



THE OLIPHANT

No. 36

WELHAM BOYS' NEWSLETTER

15 December, 1985



EDITORIAL

The Founder's Day celebration proved to be a success. The exhibitions were excellent; the English Department pleasantly surprised everyone with their 'Shakespeare Exhibition'—an addition to our usual Founders' set up. The computer room was flocked with boys and guests alike, and there was to be seen a surging crowd moving in and out of the door at all times. We had an Economics and Geography exhibition too, this time.

The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We are grateful to Mr. K. C. Pant for having come as our Chief Guest.

I apologize for the innumerable printing errors

in the previous issue of the Oliphant. I must apologize to Mr. Kapoor for the misprints in his article and also to Miss Yadav for allowing a distorted form of her interview to be printed.

The fortnight passed extraordinarily quickly, with the examinations taking up half of it. It is time now for some rest and the vacations will definitely serve the purpose!

WISHING EVERYONE GREAT WINTER VACATIONS!

Aresh Shirali.

THE MADDENING CROWD - A REVIEW

Beginning with a delightfully perceptive take-off of their Principal, the Maddening Crowd of Welham Boys School enacted a series of glimpses into the life of the school, some little cameos of wit and humour, others more routine and 'everyday'. The little boy delivered into alien hands by worried and weeping parents, turns slowly into a well informed, lively teenager, considerate of his colleagues and concerned about the world around him. You can almost see this happen as the scenes unfold.

It is difficult to compress such a panorama into one hour on a stage, to maintain the thread of continuity and to create a sense of space and time and "seeing it happen". Some of it was very well done, the basket ball game, the explosive chemistry lesson, the touching first-date, the first shave, the ragging over the girl

friend's photograph. Others were more like interruptions, entertaining on their own, but difficult to accept as an integral part of the story line. The Garhwali dance, for example or the hilarious policeman and the thief. Hilarious policeman is right. He was a gem of bumbledom with his spindly legs and his enormously wide shorts. It was only much later in the scene, when he seemed to walk curiously out of step with the sound of his boots, that one realised that it was all on tape.

Comparisons are odious and would not have been made had they not been compelled by the coincidences of the theme and the opening scenes. But these were quickly forgotten, till right at the end, when suddenly it was clear that, as a portrayal of life in the School, the Maddening Crowd was far more successful than the Pageant at the 'other place'. Well done!

A. K. Iyer

FOUNDER'S DAY : PRINCIPAL'S SPEECH

Honourable Minister, Board of Trustees, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Founder's Day. It is a particular pleasure to welcome Mr. & Mrs. K. C. Pant, his distinguished career in public service is well known to you and hence, he needs little introduction. But as in many ways, he embodies 'the whole man' that we aim for at Welham, I'd like to tell you that in college he combined a distinguished academic record (recipient of the Chancellor's Gold Medal) with an active interest in social and political activity, in sports (he played squash till recently) and in reading. It is therefore meet that he has held portfolios as varied as Steel, Electronics, Home Affairs, Atomic energy and latterly, Education where he was involved in defining the new education policy. In short a versatile man such that boys can emulate.

We have been gathering here every year, on December 1st -Mrs. Oliphant's Birthday to pay homage to our Founders. From next year this tradition will be broken as we will celebrate our Founder's Day in the first week of November.

It was Mrs. Oliphant who provided her daughter with the financial means to start the School. She believed completely in Miss Oliphant's dream and in her ability to make the dream concrete and so it proved. Working very long hours, day in and day out without taking a holiday, Miss Oliphant overcame numerous obstacles, legal battles, administrative hurdles and financial constraints to firmly establish the name 'WELHAM' on the educational map of India. A lady of boundless energy she was greatly respected and admired by those of us who knew her.

That the School has gone from 'strength to strength' shows how solidly she laid the foundations upon which we have continued to build. The preparatory School she opened, has now launched into the +2 stage of High School Education. We hope, and expect that we'll now provide a standard of excellence in education, all the way from Class I to Class XII.

Miss Oliphant originally conceived of this school while working at the Doon School and so it gives

me double pleasure in conveying our felicitations to the Doon School on having celebrated its Golden Jubilee. I am happy to report that their Chief Guest at the Jubilee is also an Old Boy of this school.

Talking of Old Boys, it is rewarding to report that three of our boys after doing their ICSE here, have qualified for Medical Colleges and one has joined Harvard. A pleasant occasion, early in November was the visit of a group of our Old Boys from Pakistan-some of them from our first batch.

I hope you'll bear with me for a moment while I give you a brief sketch of the School as it is today-which is vastly different from the days of our first batch. Those who already know may switch off and admire the colourful view around.

Unlike the impression that exists, we are a small school-though set in 27 acres of land. We have a total strength of 475 students, 242 in classes I to V and 233 in classes VI to XI. By 1988 we plan a maximum strength of 530 with not more than 50 students each, in class XI and XII. One great constraint we face is that we have more beds and classrooms for our class V than class VI. Thus, we expect and fervently hope, that some of our students will leave at the end of class V. Inevitably this small scale of ours means that we have to disappoint many prospective parents. At the same time, we do not wish to become very large, for as I have stated in my last Founder's Day address, we want to make our pupils educated persons with a spirit of enquiry and with a ability to think for themselves. To my mind, an educated person is one, I quote "who can think effectively; can communicate his thoughts; can discriminate between values and make relevant judgements". Obviously we teachers can hope to be of some use in attaining this ideal if we have manageable numbers. It is therefore, with this in mind that we have kept the strength of our classes to 25 or less.

After I had written the above, I chanced upon the study of public education in the USA, by the Committee for Economic Development. One of the tasks of the Committee was to identify the skills and attitudes that constitute doing well in College and in

jobs. To fulfill this task the CED surveyed 6000 businesses, where employers' and personnel managers were asked to rate four attributes they considered most important. 500 Colleges and Universities were also surveyed. It is no coincidence that they all gave the same attributes; striving to work well; knowing how to learn; the ability to set priorities and the ability to communicate. Nowhere is there any mention of learning by rote or of a syllabus. But again the emphasis is on the ability to communicate.

But what of us at Welham Boys? In continuing to strive towards producing educated persons we have done many things; the tangible ones are given in the printed report that is with you. But it is some intangible gains that I'd like to mention; the tremendous development in our pupils of self confidence brought about by the ability to think for themselves; the quiet pride in themselves and their School because they are allowed to work on their own.

At a time when there is so much unrest and when, let alone the questioning of old verities, there is a belief that there are no eternal verities, credit for these achievements must naturally go to the pupils and also to their teachers.

It was appropriate, therefore, that early this year Miss Z Rehman received a long service award for 25 years of dedicated, diligent and loyal service to the School.

I sometimes wish that our social climate in the world outside this haven, treated young people with as much consideration and affection as they receive from our staff. Here in Dehra Dun where there are scores of schools, we do not have those basic facilities that any enlightened administration should provide; there is no museum or art gallery; no centre for imparting skills in sports; no creative centre for arts and crafts; no educational resources centre.. the list could go on forever. I suppose when the Managing Director of the Garhwal Vikas Mandal can avoid for years moving a gas cylinders godown which is 90 feet from the school it is too much to expect the administration to consider every year as "the year of the child". But there is hope, the commissioner of Garhwal has informed me that instructions have been given to re-locate the godown in

three months time. Who knows, better things may follow.

Fortunately many things can be achieved by self-reliance. It is a pleasure to report specially as Mr. & Mrs. K. C. Pant are keenly aware of the environment, that a greater awareness of our environmental degradation has got the School deeply involved in many relevant activities; planting trees both within and without the campus; the introduction of solar heating; camps in the wilderness; treks in the hills and elsewhere and taking a keen interest in our neighbourhood and its uplift. But the primary goal of our energies remains the reaching of academic excellence. In spite of limited finances we have been able to develop our laboratories and our libraries, and now our senior's library is open for all from 7.30 A.M. to 6.30 P.M., on Sundays too.

We have not yet developed a full Computer centre but next year we shall have one given the co-operation of Govt. and the kindness of our Parents. Here I must tell you-especially non-believers - that computer aided learning is an exciting, fascinating and intellectually stimulating facet of education. If treated as a tool for learning and properly integrated into the syllabi it can achieve a lot to make learning meaningful and fun.

Of course, enthusiastic teaching too is a must. I am pleased to inform you that we have many on our Staff who cheerfully give up their leisure in helping our students in fields as varied as computer literacy and play producing. Being a purely fee earning school the salaries we pay, though better than most, remain somewhat below the ideal level. I am happy to report that the Board is fully aware of this and it has raised salaries of all classes of our employees. To cover this increase in expenditure we will have to take some austerity measures - such as not giving you dinner tonight. This is of particular importance as we are not raising fees this year. Mind you, as is the case with all good Schools our waiting list is quite long. This year we have some sixty vacancies and nearly 500 candidates sat for the entrance test. Some of the candidates are barely six years old, which of course means that I am inflicting cruelty on all. But, can anyone of you suggest a better alternative? If so, please let me know.

The pressure on our Classes I to III is tremendous. It seems that few residential schools of any excellence provide the efficient and tender care that we all want for our young children. That Welham Boys' provide this care in such great measure is owing to matrons like Mrs. Young. An institution for 21 years, she has nurtured generations of our younger children. She runs Woodseats in an exemplary manner. Combining discipline with affection, tact with a deep practical knowledge of a child's psychology and in her dealings with parents, firmness with courtesy. Alas, she is retiring at the end of the term. On behalf of us all I thank her for the wonderful job she has done-part of the thanks must go to her husband who let us keep her when she reached the age of retirement.

The end of this term also sees us saying goodbye to Mrs. Misra and Mrs Talukdar. Mrs. Misra with her great musical ability and enthusiasm has done much to build up our music department.

Mrs. Talukdar with her talent, keenness and quiet manner endeared herself to everyone. All of us, especially the Art Department will miss her. Last month Mr. Anand, left to take up an appointment as Headmaster. His enthusiastic presence on the games field and in Ganges House will be missed.

The successful running of residential schools requires keenness and hard work from many. To all our staff-in the dining hall, on the games field, in the hostels, the office and the classroom, my thanks for their cooperation.

We lead a rather hectic and full life in school. One of our few oases of silence is our morning Assembly. So before I ask our Chief Guest to deliver his address I will end with one of our Assembly Prayers :-

"Creator of life and light, we bless Thee this day for the beauty of this world, for sunshine and flowers, storm, cloud and starry night, for the first radiance of dawn and the last smouldering glow of the sunset.

We thank thee for physical joy; for the ecstasy of swift motion, for deep water to swim in, for the goodly smell of rain on dry ground, for hills to climb, and hard work to do, for all skill of hand and eye, for music that lifts our hearts in one breath to heaven, and for the hand-grasp of a friend "

GOOD ASSESSMENT CARD '85²

WBS No.	NAME	CLASS	WBS No.	NAME	CLASS
Kaishna			Ganges		
183	Rajnish Agarwal	6	330	Gagan Gahlot	6
134	Tanuj Sethi	11	195	Rajnish Yadav	6
241	Raj Kamal Phukan	7			
Cauvery			Jamuna		
89	Ashish Shekhar	7	408	Sidhartha Goyal	7
176	Aresh Shirali	9	156	Ashish Kalra	8
280	Piyush Modi	9	295	Mohit Agarwal	11
386	Samir Singhal	7			
White House			NU		
485	Amit Saraogi	IV	416	Pranav Priyadarshi	4
			478	Amit Shekhar	4

-S Kandhari

SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST ; MR. K. C. PANT

Mr. Dharma Vira, Members of the Board, Principal, Members of the Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen, Students. I am grateful to you all for having invited me to participate in this function.

Dehra Dun is a well known centre of education and home of some of our best educational institutions. In the country as a whole. We have a large number of good institutions but in relation to our population and needs, the number is too small. We need many more institutions of the kind which can produce tomorrows citizens of quality.

I went around the school today, met the boys and a few girls, talked to them, and saw what they had done in the field of painting, art and creativity of various kinds. I would like to congratulate all of them and tell them how happy I was to meet them to see their bright eager faces and to get a glimpse of the future of this country in their eyes. Welham needs no introduction and its achievements speak for themselves. I then congratulate the Board of Governors, Principal and Staff for all that they have achieved.

That is why, because the future of this country is inextricably linked with this generation, which is now being nurtured into adulthood; it is in these formative years that educational institutions are required as a fundamental necessity in the scheme of things.

Sometimes there is a confusion between elitism and excellence. We want excellent institutions but it is not necessary that excellent institutions should breed a sense of snobbery in people or should necessarily alienate them from the bulk of people, or make them insensitive to the realities all around them. In fact a good school sees to it that its students develop this kind of sensitivity, which enables them in later life to give back to society something of what they have received from it by the way of education. All of us have been fortunate enough to get a good education, owing to those who have not been so fortunate. We should make our contributions and share what we have learnt with them. Social consciousness and awareness are very important. I am sure that the boys of this institution are being exposed to this kind of social awareness

This institution and other institutions of its

kind are not just for the facilities they offer in its activities, buildings, play grounds or the resources that go into making these institution. What makes an institutions are the traditions and conventions and the way they are kept up and the way they are adapted to changing times and the way that the end products, that is the students, go out of this institution well equipped for later life. I have already mentioned the achievements of the students and that itself is the biggest achievement that any institution can have and I hope that the students present here remember this and learn the importance of this institution.

In the same way India is a big country with big rivers, big mountains and seas, spread out from Assam to Gujarat and from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and yet what is important is the values which we cherish and our age old culture and the best in it which inspired untold generations of genius which have contributed to the world's civilization and its growth. We have to understand these old values and decide to take a path where we must discard some which are no longer relevant and keep those which are relevant. Therefore the challenge today is to step into the moving times with the changing world of science and technology, to combine the best of the past and the needs of the future and that is where education plays a critical and crucial role. Times are changing. Old values, as I said are crumbling. In many homes even within two generations, life styles have changed so much that the children are exposed to more than what their grand parents were ever exposed to. even by way of cultural influences in their homes. Therefore the old values, even though not actively practised may have served the parents as a stabilizing factor through out their lives are no longer relevant but then there is the danger of the exposed and the new value systems which are not fully integrated in our society. It is here that the education plays the peculiar role of making the children march ahead. The whole world is modernising and we must do it.

You may have heard of the new education policy or rather a prelude to the education policy

being framed by the Ministry of Education. It deals with many issues and questions and surveys the present education system and hopefully a new policy of education will now take shape. This is the time for institutions like this, for the staff, students and parents to contribute to this debate and particularly if they feel very strongly about certain aspects. I have no doubt that faced as we are with illiteracy and a large number of drop outs even in the elementary schools, faced as we are with overcrowding on all levels and particularly Universities and Colleges and so many different problems, your contribution should be meaningful on the future of this policy. Everybody must be concerned with education and education must reach all. Our population is large which is bad for the progress of the country unless we can educate the people. Education is relevant in man making, it gives confidence, forms character and of course gives knowledge.

I agree with you Mr. Principal when you refer to the examination system which today nurtures cramming rather than understanding and this is the root of the problem and it is high time that we applied our minds to the improvement of this system and the time has come that we go into depths about these questions and instead of lamenting on the gaps and lacunas in this system

we correct this system in the right spirit. While on the subject I would like to make one more point and that is that the load on the children is very heavy, both on the dayscholar as well as borders and even parents complain about this. The fact that more and more is being taught in very little time and so the problem before the educationists is how to compress this, how to teach it, how to impart this knowledge without adding such a bulk of books to the curriculum as to make it possible for the child to enjoy the school, play games or even take part in other activities.

On the other hand the means of communications are growing faster and faster and so every country is every other countries neighbour and so the volume of knowledge and volume of information both are growing and the challenge for the educationists is to keep pace with this and enable the children to come out of this without being overburdened.

With this I would like to thank the Board of Governors, Principal and staff for calling me here and giving me the opportunity to meet the students and spend some delightful hours with them. Jai Hind.

REFLECTION

On the banks of the river Ganga rise the temples and palaces of Benares, the sacred city of hindus. Benares is thronged by pilgrims from all over the Hindu world, who come to wash in the water of the Ganges, to visit the city's many shrines, or to die and be cremated by the holy river...

Life on the banks of the Ganga at Benares begins at dawn, which at that time reveals a magnificent panorama of the buildings, Along the waterside, stone steps line the entire river front, and interspered between them are many 'ghats' or landing places for boats that ply on the waterway. Crowds of worshippers throng the steps and the Hindus believe that the sacred water can cleanse their sins and is the gateway to salvation.....

At this time of the day my gaze is directed towards a lonely figure who is sitting motionless. He wears a simple cloth to keep out the cold of the morning but that too will be washed in the sacred river.

Gradually the sun rises, and the river mists slowly lift to reveal the magnificent buildings below that have a solemnity unmatched by any city in the world.

The ritualistic bathing continues until the afternoon until the river terraces are shielded by a curtain of smoke from the funeral pyres.

The funeral ceremony is simple. The body

is set on fire and the mourners squat silently around the pyre. Children stand by and watch. The burning takes several hours, and finally extends into the late evening. The mourners walk slowly away.

preservation and destruction of the universe and all it contains. These emblems are everywhere, majestic and defiant to the darkness. These simple, rituals are part of everyday living, prayers of the people to the almighty, the giver and taker of life...

The glowing embers represent the creation,

—Gaurav Kampani

“THE MADDENING CROWD”

The following names were missing from the brochure. My sincerest apologies for the faux pas.

Deepak Rishi
Abhay Singh
Ashu Khanna
Viresh Sharda
Raghunandan Kakkar
Masroor Hussain
Deepak Jaiswal

Amitabh Singh
Himanshu Agarwal
Akshay Kant Purohit
Mohinder Bedi
Shashi Kant Kedia
Roopak Arora
Roopak Kapoor

Not to forget Dr. Saxena's invaluable assistance with props and costumes and Mr. and Mrs. Benjamins help with make up.

MISS M. YADAV

P.T. COMPETITION : RESULTS

P. T. Competition held on 13th December, '85.

Congratulation to Ganges A for coming 1st in the Seniors and to NU for coming 1st from in the Sub-Juniors

EDITORIAL BOARD

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