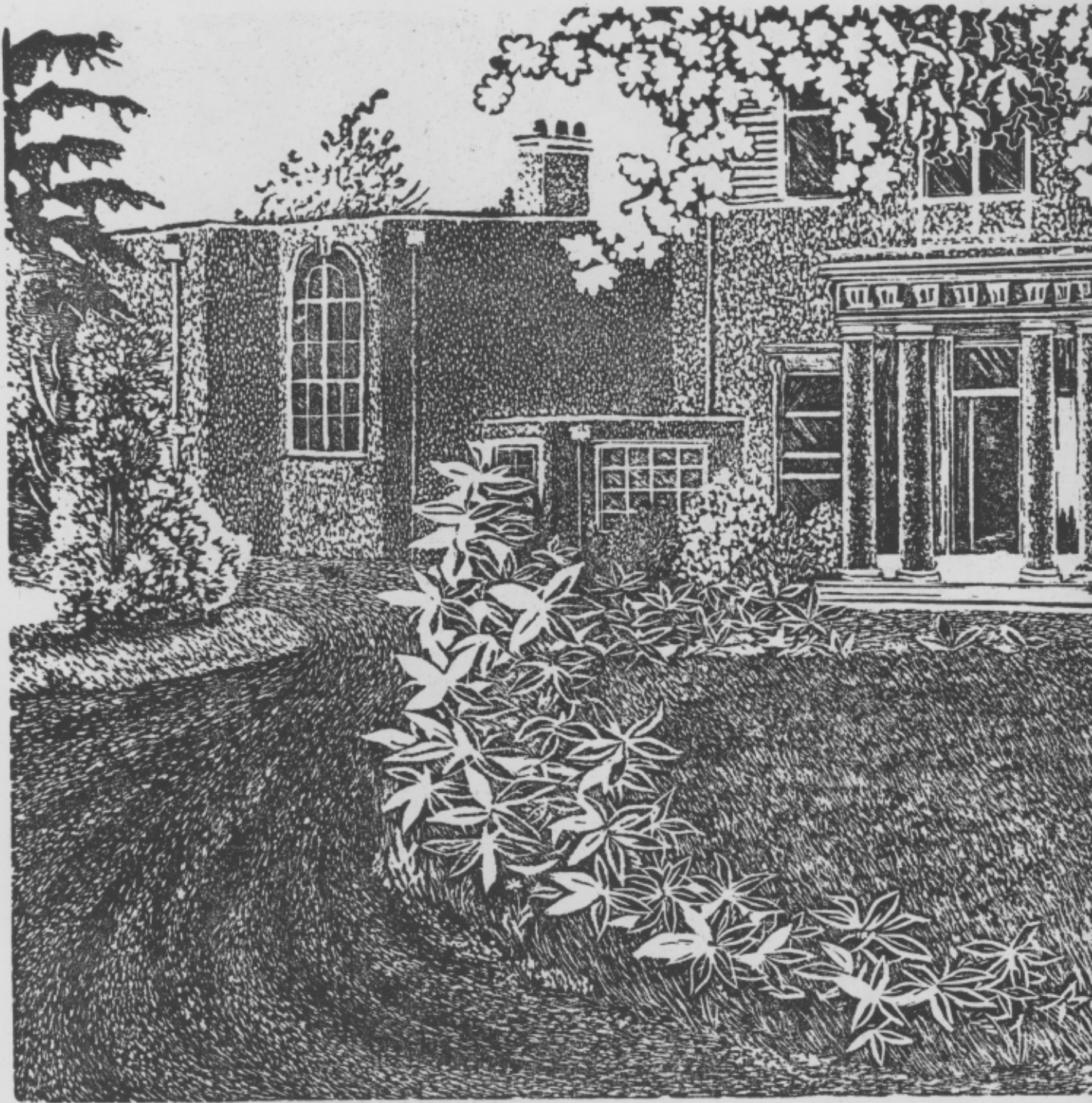


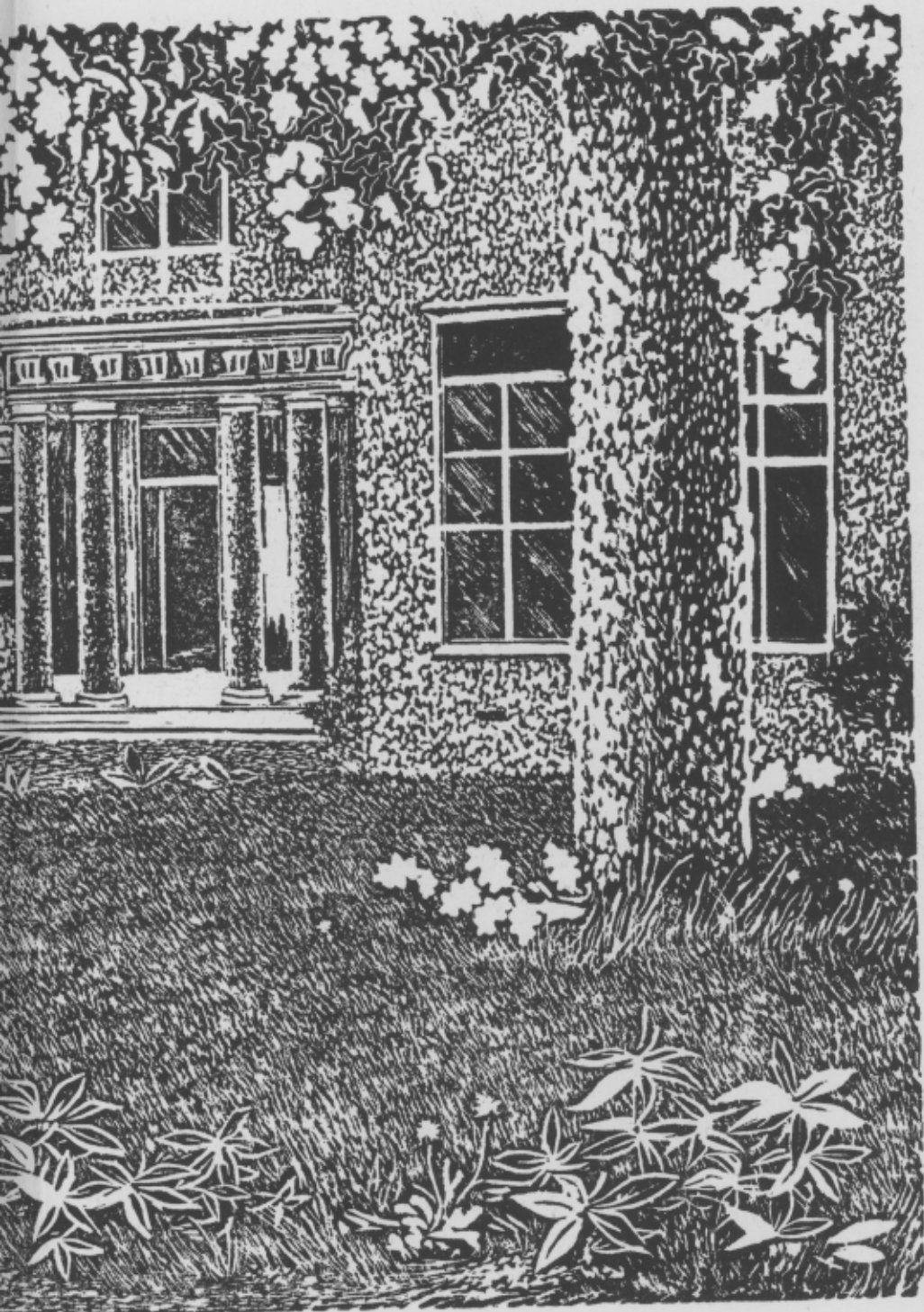
urbiton County

**The First  
Twenty-one  
Years**

Grammar School



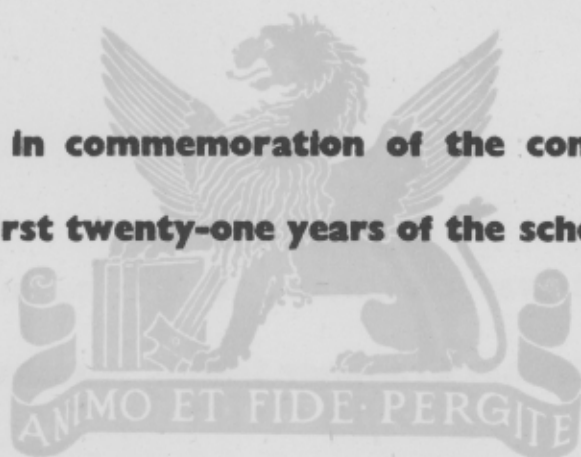
General View of the School, 1946



Lino-cut by Peter Wilson, Lower Vc

# **THE FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS**

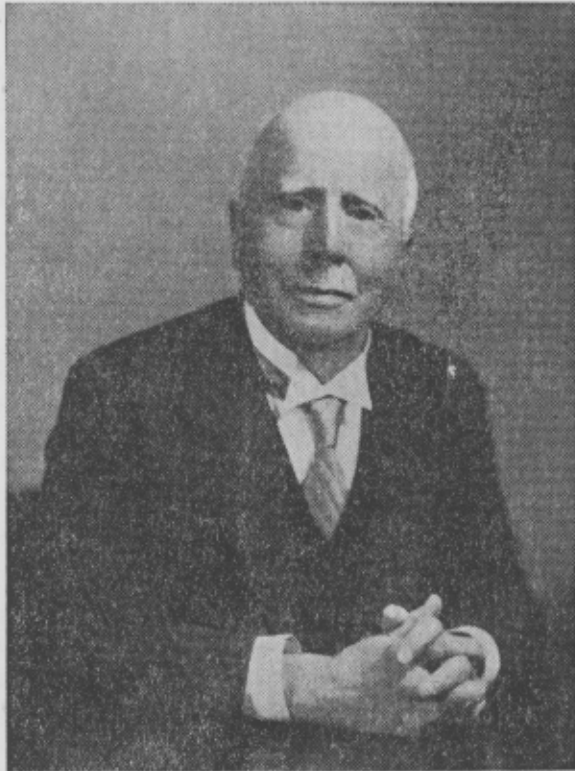
**Printed in commemoration of the completion  
of the first twenty-one years of the school's life**



**SURBITON COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**1946**

**This booklet was designed and printed in its entirety  
at Surbiton County Grammar School, Autumn Term, 1946**



W. M. Willcocks, Esq.,  
First Chairman of the Governors

# **A** BEGINNINGS

IT WAS well over 21 years ago when the Surrey Education Committee decided that the time had arrived for Surbiton to have a Boys' Secondary School of its own, and no longer be entirely dependent on the two old established schools in the neighbouring borough of Kingston. It so happened that at this time Albury House was for sale, and Mr W. M. Willcocks, later our first Chairman of Governors, learning of this fact, bought it on behalf of the Education Committee. Thus it is that we are housed in the former residence of Dr. Williams, of "Pink Pills for Pale People" fame, with the disadvantages inherent in any converted dwelling house, but with the compensation of delightful surroundings.

On September 16, 1925, the school opened, with 69 small boys sitting timidly on the floor in a corner of Room 1, larger then, before the 1935 extensions, than it is now. Rather nervous they appeared to be, as though impressed by the importance of the occasion, but no more nervous, probably, than some of the four young assistant masters, three of whom were more or less at the beginning of their teaching careers.

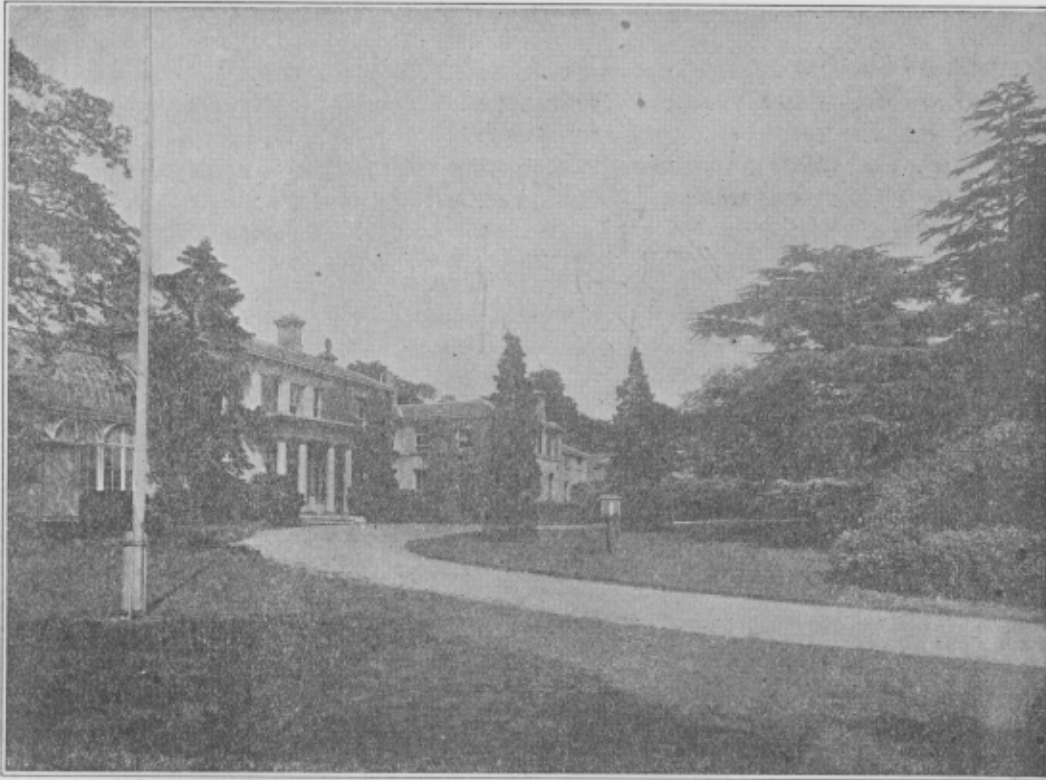
The outside appearance of the school was much the same then as now, except that in place of our present hall there was a large, leaky conservatory which, for 10 years to come, was to do duty as assembly hall, dining room, art room and gymnasium.

The grounds were still more or less in the well kept condition that one would expect of a large private house. The playground, or kitchen garden as it was then, presented a very different appearance from its present state, bare, part asphalt, part earth, littered with the wreckage of one time air raid shelters. In 1925 a huge greenhouse stood against the south wall; four paths converged on a pool in the centre, and here goldfish still swam while the many trees were well laden with ripe fruit, a matter which soon received adequate attention.

As one would expect, the first term was chiefly occupied with the work of organisation incidental to the opening of a new school, and the House system was adopted almost immediately, the original house captains being Le Cassick, Millward, Plant, and Ben Baigent, the last two named, we are glad to say, still close and welcome friends of the school. The staff favoured, as House names, four of the great abbeys of Surrey — Newark, Chertsey, Waverley and Merton, but the governors decided otherwise, and the present names were adopted: Villiers, from the Lord Francis of that name, who lost his life in a skirmish with Roundheads in what is now Villiers Path at the back of the school; Lovelace and Egmont, from aristocratic 18th Century owners of land in the district, and Coutts, the bankers, who did much, in the 19th Century, towards the development of Surbiton.

# **B** EARLY YEARS

OUR early years were an easy going period: the boys were young and there were few problems of discipline; no General School Examination worries assailed us until 1928, and we only very gradually began to build up our present many out of school activities, though the Savings Association and a small lending library in Room 9 were soon started.



General view of the School before the 1935 extensions

It would, however, be true to say that these late 1920's were most important in the development of the school's character, and set the pattern for the years to come. It has never been an aim of Mr Willis to strive for a super-efficient, machine-like organism, neither has he sought to publicise nor advertise the school. Instead, and under his guidance, we quietly developed into a tolerant and friendly community, and this has to a large extent been responsible for the very cordial relations among boys, staff and parents. A disadvantage of this is a certain looseness in discipline, perhaps more noise than might be desired, and an atmosphere that is more informal and family-like than is usual. A member of the staff, recently watching a colleague cheerfully remove hooks from the walls of the staff room, and take them away to enable him to hang moth balls among new blazers, remarked that there could not possibly be such another school (and the word used was not "school") in all England, but at the same time admitted a great reluctance ever to leave us. And that is how we all feel; we are easy going, and in some ways haphazard, but as a community we are happy; moreover, H. M. Inspectors, in 1929 as well as in 1945, appeared to approve very strongly of our efforts; we have a good name in the district; the police have several times remarked on the reasonable behaviour of our boys; our examination results have been excellent and the records, in peace and war, of our Old Boys appear to justify our conception of what school life should be.



At first we occupied four classrooms only: 4, 6, 7, 8; and Room 7 is by far the worst room in the main building, though conditions there are Utopian compared with those under which Junior forms now have to work at Braemar. Three members of the staff, during the first year, were specialists in the same subjects, and no one had qualifications in languages — some of the teaching of French and Latin in that period was of a highly original and unorthodox nature, until the timely arrival of Mr Findlay, in 1926, set these subjects along the right road.

In 1930 occurred an important event: a school fete. It was necessary to raise money for the purchase and equipment of the pavilion at Hook; £200 had been generously given by parents, but much more was needed. A great deal of work was put in by parents and staff; Sir George Penny, M.P. (now Baron Marchwood) was invited for the opening ceremony: the grounds were crowded with tents and stalls and every possible device was used to extract money from visitors, while periodically throughout the afternoon and evening there were dances, historical pageants, one act plays and other spectacles that lent colour to the scene.

It was on this occasion that George distinguished himself. George Appleford, ex-policeman with strong views on discipline among boys, was our first caretaker, and lived, with his very charming wife and a most ferocious dog, in the little one storey house at the entrance gates. On the day of the fete two distinguished visitors — ladies — arrived earlier than expected, and George's efforts to entertain them until the arrival of the Headmaster were original in the extreme. Leaning affably over the open window of the car he removed his new dentures, and with considerable pride displayed them to the startled ladies.

As a whole the fete was a great success; not only did we spend a most enjoyable afternoon and evening, but we managed to raise £260 which went far to put the pavilion in a reasonable condition.

# **C** **SPORTS AND GAMES**

CHIEFLY owing to the fact that we remained, for many years, a rather small school, and that the expansion of our VI Forms was a slow process, our record in the sphere of sports has not been altogether outstanding.

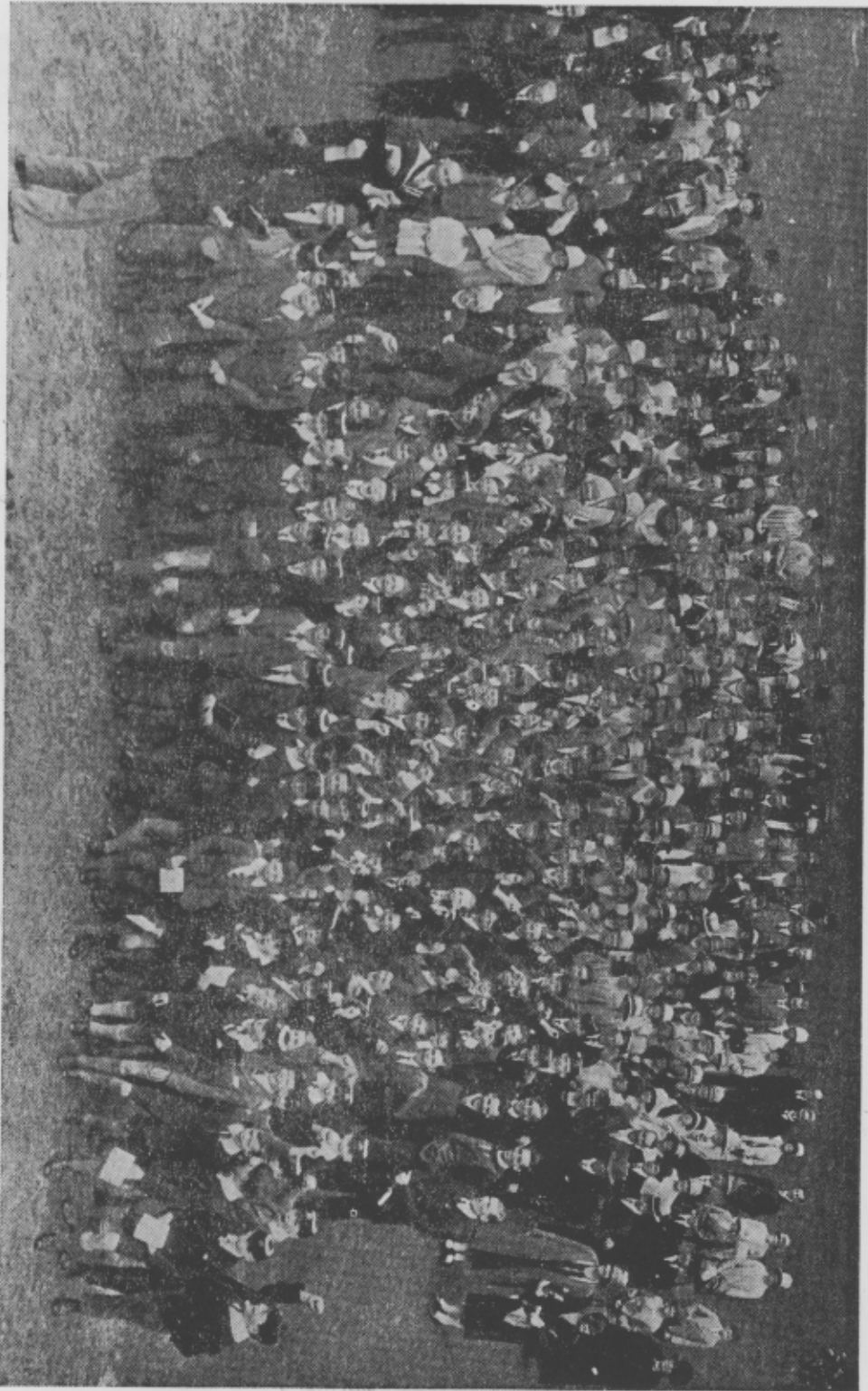
It was decided, as soon as the school opened, that our winter game should be Rugby Football, but unfortunately, the only two masters with any knowledge of games were both regular soccer players, and had themselves to learn the rudiments of rugger before passing their meagre knowledge on to the boys. The results were as one would expect, and in spite of our good fortune in having, in Maurice Oakley, a games captain and leader of outstanding ability, we lost rather heavily in these years. Our first games, in which we faced a XV from Tiffin's, resulted in a defeat by about 50 points, but in our next, against Wimbledon College, we scored our first try, through the efforts of a very fast runner named Playne. When Mr Rose came, in 1927, he was faced with an uphill task, and has had to labour for many years, with inadequate assistance, to build up the school rugger.

In cricket we have been more fortunate; there has not been the competition to face that rugger has found in local soccer, and many boys have come to us already possessing a degree of skill in the game. For a year or two we had the valuable help of Mr "Joey" Russell, a player of county standard, and cricket flourished, producing such exponents as Grellier, Long, Knowles, Charlie Ellis and Kerin, to name but a few.

Our early boxing was very rough and ready, with far more vigour than skill, though we do remember such capable boxers as Playne, Oakley, Denny, the brothers Freeman, Sellwood, Bradley, Bradshaw and Gilmore. The first tournaments were fought out in the conservatory, with the front row of spectators forming the ropes. The floor was of brick, or maybe it was tile, very dangerous for a fall, and too hard even for the hard head of Durnford in his memorable fight with the elder Middlemiss. With the great progress recently made, and the much improved conditions in the hall, we hope in the near future to have some successful fixtures with neighbouring schools.

There is space for a mention only of other activities — swimming galas, the cross country races with struggles between Oakley and Shaylor, and the long pre-eminence of the Fynn family; the Annual Sports Day on the Kingstonian Football Ground, under the control first of Mr Ridgewell and then of Mr Dyer, with such runners as Hallam, Flavin and Grier. A great feature of Sports Day was the House Tug of War contest, now discontinued — happily. Probably the most strenuous of the competitors were the shouting, gesticulating house masters, for tradition insisted that they should enliven the contests by acting as coaches, and more than one unkind snap has recorded their moments of intense agony.

We were, for some years, handicapped by the absence of a fixed playing field. At first a paddock adjacent to the cemetery was put at our disposal, and from here we graduated by way of a site at the back of Alexandra Drive to Minter's at New Malden, and thence to our own ground at Hook. This was an improvement, certainly, but it has never been entirely successful: it is a long way from the school and from the homes of most boys, while the field itself was formerly arable and has never been properly sown for sports. Consequently Mr Farr has worked with the greatest difficulty to produce a fair cricket table and the nature of the ground is such that the home team has a considerable advantage over visitors — and over masters.



Scene at the Second Speech Day, July, 1927

# D EXAMINATIONS

PUBLIC examinations, though often regarded as an evil, necessary or unnecessary, do play a great part in the life of grammar type schools, and in spite of all that has been said in criticism of them, they do at least provide a yard-stick whereby a secondary school boy can, to a certain extent, measure his ability against that of his public school competitor, usually more fortunate than himself in influence and material resources.

Here, we have always done very well, at least, until the effects of the war gradually made themselves felt, especially in the last two years. We first entered candidates in 1928, when 7 out of 8 were successful in obtaining General School Certificates. From that time success has bred success: in 1934 there were 31 certificates, including 22 Matriculation exemptions, and before 1941 it was rare indeed to find more than 3 failures out of 40-50 candidates. Perhaps our peak year was 1938, when out of 44 candidates there was one failure only, while the entire A form and 7 members of the B form reached matriculation standard.

In those days success was held so lightly that disgruntled A forms, a little jealous of the success of their less academically minded fellows, grumbled that a candidate hardly needed to be able to do more than write his name to become a matriculant. One master, too, who habitually rated the ability of his pupils at a very low level, found to his astonishment — or perhaps apparent astonishment, — that out of a form of 26, as hopeless as ever, he had secured 22 distinctions.

It is not that there has ever been any desire on the part of the Headmaster for record results, nor has he ever been known to look askance at weakness in a subject, or to suggest, even ever so gently, that marks in any department might have been or should have been better. The only occasion on which I can remember anything approaching a reprimand was during the middle 30's; the forms were not strong, and we felt pretty sure that the expected slump was upon us. When the results came to the staff room it was found there were 3 failures only and that again every member of the A form had been judged worthy of matriculation exemption. We sat more or less stupified into silence as we heard the name of one "outsider" after another who had somehow managed to romp home; suddenly there was a tap on the door; the Headmaster entered, and after congratulating us upon our continued success, remarked, somewhat acidly, that he hoped the nature of the results were not an indication of undue cramming — they weren't, of course!

In the Higher School and Intermediate Degree Examinations, too, our record is one of which there is no need to be ashamed. The VI forms have never been large, perhaps not as large as they should have been, but among the boys who have stayed for the extra two years failures have been few. Our list of successes, moreover, in major county and state scholarships, University awards, and, particularly in the last few years, the coveted Royal Scholarships to the Imperial College of Science, has been impressive. Those boys who have remained for the VI form course have found, almost invariably, that judged even by the standard of material progress in life the sacrifice that their parents have sometimes had to make has been very well worth while.

## **E** SCHOOL SOCIETIES

A BOYS' secondary school of the grammar type probably indulges in out of school activities to a far greater extent than does any other type of state school, and it is often not realised what a great deal of labour is put in by those responsible for the organisation of this work. We ourselves began very modestly in the Autumn of 1925, but from that time on our interests have grown steadily and continuously, until by 1939 the various societies were almost too numerous to be mentioned individually.

No one will feel aggrieved if pride of place is given to the orchestra, for Mr Cocks, with the capable and whole-hearted support of Mr Greaves and Captain Acres, has more or less made this his life's effort, and has spent evening after evening here, practising and rehearsing, often until ten or eleven o'clock at night. It is very pleasing, therefore, to be able to congratulate Mr Cocks and all concerned on their latest success, an invitation to broadcast for the B.B.C. The excellence of the orchestral concerts is known to many, and the school greatly appreciates the part taken by instrumentalists in the morning service. Few, however, realise the great amount of detailed work that is undertaken at odd times — at break, during dinner time and after school, when, owing to a violin class in this room, the wood-winds in that and a section of the choir in another, the unfortunate master on duty finds it quite impossible to clear the school, and possibly more in anger than in sorrow he returns to the staff-room, where he sees violins under the table, trumpets on the shelf, and as he goes to get his coat and hat he probably falls over the big double-bass in the changing room.



Mr Donkin's entry during the party scene in Act 2 of "Housemaster"

Lino-cut by John Mills, VI Arts

The Dramatic Society, too, before its suspension owing to the outbreak of war, had an unbroken run of successes, and Mr Hayward produced year after year, plays which were performed to packed houses — "Pygmalion", "Tilly of Bloomsbury", "The Bird in Hand", "The Fourth Wall", "The Ghost Train" and others, and it is pleasing to note that success has been renewed with the recent production of "Housemaster". My own special memory of these plays is of K. T. Phillips in "The Bird in Hand", dressed in a long night-shirt, conversing with G. Walters and scratching himself so vigorously and fooling so cheerfully that the rest of the players themselves had the greatest of difficulty in controlling their emotions. Mention should also be made of at least two members of Mr Hayward's casts who have established themselves with considerable success on the professional stage — Franklin and Bentley.

Among other activities suspended owing to the war and now in some cases being revived are the Magazine, the Debating and Scientific Societies and the Chess Club, the last named under the control of Mr Blomfield, himself a player of outstanding ability, and a successful participant in the international tournament at Hastings. On the other hand the war gave fresh impetus to the Savings Association and for some years there were average weekly investments of some £30 while in each of the last two special savings weeks over £1,700 was raised.

Gardening, too, has flourished more in war than in peace. Many years ago the condition of the grounds at the back of the school was deplorable; part jungle and part rubbish heap, to say nothing of an overgrown carriage drive leading to Lamberts Road. Then Mr Holdaway came, and looked, and the earth brought forth fruit. At first the work was undertaken only during the dinner period, when squads of boys cleared the undergrowth, broke up the concrete duck-pond, dug up the carriage drive, and turned the whole into a productive garden, being beaten only by the mare's tail on the patch next to the greenhouse, itself a most useful erection constructed by Mr Masters. During the war the whole of the grounds of Aysgarth were taken over, so that at one time we had under cultivation about one and a half acres of land, to the great benefit of the school dinners.

# F SCHOOL CAMPS

FROM 1928, when the first camp was held at Highcliffe, in Hants, this feature of school life has been extremely popular, and members of the staff, as well as the boys, looked forward each year with keen anticipation to enjoyable visits to distant parts of the country — Cromer, Bridlington, the Isle of Wight, Devon, both North and South Wales, while the wartime harvest camps in Gloucestershire have been equally successful and perhaps even more valuable.

One of the great benefits of camp life is that masters and boys are brought together on a footing which is not that of the classroom, and unsuspected virtues — on both sides — often come to light.

Difficulties are inseparable from the organisation of life under canvas, and almost every year new problems, or variations of old ones, continually crop up, but there has been very little, surprisingly little friction, though the memory of a master being chased by an infuriated cook, complete with frying-pan, is one that will always be cherished by those who were in the Isle of Wight in 1934. Outside cooking, especially in the rain, was always a sobering experience, but we soon developed the custom of taking with us our own prefabricated kitchen, though this was a policy scorned as effeminate by those hardbitten scouts who were in the habit of camping under more primitive conditions.



Harvest Camp at Oddington, 1944

Lino-cut by John Cooper, VI Science

Equipment, too, does not always arrive on time, and the advance party at Bridlington spent two most uncomfortable nights in a barn, and did not suffer in silence, nor, we suspect, did their tale of misery lose anything in the telling. Our goods were eventually located, owing to the efforts of Mr and Mrs Bidmead, carefully tucked away in a siding at Hull. At Bourton-on-the-Water, on the other hand, equipment was evidently regarded as being more valuable than personnel, for while we all travelled 3rd, our bicycles and other effects came along a little later on the seats of 1st Class compartments.

The two Isle of Wight camps were in some ways our most successful, and it was a matter of pride that on the morning after a very windy night the school tents were still standing firm, while those of a territorial camp in a nearby field lay around in a state of wreckage. It was here that a stalwart band of a dozen or so boys undertook a 30 mile challenge walk around a section of the island, and all finished strongly, including Hope, who walked in plimsolls. The only people who suffered any untoward after-effects were the two masters who accompanied the walk.



Every camp brought incidents of one kind or another: it was at Cromer that IVb — 'Horsey' Saville, Bentley and their friends—discovered a churchyard that was slowly slipping down the cliff, and from that time on their water bucket contained what was regarded as the tent's coat of arms — a skull and two thigh bones. We never did investigate fully the truth or otherwise of a conjecture by a member of the staff — no longer with us — that as the skull was low in the brow it was evidently feminine.

Some years later we visited a district where places of refreshment closed very early, if, indeed, they opened at all. Fortunately, one of the masters remembered that he had, some time earlier, been made an honorary member of the local Conservative Club, and on the strength of this, and in spite of the secretary's scepticism he had us all accepted as members. It was not till the closing stages of the camp that he realised that it was the Liberal and not the Conservative Club that had so honoured him, but by that time the purpose had been served.

Seven o' clock reveille was always a trial, as much so, to many boys, as the compulsory wash before breakfast, but at Bridlington it was almost worth while obeying the rules each morning to hear — and see — that mighty atom, Derek Fynn, blow the cookhouse call on his scout's bugle.

They were good days, and it is greatly to be hoped that this annual event may be revived in the not too distant future.

# G

## SCHOOL DINNERS

PROBABLY school dinners always have been and always will be a kind of stock joke among boys and girls; there is, perhaps, no other subject so certain to raise a laugh, or arouse a storm of mingled scorn and derision. As far as we are concerned, however, a general discussion on the topic seems inevitably to lead to the admission that while, quantitatively, more could be hoped for, yet as far as quality is concerned there is little better to be desired. Even as far as quantity is concerned, it is not so certain that we are not getting, these days, as much as we need. Quite often during this term and last I have seen the Juniors piling up their plates, without waiting for 'seconds', and with expressions that seem to indicate that though the spirit is more than willing, yet the flesh has had all that it can take.

The excellence of our dinners is a tradition that has been built up over many years, by many organisers and kitchen staffs. In the early days the meals were prepared in an asbestos kitchen and served in the old conservatory. Conditions were far from ideal: the kitchen was small and ill-equipped; the conservatory was icy cold in winter and a hot-house in summer, while to say that the roof leaked on wet days is a somewhat serious understatement — it was practically impossible to find a dry spot for oneself or one's plate. Later, during the time that our extensions were in course of erection, we had a harassing period in a room kindly lent to us by the Methodist Church, until we were able to return to the comparative comfort of our present dining-room cum hall cum gymnasium.

We have, over a period of years, had a number of changes in kitchen staff, and there are many of us who will always remember the imperturbable cheeriness of Mr and Mrs "Steamboat Bill", the exquisite cookery of Mrs Spink, while today we look with gratitude for the tasty sultana puddings that Mrs Gross gives us, and the very welcome mixed salads lately introduced by Miss Matkin. Now and then, visits by dinner organisers from other schools, seeking advice for the improvement of their meals, help to impress on us the excellence of our own, and for this we owe our thanks both to the kitchen staff and to all others responsible for the provision of the meals.

Perhaps a sufficient tribute lies in the fact that of our 470 boys, some 420 remain to dinner, a number which throws a great strain on the kitchen, whose space and equipment is quite inadequate to deal comfortably with so many. The difficulties have, however, been surmounted, as have those of wartime shortages and rationing, although a member of the staff was recently threatened with a heavy fine and possible imprisonment on account of having overspent to the extent of 1750 points — she would have been fortified, we hope, in the seclusion of her prison cell, by the grateful sympathy of all of us.

# **H** NEW BUILDINGS

IF WE are to be quite frank we must say that our main building has never been satisfactory as a school: it is very much of a makeshift affair, noisy and dirty: wine cellars, where every sound re-echoes, do not make ideal cloak rooms: the science laboratories, especially that for Physics, are entirely inadequate, the staff room — two maid's bedrooms converted into one — is dark, dismal, and even with the best will in the world hopelessly untidy.



The Demolition of the Old Conservatory

But for our first ten years conditions were far worse: there was no hall, no kitchen, no library nor art room and not even the two modern classrooms that we now have in Nos 10 and 11. The old conservatory, already mentioned, did duty for assemblies, prayers, dinners, Physical Training and Art.

In 1935 came the improvements: the conservatory disappeared, one midday, in a great crash of glass, and to the cheers of the assembled school, while some time later the additions slowly began to rise. They were a boon, and we felt that we could now function more fully as a real school, producing plays and concerts on our own premises, and conducting morning prayers under more normal conditions. Unfortunately the far end of the hall appears to have been erected on unsound foundations, for large cracks have appeared in the walls and appear gradually to be getting more serious; the outside drainpipes stand at drunken angles and it is impossible to open or close some of the inside doors. There have been narrow escapes from falling plaster, the last fall taking place in the middle of a service, for the services of St. Mark's Church have been held in the hall since their own building was burnt out. It seems, in fact, only a matter of time before the entire wall collapses.

It is, however, refreshing to be able to teach, now and then, in modern classrooms, with adequate light and plenty of blackboard space, while the kitchen, though unsuited to our present needs, is a very great improvement on the old asbestos contraption. The art room and the library, too, are large, pleasant and well lit, but it will be a welcome day when the latter no longer has to be used as a class room, a text book store and a music room.

## OLD BOYS

IT WAS in 1929 that the Old Surbitonians Association was formed, with a membership of 12; it rapidly became firmly established and before the war was a most flourishing concern; its rugger club was well supported and successful, while its dinners and dances were always popular occasions. It is pleasing to note that its activities, largely under the control of Plant, Baigent and Gastien, have been revived, and it is to be hoped that those who will shortly be leaving us, or who have lately left, will maintain a link with the school by joining the Association. Two dances have already been held this year and both were well attended by old boys of all periods—there were those of the 1925 era, including Wright, the school's first full back, and very pleased we were to see them again, while there were also present at the first dance boys of our present VI forms, who for the evening took upon themselves the honorary rank of Old Boys, and excellent dancers some of them were.

Mention should here be made of the ambitious War Memorial Appeal being launched by the Old Surbitonians Association. It is hoped to raise £5000, the object being to provide a plaque bearing the names of those of our boys who lost their lives in the war, and with the remainder of the money to purchase a much needed sports ground with pavilion and clubhouse, which will be of benefit both to present and future Old Boys. We heartily endorse this appeal and invite all connected in any way with the school to respond as generously as they are able.

Our oldest Old Boys, such as the elder Thexton and Bacon, must now be well past the middle thirties, and quite apart from war records, some of them are beginning to achieve considerable success in life. We have many university graduates, doctors, surveyors, accountants, factory managers, engineers, experts in scientific research, workers in various churches, including those in the foreign mission field, and others in professions too numerous to mention.

From selective secondary schools such as this there is no station in life that is closed to a normally able boy — some of our most successful have come from homes where conditions have verged on poverty — and we sincerely hope, though perhaps with a shadow of doubt, that opportunities in this direction will not, under the new educational system, be more restricted for boys of the working and lower middle classes.

# J THE WAR

## THE BUILDINGS

SIX YEARS of war have had evil effects, in many ways, on the life of the school. We were, in 1939 due, if not for entirely new buildings, at least for extensive reconstruction. These projects, of course, have had to be scrapped, and in view of the present conditions in the building world it may be many years before we at last have the accommodation we require, and which will give us scope for the full and proper development of school life.

As the years have passed we have grown in numbers until we now approach the 500 mark, and as the original building is quite inadequate for so many we have taken over the entire premises of Braemar. This gives us extra space, which is about the best that can be said for the arrangement, for the space is entirely unsuitable for school work, being dirty, dilapidated and infected with dry rot to such an extent that it is considered unworthy of repair. In these conditions our junior school, with its masters and mistresses, has to work, nor is this all, for such is the shortage of equipment that many young boys have to sit crowded together, some facing the front of the room, and some facing the back, and on forms with no backs to them, conditions that can have no beneficial effects on their health. Probably IIIc are the most unfortunate, for they are housed in an attic at the top of the building, very cold in winter and almost unbearably hot in summer.

## THE COMMUNITY

WAR always has an undermining influence on the morale and discipline of children, and our experience has been no exception; in fact, in a district such as this, open to all types of bombing raids, the effects have been particularly severe. Not only have many nights been spent, often sleeplessly, in air raid shelters, but whole days have been passed under similar conditions, and in 1944 a large part of the General Schools Examination was taken in the school shelters.



School Dinner in the Shelters

Lino Cut by John Cooper, VI Science

Moreover, wartime activities make great demands on the time of boys of grammar schools, and ours have some reason to be proud of their record: we have a strong cadet company and have furnished many members for such organizations as the A. T. C., the Scouts, the Civil Defence and Home Guard. The older boys, too, willingly assisted the staff in the task of firewatching the school, and to their credit be it said that this was undertaken early in 1941, before there was any rational system, or any question of payment of subsistence allowances.

Another effect of the war has been a gradual deterioration in our examination results: since 1941 the number of failures has increased, until in 1945 they were larger than any other five years put together, while those of 1946 were even worse. We feel that the blame for this can be laid neither at the door of the boys themselves nor of the staff, but are adequately explained by the conditions already mentioned, and by the absence of many fathers on war service.

## THE STAFF

REQUIREMENTS of war service have naturally made demands on the younger members of the staff, though we have been somewhat fortunate in that most of us were just over the age of enlistment. We lost, temporarily, three of our masters, but these, Messrs Blomfield, Grimes and Masters were very valuable to us and their loss was severely felt.

But bad luck is often balanced by good, and the arrival of the ladies enabled us to bear with equanimity the temporary absence of our servicemen. We were fortunate in that our first lady teacher was Mrs Foskett, who, during her four years' stay with us, completely identified herself with the work and life of the school, and her departure last Christmas was regretted by all, and not least, we venture to think, by Mrs Foskett herself. In 1943 came Miss Marga Lane, to whose efforts the success of the Atherton evacuation was largely due; both to Mrs Foskett, who, we are happy to say, still visits us occasionally, and to Marga, who, we fear, has quite forgotten us, we send our best wishes for their work at Guildford.

Naturally we consider ourselves better fitted than women to deal with boys in their middle 'teens, and our admiration has been faintly — just faintly — tinged with chagrin as we see them handle matriculation forms, and gain results, particularly with a hopeless C form, at least as good as any of the rest of us.

## OLD BOYS

BUT THOUGH we may regret our lapsing societies, deteriorating examination results and school discipline, our first thoughts have been with our boys in the Services, and justifiable pride in great achievements has mingled with sorrow over very heavy losses.

Old Surbitonians have served with distinction in all branches of the Services, not in Army, Navy and Air Force only, but also in the Merchant Navy, where Peter Ayliffe appears to hold something like a record with four survivors' leaves after wreck by torpedo attack.

Outstanding successes there have been; many have gained commissions from the ranks, and though it may be invidious to single out for special mention any of those decorated for gallantry, we do take great pride in the fine record of Denis David, whom we remember, in spite of his long list of 'kills', as the mildest mannered man ever to shoot down a Messerschmitt.

Our list of decorations, as complete as we have it, is as follows:—

R. N. V. R.	P. Dobby, D. S. M. C. P. Willis*	D. A. Fynn*	E. W. Maydon, M. B. E.
F. A. A.	D. R. O. Price, D. F. C.		
ARMY	N. D. B. Blaber, M. C. B. L. Wallis*	P. H. Bradshaw, M. M.	J. A. F. Geal*
R. A. F.	D. R. Bradley, D. F. M. P. C. P. Farnes, D. F. M. H. M. Thomas, D. F. C.	W. D. David, D. F. C. with bar, A. F. C. D. Furse, D. F. C. J. A. Woods, D. F. C.	W. D. Hinton, D. F. C.

Our casualties have been heavy and have included some of the finest and most brilliant boys who have passed through the school. To the relatives of these of our boys who have lost their lives we offer our deepest sympathy.

R. N. V. R.	J. W. F. Burgess	D. F. Sexton	
F. A. A.	P. J. Hoad	M. F. Lord	C. V. Shute
ARMY	G. S. Allison P. H. Bradshaw A. W. Masters P. Williams	K. W. Betts P. Dibben A. B. Pointer	J. M. Booker E. C. Goodwin J. M. Ratledge
R. A. F.	E. W. Armer W. Bradley S. J. Gilbert M. J. Glover V. C. Hill D. W. Licquorish D. S. Parker J. H. Taylor B. C. Webber	P. B. Bailey R. Coochey M. L. Gillingham F. A. Grills P. Hope E. C. Meredith W. J. Price S. J. Thorne	R. E. Bellamy J. K. Copeland I. A. W. Gilmore B. G. Hart A. J. Hyde J. A. Nutt P. Scott G. Tomkins
THE MINES KILLED BY ENEMY ACTION	C. W. Evans	N. J. Day	

There have been among us, too, those who have refused to accept any reason as adequate for the taking of human life, and who, moreover, have suffered for their devotion to their ideals. To a sincere and sensitive man the path of a conscientious objector is not an easy one, and those too we remember who have suffered and not gained by adherence to their principles.

\* Mentioned in Despatches





Printing "The First Twenty-one Years"

Lino Cut by Paul Solly, Lower Vb

# **K** PRESENT & FUTURE

IN ATTEMPTING to take stock of our present position and attainments we are fortunate in being able to refer to the highest educational authority in the country, for in the Autumn of 1945, for the first time since 1929, we were subject to a full Ministry of Education inspection. Six of His Majesty's Inspectors descended upon us and remained for nearly a week: during this time they investigated all sides of school life and work; buildings, curriculum, syllabuses of every subject, exercise books and teaching all came under their scrutiny; they attended prayers, sampled the dinners and examined all activities and societies. Their report received last term was most encouraging — we had done better than we had realised, and the report called forth a special commendation from the District Executive.

As we had hoped, strong comment was made upon the inadequacy and dilapidation of our buildings and equipment, and strong recommendations put forward for extensive repairs and additions, additions which are at least seven years overdue. Nevertheless, the inspectors remarked with satisfaction on the way in which the school as a community had come through the war without undue adverse effect on its work and spirit. In fact, one inspector ventured the opinion that we compared favourably, in this respect, with any other school that he had seen.

This is all very pleasing, but, to be quite frank, we do feel that academically, we have, in the years 1944-46, reached the lowest level that we are likely to experience. Our present V forms appear to us to be stronger than for many years past, and we expect, in June next, to reach our own satisfactory pre-war examination standard, and there is evidence that even better may be hoped for in the following year, from our present very lively LV's. Our VI forms, too, are growing in number, as more and more parents realise the value to a boy's future of the post-matriculation course, and this strong upper school should be of the greatest value to us in all directions.

Activities, too, are getting into swing again: the Dramatic Society's successful production of "Housemaster" has already been mentioned; the chess club and the magazine have both been revived; such new ventures as printing, the Photographic and the Arts and Crafts Societies are flourishing under Mr. Busby's direction, while the Lecture and Astronomical Societies owe their inception to Salter and Gibbs.

In sports our position is perhaps stronger than it has ever been before, and this is, to a large extent, due to the efforts of Mr Fry. Several of our boxers, Fidler in particular, have achieved outstanding successes, while in the Surrey Schools Sports our Junior and Senior teams secured the 2nd and 3rd places respectively.

Generally speaking then, our position, in spite of material disadvantages, gives us considerable hope that if we are so permitted, we shall in the future play an even greater part than we did in the years before 1939.

The key to the future lies in the words "if we are so permitted". Great new developments have taken place and are taking place in the educational world, and at the moment we are not at all sure to what extent they will affect us, and whether beneficially or otherwise. If we continue to be entrusted with the care of the brighter primary school boys from the age of 10 to that of 17 or 18 we shall continue to enable them to reach any position in life for which they are fitted, and to compete successfully for the higher posts in industry, commerce, the professions and the Government services with those who come from the public schools. We view without enthusiasm, though, the possibility that we may receive these selected boys from the age of 13 only, for it is obvious that with such curtailment we shall be severely handicapped in our task, and the chief sufferers will be the more able boys of the working and lower middle classes.

The need for well trained, first class men is becoming so apparent that we feel certain that in the end our conception of educational development will prevail, and that, with the additions that are so sorely needed — science laboratories, gymnasium, woodwork room and dining hall, clean and up to date class rooms, we shall see the development of a community of which our Old Boys, as well as the Borough of Surbiton and the County of Surrey will have no reason to be ashamed.

A. J. F.

**Animo et Fide Pergite**