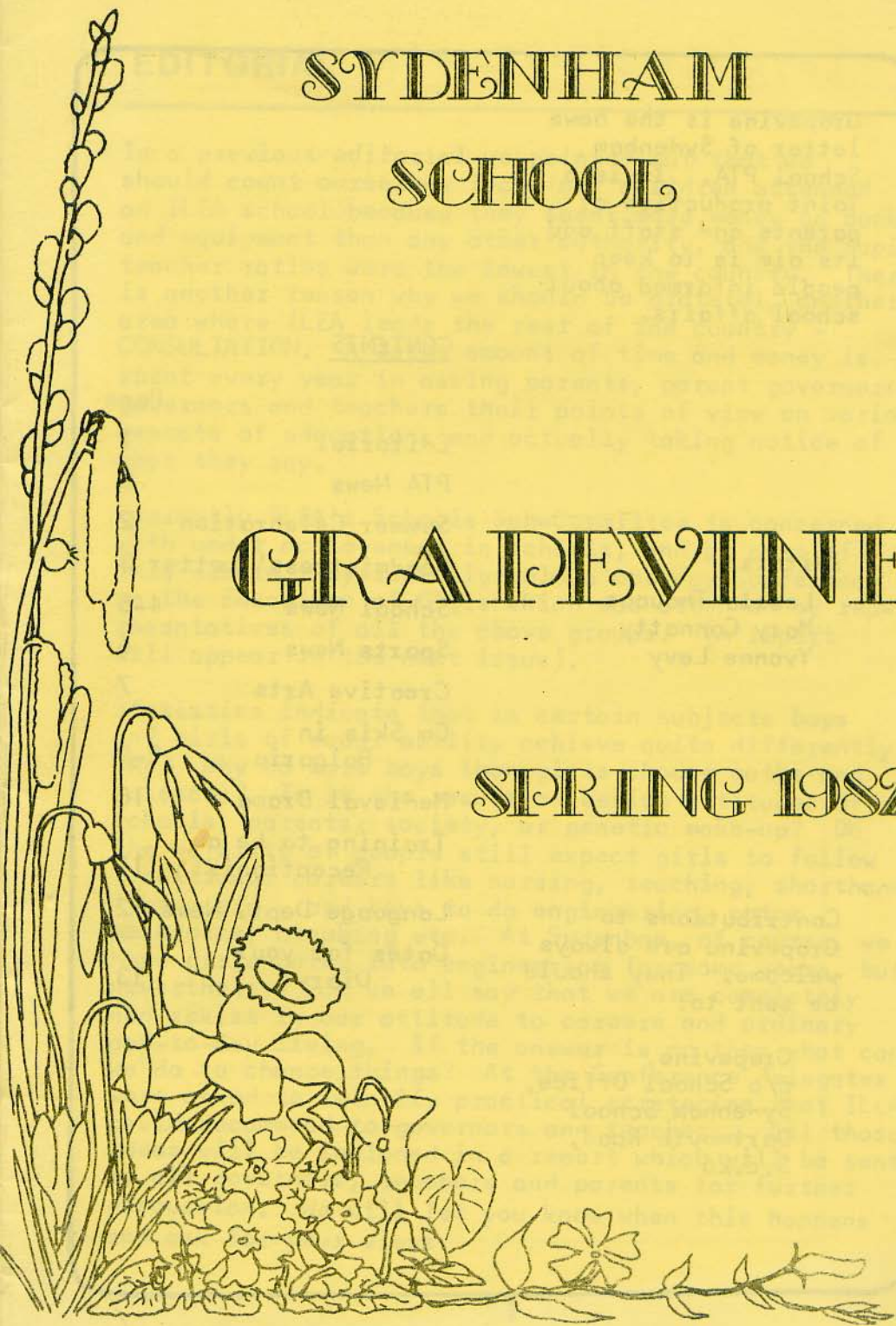


SYDENHAM
SCHOOL

GRAPEVINE

SPRING 1982



Grapevine is the news letter of Sydenham School PTA. It is a joint production of parents and staff and its aim is to keep people informed about school affairs.

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Editors:

Leslia Thauoos
Mary Connatty
Yvonne Levy

Contributions to Grapevine are always welcome. They should be sent to:

Grapevine,
c/o School Office,
Sydenham School
Dartmouth Road,
S.E.26

EDITORIAL

In a previous editorial we pointed out that we should count ourselves lucky our children attended an ILEA school because they spent more money on books and equipment than any other authority, and the pupil/teacher ratios were the lowest in the country. There is another reason why we should be grateful, another area where ILEA leads the rest of the country - CONSULTATION. A large amount of time and money is spent every year in asking parents, parent governors, governors and teachers their points of view on various aspects of education, and actually taking notice of what they say.

Currently ILEA's Schools Sub-Committee is concerned with under achievement in schools, and as part of this debate they recently held a one-day Conference on the Education of Girls which was attended by representatives of all the above groups. (A report will appear in the next issue).

Statistics indicate that in certain subjects boys and girls of equal ability achieve quite differently. Why? Why do more boys than girls choose maths and sciences? Is it the result of sexist attitudes of schools, parents, society, or genetic make-up? Do the majority of people still expect girls to follow traditional careers like nursing, teaching, shorthand typing etc., and boys to do engineering, motor mechanics, plumbing etc. At Sydenham, of course, we have girls going into engineering for some years, but nevertheless can we all say that we are completely non-sexist in our attitude to careers and ordinary day-to-day living. If the answer is no then what can we do to change things? At the Conference delegates were asked to identify practical strategies that ILEA could recommend to governors and teachers. All those ideas will be included in a report which will be sent to all governors, teachers and parents for further discussion. We will let you know when this happens and ask for your views.

PTA NEWS

Judging by the comments that have been reaching us the "creative Arts" Evening brightened considerably the dull days of January, and anyone who didn't attend missed out on an entertaining evening. (A report appears on p.7). Our thanks to all the staff and girls concerned.

The PTA is currently planning a Jumble Sale for Saturday, May 22nd, so if you can start your spring cleaning early there should be no shortage of jumble to sell! We will be telling you nearer the date when and where to bring it. Clothing, books, china, glass, toys, plants, tools, gardening tools, flower pots, etc. are some of the items you can start sorting out now.

The PTA Committee have spent some time recently discussing different ways of raising funds, then it occurred to us that somewhere amongst our many talented parents someone must have an idea which is different, simple, and not too much hard work! So any ideas please to Mike Stone 690 6996.

SUMMER CELEBRATION

Book this date in your diary now - Saturday 17th July - when yet another exciting Sydenham Dance takes place. Organised by the Home Economics Department, tickets will be £5 single and £9 double, and will be your passport to an evening of dancing to a very lively group, plus a delectable buffet prepared by our own H.E. Department. Proceeds will go to the School Fund and St. Christopher's Hospice. More details next issue.



HEADMISTRESS LETTER

Dear Parents,

We returned to school on March 1st in a cheerful frame of mind; the crocuses were showing, the birds were singing, and Sydenham was bathed in a strong golden light which some of us remembered as sunshine. Spring has really arrived! There is no doubt that the snow, the rail strikes, the burst water main and winter colds held up our work considerably during the first half of the term, but we are all determined now to make up for lost time and none are working harder than the girls in the 5th and 6th forms, who now have such a short time left to them before sitting for their public examinations.

By the time you read this letter our Chester Miracle Plays will be over. This year we have had the distinction of performing in Southwark Cathedral and although we were delighted to be asked, this has obviously meant even more hard work than usual in order that Sydenham School should "aim higher than ever" on this auspicious occasion. Our congratulations certainly go to Colin Dean and all the members of his team.

Our special thanks this term go also to Mrs. Wallman, who, in spite of her sad bereavement just before Christmas, has nevertheless continued to go on with all the arrangements necessary to produce the valuable Careers Evening on Wednesday, March 17th.

We are looking forward to meeting all 2nd year parents on Monday, April 5th, and next term will bring invitations to everyone to come to our Art Exhibition as well as to a music concert and to a dress show. We look forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Zackerwich

Headmistress

SCHOOL NEWS

Equal Rights Sydenham girls certainly don't believe in sitting back and doing nothing when they don't approve of something. When 2T were recently discussing the English Succession Law and learnt that a princess who is the eldest of the royal family is prevented from succeeding to the throne before her brothers who are younger, they decided to write to Mrs. Thatcher explaining their views and hoping she might promote a new law giving equal rights of succession to princesses.

Magnificent Effort Well done all the girls and staff who took part in the sponsored swim which raised the magnificent total of £1,651.14 for the British Heart Foundation. This amount won Sydenham the Challenge Cup for the second year for raising more than any other group. T.V. star Matthew Kelly presented the Cup to the school, and Debbie Knight 4Y1 was presented with an individual cup for collecting the second highest amount of all the entrants - £97.18.

Music Successes Rachel Duffett and Jo Palmer both of 4R2 have been accepted as violinists in the London Schools Training Orchestra; Nicola Glanville 201 has gained an ILEA award for clarinet and Refiloe Ngakane 5R1 has passed her Grade 8 recorder examination with distinction. This is a considerable achievement as this is the last examination before the LRAM Diploma.

Staff News Congratulations to Mrs. Lamb, Head of P.E. who had a baby boy on March 10th and is calling him James Russell. Our best wishes to Mrs. Richards, Head of German, who recently had an operation and is doing well, and also to Mrs. Fahey, one of our Governors, who is also recovering from an operation.

School Journeys Several school journeys took place during half term and we hope both girls and staff enjoyed them. Fourth years went to Aviemore with Mr. Dean and Mr. Walker; Mrs. Richards and Mrs. Parr

took a party of girls on the German Exchange visits; Mrs. Stammers took a group of "scholarship winners" on a course at Bad Bachau in Germany (see page 12); Dr. Clifford took four 6th form girls climbing in Snowdonia; and the 5th year field course to Abergavenny left half way through half term with Miss Willmer and Mr. Rouncefield.

Aim High Andrea McKenzie, a former pupil and Captain of Aylward House is now in America and has joined the army there. She wrote to the school saying "I am going to climb to the pinnacle of the ladder so far as ranks go". In these days of equal opportunities who knows, maybe Sydenham will provide the first female General in the U.S. Army!

First Headmistress We are sorry to hear that Miss Kimsey, the first Headmistress of Sydenham (Comprehensive) School died on 27th November (after we had gone to press for the last issue).

Local History The School History Society plans to make a study of the history of the area around school. This would involve weekly sessions on Thursdays after school during the summer term. Girls interested should see Miss Hargadon. (Perhaps we could publish this in "Grapevine" at a later date).

Thorndike House News Thorndike House girls have been busy knitting cardigans for the handicapped babies in Queen Mary's Hospital - many thanks to all friends and relatives who have already sent in a cardigan or other garment (nearly new are very acceptable).

Please make a note in your diary of 7.30 pm Wednesday 12th May, for the House Evening. The girls will be entertaining you with gymnastics, judo, music and dancing, and also hope to raise some more money for the hospital.

Pottery If you happen to be visiting the school make a point of having a look in the display case in the foyer where 1W1 have a display of pottery they have made.

SPORTS NEWS

Gymnastics At the Inner London Schools Gymnastics Association Final at Crofton Leisure Centre on 7th March, Sydenham had ten contestants out of a total of 250 girls taking part from all over London. Marva Dyer 5P1 in the over 13 age group and Diane Austin 1P in the under 13 group, were both awarded medals, being placed 6th and 8th.

Judo Winners Congratulations to six girls who won medals in the London Area Individual Judo Championships in February: Paula Brailey 201 - silver; Carol Maskell 2P - bronze; Lisa Smith 302 - gold; Kim Smith 502 - gold. Carol Maskell, Lisa Smith and Kim Smith were selected to represent London in the National Schools Judo Championships in Wales on 6th March when Carol Maskell won the Junior Section - silver; Lisa Smith Intermediate Section - bronze, and Kim Smith Senior Section - silver. Sydenham also won a shield for having most points overall.

Swimming Lessons Four fully qualified ASA teachers are running half hour swimming lessons at Forest Hill Baths each weekday from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm, and Saturday mornings from 8.30 to 11.30 am. Classes range from beginners through to good swimmers wishing to improve. Twelve week courses cost £11.50 and if you are interested you should phone 699 4548 or 650 1685.

Netball Shield The Premier Netball Team won a tournament at Orchard Sports Centre in February and brought the shield back to Sydenham. This is the first time it has been awarded and Sydenham School's name will therefore be the first on the shield.

Swimming Match At the Swimming League Match held at Scott Lidgett School on 16th February, Sedgehill School were first with 92 points, Sydenham came second with 79 points, and Waverley third with 69 points.

CREATIVE ARTS

Too often in education the creative arts have been considered the easy choice, while the more 'academic' subjects, such as English, History, languages and the sciences are viewed as superior and more applicable to the needs of the employer.

On Wednesday, 20th January, Mr. Leech and members of the Creative Arts Faculty entertainingly and easily put to flight such misconceptions.

The growth of a painting, from its early sketches to choice of composition, use of colour and final product, as shown on slides and explained by Mr. Leech, clearly revealed the pupil's discipline, tenacity and pleasure in achievement. Mr. Leech emphasised the importance of producing a good piece of work, and the sense of confidence and achievement which it gave the pupil.

The beautiful film of a senior girl's own created dance sequence, also showed that a sense of purpose and self-discipline were the "tools" which brought together this imaginative piece. Seeming "effortlessness" appears to be the product of great effort, as well as many aches and pains!

"Rolling about on the floor" in drama may seem great fun and rather pointless, but its purpose in building up confidence and eliminating self-consciousness was soon made clear before progressing to the greater demands of voice and stage production.

Undoubtedly participation in the arts at school can lay the foundation of appreciation which may be followed up later on. But what became apparent from this very rewarding evening was the importance of participation in the arts in general education as a training in dedication and self-control, while increasing the pleasure of living.

ON SKIS IN BULGARIA



On January 2nd about twenty-five girls and four members of staff boarded a coach for Stanstead Airport. After a longish wait at a very boring airport we eventually flew off in a Balkan Airways plane to Plovdiv in Bulgaria. We arrived in the dark and it was raining. There was no snow!

A coach took us through the mountains, with no signs of civilisation, to Pamparovo and the Panorama Hotel where we were to stay. On the way there we stopped off at a hotel to go to the loo which turned out to be a hole in the ground!

That night it snowed, thank goodness! Our first ski lesson took place in a blizzard. We learned how to put our skis on and how to "snow-plough". In the afternoon we practised on some small slopes. We were beginning to enjoy ourselves.

The food in the hotel was absolutely awful. For breakfast we had stale bread and marmalade and tea to drink with powdered milk. The only good thing was the little packets of sugar with illustrations of Bulgarian costumes. A typical lunch was yellowy-orange meat balls (disgusting!) with mashed peas and soggy boiled potatoes. Sometimes we had chocolate ice cream - that was one good thing. A very odd drink we were given was strawberry juice. It was not very popular.

On the fourth day I had a problem on the chair lift. The lift is on a sort of continuous moving cable so that when your chair gets to the top of the slope you have to jump off on your skis, and ski away from it. It made me nervous to start with and on

this particular day one of my ski stocks got caught in the chair so that I couldn't get off. It was very embarrassing and someone had to pull the emergency stop cord.

Another accident I had was when we went tobogganing. On the way to the nursery slopes we had to get down a very slippery icy slope. There were tree roots sticking up covered with hard ice. I slipped over, so did two of my friends and they landed on my leg. We all slid down the hill the two of them sitting on me. By the time we got back to the hotel after our evenings tobogganing I had the most enormous blue, yellow and purple bruise.

In the evenings we usually had a disco. Some of the girls had taken tapes with them so the music was alright. Even the teachers had a go at dancing!

By the end of the holiday I was looking forward to going home for some good food. But I was sad to leave because I was really enjoying the ski-ing. On the last day I skied down an enormous hill with Mrs. Moy. I was really frightened of falling but Mrs. Moy kept shouting at me to "go parallel" and I did try for a while and went faster than I had ever been before. It was very exciting but I wondered if I would be able to stop. However, I managed to "snow-plough" to a halt. Success!

When we arrived home I wondered if we were actually in England or still in Bulgaria. Everything was white.

I would thoroughly recommend a school ski trip to other people, and I hope I shall be able to go again sometime.



Xenia Levy 2Y1

MEDIEVAL DRAMA

The theatre of the modern world has grown from the medieval "mystery" or "miracle" plays such as the Chester Mystery Plays Sydenham is presenting at school and in Southwark Cathedral this term. Unfortunately we go to press before the first performance so our review will have to appear in the next issue of "Grapevine". However, we thought you would be interested in the historical background to these plays.

The first "miracle" or "mystery" plays were versions of biblical stories which were performed inside churches and cathedrals from the 12th century, and later moved out first into the churchyard and then the market place. During the 13th century some of the plays developed into a long "cycle" which depicted the Christian faith, beginning with the Creation and included the Fall of Man, Old Testament Stories, Christ's Life and Death, and the Last Judgement.

After the Feast of Corpus Christie was established in 1311 cycles of plays were performed as part of the great Corpus Christie processions. Acting was then done by members of appropriate craft guilds under the supervision of town authorities. For example, the shipwrights acted the Noah's Ark play. The plays were usually performed on large wheeled waggons which were part of the processions and stopped for performances at a number of places throughout the town.

The stages did not have very much room for action so there was a greater concentration of vivid and forceful speech. We wonder how Sydenham's interpretation coped with that, especially as Mr. Rightly of the English Department tells us in the publicity letter to "watch the language work its spell; watch the characters take charge; the movement, dance, colour, music, all are of the most potent kind". It sounds as if we have another Sydenham drama success on our hands!

TRAINING TO BE A RECEPTIONIST

To a large number of girls, the job which appeals to them most in the office situation is that of the Receptionist. With this in mind, the Royal Society of Arts has this year, for the first time, introduced a Diploma Course in General Reception. As we in the Business Studies Department are of the opinion that the more qualifications our girls can obtain the better, we decided to take advantage of this and accordingly our top secretarial group embarked on this course last September.

To gain this Diploma, the candidate must pass four of the core subjects, which includes commerce, office practice, typewriting and communications, plus a special examination in reception skills. This includes the ability to meet and talk to visitors, serve light snacks and drinks, answer the telephone, etc. The same group also study shorthand and audio-typing.

Although I have been appointed Class Tutor this year I knew that my expertise would in no way cover all the aspects of the course. We therefore called in experts already in the school to help. For example, our expert in flower arranging is Miss Kelly, our expert in visual display is our Media Resources Officer, Mr. Arnold, and our expert in first-aid is our nurse, Miss Turpin. I am grateful to them all for being prepared to give up their time to teach these aspects of the course.

The girls have put their social skills into practice at school functions and will continue to do so during the year. This has proved a popular addition to our business studies courses and perhaps we will be able to widen our field in the future.

Diana Scott

LANGUAGE NEWS

SYDENHAM PIONEERS

Sydenham School was chosen to pioneer a new scheme of "mini-scholarships" which enabled 10 girls to study in Germany for one week in February.

We enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Bad Bachau who co-operated in every way and made our days there pleasurable and fruitful. We were given a room to ourselves in the Pro-Gymnasium (school) where we could pursue our various projects. Taped interviews were granted by a number of people, including the Mayor of Bad Bachau.

Our thanks go to ILEA for this marvellous opportunity and to our hosts in Bad Bachau for their care and support. My congratulations go to the girls who produced imaginative work despite the temptations provided by the overwhelming generosity of our hosts!

V. Stammers

GERMAN EXCHANGE

The German stage of the exchange visits took place from February 17-27th, with some girls participating for the third time.

Despite weather which reached temperatures of minus 17C at one point, the whole group enjoyed the insights into German family life and the local carnival so much that a number of arrangements for return trips were made.

The German group visit us between March 28th and April 9th, and will spend some time in school and sightseeing. A group visit to "Evita" is also planned.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 5th April

Wednesday 7th April -

Friday 23rd April

Monday 3rd May

Thursday 6th May

Wednesday 12th May

Wednesday 19th May

Saturday 22nd May

Wednesday 26th May

Monday 31st May -

Friday 4th June

Monday 7th June -

Tuesday 29th June

Monday 14th June -

Friday 25th June

Monday/Tuesday 28/29th
June

Monday 5th July -

Friday 16th July

Wednesday 7th July

Tuesday 13th July

Thursday 15th July

Saturday 17th July

Wednesday 21st July

Friday 23rd July

2nd Year Parents' Evening

Easter Holidays

May Day Holiday

Polling Day (1st Years to
stay at home)

Thorndike House Social

4th Year Parents' Evening

PTA Jumble Sale

Keller House Social

Half-Term

Public Examinations (Written
Papers)

School Examinations

6th Form "Stayers' Course"

6th Form 'A' Level Founda-
tion Course

Sports Day

Music Concert

Meeting for New 1st Year
Parents

Dance for Parents and Staff

1st Year Parents' Evening

Break up

