



THE OLIPHANT

No. 147

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL

3rd December 1993

THINK ABOUT IT

Strange how much you've got to know before you know how little you know.

—Duncan Stivent

By the time this issue is published half the boys will be sauntering around the school Campus praying to God that they get through their exams with good marks (the other half will be concocting excuses to tell their Dads why they didn't do well.)

Growing a stubble or hair during the exams is a part of being Welhamites. Some can be seen around the campus religiously studying and leaving nothing to chance. While others leaving everything to God...

Only a few use their learning skills very resourcefully in the L.R.C., while the rest (don't tell anybody) are busy throwing books or cushions at each other till they are thrown out. However, there are always a few exceptions who like climbing roof tops breaking through and coming down to Earth in the most Micheal Jackson like manner.

This has been a golden week for Welham. Vijay Bishnoi, Shakti Aggarwal and Amit Sharma set fire to the stage with their flabbergasting performance. Rana Randip uprooted the grass from the race tracks as he won the 400 mts. with lightening speed.

Suddenly the atmosphere has changed; seniors are very polite to the juniors (we all know why). This season lasts till 24th lunch time.

Let all 11thies know you'll give them your vote. Although he won't show his excitement, he'll probably sleep later than normal (exceptions aren't necessary.)

I won't say that I'll give my best or the Board will give its best. It's all the members of the Welham community who have to give their best to make the Oliphant a success. The Board is not glorified when the Oliphant is a success; it is the boys who get the credit.

It is not only my responsibility or your responsibility, it is our responsibility to make the Oliphant better.

□ Kirtiman Singh



OBITUARY

"We were deeply grieved to learn of the death of Major General A. A. Rudra who not only was a distinguished resident of Dehradun but a great friend of the School. He was one of the original

Trustees of the School trust set up by Miss Oliphant on 29th September, 1956.

Our deepest sympathies to the bereaved family.

Excerpts from the Principal Founder's Day Speech

Mr. Duleep Matthai, Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees, ladies and gentlemen.

We are gathered together to remember our Founder, Miss Hersilia Susie Oliphant and her mother. When Miss Oliphant launched Welham Girls in 1957, right from the start she had planned it to be a full-fledged higher secondary school. Welham in the last few decades has changed almost beyond recognition. Exactly 50 years ago, in 1943 I joined this school. It was a small school in area and also in numbers. Six years ago it became a full-fledged higher secondary school when I sent up our first batch of 11 boys for the ISC exam. Thus this rise from a strength of 70 in 1943 to 533 in 1993 accompanied with expansion in other directions has given the school new dimensions.

What kind of person should we send out into the world? Primarily I believe that he should have been trained to think for himself, to discriminate between the wholesome and the garbage and not to confuse static with the message. It is absence of this quality of discrimination that leads to the violent Society that we see around us – communal discord the spreading and believing of rumours. Secondly, a sense of history, for if we do not know our past or heed its lessons, it is unlikely that we will have a bright future. Thirdly, to send forth men who will become leaders not because of some ascribed status of birth, caste or

wealth, but because of moral fibre and ability. Having said the above, how do we at Welham go about it?

Perhaps we should restate the aims of education; we need to prepare students firstly for a livelihood, then for living with other human beings in a vibrant environment, thirdly, for enjoying life and fourthly for comprehending the purpose of existence. By and large most of our centres of education provide such training that sends out intelligent and obedient "employables" fit to work and to earn. But what of the other three aims, of living in human society, of having a zest for the art of living and of the highest goal of all, the striving to comprehend the purpose of life? Alas, though students can achieve these if they have the inclination and the time, the over-riding factor is the exam system which puts a stop to everything else.

We at Welham are beginning to revert to the traditional goal of working towards getting high marks in Board exams and letting other goals come second. Thus, as Prof Baxi aptly said, the "Guru-Shishya" relationship is being replaced by that of "Examiner – Examinee." Fortunately, by our very nature of being a residential school, with a host of co-curricular facilities, the students continue to follow pursuits that contribute to the development of "a whole man." Today we have for your entertainment an ambitious "creation" conceived by a boy, Saurabh Narang, and transmuted into actuality as 'Cosmic Karma.'

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Excerpts from the Chief Guest, Mr. Duleep Matthai's Speech Founder's Day - 30th October 1993

Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors, Mr. Kandhari, teachers and students of Welham Boys' School, ladies and gentlemen.

1. The subject I refer to is Nature Conservation which with advancing years, and I like to believe some measure of wisdom that comes from both age and experience in a wide range of activities, has broadened to environmental protection.
2. I will confine myself largely to Nature Conservation as it affects our country particularly the ecological security of our country.
3. During many years of my professional involvement in the Tea industry in North East India, in what were then some of the finest primordial tropical forests of our country, that my fascination for nature and natural phenomena was heightened, as was my commitment to nature conservation. I witnessed with growing concern the accelerating destruction of these forests and later the transformation this caused to parts of the country like Cherrapunji and Mausingran, which earlier were recorded as places with the heaviest rainfall in the world - 905 inches were recorded at Cherrapunji in 1861 !! These areas are now drought prone !
4. I watched with grave apprehension the growing erosion caused by the mighty Brahmaputra.
5. It was years later during my involvement with the National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB), which I was placed in charge of by Rajiv Gandhi, that I was first struck by the full implications of the accelerating loss of the country's forest cover.
6. The malpractices of only about 40 million people who live in the Himalayan mountains directly affect the welfare and destiny of about 350 million who live in the adjacent large river basins and plains, that are the major granary of India, where 2/3 rds of the people derive their livelihood from agriculture.
7. In fact the entire population of this country is, one way or another, tied up with the health of the Himalayan eco-system. Yet there is no broad based expression of public concern to impel our decision and policy makers to take immediate steps to arrest the constant and accelerating degradation to which these and the other mountains, hills and plateaus of our country are today subjected.
8. When forests are destroyed in the uplands then floods destroy the crops in the low lands. Once the top soil is lost on the mountains it cannot be replaced, the damage is permanent and a chain of ecological degradation is set in motion that permanently incapacitates the uplands, which I refer to as the hydro-geographical systems, to support life.
9. The point at issue is therefore that the process of ecological degradation is undermining the basis on which sustainable development can take place. It is my conviction that sustainable development is possible only on a foundation of ecological security.
10. Government's total focus today on economic development, with no regard whatsoever for ecological considerations, gives us a false sense of economic progress. It is a case of eating into, not only the interest on our natural capital, but into the capital itself, and that too on a rapidly increasing scale.

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Excerpts from the Chief Guest, Mr. Duleep Matthai's Speech

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11. No attempt whatsoever is made to assess the loss of forest capital, of our biodiversity, of top soil and consequent increase in desertification and wasteland. If our annual national budgets were presented to reflect the economic costs of such losses, as is essential if the true state of the economy of the country is to be presented to the public, an extremely dismal picture of the country's economic development would emerge instead of the entirely unjustified optimistic picture Govt. now projects.
12. When we cross a certain and predeterminable ecological threshold, the preliminary symptoms of which are already evident, as will be inevitable if we continue to pursue our current economic policies and practices, we will find ourselves confronted with a holocaust which will pale into insignificance the Bengal famine of 1943-44 when an estimated 1½ million people died of starvation, and many more left impoverished.

Our Finance Minister has declared that the liberalisation policy he has introduced, which all of us are aware was in fact imposed on us by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is now irreversible. This policy allows increasingly free access of the market forces, both legal and illegal, to all the natural resources of the country with no regard whatsoever for ecological consequences. In my opinion this will soon spell economic bankruptcy given the fact that economic development or sustainable development in the mid and long term can only, and I again repeat only, be achieved on a foundation of ecological security. The insatiable quest for profit and growth that

both the private and public sectors are now encouraged to pursue without restraint, will lead us all to environmental destruction, the first victims of which will be the poorest sections of our people; the rural and urban poor, including the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, particularly our so called primitive tribes.

13. I cannot end without a reference to the role of science and technology in accelerating the degradation of our ecological systems.
14. A reportedly dramatic statement was made in early 1992 by two scientific bodies, considered by the West, as the most prestigious in the World – namely the US Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of London. They pronounced that, to quote – “If current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation to the environment or continued poverty of much of the World.”

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Principal Founder's Day Speech

Contd. from page2

One such pursuit is the work done by keen and compassionate boys under the guidance of Mr. Shashi Bhushan and Mr. M.M. Sharma at Raphael and the Cheshire Home. We are lucky at Welham that some of our teachers give much of their own time to assist boys in many spheres. One young recruit who has been doing just that is the first real Old Boy (i.e. one who has passed his Board exams here) to join the staff of the school – Jagjit Singh. I thank all those who have given so much of themselves to the students.

It is customary at the end of a speech to convey my thanks to a variety of individuals and agencies: this year I would particularly like to thank the Chairman and the Board of Trustees for their tremendous support and encouragement. □

Old Boys News

1. **Castrol Challenge Rally** from Delhi Shimla and back in three days participants :

Rajbir and Anurag Total number of Competitors 48
Ranked 12th position.

2. **Anurag Agarwal** has joined Lucknow University.
3. **Musroor Hussain (Ex-299)** has been blessed with a daughter.

MINUTES OF THE WELHAM OLD BOYS' SOCIETY MEETING HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 1993 AT 10.30 A.M. IN THE L.R.C.

1. The President and Secretary of the WOBS along with the Senior Tutor met the Principal on 18.10.1993 to ask how the Old Boys could help the School. The Principal suggested that there was an urgent need for squash courts and Rs. 5 lakhs would cover the expenditure. The Old Boys took up the the responsibility to collect the required funds.

Gurbir Jaijee suggested that the zonal reps should organise fund raising schemes from each of their regions.

2. For further streamlining the visits of the Old Boys to the School Mr. Kandhari suggested that he would try and post the school calendar to each of the Old Boys.

Old Boys are welcome to visit School but should inform either the Old Boys Office or the Bursar in advance.

3. The term of President and Secretary was passed unanimously : Two years with an extension of one year.

President	Mohit Jain
Secretary	Jagjit Singh

The body of the OBS which was restructured is as follows :

President	Elected	Mohit Jain
Secretary	Elected	Jagjit Singh
Zonal Reps	Elected	
Principal	Ex Officio	S. Kandhari
Senior Tutor	Ex Officio (School/Staff Rep)	Dr. Saxena
Hony Treasurer	Appointed	Mr. Negi

The following were elected :

North Zone (Punjab, Chandigarh, HP, Haryana)

Delhi Univ	Gurbeer Jaijee
Delhi	Hitesh Mahajan
Bombay	Rajveer Sharma
Lucknow/Kanpur	Bharat Vaid
Calcutta	D.N. Singh
Patna	Sudipta Ganguly
Manipal	
Abroad	Sanjeev Sehgal

4. WOBS Reps in various regions should organise meetings and send reports to the OB office in School.

5. The accounts of the OB Society was circulated and passed.

6. Any other business with the permission of the Chair :

- a) An Old Boys get together has been fixed (Cocktails/Dinner) for the Founders Sunday. At this dinner the following will be the guests of the Old Boys :

Bursar, Housemasters, Senior Tutor, teachers who have taught for over 10 years in the school, with spouses.

- b) Pankaj Raheja suggested that an annual subscription should be taken from Old Boys.

- c) Ranjeet Bedi said that the school should be better represented outside.

- d) The Principal Mr. S. Kandhari, also an Old Boy, put up the suggestion that as our school had started both for boys and girls we should go in for co-education further suggesting that it would open out more courses for the students.

- e) The Secretary thanked the Principal on behalf of the WOBS for the office on the Campus. □

The Person Who Has Influenced Me Most

He could just sit there lost in the poetry of thought. A sheet of blank paper before him, a pencil between his fingers, and then in a flurry of motion the most beautiful caricature appeared on the paper. To sit so peacefully in a world ridden with problems, economical, social and emotional and yet he could sit so peacefully and churn out from his brains the most imaginative, illustrative, caricatures on the problems. Such a peaceful person could only be my brother. He was the one I always wanted to emulate. He was my peer.

His hunch, his slow lack-a-daisical gait and lack lustre yet classically good looking face made him special. His difference from the rest made him ideal. So different from what great leaders, authors and preachers said about what a peer should be like. The long brown hair, unshaven cheeks and cigarette, so uncharacteristic of a school boy proving that 'rules were made to be broken.' And yet he was disciplined in what interested him. He knew, as the Principal would say 'the size of his book.'

Plagued by bad health, he never let that come in his way. He just carried on. He exercised his way through snide remarks and cheeks, sarcastic comments. That is what made me move forward. Look for something beyond what I could not do. Listen to criticism, if it was constructive but take it in my stride if it was cynical. Be aggressive when needed, don't get aggravated and get into more trouble.

Trouble was something that followed us everywhere we went. To avoid it, he taught me how to change myself to suit the surrounding atmosphere, so that my behaviour would unsuit trouble. "Don't ever get aggravated by remarks" he would often say. Aggravation would only be more trouble. This helped I often lost my temper in front of elders. I argued with them and could not stand to listen to their criticism. He helped me see that I could change.

To be different from the rest is one of the most important things he taught me. To develop a style of my own and be of a different breed, so that I could show the difference in my upbringing. My manners at the table, in the classroom and other social gatherings. Not to be stereotype like other younger brothers who got all the pampering and molly-cuddling. Who had to be spoon fed by their elders. We were from a middle class family who had to work to get something special, like a birthday present. We were not rich and that is something he helped me realise and overcome. He made me see that we were born with a special zest for life, which helped us to strive for the best.

Life he said was to be lived everyday. We had to overcome its hurdles in our own fields and enjoy it as it came. To sit down and curse our luck, our birth and

our upbringing would be of no use, it was just a waste of time. School was somewhere we had to go, it was a must, an unavoidable calamity which we would have to fight by enjoying our helplessness. Since our schooling was formal, every member of our family had to study in a boarding school. "It helps to make you a man. To know what life in the real world is," he would remark. He, as a brother, helped me enjoy boarding school, face and fight its hardships. He was a senior boy and a prefect and yet he never took advantage of the fact that he was my brother.

He slipped out of his suits so well. He could bring the level of his conversation down to any age level. One minute he could be a loving brother and another a bully. A strict elder and a playmate. He was an artist not just in the literary sense of the word, he was an artist at changing himself, making himself likeable and emulative. He was always the commanding figure in my life. He took the limelight and yet he shared it with me, with everyone, not being selfish and taking the credit himself. He was the person that influenced me the most.

□ Sudeep Chandhurb
X-B,

The prize winning Essay in 'B' Section.

CHIEF GUEST SPEECH

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15. The environmental predicament which now confronts us does not call for the application of Western science and technology typified by the foregoing statement. The solution lies instead in returning to our roots, and recognising the omnipotence of nature and natural laws and the importance of working in conformity with these laws, rather than continuing in our attempts, through science and technology, to redirect natural processes to subserve human needs - the major cause of the impending environmental crisis. To reinforce this view a very telling statement was recently made by the former President of the USSR - Mikhail Gorbachov and quoted in a September '93 issue of TIME magazine. What he said was this "The crisis of civilization that we see today is a crisis of the naive belief in the omnipotence of humanity." I paraphrase this by substituting the word 'humanity' by the words - 'science and technology' which is what he obviously implied.
16. The solution lies unfortunately in the trauma of bringing about fundamental changes in our educational systems, in the ways we think and act, changes in our aspirations and life styles, in the very development processes we follow, and most importantly, changes in the very value systems that have inspired many successive generations of our ancestors.
17. These changes can only be brought about by the beliefs, attitudes and ambitions of the boys and girls of schools like this who represent the coming generation of the leaders of our country. □

Welham Now !

Results of the Inter-House Debate :

Jayant Gokhle	—	1st	Krishna
Sameer Gambhir	—	2nd	Jamuna
Manvendra	—	3rd	Jamuna

The Trophy was awarded to Jamuna.

SCHOOL QUIZ SOCIETY :

Sameer Gambhir (Secretary)
Nitin Agarwal
Wasim Ahmed
Himanshu Singh

Amit Oberoi
Asif Iqbal
Pawan Agarwal
Sudeep Chaudhuri

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Hunting of the Hunter : The Shaheen Falcon

The ancient sport of Falconry is still famous in Arab countries. It is known to be one of the oldest sports in the world. This sport has become the cause of the extinction of many falcon species. And the ones left are on the verge of extinction.

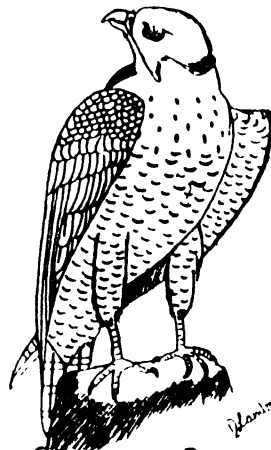
One of the endangered species of falcon is the Shaheen Falcon also known as the Himalayan Peregrine. The word 'Shaheen' comes from 'Shah' and 'een' meaning 'this is the Shah.' It is one of the fastest flying Birds of Prey and has a diet of pigeons, doves and kites; it prefers pigeons the most.

These birds are very rare. Specially because a single bird of this species can be bought for lakhs and lakhs of rupees by an Arab falconer. This makes it the most prized bird in the world. And hence in India, bird catchers try catching every bird which looks somewhat like a falcon.

These birds are one man's birds, which means they are faithful and stay familiar with a single person, its trainer.

When a bird is first caught it is not comfortable in the presence of humans hence a hood has to be tied over its eye (All the gloves, hoods used in falconry are not found in the markets they have to be made). The essential things used in falconry are to be made first because you cannot handle a Shaheen without a glove it would rather scratch your hand. There is no fixed time of training, a bird may not be trained even in a year, it all depends on the way you train it. While training, the bird has to be handled atleast five hours a day.

One of the phases of training is done with a piece of meat tied to a rope which in turn is handled by the trainer. The meat piece is thrown far away and the falcon is made to go for it. The falcon flies to it but before it can catch hold of it in its powerful claws the meat is pulled back.



THE SHAHEEN FALCON

These birds get very familiar with their trainer's whistle. If a strange person whistles to it then it would most likely pay no attention. It is a mode of communication between the trainer and the bird which is used during hunting.

Shaheens have very good eye sight. They can spot a prey of the size of a rabbit from thousands of feet in the sky. If one is able to see a Shaheen then he verywell notice the yellow colour of its eyelids which help in emitting light.

These birds have never been known to breed in captivity but efforts are still going on. Shaheens build their nests in the Himalayas on the edge of cliffs.

When kept as pets Shaheens have to be fed feathered meat because with the meat they also engulf a few feathers which clean their stomach from dust and are later excreted.

Once the training is over the falcon is taken on a hunt. This is the most crucial part of the training because if the bird has not been fully trained then it might fly off somewhere especially on seeing a Sparrow Hawk.

This bird is seldom seen but the members of our school Nature Club with a few other boys were fortunate enough to observe this Bird of Prey very closely with its trainer Mr. Ali Mohammed on the 10th of September.

He had a Shaheen falcon which he had bought a fortnight ago from a birdcatcher who had caught it by chance in his nets. Mr. Ali told us about this falcon and about the sport of falconry.

Most of the above information is courtesy of Mr. Ali Mohammed to whom the Nature Club is thankful.

□ Digvijay Lamba
VIII-A
Nature Club

Ringside View

This month was a victorious month for Welham.

Firstly, a memorable athletic meet was held on the 28th of October. This time, quite a few Ex-Welhamites visited the school on the occasion of our Founder's Day. Their sportsman spirit was remarkable. They displayed a co-ordinated march past and ran some races too.

Our school basketball team had a match with the X'ies. The X-Welhamites fought gallantly but the school team displayed a better game and was victorious. The Sehgal brother's displayed on excellent game as also Durgesh Bhatia (X-Welhamites), who is the captain of basketball in S.R.C.C.

Talking about basket, this year's team proved that Welham is the best. Under the leadership of Rajesh Sehgal (captain) and the guidance of Mr. Vachani, Welham marched into the finals of the Basketball Councils. The team met The Doon School in the finals. The game was very exciting. Till half time, Sanjay Prasad and Siddhant Sharma put in all the three points but in that half the Doscors were better and the score read 20-17.

The second half began with the loud cheering of Welhamites which boosted the players morale. Samarth and Harpreet were brought in. The class 9 hero. 'Samarth' played an excellent game. He took quite a many fouls and with the assistance of Harry led Welham to victory. The final score was 53-47. Rajesh

lifted the trophy and Welham to a moment of pleasure and pride.

Our Junior Basketball team was no less. Welham reached the finals of the Basketball Councils (Juniors). They met Pine Hall School and beat them. Welham was again declared the winner and the trophy was ours. Bikash Gurung and Vivek Sharma played a very good game. The final score was 31-28.

The Golden Jubilee Memorial trophy was also lifted by Welham. Thus, ours was the school which lifted all the Basketball trophies and became the 'Masters of Basketball.' The credit goes to Rajesh Sehgal.

The Table Tennis council cup was lifted by Welham. Our team Ramanpreet Hora (Captain), Jayander Shah and Gaurav Wahi met The Doon School in the semi-finals. We beat them 3-2 and entered the finals against Cambrian Hall. Our team beat them 3-0 and lifted the trophy.

And now for the Inter house matches. Athletic season was exciting. The boys tried their best and there was a lot of competition. In this season, the school team has lost a very good batsman, Varun Lamba. He suffered with a major fracture. He broke his hand while practicing for high jumps. He won't be able to play for the coming two years because there are two rods and a plate fitted inside his arm. Our good wishes for his early recovery.

□

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