

RAYNES PARK HIGH SCHOOL

1935-1985

THE SPUR

"To each his need, from each his power"

Vol. 1. No. 1.

OCTOBER, 1936.

RAYNES PARK SCHOOL SONG

Time will make its utter changes,
Circumstance will scatter us;
But the memories of our school days
Are a living part of us.

Chorus—

So remember then, when you are men
With important things to do,
That once you were young, and this song have sung
For you were at school here, too.

Daily we sit down in form-rooms,
Inky hand to puzzled head;
Reason's light, and Knowledge power;
Man must study till he's dead.

Man has mind but body also;
So we learn to tackle low,
Bowl the off-breaks, hit the sixes,
Bend the diver's brilliant bow.

Man must live among his neighbours,
For he cannot live alone;
Friendships, failures, and successes
Here we learn to make our own.

Tractors grunt where oceans wandered,
Factories stand where green grass grew;
Voices break and features alter,
We shall soon be different, too.

Boys and cities, schools and natures,
Though they change, like you and me,
Do not simply grow and happen,
They are what they choose to be.

W. H. Auden.

W. H. Auden

RAYNES PARK HIGH SCHOOL

1935 to 1985

A JUBILEE HISTORY

by

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(c) 1985

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P r e f a c e -

In writing the following pages I have been acutely aware that, although I have taught History at Raynes Park for the past seven years, I am a comparative outsider. This has made it all the more difficult for one allotted the task of writing up fifty years of history in the life of the School. Education, above all, concerns people, and I know that all the different people who have been at Raynes Park will have different memories of it. What follows here is no more than a commentary on some of the events that have gone towards making the School what it is today.

For my sources I have, in the first place, gone to the complete run of The Spur, and then to the minutes of the Governors' Meetings from 1935 to 1965, now lodged in the Surrey Record Office. Much of the school's own holdings of archive material were severely damaged when in 1969 the Head Master's study was flooded to a depth of four feet. Much was destroyed or damaged beyond repair at that time. However, John Garrett's own scrap book of the early years of the School has been partially salvaged in the process of researching for this present work.

Lastly, I must apologise to all the many members of Staff, both past and present who receive no specific mention in these pages. Their self-sacrifice and dedication are no less for the omission of their names. Their reward must be in the memories of the boys whom they served and in whose education they played so valuable a part.

Peter Harris
Raynes Park High School
November, 1985

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BEGINNINGS -

On June 12th, 1935, the newly established Governing Body of Raynes Park County School for Boys - due to open in September of that year - appointed John Garrett, an Oxford graduate and an Assistant Master at Whitgift School to be the school's first Head Master.

John Garrett's first contact with the boys was on September 19th, though by that time he had been busying himself organising his newly built but not quite finished school for some weeks. This was his first Head Mastership and it appears that he was as nervous as many of the boys on that first day. Turning to one of his new members of Staff and commenting, "I think I am going to be sick", he mounted the steps of the stage and addressed the boys:

My first words from this platform can hardly be other than to welcome you all very sincerely as members of Raynes Pak County School. This is a unique experience for all of us and one unlikely to be repeated. It is conceivable that we may find ourselves in other schools but never shall we have again quite the thrill of starting a new school from scratch. As I have watched this school get ready for you, and as I have been working here alone during this week, I have thought I was living through a period of prelude to adventure. And now the prelude is completed and the adventure begins, and in this adventure we all share. ...from the very beginning I want you to regard your school as a place to which you like to come, and in whose kindly walls you like to linger. We shall have failed you and you will have failed your school if you regard it as a place to which you come at 9 o'clock under compulsion, and from which you race away at the earliest opportunity. What is more you will handicap my colleagues on the Staff in all that they want to do for you, and all the avenues of interest to which they want to introduce you."

Having thus raised their hopes and interests he informed them that lessons would begin the next day. One boy is reported as having gone home and cried since he had not been able to start his lessons there and then.

The School had been planned as far back as 1931 when it had been designed to accommodate 490 boys at a cost of £44,100. In August of that year the economic crisis hit and the building industry was one of those most affected. By 1933, Surrey County Council's Education Committee finally obtained permission from central government to build. By now there was an enormous local demand in the growing suburb and Rutlish School, which the new school was partly designed to relieve, was full to overflowing. For economy the accommodation was cut to allow for only 330 boys with the possibility built into the plans of future enlargement to 490. In the light of this the building was redesigned by the original architects, Messrs Jarvis and Richard, to be built at a cost of only £28,000.

This cut in finance was made visible in such things as the omission of the central turret and the absence of any plaster from the walls. The land the school was built on also came

at a low cost to the Council. It had been left over from the Council's purchase for the Kingston By-Pass and its Merton turn-off. Part of it had been the site of West Barnes Farm and the site was bordered on the west by the Pyl Brook. In the early days of the school the farm pond, (site of the gymnasium, 1985), and the old cow sheds were still to be seen. To the first boys the school must have seemed bleak with not a tree to be seen.

The school had been due for completion during the second week of July, but work dragged on. Furniture had been ordered at a cost of £2,200. In June the Governors had placed advertisements for the teaching staff who were to assist the Head Master. The requirements were for five assistants; one for mathematics, one for science (including biology), one for geography and two for general subjects. "In all cases the ability to help with scouting, games or the musical and dramatic activities of the school desirable." A brief prospectus was issued quoting the fees at 4 guineas a term or 10 guineas for 'outsiders'. An entrance examination had been advertised to be held at the Technical College, Gladstone Road, Wimbledon, on Saturday 6th July. On 23rd July the staff had been duly appointed: Mr Cobb (aged 28), Mr Courchee (aged 30), Mr Gibb (aged 32), Mr Halliwell (aged 30), and Mr Oates (aged 25). At the same time 2 part time members of staff were taken on for Art and P.E.: Mr Rogers and Mr Sweeney. It was against this background that John Garrett took up the reins of his new school.

John Garrett was a young and ambitious man. His year at Oxford and as a teacher at Whitgift had, he believed, prepared him well for the task of leading his own school, and he eagerly entered into the challenge of building up a grammar school from nothing. Many grammar schools at that time had a considerable number of year of tradition behind them. Aware of the danger of being seen to parody the Public School tradition, Garrett set himself the task of taking the best of tradition and fitting it to the needs of what he saw as modern education. He energetically read up on current educational theory and practise; the school still possesses some of his own books heavily underlined and annotated. Nevertheless at an early stage he set his sights on what he saw as the ultimate goal of all successful Head Masters - as many old boys as possible at Oxford and Cambridge. It was no accident that the colours he chose for the school were light and dark blue.

As an Oxford man himself he did not hesitate to call upon his Oxford contemporaries for support. Traditions had to be rapidly established and, as he saw it, one of the needs was for a school song and motto. Both were supplied for him by W H Auden. Writing later in the school's magazine, The Spur, (Vol 1 No 1), he said:

"W H Auden, the poet who has written the school song, is one of the most significant figures in English letters today. His experience as a Schoolmaster, and his skill as poet, have combined to produce a song of rare distinction. His words 'To each his need, from each his power', provide the school with its motto".

Music had to be found and again Garrett called upon a friend, commenting in that same issue of The Spur:

"Doctor Thomas Wood who has composed the music, shipped aboard a tramp steamer when he was eight years old and



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sailed the world over. In 1914 he went to Oxford... Today he is known as a composer whose works are performed at the Queen's Hall, and he bids fair to achieve even greater recognition as a writer.

"To both his friends the Head Master is grateful for their collaboration in producing a school song of outstanding merit".

There was no doubt that Garrett was out to impress and impress he did.

Mr Halliwell, who taught science, designed the school badge. This was not be traditionally heraldic, but modern. He incorporated three outstanding features of the district: the arterial road, (A3, 1985), the bridge by which it passed over the railway, and the 'Electric Railway' itself. This emblem appeared on the boys' blazers and caps, on the latter in the form of a metal badge.

The school was 'officially' opened by Alderman J Chuter Ede, DL, MP, Chairman of the County Council, on November 28th, 1935. It was the 34th Secondary school in Surrey. The event was presided over by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Councillor B T King who was sadly to die the following year and in whose memory the 'Cock House' Cup was to be presented. Ironically John Garrett had gone down with chicken pox on November 14th, but he sent a telegram from his sick bed: "May the ship be well and truly launched. Greetings to the School and the assembled company". Introducing Alderman Chuter Ede, Councillor King commented, "What (he) does not know about education is not worth knowing". Speaking to the boys Alderman Ede said, "What you are starting today is going to live for hundreds of years. The pace you set will largely determine the way in which the school will stand in the race of honour in which all healthy schools are engaged, and I hope, therefore you are going to realise your opportunity". A statement from Mr Garrett was read, which began:

Although, like Macbeth, we are as yet 'young in deed', I have been asked on several occasions what traditions this school can boast, for all the world as if traditions were good purchaseable by the pound over the counter... My answer to such enquiries has been brief and invariable... Our opportunity lies in our freedom from tradition, for thus we are able to create our own... the motto of the school is no latin tag, but rather the words of the contemporary poet, W H Auden: 'To each his need: from each his power'".

The total cost of the opening is recorded in the Governor's minutes, (17.12.35), as £9.6.3 including 15/- for flowers and refreshments at 7d per head. The Governors voted to contribute 11/6 each to cover these expenses.

The celebrations over, all returned to the work in hand. There were immediate practical difficulties to deal with and Garrett's reports to the Governors contain many references to the inadequacies of the buildings and site. The grounds are continually flooded, (still a frequent problem in 1985). There are not enough bicycle 'stalls'. There are no satisfactory playing fields. (This was to be a permanent problem until the school eventually obtained the exclusive use of the 'Oberon' playing fields towards the end of the war.) Garrett was concerned too on the finer points of the building. In a paper submitted to

the County Surveyor he comments, among other things:

"The dull red colouring of the lower half of the walls in the class-rooms and passages has been criticized as gloomy and unpleasing. Since colour is being increasingly recognised as a psychological factor of importance in education, and since young people should be brought up in bright conditions, it should not be difficult to substitute some colour such as bright blue or green (even jade) or orange for the insufferably depressing congealed blood of appearance of the building's dadoses".

or:

"Nothing but the gloomiest first impressions of the school can be gained by visitors who have the misfortune to be incarcerated in the cramped and sombre Waiting Room, whose only furniture consists of a hard wooden bench against the wall".

and even:

"The light staining of the wood throughout the building, particularly in the Hall, makes difficult the achievement of any dignity of effect".

His list of comments runs to nine typewritten pages.

The school's prospectus provided a summary of the school's aims:

"The School aims at turning out boys who, because of their life within its walls, will be able to play a happy and a useful part in a changing world. By virtue of character and intellectual training alike it hopes so to equip them that they may be happy in their employment and the community glad and grateful for their services. It hopes so to stimulate their interests that in after life their leisure may be a joy and never a burden, because having been once infected with the immense joy of learning they may pursue it for themselves".

In October 1935 the Head Master reported to the Governors that 80 boys were staying to school dinner. From the beginning Garrett was anxious to keep the boys in school for as much of the day as possible. He very much wanted to preserve a family atmosphere, a place where boys wanted to be. Again, from the prospectus:

"That as many boys as possible should stay at the school for dinner is an integral feature of the school's policy. Only so can be obtained something of that continuous community life the value of which has rightly been recognised in the English tradition of education. Further it has been observed that boys bring to their work a greater alertness when freed from the urgency of catching vehicles in order to avoid being late for afternoon school. Masters look to the dinner-hour as a time when they may get to know those in their charge, and themselves have dinner with the boys. School Clubs and Societies meet after dinner. To have dinner at the school is more than a convenience to parents; it is a necessity if the boys are to profit to the full from their life in this school".

Garrett amplified his view of the 'School Day' in his Report at the school's first prize-giving on October 23rd, 1935:

"I have often asked myself why it is that schools of old foundation have a more secure hold on the affections and loyalties of their old boys than those of the new, and I think that what makes so much difference is the sheer number of hours passed happily within the school's walls. Too often a boy's secondary school anticipates life in the office for which many are destined. They appear at nine, rush off home to dinner, back for a couple of hours more work, and then - the sweet liberty of evenings spent away from school and its associations. All the time of leisure is lived apart from the school, in the evenings and at weekends. Is it any wonder that schools which have such a cobweb claim on their boys can count for little in their lives? In very deed the discipline of such compared with that of the older foundations must be as moonlight to sunlight. What we aim at here is the School Day, by which boys do not respond to the factory bell, which denotes release, but rather that of their own will they shall like to linger on and enjoy recreation with their fellows and association with their masters. The school dinner here is the busiest and liveliest of the day. Coaching of games, choir practises, play rehearsals, gramophone recitals, epidiascope lectures, Rugger and Cricket talks - all take place then, for all masters themselves stay to dinner. The school kitchen staff work magnificently and after our first year, few things have given me more gratification than that we now serve a regular 150 dinners every day. I do appeal to parents to give their son his chance of staying too, at least on some days of the week, and particularly to those who have boys in the Senior School. That a boy who wants to stay on shall not go hungry, tea is now provided for one penny. When a parent once told me that her son had spent one Monday, over ten hours here, my reply was 'What a happy school our's must be.' And I call to mind two fathers talking on our cricket ground in the Summer, and when one said to the other 'I'm thinking we shall have to bring an action against the school for alienation of affection,' the other replied: 'It would be more use if we could get Mr Garrett to put some beds up for the boys in the bicycle sheds'. It is not a question of alienation, for they have affection enough for home and school. But I do ask parents to help their sons to help their school, and to avoid wherever possible putting obstacles in the way of their service to it, particularly on Saturdays. Only so can we be of use to them, and they to us, in the building up of a school worthy of their loyalty, and of your frequent sacrifice on their behalf".

By October, 1935 much had already been established. Mr Courchee had started a Scout Troop, (the 19th Wimbledon, a tradition to continue for many years until its amalgamation with the 12th Wimbledon in 1967 to form the 5th Wimbledon). Mr Gibb had been appointed 'Second Master', (though it took a while longer for the County Council to agree to pay him the extra allowance commensurate with the post).

There were 160 boys in five forms. The classes were very full, varying from 31 to 34 boys in each. Their ages, Garrett reported went from 10.8 years to 14.5 years. By October Garrett could also talk of a waiting list of 12 boys and he applied to the Governors for two extra members of staff. On 12th November Mr Hanson and Mr Guerrier were appointed. By December, 20 new boys had been accepted out of the 30 who had sat the

entrance examination and the school held 180 pupils over 6 forms. Garrett was delighted to report that 140 boys had stayed at school for Christmas Dinner, and that they had collected £2.15.3 for the work of the NSPCC.

From the beginning Garrett was concerned by what he saw as the poor academic standard of many of the boys and he had reported this to the Governors as early as October 1935. As a result he had started extra Maths classes immediately, having succeeded in persuading 41 parents of senior boys to pay 2/- an hour for extra tuition on Saturday mornings. These academic shortcomings were something that demanded much attention during the early years.

Garrett had always planned a library that would do credit to the school and, County funds being in short supply it was to parents and friends that he turned for assistance. By December, 1935 he had got 468 books in the library only 288 of which had had to be purchased. The library continued to grow at a fast pace mostly due to the continuing generosity of parents and friends.

In December he was told by the County Council that the allowance for the school for the year 1936/37 was to be £4,531 and early in 1936 he applied to the Governors for an additional Master for the coming September, along with the extension of the buildings to the originally proposed capacity for 490 boys. At the same time the Governors agreed to approach London Transport requesting an improvement to their services to the school. In March the school had been divided into three Houses. On traditional lines they were named after their Masters, Mr Cobb, Mr Gibb and Mr Halliwell. At the same time the first Prefects were appointed and Mr Hanson undertook the task of 'liaison with local industry'. The school was surrounded with light industry and from the very beginning the boys were introduced to the world of work in the form of regular visits to local companies. By October 1936 ten such visits had been made, varying from Senior's Fish Paste Factory, (Nurdin and Peacock's Offices, 1985), to Croydon Airport.

Messrs Newson, Milton, Sexty and Beecroft had all been appointed by May 1936. They continued the style of a young and energetic staff, the eldest of them being 29, (Mr Sexty), and the youngest 22, (Mr Newsom). By June the University of London had been asked to add the name of Raynes Park to their list of schools for inspection and examination in 1936/37, and Garrett had put 8 boys into a '5th Form' to try for the School Certificate a year early.

On July 3rd an 'Open Night' was held and fully reported in the local press. There was an open air 'physical training display'. The Geography room contained a display of weather charts and statistics compiled by the boys from instruments kept in a Stevenson Screen made in the school workshop by the boys themselves. The new epidiascope was demonstrated and there were demonstrations concerning water, soil, air and elementary physics in the science laboratories. The reporter from the Wimbledon News commented, "One small boy I spoke to told me that all of his pocket money was spent on chemicals, and that chemistry as a hobby had for him supplanted model aeroplanes". To coincide with the Open Night John Garrett had, with Claude Rogers, the school's Art Master, arranged an exhibition of contemporary British painting in the school. Original works by Richard Sickert, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry, Augustus John and others, were included.

The Open Night was a development of the monthly musical recitals that had been held at the school. Garrett, calling upon his many friends and approaching not a few slight acquaintances, had tried to build up a regular cultural round. His efforts had even been noted in national newspapers such as The Times, the Daily Telegraph, and the News Chronicle. The last mentioned printed an article - 'By-Pass School':

"I have just visited a school in the suburbs where boys are taught to be sceptical of modern newspapers... that is, not to lap up everything they read but to use a little judgement. Cuttings with astringent comments are pasted up on the library notice-board.

The school is Raynes Park County School, opened a year ago, for which W H Auden wrote the school song:

Tractors grunt where oceans wandered,
Factories stand where green grass grew;
Voices break and features alter,
We shall soon be different too.

The very enlightened headmaster, John Garrett, seeks to create cultural values on a by-pass road.

He has had an astonishing array of musicians down and artists represented at shows in the school.

In his aim to create citizens fitted for both the employments and leisure of a changing world, he gives a guide to local cinemas such as the boys would go to with their parents.

Boys are also helped to find their way, culturally, through the mazes of popular broadcasting.

Well-selected masters exemplify the 'whole-man' idea.

The master who fosters music is also a first class swimmer and instructor; the art master trains the first fifteen and so on".

Thus Garrett had not been idle in pursuing his literary and dramatic interests. In 1936 the first of a long series of Shakespeare plays had been produced at the school. Julius Caesar played to packed houses in the School Hall, was reviewed in The Times, and the New Statesman and Nation, as well as in the local press. It was produced by Mr Beecroft who established the line of annual Shakespeare plays. He handed over to Mr Peter Smith in 1945 for the school's production of The Tempest. Mr Smith continued his association on and off until 1965. The history of drama productions at Raynes Park deserves a book of its own. Suffice it to say that drama flourished and expanded down the years making a considerable name for the school and attracting many eminent reviewers.

The annual school play was not the only drama event however. In March 1936 there had been the first of the school's 'House Drama Competitions'. Halliwell's presented 'Rococo'; Gibb's, 'The Bishop's Candlesticks'; and Cobb's 'Mrs Hamblett Records her Vote'. The School Choir under Mr Oates, with Mr Cobb at the piano, also took part in the evening and there was a performance by the 'One-Act Opera Company' whom Garrett had persuaded to come and perform for no fee. The evening had in fact been held to raise money to buy a silver Challenge Cup for the school Sports Day. But, as soon as this need became known, six parents had immediately subscribed enough money to purchase such a cup. It was duly named the 'John Carrett Cup for Athletics'. Thus the money raised by the evening was put towards the purchase of curtains and props for the school's production of Julius Caesar the following December.

The day after the House Plays saw the first School Sports Day. Since the school had no proper playing fields on site, they had been given the partial use of the Joseph Hood Memorial Ground in Motpur Park and it was here that the Sports were held. The new John Garrett challenge cup was received from Councillor B T King, the Chairman of Governors, by E Jepson as Captain of Cobb's House.

John Garrett certainly hoped that artistic and literary events would have a civilising influence on the boys in his charge. But, they were still very much schoolboys as the 'Castigation' book kept by the Head Master, shows. The 1936/37 entries suggest that not all boys were beneficially influenced:

----- 6 strokes

- (i) gardening instead of (detention)
- (ii) idling in the lavatory without permission
- (iii) hooliganism
- (iv) appalling and degrading manners in class and out
- (v) laziness over work.

or:

----- 6 strokes

Sloth, idleness, and anti-social stupidity.

and of another boy:

"I have no conviction that this punishment is likely to 'reform' the boy: deterrent I hope it may be. I might have produced a longer effect if I had wielded the cane more severely. As it is I felt quite sad and disheartened that all other methods of 'socialising' him having failed, that it must come to this".

Nevertheless some offences reflected less obstructive incidents:

----- 6 strokes

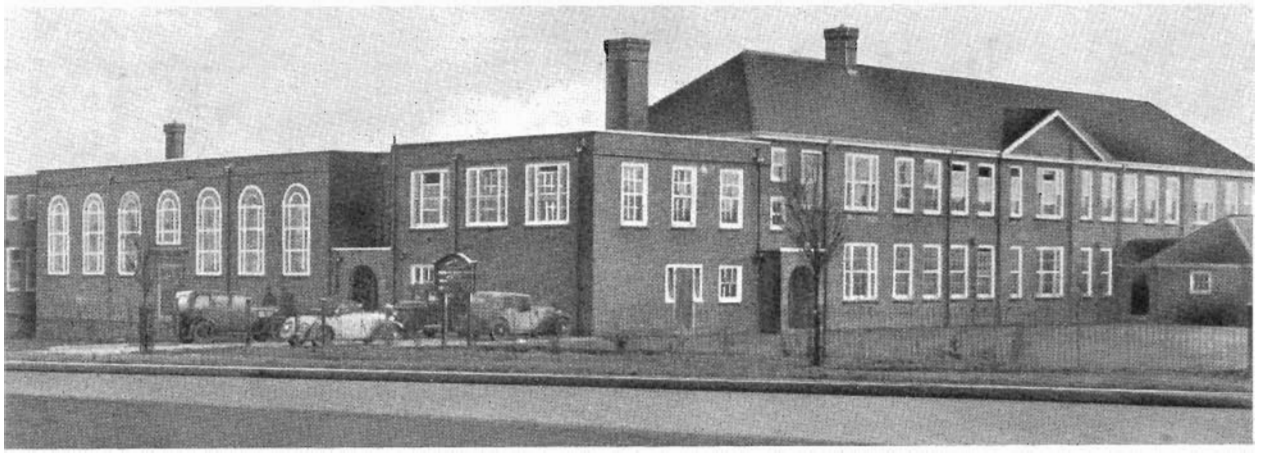
Saying 'I thank you' in tones of Arthur Askey at the end of Lord's Prayer yesterday, loudly enough that F B standing at the piano could hear him.

At the opening of the Autumn term, 1936 there were 253 boys in the school. London University had announced that they would make a preliminary inspection of the school in December. Various experiments were being tried; Garrett reported to the Governors that:

'An experiment of modified Daltonism is being carried out in the two Third Forms, whereby boys choose between eight subjects for their study during the last two periods of the afternoon. The system involves the study and individual work by boys on a subject suggested by the master, who becomes more consultant than teacher".

The School Magazine was started in October. It was to be issued free of charge to those boys whose parents paid regularly to the General School Fund. To others it was available at the price of sixpence. It was named after the road that passed by the school's front door, the 'Merton spur', (the turning to Merton off the Kingston by-pass).

There was much activity around the school itself. From the beginning Mr Cobb had taken charge of the school grounds and by the summer of 1937 they appeared well-established. Bulbs had been given by the Carter Seed Company next door, and many



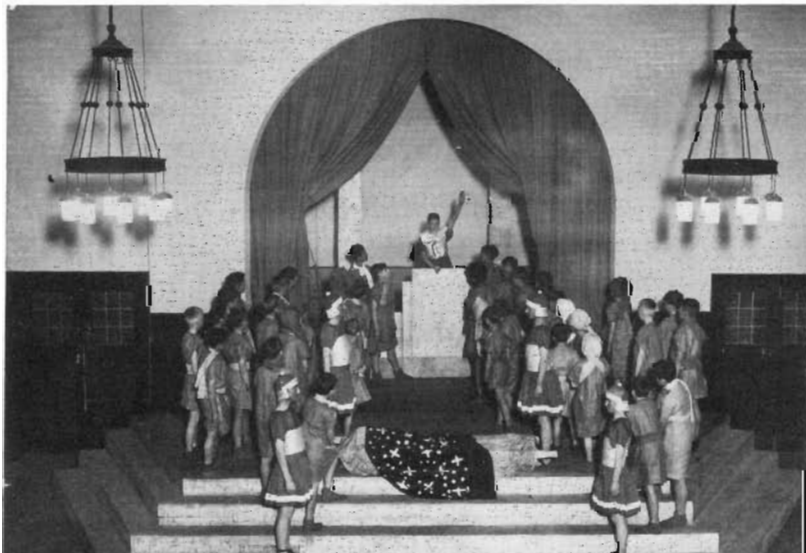
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other plants had come from parents. Down the years the grounds were to blossom more and more under Mr Cobb's guidance with the addition of an herbaceous border, a rock garden and a heath garden before he was finished. Of all these the only extant survivor in 1985 is the rock garden, albeit denuded of most of its rocks. It lies just inside the Bushey Road gates. In the winter of 1936 the playing field was drained and the poplars planted. In the first issue of The Spur Garrett waxed somewhat lyrically:

"Considering the brevity of our tenure the grounds have done the school credit. The brave impertinence of the crocus, the grace of daffodils and narcissi and the blaze of golden yellow and white tulips which constituted our spring show, were entirely due to the generosity of our neighbours, James Carter and Company. Later, the lupins and delphiniums which they gave us, stirred to envy the heart of the most seasoned Chelsea addict".

On Friday, 23rd October, 1936 Garrett held the first school Prize Giving. In later years these took place in Wimbledon Town Hall. On this occasion it was in the School Hall and it started at 8 o'clock in the evening. The prizes were presented by the Rector of Garrett's old Oxford College, Dr R R Marett. Garrett made the event as impressive as possible. 'Jerusalem' was sung at the beginning and Dr Marett's full honours of MA, DSc, LLD and FBA, were printed large upon the programme. Garrett presented his Head Masters address, in the course of which, perhaps thinking of the heavy task that his staff were facing in bringing many of the boys up to the academic standard he wanted, he made an appeal concerning homework:

"While hoping to ensure always that the amount of homework set shall not weigh too heavily on our young victims, I must confess myself on this question an unrepentant conservative. I believe that work done apart from school masters has a value for which no amount of supervised prep., in school can afford a substitute. But while I like to think of boys creating in their homes suitable conditions for study, I do appeal to parents to silence their wireless sets while Homework is in progress. There is the story of the old lady who said: 'Oh yes, we have the wireless. But I've got now as I don't notice whether its on or off.' Boys will often adopt the same line of defence. But I don't believe that crooners ever have conduced to accuracy and I should think it an act of excellent co-operation on the part of parents if they ensured that wherever possible a boy has a room of his own in which to work, and that never has his attention to be divided between the blandishments of the radio and the discipline of his homework. When the wireless programmes are worthy enough, they deserve an undivided attention: when they are not - which is often enough - the set is better silent".

The library had continued to grow and by this time had reached 1,015 volumes, and still only 268 had had to be purchased! Garrett had hung a series of Low cartoons around the walls and, under Mr Oates the librarian, a team of boys were responsible for the library's good order and day to day running.

The Head Master continued to press on with improving the boy's academic performance. It was no easy task in many cases. Mr Brown, the inspector from London University, had commented

in his report on the enormous difficulties the staff were experiencing because of the diverse educational backgrounds of the boys. In referring to Mr Brown's report before the Governors Garrett was recorded as saying:

"He (John Garrett) emphasised the importance of those passages in the report which stressed the difficulties of teaching boys of mixed educational origin. He prophesied that if the present III B took the General School Examination in 1939, so poor was their quality, and so chaotic their background, there might well be a 100% failure".

Undaunted, life continued. Mr Beecroft had been invited to take a group of boys to Europe with a party from Chiswick High School who were touring the cities of Germany with two English plays. Indeed, Mr Brown's inspection report had nothing but praise for the efforts of Garrett and his staff:

"The Headmaster has indeed gathered around him an almost unique body of enthusiastic workers who, with the exercise of good will and support, will be able to tackle the problem successfully and eventually attain the aim that he has set before them of making the school a local centre of cultural training. With this in view the Headmaster has undoubtedly called for whole-hearted and self-denying service from his staff, but no whit less than he is willing to give himself.

"The staff as a whole have both dinner and tea at the school, and devote the time thus at their disposal to training the boys in what is becoming increasingly necessary under modern conditions of life, namely, a satisfying use of their spare time. To help in this, the boys are encouraged to stay to dinner, and spend their whole day at school, and nearly all do so. This has made it possible for the Houses to be placed under their House Masters not only for sport, but for complete tutorship and control, as in a boarding school. The House Master is thus directly responsible in all matters for every boy in his House. Already a visitor can foresee that, under these conditions, an enthusiastic staff will not fail in due course to reap their reward in the form of equally willing service from the boys themselves".

Garrett summed up his staff in his report to the Governors in February 1937:

"He (Garrett) saw in Mr Milton's violin playing and his international hockey cap, in Mr Beecroft's swimming and his music, in Mr Rogers' exhibition at the Storrán Gallery and in his rugby, an illustration of the principle of the 'whole man' which he always sought for on the staff".

By May 1937 another three members of staff had been appointed, messrs Raynham, James and Grubb. A school cat was now ensconced. He had been named Stephen, Garrett commenting that the choice of name could only be put down to the early martyrdom expected by pessimists. In January 1937 the cat roamed off, never to be seen again, its place being taken by the school secretary, Mrs French's spaniel, 'Dewdrop'.

The school's second Open Night was again held on July 3rd. Between 300 and 400 parents attended. The local paper reported especially on the gymnastic and art displays. On the Wednesday before the 'Balliol Players' had performed, as part of the annual tour of (previously only Public) schools, Aristophanes' 'Frogs'.

The new academic year of 1937/38 opened with 302 boys

in the school. Mr Guerrier had resigned and Garrett had 55 applicants for the post. The school had to be divided into 5 Houses, not just 3 as before and Mr Milton and Mr Newson headed the new ones. Parents were able to choose which House they wanted their son to enter. Boys joined a House when they went into the Third Year. Garrett spoke of the boys, "retain(ing) for the rest of their schooldays the same House Master as a guide, philosopher and friend". For the Juniors three 'Clubs' were formed: Trojans, Spartans and Athenians. Added to all this permission was obtained for a store cupboard to be converted to provide tuck shop premises.

House competitions blossomed and along with this went a whole proliferation of clubs and societies. There was a great effort to get music established and in October 1937 members of staff gave an evening concert, duly reported in the local press. A Debating Society had been started as early as 1936, and their February 1937 motion was: "The return of the Socialists to the LCC would be ruinous to the country".

The second Prize Giving took place on October 29th, 1937, the prizes being presented by F B Malim Esq., MA, formerly Master of Wellington. The headline of the report in the local paper runs: "PARENTS ADVISED TO LOOK AHEAD - Think of the kind of men sons will be at 25 - EDUCATION FOR WORK". In his report the Head Master said:

"... that it was important for the school now to be given a chance of settling down and consolidating its position after two years of breathless existence. Its organisation now approached normality with eleven Forms, five Houses and three Clubs. Next year two whole forms would be presented for the General School Examination, and a small nucleus of boys would start after Christmas to work for the Higher Certificate in 1939".

The mock exams did not produce the results hoped for and reporting to the Governors Garrett told the tale:

"The mock matriculation examinations at the beginning of this term gave disquieting results, particularly in mathematics. As a result extra classes have at once been started. All parents of boys in the present V's and IV's were invited to meet the Staff on February 9th, for a conference about their sons' present possibilities and future programmes. At this meeting it was emphasised that with the material in the present Forms V B, IV B, and III B, examination results for some years to come can hardly be of a high standard".

However, the school play 'Hamlet' was a great success, running for four performances and grossing £34.2.3, leaving a deficit of only £5.0.0, and a review once again appeared in The Times. Due to Mr Gibb, the rigger results were also good. A projector was bought for the school with money raised by parents and boys. It was immediately put to use, short films being shown in the Physics laboratory on Monday lunchtimes as well as longer shows at a charge of 3d a head on Saturday mornings. A party of boys went to Belgium with Mr Milton. A train club was started and a voluntary, after school, gym club proved very popular. So that Games could start earlier the whole school day was brought forward to start at 2.45 and finish at 3.05.

By July 1938 Garrett was reporting to the Governors that

he had 80 candidates registered for the Entrance Examination for a total of 24 places. In the same month he welcomed a further 28 'Special Placers' and the first Rutlish Charity Scholarship at the school. In September he was expecting 330 boys - filling the school to capacity. Only 16 boys were expected to leave in the summer. Thus the Governors passed a resolution: "That the County Committee be recommended due to pressure of entrants - to expand Raynes Park to a three-form entry at the earliest possible period".

As predicted, the school opened in September 1938 with a full complement of boys. An Old Boys Society was formed, music took an 'up' with the formation of a school orchestra and Mr Milton was once again selected to play hockey for Wales. For the House Play Competition, in November, Garrett's mother presented a challenge cup in memory of the Head Master's father, "who loved this school". Kingsley Martin, editor of The Spectator, and Basil Wright the film producer and by now a firm friend of the school, joined the list of those who came to speak to the boys. Outings continued and the highlight was a visit by one group to the Gainsborough Film Studios, where they met the 'Crazy Gang' and had their photograph taken with them. Four tennis courts had been laid out, a biology garden established and space earmarked for the development of the Scout Troop's activities. Garrett was busy buying pictures to decorate the walls, including a lithograph by Graham Sutherland, entitled 'The Sick Duck'. Further he was delighted to be able to report in The Spur:

"Any record of Dame Sybil Thorndike's visit must begin and end in gratitude for the generosity of this great lady of the theatre, who found time, in a life crowded with important activities, to journey into the wilds of Raynes Park and give us a treat which we shall not easily forget... Dame Sybil's last remarks... were an assurance that in the theatre could be found an imaginative release which solves or mollifies all problems. She herself had found the horrors of moving house reduced to nothing by the joys of acting at the Old Vic".

C Day Lewis followed shortly afterwards with a recital of songs and readings.

Earlier in the year Mr Cobb had taken a small party of boys to Germany in his M G car. An exciting time was had by all as reported in The Spur:

"On the 30th we set off again and quickly reached Munich where we spent two or three hours. Pushing on we went through Augsburg whence we got on to a Reichsautobahn to Ulm... On this marvellous German road we had kept up 90 miles an hour for a steady half-hour and, once again, touched 92. Had there not been a slight rain falling, which made the road a little greasy, we would have undoubtedly touched the hundred".

The month of December found Garrett reporting on domestic traumas. The Governors heard:

"In an endeavour to secure quicker service and helpings apportioned more accurately to the capacity of the boy to finish what is given him, we have introduced two shifts... But the appalling waste still goes on, and I am now convinced that ----- has not the mental

capacity for estimating quantities without ruinous extravagance. Every day bucketsful of good food is taken away for the pigs. Further, there has been such internecine strife in the kitchen that I have been called on to intervene, and on one occasion I had to threaten to call the police to have one woman removed from the building".

In March 1939, a Cook Housekeeper was appointed at a wage of £110.0.0 per annum and peace reigned once more.

And so the cycle of Prize Givings, Open Nights, Sports Days, Drama Productions and cultural events seemed set to continue. A healthy tradition had been established, but times were set to change for, in July 1938, a circular sent to the Governing Bodies of all Surrey Schools had been noted by the Head Master. It was headed: 'Air Raid Precautions'.

W A R T I M E -

On July 2nd, 1937 the school had assembled to hear a talk by George Lansbury, PC, MP. The local press reported:

"Mr George Lansbury, the Grand Old Man of British politics, visited Raynes Park County School on Friday and gave a stirring address lasting forty-five minutes on peace, and the means to ensure it.

"Having recently had discussions with Roosevelt, Mr Blum, Hitler and the Prime Ministers of the Scandanavian countries, he talked with authority of world and European conditions. He urged that just as mankind had mastered plagues by the provision of drains, so must future generations abolish war by mastering the proper distribution of the world's overwhelming economic resources.

"This weekend Mr Lansbury is in Rome discussing the problem of the preservation of peace with Signor Mussolini".

There had been other signs in the school's life of the developing European situation. Reporting the school trip to Austria in 1938, one of the boys wrote:

"We visited the Zeppelin Museum and hangers, where we saw a new dirigible in construction. The evening was spent in going to a Hitler Youth Concert, which was full of slapstick comedy, and was followed by dancing".

In the July 1939 issue of The Spur Garrett wrote:

"Threat of war has meant invasion of our grounds. In the near future we shall be equipped with trenches at the expense of much green grass... It is presumeably the price we pay for relative security... It is devoutly to be hoped that our precautions will never be necessary, but how ever many heads of governments plan dementedly, it is our job to carry on our work with quiet efficiency, assuming that each term will be lived through, undisturbed by the horror of war. Any other course means chaos and capitulation".

The school was unable to function normally until shelters were provided. Luckily Raynes Park was just outside the officially evacuatable area, but until the shelters were completed the school buildings could not be used. In the meantime Garrett organised a tutorial system in the homes of masters and at one point he records that they were giving 333 tutorials a week to groups of not more than six, in the homes of eighteen different masters. On October 7th they began digging up the grounds for the growing of potatoes, and the biology garden found itself disrupted by the digging of ARP trenches.

The cultural life however, continued, even if the school play had to be postponed due to the lack of black-out curtains. As a 'thank you' for the staff's unstinting efforts in preparing for the emergency the parents had presented the school with a cheque. The money had been invested in a small printing press and soon copies of the school's Library Review, and many other items, were being produced. The young printers were organised on 'Guild' lines, and much of their work echoed that of the private printing presses of the literati. The 1938 Prize Giving had been done

by Lord David Cecil. The 1939 one was to welcome T S Eliot. The latter event was held 'privately' due to the wartime regulations, and only boys and staff attended.

By November the shelters were ready and most of the boys returned. Very few of them had been evacuated by their parents. Blackout curtains having been obtained, (at a cost of £96), the play went ahead. But, a tragic loss struck in another area:

"Our Cook-Housekeeper, Miss Van der Sluys, is now a sergeant in the ATS. She is stationed in the north and is cooking all meals for 1,050 men with a staff of five girls. She will be glad when the war releases her to return to cook dinners for 150 boys".

Basil Wright supplemented the music of the school by placing his Bluthner grand piano on permanent loan to the school. (It is still in use, 1985). Nor did his generosity stop there. In July, 1940, Garrett was able to report to the Governors that Mr Wright had presented the school with the sum of £1,000 for a fund to be used at the Head Master's discretion. That was munificence indeed. On a smaller scale he could also report that there were 190 members in the National Savings Group, that the school had given some of its iron railing for the war effort and that there were seven boys in the second year 6th sitting for the Higher School Certificate. In that last area Garrett was hoping for success. His hopes were exceeded for Anthony Hinton, the Head Boy, became the first from the school to win a University Scholarship and in due course went up to Magdalen College, Oxford.

Just after midnight on October 18th, 1940, a 500 lb bomb dropped on one corner of the school. The bike sheds and the southern lavatories were completely destroyed and a lot of damage was done to the neighbouring parts of the school. Repairs were soon put in hand. After all, there were 273 boys still attending the school and Garrett was determined to be able to continue:

"Come what may, education must go on... an education rooted in free enquirey has no place in the Nazi policy: it has in England's. It is therefore one of the traditions of this country which we are fighting to preserve".

So that the boys could stay on the premises during 'alerts', Mr Gibb was sent to attend a 'Roof Spotters' course. Keeping the boys busy Garrett made gardening compulsory for boys in the Middle and Senior schools unless they could, "show medical reason why they are unfitted for such essential work". Not everyone was working as hard though and in November 1940, the Governors resolved:

...to draw the attention of the Surveyor of County Buildings to the slow speed at which the contractors are repairing the building, and to inform him that the men on duty that afternoon were spending their time watching a football match".

Before the war the school's Scout Troop had started going on summer camps in the country. Garrett was anxious that the boys at the school should be given some break from their war-torn suburb. He had already noted the effects of the strain on some of them and had taken the decision that in future no boys was to do more than two games a week since he felt there had been a, "sapping on their academic performance". Two friends of his had bought farms on the edge of Dartmoor and

they agreed to take parties of boys during the holidays. Two went in August, six in October and more at Christmas. It was the devotion of one of these boys to a pig on the farm that resulted in Garrett's friend, Rudolph Messel, presenting two pigs to the school. (Rudolph Messel was again to be a benefactor to the school. During the war years Surrey County Council refused to allow money for the purchase of prizes to be given at the annual Prize Giving. Rudolph Messel came to the rescue and donated the funds for the rest of the war years.)

The Pig Club was duly formed and set about building a sty to hold two piglets, born to Mr Messel's sow, Susan, in February. The pigs were, from the beginning, destined to provide the school with Christmas Dinner. Indeed generally the boys worked hard to supplement school dinners. They grew vegetables in the grounds and bred rabbits, (the Rabbit Club), for the school pot.

A flight of the ATC was formed in the school under the direction of Mr Halliwell. 30 boys volunteered to join and Garrett nominated Halliwell, Raynham and Sweeney to the Air Ministry for commissions. Both boys and staff undertook the duties of Fire-watching every night. Garrett reported to the Governors:

"Since January 20th the staff have undertaken the duties of protecting the building from fire. Every night we have here two masters and two prefects from blackout until dawn. The boys do their homework and go to bed, only to be awakened in the event of their being needed. It is idle to pretend that masters are as fit for their work in the classrooms on mornings following their vigil, but we are willing enough to perform the duty if the County Council think that it is the best or only way to protect their buildings".

By November 1941 the second year 6th had founded the 'Partisans' with the assistance of Mr Warner, a wireless set had been installed in the Hall and Mr Newsom had been called up for war service. The school lost a number of staff, some to return after the war. The school produced £260.0.0 in War Weapons Week, which brought it 8th place out of 33 schools. The school took their annual play to Aldenham School for a performance and C Day Lewis and L A G Strong dedicated their 'New Anthology of Modern Verse, 1920-1940' to: "The Staff and Pupils of Raynes Park County School". Garrett noted that he had 346 boys in the school, and at Christmas the first of the pigs was killed. It weighed 151 lbs.

Life continued apace. There were happy events and, in the eyes of the boys certainly, some tragedies: severe frosts killed off nearly 1,000 cabbages and the drought halted the lives of most of the parsnips. Garrett continued to work on the cultural reputation - Nevill Coghill judged the House Plays; L A G Strong became a Governor of the school and Mr Robert Graves set the subject for the Head Master's Essay Prize and agreed to judge the entries. There were more down to earth things to deal with too. In February Garrett, in order to "avert a walking-out by the whole cleaning staff", raised their wages to 11d an hour plus bonus. The rise was, he says, "in my opinion in common justice".

Kenneth Lindsay, MP, former Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, came to speak at the school. On June 16th, 1942 he said in a parliamentary debate on the education

section of the Supply Bill:

"What is this thing that people keep on talking about which happens at public schools and not at Raynes Park County Secondary School, one of the finest in the country...?"

Garrett purchased the relevant copy of Hansard and pasted it into the School Scrap Book.

On October 21st it was recorded in the Governors' Minutes that the Head Master had submitted his resignation, effective from Christmas, 1942. He had been appointed Head Master of Bristol Grammar School. In December the Governors appointed Charles Wrinch, an old friend of Garrett's, to be the new Head Master. He was aged 36, was married, and was at the time Senior English Master at Radley College. At the end of December John Garrett left behind him a school of 372 boys, 70 of whom were in the 6th Form. The Higher Certificate results had been the best ever, 21 out of 25 entrants had passed. The school had gained 6 County University Scholarships and there were 11 Old Boys at either Oxford or Cambridge. In the General School Examination 42 out of the 51 entrants had passed, 21 of them obtaining Matriculation exemption. A parent wrote: "The traditions of the English County Secondary School are being made and Mr Garrett has set his mark upon them". At the December 1942 Prize Giving, the Chairman of the Governors,

"...paid a tribute to the work done at Raynes Park by the Headmaster in the last seven years. The school, he said, had been planted among pickle factories in an area of ground that had no culture, no traditions. The Headmaster, by his persistent policy of putting the best before the boys, had made the school a centre of culture in the district, and indeed something which was setting an example right through the country".

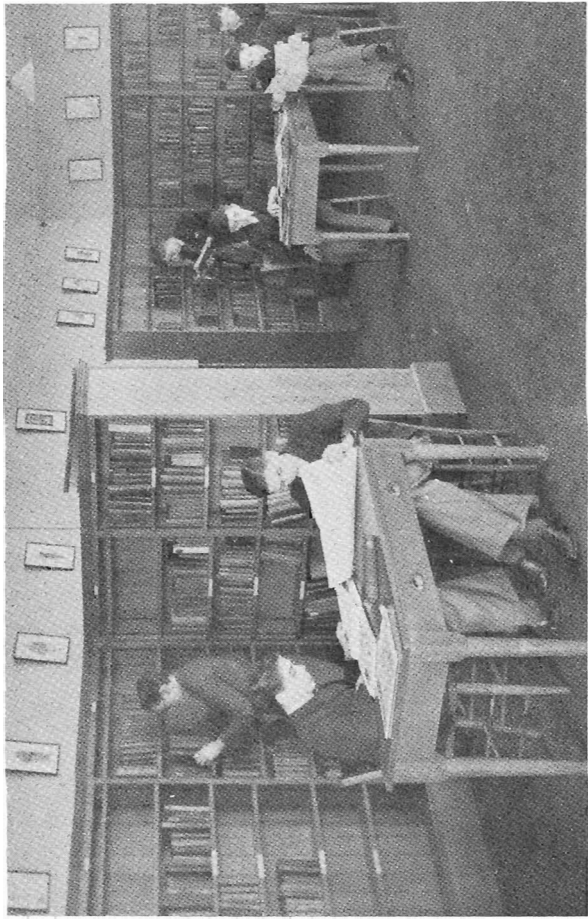
In his final report the Head Master summed up Raynes Park's wartime so far:

"...we have lost eight of the staff to war services, suffered damage from enemy action, spent long hours in shelters, improvised instruction in half a dozen places for small groups, fire-watched, wrestled with rationing restrictions, and coped with that sort of correspondence which opens with 'At what time did boys now over 15 but under 12 and wearing shoes size 9 first begin to do so?' or words to that effect".

Charles Wrinch took over the school at the beginning of the Spring term. He had 368 boys in the school. Inevitably the shadow of Garrett was still heavy upon the school. Garrett wrote in the April 1943 issue of The Spur:

"... the desk from the boys naturally dominates the scene. It is the only desk I have ever known which is big enough. The Parents' chest of drawers goes admirably into a recess, and the Staff's Persian Rug makes an antiquated Axminster carpet look apologetic. The Old Boys chair accommodates... parents and boys alike. Their beautiful desert plates await the return of fruit. And if the handsome suitcase from the Governors and the travelling toilet set from the Parents can hardly find a place in my decorative scheme, they are there, ready for that visit I hope to make to the beloved school before the year is out".

Wrinch, in his predecessor's honour, renamed the Head Master's



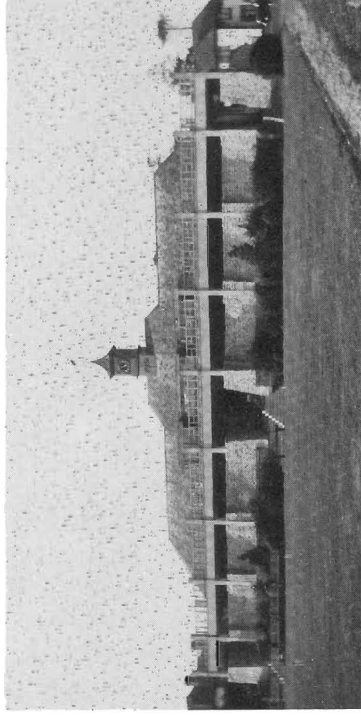
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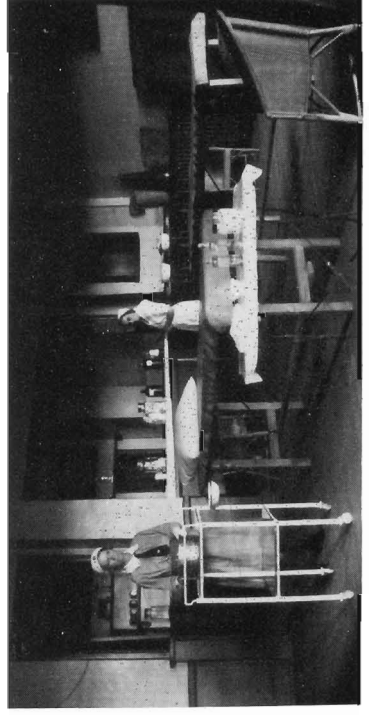
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Fund, donated by Basil Wright, the John Garrett Fund. From the beginning Wrinch was concerned about the overcrowding in the school. In June he had asked the Governors for their support in, "...any necessary work of clearance". He clearly felt that there were some boys in the school blocking the way for others and he saw it as, "...his clear duty to reduce the forms to a reasonable size... unless this is done results will probably deteriorate". He was, after all, coping with 360 boys in a school built to hold only 330.

By October 1943 the first war casualties amongst the Old Boys were reported. The names of Billingham and Ashdown were to head the list of the school's losses. Three further Old Boys were also reported missing. The first DFC among the Old Boys was announced - Flt. Lt. Roy Barnes, news all too soon followed by his being reported killed in action.

There were more changes in the staff. Mr Halliwell left to be a Head Master, Mr Beecroft followed John Garrett to Bristol. Mr Cates too, left for promotion. During the war many interim staff appointments had to be made. Many staff were called up and there weren't enough other teachers around to replace them. Charles Wrinch had to work hard to get the replacements he needed and on occasions had to be satisfied with sharing teachers with other schools.

The two major events for the boys during 1944 were the flying bombs and the evacuation camps. The Cricket Report in the Summer 1944 edition of The Spur, finished: "The Flying Bombs brought a most successful season to an untimely end". The bombs resulted in considerably more boys being evacuated by their parents, in some cases without even informing the school. By June Wrinch could list 19 boys whose homes were suspected of being damaged but of whom nothing was known. The school itself was fortunate. Many windows were broken and some were wrenched from their frames, "But our only casualty was a stuffed bird in the physics laboratory which received the coup de grace from a cannon shell fired from the one fighter aircraft which chased its victim over Raynes Park".

With the deteriorating conditions due to the flying bombs Wrinch took the opportunity of making an experiment. It was necessary to conduct the Higher and General School Examinations for those 80 boys who were taking them, but the rest of the boys tended to stay in shelters at home or to trickle away. By the midsummer Wrinch felt that the vast, thinly populated and safe areas of the country offered an obvious invitation. On June 29th, 1944, three parties set out for the country. The parties were to be self-supporting and were originally quite independent of the Government Evacuation Scheme. Wrinch takes up the story:

"The first party, through the kind co-operation of the Wiltshire W.A.E.C. established itself in the farmyard at Inkpen, Berks, which was due to be occupied in August by the school Harvest Camp. The W.A.E.C. generously gave it the use of all the equipment and facilities reserved for harvesters. The organiser was Mr Smith, who was accompanied by Mr Herdman and two mothers, Mrs Buckingham and Mrs Richards. At first great difficulties of weather and accommodation had to be faced. The size of the party rose to forty and the strain on the staff was considerable. But by the middle of July a regular

routine of school studies, expeditions and work in the fields had been established. By now the Certificate Examination was coming to an end. More permanent quarters were needed, and by a stroke of good fortune these were ready to hand. A large house stood empty in the neighbouring village of West Woodhay. The Ministry of Health willingly handed it over. Equipment was brought down from the school by Mr Dartington, who rapidly brought order into the huge rambling building. Before the end of July a branch of the school was established here with Mrs French, the school secretary in charge of the business as well as directing the operations of bringing the overgrown garden back to its original seemliness.

"The second party was organised by Mr Raynham most ably assisted by Mr Loveday, and the school Scout Troop. A tented camp was set up in an open field at Meldreth, Cambridgeshire. By permission of the Vicar... lessons in the early days were held in the village church. Mrs Wells, a mother, and Miss Parkhurst, sister of one of the boys, acted as cooks. Although few of the boys were Scouts the spirit and practical experience of the movement underlay all the proceedings of this party. Numbers increased very rapidly and permanent accommodation became essential. Once again the Ministry of Health came to our aid. The Church House, a victorian vicarage recently evacuated by the Pioneers, was handed over to us. Admirably equipment was supplied and a second large branch of the school was in full operation before the end of July. This, too continued throughout the holidays and on into the following term. Full advantage was taken of the proximity of Cambridge and many invaluable expeditions were made.

"The third party, consisting mainly of the youngest boys set up a tented camp in the playing fields of Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, by kind invitation of the Headmaster... who provided the tents and gave us the use of the School Cricket Pavilion. While the school term was in being at Salisbury the midday meal was taken at the school. Later it was sent out by the Wiltshire Education Committee. This party was organised by Mr and Mrs Horne, assisted later by Mr Haslam, Mr Bridgen, a parent (who) was brilliantly successful as principle Cook and Matron. Living under Spartan conditions the staff created a model community of healthy and happy small boys. The standards of enthusiasm, common-sense, cleanliness and initiative was very remarkable".

Boys were able to obtain work on the land and were paid accordingly. The parents who cooked received no wages, and the services of the staff were entirely gratuitous. For the equivalent of a term the boys lived under boarding-school conditions. The health of many of them improved to an astonishing degree. Their outlooks were broadened and their self-sufficiency increased.

The timetable for the camp at Salisbury is representative of the three:

- 7 am Staff rise and prepare breakfast
- 8 am Boys up, and some bathe
- 8.30 Breakfast
- 9.15 Tent inspection

9.30 Assembly, Prayers
 9.40 - 10.50 Lessons
 10.50 - 11.15 Break, Milk
 11.15 - 12.15 Lessons
 12.15 - 12.45 P.T.
 12.45 Bathe
 1.15 Lunch
 2.0 - 2.30 Siesta
 2.30 - 4.30 Free, or expeditions
 4.30 Tea
 5.0 - 6.30 Games
 6.30 - 7.30 Prep
 7.30 Supper
 8.15 Reading from 'How Green Was My Valley'
 8.30 Juniors to bed
 9.0 Seniors to bed, Juniors asleep
 9.30 Seniors asleep
 9.30 - 11.0 pm Staff supper and conference.

Wrinch concluded his account, which he submitted to the County Education Committee:

"Good has come out of evil. In June it appeared that members of the school would be dispersed. Instead of this our unity has been strengthened more effectively than ever before. The credit for this goes to the staff who have voluntarily sacrificed their leisure and time for study and have risked their health through taking on this great responsibility. Their services, especially those of the prime organisers, deserve greater recognition than it is in my power to give. I can only express my gratitude by passing on this brief record of their service for the consideration of the Education Committee".

In September, 1945, Wrinch submitted his resignation to the Governors, effective from the end of December. He had decided to return to full-time teaching at Radley and although the Governors tried hard to dissuade him, his mind was made up. He had only been Head Master for three years, yet in that time he had held the school together and maintained its sense of community.

Charles Wrinch did not depart before he had helped the school to celebrate its tenth anniversary. The 19th September was marked with festivities and John Garrett returned as Guest of Honour. The whole school went to see Olivier's 'Henry V' at the Odeon, Shannon Corner, for 1/- a head. A further cause of celebration was that Raynes Park had at last won the annual rugger match against Rutlish. Charles Wrinch commented, "This is a significant opening to a new decade".

Now that the war was over the Old Boys Society organised a Memorial Fund in memory of those Old Boys who had died in the war. Charles Wrinch would return for the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque which the Old Boys were to commission.

EXPANSION -

The man chosen by the Governors to be the new Head Master was profiled in the local press:

"Mr T Henry Porter, MA (Oxon),... has been on the staff of Sutton County School since (1934). Mr Porter, who is 42 years of age, volunteered for the R.A.F. in 1941, and his service includes two years up and down the Western Desert when acting as Senior Intelligence Officer of a Naval Co-operation Wing... He is ex-President of Surrey Secondary Teachers Association and a fellow of the Royal Economic Society. Mr Porter was married in April this year",

On the surface Henry Porter inherited a school that had been returned to good order after the war and which now looked forward to a peaceful existence. However, from the beginning there was one serious problem; that of space. Since October 1944 the school had had to be given the use of two classrooms and a laboratory in the neighbouring Bushey Central School. Porter was faced with providing for 400 boys in a school designed for 330. It was to be a little while until a more permanent solution was found, but in October 1946 Porter was promised that three temporary classrooms would be erected at the school.

In the summer term, the school's first Secretary, Mrs French, had left. She was succeeded by Miss Woodhouse, who was to hold the fort for many years to come. Mr Milton also left in 1946, severing another connection with the early days. By then boxing, wrestling and tennis clubs had been formed and due to a contract with Ely's of Wimbledon, school caps were again available for the first time in three years.

The quest for permanent school playing fields went on and the County were asked to investigate the possible purchase of the Polo Ground on the Kingston Road. At the same time there was a possibility of acquiring the 'Oberon' Sports Club on the edge of Wimbledon. This club, consisting of extensive playing fields, tennis courts, putting green and a clubhouse, had been built by Sir H Twyford, Chairman of the old Lancashire spinning firm of Lrettles and Coates. He himself lived at Possill House, on Copse Hill. Later to be Lord Mayor of London, he had decided to provide sporting facilities for the use of his company staff. Much of his fortune had been made from his company's famous 'Oberon' brand of lady's stockings. Thus he decided to commemorate the firm's success by naming his new club after his greatest asset.

Since 1936 the school Scout Troop had annually run a 'Summer Garden Party' to raise funds. In 1947, for the first time, the event was sponsored by the school itself and continued to be henceforth. These events were always well-supported and certainly an enjoyable time was had by all. (In recent years the event has been revived in the form of the 'Superteams' competition sponsored by the school's Parents, Teachers and Friends Association.)

At his first Prize Giving, held at Wimbledon Town Hall,

the Head Master spoke of his reservations about the new national exam proposals. "I am old fashioned enough to believe that examinations are not a bad thing", he said. A year later Porter could report in The Spur: "A strange building is rearing its prefabricated form on the school playground, though at the moment it looks more like a building in the last stages of demolition than one soon to be completed". Co-inciding with this project the Education Committee agreed to the expenditure of £1,953.15.10 on the redecoration of the inside of the school. (The three temporary classrooms were still in use for teaching in 1979 and were not demolished until the following year.) By the end of the year plans for the school's tenure of the 'Oberon' playing fields and pavilion were well-advanced and the Governors had approved a layout for pitches, reserving, at the local Council's request 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres for continuing use as allotments. (The whole ground had been converted to allotments for the duration of the war). It took a considerable amount of perseverance on the part of the Governors, the Head Master and his Games Staff, to get the County Council to complete the proposals for the grounds, but by 1949 they were in use. Another battle had to be fought to persuade the County Council to restore the pavilion from its wartime use as an isolation hospital, surrounded by sandbags.

Though the war had ended, the school's ATC - 565 Squadron - continued to flourish. In 1948 they were bemoaning the fact in The Spur that the Berlin Airlift had brought an end to their own flights in Transport Command aircraft, though cadets had had the chance of two flights in Ansons from Kenley Aerodrome. As well as the ATC, the Head Master's Report at the 1948 Prize Giving spoke of twenty societies, of differing nature, in the school, including the Christian Union who had chosen the motto: "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only".

In November 1948 Mr T W Powys Cobb resigned to enter business in Austria. His departure severed the last link with the beginnings of the school in 1935. A comment to this effect appeared in the spring 1949 edition of The Spur. It concluded: "He had led and moulded his House for fourteen years... he was the focus round which the Old Boys Society revived after the war, he was the author of the plan on which the gardens surrounding (the school) have been so successfully developed".

Times were changing. A new Chairman of Governors was appointed, J Hood Phillips, Esq., MA., and The Spur noted that the average for 5th Form pocket money was 5/9d, though 2/- to 3/- was the more common amount. In May, the War Memorial Committee reported the progress of their Fund to the Governors. Over £500.0.0 had been collected and they were now trying to decide what should be done with the final sum. There were at the time three suggestions: Memorial Gates, a stained glass window or, a clock tower. For the time being it was resolved that a plaque, commemorating the names of the fallen should be fixed in the School Hall. It was however not only the dead of wartime who were remembered in the school. In 1949, Michael Welby, who had come as a boy to the school in 1944, died, after a whole term spent in hospital. He was sorely missed by all and, in his memory, his parents presented the school with a Challenge Cup for Debating. From then on the annual Debating round was known as the 'Welby Debating Competition'.

Contact with past pupils, now at University, was eagerly

maintained. The goal of Oxford and Cambridge, still held before all, received support from those already there. The Spur reported:

"Raynes Park for the first time has gained control of Isis, the leading Oxford undergraduate journal. Derek Cooper is in command as Editor and Robert Robinson his lieutenant as News Editor, while the names of Paul Vaughan and Alan Day may be seen at the foot of many a film critique".

Remembering others, the Lord Bishop of Southwark dedicated the War Memorial Plaque, listing 18 names, on June 4th 1950. Both John Garrett and Charles Wrinch joined the school for the occasion.

The school entered the new decade of the '50s with a new Governing Body. Previously the school had had its own, personal, Governing Body, but from now on it was to be grouped with the other schools in Raynes Park, administered by one central body of Governors. One of the earliest proposals of this new Body was that the school should have three form intake from September 1951.

The Old Boys presented the school with a portrait of John Garrett, painted by Mr Rogers, the school's first Art Master. The following year Charles Wrinch was prevailed upon to present his own portrait, and it took its place with Garrett's, hanging in the School Hall. The life of the school in the fifties reflected life in the country at large. There were new initiatives and developments; money was in short supply, as were many other things, but the new Elizabethan age had opened. In 1952 a new proscenium was added to the stage at a cost of £200.0.0. The school Printing Guild produced 'Oberon', as a successor to the Library Review, and the 'Da Vinci' society was formed, "To stimulate a wide interest in the Fine Arts and Crafts". The Library had acquired its 8000th book and still possessed its first - Ainsworth's 'Tower of London'.

1951 also saw the departure of Mr Shannon of the Craft Department. It was his efforts that had brought the school to the notice of listeners to children's programmes on the BBC. In a July 1949 edition of the Radio Times, we note: "The Puppet Theatre at Raynes Park County Grammar School... visits the children's programme, at noon today. You will hear excerpts from the puppet operetta 'The Press Gang', which the boys are preparing to present next term". In all, 525 parents, children and friends, attended the three performances of 'The Press Gang' that were given at the school in December. The average age of the boys involved was 13, and much of their work was done at the school on Thursday nights. The sets and scenery were designed and painted by the school's Art Master, Cecil Riley who, during his tenure of that post, filled the school with a tremendous enthusiasm for art, as well as finished sets for innumerable annual drama productions. The puppet productions continued and, in Mr Shannon's final year they presented 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

1953 saw a 'Coronation' Garden Party, and some boys from the school were lucky enough to join the detachments from each London school, who were given privileged places along the Embankment, from which to watch the Coronation Procession. One boy wrote: "During the proceedings we each received a free ice-lolly and one (or more) cartons of 'Kia-Ora' orange juice". Anthony Hornsby, from the Second Form, was actually in the Abbey, and finished his report to The Spur: "At the end

of the Service, when I left the Abbey, I fed the Duke of Gloucester's horse which was standing under a shelter. Then I walked over to the Golden Coach which, if I had wanted to, I could have touched". Obviously Raynes Park boys were taught restraint!

In the Governors' Minute Book for 1952 we get an interesting insight into the cost of equipping a boy at the school. The Head Master submitted:

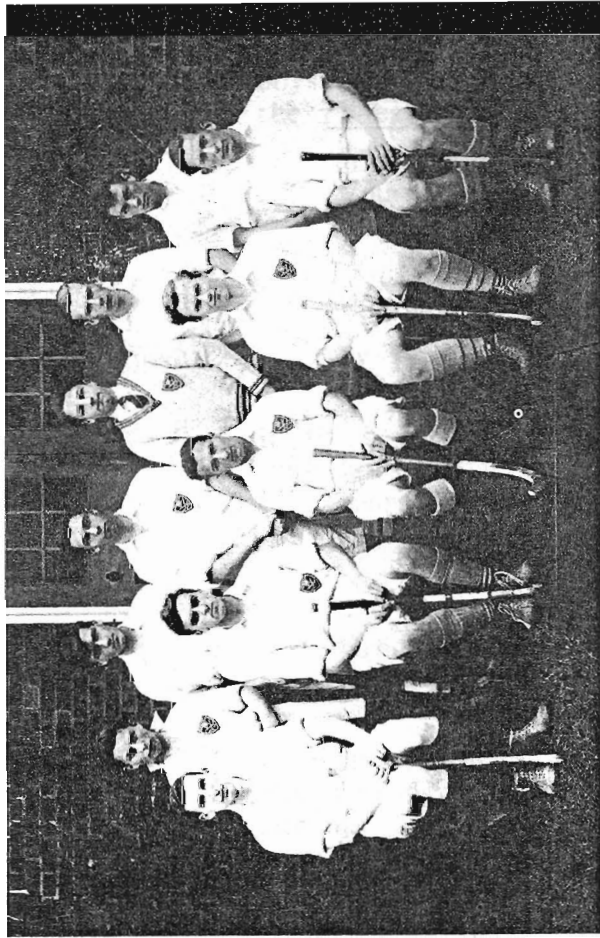
"The normal capitation rate would be 37/6 per boy. Out of that, present estimated costs are:- for stationary 22/7; for Science materials 6/6, for Art and Craft materials 5/3, total: 33/9. Give each boy a hymn book at 2/9 and one shilling is left for text-books. Even if we omit all possible 'trimmings', and include in that category poetry and sets of Shakespeare, I reckon we are bound to spend on them in the first three years about £5.12.0 per boy for books alone".

Nevertheless, in the spring of the following year the school used its £10.0.0 'Coronation Gift' from the County Council, and £60.0.0 of its own funds to purchase the display cases for the Cups and to supplement the 'Winners' boards on the walls of the Hall.

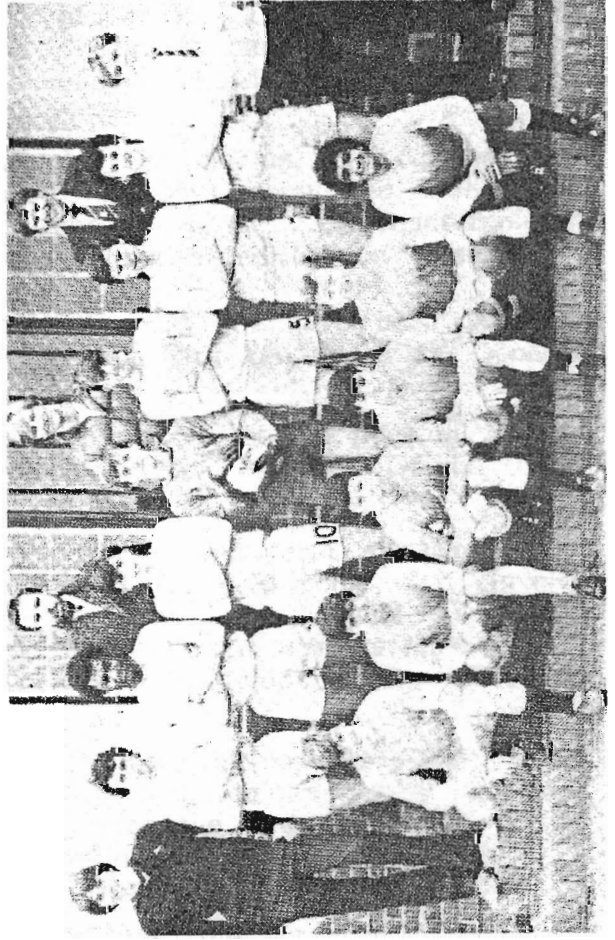
In June 1954, further honours came to the school. The Governors resolved that: "To mark the gaining of four Open Awards at Oxford and Cambridge, the Education Committee have offered an additional day's holiday". The summer of 1954 also saw the departure of Mr Raynham to be a Head Master in Guildford. He had been at the school since 1937, being Deputy Head from 1946. So effective was he, that he was known to the boys, and not a few others, at 'Tiger' Raynham. His dedication was typical of so many of the staff during the school's life. The end of 1954 at last saw plans laid for the permanent expansion of the school. Willows, Rutlish and Raynes Park, were all earmarked for growth. Raynes Park was at last to take the promised extra (Third) form from 1958, and the County promised to provide the necessary additions for 1956/7. A major building programme was envisaged. On a smaller scale, 1955 saw the school's purchase of a second hand hut for the use of the Scout Troop, at a cost of £200.0.0.

The spring of 1957 saw further developments. Whilst the Trustees of the War Memorial Fund decided to use their money to assist the Old Boys in the purchase of 14 acres of playing fields at Hook, to be named the 'Memorial Playing Fields', the school had first sight of the plans for its extension. Apart from the room for the extra forms involved in the proposed three-form entry, much needed relief was promised in the shape of 6th Form rooms, a new Geography room, a Library annexe, new laboratories and a dining room. The siting of the last caused much difficulty and difference of opinion. The final project drove a road across the Head Master's lawn and included the orchard amongst its victims. However, there were to be compensations since changes were to be made in the siting of the entrance, the boiler room and the Head Master's study. The Spur commented: "But at least strangers entering our gates a couple of years hence should see a front door where for so long there has only been a heap of coke".

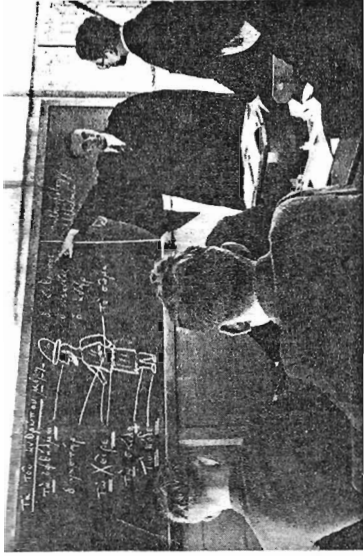
The creative talents of the boys were being given new scope too. For the Christmas Carol Service of 1956, the school's newly formed orchestra made its first public appearance under



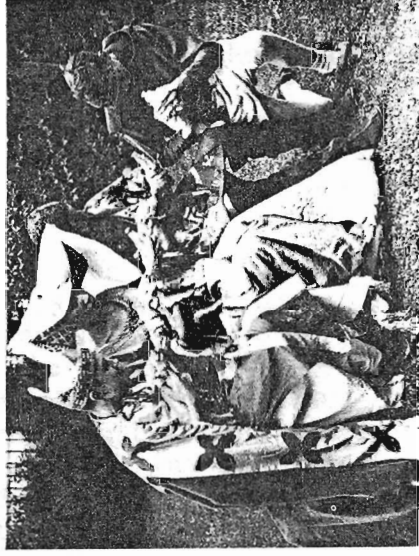
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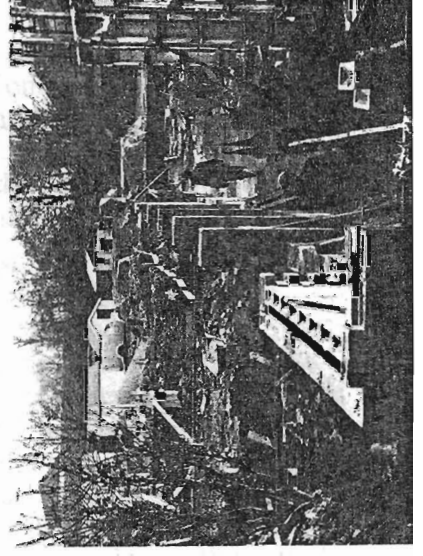
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Mr Ayton's direction. Enthusiasm for the music appeared to be infectious, as The Spur reported:

"The orchestra... played its 'party piece'... (Mr Ayton's) arrangement of 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen', a symphonic fantasia... an encore was demanded, and indeed the festivity might have developed into a 'Rock and Roll' session had not the prefects appeared to sober the audience with their collection for the School Orchestra Fund".

In 1954 Basil Wright had visited the school and shown his latest film. It was suggested that perhaps the school might be interested in making its own film and the possibilities were explored. The following spring preparations were well ahead. £100.0.0 had been granted from the John Garrett Fund, and a Kodak cine camera with telephoto lens had been purchased. The other £50.0.0 was reserved for production costs. It was expected that the film would be finished by the autumn, but the 'begetters', having gone on to University leaving the task unfinished, a Film Club was formed to complete the work. They made steady, if not spectacular, progress. Towards the end of the autumn term, by way of encouragement, Miss Barbara Hepworth visited them and showed them some of the films made by her father, Cecil Hepworth, some fifty years before. The film finally received its first public showing in the summer of 1957. It was entitled 'Knife Edge' and the original script, by M Gordon of the 3rd year 6th, had been the winner of the 'John Robbins Essay Competition' of 1955. This competition was annually sponsored by Basil Wright, in memory of one of the boys of the school who had died. The film was reviewed in the Times Educational Supplement:

"For their first venture in film making, the Raynes Park County Grammar School for Boys attempted ambitiously a story in which crime and the chase were counterpointed by the idyll of a boy's fishing expedition on a summer's day...

"The atmosphere evoked could not have been bettered by any amateur team blessed with ten times the modest budget".

If films took a little time for gestation in the lives of Raynes Park boys, other contemporary 'art forms' did not. Of the Upper 5X Record Society, The Spur reported:

"The number of records played this term already exceed 120. Rock and Roll - 75, Skiffle - 21, Pop - 17, Novelty - 7, Jazz - 3, Be-bop - 3, Country and Western - 3. Vocal Groups have figured prominently in... programmes. They include: The Platters, Diamonds, Dell Viking, Crickets, and many others".

As well as passing their time in leisure, the boys were also forging ahead in sports. In 1954 the school had won the 'Surrey Grammar Schools' Senior Athletics Trophy' for the first time, and in the summer of 1957, rowing was added to the school's sports with an eight taking to the river from the Albany boat house in Kingston.

At the 1957 Prize Giving the Guest of Honour was Dr Barnes Wallis. He spoke of his convictions that, for economic reasons, "In a generation's time all our supplies (will) be brought in underwater". The Spur reported that: "Dr Barnes Wallis closed his speech by warning us not to be discouraged, and not to think for one moment that our old country was done for, as it was not".

Dr Barnes Wallis was particularly known for his developments in the field of armaments during the war. In November, 1957, members of staff were to understandably feel that hostilities had not finished after all.

"Mr Porter also reported (to the Governors) that a bullet from the practice range of Messrs Bradbury Wilkinson's premises came through the staff room window and embedded itself in the notice board on the other side of the staff room. The matter was taken up with Messrs Bradbury's who were most concerned at the incident which was apparently caused through a defect in the concrete wall of the range. The necessary repairs were immediately carried out and the firm have undertaken to be responsible for the repair of any damage to the school premises. The Head Master has also informed the police of the matter."

The decade was to finish with two events for the school to be proud of. The school ATC won the Pennant for the best Squadron in Surrey for the second year running, and one of the school's boys, P Nicholls, was chosen by the English Schools RFU to play for England.

It was not till the spring of 1960 that the new extensions were finally completed, and that did not end the misery, for then work on alterations to the old buildings began. Due to the installation of a boiler house in the new part of the school an amount of space at the Bushey Road end of the old buildings was now available. It was decided to demolish the old stage, converting the area to a formal entrance for the school, adjoining the new Head Master's and secretarial staff's offices, all converted from the old boiler house. A new stage was erected at the opposite end of the hall, and the old kitchens and serveries were converted to other uses. (This stage was finally removed in 1980, when a whole system of free standing mobile staging was purchased by the school.) These changes were not without their hitches, since to this day the gap of up to five feet under some of these offices still fills with flood water. This, on occasion, led to unpleasant consequences:

"The Chairman (of the Governors) reported a letter he had received from Miss D Woodhouse, the secretary, complaining about an obnoxious smell in her room following the flooding of the area under her floor. ...in spite of the fact that the caretaker had used a disinfecting liquid".

Some of the boys' comments on the builders, with whom they had lived for some considerable time, were published in The Spur. A 3rd Form boy wrote: "It is very interesting to have such a selection of humanity in the school grounds, digging their little holes, and drinking their cups of tea: it gives one a taste of what a man's life is like". By the end of the summer the work was finished and an old friend returned. John Garrett had, due to ill health, resigned from the Headship of Bristol Grammar at the age of 58. He returned to Wimbledon for his retirement, and until his premature death in 1966, supported the school as a true friend should.

The spring 1967 edition of The Spur carried an appreciation of John Garrett and his service to the school. His interest in Shakespeare had continued long after he had left Raynes Park and he had been appointed a Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. With W H Auden he had edited an anthology of poetry for school use - 'The Poet's Tongue'. His demand that all should

do their best was remembered in his comment: "Those who lead anaemic lives here will invariably get anaemic testimonials when they leave". And, lastly it was remembered that, when leaving the school in 1943 he had shaken hands with every boy as they left the hall, tears streaming down his face. He did later admit to having admired Noel Coward's characterisation of Lord Mountbatten in the film 'In Which We Serve'. At Garrett's death, by his special request, the capacious desk with which he had been presented by the boys when he had left Raynes Park in 1943, was returned to the school.

The life of the school went on. Early in 1961 the newly formed 'Raynes Park Grammar School Singers' won the Secondary School Class in the Wimbledon Music Festival. It was their first attempt at such a competition and was not to be their last either. Indeed, music increased in popularity at the school. In 1962 the first House Music Competition was held and the summer concert was so popular that people had to be seated in the vestibule.

The 'Swinging 60s' were the subject of indirect comment by the Head Master at the 1964 Prize Giving:

"Boys not inclined to book-worming were (in general) spending their time profitably, although perhaps too much energy went into maintaining scooters, short-sighted jobs or 'Beatle' haircuts. Although (I) do not consider that an intelligent eighteen-year-old should have the colour of his socks or the length of his hair dictated by a gentleman born in the reign of Edward VII, (I think) that the boys concerned would strengthen (their) arguments for freedom of choice if they worked for better results".

On 18th November, 1965, after some months of illness, Henry Porter died. He was within weeks of completing twenty years of service to the school.

C H A N G E -

The death of Henry Porter was seen as a profound loss by all. "A man of dry wit and the calculated understatement he will be missed by many of us for many different reasons." So said the Chairman of the Governors. It was felt that there should be some kind of memorial to the late Head Master, and a fund was duly set up. By the spring of the next year it had reached £1,050. In the same year the new Head Master, Mr G D N Giles, was appointed.

Following a motion in the House of Commons in January 1965, the Department of Education and Science requested local authorities, (in Raynes Park's case, the newly formed London Borough of Merton) to prepare and submit plans for reorganising secondary education in their area, on comprehensive lines. Six different schemes were duly presented by the Borough's Education Department. There was to be widespread public consultation within the Borough. In one of the schemes Raynes Park was to be closed but ultimately that scheme was not adopted. It was, in the end, the Sixth Scheme that was adopted for implementation. This involved the formation of a three-tier system for education in Merton. Raynes Park was to be an eight form entry Senior Comprehensive. At the 1967 Prize Giving, the Head Master said:

"It is a truism to state that the problems facing Raynes Park High School will only really hit us when our status changes in 1969, but I am sure this school is not so attached to its past that it cannot change and meet the challenge of the future with vigour, flexibility and humanity".

He went on to speak of, "...a bright new world with the label 'comprehensive' attached to it".

The year before an old friend had returned to present the Prizes. Mr C Day Lewis had been a great friend of the school ever since its inception. He told the boys: "The arts in this school are built into your life. They are not just a subject for dilettantes. They are not a luxury - they are essential and necessary to the human mind". At the same time a portrait of Henry Porter joined those of the previous Head Masters. The end of the summer term saw the severing of another long association. Miss Woodhouse retired from the position of school secretary. She contributed some reminiscences to The Spur before she went. They must have made strange reading to those boys who had not known the school before its physical transformation in 1959. She, unlike the Head Master for whom she had worked so hard, completed 20 years of service to the school.

There were innovations by 1967 too. £50 had been allotted for the school to build its own computer, and a School Council was running. In the spring of 1968 the Parents raised money to help the school buy a minibus, and The Spur reported the activities of the 'Social Service' group - an option available in place of 6th Form Games. Old associations came to an end and some were renewed. Mr Peter Smith ceased from full-time teaching at the school after 27 years, and on his partial retirement he was joined at a special Dinner by Messrs Gibb,

Mellinell and Milton. In the school's environs, Senior's Fishpaste Factory was at last closing. The air over the school might be fresher in the future !

The summer of 1968 saw the opening of the Henry Porter Memorial Library. The establishment of a 6th Form Reference Library had been the choice of those responsible for the Memorial Fund and it was installed in the annexe to the school library that had been added in 1959. (When, in 1979, the library was moved to take up residence in the old gymnasium, the decision was taken to amalgamate the two parts of the library and name the entire facility the 'Henry Porter Memorial Library'. Today (1985) Henry Porter's portrait presides over it.)

In the July 1969 edition of The Spur, (the last to be headed 'Raynes Park Grammar School'), the Head Master wrote:

"One of the most exciting offers recently has been a gift to commemorate the change of the school from being a Grammar School to being a High School, and the form this will take is a piece of sculpture which will reside in the 6th Form Quadrangle. No doubt there will be cries of horror and perplexity from some who find all modern art difficult to appreciate".

The sculpture was executed by Graham Gilchrist and was entitled 'Raynes Rise'. Its acquisition was made possible by Mr Milton's generosity and a grant from the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The March 1970 edition of The Spur was Vol 25 No 1. It bore the new title, 'Raynes Park High School'. September 1969 had seen 135 new arrivals and those already established in the school regarded the newcomers with a suspicious eye. However, the Head Master worked hard, with his staff, to merge the two groups and an effort was made, by such things as the ceasing of the annual Prize Giving, to remove what were seen by many as the more blatant relics of elitism. The old Bushey Central School, which in the immediate past had been Bushey Junior School, became the new High School's technical wing. The Bushey School's biology laboratory, originally built on land taken from the Grammar School, had been taken by Raynes Park as early as 1963. So, for the first time since the days of the old West Barnes Farm, all the land from Bushey Road to West Barnes Lane, was united.

There was however to be no change in the boys' determination to excell. From the late 1960s on this excellence had been particularly seen in the field of Sport. In 1969 the school's First XI Hockey team had won the London Senior Cup, a trophy that they were to retain for seven consecutive years. This was for a team who only played their sport for one term a year. The 1970s saw great success on the Rugger field as well and in 1974 the Cricket team won the Surrey Cup. Cross Country Running was another sport in which the school excelled. Not only was it the hard work of the boys that brought this about; the dedication of the staff involved was, in great measure, the source of that success. In Hockey alone the school fielded six teams every Saturday.

In the early 1970s the school's Tennis Courts were sacrificed for the site of the Raynes Park Youth Wing. This new building offered the young people of the area the chance of a place to meet together and, from its completion a regular 'Youth Club' met every week. It became a much used facility and very much reflected John Garrett's original hope that children

would not simply make good their escape at the end of their lessons but would fully utilise all that the school had to offer.

In 1971 The Spur was reduced to twice yearly publication and sadly, due to soaring printing costs it ceased publication with the summer 1972 edition, Vol 27 No 1.

In 1974 the Head Master, David Giles, left to take over the Headship of Tamworth Manor High School, also in the Borough of Merton. He had worked extremely hard and had ably shouldered the enormous responsibility of leading the school through the greatest upheaval of its life. It was great credit to him and staff that the work was completed so successfully. His replacement as Head Master was Mr Brian Butler who led the school with enthusiasm until his departure in 1978. The man then appointed was John Massey. Interviewed in the local press, at the time of his appointment, he said:

"I want Raynes Park to continue to be a good example of what a comprehensive education can provide. I am a modern traditionalist when it comes to teaching... I'm very firmly in support of school uniforms and expect my boys to set an example when they are out of school... But most of all, I want to continue the high academic standard the school has already set".

Co-inciding with his arrival the school saw an amount of new building work undertaken. In 1979 the new gymnasium was brought into use. It was equipped with extensive changing rooms for boys and staff alike. (In 1936 John Garrett had complained to the Governors about the appalling lack of any facilities for the staff to change before and after Games.) At the same time new 6th Form accommodation was provided in a building linking the Youth Wing to the main school buildings. This was named the 'Cobb Centre' since, when the school had adopted 8 form entry at the time of comprehensivisation Cobb's House had been closed. In the naming of the new building the memory of Mr Cobb could be kept alive with the names of his contemporaries.

The cultural side of the school's life continued unabated. In 1977, for the first time, the school staged a musical written by the Head of Music. It was entitled 'A Piece of Pie'. This was followed by a number of others, the fruit of co-operation between the English and the Music departments. The last Shakespearean production was in the academic year 1979/80. Fittingly, being a repeat of the first, it was Julius Caesar.

The 1980s saw the pre-eminence of Raynes Park in Football. In 1981 the school were the U.15 Surrey Cup winners, an achievement repeated in '82, '83 and '84. In 1981 and 1983 they were U.19 Surrey League winners, but in 1983 the school were proud to have produced the team that won the U.16 English Schoolboys Football Trophy.

Finally, the school can be proud to note that in its 50th year it has attained its best ever 'O' level GCE results with 61 5th year boys attaining 5 or more passes at 'O' level or their equivalent. This represents an impressive 30% of the school's intake. At the same time the 'A' level GCE results have been one of the best years the school has had, with 26 boys attaining 3 or more passes at 'A' level (67% of the entry or 3.2 'A' level passes per student).

So Raynes Park High School looks forward, confident of the spirit of its founders and the continuing witness of its members:

"To each his need, from each his power."