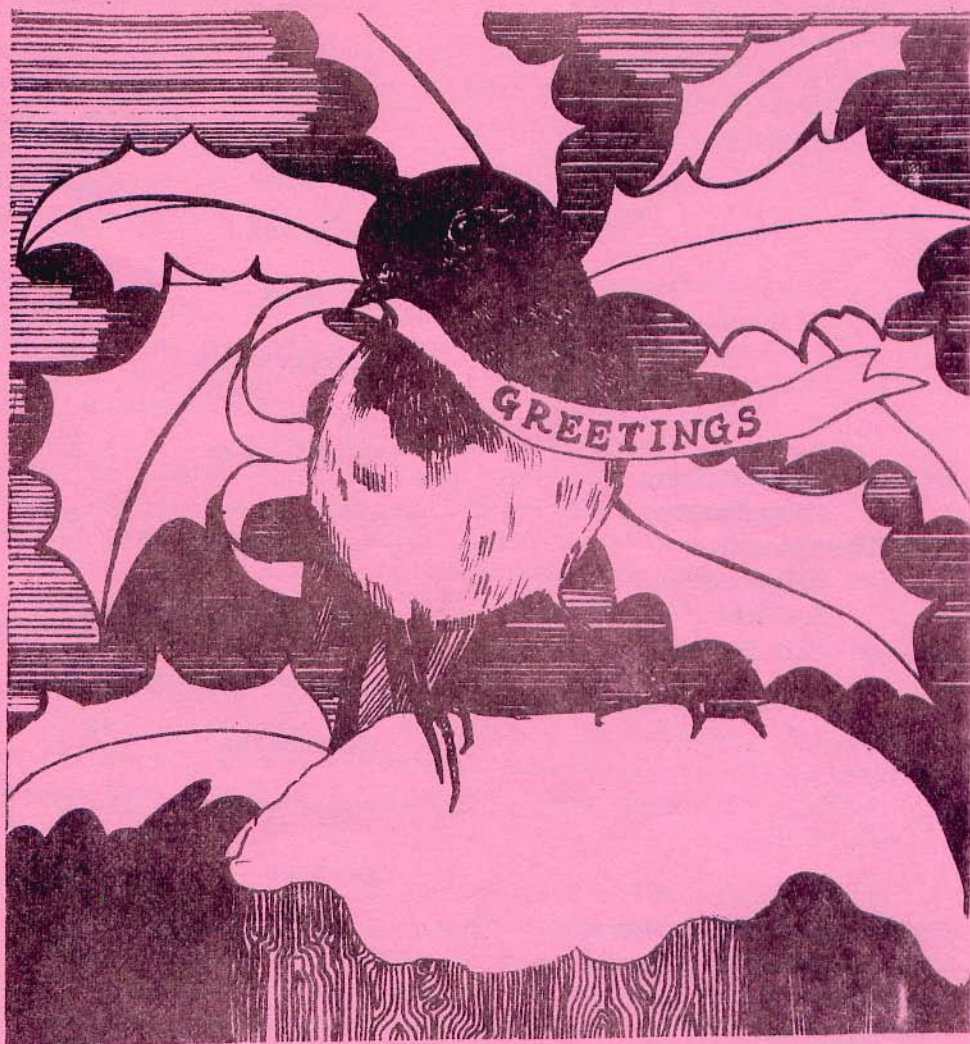


GRAPEVINE



CHRISTMAS 79

Grapevine is the news letter of the Sydenham School PTA. It is a joint production of parents and staff and its aim is to keep people informed about school affairs. It is published six times a year, at the end of each half term.

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EDITORIAL

WHAT'S IN A COMPREHENSIVE?

Those of us who have been lifelong supporters of comprehensives were swayed by two things. We felt there is no sure way of predicting at age eleven how a child may achieve at age fifteen or eighteen. We also felt that it was only fair that every child should be given an equal opportunity to fulfil him/herself.

In a school like Sydenham we see these comprehensive ideals working. On the one hand girls with academic potential can achieve highly - see the report on last summer's examination results on pages 7 and 8 - on the other we see in functions like the Careers Convention and the P.T.A. evening on Health Education the extent to which the school takes seriously the role of providing a fuller curriculum of preparation for life. Yet again when we come to evening entertainments we see the school developing into a centre of excellence for art, dance and drama. And we think, "Yes, this is good. It is as a comprehensive ought to be."

Yet are we asking too much? The very breadth of the curriculum poses constant problems of priorities. We want our children prepared for public examinations, yet equally we want them prepared to cope with life when they leave school. Do we as parents have a clear answer for this one?

There is another aspect of the comprehensive school which receives less publicity, but puts even more pressure on the teachers. This is the pastoral care role - for amongst those for whom the school strives to provide equal opportunities are those who for one reason or another have found themselves as misfits. It is an unsung and often unrecognised role of crucial importance. Inevitably, there are grossly insufficient support resources provided to help teachers cope - let's face it they trained to teach, not do social work. Yet if the comprehensive ideal is to survive, it is vital that this support is not swept away in budget cuts.

PTA NEWS

A.G.M. AND WINE AND CHEESE PARTY

We had good attendance at the A.G.M. The main business of the evening was the Chairman's Report. Mrs Sharp said that although it had been a busy year with many activities and new initiatives, she was not satisfied with the way things were going. Too much work devolved on too few people. Attendance at meetings was poor and the response to the social events dismal. She really wondered whether people wanted a P.T.A.!

This bombshell drew a lively response from the audience with some people casting doubt on the value of a P.T.A. while others said they thought it would be shortsighted to wind it up at a time when its fund raising capacities would be needed. In general it was agreed that it was worth going on for another year provided enough people were prepared to serve on the committee and pull their weight. The response when it came to Committee Nominations was enthusiastic. The following elected/volunteered to serve on the Committee for 1979/80:-

Chairman:	Mrs Sharp (778 8776)	Treasurer:	Mrs Godier
Vice-Chairman:	Mrs French (699 1003)	Grapevine:	Mrs Thauoos
Secretary:	Mrs Jones (699 5668)	Ed.Sub.Com:	Mrs Hennessy

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Duffet (2R2)	Mrs Stevens (1R1)
Mrs Georgiou (2W2)	Mrs Stevenson (2G1)
Mr Godier (2Y2)	Mr Stone (2R1)
Mrs Herron (1R2)	Mrs Summers (5P1)
Mrs Jarrett (4Y1)	Mrs Tagg (1R1)
Mr Hyde (4Y2)	

PARENT GOVERNORS

Mr Peter Stanley
Mr Tom Herron (newly elected
to replace Mr Daniels)

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

Miss Rees
Miss Hotham
Mrs Wallis (Staff Association)
Mr Dean (Grapevine Liason)

We have no third year representatives on the Committee.
Any Volunteers?

HEADMISTRESS' LETTER

Dear Parents

We are now finishing the end of a long and busy term with mock examinations for the girls in the 5th and 7th Year and there is a pleasant atmosphere of hard work in the rest of the school. I am also happy to report that the standard of attendance in the Upper School has improved this term and I am hoping that this will be maintained since it is a matter to which I am always asked to refer when providing a girl with her final school reference.

We have planned our usual round of Christmas festivities for the end of term. These will begin on Wednesday 12th December with three performances of Shaw's 'Pygmalion'. Following that there will be the usual Carol Services for the girls and the staff tell me that once again they will be putting on an entertainment for the delight of the school.

Sadly we hear news of cuts in the education budget which are extremely worrying since the price of text books and equipment goes up with each new year. Bearing this in mind we are hoping to encourage girls to be as careful as possible with all stock and to make economies wherever possible. It is regretted that exercise books are not used to the full, nor as carefully as they should be and parents could help by occasionally looking through their daughter's exercise books and drawing their attention to wasted spaces and spoiled pages!

We are hoping that we shall see you at one of our functions during the Christmas period and take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne B. Zackerwich

SCHOOL NEWS

NEWS FROM THE STAFF ROOM We welcome two new members of staff who have joined the maths department, Mr Griffiths and Mrs Towler. Our apologies to Mrs J Smith who has joined the History Department and is tutor to 4R1 - we omitted her from our list of new staff in the Autumn issue of Grapevine.

Congratulations to Mrs Newton who has put a stop to the recent spate of baby boys by producing a girl! Congratulations too to Mrs Healey who left at half-term to take up an appointment as Head of Maths at another school. We are sorry to hear that Mrs Johansen will be leaving at the end of term to become a full time mum to her toddler. We are very pleased, however, to welcome back Miss Knox who returned to the school after a long illness, and we send our sincere good wishes to Miss Burdon who is still seriously ill.

DEATH OF FORMER HEADMISTRESS Miss Enid Love, Headmistress at Sydenham from 1963 to 1968, died early in November. Past and present members of staff and old girls attended the funeral in Salisbury. It was requested that tributes take the form of donations to the British Rheumatism and Arthritic Society and a cheque has been forwarded from the school to the Society.

DANCING SUCCESSES A team of dancers from Sydenham were invited to assist with the Carol Service at the Royal Festival Hall on December 10th and 11th. Only one other school provided dancers for both performances which took place. Congratulations also to two Fifth Year girls, Jacqueline Benjamin and Beverley Adams, who have been accepted for the LIBA Saturday Dance Group, and to Jamble who were invited to give a demonstration recently at the place.

REALISTIC LESSONS The Business Studies Department wish to thank the parent who gave them a supply of National Bus Timetables - they have already been put to good use! The Department is always pleased to receive material which can be used to make lessons more realistic - reference books, printed forms or headed stationery which is no longer used.

Careers and Leisure Convention

Wednesday 17th October saw a transformation of the Lower School and the Sixth Form Block into a Careers and Leisure Exhibition. Within the space of a few hours, exhibitors, teachers, school-keeping staff and girls produced a colourful, comprehensive display of careers information in the Lower School Hall; a most efficient 'working-model' of the Business Studies Department; and a fabulous, if somewhat crowded, panorama of leisure-time activities in the Sixth Form Common Room. This Convention, which ran from 4.30pm. to 8pm. was extremely well attended; attracting nearly a thousand visitors.

Judging by the 'feed back' from both girls and parents, it was also successful in awakening interests and supplying career motivations. Certainly this convention did not really end at 8pm. Girls are still visiting firms, hospitals and other organisations as a result of contacts made during that evening.

As far as leisure-time activities are concerned - there can be no lack of recruits now for confectionery, fashion design, needlecraft, handicrafts, camping, drama and dance.

A Convention like this very much depends on the help and support of many 'behind the scenes' volunteers. As always, I am very grateful to all the staff and girls who so readily gave their time and energy to act as hosts and stewards throughout the evening.

I was also grateful to the parents who so kindly volunteered to help. We hope it will not be too long before we can arrange a repeat performance!

Betty J. Wallman
Head of Careers

SPECIAL FEATURE

EXAM RESULTS

The Autumn Term is the one when the Headmistress reports to the Governors on the summer exam results. We thought parents would be interested to know more details so we asked Mrs Zackerwich if we could publish some details of the report in Grapevine. We think readers will agree that it shows that the school is serving its pupils well. Here are some of the interesting features:-

- 91 per cent(249 out of 273) of Fifth Year pupils last summer sat for public examinations.
- The overall pass rate at O level was 55 per cent(1976 - ILEA 51%; England and Wales 59%).
- 9.5 per cent of the girls taking CSE gained Grade 1 or O level equivalent.
- The total number of O level and CSE Grade 1 passes was 467 or 1.71 per Fifth Year pupil. Recently publicity was given to a 'good' school where this ratio was only 0.91.
- 5 girls gained 8 passes at O level or CSE Grade 1
7 " " 7 " " " " " " "
9 girls " 6 " " " " " " "
1 girl " 5 " " " " " " "

A total of 32 girls with 5 or more passes at O level or CSE Grade 1.

- When this group of girls entered the school in 1974, only 46 were in Band 1 and only 21 of these were graded 1:1:1. This indicates that if your daughter enters Sydenham in Band 1, she stands a good chance of getting what many regard as the 'grammar school norm' of 5 O levels or equivalent, and if she enters in the 1:1:1: category there is a more than odds on chance that she will do so.

- 64 girls gained English Language at O level/CSE Grade 1, although in 1974 only 29 girls had entered rated Band 1 in English.
- 35 girls gained Maths at O level/CSE Grade 1 although only 25 girls had entered Sydenham in 1974 in Band 1 for Maths.
- The most successful departments for O level were the Science Departments - biology, chemistry and physics - the Maths Department, the English Department and Modern Languages. For CSE the most successful departments were Art, Needlework, Classical Studies and Drama. (But it is always very difficult to make these sort of comparisons - so much depends upon departmental policy about O level entries etc.).
- Numbers taking A level are much lower than those taking O level. There is satisfaction in the overall pass rate of 64 per cent (1976 - ILEA - 50%; England and Wales 67%)
- The Maths and Science Departments again did very well at A level with 100% pass rates in Maths, Chemistry and Physics. The Art Department entered more candidates than any other for A level and also gained a 100% pass rate.
- One candidate at A level gained three Grade A's.
- The Art and Dance Department both gained Grade 1's in the new C.E.E. (Certificate of Extended Education).

SCHOOL FAIR

We are planning a May Fair on Saturday May 17th. More details next time but please bear this in mind in relation to the plant stall(cuttings and seedlings) the White Elephant Stall(unwanted Christmas presents???) and the Craft Stall.

"CHINESE EVENING"

'ONE QUARTER OF THE WORLD' AT SYDENHAM SCHOOL

Perhaps no one would believe you if you said that there was 'one quarter of the world' at Sydenham School on November 21st ! However, well over 400 parents, teachers, pupils and friends of Sydenham turned out on a cold and foggy night to enjoy the Chinese Evening.

Welcomed by red flags and Chinese music, visitors were received by smiling hostesses, one of whom, Lorna Summers looked dazzling in a traditional Chinese costume. They then strolled into the Chinese Food Kitchens to enjoy their spare ribs and crackers whilst they watched Mr Moy's fascinating Wok cuisine demonstration.

In the Hong Kong Rooms Mrs Stammers gave two exciting glimpses of her visit to the Far East. On the walls were interesting displays of work from the English and Geography Departments. Mr Dahl mystified observers with the ancient game of mah-jong and Nancy Worcester had a full house for her Society of Anglo-Chinese understanding lectures. In the Huts 2,000 years of Chinese History adorned the walls whilst Mao Tse Tung rose to power on the video-screen and the last of the Manchu Dynasty Emperors had their stories told next door. Chairman Hua's recent visit to Britain was also well illustrated.

The Junior Drama Club's 'Slow Boat to China' put on two performances of amusing Chinese moral tales - one a traditional legend, another depicting a modern revolutionary saga.

The success of our American and Chinese Evenings must inevitably raise the question of 'What's next?' Perhaps an Evening inspired by a colourful period of English History - just for a change!!

John Holbrook
Chairman, Chinese
Evening Committee



What's A Pandamaran?

Sydenham School has recently been presented with a PANDAMARAN! What's a Pandamaran you may ask? Well, it's a distant relative of a catamaran (a boat with two hulls).

The boat is in the form of a kit - we have to build it before we can sail it. Once built it will be 13 feet 2ins in length; have a beam of 6 ft 2 ins.; a mainsail measuring 85 square ft. and a Foresail of 65 ft.; the mast height is 8 ft. 6 ins., and the whole boat ready to sail will weigh 72.75 kilos.

What makes a Pandamaran unique above all is that for every boat purchased from the boat builders, Christian Brann Ltd., a royalty is paid to the World Wildlife Fund to support its vital work. Sydenham's Pandamaran was bought for them by Business Intelligence Services at a cost of £ 650

What the scheme aims to provide is first, a complete Pandamaran kit with everything needed for a group of youngsters to build their own boat. Second a residential educational Pandamaran Week on the South Coast in April 1980, when a team from the school will have our boat judged for accuracy and care in building, **receive** qualified sailing instruction, and compete for the Panda cup in the regatta.

The boat is ours to keep and girls will be able to learn to sail her at weekends and after school during the coming years. At present around 90 to 100 girls are involved in the building of the boat under instruction from Mr Steve Walker, and they will eventually learn to sail. We think this is a "first" once again for Sydenham as we do not know of any other girls' school involved in a scheme like this one. Our thanks for making this possible go to our generous sponsors - B.I.S.

HOUSE NEWS (i)

AYLWARD

Harvest Festival this year was arranged by the 6th Form and performed by 1P2. It was an interesting and successful Assembly. We received many gifts of groceries which will go to make up Christmas parcels which we send out each December to old people in the neighbourhood.

All the tutor groups are working hard at their charity targets; 6P have already sent £50. to St.Christopher's Hospice.

We congratulate all those whose magnificent efforts gained us the Shield at the Swimming Gala. Well done!

AUSTEN

This term we have made special efforts to raise money for charity and last half term raised £150. for C.A.R.E. We had a cake sale, which involved all Tutor Groups, staff raffles and a sponsored swim. This half term we hope to raise a similar amount for the Cambodian Fund. Sponsored silences seem an effective way of raising money! We also hope we shall have a number of Christmas boxes to give to the old folk. Austen House wishes a Happy Christmas!

FERRIER

The main event this term was our House Evening. The theme was an Old Time Music Hall and our only regret was that we ran out of time! Particular thanks to Mrs Palmer, mother of Jo in 2R2 for playing the piano and to Mr Dean who acted as compere. The stalls and games raised £140. for our House Charity. We have all considered carefully which charity to support and it was decided to buy some piece of equipment for a local hospital. Lewisham Hospital was approached and it turned out that they very much wanted a flotation mattress for the medical wards which cost £130. - just covered by the House Evening. Our next aim is £300. for a cardiac monitor and we have organised a sponsored bounce on the trampoline! A Very Happy Christmas to everyone!

STOP PRESS Ferrier have raised over £200 in the sponsored bounce.

HOUSE NEWS (ii)

KELLER

Congratulations to the girls who volunteered and practised so hard for the swimming gala. We did not quite win the shield, but we came a good second.

Eleanor Dare of 40 has been selected to go on the Outward Bound Course and Dionne Smith of 50 is the reserve for the February Course.

We are all working hard on charity efforts. This term we have donated £100. to St.Christopher's Hospice. £250. to Cancer Research, £100. to the British Legion and £50. to supporting two local children in a residential centre for handicapped children. We are now working hard to raise funds for a kidney machine.

RYDER

Our Halloween House Evening was a very enjoyable event. We are going to be sending a record cheque for £300. to Sue Ryder to help towards a new Cancer Care Home. Everyone was sad to see Mrs Healey go at half-term, although we were glad she gained promotion. We are happy to welcome Miss Wingrove as Deputy Housemistress in her place. We have to say good-bye to two other teachers this Christmas. Mrs Shoulder is going on a course and Mrs Johansen who has not been well is giving up teaching to become a 'full time Mum'. We send them both our best wishes. A Very Happy Christmas and a Good New Year to Everyone!

THORNDIKE

The girls in the House generously brought contributions of fruit, flowering plants, sweets, jam and jellies, soaps and bath salts as well as home made cakes to an Assembly after half-term. The next day representatives of the House took all these gifts to St.Christopher's Hospice - where they were able to personally give the gifts to the Nurses in each Ward. The staff and girls were much impressed by the calm and friendly atmosphere in the Hospice, and they saw and spoke to one or two patients.

Only three days later we heard that Miss Burdon was being moved there.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

One would think I had given my daughter up to some kind of life sentence when I told friends and acquaintances that we had a place at Sydenham School for her.

" Those awful girls bully the little ones " they said. "That's stamped on as soon as its stamped on as soon as it's started " I'd answer. " That Headmistress is very strict " was another statement. " Discipline never hurt anyone " I'd retort. " Laden down with all that homework, it's unfair for new girls ". " Only one hour each night " I was able to reply.

Anyhow how did they know what it was like. They had children still at primary school or older ones attending other schools for one reason or another.

We are fast approaching the end of the first term and my daughter is doing very nicely thank you. After getting through this part, I'm quite confident she will finish her secondary school life unscathed!

Satisfied First Year Parent

An Open Letter of Appreciation to Mrs Healey

Dear Mrs Healey,

Your manner of leaving us at half-term was true to character - quietly and without fuss. Those of us who have been closely involved with the PTA during the 4½ years you spent at the school know what a tower of strength and help you have been to us. You were always willing to give advice, and to give your time to attend meetings in evenings although your family were waiting at home for you.

Congratulations on your promotion and our sincere thanks for the years you have given us at Sydenham. We hope one day you will be able to return.

Leslia Thauoos, Editor.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LIST OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE SPRING TERM, 1980

- School re-opens Monday, 7 January: 9 am for staff
10.20 am for girls
- Friday 11 January: Old Girls' Reception, 7.30 pm
- Thursday 17 January) Open Afternoon and Evening for parents
& Monday 21 January) & pupils from the primary schools
- Wednesday 23 January: 4th Year Dance Workshop
- Wednesday 30 January: 5th & 6th Year Parents' Meeting
concerning Public Examination entries
- Monday to Friday,
18 to 22 February: Half Term
- Wednesday 27 February: 3rd Year Parents' Evening
- Tuesday 11 March: PTA Education Meeting on "The Teaching
of Modern Languages at Sydenham School"
- Wednesday 12 March: Aylward House Social
- Wednesday 19 March: Keller House Social
- Wednesday 19 March: Governors' Meeting 7 pm.
- Monday 31 March: 2nd Year Parents' Evening
- Break up for Easter holiday: Tuesday, 1 April.

NB

The CSE group will be performing their examination play for parents of the 2nd and 3rd Years during the week 24 to 28 March. Dates will be finalised later.