

SOUTHGATE COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ANNUAL SPEECH DAYS

1954

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2ND - SENIOR NIGHT

Once again I would begin by welcoming our guests to the Senior Speech Day, the Mayor & Mayoress, all Parents and Friends of the School, Members of the Education Committee and Education Office Staff on the platform with me, and particularly our Chairman, Alderman G. Peverett, whose continued service to, and leadership of, the cause of Education in this Borough is an inspiration to us all.

I also welcome with great pleasure our Guest Speaker, Mr. Basil Henriques. He is well-known to us as a writer and speaker of outstanding ability. We have frequently read of his great work as a Magistrate (he is, among other things, the Chairman of the East London Juvenile Court), and we have all admired the sincerity of a man who practises what he preaches and devotes so much of his life to the service of young people less fortunate than we are. I understand that a School Speech Day is no new experience for him and it will, therefore, hold no terrors for him. We welcome him cordially to our School and look forward to hearing what he has to tell us.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3RD - JUNIOR NIGHT

Once again I would welcome all our guests to the Junior Speech Day, all Parents and Friends of the School, Members of the Education Committee and Education Office Staff, and particularly our Chairman, Councillor W. H. Warren, who has always shown such a genuine and effective interest in our School. I would extend a special word of welcome to our Guest Speaker, Professor A. E. Richardson Professor Richardson is one of those men who astounds us by the

number of his activities. In addition to being Professor of Architecture in the Royal Academy, he has also been Professor of Architecture in the University of London and has served as a member of the Standing Commission on Museums, of the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and of the Central Council for the Care of Churches. In addition to this, he is a Gold Medallist of the R.I.B.A. and has also found time to produce a number of publications on Architectural subjects. This is not, I understand, his first visit to North London, but it is his first visit to our School and, on behalf of all present tonight, I extend a cordial welcome to him, coupled with the assurance that we are looking forward to hearing his Address.

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My report begins with a record of Staff changes. In the Xmas Term 1953, we welcomed Mr. Poulter to take History, Miss Linnell, Chemistry (incidentally she has now become Mrs. Madell) and Mr. Sheard joined us for a term in view of Mr. Knowles' illness, to which I referred a year ago. In January 1954, we were very pleased to find that Mr. Knowles was well enough to rejoin us and we also welcomed Mr. Toobe, English and Miss Crampton, Girls' Physical Education and Games, to replace Miss Brewer and Mrs. Neville. Miss Brewer had secured an appointment with the B.B.C. and Mrs. Neville left us because her husband's work had taken them both to Birmingham. We were very grateful to Miss Crampton, an old girl of the School, for helping us out for the whole of the Easter Term at some inconvenience to herself, until in the Summer Term Miss Flinders could take up her permanent appointment of Mistress in Charge of Girls' Physical Education and Games. The last change I have to record took place at the beginning of the present term, when Mr. Wise joined us in place of Mr. Scrine, who left last July to go abroad.

Now what of our academic results during the year just ended? I will come straight to the point and say that they are not up to

our usual standard. To deal with G.C.E. Advanced Level first; we only entered ten candidates - all members of the Third-Year Sixth. There was no Second-Year Sixth in existence owing to the curriculum adjustments which I explained in my report last year. These ten candidates passed a total of 26 subjects at Advanced Level and 3 at Ordinary Level. There were no outright failures. Although no candidate did well enough to secure a Scholarship, I am pleased to record that seven of them secured entrance to Universities.

At Ordinary Level our results were, frankly, disappointing, and our average of passes dropped from 66% last year to 52% this year. It is only fair to the School to point out that, in previous years, our Ordinary Level results in the subjects we take have consistently been above the average of all schools taking the London Examination. This year, however, I suspect they **will** be below the average. I cannot be sure, however, because I have not yet seen the London figures.

One asks oneself why this has happened. A contributory cause can be found in the Staff changes and absences to which I have already referred. These were, of course, unavoidable, but it is obvious that, had we been able to deploy our full teaching strength uninterruptedly throughout the year, many of the border-line cases might just have got through. It is significant that a large number of failures were within a very few marks of success. The main cause, however, is, in my opinion, to be found in the candidates. By this, I do not merely mean that intellectually they were not so good as usual, though there may be some truth in this, I refer rather to an immaturity of attitude that I fear many of them must have shown towards work during their progress up the School. It is no good working at half pressure up to and including the Fourth Form and trusting to a spurt in Form Five to bring the desired success. If the foundations of hard study have not been laid in the Lower Forms, even a genuine effort in the Fifth Year may be too late. I think a number of our candidates found this when they embarked upon their Fifth Year and some of them then gave up too easily.

I say, with all possible emphasis to future G.C.E. candidates, and to their parents, that we can and must restore our percentage of passes to its proper place. This must be achieved by a sustained and determined effort throughout the school from the First Form onwards. I would agree with those that say that many passes in G.C.E. is not the only object of a Grammar School Education, but I hasten to add that good examination results are an indication, not only of intellectual ability, but also of perseverance and diligence, qualities worth pursuing as an end in themselves.

Finally, I must point out that, this year, there is no Third-Year Sixth, so the numbers of Advanced Level Candidates in the Summer Term 1955 will again be less than usual, though larger than last year. Not until 1956 will the Sixth Form be at full strength again.

I would now like to say a few words about the School Library, which is just two years old. It started with a nucleus of 1000 books which previously had been scattered around the various departments of the School. Since then, we have purchased about 750 more with the help, not only of the increased Library Grants made by the Authority, for which we are very grateful, but also of donations made by school leavers and their parents and gifts made by various friends of the School. We acknowledge these with gratitude, but I must emphasise, as I did last year, that our shelves are by no means full. In this connection I would again thank the 15 school leavers and their parents for the sum of £17.-17.- Od. that has been given to us since last July, and would again ask most earnestly all other school leavers, and their parents, if they would not consent to show their gratitude for what the school has done for them by making a donation to the Library Fund. Their names will then be inscribed in the books purchased with the money as a permanent record of their time at school. We would like to see the tradition firmly established that no boy or girl would think of leaving without gladly making some contribution.

I said we now have about 1750 books in the Library. These

consist of Reference Books, Non-Fiction Books of wide general appeal and Senior Fiction, including not only the great Classical Works, but also many good Modern Novels. Accommodation difficulties force us, at present, to restrict the use of the Library largely to the Upper School (the Lower and Middle Forms having their own little Form Libraries) and we find that, on an average, 30 to 40 books are being borrowed per week. I would like to thank both Mr. Swire for all the work he has done to organise and equip the Library and also the Senior Boys and Girls who have acted as Library Assistants to him.

I will now deal with the Boys' Games. Curiously enough the picture I painted whilst talking about our academic results is, to some extent, reproduced here. In 1953 I was able to report that our results were above the average. We won, for example, far more matches than we lost. In 1954 the pendulum has swung slightly in the other direction and our losses are a little larger than our wins.

Our five Football Teams played a total of 71 matches of which 30 were won, 32 lost and 9 drawn. Three boys were given County Trials by the Middlesex Grammar Schools' Football Association. The Senior Inter-House Football Competition was won by Green House and the Junior by White. Green House also won the Six-a-Side Tournament.

We also ran five Cricket Teams which played a total of 33 matches. Of these, we won 12, lost 15 and drew 6. The Senior Inter-House Cricket Competition was won by Green House and the Junior by Blue.

Our School Cross Country Teams competed in the same events as last year. In the Inter-Schools Invitation Race at Clay Hill we came 4th out of 12 schools competing: at Highgate we came 16th out of 26 schools and in the Middlesex Grammar Schools County Championships we came 5th out of 29 schools. You may remember that we won this race in 1952 and 1953, and although it was disappointing not to have achieved the hat trick, yet I think it is fair to say we gave a good account of ourselves. The Senior Inter House Cross Country Races resulted in a tie for Red and White Houses. Green House won the Intermediate and Blue House the Junior.

Our School Athletic Sports were held on one of the few sunny days last Summer Term. Four new School Records were set up by the boys and out of 116 boys competing for their houses, 71 gained Grade A. Standards. On this evidence we can claim that the season's athletics showed a better standard of performance by more boys than in any previous season. We congratulate White House on winning the Championship, with Green House only 3 points behind. It is interesting to note that White House were 2nd in 1953, only 2 points behind the winners of that year.

We had no members of the School competing at National Level this year, but 13 boys represented the District at the Middlesex School Championships held at the White City. At this meeting, boys of the school secured 1st place in the Senior Hurdles, 2nd place in the Senior 440 yards, 3rd place in the Mile and 4th in the 100 yards. At the North Middlesex Grammar Schools Meeting at Broomfield Park, we secured one first place, six records and eight thirds, and, as a result of this meeting, seven of our boys were chosen to represent the District in the Middlesex Grammar School Finals at Chiswick. Although they made a valiant effort, they found the opposition at this meeting somewhat too strong for them.

I now come to Swimming. The boys have, I fear, no successes to report. The voluntary swimming periods after school at Arnos Baths were not well attended and we had some difficulty in raising a boys' team to compete in the North Middlesex Inter-Grammar Schools Gala at Wood Green. Those who swam most certainly did their best, but they were, frankly, outclassed. The girls, on the other hand, did well, winning both the Senior and Junior Shields and thus qualifying to swim in the Middlesex Grammar School Finals at Marshall Street Baths. There the Senior Girls' Team came 4th out of 12 schools competing and the Junior Team 7th out of 13. We congratulate the girls' teams on these successes, but I must emphasise that there appear to have been only a few girls who were genuinely interested in swimming, interested enough to practise regularly and make the most of their ability. Generally speaking, the attendance of girls at the voluntary swimming

periods was as disappointing as that of the boys.

We held our own School Swimming Gala at the end of the Summer Term. The House Cup was won easily by Green House and, I believe, for the first time in the history of the School. the Leonard Evan White Cup for the 440 yards race was won by a girl - Margaret Tickner - who beat all the boys who entered.

Now the girls' games. You may have noticed from the beginning of my report that we had a different Mistress in charge each term. This has not made things any easier and Miss Flinders, who took up her permanent appointment at the beginning of the Summer Term, did not have time to do much more than pick up the threads. Our 2 Hockey Teams had a disappointing season. Out of a total of 20 matches they won 3, drew 3 and lost 14. The 5 Netball Teams, on the other hand, did well. During the Easter Term they played 25 matches, of which they won 14, drew 3 and lost 8. We offer special congratulations to the two teams that won the Middlesex League in both Senior and Junior Divisions, and also to the Under 14 Team which did not lose a match. The 3 Rounders Teams were not so successful. Out of 9 matches played, they won 3 and lost 6. The 2 Tennis Teams, however, compensated for this and took full advantage of our resurfaced courts at Minchenden to win 8 matches and lose only 3.

In the School Athletic Sports it is noteworthy that the best performances by girls were put up in the Intermediate Division. The actual achievements were, in many cases, higher than those in the senior division. It was from the Intermediate Group, therefore, that some of our girls were chosen to compete in the Inter-Schools Meeting at Popefield and some are to be congratulated on getting into the finals at the White City.

I will end my report of the girls' games by congratulating the winner of the House Matches. In Hockey and Netball, White House. In Tennis, Red House. In the Junior Rounders, Green House and in the Intermediate Rounders I must congratulate White, Green & Red Houses who tied for first place.

Leaving behind the Form Room and Games Field, we have as full

a list as ever of varied activities to record. The Orchestra and Recorder Group have played regularly at Morning Assembly. The Orchestra was smaller than in previous years, we had, in fact, only 3 recruits from those that joined the School in September 1953. This September, I regret to say, we have had none and I would again ask Parents of new entrants to encourage their children to join. As I said last year, we can lend the necessary instruments so long as the parents will undertake to arrange for lessons on them.

In the Summer Term we held our Annual Inter-House Musical Competition and we welcomed Mr. George Baker as Adjudicator. After an excellent summing-up, he awarded both the House Cup, and the George Mitchell Cup for the best Choir, to White House.

The Serious Music Club has continued to meet weekly during the year, with an enthusiastic, if somewhat small, following.

Owing to Mr. Knowles' illness, we produced no Opera this year. In its place Mrs. Pole, with Miss Hyde's assistance, produced Jane Austen's "Pride & Prejudice", and this was preceded by an excerpt from "The Frogs" of Aristophanes, produced by Mr. Sharwood Smith.

Our entries for the Enfield Festival were, this year, much restricted as Mrs. Pole was so busy with "Pride & Prejudice". We only entered one Verse Speaking Choir from members of the First Form, which did well, even though it did not gain a place, and a few soloists, most of whom gained Certificates. The outstanding achievement of the year in this sphere, which occurred just before last Speech Day, was our success in the French Verse-Speaking Competition organised by the Modern Languages Association for London & Middlesex Schools. Four of our soloists reached the Semi-Final and Joyce Redon came first in the Open Dramatic Class. In the final result, based on the total number of marks gained by Competitors entering, we came 8th out of 101 schools.

Our various School Clubs and Societies have continued throughout the year. The Art Club has been particularly pleased to welcome new members from the Senior School and a visit was paid to the Augustus John Exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

The School Discussion Society, and the Inter-Schools Discussion Society, have met regularly with attendances increasing as the year went on. Some of the Senior Members of the Society founded a Junior Discussion Group in the 1st and 2nd Form. This had a successful beginning and will, I hope, establish itself as a permanent feature.

Talking of new things. This last year saw the start of a Geographical Society, which intends to carry on both inside and outside activities, and also the birth of a small informal Philosophical Society for members of Form VI.

The Chess Club has had a successful season. It reached an all-time record of 70 members, including many girls. Inter-House Matches and a Ladder Tournament were started for the first time and the Senior and Junior Teams played a total of 21 matches against other schools; of these, we won 9, lost 10 and drew 2.

The Christian Union Society has also had a full year and has been greatly encouraged by support from the Lower Forms as well as from the Senior ones.

The Photographic Society has also re-started and shows every sign of a most flourishing existence.

The year's record in National Savings is somewhat curious. We collected a total of £346.-6.-0. during the year. The maximum number of contributors in any one week was 115, but this number fell alarmingly towards the end of the year. The support from the Lowest and the Senior Forms was disappointing. I am glad to record, however, that there has been a definite improvement this term and I would ask Parents to co-operate with us and encourage their children to form the habit of regular saving.

We arranged one more journey abroad by a party of 24 girls who were taken by Miss Watts to Switzerland during the Easter Holidays. We also had our usual days' outings for each age group of the school at the end of the Summer Term.

We again held two Careers Evenings for Parents and Senior Members of the School, at which speakers explained prospects and conditions in various careers. The outstanding event, however, in

which Parents participated was the Annual Parents' Day at which Mr. J. Spedan Lewis, Chairman of Directors of the John Lewis Partnership addressed us on "Education for Industry". As most of you will now know, we are extremely grateful for a gift to the School of £100.-0.-0 from the John Lewis Partnership, which arrived soon after his visit. Mr. Spedan Lewis told us in what way he would like it to be spent on improving the amenities of the School and we have followed out his wishes. We now have, therefore, three fine new chairs on the Hall Platform and the Headmaster's Study and the Masters' and Mistresses Staff Rooms have acquired carpets and new furniture.

I would again like to record my thanks to Mr. Clark, the Southgate Youth Employment Officer and his assistant, Miss Richart. During the year they interviewed 57 of our pupils. Not all of these were school leavers, but of those that did leave, 31 were given advice and help in securing their first jobs.

The Old Scholars have had another active year. The Dramatic Section produced two plays, both worthy of larger audiences than actually attended. The Hockey Section held another successful bazaar and the Tennis, Football and Cricket Sections had a full programme. The social side was not neglected in that Dances, the Childrens' Party and the Old Boys' Supper again took place. The year ended with the second of our annual parties for Old Scholars and School Leavers, which was, I consider, even more successful than the first one.

I would not wish to end this report without my customary thanks to all who have helped the School. By this I mean not only the Staff, both teaching and domestic, but all friends of the School, including the Education Office Staff and Members of the Education Committee. In thanking the last named, I would like to make particular mention of the work they did which resulted in the re-decoration of the School during the Summer Holiday. We were grateful for the opportunity given us to choose whatever colour schemes we wanted and even though some of us suffered from mild shock when we saw our wishes carried into effect, yet the overall picture is of a clean, fresh, bright school, which is a real tonic to morale. I trust, however, that the

Education Committee is not wedded to the idea that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever". I hope it will lend a sympathetic and attentive ear when I say that we still want a new School capable of giving proper accommodation to our 580 pupils and the equipment and facilities essential before we can give them the best possible education.

I must now bring this report to a close. It has been a patchy one, I fear, but I consider that its disappointing parts should be spoken as openly as the pleasing parts and I have, therefore, not attempted to gloss over the year's weaknesses. I trust and believe that a frank realization of these disappointments will spur us all on to make a determined effort this year, a determined effort by every single member of the School to put our record for work and games back where it has so long belonged and a continuance of this effort to ensure that our record is, at any rate, maintained and, if possible, even improved.
