



# THORNTONIAN DAYS

Newsletter of The Old Thorntonians Association (Clapham)

*"Education is the leading of human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them."* John Ruskin (1819-1900)

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## **Reunion 2019**

Twenty OTs attended this event, held as usual at The Windmill, Clapham Common. Those present included two recent joiners, David Kay and Charles Sedgwick; coincidentally, both were at the school from 1958 until 1965.

For your diaries: next year's reunion will be on **Tuesday 3 November**.

## **Annual General Meeting 2020**

A reminder of the date and venue: **Saturday 21 March**, starting at 2pm; Lambeth Academy, Elms Road, SW4. The agenda and supporting papers will be issued early next year.

## **Obituaries**

**John Boud** (1947-54): died 11 June 2019. Contemporary Mike Surridge recalls: "In later life John qualified as a pilot of light aircraft and helicopters and regularly flew solo over the South Coast and across to France. On one occasion we agreed a time for him to fly over my caravan in Hastings and I would wave at him. I don't think that he saw me. We would regularly meet up in the Nightingale, Balham, on a Friday evening for a few drinks. Although not really a team player, he did play tennis on the courts on Clapham Common and cricket on the 'Ashes' nearby."

**Charles Corcoran** (1936-40): died 26 September 2019, aged 94. The following extract is from his letter of April 2006 to Ted Hayward: "I retain various exam reports, entry forms, etc, and especially some mementoes, including a 1938-9 homework timetable, a copy of 'The Thorntonian' magazine (Summer '38), a Speech Day programme for 20 January 1939, and a 'Clapham Exhibition' programme, price 6d, for 1939. I look back with nostalgia to those days, and regret the recent demolition of the buildings to erect an 'Academy' on the site."

## **From the Pages of *The Thorntonian***

Autumn 1932:

### **How Films are Faked**

A honeymoon couple whirl down Whitehall in an open touring car and behind them the Cenotaph recedes in the distance. The actors, however, are two Hollywood stars who have never been in London. In a haunted house, gloomy with cobwebs, a girl is terrified by peal after peal of thunder. Yet outside the studio the sun is shining brightly.

A man looks out of a train window and sees Windsor Castle in the distance, with its fluttering flags. The train is a section of "scenery" and the studio is forty miles from Windsor.

How do studios transport actors to where they please without even asking them? How can they create storms and fogs to order?

The couple who whirled down Whitehall were not in a car at all, but in a seat taken from a real car and put on rockers. Behind them was a cinema screen on which a film of Whitehall, specially photographed and sent from London, was projected from behind. The cinema

camera recorded both the acting in front, supposedly in a car, as well as the picture projected on the screen.

The girl in the haunted house was surrounded by synthetic cobwebs, made by pouring rubber solution on to a board. When this has become “tacky”, another board is placed on top. The two boards are pulled apart, and long, wispy strands are the result. With the aid of some grey powder these cobwebs defy detection. Peals of thunder are produced by a sack of potatoes being upset on a drum!

The actor who “watched” Windsor Castle actually looked out of a scenery train in the studio and saw – a bright blue background. A film of Windsor Castle is threaded in the camera to run face to face with the negative about to be made. The blue light from the back cloth acts as printing light and imprints the pictures into the new film negative. The result is an actor in front of a solid castle.

“All that glitters is not gold.”

L. PEARSON, IVA

Winter 1932:

**Things We Love – by Form IIIE  
(With apologies to Rupert Brooke)**

Snow-clad roofs in the moonlight;  
Silver-coloured airplanes glistening in the sun;  
Cool shades after exposure to heat;  
The tilted deck of a cutter under full canvas;  
Friday; the smell of lime trees after rain;

Cheeky wire-haired terriers; the first cuckoo of the year;  
The smell of boiling tar;  
Well-oiled machinery running smoothly;  
Stately pines; the satisfying thrill of high speed;  
The sweet fragrance of evening flowers;  
Water gurgling crystal-clear over stones;  
The beginning of the summer holidays; a cloudless sky in August;  
White-flannelled cricketers on the village green;  
A sea-bathe on a hot, sultry day;  
New bread; ruins of old castles;  
The flash of the kingfisher diving for his prey;  
A blood-red sunset; coloured pebbles on the beach;  
The purple heather on the hillside; unreaped golden corn;  
The velvety green of a well-kept lawn; the silvery spray of angry breakers;  
Many-tinted leaves in autumn; twinkling harbour lights;  
The moon’s path on the sea; the faithfulness of dogs;  
The cinema on a rainy day; toffees to chew;  
The freshness of an early morning breeze; fresh-flavoured fruit;  
The coolness of ointment on a wound; shop-windows at Christmas;  
A thatched cottage nestling in a valley;  
The company of a good book on a winter’s evening;  
Tracks freshly made in snow;  
A glass of water after peppermint rock;  
The crisp crunch of virgin snow;  
Shadows cast by a glowing fire;  
The untold beauty of adventure.

**1949 School Inspection**

As promised in the previous newsletter, reproduced below are the concluding extracts from the inspectors’ report.

## **ORGANISATION, CURRICULUM AND STANDARD OF WORK**

On entry into the First Forms boys marked "A" in the Common Entrance Examination are placed in Form 1A, and those marked "B" or "BII" enter forms 1B and 1C. Towards the end of their first term in school, all boys are examined and then placed, according to performance, in Forms A1, B or C. If necessary, further re-adjustments are made at Easter. In their first year the boys follow a normal Grammar School Curriculum and those in the A and B Forms begin the study of Latin or German in their second year. In the third year the study of Music is dropped by all, as is Religious Instruction in the fourth year. In the fifth year Economics is added to the Curriculum and options operate. Although a very large choice of options prevails, the majority of the boys choose Geography or Handicraft or Physics, and either Art or Economics or Chemistry.

The curriculum of the older boy is deficient in certain provinces of knowledge and experience which are normally thought important, notably in Religious Instruction and Physical Education, and throughout the school more time is needed for French and Science if present or comparable objectives are to be satisfactorily achieved. The remedy for these and other difficulties of time allocation would seem to be a fundamental reconsideration of the system of options which at present is not very wisely conceived and which sometimes, as in the case of Latin and German, to lack educational justification. A more satisfactory curriculum would result if at all stages boys were allowed to study fewer subjects with greater intensity. Later paragraphs indicate the standard of work reached in the various subjects.

The boys in the Sixth Form are grouped in three sets: Arts, Science and Economics. Although numbers in the Sixth Form have doubled since the time of the last Inspection [1930], yet they remain small in proportion to the yearly intake of boys. As was stated in the last Report, Sixth Form work is most likely to develop if the Curriculum of the Main School is planned on the broadest lines. In the Sixth Form itself the Curriculum should be broadened. The Arts Sixth might have some lecturers and guidance in reading as to how scientific thought and discovery are reacting on daily life, thought and morals. Boys in the Science Sixth might be introduced to non-scientific fields of thought. In order to give the boys continuing opportunities to develop taste outside their professional subjects, Friday afternoon might be left free, so that they might work in Studio, Music room, Library or laboratories. External lecturers and visiting artistes might open up to them new and exciting fields of human experience.

A more generous time allowance is necessary to enable lower and upper Sixth form boys to be taught separately on occasion. They may with profit share some lesson periods. This specific suggestion does not inevitably mean an increase of staff.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The School is recovering from its war-time experiences and post-war difficulties. The boys work hard, as recent examination results show, but too much of their work is narrowly determined by examination requirements. Yet some of the classroom work is stimulating and imaginative and in the Sixth Form there are signs that some of it is beginning to flower.

### **Magazine Advertisements**

From the Autumn 1936 issue:

# “Look what I’ve built with my MINIBRIX”

*the building system with all-rubber, self-locking bricks*

*Here’s a grand new hobby, that boys everywhere are taking up like wildfire. All-rubber bricks that lock together and enable you to build up a host of realistic interesting models like the fine skyscraper shown here, laying the bricks course by course just like real builders do. Minibrix sets cost from 5/- to 63/-*

*Write for illustrated leaflet to Dept. CM*

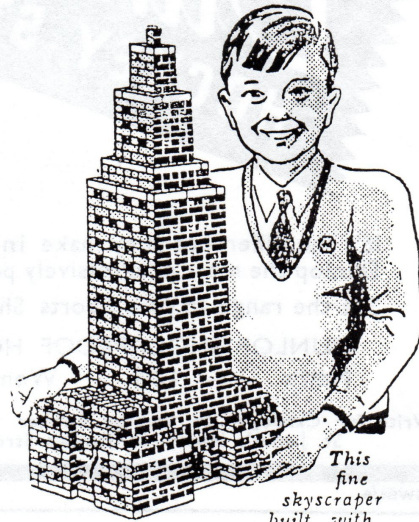
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## Prize Competition

For full details of prize contest for clever builders ask your dealer or write us.

MINIBRIX is obtainable from Army and Navy Stores, Civil Service Stores, Gamage, Harrods, Hobbies’ branches, Selfridges, Whiteleys, and most good toy shops and stores in London and provinces.



*This fine skyscraper built with Set No. 7*

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The Editor welcomes contributions for future issues. Please post or email them to: Ted Hayward, 31 Linfields, Little Chalfont, Amersham, HP7 9QH; ted.hayward@btinternet.com

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