out a large pad of paper. She loved this kind of assignment, it made her think, look inside herself, search out her real feelings. She was very intelligent and loved to

be stretched to her limits. She put her name at the top of the page and neatly printed the title 'My Special Place' just below.

The bushes to her left rustled. Tammy looked up and stared straight at them.

"Hello," she said, "Is anyone there?"

A girl in a blue and white checked dress stepped out of the bushes. She had long, thin blonde hair and strange, light coloured eyes, which seemed to stare right through Tammy.

"I'm Sarah," she said in a light, airy voice, "I'm sorry if I startled you. I didn't mean to."

"It's okay, you didn't startle me. I'm Tammy."

Tammy put her paper down and started to make her way over to Sarah. She took a couple of steps and tripped over her bag. She landed flat on her face. Sarah rushed to her side, her eyes frowning with a deep concern. "Are you okay?" she asked, helping Tammy up.

"Yeah." Tammy looked down at her jeans; they were covered with grass stains and mud. "I really need to get cleaned up though. I should go home and come back tomorrow."

"There's no need, my house isn't far from here, you can get cleaned there. Come to me."

Sarah led Tammy into the woods. They walked for what seemed like miles, through thick woodland and soft, muddy earth, with neither of them talking.

"I thought you said it wasn't far," Tammy said breaking the silence. Tammy was starting to get nervous. She'd never been in this part of the wood before and was growing anxious at the thought of depending on a girl she'd only just met.

"It isn't far now, in fact it's just up ahead," Sarah replied coolly. They pushed past a few trees onto a ledge which overlooked a quarry.

"You live down there?" Tammy said, slithgly astonished.

"Sure I do. Take a look."

Tammy walked to the edge and looked over. She couldn't see any house, any sign that someone lived there. All she could see were rocks; sharp, tall rocks.

"I don't see your house," said Tammy continuing to scan the ground way down below. Sarah shuffled towards her, her own eyes growing wide with excitement. This is so easy, she thought. She extended her arms, reaching for Tammy "Bye, bye," she said.

"What do you...." Sarah pushed Tammy sharply between the shoulder blades. Tammy lurched forward and sailed straight over the side. She twisted and turned and grabbed at the air, desperately trying to find something to hold on to, something to stop her falling to a horrible death, something to stop her reaching the tall, sharp, evil rocks of the ground below. She found the cliff side and took hold of the first rock that jutted out. Pain shot through her arm, she was sure she must have dislocated it or maybe even have almost ripped it off, she couldn't bring herself to look. She tried to ignore the pain so she could climb up but it was impossible. Tears began to roll down her face. She looked up and took a deep breath.

Sarah stood at the top, laughing. She'd done just what she said she would do, only this time she'd enjoyed it even more because for a second before, Tammy had actually known what was going to happen, she had felt the pure terror of knowing she was going to die.

Tammy reached the top. Her arm and her mind had grown so numb that she couldn't feel a thing any more. She saw Sarah's dainty little foot and grabbed it. Sarah screamed and fell over and landed on her back. She sat up and tried to kick Tammy away. She missed.

"I don't want to die," Tammy said suddenly regretting it because she sounded like the pleading woman in a low budget action movie, but she knew Sarah would do anything now to push her back over the ledge and she had a feeling that Sarah had done this before.

Sarah kicked again, this time catching the side of Tammy's face. Tammy howled in pain. She lost her grip on the edge of the cliff and began to fall again, but she held on to Sarah's ankle with all her might. Sarah started to slip off the edge. She managed to scream before she hit the rocks and became her own victim.

After a day Tammy was reported missing and the Police conducted an area wide search. They found the clearing and Tammy's English paper, they found their way to the quarry. They got down to the bottom and found the bodies of three young girls, one identified by a Police constable on the scene as Tammy Grenich. As he stood over the bodies, he said with his voice breaking up and his eyes filling with tears, "I'd love to know who did this, she wouldn't commit suicide, she had everything. The guy who did this should be put behind bars for ever." He let a single tear fall from his eye and roll down his cheek before turning around and walking away.

Claire Lelonek (3X)

DRUGS IN SCHOOL

David was tired after the cricket match. Their side had lost by nineteen runs, and he felt demoralised. He would often spend hours on end practising his batting strokes to perfection. This was the third match in a row that they had lost, and David knew that there was something wrong. He changed back into his school uniform after having a quick shower, and made his way solemnly to his room in the D-block.

On the way, he met Brian. He cheered up a little bit at the sight of his friend. Brian and David had been friends ever since they had started school at Hillbury, eight months ago.

"How was the match?", asked Brian, trying to start a conversation with a depressed David.

"Same as the last two; we lost", replied David kicking at some stones on the ground.

"What was private work tonight?" asked Brian.

"Er..... to start our newspaper articles", said David.

"Oh yes", said Brian. "We have to interview the Head Master, about our drugs articles. I wonder if he's in now. Let's go and see."

Brian knocked on the polished hard wood mahogany door of the Head Master's office. A deep voice said: "Come in." David opened the door which opened effortlessly, and closed again after they were inside. Instantly the smell of 'Hamlet' cigarettes came to their noses. Brian did not speak, but nudged David. David cleared his throat.

"We are doing a newspaper article on drugs, sir, and we were wondering if you could answer a few questions for us."

The Head Master sat in his leather chair playing with a pen. He thought about what the boy had just said and replied, "I'll think about it, I'm busy now."

"But you're not doing anything now", replied Brian all of a sudden as if he ability to speak had just come to him.

"Get out!", snapped the Head Master but still the boys did not move. They stayed where they were on the blue and red carpet. The Head Master got up. He walked round his desk in his newly tailored suit. He towered over the two small first year boys, like a lamp post, and bellowed;

"You will do as I say or you will have two weeks detention and no private-time!"

This message seemed to shake the whole room, but the boys stayed where they were. This infuriated the Head Master even more. He felt like taking all of the expensive wall paper off the walls and stuffing it down their mouths. He was just about to grab the boys when suddenly he remembered that he was supposed to be a kind, good-hearted Head Master. He lowered his voice, and said;

"There must have been a misunderstanding somewhere. Sorry if you were inconvenienced. Now what were you saying?"

"It's okay sir, we'll come back later when you've got some free time", replied David sarcastically, and nearly set the Head Master off again.

Just before they left, Brian noticed the Head Master's name on the door. MR A T MATHEWS. He shut the door. They were now in the secretary's office. She was pale and thinner than him. Her desk was scribbled on and she was wearing a normal suit; nothing flashy like Mr Mathews. Her office was not exactly state of the art or decorated nicely. In fact, it probably wasn't decorated at all. The carpet on the floor was a murky brown with years of experience in it. It had known a lot of secretaries. Her desk was loaded with folders, files and paperwork, whereas Mr Mathews had nothing but stress relief toys on his desk, a telephone and answering machine, and some very expensive pens. He also had a cigarette ash tray on the window sill.

At first neither of the boys thought much about the incident with the Head Master. But after a second try when Mr Mathews had dismissed them again without co-operating with them, they got suspicious. One afternoon, when they were walking around at lunchbreak, David suggested as a joke that Mr Mathews was involved in drugs. However Brian thought about this and connected it to Mr Mathews' reluctance to answer their questions about drugs. He decided to try once more and ask Mr Matthews about the questions in their interview.

"Get out!", shrieked Mr Mathews. The boys were only encouraged even more.

"Sir, are you involved in drugs?", asked Brian bravely.

"Don't you dare ask me questions like that, lad. You say too much and you'll be expelled from this school", retorted the Head Master, with venom frothing at his lips.

"We'll find out, sir". replied David and they made their way out of the two very different offices. They were like black and white, day and night, fire and water.

That evening David had an idea. He completed his private work early and went to see Brian. He told Brian about his idea to watch what the Head Master did after School. The two boys carefully made their way to Mr Mathews' office. They were too late; the Head Master had already gone to his quarters. With despair and disappointment hanging around them, they walked through the secretary's office. Suddenly Brian found a note written in red ink. The message read:

"6.30pm THURSDAY 15TH MAY, DELIVERY."

"What's this?", he asked.

David took a look at the note and realised that this was for the Head Master.

"Right, we'll come back on Thursday at 6.00pm and see what the delivery is. Oh, Isn't this exciting?"

At exactly 6.03pm the two boys dressed in black, and masked with balaclavas, waited behind some trees at the school gates. Nothing happened. It was 6.41pm.

The boys decided to go back and their great plan was destroyed. But as they were walking into the quad, they heard the sound of things being moved and engines running. They hid behind some cars. As they looked round, they saw a lorry with its doors open. There were men unloading huge boxes of something and there were two men talking. One of these men was Mr Mathews. The boys knew exactly what this was. It was the delivery which the note had mentioned. They followed one of the porters, to where they were putting the boxes. Once there were no porters around, Brian and David took a box and carried it to their room. There, they opened it and found a substance packed in polythene bags, looking like flour. In fact, they knew that they were packets of illegally imported drugs. Quickly David got his camera and went back to the car park with Brian. They took five photographs of the men and porters unloading the drugs and made sure that the Head Master and the other man were in the picture.

The next day the two boys hid all of their evidence and kept the note as well. On the back of the note was another message reading:

"NEXT, 8.30PM, TUESDAY, 20TH MAY, THEN NO MORE FOR THREE WEEKS."

From this the two boys concluded that there would be another delivery next Tuesday and then no more for three weeks. They had to do something on that day otherwise they would probably never find another delivery note.

Tuesday came. The boys were excited. They had thought of a plan to call the Police at 8.10pm, stating that there was a robbery in progress so that they would come. They made the call and got all their evidence ready. They had their own plan. They went round and locked all the gates with chains and padlocks of their own except for the front entrance for the Police. This would also be closed when the Police arrived. This means that there was no escape for the gang, if they were scared by the Police sirens.

The last gate was locked as the Police entered. The two boys went to the cars and told the police about the trick and showed them the evidence. The Police went round and did their work.

The whole School praised the two boys who were awarded prizes by the Police, the School and even the local town hall councillors. There was a new Head Mistress now, Mrs Jervis, who changed the secretary's office and paid her more. In the end the boys didn't do an article on drugs, but one on their plan to finish their Head Master!

Abdul Talukdar (3X)

NATURE STRIKES BACK

Lightning crashed. Rain lashed down, like a hail of arrows from the heavens. High on a weather-blasted cliff, a sacred tree stood. It was old, its branches were gnarled and knotted. On its age-old bark two things were carved. The first was a name - Bob. The second was a heart with two homes by it. Both of the owners of these homes had long since passed on. The names were carved not only into the tree's skin, but into its very soul.

Thunder rolled and wind howled. But the tree was as immovable as a rock, grim and steadfast. It had been there longer than anyone could remember and would, they all said, probably still be there when they were gone.

A jagged bolt of lightning rent the air, zig-zagging down. With a deafening crash it hit the tree. Flames licked with incandescent fury at the long, wizened branches. It was hidden from sight by a raging inferno. Then, as suddenly as it had started, the blaze abated, leaving the tree scorched but apparently unharmed. It looked as still and firm as ever, but an invisible, terrible energy coursed through it. The storm raged about the tree, but a far fiercer one raged inside. Under the ground the roots shifted in the soft earth.

It was a quiet day. The air hung hotly, the humid weather making everyone irritable. Dogs growled at passers-by and barked at people that were not there. Shops closed for the day, the owners not feeling up to it. The tree stood, its blackened form seeming to gaze across the cliff to where the young couple walked, hand-in-hand, along the damp grass. The girl took a penknife from her pocket and, laughing, carved a crude heart into the bark of the scorched old tree. As she finished the sky began to darken. Clouds, heavy with rain, crept across the sky. The first drops fell, splashing into the soggy ground. Almost instantly, thunder crashed. Lightning licked down, darting like the tongue of a viper. The couple staggered back as the earth heaved. In the flickering glare of the lightning, it seemed the tree was moving.....

"No!" screamed the girl. The tree loomed menacingly. The couple turned, but they were on the edge of the cliff. The tree groaned and a branch snaked out. The couple were pushed back. The earth crumbled away. They sought for a hand hold but their flailing hands found no purchase and the ground gave way, hurling them down in a mudslide to the rock far below. The storm abated. The clouds rolled back. The tree was silent, brooding. It looked like a normal oak. But on its bark the heart flared with the blue flame, faded and was gone.

"All right, Bert, bring the saw over here then." The two woodsmen stood on the edge of the cliff. They were there to clear away all the trees on the cliff that had the large red cross daubed on them, indicating that they must be cut down to make room for a new "Sea-View Hotel". It was to be built half on and half off the cliff edge the "Overhand Suites" would be supported by a hue metal post, embedded in the rocks at the bottom.

Bert brought across the chainsaw. "This one, Bert", said the other man Max, "and then that one". Bert pulled sharply on the rip cord and the rusty teeth slowly ground into life. The blades whirled around, buzzing like a horde of hornets. Bert held the chainsaw to the tree. Bark chippings flew through the air. The old tree howled in protest, but it was no match for the whirling steel death that gnawed away at it. Wood splintered as the tree listed, creaked ominously, swayed and with a final rending crash, smashed to the ground. The roar of the chainsaw stuttered and died down. "Next!" joked Bert. He moved over to the scorched tree, staggering under the bulk of the chainsaw. He positioned the saw and braced himself. He fired the motor. The blades coughed and whizzed. Bert pressed the saw into the bark. The saw had hardly scarred the wood. When it spluttered and died. Bert fired the motor again. Again, the blades started, faltered and jammed. Bert cursed, re-started the saw and fairly slammed it into the tree. There was a blinding flash and blue fire erupted from the tree, flashing along the blades. Bert yelled in pain and terror and stumbled back. The chainsaw fell to the ground, crackling and jerking. The motor was racked by explosions, showering Bert with burning metal and plastic. Fuel ignited and the chainsaw was consumed in a blue fireball. Suddenly it stopped. The woodsmen carefully approached the smoking heap of mangled metal. Bert was badly hurt, his face and hands were bleeding profusely, and he was only semi-conscious. Just before he blacked out, he muttered on word through his bleeding lips "Hell!" and then he fainted. On the tree the saw-mark faded and was gone.

The moon gleamed through wisps of cloud. A faint odour still came from the smashed saw. Bert had long since been taken to hospital by Max, who was cursing very loudly all the way, in language that would make a punk rocker blush. Bob, the night-watchman on the foundations of the "Sea View Hotel", paced in bored circles. He trudged over to a tree and, taking out a knife, carved into his name, as he had on almost every other tree on the site of the "Sea View Hotel".

The small coffee jug on his simple stove whistled importantly, so he walked back and, squatting down, sipped the hot coffee. He wished, as he did every night, that something would happen to break the constant burden of his boring job at the boring hotel site, in boring England. But this night, something did happen. Something far from boring. Something very, very strange and something that would prove fatal to Bob.

The next day the local newspapers were ablaze with headlines:-

"Mysterious Death of Night-watchman - Police at a loss"

“Police were amazed and horrified to find that Bobby Johnson, a worker and night-watchman at the building site of the “Sea View Hotel”, was murdered last night at his camp. The killer used a rough vine to strangle Bob, before wrecking his camp. Police have no clues as to who their killer was, but Bob’s name, carved in the blasted old oak, has strangely faded and gone. Police are hunting the killer.”

The workers at Sea View were deeply shocked at Bob’s death, but it didn’t stop them working. At the end of the day, the huge support pole was in place, but by no means firm. As night fell the tree awoke. It, rather than the pole. Its primitive brain found only one course of action and took it. The old oak slid down the cliff face to the pole. A branch whipped out and wrapped itself around the pole. Others grabbed the supports. Then it pulled. The pole shifted. It pulled again, exerting all of its monstrous strength. The pole creaked and tore itself free of its concrete housings. The overhead suits, with no support, crashed down, tumbling into the sea, far below. A girder hit the tree. It lumbered away trying to escape, but the wreck of the hotel smashed around it, and it was buried in the rubble. The dust settled. There was silence. Amidst the bricks, a branch quested upwards. A hollow chuckle echoed around the silent beach.

Nicholas Barratt (1C)

THE ABANDONED STATION

Once, when I was riding on my motorcycle, I found I was lost, deep in a rural woodland area on a narrow lane. The early evening darkness must have led me to take a wrong turning, and the catacomb of lanes and tracks here were indecipherable to me. No matter how much I roamed the surrounding wood, it just seemed to remain the same. Further into the night, I searched for an exit, the mist and rain obscuring my vision. Eventually, I submitted to nature and retired, sleeping by the side of a track, my motorbike acting as a pillow.

Dawn woke me, the pleasant sight of sunlight streaking through the trees’ leaf roof. The wood floor was carpeted with leaves and twigs, my bike was no use now. I had calculated in my sleep that if I walked for long enough in the same direction, I should emerge from the forest, but still I was worried about my outcome; I had no contact with the rest of the world from here. Concealing my motorcycle with tree branches and leaves, I departed and began my journey. My hunger was apparent now, I wanted to be at home. Soon the trees became more dispersed, surely I had found the edge. Sunlight now made bright patches on the ground, the temperature had increased.

I saw ahead of me what looked like an old hut, covered with thick ivy leaving tiny windows. Immediately I was intrigued, but optimistic now that the wood was behind me. Just then a glimpse of a town appeared a few miles away on the top of a steep hill. The hut now revealed itself as in fact being two huts almost derelict and in good condition simultaneously, but it was not until I arrived at the buildings that I realised the purpose. This was an abandoned railway station, preserved in all its splendour, camouflaged and protected by the bushes and plants which surrounded it.

The platform, so much coated with greenery, had paled into its surroundings, the track, some of the metal still showing at light patches of the gravel and weed, had become so full of plant life that it could have been mistaken for a garden allotment. On the opposite platform, the other hut was clearly visible, not as big as the first one, yet almost identical; I thought, nobody had probably seen this abandoned station for many years, there was just one narrow track I saw heading towards the town. The line I could see continued in both directions, disappearing into a tunnel at one end, and obscured by the wood at the other.

Standing on the platform and looking around, even through the silence, only the birds made noise, their wings flapping majestically above; there was a feeling of nostalgia, almost déjà vu. People were in my presence and a steam train was proceeding towards us. The ticket officer with a black suit, a tobacco pipe and a treasured time piece in his pocket. All of the feelings conjured were related to a Victoria summer’s day; the people I imagined and the clothes they were wearing.

I stepped forward and looked at out of the door. Solid oak had prevailed through weather, sheltered by the bushes and trees. The small windows were ornately patterned, resulting in my being unable to look inside, so I opened by door. The loud creak was to be expected and understandable. Yet still it gave me a fright. The whole atmosphere of this place was strange; it seemed too uncanny that it could remain untouched by humans. I was probably the first person to come here in my generation.

Inside was dark, very dark. I was not brave enough to enter, some thought prevented me. Firstly I would clear the windows; the more light, the better. My hands were cut and stung after the task. It seemed a barrier against me, the windows were protected from the wind and rain and now, the prickly bushes were trying to protect it from me. My intrigue had already far overcome my doubts and fears. Taking a deep breath I went in.

The one-roomed building spelt history in its entirety. The stone floor was covered with a rug, which, when stood upon, crumbled like sand. A coal fire stood against one wall, coal had been left at the side. A table stood in the middle, a chair neatly placed underneath it. Both appeared to be classic Victorian furniture. I am no expert, but just looking at these authentic originals was enough. One window at the platform appeared to be a place for buying tickets. Stacks of paper stood on a small wooden ledge. On the table was a ceramic cup, quite big but very dry. Other than that, there was nothing else of interest here; something of an anti-climax. The room, just like the rest of this station, was almost trapped in time, nothing had happened here for years. I felt guilty I had interrupted this deadlock, almost as if the station were a person and wanted to be left alone.

I departed, my mind confused with thoughts, walking down the track I had seen. My conscience had decided I should not tell anybody, I would leave the station in peace. These events of the past day frightened me in their unlikely character. I wanted to forget it completely. I knew I never would.

Philip Holt (4X)

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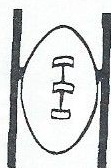
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GAMES



RUGBY

1ST XV RUGBY

Played 11, Won 7, Lost 4, Points for 204, Against 124

v Lymm High School	W	9-3
v Cheadle Hulme School	W	26-0
v St. Bede's College	W	17-7
v Bury Grammar School	W	59-21
v Widnes Sixth Form College	W	12-5
v King Edward VII School, Lytham	L	5-29
v Manchester Grammar School	L	6-17
v Bolton School	L	12-14
v Stockport Grammar School	L	3-22
v Sale Grammar School	W	42-8
v Bramhall High School	W	13-0

As can be seen from the results, the 1st XV have had another successful season, winning seven out of the eleven matches played. With much hard work put in by the squad in pre-season, it was a great disappointment when two of the first three games to be played were cancelled due to the opposition being unable to field a team. We did finally kick the season off against Lymm High School where we won a tight, forward orientated game 9-3.

The next four games against Cheadle Hulme School, St. Bede's College, Bury Grammar School and Widnes Sixth Form College were all won with relative ease, the team looking particularly impressive against Cheadle Hulme and Bury.

The winning run came to an abrupt end just before half-term at King Edward VII School, Lytham where we were beaten by a much better side and this was followed by successive defeats against Manchester Grammar School and Bolton School. The defeat against Bolton was particularly disappointing as two senior players failed to turn up and the team had to play with only fourteen men. However, they did play extremely courageously, and were unfortunate to lose by two points.

The losing sequence continued against Stockport Grammar School but the team finished the season well with convincing wins against Sale Grammar School and Bramhall High School.

Although the team has been fairly settled, only Reading, Allen, Butterworth and Haroutunian have played in all eleven matches. Haroutunian and England have been the regular props. England being only a fifth former, had a particularly good season being strong in the scrums and quick and robust in open play. The hooking position has fluctuated between Knowles and Murray - Knowles is the quicker of the two and has played a number of games in the back row. Murray ran well with the ball in his hands and was strong in the mauls, but preferred to hang out in the backs rather than get involved in tight forward play.

Riste was the main man in the second row and he played alongside either Shelmerdine, Grove or Graham. The back row usually consisted of White and Butterworth with either Knowles, Shelmerdine, Grove or Malik making up the trio.

At half-back, Taylor and Allen have been the regular pairing. Taylor, the scrum-half, is a natural footballer and very quick off the mark but would have benefited from more training. Allen, the fly half, has been an excellent captain and has led the team by example. He has been a key member of the 1st XV for the last three seasons and has scored the vast majority of the side's points. He has terrific vision, is a good kicker and passer of the ball and is not afraid of tackling opponents bigger and heavier than himself. His presence will be sorely missed next year.

Gleave and Reading were the uncompromising, hard tackling centres. As well as their tremendous defensive qualities, their attacking capabilities and positional play also developed as the season progressed. They will both be key players next season.

The wingers were mainly Wood and Misra, but Clemetson forced his way into the side with some powerful running and tackling towards the end of the season. Gandy and Sayyid both played fullback for the team. Gandy was very strong and powerful in attack but tended to be a little too casual at times in defence, whilst Sayyid proved to be an all-round competent footballer.

Overall, it has been another enjoyable and relatively successful season. I would like to thank those colleagues who have covered for my absence on a Saturday morning, to Dr. Barnes for his help with the senior squad and to parents for their regular and loyal support.

The following boys also represented the School 1st XV: JP Flatman, JM Hall, MJ Musgrove, DC Segal and MD Sellers.

D.J. Mallinder

2ND XV RUGBY

Played 11, Won 8, Lost 2, Drawn 1,
Points For 337, Against 143

v Lymm High School	W	47-7
v Cheadle Hulme School	W	25-12
v Altrincham Grammar School (U16)	W	27-25
v St. Bede's College	W	36-3
v Bury Grammar School	W	63-0
v Widnes Sixth Form College	W	47-0
v King Edward VII School, Lytham	L	5-22
v Manchester Grammar School	L	6-17
v Bolton School	D	21-21
v Stockport Grammar School	W	24-12
v Bramhall High School	W	36-24

The first team we were to play was Sandbach But we never did as they cancelled the match I thought we'd be out on a Lymm in our next game But a supreme performance from our pack put them to shame The whole pack need commending except Rick England who went over the top So he lost into the first team where he played prop

I've never played on a side that at Cheadle have lost
 But against our scrumming the referee did have a reposte
 If we won too many then non-competitive scrums he'd play
 Though we dominated the game we just couldn't score on the day
 Against our attacks many try saving tackles they did make
 Jim Vickers debuted as flanker on the squad before but he'd never got his break
 Altrincham I did not play as I was too old you see
 Strange, James Brown and Goodman are older than me
 And were on the losing away side that day
 William Hulme's v St Bede's had always been a close game to play
 But we knew we had a good side and our confidence was high
 We easily defeated them without them scoring a try
 At Bury we were allowed the room to play
 Flatman and Johnson impressed but not as much as Sellers and Day
 Sellers fully fit showed what an asset he might have been
 If his consistent ankle injury hadn't kept him from the first team
 The forwards performed well especially Pearson, Hargreaves and McLean
 Who at one point single handedly tackled their winger and got up again
 Tackled the support player and against their forward secured us the ball
 Ahmen Zeb played well for the opposition and even one of our tries he did forstall
 Early in the match Rick Gandy got sent off at Widness
 Though we ended up with Pearson on the wing we still did the business
 Brocklehurst played solidly despite his infamous 60 yard crossfield ball
 Second rows can run too as demonstrated by Jim Crawshaw and John Hall
 It was a shame about King Edward, Lytham we lost for the first time
 Robinson and Dé played well but it showed that they were not part of our usual back line
 Our scrum was not as dominant as usual because I was unwell
 I hadn't slept a wink the night before because then and on the pitch my ears hurt like hell
 Because of Lytham our unbeaten run was finished
 Manchester Grammar would be tough but our spirit was not diminished
 In the second half 7-6 MGS led and we wanted a win hence
 We went all out for more points but in doing so we weakened our defence
 And that cost us dearly because before the end they scored two
 It is my fault that against Bury we drew
 An involuntary hand movement gave away a penalty and they scored it
 All the backs were magnificent but Wood and Alexander deserved special credit
 Damien Taylor really made the difference at Stockport
 Showing the knowledge of when to and when not to run that if it were taught
 To John Flatman with his skill and pace a superlative scrum-half he would be
 But despite having a very good game Misra displayed a lack of discipline I don't see
 Bramhall played better than I had expected and I thought we might not win
 But we turned the game around and pulled deep resolve from within
 I scored an amazing Captain's try, ripped the ball out and sprinted a yard and was through

Some say Adikibi's solo run the length of the pitch past all their players was better, I don't - do you?

I would like to thank all those stalwarts of the Second team whose names I couldn't think of rhymes for. Adnan Malik, Danny Segal, Neville Clemetson, Daniel Gent, Tyrone Berkeley and Ian Graham. Finally I apologise to John Flatman and James Brocklehurst for all the abuse I gave them.

A T Rodgers (U6M)

U15 RUGBY

Played 13, Won 5, Lost 8, Points For 152, Against 280

v Sandbach School	L	5-36
v Lymm High School	W	12-5
v Cheadle Hulme School	W	25-0
v Altrincham Grammar School	L	0-38
v St. Bede's College	L	5-36
v Bury Grammar School	W	12-5
v Wright Robinson High School	W	20-12
v Audenshaw High School	L	26-39
v King Edward VII School, Lytham	L	8-20
v Manchester Grammar School	L	5-25
v Bolton School	L	5-18
v Stockport Grammar School	L	0-39
v Sale Grammar School	W	29-7

The team's coach last year commented that the problem position was fly-half. He also mentioned that only on occasions did the team act as a unit. In taking over as coach I was looking forward to being involved and giving young rugby players the benefit of my experience. My joy was in the sheer enthusiasm shown by the majority of the team; my sadness was that few of the best players listened and learnt.

The forwards were quite big but raw in terms of talent. Extra unit practices helped to improve some of the basic skills but these skills were never instinctive nor ingrained enough to withstand pressure brought to bear by the better opponents. The backs never quite operated as a unit until at the end of the season after a couple of practices where Mr. Mallinder helped. Perhaps I am losing my touch or is it that a youthful figure who graces the field for Sale and the North inspires players more than a middle-aged Head Master? However, I enjoyed my experience and a few players really did improve.

We lost the first game to a rowdy Sandbach side with a psychopath playing at No. 8. Not surprisingly we were a little in awe and did well to keep the score down. Two good wins then came. We beat Lymm High School well and Cheadle Hulme even more comprehensively and this was having lent them two of our spare players. The Altrincham Grammar School game was a farce and the injury to James Silver criminal. We played well against St. Bede's, losing to a much better side but were in no way disgraced. Bury Grammar School and Wright Robinson High were beaten well and a few lessons about life were learnt in the latter game; the players will be more capable of withstanding a mugging after that experience. The Audenshaw game was one of the best and although lost it was one of our best team efforts. There followed a string of four defeats and I am afraid we did not cover ourselves with glory in any of them; one of them we should have won but did not deserve to win the others. The discipline of the team in this second half of the season lapsed somewhat although the enthusiasm to play was still maintained. The final win against Sale Grammar

School was an excellent team performance and so the season finished on a good note.

Michael Dodd captained the team with admirable endeavour and Colin Ogden and Philip Buxton became the most improved players in the team. The locks interchanged regularly and no regular combination gelled. Graham Thornton had his moments but they were mainly off the field. Suhail Aziz tackled like a shell when he was there. Chris Longsdon has possibly the best future but I suspect the round ball beckons and James Silver, after injury, came back and looked to be promising either in the front or the second row. The star of the side, and he never stopped telling everyone so, was James Jobling who proved fast and strong; he has definite talent and should he learn to integrate with others, could become a very good player. Mathew Robinson talked a good game but was keen and Nick Davenport came in later and showed raw courage.

The backs were more than a little temperamental. Greg Humphries filled the troublesome fly-half spot and performed well. His tactical awareness should develop and he could go further. Robert Seddon knew what to do at scrum-half (and also most other positions) but only performed when he felt like it. James Calderbank deputised very ably on occasions and in other positions when the need arose. TJ Rashid tackled well in the centre but needs to improve his distribution. James Lambert joined him from the back row and is quick and elusive; the main problem was, however, he was not sure where he was going. Matt Healey was fast and direct on the wing and should have had more tries if he had been passed the ball (as he told all and sundry continually). Stephen Kellett could be a very good player at either full back or fly-half and when he grows and wants to compete he could make it. Nick Bell, Chris Reading and James Leinhardt all had good moments but either injury or lack of competence hampered progress.

To enjoy your rugby you need to subject your own temperament to the will of the team and this is something all must learn. Then the natural individual talent emerges and is sustained. If these boys can learn this then they will use their ability rather than abuse it. Turn-out and discipline are crucial; ask Alex Ferguson.

The following represented the School: S M Aziz, R Beenstock, N Bell, G R Brocklehurst, P Buxton, J T Calderbank, N Davenport, M J Dodd (Captain), J Guy, M Healey, G P Humphries, J S Jobling, S J C Kellett, J R M Lambert, J Leinhardt, C Longsdon, M W Newton, C R Ogden, T J Rashid, C Reading, M E Robinson, R M Seddon, J T P Silver, G H Thornton, A Xydeas, S Waind.

P.D. Briggs

U14 RUGBY

Played 13, Won 10, Lost 3, Points for 381, Against 186

v Sandbach School	W	71-5
v Lymm High School	L	12-36
v Cheadle Hulme School	L	10-51
v Altrincham Grammar School	W	15-7
v St. Bede's College	L	19-22
v Ashton-on-Mersey School	W	19-17
v Bury Grammar School	W	33-0
v Audenshaw High School	W	69-0
v King Edward VII School, Lytham	W	19-7
v Manchester Grammar School	W	15-12
v Bolton School	W	17-5
v Stockport Grammar School	W	29-19
v Sale Grammar School	W	63-5

After a hectic introduction to both the school and the U14 squad, it was with some trepidation that I approached the first match against Sandbach. Fortunately the team provided an excellent all round performance to produce an overwhelming victory. Credit must go to Sandbach who battled on to the end of the match, gaining a late consolation try. The following two matches brought everyone down to earth with a crash! Lymm's hard running showed up weaknesses in the team's tackling, although David Hancock at scrum half was a constant threat to the opposition. Cheadle Hulme's overall size advantage played a large part in this defeat, but their excellent forward play and well drilled performance should prove a valuable lesson for next season.

A win at Altrincham, avenging last year's narrow defeat, raised spirits again. This was a hard fought game but good performances from both forwards and backs supplied a deserved victory.

St. Bede's proved to be tougher opponents than expected, and this was a very close game with both teams playing some excellent rugby. With the scores fairly close at half-time, determined rugby by the school team was rewarded by a good try. However, with the minutes ticking away (and one half of the supporters praying for an early whistle) a moment's idiocy by a certain forward gave away a penalty in our own 22. This was quickly taken and run in by St. Bede's to clinch the match for them.

Perhaps it was this narrow defeat which spurred the team on to win all the remaining games. Ashton-on-Mersey again provided tough opposition although this time forward determination from Hamza Anwar amongst others, and solid tackling from Zishan Anjum on the wing secured a close victory.

Both Bury and Audenshaw were overwhelmed by the rapidly improving team, the forwards now acting as a cohesive unit and the backs' speed and handling producing some excellent moves. Matthew Naylor's positional kicking was strong throughout the season, often gaining valuable ground for the team.

King Edward VII was expected to be a hard contest, and also proved to be useful preparation for the looming match against Manchester Grammar School. A win by another strong team performance put everyone in the right frame of mind, and a week's rest over half term meant a refreshed and injury-free team went to Manchester Grammar in a determined mood.

The MGS game was the toughest test the team faced all season, but their attitude and performance, despite difficult circumstances, is something they should be proud of. The team was clearly the stronger of the two, and it was only lapses in concentration that kept the score so close. Hancock and Naylor proved to be a strong unit, and Tim Edwards ran in an excellent try from half way early in the second half. With a narrow lead the last ten minutes of a somewhat extended half were spent camped in the opposition's territory, missing several opportunities for a decisive score.

The remaining matches allowed the team to put a seal on a very successful season. Bolton and Stockport both succumbed to the consolidated skills within the team, and saw improvements in many aspects of their play. The final game against Sale provided the chance to experiment. The new partnership of Daniel Ellis and Rudy Mensah in the centre proving very strong, and forwards such as John Daniels and Brett Smith showing the extent of the abilities.

Over the length of the season the squad has developed immensely and has great potential for the future, with plenty of depth and talent throughout. Concentration and tackling weaknesses have improved but still need development.

The forwards might find they lack size in future years, but skill and determination are in ample supply. Front row: J Daniels, TR Barraclough, B Smith. Second row: H Anwar, AM Goldsmith. Flankers: PR Murphy, NG Arthur. No. 8: TC Edwards. Other regular forwards include AJ Power, LJ Hassett and J Haboubi.

The backs have a number of strong runners, but not all are yet committed to hard tackles. Handling and awareness however improved greatly during the season. Scrum half:

DT Hancock. Fly half: MR Naylor. Centres: OJT Briggs, RK Hanley, R Mensah, DA Ellis. Wings: Z Anjum, S Arshad, CA Baker. Full backs: RFM Bell, CI Johnstone.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr Seddon, Mr Mallinder and Mr Myers for all their help and advice during the season and the many parents who gave encouragement and support to the team (and coach) in all weathers.

AR Austen

U13 RUGBY

Played 14, Won 5, Lost 9, Points For 268, Against 465

v Sandbach School	Lost	17 - 32
v Lymm High School	Lost	0 - 27
v Cheadle Hulme School	Lost	15 - 47
v Altrincham Grammar School	Lost	50 - 0
v St Bede's College	Lost	7 - 55
v Ashton on Mersey High School	Won	17 - 5
v Bury Grammar School	Lost	20 - 29
v Wright Robinson High School	Lost	10 - 66
v Audenshaw High School	Lost	17 - 32
v King Edward VII Lytham	Won	29 - 19
v Manchester Grammar School	Lost	0 - 60
v Bolton School	Won	54 - 15
v Stockport Grammar School	Lost	0 - 68
v Sale Grammar School	Won	32 - 10

Having retired from the coaching staff last year I was surprised, indeed shocked, to find myself out on the field at the first practice in charge of the U13 squad, but in the absence of any new talent here I was again.

The opening fixture was soon upon us even before I had got to know the squad. So inevitably the team was basically that which finished last season.

We performed quite well but Sandbach proved to be just too strong. There were some creditable individual contributions, namely from Richard Dixon, Kopul Rahman and Robert Richardson, but the team lacked cohesion and did not work together. It was also evident that many of the players were horrendously unfit.

During the week the team worked on the immediate problem areas only for another underlying failing to come to light. Only about half the squad could train effectively, the other half believing practice was time for idiotic buffoonery, lacking the ability to concentrate or work at developing basic skills. Consequently a number of new players came into the side for the fixture versus Lymm High School, a traditionally strong rugby playing school, and some of the reserves were given the opportunity to shine. Although defeated, we did play with more grit and determination, with Adam Dignan, a new player performing admirably, only unfortunately to miss the rest of the season due to illness to the huge disadvantage of the squad.

Three games followed which showed our very best and worst. In winning we ran very strongly and Marvin Daniel showed he has real pace, but in tougher situations our tackling became gutless and some players hid on the field letting themselves and their team-mates down.

We did well to win against Ashton-on-Mersey, a new school to our fixture list. Whilst the game against Bury should have been won, when having worked hard to score ourselves, we promptly allowed the opposition to score by failing to concentrate and work hard in defence. This was to prove our downfall on a number of occasions and was part of a general pattern of poor team discipline and over reliance on one or two key players. This is a great pity because there is potential in this team, so evident in their splendid performance against King Edward VII, Lytham, who are always very strong and well drilled. In this game many players displayed qualities previously unimaginable and the team produced what I consider to be their best win of the season.

Sadly the spirit and strength of character was absent against MGS and we plunged to a heavy defeat, only to bounce back against Bolton School. The performances to the end of the season continued to see-saw, with a high scoring loss and then a comfortable win.

Finally a few words addressed to the players. Many need to be fitter, more self-disciplined and must be prepared to work in order to improve, however they all have potential. A number made huge strides through the course of the season and deserve special mention. Garth West and Robert Watson, at hooker and lock respectively, were always hard working. Richard Dixon is an excellent prospect and led the side from the front but was too often without the support of the other back row players. In the backs we have good players on an individual basis but they fail to perform as a unit. If they all played well at the same time they could put on a spectacular display. All the players must believe in themselves, must want to achieve, must want to do better.

My sincere thanks go out to all who came to support the team, often in cold and wet weather. Such support from parents/guardians and colleagues is not taken for granted and is appreciated by all who run teams.

The following pupils formed the U13 squad: O Ahmed, O Ajaz, M N Daniel, A L D Oignan, R Dixon, P M Edisbury, C P Edwards, S M Ghazi, B M Green, C M Grimshaw, J J Hancock, C N Lindley, R I D Mackay, N L P Matthews, M C Norcliffe, K M Rahman, R J Richardson, C A Smith, A J Wall, R G Watson, G S West, D A Wynter.

N P Dunn

U12 RUGBY

Played 10, Won 10, Points for 396, Against 12

v Cheadle Hulme School	W	31-0
v Ashton-on-Mersey High School	W	39-0
v Audenshaw High School	W	36-0
v King Edward VII School, Lytham	W	51-0
v Manchester Grammar School	W	22-0
v Bolton School	W	66-0
v Stockport Grammar School	W	17-5
v Sale Grammar School	W	40-0
v Bramhall High School	W	38-7
v Wright Robinson High School	W	56-0

It is obvious from these results that this has been a truly outstanding season for the U12 team.

In all, 24 boys represented the School and although a few key individuals played important roles this was very much a squad success. From the very first practice session all the boys showed enthusiasm and commitment to the team. All worked hard at individual skills (which were new

to many of them) and at the unit skills of rucking and three quarter alignment etc.

From my point of view the most impressive aspect of the season was the tackling. I have never seen a junior team tackle so well, and certainly in two games this was the deciding factor between the two teams. Against Manchester Grammar School we found ourselves unable to win much ball and, as a result, were defending for most the game. To win this game 22-0 speaks volumes for the character and determination of the team. We tackled anything that moved and denied our opponents any opportunity to score. Then with our little possession we managed to run with determination to score the vital points. It was a similar story against Stockport Grammar School. Once again, we saw too little possession (and this is an important area to work on next year), however, the character of the team came through as in the previous match, although Stockport were the first team to score any points against us.

Although rugby is a team game the presence of key players can make a good team excellent and I would class this year's U12 squad as excellent - not just from a playing point of view but in training, as representatives of the School and in their willingness to learn.

Captained by Daniel Naylor, an astute fly-half, the team improved greatly as the season progressed. We were fortunate to have a large number of athletic boys in the squad which gave us speed and size. This was especially important in the back row where William Kent, Joe Holland and Jonathan Murphy mostly stopped any potential attack by the opposition and even had a few back row moves of their own. To make good use of any possession won, it is vital to have a good scrum-half/fly-half link. In Luke Coffey we had an excellent scrum-half with vision, strength and speed. Luke scored many times by spotting the gap and accelerating 20/30 m past the opposition to score. Daniel Naylor is the most promising fly half I have seen for several years. As he grows older he will gain the experience needed to make the crucial decisions and kicking will feature more in the later years. At junior level, he is as close to the perfect player as I have seen.

The strongest player in the squad was Richard Hopkinson. I could have played Richard in any position and he would have made a significant contribution. As it was I selected him as left wing but, as all good wingers should, he would pop up in the centre or on the right wing. A strong running, strong tackling player he has a good future in the game.

Such key individuals provide the icing on the cake but without the efforts of all the players we would not have had such a tremendous season. Our front row of Thomas Chung, Nick Sharwin/Aron Robinson and James Veitch worked extremely hard to provide quality scrummage ball. These boys, along with our second row pairing of Chris White, Andrew Pickford or Anthony Wardle carry out much of the unseen "graft" that is essential in providing the basic platform of "good ball". This they did game after game and as all forwards should, their game matured with age!

The most successful centre pairing was found to be Chris Harwood and Ian Allison. Both are effective ball handlers but both should look to improve their speed and their vision. Centres are not just passers of the ball (watch Will Carling) they are key players forming the link between the fly-half and wings. Both have enormous potential and with practice will contribute even more to the team as they get older.

Thomas Gent (right wing) and David Rogers (full back) were both more than useful once they had settled into the position. Again with more match experience and practice I can see promising futures for them.

All other boys who represented the School made significant contributions and I look forward to watching their progress through the School.

It has been a pleasure to work with this squad and I thank them for their efforts. Many thanks, also, to the many parents who continually supported the team.

The squad consisted of: DM Naylor (Capt), IJ Allison, LS Coffey, TLC Cheung, DS Freeman, TP Gent, C Harwood, J Holland, R Hopkinson, W Kent, S Miller, J Murphy, C Nwegbu, D Peters, AR Pickford, AP Robinson, PJ Robinson, DP Rogers, AJ Russell, N Shah, NJ Sharwin, JA Veitch, AP Wardle, C White.

C H Seddon

LACROSSE



1ST X LACROSSE

Played 17, Won 12, Lost 5.

For its first season of league lacrosse, the School side could have done with a maximum of experience players available, however the departure of two top players after their lower sixth year and the loss through injury of two more for the whole season left gaps which it was difficult to fill satisfactorily. What should have been a fairly straight forward progress towards promotion from Division 5 became something of a disappointment as a poor attitude from a few players led to two crucial defeats and a final record in the league games of 9 wins and 2 defeats and third place. Whilst we played some exciting and enjoyable lacrosse against the weaker sides in the division, it was the two top sides who refused to let us have our own way, with frustrating consequences.

Similarly, in the Timperley Floodlit Competition for Under 19 sides, the going was difficult, and only those with real resilience to put alongside their lacrosse skills emerged with reputations intact. A very hard David Beesley Cup semi-final saw another capitulation late in a well fought game when a stiffening of resolve and more running and ball movement was what we needed.

An unusual season without trophies still brought a lot of pleasure and promise however. Craig Simkin had a good season as Captain and was awarded the Andy Brown Trophy for his consistent standards and effort in defence. John Hall's final season was typical of all his others in goal: invariable sound, reliable stopping, catching and clearing with saves of real brilliance interspersed - it has been rare in his seven years between the posts to blame John for a goal. Jonathan Sills showed his increasing experience in defence, and James White had some good moments but was sadly misused and underused in defending situations. The midfield relied heavily on Chris Gleave's facing and running; when he had spells of over-exposure and injury, the team was fortunate to have such a creative, pacey runner as Chris Bell and such a hard-working team man as James Brocklehurst to take over the burden. If these three had had an always fresh Peter Day and those missing injured to back them up, then that would have been a combination to challenge any of our opposition. Dominic Stansfield was the lynchpin of the attack, still always ready to feed anyone

who appeared half-free: when Iain Cooke returned to lacrosse, he found a partner who really understands the game. These two and the left-handed Mark Warnes formed a balanced straight-attack which will remain available next season and should do very well.

I am sure that all the team lacked this season, apart from those missing senior players, was match-playing experience. The half-season we play together with limited practice time and, it seems, increasingly awful winter weather putting the field out of bounds, is making it harder to find quantities of strong running, fluent stick-handlers who have a genuine feel for what the game is about. This problem we must, I feel, address as soon as possible. We have so many willing players, and talented ones, and I am sure we must aim for increased involvement in lacrosse and become aware again of the absolute delight in handling a lacrosse stick with speed and skill.

The team was usually selected as follows:- J M Hall, C Simkin (Capt), N M G Owen, J R Sills, J K White, J A Brocklehurst, C Bell, C Gleave, M A Shelmerdine, P H Day, D P Stansfield, I J Cooke and M T Warnes.

The following also played:- M A Knowles, N D Goodwin, J Birtwell, S Xydeas, W M Parry, D Rowlands, J M E Robinson.

C P Langford

2ND X LACROSSE

Played 10, Won 1, Lost 9, Goals for 47, Against 101

v Warwick University (A) (Nigel Wayne Trophy)	W 12 - 3
v Wilmslow A (H)	L 5 - 14
v Crewe and Alsager (A)	L 0 - 5
v Stopfordians B (H) (Nigel Wayne Trophy)	L 1 - 13
v Cheadle Hulme B (A)	L 7 - 10
v Ashton B (H)	L 3 - 8
v Blackpool (A)	L 9 - 17
v Norbury A (H)	L 4 - 18
v Mellor B (A)	L 6 - 7
v WHGS 1st (H)	L 0 - 6

Looking at the Upper Sixth year group when they were Fifth Formers two years ago, one would have thought that the nucleus of this year's First team would include the names Howells, Jones, Musgrove, Sellers, Sherwin. Unfortunately the first three are no longer at WHGS and the last two have not played lacrosse this year because of injury. This has obviously left a big hole in the First team which has had a knock on effect with the Second team. Added to this, the Second team have played this season in Division Five of League North. A rule of this league prevents players under the age of sixteen from playing and hence many of the U16 team, who would normally play for the Second team, were ineligible. This has left the Second team with one of the weakest squads of recent years and this has been reflected in the results. After winning the first match, in the Cup against Warwick University, all the league matches were lost by various margins.

Knowles, in goal, had a good season; probably because he had more practice than anyone else! At times he showed his frustration when left over-exposed by the defence and he must learn to curb this. The straight defence usually consisted of Crawshaw, Vickers and Willett and they improved as a unit as the season went on. The main source of trouble in defence came from midfield. While being

quite good when we had the ball they were often slow to react when the ball was lost, leaving the defence stretched. In attack we lacked the movement and ideas to worry the opposition and this was not helped by very limited practice time.

Despite the lack of success I would like to think that we have all learned something and I would like to thank all players for their efforts, particularly Nick Goodwin as captain. He stuck to a difficult task with his usual determination.

The following players represented the School:- ND Goodwin (Capt), TM Berkeley, J Birtwell, LP Brown, MD Brook, J Crawshaw, R England, CJ Hope, MA Knowles, W M Parry, NJ Reading, DJ Rowlands, DN Slack, JA Vickers, AM Watkins, JK White, MA Whiteley, AG Willett, JR Witter and S Xydeas.

A Simkin

UNDER 16 LACROSSE

Played 9, Won 5, Lost 4, For 76, Against 56

v Timperley (A)	L 3 - 5
v Poynton (H) (Junior & Schools Cup)	W 9 - 5
v Mellor (A)	L 6 - 10
v Cheadle Hulme School (A) (Juniors & Schools Cup)	W 16 - 3
v Mellor (H)	W 6 - 5
v Boardman & Eccles (H)	W 16 - 7
v Timperley (A) (Juniors & Schools Cup Semi-Final)	L 5 - 12
v Boardman & Eccles (H)	L 4 - 9
v Poynton (A)	W 11 - 0

In a season that was blighted by wet weather and heavy pitches, the U16's did remarkably well to play nine matches. As usual with this age group, the main focus of attention was the Juniors and Schools Cup. We were happy to play on astroturf against Timperley on the first Saturday, when all grass pitches were waterlogged, so that at least we had got a game in before meeting Poynton in the first round of the Cup. This was a closely fought match which was only decided by a late flurry of goals from Hope. The second round was a more comfortable victory against Cheadle Hulme School. This match was sandwiched between two games against Mellor. The first one was lost but the team had improved significantly before the second game and a narrow win confirmed this. A convincing win against Boardman left us in good spirits to face Timperley in the semi-final of the Cup.

Having lost 5-3 to Timperley in the first match of the season, I was confident that we had improved sufficiently to reverse the result. However Timperley had also progressed and they deservedly won 12-5. It was our most disappointing performance of the season. Robinson was missing, injured in practice the evening before, and Ghazi was struggling with bronchitis. While these were valid excuses, very few players played to their true potential, as if they were over-awed by the occasion. There was another disappointing performance and result against Boardman so it was pleasing to finish the season on a high note with a very comprehensive win against Poynton.

Played 9, won 5 sounds a fairly average season. I would like to think that it was better than that. Only fifteen players were used during the season and one of those had a

broken arm for most of it! The attitude to training and matches was excellent as it always has been with this year group. Consequently, there was a real progression in the standard of lacrosse during the season. The defence was usually solid, only being exposed by the fast breaks of Mellor and the overall attack play of Timperley. The first string midfield of Day, Flatman and Robinson was as good as any in this year group. They know each other's play well and complement each other. The second string midfield players used were Gent, Holden, Kelly, MacLean and Taylor. Gent and Taylor made good progress but sometimes seemed to lack confidence in their own ability. Kelly missed most of the season through injury and MacLean was introduced to take his place. Holden is more naturally an attack player but found it impossible to displace any of the straight attack of Ghazi, Hope and Lowry. Hope emerged as top scorer, having the knack to find space and to time his runs so that most goals were from "one on ones" with the keeper. Ghazi also scored frequently. Lowry had the most difficult attack job, operating behind the right of goals. This position lends itself to a natural left hander but we do not have one. Like others in the team he could do with an injection of self confidence.

I would like to thank all the players for their co-operation and enthusiasm which made this an enjoyable season. Particular thanks go to Peter Day as Captain. He led by example, being second highest scorer and top of the assists list. He is a talented and dedicated player who has learned to channel his natural aggression and he will go far in this game.

The following players represented the School:- PH Day (Capt), P Bagnall, MJ Birtwistle, R England, JP Flatman, DJ Gent, NB Ghazi, AJ Holden, CJ Hope, AFJ Kelly, D Lowry, SJ MacLean, JH Pearson, JME Robinson and DI Taylor.

A Simkin

U15 LACROSSE

Played 6, Won 1, Lost 5, Goals for 2, Against 53

v Heaton Mersey	L 0 - 17
v Sale	L 4 - 7
v Mellor A	W 7 - 3
v Sale	L 3 - 9
v Cheadle Hulme School	L 8 - 10
v Cheadle	L 5 - 7

Even before the season started, the team was at a disadvantage because they were due to play many teams that were a year older. In addition to this, there were five games rained off because of field conditions and poor attitudes at times hampered the team's progress.

Practices were hard to come by in January due to field conditions and this became obvious in the first match. Heaton Mersey defeated us 17 - 0. There was no place to go but upwards. After a week of hard work, the team improved dramatically and played honourably in a 4 - 8 loss to Sale. The next two scheduled matches were rained off. This gave the team two weeks to prepare to play Mellor A. Through hard work and some positional changes, the team reached their high point of the season with a 7 - 3 victory over Mellor. This game was highlighted by the efforts of James Jobling and Miles Newton. The entire defence played extremely well, limiting Mellor to only 3 goals.

After such a strong match, we were disappointed at Sale, where neither our offence nor defence could manage

to be consistent. A poor effort was highlighted by outstanding play from Greg Humphries, Andrew Xydeas and James Lambert. After the mid-term break, we travelled down to Cheadle Hulme School to play what became the most exciting match of the year. In the middle of a rain storm, our team fought hard, but came up short 8 - 10. James Jobling scored 3 goals and appeared to be unstoppable at times. The midfield play was outstanding, as was the play of our goalkeeper, Matt Robinson. The following match against Cheadle ended in a similar fashion, with the team playing hard, but not scoring enough. The final two matches were also rained off.

The team had many good players, but not outstanding ones. Some players showed flashes of brilliance, but were ordinary the following week. Unfortunately the weather impeded the progress of this team. Poor efforts in practice also put a strain on the team's growth. There are many promising players, who need to produce better attitudes in order to let their natural talents play instead of their mouths. With hard work, this group can become very good, but every player needs to improve. Thanks go to the parents who helped with transport and showed their support throughout the season.

Regular players were: N Bell, GR Brocklehurst, JT Calderbank, M Healey, GP Humphries, JS Jobling, SJC Kellett, JRM Lambert, MW Newton, JAD Partington, ME Robinson, RM Seddon and A Xydeas.

Also played occasionally: PA Beales, CR Ogden, MT Olden and C Reading.

Mr B N Hamblin
(American Lacrosse Coach)

U14 LACROSSE

Played 6, Won 1, Lost 5, Goals for 30, Against 46

Lacrosse at this age group is very difficult for the school under 14 side playing club sides that invariably contain players a year older. This extra year produced a marked and important difference in physique and skill levels. Most of the teams we encountered contained a couple of bigger players who, through their size and experience were able to control the game. As a result the school team often saw too little of the ball and, not surprisingly, failed to score enough goals.

That said, however, the team improved as the term progressed. We concentrated on our defensive skills, settling for a zone defence. With John Daniels, our new goalkeeper, performing well, this zone worked very well when all players concentrated on the task, but broke down occasionally as players got drawn out of position or failed to get back into position quickly enough.

Stephen Flood, Ben Veitch and Russell Jones were our regular defence men. They were well supported by Nicky Arthur, Craig Baker, Richard Bell, James Higgins and David Hancock in midfield. All these players have the potential to do well but none of them worked hard enough on their individual skills. As a result we often lost possession when under pressure, to a dropped pass or a failed pick up or a poor pass.

Paul Murphy, Matthew Naylor, Nick Gilmore and later James Merron made up our attack. Again, all showed reasonable skills in practice, but struggled against the stronger defenders. As well as developing their individual and evasive skills, all will need to work hard at their positional play to produce the fluid movement, with the midfield trio, necessary to break down tight defences or get past individual defenders.

In reflection we had an enjoyable season which served to highlight the requirements of skill, speed and strength, All the boys should be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and should aim to improve their levels of skill and fitness. The school lacrosse season is very short and players must accept responsibility to practise in their own time if they have any ambitions to play in the higher teams.

My thanks to all the players for a pleasurable season and to those parents who supported the team throughout the term.

The following boys represented the school: N G Arthur, C A Baker, R F M Bell, R J Bowie, J Daniels, S J R Flood, N Gilmore, D T Hancock, R K Hanley, J T Higgins, R S Jones, J E P Merron, P R Murphy, M R Naylor, R F Poll, G D Roberts, B M Veitch.

C H Seddon

U13 X LACROSSE

Played 5, Won 1, Drawn 2, Lost 2.

Playing against mostly older and bigger opposition, this years' team, though rather limited in ability, both individually and collectively, could be quite pleased with its results, though the number of matches was relatively few. They were soundly thrashed in the first game by an excellent young Ashton side who played beautiful flowing lacrosse even though the surface was awful, but only lost by the odd goal to a big Cheadle Hulme School U14 side.

In between they were easy victors over Stockport Grammar School Under 14 2nd team and fought two creditable draws against Rochdale and Poynton U14s, the latter game especially being a brave and determined effort.

Few players distinguished themselves consistently, foremost amongst these being Green (the goalkeeper), who stopped dozens of shots with coolness and bravery, and MacKay who handles well and looks as though he understands how to attack as a team. Elsewhere great promise was shown by Richardson, a tenacious man-on-man defender, and Green (the outfield player), who has physique, handling skill and understanding but little fitness. Similar failings of stamina and also confidence affected Dignan, Ghazi, Daniel, Wynter and McLeod, though all should make the grade with more experience. Every player can learn simple lessons of common sense and reliability from Nixon. What all these players need more than anything in the coming years is lots of running, stick handling lacrosse.

The team was selected from the following players:- MN Daniel, A Dignan, R Fu, SMA Ghazi, BA Green, BM Green, M Ludlam, NA McLeod, RID MacKay, R Nixon, RJ Richardson, CA Smith, CB Smith, DA Wynter.

C P Langford

U12 LACROSSE

Played 9 ; Won 9 ; Lost 0 ; Goals For 145 Against 28

v Stockport Grammar School	W 12 - 3
v Ashton	W 25 - 0
v Beckenham	W 7 - 3
v Norbury	W 25 - 0
v Stockport Grammar School	W 17 - 2
v Timperley	
(Onandaga Cup 1st round)	W 11 - 4
v Stockport Grammar School	
(Onandaga Cup 2nd round)	W 17 - 2

v Stockport	
(Onandaga Cup Semi Final)	W 16 - 5
v Heaton Mersey	
(Onandaga Cup Final)	W 15 - 9
(North of England Cup Winners: W.H.G.S. U-12)	
North of England U-12 6-a-side tournament (at Timperley)	
v Wilmslow (W 5-2) , v Boardman & Eccles (L 3-4),	
v Cheadle (W 3-2) , v Mellor (W 5-2)	

The usual training sessions were held over the Christmas holidays, and it was found that there were several who had experienced the game before. Further sessions every lunchtime, together with the Saturday mornings, brought along more boys, and a squad of about 20 developed. Two fathers had both played and coached, and three coaches were better than one!

Bad weather prevented the first Cup match against Timperley being played on time, and Stockport Grammar School turned out to be the first opposition. All put in very good performances, starting from the diminutive Michael Robson in goal, through the strong Daniel Naylor, who won most centres and scored three goals, to captain James Veitch who scored six times. A 12-3 win resulted. The second match, against Ashton, showed how well the players had developed in such a short time, and a squad of 16 players, with continuous substitution, worked together extremely well. Jonathan Murphy, in attack, was encouraged to shoot earlier and harder, and he and Aron Robinson on the other post in attack, both scored and fed others in a 25-0 win. A strong and experienced team from Beckenham, London, came to play an afternoon match. The full squad of twenty players participated in this match, which proved to be a valuable prelude to the following day's Cup match against Timperley. Seven different players scored in the 7-3 win. In the Cup match, we had learned to pass the ball round quickly and early, and to feed players cutting for goals. Daniel or William Kent won every centre, the midfield constantly switched, to keep fresh, the defence held firm, and we were 7-1 up at one time. After Timperley came back, we played some of the best lacrosse seen from a School Under 12 team, and won convincingly.

A team took part in the North of England 6-a-side tournament , but the astroturf and small pitches cramped our style. Three wins out of four were not enough to gain a semi-final place, but all enjoyed the experience. We entertained Stockport Grammar School again in the second round of the Cup, and eight players scored in a convincing 17-2 win. The next match was against a weak Norbury side, when some non-regulars were given a game. There was again much to commend about the attack play, with Michael, on a short sortie from goals, one of twelve scorers in another 25-0 win.

Prior to our Cup semi-final match, we had a friendly against the School's Under 13's. It was worthwhile training, and the defence found more problems than they had previously. Our confidence showed through, and an honourable draw ensued. All had looked forward with apprehension to the Stockport game, on a very muddy pitch, and against some experienced players. An excellent referee helped our passing and non-physical game, and we built upon an early lead. We again won most centres, and played a patient game when we had the ball. Players made space , and the team plays that had been practised worked well. Stockport were surprised at our skill level, and we won through to the Final 16-5. Our one disappointment was that two major players - goalkeeper Michael and centre Daniel - would be unavailable for the Final. We experimented with other players for one match , and Philip Robinson's training

and good handling gave him the goalkeeping spot. Joe Holland showed that he was strong enough to play a role in midfield if needed. Much work was put in during the week before the Final, and all looked forward to the challenge of the strong midfield running of Heaton Mersey.

Onondaga Cup Final : Nerves and losses at centre led to us down 0-2 early on. A change of centre, a good goalkeeping save, two feeds to James near the crease, and we were level. We lost the ground ball again, and conceded two more solo goals. Our strategy to counter the attack then started to work. We won one ground ball and one face, and the two quick breaks each produced a goal. We were more confident in the second quarter, the midfield worked hard and defended better. We went ahead when we were a man up, and the opposition had to chase us. A defensive mistake of ours was costly, until James capitalised on an error at the other end and we went in ahead at half time. We strengthened our midfield with Joe, and Mersey's threat was annulled. We were assured going forward, and all worked together as a team. We scored twice after good vision from Philip in our goals, and James was totally dominant, eventually scoring TEN individual goals in a convincing 15-9 win. WHGS Under 12's were the North of England Cup winners for the first time.

This was possibly the best Under 12 School team I have experienced in over twenty years of coaching. Their 100% record depended upon teamwork, the positive attitude taken by all the squad, and all were totally committed to the team. Many were happy to play both left- and right-handed, and midfield strings were used readily. Tactical plays, that will be needed in the future, were understood. James Veitch (averaging five goals a game) and Daniel Naylor were magnificent. Our main concern was in defence, where players were out of position at times, especially on zone play. Aron Robinson's departure will be a loss in attack, but I hope he will continue with the game. William Kent was the most improved player and was strong in midfield and at the face. This group of boys has a very rosy future.

Thanks to Mr Andrew Veitch and Mr Keith Robson for all their help in coaching.

The team (with major goal scorers) was usually selected from : M.E.C. Robson, P.J. Robinson, J.J. Holland, C.White, A.R. Pickford, L.S. Coffey(10), D.M. Naylor(29), D.P. Rogers, W.O. Kent, R.L. Hopkinson(11), T.P.Gent, A.P. Robinson(18), J.A. Veitch(55), J.R. Murphy(17).

Also played : T.W.J. Hickman, N.J. Sharwin, A.C. Edwards, A.P. Machin, G. Meakin, M.J. Brown.

M.D.Wood

HOCKEY



1ST XI HOCKEY

v St Bede's (H)	Drew	0 - 0
v Manchester High (H)	Won	1 - 0

Manchester and District Tournament:

v Marple Hall	Won	1 - 0
v Altrincham Grammar	Drew	0 - 0
v Loreto	Drew	0 - 0

Semi-final:

v Stockport Grammar	Drew	0 - 0
	after extra-time	
	Lost on flicks	

County Tournament:

v Manchester High	Won	1 - 0
v Turton	Lost	0 - 1
v Oldham VIth Form College	Drew	0 - 0

Quarter-final

v Canon Slade	Lost	0 - 2
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For the first time since girls arrived at WHGS, we were able to field a full 1st XI team. Although the team took a while to sort itself out due to girls leaving at the end of the fifth year and also new players joining the Sixth Form, we eventually produced a strong side of keen and enthusiastic players.

Unfortunately we didn't have many matches, but the tournaments which we had entered gave us something to work towards. The first tournament was early on in the season, although we didn't actually score many goals we did go through to the semi-finals. This proved to be a tough match against Stockport Grammar. Having defended most of the first half, we got our act together in the second half and put the pressure on, but unfortunately even after extra-time we were not able to score and the match went to penalty strokes, which we eventually lost.

The County tournament was played at the end of the season. Again we went through from our section but came across Canon Slade who proved to be too strong and a lot fitter than us.

As we are a young team, ten of our eleven players being U17, this season has been a learning experience and has given us great hope for next year. A special thanks to Caroline Ip who was always there to fill in for us at the last minute and played her heart out every time and to Miss Barlow for putting up with us all and especially for playing in goal (without any pads) when we were practising our flicks.

The team can now look forward to next season when the squad should get bigger and stronger as more players join the Sixth Form. I wish them every success next year.

Debbie Segal (U6A1)

U15 HOCKEY

Played 8, Won 4, Drew 2, Lost 2.

v Stockport (A)	Lost	0 - 7
v Kingsway (A)	Lost	0 - 3
v Marple Hall (A)	Won	8 - 0
v St Bede's (A)	Drew	0 - 0
v Loreto (A)	Won	2 - 0
v St Bede's (H)	Won	1 - 0
v Knutsford (H)	Drew	0 - 0

Manchester and District Tournament:

v Kingsway	Lost	0 - 1
v Marple Hall	Won	1 - 0
v Sale Grammar	Won	1 - 0

Semi-final

v Stockport Grammar	Lost	0 - 1
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County Tournament:

v Stockport Grammar	Drew	0 - 0
v Bury Grammar	Won	2 - 0
v Turton	Lost	0 - 1

Quarter-final

v Loreto	Drew	0 - 0
	Lost on flicks	

This year the U15 team has had a rather mixed season. After a few good practice sessions and a new addition to the team, Eleanor Heynes, we thought we were ready for our opening game. However, with a few of our strong players missing due to illness and other commitments, we were proved wrong as we were heavily defeated.

We didn't let the disappointment of the week before affect our spirits as we prepared for our next game against Marple Hall. This was by far our best match of the season. We played good hockey and actually worked together as a team which resulted in us coming away with an 8 - 0 victory.

We entered two tournaments, the first being the Manchester and District one which was held in November. This proved to be a very good morning of hockey where all the girls played well. After being placed second in our section we were up against Stockport Grammar in the semi-final. Everyone gave 100% but Stockport came away the winners, but only by one goal this time. We were still pleased with ourselves, reaching the semi-final in our first tournament and it made us even more determined to beat Stockport in our next clash.

The Spring Term brought us our eagerly awaited match against Manchester High. This was a fast and exciting game and although we missed a flick we still won the game 2 - 1.

Next came our second tournament, the County one. We couldn't believe our luck when we saw the draw, Stockport Grammar in the first match! Although we were under pressure for a lot of the game we did have one or two quick breaks and were very satisfied to come away with a draw. After a convincing win over Bury Grammar we were placed top of our section and had a place in the quarter-finals. This game, against Loreto, proved to be very frustrating. We had most of the play but just couldn't find the goal and disappointingly came away the losers after a penalty shoot-out.

I would like to thank Miss Barlow for all her coaching and time she has given to the U15 team and I'm sure I speak on behalf of all the team. A very good season was had by all and our aim for next year is to score from a penalty stroke!

The following girls represented the team: Vicky Fleming, Emma Weeden, Caroline Shaw, Sarah Cochrane, Jane Lawson, Rachel Nightingale, Louise Ives, Lucy Mattison, Geraldine Brook, Frances Edwards and Eleanor Heynes.

Geraldine Brook (4B)

U14 HOCKEY

Played 9, Won 1, Drew 1, Lost 7.

v Kingsway (A)	Lost	0 - 2
v Marple Hall (A)	Drew	0 - 0
v Manchester High (A)	Lost	0 - 3
v St Bede's (A)	Lost	0 - 3
v Loreto (A)	Won	2 - 0
v Weaverham High (H)	Lost	0 - 4
v St Bede's (H)	Lost	0 - 2
v Manchester High (H)	Lost	0 - 1
v Weaverham High (A)	Lost	0 - 2

The beginning of the season started with us gaining a new coach. We put a lot of effort into our training but it only seemed to show in one match which was against Loreto where we won 2 - 0. However, we have thought up a new team strategy for next season so hopefully there will be a dramatic turn around in results.

The best thing about the season's hockey was the genuine effort which was put in by everyone even when team morale was low. Due to illness some people had to

step in at short notice so thank you to them for their support.

Even though it wasn't our most successful season everyone gave their all and enjoyed themselves.

The following girls represented the team: Maame Ankrah, Emily Hope, Sally Burton, Sarah Moore, Lauren Crane, Rachael Lee, Dugyu Uflaz, Laura Smith, Carys Edwards, Cemile Egeli, Alex Preston, Dipti Trivedi, Tabasseum Safdar and Dawn Sing.

Sarah Moore (3B)

U13 HOCKEY

Played 11, Won 8, Drew 2, Lost 1.

v Stockport Grammar (A)	Lost	1 - 3
v Kingsway (A)	Drew	0 - 0
v Marple Hall (A)	Won	6 - 0
v Manchester High (A)	Won	1 - 0
v St Bede's (A)	Won	1 - 0
v Loreto (A)	Drew	0 - 0
v Weaverham High (H)	Won	6 - 0
v St Bede's (H)	Won	4 - 0
v Manchester High (H)	Won	1 - 0
v Weaverham High (A)	Won	2 - 1
v Marple Hall (H)	Won	2 - 0

Southport Junior 7's

v Greenbank High School	Won	1 - 0
v Trinity Hockey Club	Won	2 - 0
v Stanley High School	Won	8 - 0
v Sunnymede	Won	5 - 0

Final

v Queen Mary's	Lost	0 - 3
v Darwin	Won	1 - 0

Finished Second Overall

Rossall Mini Hockey Tournament

v Rossall	Lost	0 - 2
v Buchan	Won	2 - 0
v Kirkham	Lost	0 - 3
v Oswestry	Drew	0 - 0

National Mini Hockey Tournament

v St Bede's	Drew	0 - 0
v Blackpool	Lost	0 - 1
v Sunnymede	Won	2 - 0

It was a disappointing start to the season, 3 - 0 down at half time to Stockport Grammar, we decided something had to change. In the second half we got our act together and although we didn't win the match we won the second half. This proved to be very encouraging as the season just got better and better. We went on to win 8 of our remaining 10 matches, scoring a total of 23 goals and conceding only 1.

We entered 3 tournaments during the season. Two of them proved to be slightly tricky but mainly due to the fact that they were on astro-turf and although we had a few practices on this surface we still prefer to play on grass.

The highlight of our season was probably the first tournament we entered in November at Southport. 15 teams entered this 7-a-side tournament, making 3 groups of 5 teams. We won all four group games, scoring a total of 16 goals and conceding 0. We went through to the final and played both Queen Mary's and Darwin. Here we won 1 match and lost 1. However finishing 2nd out of 15 in our first ever tournament gave us something to celebrate.

On the whole we had an excellent season with good coaching from Miss Barlow and everyone thoroughly

enjoying themselves. We hope to have another season like this next year!

The following girls have represented the team:- Katie Chesworth, Levinia Clemetson, Anya Dearden, Alison Featherstone, Alison Hawcroft, Kim Hayden, Sophie Hope, Elizabeth Hyde, Stephanie Jackson, Carla Narnor, Joanna Shaw, Lauren Standring and Lindsay Thornton.

Lauren Standring (2B)

U12 HOCKEY

Played 6, Won 4, Drew 1, Lost 1.

v Weaverham High (H)	Won	4 - 0
v St Bede's (H)	Drew	0 - 0
v Weaverham High (A)	Won	3 - 0
v Brookway (H)	Won	4 - 0
v Knutsford High (H)	Won	2 - 0
v Marple Hall (H)	Lost	0 - 1

The season started off extremely well with a 4 - 0 victory against Weaverham High School. This win gave us some confidence and prepared us for our next match against St Bede's. Although we had most of the play we just couldn't get the ball in the back of the net. So came away with a slightly disappointing 0 - 0 draw.

We spent the next few lunchtime practices concentrating on scoring. This proved very worthwhile as our next three matches were won fairly convincingly, nine goals being scored in total. The season had a disappointing ending as we had our first defeat. However our aim next year is to play six and win six.

Finally I would like to thank Miss Barlow on behalf of the team and all the parents who supported us every match.

The following girls represented the team: Danielle Baker, Caroline Bell, Elli Metcalf, Rebekah Lawson, Sophie Nelson, Natalie Phillips, Georgina White, Louise Goodwin, Emma Cruickshank, Kati Greenall and Sarah Baker.

Kati Greenall (1D)

NETBALL



U18 NETBALL

This season of Netball has been quite a disappointment in regard to the number of matches we actually played. This was largely due to the fact that most other schools found it difficult to turn out any teams at our age group (for various reasons).

As well as having problems arranging fixtures, we lost two key members of our team - Karen Law who played WD and Caron Abramson who played WA, both leaving after their fifth year at William Hulme's. Through this a reshuffle was inevitable and this seems to have unsettled the team and understandably hindered our success, particularly in comparison to our brilliant performances last season.

Having said that, the two key members mentioned were replaced by Jennifer Ellis, Libby Gilmore and Louise Borg, who are all faithfully committed and enthusiastic players.

So really I think that it's simply a matter of the new team getting used to working together, and hopefully next season if we work hard on team tactics, possession and particularly our marking techniques I'm sure our performances both individually and as a team will improve considerably.

The matches played against Withington Girls' School were quite disappointing results for the team, particularly as they were very close matches and especially because we are usually the victors on these occasions. However, the team didn't once lose faith or commitment and continued to play their best right through to the end. Don't get me wrong though, there were many encouraging displays of team work, but because of a lack of good tactics, we looked 'lost' in the centre of the court, where the ball in these three particular matches against Withington seemed to be lobbed time and time again over our heads.

All the players made a great effort and contribution for this season, so I would like to thank and congratulate all the team members:

Claire Reichl, Mandy Wheeler, Jenny Ellis, Alison Soper, Nicola Miller, Libby Gilmore and Louise Borg.

Special thanks to Jenny Ellis, Louise Borg and Libby Gilmore who joined the 'A' team only this season, all with great enthusiasm and commitment. Particularly Libby Gilmore and Louise Borg who agreed to play half a match each, so that they both got a chance to take part and play. Libby and Louise time and time again came out to practices and supported the team, even when not playing in the matches themselves.

Special thanks must also go to Mrs. Pollard and Miss. Smith for coaching and umpiring us. Thanks to Mrs Pollard again for arranging fixtures and for the support and inspiration she gave us, which really means a lot to the team. So from the whole team,

'Thanks Mrs. P.'

Nadia Hanley (L6C)

U16 NETBALL

This season the U16 Netball team had five matches, winning two, drawing one and losing two. Matches have been few this year as many schools either don't have senior teams or are reluctant to play matches due to impending G.C.S.E's.

The team this year consisted of:

Caroline Ip (WD), Sophie Stephenson (GD), Bernadette McCurrie (C), Debbi Mosley (WA), Claire Babington (GS), Ellen Nicholson (GA), Christina Barnes (GK), Martyne Jones (Reserve)

The most memorable match was against our arch rivals Stockport Grammar School. We went out with a little more optimism as we had won our previous two matches against them. The team played very well with some exceptional shooting from Ellen Nicholson, and after a hard fought, close match we won!

We also played a triangular match against Manchester High and Withington Girls' with a combined 5th/6th year team. The team had never played together before but through organisation and skill came back with a win and a draw.

Overall although we didn't have many games, the season was fairly successful.

The team would like to thank Mrs. Pollard for arranging matches and her overwhelming support throughout the season. We would also like to thank all the other teachers and parents who came out and supported us.

Sophie Stephenson (5L)