

# MELTING POT



TUPTON HALL SCHOOL  
MAGAZINE 1980



***Tupton Hall School, Review 1980***



# Headmaster's Comment

Once again it gives me pleasure to write a short introductory comment. Tupton Hall School has now completed over ten years as a comprehensive school and this magazine sets a scene and gives the readers a taste of what happens in a large modern school as well as showing the skills and capabilities of young people.

Education rarely seems to be out of the news these days and one reason for this is because our society has moved steadily towards a point where jobs and further study opportunities often depend heavily on paper qualifications. We are very fortunate to be an all through 11-18 school which can offer a full range of subjects to pupils at every stage of their secondary education. In the uncertain future, I hope that it will be possible to continue to offer all pupils chances to develop their interests and talents and that job opportunities will then be available to use them when they leave school.

We had a very good record of university and college entrants last year and our special congratulations go to David Parker who entered Queens' College, Cambridge to read Natural Sciences, and Stuart Knowles who will go to University College, Oxford in September to read Law. The exceptional 'A' level results of Dale Garbutt, which many of you will have read about in the local press, are also a fine example of the school's success.

Young people today work hard at school and also work hard when they become involved in activities to help other people. We have had amongst other things a first year Toy

Fair, a sponsored tug-of-war, carol singing as well as our formal carol concert; penny races and donations and our own sponsored arithmetic tests. The beneficiaries have included Dr. Barnardo's, Riding for the Handicapped, the Old Folks' party (Cavendish House), and Indian boy through "Action in Distress" (Gladwin House), the local Scanner Appeal, the Pigmentosa Retinitis Society, Help the Aged, Cancer Research, Clay Cross Mobile Physiotherapy Unit and the P.T.A. Narrow boat. I would like to thank all the pupils, staff, parents and friends of the school for their support.

By the end of this year the school will have said goodbye to eighteen staff since the last magazine was published. I would like to thank them all for their work and in particular pick out three for special mention. Mr. Rivers will be sorely missed by the English Department and will always be remembered for his performance of Aston in "The Caretaker". Dr. Rosser is off to Paris as a Head of Science in an English school there and amongst other activities he was on a team responsible for introducing the new style of the school magazine. Lastly Mrs. MacDonald is retiring after many years of loyal and dedicated service at Clay Cross and Tupton Hall. We wish her and her husband a long and happy retirement.

It only remains for me once again to thank the editorial team — especially Mr. Whitehead and the contributors for their magnificent efforts.

I.L. Forsyth

## Some Words from the Editor

Several people have asked me why the School Magazine is called MELTING POT. Someone once described America as a melting pot, because during the last century millions of people from different countries throughout the world left their homes and went to settle in America. The result was that the strange mixture of peoples (Germans, English, Irish, Scottish, Chinese, Italians and many other nationalities), were all thrown together, rather like the different ingredients in Mr. Sutton's camp soup.

In a similar way our school is like a melting pot, and we, pupils and teachers, are the ingredients, because we come from different areas and different backgrounds, and therefore bring different qualities to school. Some of us live in Clay Cross, others in the wilds of Woolley Moor; many are interested in sport, while others prefer music or drama; some pupils are good at English and Maths, others at Metalwork or Art. Some people will leave school and (hopefully) find a job in a local factory, whereas others will go on to college or university. The important point is that we all contribute something, however small, to the bubbling pot that is our school.

MELTING POT is a good example of the diversity of

activities at Tupton Hall. In these pages you will find stories, poems and pictures from pupils throughout the school. There are accounts of trips made throughout the year and special activities, like the concerts, drama productions and the Art and Craft Exhibition. Important developments in the school such as the Merit Unit Scheme and the progress of the Narrow Boat are also investigated by our team of intrepid reporters. Sport and Competitions, Photographs and Quizzes: they are all here.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have helped compile this magazine, especially the members of my present fifth year English group, the Commerce Department and all the girls who helped with the typing, Mr. Johnson for his photography and all those pupils and staff who contributed to the magazine in a hundred different ways. Above all I should thank you for buying MELTING POT. I hope you enjoy reading it, and in years to come, when you find it lying in the bottom of a cupboard, and you start to read it, I hope it will remind you of the many people you knew, and all the things that happened, while you were a member of Tupton Hall School.

D. H. Whitehead

# FIRST YEAR POETRY COMPETITION

## THE CARP

It's a beautiful and peaceful fish.  
Swims so fast you can hardly see it.  
The carp is brown and cream, slippery and cold.  
Bread floats on the pond.  
Carp jumps for it and misses.  
Tries again.  
Gets the bread this time.  
Dives down, down, to the bottom of the pond.  
Cannot see it now.  
Gone too deep.  
Black figure comes to the top of the water.  
Dead carp.  
The pike has had it.  
The pond is now calm.

*Philip Edwards 1C3 (Joint Winner – Band Three)*

## DEAD CAR

The car skids over the fence.  
It flies,  
Landing with a crash more destructive than  
A junk-yard crusher.  
I peer over the fence,  
Shocked,  
Numbed.  
The stench of petrol trickling from the tank.  
Gleaming metal,  
Ripped,  
Jagged,  
Screaming metal.  
Dry fumes.  
Helpless, I am but the watcher,  
Stunned.  
A plea for help, weak but detectable.  
I half run half slide down the slope to the car,  
Grip the man's arm  
Wrench at the door in a blind effort to cheat death.  
BANG!  
Oblivion.

*Wayne Ryder T1 (Winner – Band One)*

## WAR, THE WAR

The whistle – the explosion.  
The fire, followed by the screaming.  
The fire engines – the soaking rubble.  
Why does no-one think?

The chasing spitfire – the burning meschersmidt.  
The screaming of the pilot followed by the explosion  
The fire burning – the silent ashes.  
Oh why does no-one think?  
The soldiers going over the top.  
The rattling guns.  
Bullets hitting the soldiers – the falling bodies.  
The last soldier falls, the scary silence follows.  
Why does no-one think?

The silent submarine followed by the lurking destroyer  
The silent sinking depth-charge  
Followed by the roaring explosion.  
The floating wreckage and the charred bodies.  
Now it's too late to think.

*Paul Marsh 1.G.2. (Joint Winner – Band Two)*

## THE WITCH

"We've seen a witch" say the children.  
"She lives in the dark, dark castle  
That stands at the top of the hill  
Where the bats and owls fly round at night.  
"Shall we visit her tonight?" the children ask,  
"Yes they say, Yes we'll go."  
Now they have reached the deep black wood  
And approach the castle with fear.  
Through a lighted window they see her.  
THERE SHE IS! The witch with her black pointed hat.  
Her nose and chin are pointed too.  
There in the corner sits her sleek black cat,  
With its green shining eyes.  
As the witch turns her head and reaches for her broomstick  
The children turn and run, back through the deep black  
wood.

Back to the warmth and safety of their own little beds.  
*Donna Broomhall 1.G.3.. (Joint Winner – Band Three)*

## A CASTLE

Castle new,  
Fresh with dew;  
Stone so white,  
Symbol of might.

Castle in battle,  
Armour's rattle,  
Stone is battered,  
Quickly shattered.

Castle's defence  
Battle to commence,  
Stone walls fall,  
Wounded men call.

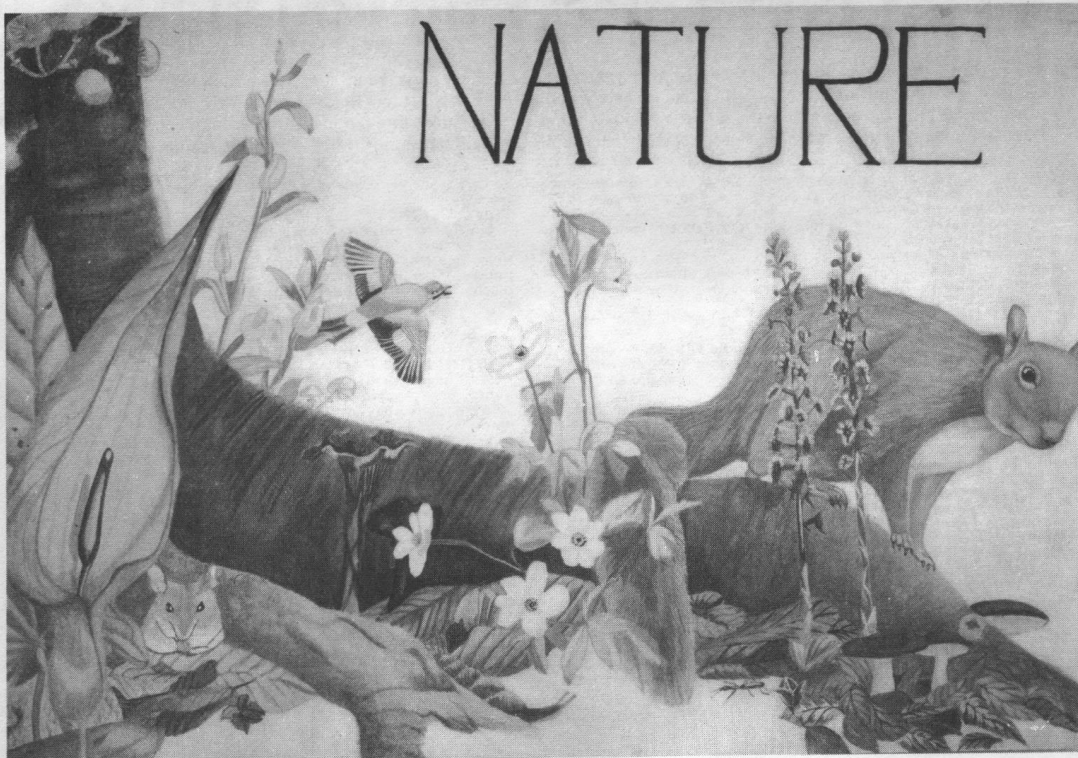
Castle grounds,  
"Out of bounds."  
Stone decays  
In many ways.

*Julie Raybould 1.H.1. (Runner-up Band One)*

## THE BEACH

When we go down to the sandy beach  
We have a pail and a shovel each,  
And lots of sand and crabs and shells,  
And all those tangy seashore smells,  
Of salty sea and sea weed bunches,  
And sunny sand and picnic lunches,  
And bathing suits and sun-baked wood,  
And cool sea breezes (awfully good)  
That smell perhaps of Spain or France.  
Then watch the far off white-caps dance,  
And see the seagulls turn and wheel,  
I know exactly how they feel –  
All light as air, and bare and free  
And warm as sun and cool as sea  
And wild and lazy as the sound  
Of all that ocean all around.  
I guess there's no way you can know  
Unless some day you too can go  
With lunch and a pail and a shovel each  
Down to some wide and sandy beach.

*Lauraine Crowder 1.G.2. (Joint Winner Band Two)*



by Helen Morland — Runner-up in Book shop Poster Competition

## First Year Verse Speaking Competition

For several years now, this competition has attracted a large number of entrants and an even larger audience to the dark confines of the drama theatre. The enthusiasm with which successive years of First Years have learnt and practised the many poems has only been matched by the feelings of excitement and pleasure which the capacity audiences have created, while listening to their friends in rapt silence. This year was no exception. Having won their way through class heats to the band heats in the drama theatre, a dozen contestants were ready to perform in the final in front of a packed house. Our reporters, **Jacquie Moon** and **Debbie Walters** were there too. Despite the sunny day, the drama theatre was overwhelmed with enthusiastic first years. Beneath the lighting box, on the large steps sat the contestants nervously looking at their noisy audience, and the empty seats that were to be filled by the judges. Slowly the noise diminished to an excited hum as everyone impatiently waited for the competition to begin.

The judges came in; they were Mr Rivers, Mr Scott, Mr Forsyth, Sonia Howard and Diana Tudsbury. Their job ahead was to be difficult, as all the contestants were of a high standard.

Band Three section began with two renditions of "There was an old woman", both Mark Webster and Ashley Pattie of 1C3 including movement into their humorous accounts, whilst the moans and groans of Danise Martin of 1C3 brought an eerie atmosphere to the theatre as she recited "Hairy Toe", Richard Hawthorne recited his choice of poem with a good variation of tone.

In Band Two different poems were recited. Stephen

Rudkin of T2 chose "The Listener", a serious poem which he interpreted well. Duncan Peitt, also of T2 chose the old favourite, "Colonel Fazzackely" reciting it in a lively manner. Simon Nash and Dale Julian both chose "Mr Kartoffle" and made excellent work of conveying the poem's absurd humour.

Finally the Band One section was heard. Nicola Gregson of C1 had chosen "To see the Rabbit", another dramatic poem which was interpreted well by Nicola. Georgina Osbiston of T1 asked "What is White" an interesting poem which was, clearly recited. Kerry Lovatt also of T1 had a brilliant voice variations to bring over a difficult poem; though maybe the loudest poem was read by Hazel Wright "The Way of Love" a descriptive epistle taken from the Bible.

Now came the waiting. The audience chattered noisily discussing who they thought should win whilst the contestants nervously smiled as their photograph was taken. Then came the announcement read by Mr Forsyth.

The winner of the Band 3 section was Mark Webster and second was Richard Hawthorne. The winner of the Band 2 section was Stephen Rudkin and Duncan Pettitt came second. The winner of the Band 1 section was Kerry Lovett, followed by Nicola Gregson. All the winners won book tokens, which were presented by the headmaster.

Speaking to Mr Forsyth after the competition, he commented on the enthusiasm and interest that the competition created throughout the First Year. He spoke highly of the competitors praising their intonation and clear recitals and he hoped that this poetry competition would remain the school calendar for many years.



# MERIT UNITS - WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Merit Unit Scheme was introduced almost two years ago, with the aim of rewarding those members of the school who made a positive contribution to school life. Like all new schemes, it has had its fair share of faults and more than its fair share of critics. Last term, a group of fourth year girls decided it was time to look more closely at the advantages and disadvantages of 'Merit Units' and they set out to question teachers and pupils on their attitudes towards this contentious subject.

A team of 4th Form interviewers questioned approximately a quarter of the teaching staff selected at random. The sample proved to be remarkably representative.

Question 1: What were your first reactions to the scheme when you first heard about it a year ago? why?

Most teachers welcomed some method by which incentive was provided and thought the scheme was worth experiment. But there were some doubts as to the amount of paperwork it would cause and its practicality.

Question 2: Have these first reactions been confirmed? If not, why not?

While the majority are satisfied on the whole with the incentive scheme several feel that it has greatest impact only in the first three years. One said that staff are opting out of the scheme and another said the scheme had lost its initial impetus.

Question 3: Do you personally give three merit-units each week or do you prefer to give an average of three taking one week with another? 25% of the teachers give three each week, and 75% give an average of three.

Question 4: (Can a system such as this be fair if any staff opt out of it?)

A large majority feel the system can't be fair if this happens. Question 5: Many pupils think that staff should have about five merit-units per week so they are easier to obtain. What are your views?

Most teachers were not in favour of having more merit-units to give out as they felt it would devalue them and add to the paperwork. They also felt that an average of three was enough. However some teachers see a very large number of pupils per week and some see one group of pupils for the majority of their lessons (14 lessons out of 20) and these teachers would prefer to have more merit-units to give.

Question 6: What are your criteria for giving merit-units?

Different teachers have different criteria but the criteria included:

- (i) An improvement in work,
- (ii) Excellent sustained work,
- (iii) Effort
- (iv) Service rendered
- (v) Co-operativeness and responsiveness.

Question 7: What year of pupils do you tend to give your merit-units to?

Some teachers said they tended to give them to the first three years, but others said they gave them to a wide range of pupils.

Question 8: The majority of 4th and 5th year pupils appear to wish to be excluded from the scheme as it is at present. Do you agree?

44% of the teachers agreed to excluding the 4th and 5th year pupils from the scheme as they said there was no form incentive for them, but 56% of the teachers disagreed, and said that it doesn't do them any harm and so it can only to them some good. One suggestion was that the 5th year are secretly pleased, but it is the minority that speak out and not the majority.

Question 11: Do you think the scheme should be continued? Why? 93% of the teachers thought the scheme should be continued, but 7% of the 27 teachers thought the scheme should be discontinued in its present form, although they were in favour of some scheme.

Several suggestions were made to improve the scheme such as:-

- (i) Instead of having a class total of merit units a class average per person should be calculated so small classes would have a better chance.
- (ii) The prize-giving should be given greater prominence
- (iii) 4th and 5th year form prizes should be replaced by prizes for individuals instead.
- (iv) There should be a house prize at the end of the year, possibly a day's holiday.
- (v) Have demerit units as well.
- (vi) The amount of merit units should be made more flexible, so that teachers can give between 1 and 5 merit-units each week to give an average of 3 per week.
- (vii) The staff merit-units should be given in proportion to the number of pupils they teach.

Researched by  
Sarah Montague 4G3  
Jayne Littlewood 4G3  
Mark Wightman 4G3  
Sasha Karakusevic 4G2  
Debbie Turner 4T3  
Jacquie Moon 4T2  
Rachel Maltby 4C2  
Moirá Browne 4C1  
Written by  
Sarah Montague 4G3

## HOW ARE MERIT UNITS DISTRIBUTED IN A FORM?

A form was chosen at random and their merit unit awards over 1 term were analysed and the following results were obtained:-

### REASON FOR AWARD - PERCENTAGE %

WORK . . . . . 49%  
HELP . . . . . 49%  
IMPROVEMENT . . . . . 2%

We found that of these, 63% were awarded from their own House

Teachers, while a mere 37% were awarded from the remaining Houses.

### CONCLUSION

From the above results, it can be clearly seen that House Teachers, tend to favour their own Houses, when awarding merit units, while there is a lack of enthusiasm for teachers to award them to other houses. Therefore the question arises can a fair system ever be reached and are merit units distributed fairly? To try to help answer these questions, we put them and others to the fourth year Cavenish in the form of a questionnaire.

The first question asked:  
WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE THE MAIN PURPOSE OF MERIT UNITS?

42% thought merit units should be given to reward a marked improvement in work.

33% thought they should be awarded to reward consistency in work.

11% thought they should be given to reward high marks in work 8% thought that merit units should reward pupils who help in the 'house' in some way.

5% Did not know.

Next they were asked:  
DO YOU THINK MERIT UNITS ARE AWARDED FAIRLY?

56% said yes, 39% said no and 5% didn't know.

The 39% that said no were asked WHY NOT?

50% said that teachers give merit units for different reasons. 32% said some teachers give too many merit units to their own form. 11% said some teachers do not use their merit units each week. 2% said the same people received them each week.

5% didn't know.

The next question asked:  
Do you think more merit units should be awarded?

51% said Yes  
41% said No  
8% didn't know

Question five asked:  
Do you wish the scheme to continue for the 4th and 5th years?

44% said Yes  
56% said No

And finally question six asked:  
In what ways could the scheme be improved?

15% said that teachers should be given more merit units each week to distribute.

13% said that the scheme should be discontinued for the fourth and fifth years but continued for pupils lower down the school.

6% said that merit units should be given for continuous hard work.

4% said that merit units should be given out at a set standard.

18% said that they should be abolished.

5% said that they should only be awarded for helping out.

1% said that it shouldn't be improved but it is suitable as it is.

1% said that the same amount of merit units should be awarded to each year and teachers should not be allowed to award them to their own form.

1% wished for the wall charts to be abolished as people abuse them, and the teachers should keep a record themselves.

29% refused to comment.

4% wished for better prizes for the winners.

1 person wished to receive a genuine pound note for each unit awarded!

Another wished for the prize to be a trip to Disneyland, a Rolls Royce, a Jaguar and a Granada Ghia however, the school doesn't feel that it is within its resources!

Written and research by:  
Rachel Maltby and Moira Browne  
4C2 4C1

### 1979-1980 Merit Units

Form Totals	Winning Form 2T1	183		
T1 136	2T1 183	3T1 118	4T1 65	
T2 140	2T2 127	3T2 166	4T2 125	
T3 160		3T3 90	4T3 122	
H1 178	2H1 171	3H1 147	4H1 78	
H2 94	2H2 86	3H2 119	4H2 67	
	2H3 120	3H3 80	4H3 61	
G1 159	2G1 142	3G1 170	4G1 76	
G2 113	2G2 83	3G2 109	4G2 69	
G3 97	2G3 92		4G3 88	
			4G4 65	
C1 152	2C1 166	3C1 115	4C1 135	
	2C2 145	3C2 95	4C2 119	
C3 110	2C3 113	3C3 142	4C3 106	

M1 113

Unlike last year, there does appear to be a distinct pattern.

Year 1 average 132  
Year 2 average 130  
Year 3 average 123  
Year 4 average 91  
(Year 5 average about 55)  
Years 1 - 3 Band 1 average 153  
Band 2 average 114  
Band 3 average 111  
Turbutt had highest house average

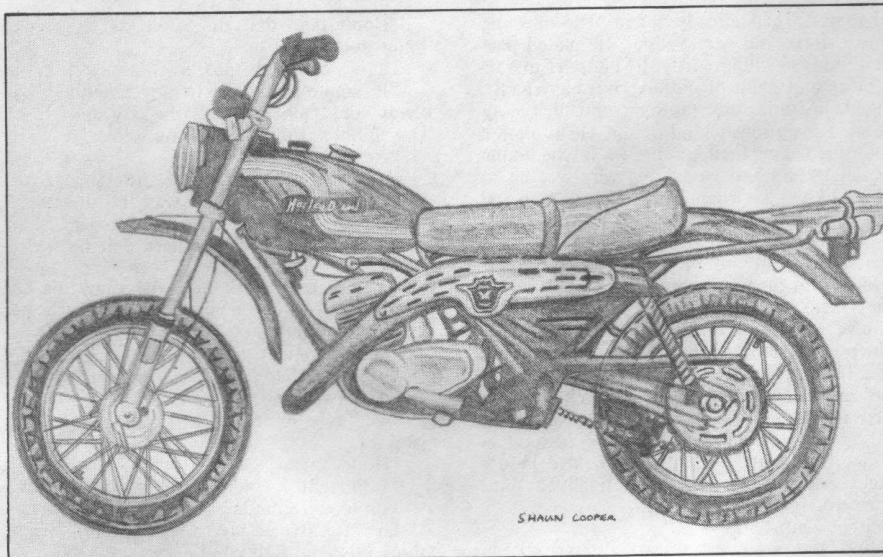
# A S. T. E. P.

For some time now we have watched enviously a group of pupils riding a motor-cycle around the bus park, while we have been sitting in a boring Biology lesson. Whenever we have asked what these fortunate pupils are doing, we have received the enigmatic answer "S.T.E.P." Determined to find out more about this active lesson we decided to interview Mr. Sankey, the master in charge of the SCHOOL TRAFFIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME, a scheme which hopes to improve the attitudes of young people towards motor vehicles and the roads.

The dramatic increase in the number of fatalities and serious injuries among young motor-cyclists has caused concern right up to government level. Many of us know of people who have been badly hurt, or even killed, during recent years. The S.T.E.P. programme is an attempt to educate potential road users in the practicalities of machine maintenance, vehicle control and even first aid.

National statistics state that 7% of the teenagers

# F O R W A R D



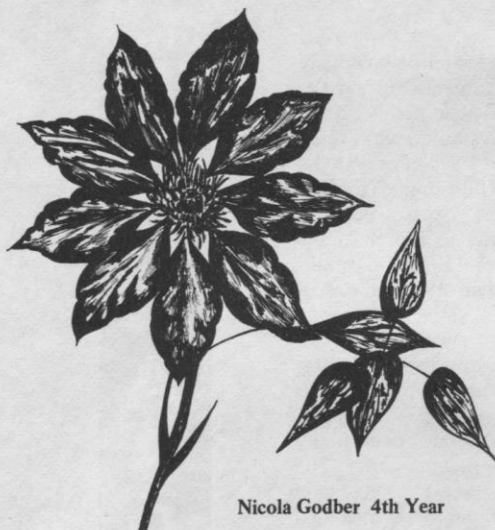
that go out and buy a motorbike, do not return home immediately from the showroom; 1% end up in the cemetery. The aim of S.T.E.P. is to make teenagers more aware of road safety although there is no way of measuring its success in preventing accidents.

The S.T.E.P. course follows a syllabus adopted by a school in Lincoln. In the course the pupils study the history of roads, the progression of models of cars and first aid. At the end they take an examination involving written papers, one being a first aid exam, and practical tests. These tests can be demonstrating a daily check and/or a weekly check on either a car or a motorbike. The pupils must also produce two projects which can be anything from a poster on road safety, to looking into vehicle insurance or carrying out surveys. There is no practical test on the motorbike, for the CSE examination board fears that the pupils will

then think that they have a licence to ride on the road. THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

S.T.E.P. is a big concern in Birmingham and the organisers there, have made an agreement with motorbike manufacturers that 1% of the profit goes towards paying "Step" training courses, this being to the manufacturer's advantage as well as STEP'S.

Future plans for Step? Well next year pupils taking STEP will follow a syllabus formed by Mr. Sankey and Mr. Turner, which has just been approved by the C.S.E. examination board. With more and more young, inexperienced people buying dangerous motorcycles, their hope is that the STEP programme will at least make sure pupils in this school are more aware of the hazards of road-use. Let's hope its a step towards safer roads and few casualties in our area.



Nicola Godber 4th Year

## Death is a Red Rose

End of term happiness had already set in. The morning was perfect: crisp, fresh and very yellow. He glided past everyone smiling and whistling softly to himself; the air was unusually clean and smelt of nothing, but city smells. The cars honked in tune this morning and the early morning rabble were so curiously kind to him. He sauntered through the houses replacing their empties whilst the young children sat watching him and wondering why was he so happy in a place like this. When Lenny approached the 'Floral Block' of flats he changed his whistle to song. He tried the lifts once or twice but neither worked. A tired postman appeared from around the corner. "You'd best use the stairs like I do, them bloomin' things never work. Wish they'd get them fixed, it taked everything out of you before you've even started. I'll tell you one thing I don't envy the poor creatures who live in these pigeon holes." With that he disappeared.

Lenny stared after him for a while. "Ah well, here we go." He picked up his crates and began up the stairs. When he finally reached floor six he paused to look at his customer sheet. He walked across and rapped loudly on number eight's door once, twice and finally a third time until he gave up.

"It's no good you know."

He turned and saw a young girl of about fourteen staring at him. She had deep brown eyes, the main feature of her face, long wispy chocolate hair and a thin, evil smile.

"Oh, and why's that?" he asked.

"They've gone. They left late last night; a moonlight flit you know. Thought nobody would notice, but I did".

"Well I guess they won't be wanting these then will they?"

"No I shouldn't think they will".

"I don't suppose....."

She looked down at the yogurts. "Grandad!". She called into the flat. "Do we want any yogurts or milk".

"Hang on a minute love".

"I think you'd better come in for a while until he's ready".

Lenny stepped cautiously into the flat and straight into the main room. It was neat in a kind of a way. The breakfast stained plates were still on the table and the radio chattered out another tasteless disc jockey. He turned to find her grandfather standing in the doorway rubbing his hands on a shabby towel. "So you're the new milk man".

Lenny nodded. "Your grand-daughter told me the people next door had gone so I wondered if you'd like their

order?"

"Well let's see what you've got."

He potted about in the crate for a while. "I think my pension will stretch to that. You understand I can't pay you now."

Lenny nodded, "I'll call for it tomorrow."

He turned a little and saw the girl staring at him.

"Well I must be off."

Both of them nodded and followed him to the door. He started to walk down the stairs.

"What's your name?"

Lenny looked round suddenly and stared at the girl.

"My name's Lenny, Lenny Harris."

"Hello," she said. My name's Sarah."

The next morning she appeared quicker than ever. He stood expecting the toothy smile he had seen so much of yesterday, but this morning it was quite different. She invited him in and paid him the money. He looked around the flat questionly,

"Has your grandfather gone out?"

For a moment she was suspicious of him,

"No, no he's here, but he's got a fever of something. He's laid up in bed, the doctors coming this afternoon."

"Oh, I see. Maybe I could get him something?"

She laughed, "You?"

He seemed quite taken aback by her suggestion that he was incapable.

"Don't take that the wrong way, but well we hardly know you."

Lenny coughed into his hand, "I know but....."

"If you really want to do something," she broke in, "you could nip down to the city and get him a George Orwell book. He does enjoy his books."

"Right then," said Lenny.

He parted that morning a little sorrier for having seen her. She was unusual in a way, he thought. The way she dressed and changed so quickly, it scared him sometimes, but there was something there that he was interested in. It made him feel good.

While walking back from darts meeting Lenny thought he recognised her in the local shop. He paused briefly outside and then walked in.

"Hello Sarah."

She span around, "Oh hello Mr. Harris did you find any George Orwell books?"

"Yes as a matter of fact there were quite a few," he laughed.

"Good."

"I thought I could pop it round tonight when I pick you up to go to the fair."

She quickly began to shop again, "What makes you think I'll come with you Prince Charming?"

"I thought you could get out a bit from that flat. Since I've known you....."

"Which hasn't been long may I add."

"Well you've just well been there."

"I do go out you know."

"Shopping perhaps? And maybe the odd spree round to the chemist."

"Alright, alright." He could see he was making her angry but making a little progress.

"I'll come with you to the fair. But," she said as she turned away, "only out of curiosity you understand."

By quarter to six he was already in the main block pacing up and down, with the book firmly squeezed into his breast pocket, trying to destroy the last five minutes. At two minutes to he waited no longer. He sprang up from his tiger walk and ran to the stairs. As he approached the door he stopped to look out onto the city. The nights were closing rapidly in. Getting darker and darker until finally they would be covered by the murkey blanket before they had even left work. He sighed heavily. He hated Autumn and Winter even more.

The door clicked open behind him and she stood there. "Is anything the matter?"



"No, no here's the book." "He hurried her pushing it into her hands. He followed her in and continued to straighten his jumper while she went to speak with her grandfather. After a while she slipped out and slid into a nearby chair and retrieved a book from off the kitchen table. He rocked nervously from one foot to the other.

"I'm sorry Lenny, but could you wait just a little while longer while I finish this chapter?"

"Yeah, sure I'm OK." He sat down heavily opposite her. "What's it called?"

She held the cover up and carried on reading.

"Death Is A Red Rose, sounds good. Is it?"

"Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. The best book I've ever read anyhow."

He laughed, "It must be good."

"Oh it is" she agreed.

Suddenly she slapped it shut. "How thoughtless of me. Come on, we'd better be off."

"No, carry on. I know what it's like when you've got involved with the story."

"Honestly, it doesn't matter." Sarah learned across to him, "Here you take it."

"Thanks, but don't you want to finish it?"

"Not in the least," she said getting up from the chair, "I've read it three times before."

The two entered the fairground.

"What I don't understand is why roses in that book, are always the motive or the reason for death. I never really related the two before."

"Do you want a hot dog?"

"What?"

"A hot dog."

"Mm, please."

Lenny went over to the stand and bought two hot dogs and went back to where Sarah was staring out into the fair. He passed her the hot dog and then tried to angle his head so he could see what she was looking at.

The fair was busy and alive. The smells were delicious and tickled his nose. The colours darted past, flashing; shining; flickering. He watched Sarah a little while as she thought.

"I really think they should have changed it. The roses I mean. They're so delicate, soft and," she hesitated, "well red."

"Red?"

"Yes, I always think of roses as being red."

"Well maybe that's where the connection lies. The red roses must symbolise the murder and blood shed."

"Maybe," she said. "Fancy a ride on the waltzer?" He nodded, smiled and helped her off the bench.

The two climbed into the carriage and pulled the cold safety bar across them. The music began louder and louder, faster and faster. Their heads were sent jolting back and forth, screaming and wailing as the obsessed octopus took command. Lenny reached over and held Sarah's arm tightly.

"Are you alright?"

She laughed at him, "Fine, fine. Don't worry I'm enjoying myself."

Suddenly the carriage swooped frighteningly towards the ground, skimmed and sped into the cloudless sky. It whirled round and snap! His vision was black, head of lead, mind of nothing. The music stopped. There was a real blue light in his eyes. It was flashing, whirring and calling to him. Ralph, one of his mates, held him up by

his arm.

"Lenny are you OK pal?"

"Don't be funny Ralph," he said leaning forward with his hands on his head.

"You look pretty awful."

"Thanks again." He got to his feet and pushed hastily through the crowd in time to see the ambulance drive off. He stared around the mess, the carriage, the coconut shy. He turned sharply around to the crowd as if he had just remembered something important.

"Where's Sarah?"

The crowd almost froze. Their voices ceased and Lenny guessed what was to follow.

Molly, a girl he once dated, pulled Lenny to the side away from ear's reach.

"Lenny....." she began.

"She's dead isn't she?" he asked.

She looked up but Lenny avoided her eyes.

"I'm sorry."

He started to kick the grass with the toe of his shoe. He felt the sting in his eyes and the uncontrollable gulp in his throat. The strange jumpy warmth in his stomach started.

"So where have you taken her?"

She looked puzzled.

"The cemetery, undertakers where?"

"Oh, home. That's what he wanted," she corrected him with her eyes. "Her grandfather."

As Lenny left her she called him back. "Lenny? Listen I'm sorry."

"Yeah sure you are. Your hearts made of solid plastic isn't it Molly?"

As he walked the pain eased. His eyes were sore from his cries of self-pity he had allowed to escape. He walked from the lifeless part into the centre.

A few shops were still open, but he managed to sort out a small flower shop on the main row. He tapped on the door glass then pushed open the door. A small grey man stood behind the counter. He glided towards him smelling of every flower in the shop. He waited until Lenny began.

"I'm looking for a wreath. It has to be special".

The man nodded solemnly.

"Any particular flower Sir?"

He felt the bulge in his pocket suddenly.

"Roses, red roses."

The wreath quivered in his hands as he stood outside the flat door. The corridor was dark and black. The silence rang in his ears and accompanied the thudding of his blood. There was a fresh night smell blowing in from the window, but the light of the streets was not enough to light the door on the inside or out. He leaned forward to place the wreath, but as he did a red velvet petal trickled onto the floor. He looked up and saw her deep brown eyes watching him

"Why so red," she whispered.

He shook his head and laid the wreath. Lenny fumbled in his pocket and found the book. He placed it on the wreath, rapped quickly on the door and disappeared before it could open.

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