

Issue No 156

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high
school
for boys

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Devonport High School for Boys

Annual Magazine

2007

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from the editor

Editing a magazine that has such a long history has been a real honour. It is also an honour to be the editor in a year where such a lot is happening. The fact that we are losing our headmaster of 15 years is a great loss but also a great excuse to do an in-depth interview and find out a little more about the man who has been in charge of our school for the last decade and a half. We also have a feature about the very exciting project that is starting this year; what will be the awe-inspiring theatre, that will surely be one of the jewels in the crown of the school in future years. We also have an exclusive piece from Charlotte Cossey the first girl for almost fifteen years to enrol full time at our school. As well as very good pieces on sport and the media department, and some excellent pieces of creative writing from our own fellow pupils. I am very grateful to all who have contributed and all who have helped, giving a special mention to all the hard-working members of my editorial team, Mrs Nicholson, Pepper Communications Ltd, the Old Boys Association and Dr Pettit himself.

james chave



editorial team

editor in chief
james chave

commisioner
alister j gardiner

sales
simon teasdale and
simon scullion

design
ben pilkington

cover art
martin brien

the headmaster's report 2007

For the past two years I have been awaiting a particular phone call every Friday and Tuesday: on Friday 14th September, 2007, at 11:00am, it came. I had had notification of our fourth OFSTED Inspection, starting first thing on Wednesday 19th! Helped by the senior team, I had just 2 hours to update and submit the School's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) on-line, and then 4 days to worry ... would the inspection team, charged as they would be with this week's Government priorities, like what we had been working hard to provide? Five of them came, talked to the boys, talked to the staff, talked to the parents and observed lessons for a day and half and found that our own judgements and priorities, as logged in our SEF and the School Development Plan, were indeed appropriate for our boys. What an anti-climax after my long wait: so, the

school is indeed still a good school!

Two of the summary paragraphs of the report sum up their conclusions and so nicely acknowledge what have been our priorities for the school over the past years:

"Devonport High School for Boys is a good school with some outstanding features. One parent described how his sons moved on to university '... not only academically well qualified, but also with the personal skills that enabled them to take full advantage of the opportunities arising'. This captures one of the key strengths of the school: its ability to maintain high academic standards while helping pupils to become well-rounded, articulate and confident young adults.

"Pupils' personal development and well-being are

outstanding. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong and are eager to contribute to the life of the school and wider community. They are keen to take responsibility and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have high aspirations and enjoy their education, particularly when lessons are lively and interactive. One parent wrote, 'My son has matured into a responsible young man under the guidance of the teachers and the independence that they have encouraged.'"

Another sense of reward for me comes from the quality of staff that the Governors and I have been able to recruit to the school over recent years, staff who have helped to maintain these high standards. The staff, as our main resource, now cost some £3,500,000 per year,

and remain of critical importance in all that we do for the boys. The reasons that we have had such strong fields are various: our on-going good reputation and resources, our historic site, our breadth of curriculum, our specialisms, our large academic sixth form and the good humour of the staffroom. And we are now, more so than in the past, a school to join in which to nurture one's ambition: our staff are now able to move on to deserved promotion at Devonport High School for Boys or in other good schools (comprehensive and selective) in a way that was very exceptional in the past. The critical part of this increasing credibility is our growing National reputation and, locally, our greater involvement in collaborative work with other schools. For example, our leading edge work in Engineering Education, the

vision of the Languages Faculty, building upon the strength of our traditional Classics department, our extra-curricular sport and adventure and the pastoral support that we provide for the boys (and staff), the latter illustrated nicely by our National prominence in the pilot of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project. Referring back to the OFSTED report, they conclude “Outstanding collaboration with other schools and organisations enhances the quality of education provided by the school and its partners.”

My other great sense of achievement comes from the progress that we are making to improve the school facilities for the benefit of us all. The sixth form centre has proved to meet our needs splendidly and it is very rewarding to see the

boys (and now, some girls, here to study A-levels not available elsewhere in the city) appreciating the space in which they can work and socialise together. The innovative materials used have proved to be very much up to the task and it was pleasing to come second in this year’s Plymouth Herald on-line ballot in the Plymouth City Abercrombie Architecture Awards. This autumn, after a delay whilst preliminary building works were completed, the Edgcumbe Theatre project is underway at last! James Barron’s detailed and impressive design work is to be realised by TEC Construction over the next 32 weeks, after which we will have a remarkable facility for both the boys and the community.

Many of you will know that this will be my final year at Devonport High School for

Boys as I will be retiring next summer after 15 highly rewarding years. As I start to do things for the last time I am feeling more sentimental about those that have been so very rewarding: the progress of the pupils; the laughter around school; when I have made a difference by a 'right decision', the impressive commitment and loyalty (to the school and me, personally) of the staff and governors; etc. I will not, however, miss the accelerating level of demand on the school by a government that is anxious to apply its 'Nanny knows best' solutions for failing schools, to all schools. I have been distressed by the huge pressure on education to 'level down' to distort the statistics (this has driven much of my involvement with external agencies over the past 3 years – fighting to ensure that the needs of the academically able are not forgotten in the rush to meet

the needs of the illiterate, innumerate and unemployable). Neither will I miss the rising tide of challenge and threat of litigation from a small (but increasing) number of people who seek more than an apology when they think we have got something wrong.

It has been an extraordinary privilege to be the eighth Headmaster of this fine school: I am proud to have been associated with the boys, old boys, staff, parents and governors upon whom its reputation is rightly built. I hope that Headteacher number nine is given the same support and encouragement to lead the school onwards and to make the (for me, daunting) 'agenda for change' into an exciting opportunity that will benefit the next generation of boys.

nic pettit
headmaster
november 2007

from the old boys' association dhsoba bath to close

It is with some sadness that I have to announce the closure of the OBA Association in Bath. Over recent years our numbers have been dwindling and a decision was taken two years ago to close the branch to coincide with the retirement of the headmaster in 2008. Dr. Pettit has been a very enthusiastic supporter of the branch and since his appointment has regularly attended our Annual Dinner.

The branch was inaugurated at a meeting held on 29th October 1960 and was attended by the then Headmaster – Dr. Cresswell – and representatives from London and Plymouth branches. Mr. J.M. Widdecombe a senior officer in the 'Admiralty' in Bath was elected as Chairman and Des Reed (who had rustled up interest from 26 potential members in the area) as Secretary.

Although in those days many pupils from the school entered the 'Admiralty', and as a result served some time in offices in Bath, there was a continual movement of staff in and out of the city with the consequent difficulty in keeping track of potential members. When Bath University came into being, ex pupils seemed to find much more of interest for them on the Campus than at Old Boys events, and we never managed more than three student members. Nevertheless we remained in contact with about 50 Old Boys in the area for a number of years, although it has to be said that paid up membership never exceeded more than about thirty.

In 1964, as soon as finances permitted, a school prize, (of one Guinea) was inaugurated in the name of the Bath & Bristol branch, and over the years, this was gradually increased to £100.

Many different events were held over the life of the branch, the earlier ones surrounding challenges to Sutton High School O.B.A. in Bath. These extended to cricket and skittles; the latter running for a few years. Car treasure hunts were also a popular event, as were visits to such places as Harvey's breweries in Bristol! In May 1968 Len Truscott, who by then was Secretary, organised the first Annual Dinner attended by 62 old boys and their wives including official guests from Plymouth and London. This event remained on the calendar with a break of only one year until the end. At its peak there was an attendance of 65. Another popular event has been the Steak Supper held each year in October and in the glory years attended by up to thirty members and their wives.

For a couple of years in the mid 70's we hosted visits from the school 1st XV.

Matches were arranged against a combined Bath Schools XV. The DHS team being accommodated by Old Boys in the area. In later years we also hosted one or two visits by up to three boys from the school on 'educational' visits to the city of Bath: The boys being accommodated and conducted to places of interest by members of the association.

Regrettably, Old Boys Associations seem to have lost the attraction that they had in the past, however it is good to see that the parent association in Plymouth has firmly re-established itself after a hiccough a few years ago. I would encourage any boy leaving the school to consider joining, even though he may be moving away from the city, as it is a focal point to meet up with friends of the past when returning for a visit. The current membership fee is only £5 per year - less than a couple of pints of beer!!

girls in dhs for boys! a girl's perspective

So I've been asked to write about my experiences so far as a girl at Devonport High School for Boys. But where to start? I suppose firstly I should say what attracted me to this school in the first place; the extensive range of high quality A-level results and a chance for a fresh change of learning environment turned out to be highly magnetic. I was also attracted by the broad range of subjects the school offers, being able to take drama as well as sciences was a definite bonus.

The induction day was good fun with some challenging situations; many of the boys had never been faced with a young lady wanting to have her opinion heard and taken into consideration before, there were a few uncomfortable clashes until everyone settled into listening equally

to one another's ideas. Fortunately once term started we settled down as a year and the boys started to get used to the fact there were a few more female faces around than they were used to. Much like puppies



discovering how to handle a bee they tested my patience frequently in the first week or so with the odd incident in which I was the subject of a few jokes. They soon learnt that every bee has its sting as I showed off my humorous side. Starting my A-levels in a new

school was certainly a new experience but the staff went out of their way to get to know me and make sure I was included within the class activities. I have quickly adjusted to the new surroundings and after being escorted to new lessons for a few days I can now efficiently find my way around school, although I often find myself walking to whole school assembly on my own and finding that I should in fact be in the Sixth Form Centre instead!

I have started my application to become a prefect which involves taking a responsible role in managing the younger years and the school environment. I believe this has helped the younger boys respect girls in the school and prepare them for their time in sixth form which I hope will continue to have its

own set of girls for years to come. Being called "miss" by the cheeky year eights who think they can pass me with an un-tucked shirt never fails to put a smile on my face.

I would strongly encourage any parents who have daughters moving onto sixth form next year or in a few years to come to persuade their daughters to look at Devonport High School for Boys as an option.

It is a brand new and exciting experience for any young lady and gives them good experience in dealing with a challenging and completely different environment. These last few months have really shown me it is not just a boy's world; there are chances out there for all of us and we have to take them.

charlotte cossey

"many of the boy's had never been faced with a lady who wanted to have her voice heard before!"

dr pettit's final year interview

As he comes to the end of his 15 years at DHSB, Dr Nic Pettit takes time out of his schedule to talk A-levels, Led Zeppelin, and girls in the 6th Form.

15 years ago this December, a younger, more sprightly, Dr Pettit arrived for his interview and by January he was in what would be his final and, perhaps, the most important stage of his career - head teacher of Devonport High School for Boys. In the past one and a half decades, he has worked hard to improve teaching standards and school facilities. The sports hall, the new music block, the refectory, the library, and the new 6th form centre are but a few examples of these. Now, Dr Pettit's 'swan song', the new multi-purpose theatre, looks set to be one of his most impressive projects yet. Along with this, he has man-

aged to consistently produce students with excellent grades who go on to be well rounded, high-achieving members of society.

Planning his retirement for next year, this will be his final speech day and so Simon Teasdale decided to catch up with him and reflect on his time at DHSB:

Simon: What would you consider to be your proudest achievement during your time here at DHSB?

Dr Pettit: I think that it would have to be the collaboration with the other schools in the city; and the recognition, beyond the walls of this

school, that what we are doing here is of merit. That has meant so much to me. Strangely, this is perhaps realised by so many of our young, good staff leaving for promotions at comprehensives and the large numbers we have applying to join the school. Whilst that might sound odd, me being happy to lose staff, it is because it shows how highly other schools view our teaching standards now as opposed to how it was 15 years ago. Then, "What do you know about teaching?" would have been the quote. Now, due to the collaboration, we have shown them what we are capable of through our achievements in areas such as engineering at national level, and the work we are doing in languages.

Simon: What advice would you give to your successor?

Dr Pettit: Be proud that this

is a selective school and that it is a meritocracy. This is a meritocracy. The boys are here on merit from wherever they come from, on the basis that they and their families wish them to attend. They must not be afraid to work with that meritocracy. I have been proud to work with it; it means so much to me the way this school makes people from such diverse backgrounds equal.

Simon: What would you say has changed during your time here, and is there anything which you are particularly proud to say has stayed the same?

Dr Pettit: I think it is quite a scary job to take on this school. I think that is why the field when we first advertised was so small and will still be the second time too. It is a school of real local reputation. There is almost no situation in

Plymouth where, when it emerges I work at Devonport High School for Boys, there is not a family or knowledgeable connection with the school. Invariably somebody knows someone who has been to this school, be it their father or uncle or granddad, and the reputation of the school has been consistent throughout. This is known to be a school where boys attend and can live on to be successful adults and that is most precious, but also alarming. You could not come to this school and be negligent of that reputation

Simon: With arguments currently raging over A-Level and National Diplomas, where do you see the future of secondary education?

Dr Pettit: The reason that I had us involved in the Diploma programme and

other initiatives like the Young Apprenticeship scheme has been to make sure that the perspective of an academically abled child is remembered. For example, we made sure the Young Apprenticeship scheme is available to our gifted and talented students, and as a result, it was a success at national level. Similarly with the Diploma, it would have been very easy to have left it to other schools that are less aware of what an abled student wants because they do not work so consistently with them. So, for example, we have been able to put some undergraduate modules in at level 3 of the diploma in order to help maintain the academic content of the course in case that is where the government chooses to take secondary education. We do need to make sure that the needs of very able, bright young students are included within all

programmes. However, I am undoubtedly loyal to A-Levels. I think that the A-Level provision has still got life in it and I think that the introduction of the A* grade would rejuvenate it and help ease the problems some universities have with sorting out the excellent from the good. I had thought about the International Baccalaureate for this school, but I think that it would probably only suit a third of the boys, half of which would not want to be doing 6 subjects anyway.

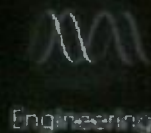
Most of our students are happy to specialise so we decided to stick with A-Levels for a little while longer. However, you do need to keep your eye on the horizon; you need to be out there. In many ways, I feel that is what I meant by the collaboration. By being involved, by speaking, at

national and local levels, we can make sure that students of ability are remembered.

Simon: We currently have 6 girls enrolled full-time in the sixth form, but none in the years below. What are your opinions on single sex education?

Dr Pettit: The admissions policy for the sixth form has always been to provide A-Levels to students who could not get them elsewhere as well as the boys themselves. There has never been any gender policy for 6th Form admissions.

When I came to the school 15 years ago there were also 6 girls at the school, but as the girls' schools dropped school uniform for the 6th form, the numbers who came here began to drop. Also, at that time, the curriculum we offered was a lot closer to



DEVONPORT SCHOOL FOR BOYS

A Foundation Grammar, Specialist Engineering,
and Languages School



Edgcumbe
Library & Theatre

“be proud that this is a
selective school and a meritocracy”
dr n.m. pettit

that of the other schools. Now, many students have to come from outside to study subjects such as classics which they cannot do elsewhere, or subjects such as the Applied Sciences, Engineering and Ancient History.

If we are the only school which offers them the subjects they wish to take then they may come to us. Isn't it interesting to speak to them though? I was astonished when I spoke to them during the school photograph to hear that they consider this to be a very peaceful and civilised environment compared with their previous schools.

So it is lovely to have them here and enable them to do the A-levels they want to do. It will also be interesting to see if it encourages other girls to swallow hard and come to the school in following years, to be with boys and in uniform.

Coming back to the question, I think that the critical age for single sex education is 11-16. When the hormones start rushing around, adolescence is a time when children can be very distracted by the other gender and it is a time when I think education needs to be diamond shaped. By that I mean co-ed during the primary years, and then split to single sex until later when

“i think its fantastic that people of my generation are still touring the road. it makes me think that i was in with a good group of folk.”

it becomes gradually co-ed again just as society is. I think this system maximises the opportunity for children to learn without distracting them.

Simon: Finally, on a lighter note, with all the current press Led Zeppelin are receiving about their long awaited comeback, how does it feel to have seen them on one of their original tours?

Dr Pettit: I enjoyed seeing Led Zeppelin at Tonbridge so much. My ears were ringing for 4 days after that concert, but it was the most exhilarating occasion that I can ever remember going to. It was fantastic. AND THEY'RE BACK! Doesn't it astonish that so many of the groups from the 70s and 60s like Led Zeppelin and the

Rolling Stones are still international stars today. It is so extraordinary that their music has lived through 40 years of their lives and mine. I think it is a testament to their dedication to music and fantastic that people of my generation are still there with those international reputations, touring the road and staying consistently popular. It makes me think I was in with a good group of folk.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Pettit on behalf of the pupils, the staff and the Old Boys Association for the time and effort he has put into making this school as good as it can be. We wish you luck in your retirement.

words simon teasdale
portrait ben pilkington

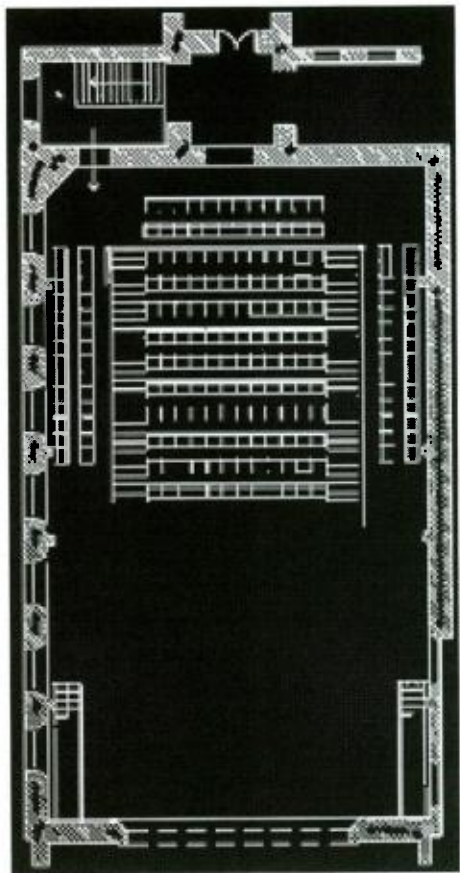
the theatre must go on

A new sports hall, a new school library and a new sixth form centre are among DHSB's most recent projects, however the school has not yet finished being refurbished. The latest and possibly most ambitious and exciting project to date is yet to start; that is the construction of a new theatre by renovating the Edgcumbe Hall. The design of the theatre (the task of which was undertaken by theatre consultants Carr and Angier, who oversaw the refurbishment of Plymouth's Theatre Royal) includes many special features that will enhance any performance that is put on when it's completed.

But before any work on the building was started, £40 000 had to be raised - and this was a challenge taken up enthusiastically by the pupils who organized all kinds of fund raising events ranging from cake sales to a sponsored 'teacher vs pupil'

basketball match. As well as all the fund raising that was happening in school, countless companies and parents all contributed to the theatre appeal and these people will all be rewarded with the 'Patron scheme' - any person donating £25 or more is a 'silver patron' and will receive two tickets to the first production in the new theatre, any person donating £100 or more is a 'gold patron' and will receive two tickets to the first three productions in the new theatre and any person who donates £400 or more is a 'rose patron' and will receive tickets for a party of ten for the first three productions. With everyone pitching in, the money was raised in almost no time at all and very soon Dr Pettit was finalizing the plans with the contractors- TEC Construction.

When complete, our new state of the art theatre will be able to be controlled



entertainment. There will be approximately 250 retractable seats to give the theatre versatility in its use, for example, it could be used for concerts, conferences or even as a cinema. The most exciting feature of the new theatre is the high tensile grid - this will be installed high above the performance area and it will be strong enough to support several people. During productions the stage crew will have access to it and this will give them a revolutionary ability to use spotlights, projectors or lower in props, speakers and scenery, and all in all open up the opportunities for stage effects the likes of which have never been possible before.

almost entirely by computers to the extent that, with the correct programming, one push of a button will turn on different lighting, operate mechanical props and on the whole take any school production to another level of professionalism and

As a drama student and an avid musician I am personally looking forward to what will hopefully be a marvelous addition to the school's performing arts facilities.

alistair j gardiner

a jolly good show!

cricket report

"Football Crazy" would certainly be the most appropriate way to describe the pupils of Devonport High for Boys, if not the entirety of Plymouth, but at the beginning of the 2006 summer term, cricket fought its way through. At the beginning of this season, the school participated in The Daily Telegraph National Schools Under 15 Twenty20 Cup, an up and coming tournament devised by The Daily Telegraph newspaper to promote sport in schools. Little known to many pupils around the school is the talent of that particular Under 15 team. Coasting through to the county final after triumphing over Heles School and later Tiverton based public school Blundells in the semi finals, whom the year before embarrassed us in the final. The 2006 county final of the Devon stage was held at a soggy Plympton CC, and with the DHSB team confident, we won the toss and invited

Torquay to bat on an artificial wicket that looked damp and dangerous.

There was an exceptional performance from Steve Cross (4 -23) who bowled with pace and accuracy to restrict Torquay to a meagre total of 86. After the lunch break, we went about chasing down their total confidently, but soon realised the difficulties of batting on such a slippery track, losing regular wickets. Thankfully, Keith Barlow (20) restored the order with a mature knock, with Alex Carr and David Restall chipping in to secure the win. The final result really reflected the effort put in by the boys, and moving on from our first tournament success were bigger challenges ahead.

We were invited to the South West Regional Finals by The Daily Telegraph, to compete against another team from either Somerset, Dorset or the Isle of Wight in the South

West semi finals. Unfortunately, our worst fear came as we were drawn against Millfield School of Somerset, possibly the most prestigious sporting school in the UK. Going into this crucial game, we knew that giving 110% was essential, as the opposing side had mostly represented England at age group levels. Losing the toss, Millfield chose to bat first, and set a colossal total of 204 from 20 overs sending our bowlers to all parts of the ground. The two wickets we did manage to take were from an excellent catch in the deep from opening batsman John Meredith, and also a brilliant run out from David Restall. In the short change over between innings, we realised what a huge task was asked of us, and going into bat, we attacked from



the off. However, fall of wickets hampered our progress, with the two top scores from David Restall at number 7 contributing 28 and Ben Ferrao (myself) at number 3 (21). Millfield proved

too powerful for us, and we ended with a respectable total of 88 for 6 from 20 overs against such opposition.

It was certainly an effort to be proud of, we came away semi finalists in a National Competiton stage, and with some handsome silverware for the schools trophy cabinet. Some consolation may be provided, as Millfield School went on to win the national competition finals against Sedbergh School, held at the Headingley Carnegie Stadium, the home of Yorkshire CCC.

ben ferrao

ben cornish - media prodigy

Media is becoming a dominant subject in secondary education due to its constant continuing growth over the years. It has become a staple in modern day society, as we are constantly targets of its manipulation and donations in entertainment, it is important that we are aware of this and can understand media.

Devonport High School for Boys is often considered to be one of the best secondary schools in Plymouth with regards to engineering and the more scientific approach it uses towards academic education as a whole. However, the school still manages to flourish in results for other subjects it isn't generally renowned for being associated with – one of these being media.

Two academic years ago the school was blessed with a high quality media facility and a range of highly competent teachers and

assisting staff to help launch the subject in the school; doing so with the prowess that only such an established grammar school could.

Pupils immediately took to the subject and in the two years of it defining its place in the school several extra curricular clubs have been produced (including the recently introduced 'Film Club', and the ever popular 'Media Club'), a production company under the name of 'Dauntless Digital' and an overall array of young talent has arised within the school.

The most notable of this young talent being the sixth form's very own Ben Cornish. This young technical genius has not only been involved in media activities within the school, but has also won and entered various competitions to expand and utilize his aptitude for media. He managed to win the 'Motion Plymouth 2006' competition

and came second somewhat unfairly in 'Motion Plymouth 2007'.

Ben has entered each competition completely unfunded by anyone and required only his own intellect and ability as well as non-stop support from the school's Mrs. Delve, friends and family, whereas his competitors have all received government funding as well as help from media professionals.

In 'Motion Plymouth 2007' he lost out to another school who were given their resources (equipment, music, professional guidance, technical support to name a few) and also disregarded the competition time limit. Yet this misfortune did not disengage Ben's love of the subject, and already he is preparing for 'Motion Plymouth 2008'.

Upon speaking to Ben about

his misfortunes he humbly replied 'I must admit the results were slightly disorientated and I am disappointed, yet to get that far I am extremely pleased. If it wasn't for the support of Mrs. Delve and my friends who were always able to assist me, I wouldn't have gotten half as far as I did. I can only hope that next year will be a different story and I'm prepared to put my all into it.' We can only wish Ben the best in his endeavours and hope that he won't be the only DHSB talent included in this media parade.

Overall I think it's safe to say that media has rapidly expanded within the school, and whilst it isn't completely perfect as of yet, we have the right teaching staff and attitudes from avid pupils to allow it to reach its threshold and gain recognition as a key subject in the school.

simon scullion

creative writing corner

We are very pleased to introduce a brilliant selection of creative writing from our own pupils. The English department at Devonport High School for Boys is of a really exceptional quality, and this quality is reflected in the outstanding work produced by pupils. There are a number of very talented pupils here at DHSB, and we can only hope to provide a small selection of the incredible creative writing that the pupils have produced over the last twelve months. We hope you enjoy it.

grandmother

Such a short, plump figure,
Such a pallid, fair complexion.
Two glazed , green eyes gazing from afar,
Stare through crescent moon spectacles.
Ancient, craggy hide,
Soft, beneath her caressing, gentle touch.
Wicked grin and laugh beyond compare,
Arms which quiver in the slightest breeze,
Rasping breath which catches in her throat.
All this and even more,
Is my loving, ageing Grandmother.

Shrewd words, of primeval wisdom,
Counsel of which I know I should heed.
A selfless soul, which only I know,
Has but best interests at heart.
Perhaps somewhat harsh,
Misunderstood, misheard, misjudged,
But this is beauty, of an unknown kind,
A well of intellect and cunning.
Quick witted, sharp as a fox.

All this and even more,
Is my lovely, ageing Grandmother.

The scent of bottled flowers,
Tranquil to the senses.
The aura of an imposing figure,
Withered with the curse of age.
Basked in a soft golden glow,
Angelic calm soothes all who step into her presence.
But even I could not envisage,
Ill fate befalling such a warming soul,
But, alas, she turns a blinded ere.
All this and even more,
Is my loving, ageing Grandmother.

christopher martin
year 9

the tourist

A lone reed broke the surface of the smooth, glossy water like a twinge in a dreamless sleep. The dripping mangroves surrounded the water's edge, concealing the sources of croaks and snorts in their enigmatic depths. Despite the full moon creeping into the sky, no light could penetrate this deep into the jungle.

Through the suffocating darkness crept the fetid stink of decay, rising from the ground like a vampire from its slumber. A foreboding shroud surreptitiously stole over the night, the

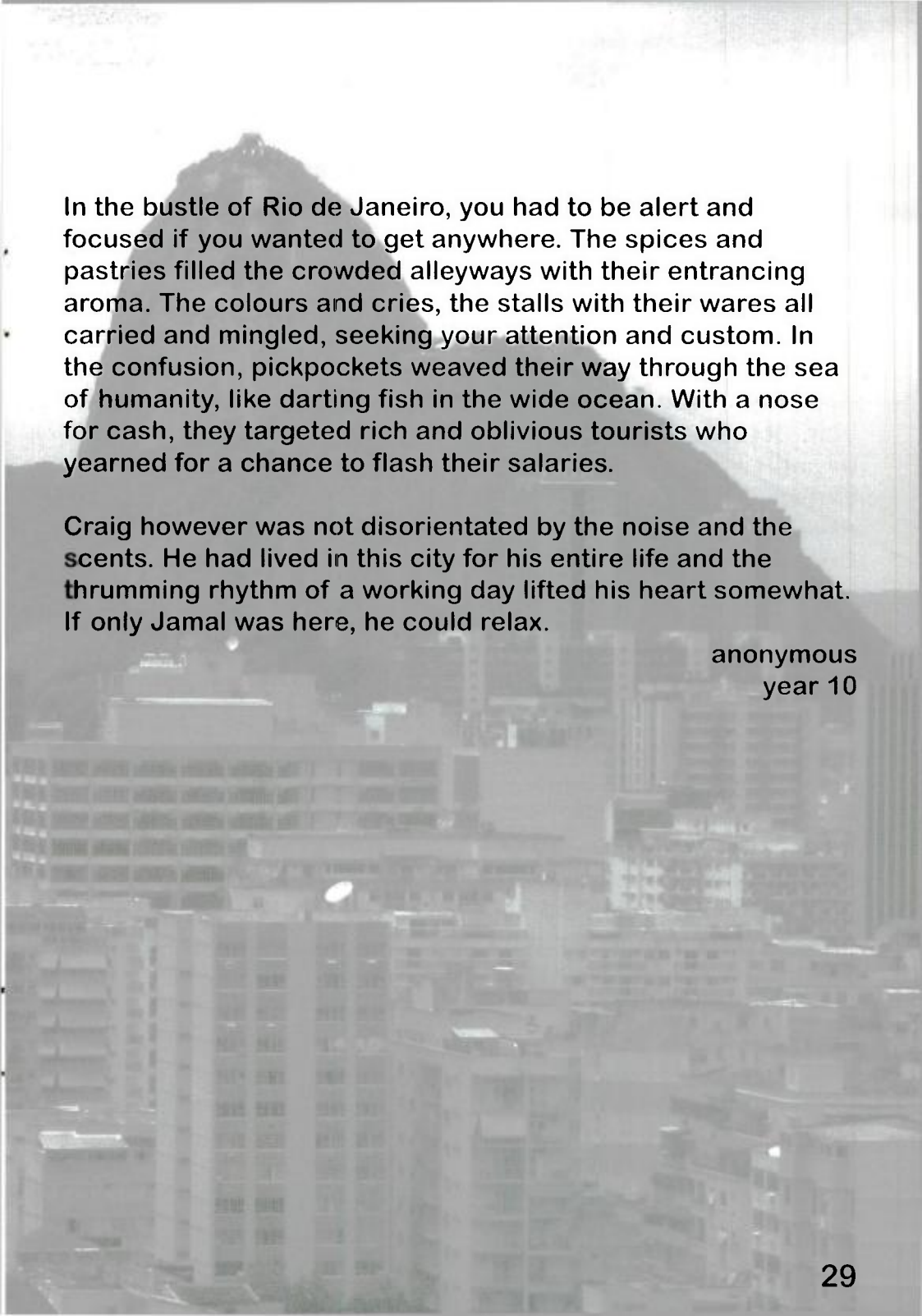
humidity undisturbed by breeze, so that even the heartbeat of the forest was muffled.

The fish were still;
The air was still;
The forest was still.
The body, however, was not still.

The thousands of parasites and slimy maggots infested the corpse in such prolific numbers that the flesh rippled like water with their frenzied attentions. The worms writhed in the gruesome feast, engorged themselves on all the delicacies this vessel had to offer. The rank pungency smelled like strawberries and cream to the gathering hordes.

When dawn broke there would be no trace.





In the bustle of Rio de Janeiro, you had to be alert and focused if you wanted to get anywhere. The spices and pastries filled the crowded alleyways with their entrancing aroma. The colours and cries, the stalls with their wares all carried and mingled, seeking your attention and custom. In the confusion, pickpockets weaved their way through the sea of humanity, like darting fish in the wide ocean. With a nose for cash, they targeted rich and oblivious tourists who yearned for a chance to flash their salaries.

Craig however was not disorientated by the noise and the scents. He had lived in this city for his entire life and the thrumming rhythm of a working day lifted his heart somewhat. If only Jamal was here, he could relax.

anonymous
year 10

a-block - a gothic nightmare

It is very dark, not like pitch, but like murky ink. I haven't seen Her for hours now. I can smell damp. It is silent also. Silent like the silence of nightmares. The kind of silence that speaks louder than words. I stumble through an unlocked door; I can still hear it swinging on its long rusted hinges. Creaking. My hand instinctively reaches out before and around me, already groping in the mechanical way that blind people do. My clammy fingertips stroke the cold stone wall, as I tread slowly down a black passage. It is wet, even now that I am inside the Building. I don't think that It has followed me this far, but I am unsure. I wish I could be with Her, I wish She was with me. I stop abruptly. I am aware that I am now in a large empty space, a hall, or something. The ceiling has

now risen high above me. Suddenly a splintering shard of Moonlight scythes through some crack in the roof, probably the same crack through which the damp got in. I look up to see where the light has come from, and glimpse the White Face enshrouded with the tattered rags of clouds, all that remains of the Storm. I watch the ruins of a staircase tumble down from the top floor of the Building. They descend to the first floor, where a corridor runs along the right side, directly over the door and corridor I came through. They come half way down to the ground floor, but break off top the right of me. Nobody has been here for decades, at least.

ben pilkington
year 12





PRORSUM SEMPER