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Front Cover: Beverley Gay, L6



EDITORIAL

1984 - is this the beginning of a new era? With the threat of 'the bomb' hanging over us like a huge oppressive cloud, is it possible that tiny bulbs of hope are flourishing and flowering in the sheltered depths of B.R.G.S.?

On reading the material submitted to this year's Editorial Board, I became acutely aware that the winds are slowly changing. Only a small amount of the original contributions show the pessimism that seems to crush everybody today; few articles have the underlying theme of futility, frustration or despair. The pupils of B.R.G.S. are ceasing to look at the negative prospects for the future, but seem to be taking a new stance - an optimistic viewpoint; perhaps it is a rebellion against the nihilistic view adopted by George Orwell in his novel, '1984'.

Perhaps the bottom of the pit has been reached and we can now scale the heights to some new goal. The work submitted by some of the pupils seems to be reaching out for new ideals, rejecting fatalistic attitudes which people tend to adopt these days. Perhaps they feel that there is little to lose and that the situation can only improve.

It is certainly encouraging that in these 'dog-days', the pupils of B.R.G.S. can still keep life in perspective and respond with humour and warmth, in spite of pressures facing them. It is not that they are unaware - on the contrary, they are very aware and socially conscious. Hopefully this will be a beginning: Big Brother, watch out! We're watching you.

Alison Jean McClenan, L6

A FOREWORD FROM THE HEADMASTER

You have to travel by public transport to see real life. It isn't possible hermetically sealed in the family car emerging only to refuel with petrol or plastic food. Leaving Preston by train one evening recently, I sat opposite two men, one white-haired and elderly, the other sturdy and middle-aged, who, tired of basking in "The Sun", entered into conversation about the education service.

"You go to these parents' meetings. They tell you she's not working hard enough. But what do they teach her. Cooking - she does that at home. History - what's the use of that?"

Or, again, travelling to Birmingham on a superior train last week, two ladies joined at Stoke and sat alongside me. One was young, fair, with pencilled eyebrows, cheekbones etched in red, chandelier ear attachments, cream coat, red dress, black shoes. The other was a considerably older, jaeger type of woman with thick fawn stockings and flat brown shoes. "I thought," said the latter, "of going back to college and taking a degree in sociology." "Whatever would you do with that?" asked her companion, with the air of one who already knew the answer.

Of course, Sir Keith (saviour of B.R.G.S.) would agree with both pairs of travellers. He is right. And based on this sample of four people, public opinion supports him. What we need to restore Britain's economic power is to make education relevant to the modern age, prepare pupils for the high tech society (or the self service jobless centre) and add the conditions of life and social skills (whatever they

may be). After all, goes the argument, we must emphasize a technical education as the way forward on the road to prosperity but we mustn't ruin all the good work of comprehensive schools by re-introducing any form of selection or privatisation. Now look at how successful countries do it. Look at West Germany. Or the United States. Yes; perhaps we should not just look at but scrutinise these exemplars. West Germany has the most highly selective form of education in Europe with over a third of its pupils in specialist technical schools. Despite millions of post-Sputnik dollars poured into them, science teaching in American public schools has yet to emerge from mere gimmickry. In truth, the towering wealth of post-war Germany has been built upon the broad base of cheap labour from South East Europe and Turkey. Vast resources have something to do with the prosperity of the United States. Increasingly rich private universities may help a little, together with the irritatingly successful American habit of importing the talent they don't have. Perhaps we should do the same; it may prove cheaper in the short run.

The Forster Education Act of 1870 was introduced by the government because of fears of economic decline. Maybe education had very little to do with it. It certainly didn't reverse the trend I suggest that Sir Keith and our sample of public opinion may have it completely wrong. Good education is that which good teachers teach, whether it be high technology, the Classics, or Sociology, enabling young people to aspire to excellence in their chosen field of study, ceaselessly seeking the infinite breadth and depth of beauty, passion, enlightenment and understanding. Pretty elitist, wouldn't you say? Well, that's what B.R.G.S. stands for.

P.L.C.

CHANGES OF STAFF

After thirty-three years, Mr. Cawthorne retired from the Art Department, a great loss to both staff and pupils. We also said goodbye to Mr. Maiden after eighteen years who left to train as a Methodist minister at Birmingham. Mrs. Andrews left to become a Careers Officer whilst Miss Skipper left to take up a teaching post in London.

We welcome the return of Mrs. Taylor as a part-time teacher in the Latin Department. Mrs. Redford and Mr. Heap joined the English Department and Miss Chadwick the Physics and Maths. Department. Mrs. Hollick and Mrs. Greaves have been appointed Heads of Art and Latin, respectively.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mrs. Hoyle and Mrs. C. Clarke for typing 'Squirrel' and the Resources Department for duplication. We would also like to thank Mrs. Redford for the help with advertisements and to the Art Department for the provision of illustrations. Our thanks also go to Miss Macleroy for compiling news of former students, Mr. Kershaw for again kindly helping with stapling and trimming the magazine. Finally, we must give our thanks to the pupils of B.R.G.S. for contributing so much to the publication of this magazine.

A Tribute to Rev. Cawthorne

Most of us remember Mr. Cawthorne as a lively, enthusiastic man, always willing to stop and have a natter about one thing and another, so it comes as no surprise to find that he hasn't sunk into a quiet docile retirement, as would be expected after thirty three years of teaching, trying to drag the most unlikely candidates through Art 'O' and 'A' Level by the skins of their teeth, and, actually succeeding in many cases. Indeed, from what I have seen, retirement is definitely to be recommended.

First of all there was the long holiday, somewhere slightly further down from Bournemouth, the Southern France region to be exact, where our Mr. Cawthorne spent most of the day following hectic pursuits such as sunbathing, sketching and painting. Examples of work done here can be seen above the fireplace of his Newchurch residence and, I can tell you, it's a far cry from sunny Skegness.

When he got back from France, Mr. Cawthorne was completely wrapped up in church work, wedding rehearsals, hospital visits and so on, and he says that he wonders how he ever managed to find time to teach. He also attended a church mission in Wales during October and has, in fact, been so busy that he hasn't seemed to miss school very much. He says that he knew it was time to stop teaching "when the problem children ceased to become a challenge and just remained a problem". Mr. Cawthorne's years at B.R.G.S. haven't been simply a bed of roses, though, and he gave a chuckle as he remembered one incident which happened during his career.

He was firing some pots one afternoon, down in the pottery room, but decided that they would need an extra hour after school had finished, so he thought he would go home and have his tea before returning to switch off the kiln. The next time he thought about it, however, was just before going to bed that evening and so he had to scurry back after dark and try to get into school. Luckily he found an open window. Unluckily it was only eighteen inches wide. So he had to squeeze his not-too-small frame through, head first, and flop onto the pipes which were then covered with grime, muck and cobwebs. This is an example of the unglamorous side of the teaching profession.

In the future, Mr. Cawthorne says that he has no particular desire to become the next men's downhill skiing champion, but neither does he intend to wile away the years idly. He plans to strike a happy medium by doing more painting, drawing and churchwork, visiting interesting galleries, relaxing with his music and generally enjoying life to the full. We remember him with much affection and acknowledge his devoted service to B.R.G.S.

A. Porritt, L6

