

# WAR

The spirit of the school for the two years preceding and the two years following the outbreak of the 1914 War finds expression in the " Annuals ", as the first two were called; the equivalents of the modern School Magazine. These were produced in 1912, 1913, a third served the years 1914-1915, (an indication, perhaps, of some disorganisation caused by war) and 1916. Then there was a gap until 1919.

Although these Annuals are forerunners of the later Magazines they are curiously unlike them in many ways. There are no House Notes, no sports' and games' reports, except for a table of cricket matches in the 1914-15 issue and photographs of the Hockey and Cricket Teams in the 1913 Annual, no account of staff changes, no examination successes approaching the long lists published in modern magazines, for the school was small and candidates few. In 1913 when the first successes appear there were twelve passes in the London Matriculation Examination and the Oxford Senior Local Examination. No Old Scholars' Association Notes are published; there was no Old Scholars' Association. There are no Society reports, for Societies did not exist. Mrs. Sedden, (nee Winnie Feber) writing of 1914 says : " I can remember no Societies except the curious ones we formed among ourselves, but life was very full all the same." Mr. Attenborough taught dancing after school on Fridays ; dancing was allowed during break on wet days ; and there was at one period a dancing session on Saturday evening in the school ; but such activities were not formalized into a club with its annual report published in the magazine. As with dancing so with other activities. They probably existed but were not systematically organised and reported on. All these items, which tend to form the bulk, perhaps a not very interesting one, of a modern magazine, were entirely lacking

in the first Annual and only faintly present in the later ones. Mr. Clegg's conception of a magazine was clearly not of a formal record of school activities of this kind.

The Annuals differ physically from most modern magazines. They are almost twice the size of the present magazine, the Gossamer, and are backed with stout covers overlapping the pages of text. These covers are decorated with elaborate designs in colour which has now faded but which, fifty years ago, must have made them visually attractive. The pages inside these covers are of thick, quality paper, impossibly expensive today; the print is surrounded by lavish margins, so that on some pages the print occupies only half the space; and instead of the edges being guillotined even, they overlap each other. The print used is beautifully shaped and black, and the layout of each page was clearly carefully planned for greatest visual effect. Pen and ink drawings, colour washes, done by hand after being outlined on stencils, break up the flow of text, and the impression given is of a mind intent upon producing a beautiful object rather than a record of school events.

The Annuals contain contributions by scholars from Form III and above, in most cases unaided, in others under the direction of teachers. So Mr. Clegg tells us in his foreword to the 1912 Annual. There are some deft translations from French verse, one translation from Latin, one descriptive prose passage, but nothing else which can be regarded as imaginative writing. The greater part of these Annuals and Magazines is occupied with what have been called " projects ", work carried out by a small group of children to investigate some particular problem. So we read an account of the washing of the Roman mosaic fragment in a barn at Barton, its tracing, delineation in a colour print in the Annual, and a consideration of its historical significance. In such an exercise Art and History are brought together. A similar investigation of the Stapleford Cross is even more impressive. This was made by six pupils, Mr. Attenborough, and Mr. Clegg, who would assemble on several days at the cross at six o'clock in the morning to take tracings from the worn stone. " Has the poor fellow been there all night ?" asked an old lady one morning, as she looked out and saw Mr. Attenborough putting the paper in position for the rubbings. The Art Master, Mr. Riley, helped by photographing the Cross, and finally a report was drawn up, illustrated by sketches of the figures revealed by the rubbings, and a learned comparison made of the figures with those on the Soroby, Dunfallandy, and Billingham Crosses. Similar investigations into historical records, the Patent and Close Rolls, are described ; two pupils examine the family name Plackett in the Breaston area and find that it is the French Huguenot name, Plaquet, brought over by a family fleeing from France after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685. Mr. Clegg

in a lesson on ballad poetry sets off another piece of research into local folk lore, resulting in an article about the ancient " Peace Egg " play and the " Humming Bees Game " of Wilne.

Science is not neglected, for one article describes experiments to determine the relative hardness of the Stanton-by-Bridge water and the Derwent water, and proceeds to calculate that the addition of soft Derwent water to the Long Eaton supply results in a saving in the consumption of soap worth £1000 per year. Another article describes experiments to determine the relative density of pieces of the Hemlock Stone in Stapleford, while graphs are used elsewhere to assess the population, trade, and rateable value trends in Long Eaton. Sometimes the scientist and artist join hands ; so we find Harry Godwin now Professor of Botany at Cambridge and an F.R.S., designing the cover for the 1916 magazine and contributing an article on Querns ; and in one article the scientist and the sportsman almost meet, for we find a careful description of the various types of weed and grass growing on the land at the side of the school where tennis courts were later laid.

These articles reflect an enlightened teaching method, great enthusiasm on the part of the staff kindling eagerness on the part of the children, and a determination that the finished magazine shall be as attractive to the eye and the hand as to the mind. Their elaborateness demanded hard work from Mr. Alliott -who was in charge of cutting the blocks from which prints were made, and probably equally hard work from people now forgotten. Their concern is with values, truth, beauty ; contemporary events are ignored ; no Editorial comments on life inside or outside school ; no one reading them could know that the civilisation these magazines were based on was breaking up in war.

Old records are most interesting when we find in them the first mention of something still familiar. In the first Annual (1912) a School Song is printed. The initials S.C. beneath it suggest the Headmaster as its author. It is here that the School Rule or motto is stated and presumably from this publication that it dates. " I'll bear no base mind," is a quotation from Shakespeare's Henry IV Pt. 2. The words come, oddly enough, from a comic scene in which Falstaff recruits for his battalion. A recruit, Feeble by name, expresses his readiness to meet all dangers. " A man can die but once : we owe God a death, I'll ne'er bear a base mind," and shortly afterwards he repeats the idea in the familiar form : " I'll bear no base mind" Whether Mr. Clegg intended the words to have the meaning they have in the play or the more general meaning " I'll do nothing unworthy ", which most pupils think they have is for ever unknown. In the song Derwent,

Trent and Soar are also mentioned : " We come from Derwent, Trent and Soar," but the names are used in the geographical sense only for the School Houses so-named did not exist at this time.

But if the magazines give the impression of a school, detached from world events it is a false one. The Long Eaton lace trade declined sharply and, as wages fell and ceased, pupils left because fees could not be paid. Already in October 1914 the Governors recommend the granting of more free places in order that the staff may be fully employed. This staff, however, soon begins to drain away : Mr. Riley, the Art Master, dies in March 1915 and is not replaced till August ; Miss Bennett goes to Sheffield University ; Mr. Attenborough leaves for Emanuel College, Cambridge ; in November 1915 Mr. Mansfield joins Manchester University O.T.C. but is allowed to return until his call-up group is needed ; two junior staff go ; and Mr. Nicholls, the caretaker, and his wife, resign. Mr. Peach is appointed together with Miss Dediccoat ; six months later the Governors declare Mr. Peach indispensable asking that he should be reserved from military service ; but three months after this he joins Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps and is only replaced by an arrangement whereby Mr. Attenborough returns to the school during his university vacations. Mr. Mansfield goes in 1916 to be replaced by Mlle. Verachtert. The result of these changes was that by 1916 only two men remained, the Headmaster and Mr. Alliott.

Other strains were imposed on the school. The County Council press for a Cadet Force to be formed. Local opinion is against this and five hundred townspeople sign a petition against it. But the Governors eventually agree to the County Council's request and a rather ineffective force is formed. Standards in the elementary schools fall, and arithmetic and grammar, as always, deteriorate. In June 1916 the Governors are most dissatisfied with the entrance examination results, for only thirty nine candidates sit. Financial hardship prevents so many pupils otherwise acceptable from coming to the school that the Governors in desperation suggest an instalment system under which scholars would pay three shillings a week. This the County Council will not accept. Pupils are often withdrawn from school in breach of agreement and financial penalties are reluctantly enforced by the Governors to discourage this. In 1916 an inspection results in an adverse report. In 1917 school hours have to be altered to suit revised train schedules. School now begins at 9.30 a.m. and ends at 12.40 p.m., re-opens at 2 p.m. and ends at 4 p.m. Some pupils arrive at Sawley from Derby each morning at 9.29 a.m. ; others leave for Kegworth from Trent at 6.28 p.m. The school sports are spoilt by rain. No wonder that Mr. Clegg reports that the year has been a difficult one. But he notes that the results have, nevertheless, been

good. Mary Torrance has been awarded a Major Scholarship, and the Governors, happy to find a ray of sunshine somewhere, present Mary Torrance with a wrist watch.

These early war years were not entirely lost to the development of the school. In 1913 the Governors asked the County Council for permission to lease a strip of land from the Long Eaton Urban District Council in order to enlarge the playground area of the school. There was much correspondence about the terms of the lease but eventually the County Council gave its sanction to the proposal. The lease was for five years only and more delay occurred over the question how the ground should be levelled and by whom, but by the end of 1914 the land had in effect been added to the school grounds. Accordingly in 1915 two asphalt tennis courts and one grass court were provided for the school's use. These were the original courts, and the asphalt ones still remain beside the Canteen, facing Tamworth Road. Nor was the school alone in enjoying the use of the courts ; they afforded entertainment to the local population. Miss Turner recalls a game she played with a colleague, in the course of which she heard one idle youth, lounging along Tamworth Road, shout to an equally idle acquaintance on the other side of the road : " Cum over 'ere, an' look at these wimmin playin' tennis!" only to receive the superior reply : " Them's not wimmin, them's taychers!"

Another important event at this time was the provision of school dinners from 1916. The only catering before this was the warming up of food, chiefly pies, bought from home by the children, and the supply of tea and coffee at one penny a cup for morning and midday breaks. Now, because of travelling difficulties and shortage of food, Mrs. Frost, previously employed at the Siamese Embassy in London, was engaged to run a meals' service. Cooked meals were provided for scholars from a distance, the full cost, 4d, being paid by the diner. Vegetables were grown in the school grounds ; dried milk was used ; a ration of one ounce of butter a head was granted by the food authority. Soup was made from bones, and all vegetables were prepared by hand. These meals were prepared in the kitchen, now Room 15, and served through the serving hatch, now the film projection aperture, into the dining room, formerly a part of what is now Room 14. The chimney space of the old kitchen range can still be seen in Room 15. It is the alcove in which the shelves holding Junior Library books have been fixed. A cook's task in those days of food shortage was one of constant improvisation. One old pupil remembers how potatoes were roasted and boiled and how she preferred the roast potatoes until fats for roasting were no longer available. Then coconut butter was used instead and its exotic taste put her off them.

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In one way these war years brought advantages to the pupils of the school. 1914 brought refugees from Belgium to the district, and two of them, Mlle. Verachtert, already mentioned, and Mlle. Vaerwyck, later Mme. Pauwaert, joined the staff. The latter mistress was a fine artist and with Miss Nowell she painted the murals which remained showpieces of the school until 1948. Room 5 was so decorated as to be known as the Milton Room ; Room 4 was the Tudor Room ; Room 3 was decorated with French landscape and was the French Room; while local trade was honoured in Room 7, which became the Lace Room. This mural decoration of classrooms was an expression of Mr. Clegg's ideas about presenting art to children incidentally, as part of their environment. In 1911 when a French artist, M. Bissiere had been on the staff for a short time as Art Master, Mr. Clegg had seized the opportunity to persuade him to paint a mural of the Canterbury Pilgrims in Room 6. It was from this painting that the room became known as the Chaucer Room ; and the murals of Mlle. Vaerwyck were an extension of this mural decoration. Some faint idea of these mural paintings can be gained from the photographs published with this account. Through these teachers, too, the children of the school were put into close contact with foreign culture, and this may be regarded as a development of the system of having French *assistantes* in the school.

At the end of 1917 Miss Silk was appointed to the staff and another long connection with the school began. 1918 saw an increase in the number of pupils to 274 and the Governors begin to be haunted by the spectre which is never to leave them alone for long during the next forty\_ years : more accommodation. Influenza breaks out towards the end of the year and the school has to be closed on four occasions because of heavy absence. But November 11th brings Armistice Day and wholesale rejoicing. Very few pupils attended school ; those who did had the rest of it as a holiday. The following day also saw such poor attendance that the Headmaster closed the school for the rest of the week as far as the juniors were concerned. The senior scholars were expected to attend on the Thursday and Friday, but at this the Army took a hand, presumably thinking the Governors were mean, and at the request of the officers of the 46th Division the whole school was granted Friday off.

Throughout the years of war the difficulties of a headmaster were obviously very great. They are clear enough when one considers the effect of constantly changing staff ; the disappearance of men ; falling standards in the elementary schools ; the administration of additional services. But these difficulties were hidden from the pupils in the school and it is from their lack of awareness of them that we form an impression of the skill with which difficulties were surmounted. From

THE JUBILEE BOOK

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the following memoir, written by Canon J. D. Hooley of Sheffield Cathedral, we can catch a great deal of the happy atmosphere which Mr. Clegg achieved in those hard days.

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