

Devonport High School
for Boys
Old Boys Magazine 2002





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Headmaster's Editorial

The year has been very interesting, the most significant event being our successful bid for Specialist College Status. This government initiative requires schools to raise at least £50,000 and to prepare a bid that sets challenging targets to improve the school across the board, but especially in the area of specialisation chosen – and in exchange to get significant extra funding.

After careful consideration we chose engineering as our specialisation, going back to Alonzo Rider's 1896 priority: "to establish a school for boys intent on careers in engineering, the navy and civil service". This subject had the real advantage that it was not a defined subject within the National Curriculum, and so we could generate a novel teaching programme with more independence. The subject also allowed us to build on the strengths of two very strong and popular faculties – Maths and Science – and to invest in a somewhat neglected faculty – Technology.

Sponsorship in this area proved to be more generously funded than some of the other specialisms and we were delighted to successfully compete for two major sponsorships from (i) Consortium lead by the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) (£40,000) and (ii) BAE Sys-

tems (£40,000). The school trust also committed £10,000.

The key parts of our bid involved working within a partnership of local schools – very local. We chose to work with the six primary schools around our school site – High Street, St Peter's, The Cathedral School, Stuart Road, Stoke Damerel and St Joseph's – and one secondary - Devonport High School for Girls. This partnership with our neighbouring schools has got off to an excellent start and is helping us become a part of our local community. To see 400 primary children in our school hall with our sixth formers as their hosts to see Gary the Clown (who introduced them to scientific principles!) made a super start.

We are also being able to invest substantially in our old buildings, extensively refurbishing Astor Block to provide new Systems and Control workshops and CAD/CAM facilities, plus an increasing the provision of ICT equipment for Maths and Science. Extra staff, resources, courses All helping us to spend the £700,000 that was drawn in from the DfES over the next four years as a result of our bid being successful.

What about the other subjects? All benefiting from the increased funding and sense of purpose. One area that we have invested in is in enhancing our Pastoral Support so that

every boy has more help to ensure that he is more likely to fully achieve his potential (or is it that more boys will be less likely to get away with being lazy?)

A most refreshing new initiative that has only led to a positive response from parents and pupils. That 8 of our 14 successful Oxbridge applicants are to read engineering says a lot! We remain equally proud of our humanity, classics, linguistics and arts successes – our curriculum staying broad to meet the needs of our able boys.

Dr. Nic Pettit December 2002



Student Editorial

Welcome to the 2002 edition of the DHSB Old Boys Magazine, produced entirely by child labour. The last year has been a turbulent one for us here at DHSB, with a variety of notable events and departures among the staff.

The year began with the final completion of the ongoing Hansom Sports Hall project. Now outfitted with cricket nets, basketball hoops and indoor football goals, as well as a functioning PA system, the hall doubles as indoor sports area and full-school Assembly venue; with in excess of 1200 pupils, the old Edg-cumbe Hall is no longer capable of housing us all! The Gibbons Refec-

tory is now managed and run by the school, which has brought a noticeable improvement in the food if not in the prices. The Burrows Drama Studio's transformation from Sixth Form common room to operational studio is complete following two years of renovation, the ATC huts have been demolished and rebuilt and the playground extended onto the site of the old canteen.

We also successfully acquired Engineering College status early in this academic year, which grants us an extra £700,000 over the next four years – the full results of this are being discussed later in the magazine, but side-effects include the modernisation of the English and Mathematics departments with the installation of laptops for all staff within these departments... and speaking of staff, this year we said farewell to Mr Dickens who left the school after thirty years of History teaching and Mr Docherty, former Head of Classics.

And now a pause for thought; browsing through the Evening Herald the week before writing this editorial, I noticed an article praising former DHSB student Rob Preece, now a student at the University of Sheffield. Rob was recently a runner-up in a University Sports Writer of the Year competition and winner of a commendation from the Guardian. In a world in which DHSB students are making such great strides,

why do I single out Rob?

Because Rob wrote for this very magazine; it's very possible some of you may remember him. And that got me thinking about the ongoing process that is education. Three or four years ago Rob was sitting at a desk typing out an article very similar to this one; now I'm sitting here writing about the success he's gone on to.

Perhaps in a few years' time another fresh-faced, black-blazered and damnably handsome and talented young man will be sitting here writing about something I've won. Joking aside, though, I'd just like to say that it's been wonderful working on this magazine, being the latest part of a tradition stretching back over the best part of a century, and I'm sure the rest of the team would agree with me. I hope you enjoy the result of our collective efforts.

Jon Garrad, Year 12 and Editor



Specialist Engineering College Bid

In last year's Magazine there was a brief statement by Dr Pettit saying that he was thinking of applying for DHS to become a Specialist College as he thought that this was the best way to take the school forward. After some deliberation and discussion

during the Autumn Term in 2001 it was finally decided that we would apply for Engineering College status in March 2002. Engineering was chosen as it built on our strengths of Maths and Science and would enable us to improve the facilities and results in Design and Technology. We also had a good background in engineering with a number of our sixth formers leavers going on to university to study Engineering related courses. We attracted sponsorship from the Engineering Employers Federation and BAE Systems as well as the DHSB Trust. In July 2002 we heard that we had been successful and would become a one of only four Specialist Engineering Colleges in September

The three school aims that we were required to address in our bid to become a specialist college were - to raise standards, to extend the curriculum and offer enrichment in the three key subjects and to increase take-up and interest in specialist subject courses. Targets were set in each of these for the next four years. We also have opportunities to work with our local community and we linked with six local Primary Schools and with DHS for Girls as our partner secondary school.

The capital funding we have received will enable us to extend and enhance the facilities in the school. A111, the old Food Technology room, will be fitted out as a Systems

and Control Laboratory and A18 as a Systems and Control Workshop. Art will move down into A03. There will be an emphasis on hi-tech equipment, especially CAD / CAM. By the end of the Autumn Term all Maths and Science rooms and some D&T rooms will be fitted with computers and projectors and several will have Electronic Whiteboards. Wireless networking will be put into A and B Blocks and there will be a set of laptops for pupils to use in any of the rooms with a wireless connection.

Systems and Control is now offered as one of the D&T areas at GCSE and we will be starting an A level course in the subject in September 2003. We will also be developing GCSE and A Level Systems Engineering courses in conjunction with BAE Systems and the AQA examination board. These courses will require an input from Maths, Science and D&T to form a Systems approach.

We have planned a number of Engineering enrichment activities, some of them with DHS Girls and after Christmas we will be meeting regularly with teachers from our partner Primary schools to develop modules of work in Science and D&T. There will be a lot of opportunity for staff and pupils at the school to participate in activities related to Engineering.

As part of our Mission Statement says

As an Engineering College we shall strive to be at the forefront of technological initiatives within education in the 21st Century. We will become a UK leader in the approach to engineering practice for young people preparing them for what industry sees as the future requirement. Our principal aims are to improve the quality of teaching, learning and to raise standards for all our pupils and those in our partner schools. We shall enable pupils to experience an original, exciting and creative climate for learning with an engineering focus underpinned by a broad and balanced curriculum. We shall seek to actively promote innovative, integrated practice in the teaching and learning of applied science, mathematics and technology that leads to an understanding and vision of engineering.

Anne Reeve
Director of Engineering



Friday Choir in Barcelona

In July the school's successful Friday Choir, made up of students from DHSB, DHSG, PHSG and St Dunstan's Abbey School, toured the city of Barcelona and its surrounding

province of sun-kissed Catalonia. As I have been a member of the choir since joining the school in 1997, I consider myself well-qualified to report on proceedings.

With the vast sandy beach a five-minute walk from the hotel in the resort of Coma-Ruga, and with the hotel providing a luxurious heated swimming pool, it would have been easy to forget that we had in fact travelled to Spain to sing. With settings as beautiful as Barcelona Cathedral, however, it was always easy to rise to the occasion and the choir performed some breathtaking music. This was enhanced by the vocal quartet Friends In Synchronised Harmony, made up of senior members of the choir.

Included in the programme was the punishing and uncompromisingly operatic "Messa di Gloria" by Giacomo Puccini, which was a real success after several months of rehearsal. Interspersed were some of the choir's more traditional pieces, such as "A Gaelic Blessing" and "I Will Sing With The Spirit". It was stated in another edition of this magazine that the Friday Choir is "greater than the sum of its parts". I feel I have to agree with this and credit must be given to the staff who accompanied the choir to Spain for their support and patience.

Sean Kennedy, Year 12



Sixth Form Issues

The Sixth Form are likely to have a busy year. The new Year 12, fresh from finishing GCSEs with great success, are now hard at work on AS Levels. Some of the greatest GCSE successes were Laurie Wilks with 10 A*s and 1 A, Paul Kittle with 10 A*s and Richard Hill with 9 ½ A*s and ½ A. The overall A-C pass rate this year at GCSE was 98% - a figure showing the tremendous amount of hard work put in by pupils and teachers throughout the course.

The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award scheme run by Mr Coombes is a highly prestigious award requiring students to fulfil long term commitments in a variety of areas - physical recreation, skills (not related to sport), expeditions, voluntary work and residential. The Duke himself presents the award when these commitments have been completed.

Young Enterprise is a business incentive for those aiming at a career in the business sector. It involves groups of 7-15 people forming a small-scale commercial company. Different positions within the company are awarded and a voluntary industry advisor is present at the meetings to make the experience as real as possible for those involved. The school has entered two teams

into this year's competition, headed by Mr Pugh and Ms Nye.

The Debating Club established by Mrs Sheridan and Mr Jessop and maintained by Tom Andrews of Year 12 is a Thursday evening event where students can voice their opinions on a variety of highly speculated and controversial issues, and have these opinions heard and respected. Each week a new topic is outlined in the Sixth Form assembly and the results of last week's debate are discussed. The activity has recently been extended with the arrival of the Sixth Form mass debates as part of the PSHE course.

A large number of Year 12 have become vice-prefects and some members of Year 13 have become full prefects. The contribution of these students to the smooth running of the school is greatly appreciated by staff. Other activities carried out by sixth form pupils include peer mentoring (a lunchtime counselling session operated by Year 13) and work with local primary schools as part of our engineering college status (*and, of course, the production of this magazine - Ed*)

The school is also heavily involved with a new government incentive for students aged 16-19, encouraging them to enter higher education - the Connexions service. The Connexions card, currently being introduced to the Sixth Form, enables

students to register electronically and receive points. These points can then be exchanged for various items such as entry to draws and discounts from high street stores, all of which is run through the Connexions website. This system is about to be implemented in the Sixth Form and staff and pupils await to observe whether it will be a success. Connexions have also become heavily involved with the school's Careers department in the last year.

Arham Barakzai, Year 12



Music and Drama Production 'The Hired Man'

Amongst the very best things about DHSB and in particular its music department is its ability to produce wonderful shows year after year. This year's performances of 'The Hired Man' by Howard Goodall and Melvyn Bragg were no exception. After much frantic rehearsal and exhaustive behind-the-scenes preparation, the musical was performed on July 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th in the Edgcombe Hall. As always, the cast was selected from this and other schools across the city and from students across the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools.

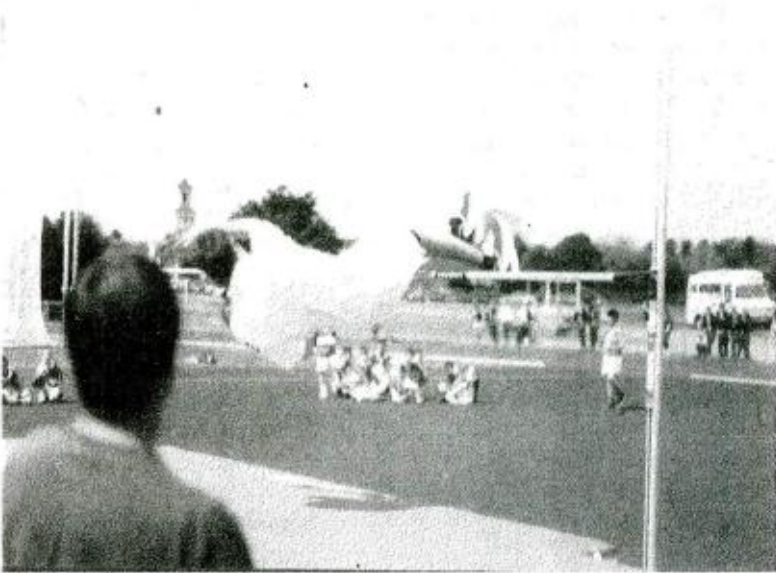
"The Hired Man" concerns a young farmhand, John Tallentire, at a farm

hiring at the turn of the 20th century. At such occasions labourers offered themselves to landowners for whom they then worked for six months. John has just married Emily at the start of the play and they outline their plans for a life together in the countryside. However by Act Two unemployment has struck and John and his family move to the coast (Workington) in order to find work in the mines. The outbreak of war separates John from his family as he goes to fight in the trenches but despite his father's wishes and his mother's pleas, Harry, John's son, soon follows – the seventeen-year-old dies in action. At the close of the war John returns home and he and Emily decide to return to the countryside. The play ends with John and Emily returning to a hiring. Their lives have gone full circle with romance, parenthood and tragedy all mixed in.

Oliver Pengelley and Charlotte Jones played the lead roles of John and Emily Tallentire; the school bade a fond farewell to Olly last year as he took up his place at RADA. Sam Holmes, who has also left DHSB for London at sixteen after an exciting drama scholarship offer, played John's mischievous brother Isaac. The Tallentines' children Mary and Harry were played by Emma Longbottom and Joe Knight respectively. Emma will also be sadly missed after a series of star-

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Sports Day 2002



Final Attempt This was the last of the three successive record breaking high jumps achieved by Lee Russell.



Champion! James Nicholls stands ready



So to finish the sports day photos section (*and fill in the rest of this page*) here are these two token photos . A close and Final push to the finishing line and the record breaking javelin throw, again.



Spot the javelin thrower Whoa! What a distance, I didn't manage to get Adam Sharp who threw the javelin into the picture.



Lapped! Even though he was lapped because he did not realize the distance he was going to run he was not disillusioned and the crowd cheered him on.

Redesigning Edgcombe Block The New School Entrance



ring roles, but DHSB needn't worry since there is, as always, a fresh crop of talent coming through to grace the stage in future years. The production of 'Macbeth' by a group of younger Drama students last year was a demonstration of this.

As well as the starring actors and actresses, there was as always a large chorus and a wide range of instruments in the orchestra; strings, a piano, a trumpet and a harpsichord. The orchestra did much to set the scene in key parts of the production and provided an excellent accompaniment to the moving opening and closing choruses.

Behind the scenes, the scenery backdrop was superbly rendered by the Art department and a group of students were involved with lighting, sound and shifting stage furniture. One of these stagehands was Michael Davy, then of 10C, who told our correspondent that he had enjoyed his often-forgotten role and enjoyed especially the notorious parties which have become a traditional climax to the four-night season at DHSB. In fact he was so impressed that he intends to be a part of this year's show 'Patience' which will take place in October 2003, following a production of 'The Tempest' at Easter, directed by new Head of Drama Kier Bygrave.

Sean Kennedy, Year 12



Sports Day 2002

Disaster surrounded this year's Sports Day which almost didn't happen as the gate was found to be locked and the key could not be found; fortunately a cleaner was soon found in order to open the gates in time to allow the school into the Brickfields, but not before the early arrivals had found an alternative entrance over a broken fence. *(Including our own correspondents – Messrs Franco and Bulpett should be ashamed of themselves. Ed)*

The 1500 m dash also had a disastrous moment for one young boy when he sprinted for the first three hundred metres to the finish line not realising that he needed to run for two more laps before the end of the race. Needless to say he was soon caught up and overtaken by the other racers and was lapped just as the winner crossed the finishing line.

But there was also good news as this year no less than five different records were broken: Steve McNellie ran the year 10 400m in 54 seconds beating R Manhire's record of 54.02 set in 1985, Adam Sharp year 9 set a new record of 48.77m, breaking R Blackford's record of 42.50m (1979), Lee Russell had a high jump of 1.67m beating M Higgins' 1987 record of 1.64m, James Nicholls threw the year 8 discus an incredible 19.57m smashing L Davies' record

of just 18.84m (set last year), and in the discus Matthew Meddings Year 7 threw his discus an amazing 18.80m almost matching the previous Year 8 record! Who says kids are getting less healthy?

Walking round the field it was obvious that more people were showing up than is usual (over 600) unfortunately those not competing or helping were made to sit in the stands.

Looking behind the scenes for the first time I was impressed by the work put into the event and all this goes on inside "the hut", where equipment, placings, records and certificates are all organised, written down and distributed from the three teachers inside a space no bigger than the average garden shed. All very impressive.

Jonathan Bulpett, Year 12
Photography by Daniel Franco,
Year 12



Site Development

As work on the sports hall and canteen nears completion the school turns its attention to the older buildings; when the new hall is completed the Edgcumbe gym will no longer be used for sporting activities. Dr Pettit has therefore decided to return the gym to its original two floor form; the top floor will become a new I.C.T. suite and the lower floor will become a new Learning Resources Centre, access

to which will be provided by what Dr Pettit has christened his "Drawbridge". This revamped entrance is being designed by AS student David Pessell as part of his coursework, but the same firm who completed the sports hall will build the actual bridge. Pictures of the planned bridge can be found at www.steen-mitchel.demon.co.uk

Following the closure of the Food Technology department A110 has been emptied in order to install a new Engineering laboratory with Computer Aided Design and CAM software, along with fifty laptops. These will be lent to pupils and staff involved in the Engineering course, and a knock-on effect has been the modernisation of the English and Mathematics departments.

Astor block has also been redesigned with the Electronics and Art departments swapping locations; the middle floor is now Electronics and Engineering with Art and Product Design on the ground floor.

The last piece of news on site is the school's new gardener, Mr <?>, who is at the heart of the school's repair and maintenance programme, to be carried out over the next few years.

Jonathan Bulpett, Year 12




Old Boys Rugby Club

In Devonport division one the 1st. XV won 7 and lost 11 matches, finishing as the top Plymouth side in sixth place. This represented a significant achievement in what was a very strong league with four Cornwall & Devon clubs having been relegated the previous year. In the RFU Junior Vase the Club again reached the third round while an incomprehensible decision by the Plymouth Combination denied the players a chance of appearing in the Lockie Cup Final. The Wizards (2nd.XV) took further strides with an increased fixture list and are now developing a pool of players ready to step into the first team when injuries or form require it. In The Roy Ellis Trophy they secured a victory as the away side in a drawn match with St Columba before exiting at the hands of a strong OPO's side. Spike Hughes and Simon Blackshire retired from playing and enjoyed the best wishes of the club for their future and in Simon's case a speedy recovery from a leg injury. Financially the club has made enormous progress with increased sponsorship and tighter controls on match fees. Tribute has been paid to the hard work done by Jim Moss which deservedly won him the Clubman of The Year award. On the social side Christine Dunkley likewise brought a previously unknown degree of organisation and enthusiasm to this

very important aspect of the Club's activities. These included barbecues and the outstanding Club Dinner at H.M.S. Drake with 128 in attendance. On the administrative front, Geoff Simpson continued as Club Secretary, dealing with ever increasing demands from the RFU such as filling in questionnaires on the internet to secure funding and international tickets and monitoring the move to non-paper communication within two years. This has implications for the expenditure on appropriate equipment. The Club Tour to Rome was a huge success, enhanced by several delightful hours spent in the company of Laurence Dalgaglio's father. The Club continues its valuable links with Devonport High School, the home ground for playing matches and also the venue for training on Wednesday evenings. The Club now runs a golf society, predominantly for former players, which gets together two or three times a year. Paul Vaggers, the Chairman, maintains contact with the Vice Presidents who remain very supportive.

Geoff Simpson Club Secretary



Year 12 University Visiting Week

I don't know if it's possible to write while adrenaline is slicing through your veins like an angry fish-gutter;

having vowed to write this soon after beginning my four-hour journey from home town Plymouth up to Birmingham, I soon gave up when an over-polite Scotsman returning to Aberdeen sat next to me after asking three times and proceeded to make himself, well, only superficially useful.

Only marginal benefit could be gleaned from his advice because I was in a state of trying to ignore all preconceptions of what Birmingham and its university might be like before travelling up to visit it. The gent had previously taken two of his children to, and shortly after from, the University of Birmingham, when they suffered separate bouts of homesickness, due in one case to the son living on the ground floor of a Hall of Residence where every morning for the first - and final - week of his stay he awoke from a sleepless night to find partygoers' vomit deposited on his doorstep.

My goal six months ago (mid-June 2002) was to cram in as many independent visits and higher education open days into a fortuitous week off school as I could. I managed four. Fortunately, three of the sites had the graceful buildings, beautiful grounds and friendly, enthusiastic staff that I hadn't dared hope for. Then there was Birmingham.

After wandering around New Street station in a daze and wondering why

the largest train station in Britain's "second city" had no benches (tramps used to sleep in them apparently), I managed to catch the cross-city service two stops down to the canal-side campus. Yet again I did several rotations, this time more to admire the undulating lawns and simply gorgeous brick-red domed buildings than to settle my anxious stomach. I was sent through a reception area with a perfectly circular wooden desk centred under a domed ceiling as high and airy as a cathedral, before finally arriving at the dated but oddly charming tower block which holds the Arts departments.

My meeting with the affable Professor Tony Davies – one of the few English department members present (this was the summer holiday for them, I should mention) – went well, especially given my complete lack of any advance warning that I was coming. As I am now set on doing joint honours, my next chat was with Michael Butler, Professor of German and awesomely renowned chap (just search on the internet), who spoke with me at great length about the course and completely changed my thoughts on studying foreign literature and history. I took one look in the rather gloomy library, then smiled it off and hopped back down to Bristol Temple Meads, where my uncle picked me up and looked after me for the week.

The next morning I was up bright and early and spent two hours moping around after trying, and failing, to charm my way onto an earlier train service to York. My scheduled journey was delayed by a further hour, so it was very surprising to arrive at the sweet if eccentric village of Heslington and find that the administrator of the Linguistics Dept. had prepared a range of promotional materials and annotated maps for me. As that Tuesday was the final day for marking current final-year students' exams, I was left to my own devices to peer around the shady lakeside buildings, including a frustrating wait to be registered for entry to the serene and ethereal wash of pale that was the arts library.

My walk back into York was long and very hot; I started cursing York City Council (if such a body even exists) after taking my second of four wrong turns purely due to having to guess which fork to take because road signs were, presumably, too much of an effort to be worth bothering about. I suppose they can be forgiven for soaking up its pretty riverbanks and daisy-fresh historical sites all day rather than thinking about the needs of poor Josh Miller, aged 16 and three-quarters.

Wednesday was less fraught with confusion and delay, as I spent it at the impressively co-ordinated Not-

tingham Open Day. The university had everything running (as far as I could see) with effortlessly speedy efficiency; from the shuttle-bus which left the station before my train even considered starting a ponderous departure, to the Q&A sessions with straight lines through the bachelor-pad lecture theatres (rows of disgruntled feet lined up and berating this popular university's sought-after course with completely inappropriate demanding entrance requirements!), it seemed that the only time one might take a chance to admire the splendid white Portland Building would be in the absolutely unthinkable lines of people at the barbecue. To this day, I haven't had answered the most persistently nagging question of that week: where the refreshments free or did the site charge for food?

And so it was that I came to my final day, when I was due to meet up (and did, after using my mobile phone for the first and henceforth only time in its lacklustre career) with my classmates from school in Bristol and hitch a lift back on their coach.

This was another organised preview day, but sadly I did not exactly have a whale of a time. The only fun I had that day was during the revelatory and hilarious English Literature promotional lecture, where an astonished and heckling crowd asked such questions as: "Do you offer

lessons in journalism?" "Do you study foreign works of literature?" "Is there a creative writing course?" "Do you do much other than poetry?" "Is the department quite large?" "Are there any examinations?" "Do you put on any modules in linguistics?" "Is there any practical drama performance in the course?"

As you might have guessed by now, the linking thread between these disparate enquiries was the bewildered woman's answer to each of them: "Sorry, no." She at least had the wit to confirm that, "Golly, it must seem like we don't do anything much here." I recall our young minds' collective shudder at the lady's suggestion that science, with its practical-based team work in labs, would "probably be more fun than English", but I was certainly relieved to leave Lecture Theatre 3 and continue my day elsewhere.

Sadly, as I've already hinted, the rest of the day was one minor upset followed by another. Twice I banged my head on pipes in the little boy's room which followed no logical curve around the walls but instead went in their own meandering way, a little like me as I stepped onto the main streets which house a lot of the buildings and wandered off in search of the library. On the way I saw the majestic Willis Memorial Building, which deserves its reputation as Bristol's finest work of

architecture. Shortly after I came across the Arts Library which deserves its reputation as probably the ugliest, most tragic and simply hideous, squat building to venture into the heart of any city. The incident which occurred in here was the inevitable collapse of my impressive pile of books. To be fair, no interior designer could have predicted that I would have balanced my entire collection of prospectuses on a paper towel dispenser, but still, they could have at least kept the lavatory floor clean. Eurrrgh!

I was back in the loo (sorry to stick with this theme, but this is the trouble with factual accounts; they have to stick to the truth) a couple of minutes after buying an enormous chocolate sundae from a sullen ice-cream vendor, who didn't think enough of me to provide, say, a serviette, or even something basic like a spoon. Any spoon would have done, even plastic, but instead I ended up throwing almost the whole dessert away to save my lovely grey T-shirt from any brown stains. I'll let you think of a punchline for that.

The journey home was even worse, with my ill-advised vow of silence for five minutes, which sounded easy until I tried it. Then there a service-station shop which tried to tempt me with Haribo packets four times the price of the local Co-op and a guilt-inducing U-turn on my offer of a lift to my best mate.

So really, I came away having confirmed my good impressions of three places, and having ruled out, er, an institution that doesn't even offer the course combination I want. I spent an estimated twenty-four hours in coaches and trains, as well as four hours sat (or in Brum's case) stood on station platforms. I wasted two pounds on a simple ice cream, two quid forty on a return ticket to Heslington which I used for only the outward journey, and about £150 of my mum's hard-earned on train tickets.

And in two weeks' time, once my summer holidays begin, I'll do it all over again. Three brand new universities. Three new sets of faces to learn. Three dozen more wrong-turns in cramped corridors or looming hillsides. I think I'm beginning to understand why students who fret so much over UCAS and AS, GCSE and BSc, upon arriving at their new home-from-home, settle down to spend their three years drinking and sleeping.



Obituary

It is with deep regret to record the death of Mr Henry Whitfeld (born in 1908) who not only attended DHS as a pupil for many years but also taught at DHS (apart from certain

war years) from 1934 until his retirement in 1969, when he was Head of the English Department.

Mr Whitfeld inherited a natural aptitude for public speaking and prose writing from his well known and respected Devonport literary family. These attributes were greatly in demand as a teacher, and he combined a ready adaptability and unselfish dedication to his profession throughout his career.

On the evacuation of most masters and pupils to Penzance in May 1941, Mr Whitfeld, ably assisted by his wife Marjorie, joined other DHS House Masters at the Mount Prospect Hotel (Raleigh House). This was a particularly demanding role. Here not only was a House Master responsible for about 65 resident boys, but also taught in variously located (and adapted) buildings. While at Mount Prospect, Mr Whitfeld, as MC, even helped to organise a Social Dance, to which senior girls from the local county school were invited.

Call up for War Service applied to several DHS male teachers. Before the end of 1941 he was in the RAF for the rest of the war, and soon became P/O Whitfeld of Coastal Command.

Fortunately with the help of his enthusiasm, the school dramatic society had already become well estab-

lished as an out of school activity. By the time Mr Whitfeld, on demobilisation, returned to DHS in 1946, the dramatic society had joined the Plymouth Drama League. In February 1947 the dramatic society presented its first production since before the war. Using facilities at the Swarthmore Hall and the Globe Theatre, Mr Whitfeld produced three one act plays. Plays were entered for the Plymouth Youth Drama Festival. Over decades of teaching, he maintained a keen interest in drama and choral speaking.

On 15 April 1958, Mr Whitfeld suffered one of the worst misfortunes imaginable when his 15 year old son, Henry, was killed by mortar shell burst at Cranmere Pool where he, his son and 12 year old daughter were rambling on Dartmoor National Park. The resultant inquest recorded a verdict of 'Death by Misadventure'. Following legal proceedings against the War Office, Mr Whitfeld won his case and was awarded damages which he donated to the Dartmoor Preservation Association. Sadly, too, he later lost Jennifer, his only daughter, to cancer while she was still young.

However, his literary talent and painstaking skill shine through in his book 'A Torch in Flame' the history of Devonport High School for Boys, first published in 1987. Mr Whitfeld, 'Elmer' as many boys knew him, took a kind interest in the

individual pupil, and will be particularly remembered for his good humour, not to mention his tattered academic gown nor his unique driving skills.

The long queue of former pupils waiting to exchange greetings with him during the Centenary Celebration Day on 5 July 1996, testifies to the high regard felt for him and the personal debt they owed him. Combining enduring qualities as a man, school master and friend, he will always be associated with the best teaching that a grammar school can offer.

Mr Whitfeld also had wide interests in community work. Many benefited from his long years of service as a practicing and dedicated Christian at Derriford Church. He made a special contribution to the welfare of young people at Friary House.

Mr Whitfeld passed away on 15 January 2003, at Ravenscroft Nursing Home, Yelverton, where he had been admitted in June 1999, following deteriorating health. Cremation took place at Weston Mill Crematorium, with a Service of Celebration at Derriford United Reformed Church later that day. At this service many former pupils were present. Both former staff and current staff, including Dr Peck (ex Headmaster), and Messrs Ted Attewell, John Bowden and Trefor Farrow (together with a school choir) repre-

sented the school.

To his son in law, Mr John Wells,
and family we offer our sincere
sympathy in a loss which we also
share.

David Cole 1939 – 1947

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