



HEADMASTER'S NOTES

Adventures on the Boat Train

With next year in mind, not everyone has been preoccupied with the Olympics. Already in France, celebrations have begun to mark the bicentenary of Charles Dickens' birth. The station at Staplehurst in rural Kent was the scene of an unusual episode in Dickens' career. Returning from Folkestone (after Boulogne) in June 1865, the first class coaches of his train plunged over a viaduct at 50 miles per hour - all but one, which was left teetering precariously in the style of *The Italian Job*. Dickens became the hero of the hour, offering water out of his top hat and brandy from his flask to the dying and injured, retrieving his manuscript of the latest chapter of *Our Mutual Friend* from his overcoat still in the swaying carriage and rushing from the scene before the authorities could ask him who the ladies he was travelling with were. For it was the young actor Nelly Ternan and her mother accompanying the great writer back from a stay in Pas de Calais. That was Monday's talk. Tuesday and Wednesday were the turns of Bruce Rickards and William Rogers. First we remembered Pentecost and its strange but wonderful speaking in tongues and later we recalled the exotic Old Testament names of the Book of Daniel, then emulated by the impressive variety of names of our own assembly audience. Ruth Henson concluded her series on Thursday, in what has now become a much enjoyed tradition of serial narratives. The Ofsted Report is out today. Two young French Canadian actors put on a vaudeville, slapstick piece, which entertained everyone in comprehensible French. It was called *Le Paquet Mystereux*, but retained its enigma to the end. David Saran continues to star in the Judo world. He came third in the South England Nationals. We await the results of the whole school photograph and the Year 4 tales of their trip today to Wimereux.

Lingering Death Throes

The death of Common Entrance has been predicted for at least 50 years, but it clings robustly to life. The exam is now marked by a certificate from the ISEB for those completing the course and the papers provide an insight of how the modern world is reflected in the setters' imaginations. History remains rooted in our sea-girt isle. The paper surveys Britannia from the crusades via the Great Plague to the cotton industry. Contrasting are the Geography and Science questions, where the trend is very much towards natural disasters, conservation and echo themes of all kinds. We are back on terra firma in the Latin paper: *you have been invited to a Roman dinner party, explain some of the different entertainment you might expect to receive* (guest examiner: Silvio Berlusconi). And Orpheus, disobeying Pluto's orders, watches as doom strikes: *Eurydice statim ad Tartarum redit*. Jollier subject matter in the French, with a passage about mannequin Carla Bruni, "*elle a porté des vêtements de Christian Dior*". More attuned to our austere times, in the Maths we find Mr. Bevan's train ticket to London costing £16.28. *How much change does he get from a £20 note?* One mark given for very little. Also, a paper for our times, Religious Studies devotes exactly half its space to world religions and some of the rest is of the rhetorical nature of queries like: *what is pacificism?* In the English, the chosen extracts are from the Sahara Desert and from a poem ("*Once upon a schooltime*" it begins) by U.A. Fanthorpe, herself for many years teacher of English at Cheltenham Ladies. Despite all these trials to overcome, the Willington C.E. cohort came up trumps to a man and congratulations to Year 8 for maintaining our 100% success record in Common Entrance for the 8th year. Some excellent marks, but hats off to Michael Hammond for his straight As in every subject. A result which takes some getting at St. Paul's. Deservedly, they can all enjoy their paintballing etc. now.

Die Schule Mit Musik

Given their roll call of composers, it is hard for us to cavil at the Germans' description a century ago of England as a land without music. It would be unkind to say that a decade ago there was a similar situation at Willington, but not all of the panorama of music can be conveyed in a ukulele band. Since the bursting on the scene of IK and the continued thrusting forward of our musical tradition through the work of Caitlin Kelly and Jonathan Eyre with growing and more extensive peripatetic support, we have certainly become a school with music. There were two graphic illustrations this week. In the Vocal Recital, the talent was clear throughout, two of the stars being Max Sitter and Arthur Lewis. At St. Mark's yesterday afternoon, the programme was extensive, with five contributions from the Orchestra which now numbers 26. Other ensemble work showcased the massive presence in our music of Daichi Yoshimura and Ricky Choi, the Jazz Group in growingly sophisticated mood and some boisterous and splendid singing from the Hawk and Sparrows Choirs and the Choristers. Chad Barnes won the biggest ovation of all with his syncopated *Oh Happy Day*. The music tradition stands higher than ever.

Turning Points

Though the House Matches have been buffeted by showers in an unpredictable spate of summer weather this week, there has been some cricket. Drax still has a rugby feel to it, with its soaring posts reminding us of the oval ball, but the tangible presence of a home ground, which we never really enjoyed at Raynes Park, does give local advantage. In the matches, the Under 10 As had a 6 wicket victory against Tower House. The 2nd XI beat Priory's modest total, losing only a couple of wickets. In the 1st XI match, things were much more evenly contested. Abdullah Nazir had held our batting together, but, in reply, Priory, with a commanding opening bat, looked likely to reach our total. As so often in prep school matches, there is little between two teams and everything turns on two factors: esprit de corps and the quality of coaching. Obviously, the team needs to hold its nerve, but shrewd tactical help in the background from the staff in charge can readily sway the issue. It is not for nothing that, in close encounters, the deep knowledge and enthusiasm for the game of Marcus Tattersall, Mark Strudwick and Scott Moody have turned matters our way. It was the same on Wednesday afternoon, when, with adroit changes of bowling mixing pace and spin, we contained Priory, dismissed their opener and ended up excitingly winning by just 15 runs.

Sporting Chances

Storm clouds just around the corner, as two of the schools' unions threaten strike action on 30th June. Meanwhile, grade inflation now means that the old A* is ceding place to A with Distinction. This will still be a tall order for pupils at one college in India, which has set its pass mark for school leavers wishing to attain entry unequivocally at 100%. With rain clouds across the sky, Sports Day and sunshine seem an unlikely combination. Let us hope the gods will be kind for Prize Giving on Friday.

EVENTS : WEEK 9

MONDAY 20th JUNE

Years 6 & 7 Trip to Buggy Malone
Wimbledon High School

11.40 am Years 4 & 5 House Cricket Matches

TUESDAY 21st JUNE

8.40 am Assembly : Peter Bines
(Whole School)

Year 8 Campaign Paintballing Trip

4.15 pm Music Scholars' Recital

7.30 pm Governors' Meeting

WEDNESDAY 22nd JUNE

8.40 am Assembly : Catherine Parkes
(Whole School)

Year 4 Trip to Lord's Cricket Ground

Year 8 Trip to Thorpe Park

THURSDAY 23rd JUNE

Year 8 Trip to Graffiti Workshop

Year 8 Trip to Goals & Golf

7.00 pm Year 8 Leavers' Party

FRIDAY 24th JUNE

NO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING
(Crèche available)

JUNIOR AND SENIOR SPORTS DAY

12.30 pm Senior Boys to arrive at Drax

1.00 pm Senior Sports Day starts

1.30 pm Junior Boys to arrive at Drax

2.00 pm Junior Sports Day starts

4.00 pm School Prizegiving at Drax

5.00 pm POW Drinks Party at Drax

SATURDAY 25th JUNE

12.00 pm CD Recording (Choristers)
St. John's Church

FIXTURES : WEEK 9

MONDAY 20th JUNE

2.30 pm 3rd XI vs Kingston GS (Home)

TUESDAY 21st JUNE

2.30 pm U8 A&B 10 Aside vs Homefield (Away)

2.30 pm U10 A&B vs The Mall (Home)

MUSICIANS OF THE WEEK

For Excellence in the Classroom

Louis Allen (3P)

Eric Sarfo (6C)

Caspar Paton (7T)

Orchestral Player

All Orchestral Players for a fabulous concert

Sparrows Singer

All Sparrows for a fabulous concert

Chorister

All Choristers for a fabulous concert

WHITE CARD BADGES

Korosh Peyvandi (5F) Galahad 75

Dara Dina (5P) Excalibur 25

Hussam Elkhoully (5F) Galahad 25

SLAPPED CHEEK

We are still experiencing some cases of slapped cheek, so do please continue to be vigilant and inform Liz Rissen (liz.rissen@willingtonschool.co.uk) if you suspect that your son has contracted it.

CRICKETERS OF THE WEEK

Ricky Choi (8C)

Arjun Rao (8C)

Abdullah Nazir (6C)

Jamie Crowfoot (5F)

Victor Kang (5F)

UNIFORM SHOP OPENING HOURS

Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday, Friday
8.15 am - 9.00 am

**CLOSED
WEDNESDAY**

SPORTS DAY FRIDAY 24th JUNE

Please look out for details regarding Sports Day, which will be emailed to all parents next Tuesday.

CANCER RESEARCH

A huge thank you from Mrs. Hill to everyone who contributed. We managed to raise £1,428 for Cancer Research.

HOUSE POINTS WEEK 8

2 (2) Excalibur	5100
1 (1) Galahad	5780
3 (3) Lancelot	4375
4 (4) Merlin	3875