

# 'DON'T RUSH CHANGES' WARNS SPEAKER AT THORNBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL'S SPEECH DAY AND PRIZEGIVING

**S**PEAKING of the far-reaching changes that are taking place in English education today, Dr. J. Mackay, Headmaster of Bristol Grammar School, the Guest of Honour at Thornbury Grammar School Speech Day on Friday, said 'I hope very deeply we shall not rush to abandon or dismantle the institutions which have served this country well over a long period. Good schools are far too few for any to be lost.'

Canon R. G. Rawstorne, Chairman of the Governors, congratulated the pupils, headmaster and staff on the academic achievements of the school. Last October eighteen pupils from Thornbury went to a University, the greatest number in any one year in the history of the school. That was a great achievement of which everyone had reason to be proud. Eleven pupils went to Colleges of Further Education so it was evident that Thornbury Grammar School was well-maintaining its fine tradition of academic work.

Mr. D. P. Rendall, headmaster, reported that academically, examination results were a little down on last year, but not greatly so. At 'A' level, 53 candidates took 15 different subjects and obtained an overall 79.4% level of success. At 'O' level, 140 pupils sat in 19 different subjects in July and the percentage of passes was 73.1.

One of the most satisfactory aspects of the leavers list was the very large number going on to further education. Forty-five out of the 54 in last year's second year Sixth were still continuing their education at a great variety of educational establishments, and of the others, three went into banks, one into insurance, one accountancy, two into laboratories and two into industrial apprenticeships. It was good, too, that an increasing number of our Upper Fifth form leavers were going on to Filton Technical College, with whom the school continued to enjoy excellent relations.

The headmaster then said: 'I am glad to report that we are moving with the times and making very real changes in our approach in a number of subjects. In particular, we are making preparations in the hope of participating in the Nuffield Science project, whose general emphasis is on pupils doing and finding out things for themselves rather than merely reading about things and being shown them by members of staff.

Evidence suggests more and more that the learning process is not simply an open ear, a receptive mind and a retentive memory. It is rather something active, which has as its base that the pupil remembers what he does, not what the member of staff does. Quite obviously, a science course which lets pupils find out for themselves, makes severe demands on time and on laboratory space and involves a good deal of expenditure on new equipment, whether it be projectors and film loops and other teaching aids, or apparatus which allows every pupil to do the experiment, and in this respect, I am glad to report that the initial reaction of the Education Committee to our requests has been sympathetic. Our need for an additional Chemistry laboratory of which I have spoken before, however, now becomes even more pressing.

The modern Mathematics project which we have already introduced in the first year has the same basis as Nuffield Science. This course, which is very relevant in this computer age, again emphasises the active, the creative, very effectively, without sacrificing other Mathematical skills which we should and must continue to value.

In Languages, we are in the Lower School emphasising the audio-visual and oral techniques and in this respect our new language laboratory is playing a major part in helping the pupils concentrate in their early years on direct understanding of a language with emphasis on fluency. Later on, of course and notably in the 6th form, literature has its importance.

Next year, we hope to equip a classroom as a drama room, which will give scope for more informal lessons than are possible in a room cluttered with thirty or more desks.

## EXCITING DAYS

Dr. Mackay said they were living in exciting days when the desire for education in the country at every age level up to adulthood was immense. They were living in a time of great change. But change was no more

to be regretted for itself than it was to be welcomed.

Speaking of the far-reaching changes that were taking place in English education, Dr. Mackay said 'I hope very deeply we shall not rush to abandon or dismantle the institutions which have served this country well over a long period. Good schools are far too few for any to be lost.'

He said that perhaps the greatest danger they had to contend with in the third quarter of the Twentieth Century was the social engineer who thought he could deal with people and human problems in the same terms as one dealt with the problems of a machine.

They all knew that a school was not just a building full of people. Good schools were not made as quickly and as easily as that. Every good school was a living memorial to the labour and care and affection of generations of people who had worked in it and they couldn't be replaced overnight.

He hoped they were not going to fall for the idea that because one believed people to be different, this was the same thing as saying that some people were better than others. There was a dangerous idea about that people could only be treated fairly if they were all treated the same. Every schoolmaster and every parent knew how profoundly untrue this was.

'All are equal before God but within that they share an infinite diversity of talent, endowment, ability and character', said Dr. Mackay.

He hoped that the development of great and exciting change in English education would allow, whatever system emerged, for an increasing recognition of the right of the parent to be interested in and concerned about his children's education. Hitherto only a small minority of English parents had been able to exercise an effective choice about the course of their children's education.

Turning to address his remarks more directly to the boys and girls, Dr. Mackay said they were shortly going into a most re-

markable and exciting world which had within its grasp the possibility of unity, the possibility of material plenty, the possibility that within their lifetime every man and woman might be free from present want which was not the case at the moment, the possibility of increasing leisure and the necessity for sheer, repetitive labour reduced beyond the dreams anyone could have cherished ten to fifteen years ago. They would be going out into a world which had a knowledge of the universe beside which previous knowledge paled into insignificance but it was a world which had less desirable characteristics.

He went on to refer to advertisements trying to persuade them that the faster they drove, the better man you were or that your quality as a woman depended on what you wore or the make-up you used and that no sin was so unforgivable as not being 'With it'. There was, too, the suggestion that what matters was not what you were but what you had; the suggestion that the best and cleverest man or woman was the one who strove to put in the least to the common pool and took out the most, that the wise boy or girl snatched at the moment's enjoyment regardless of what there might be to come afterwards. Perhaps worst of all was the endless, unspoken suggestion that nothing mattered very much — 'I couldn't care less'. This was a poisonous illusion. It

was an illusion which, if accepted, turned all human satisfaction to dust and ashes, an illusion which if widely followed would reduce human society to nothing more than a kind of animal organism. But a more important reason for rejecting it was that it was untrue.

He urged his listeners to discover what they really wanted to do and the present was by no means too early to start. Having discovered what they wanted to do, they should have the power to lose themselves in the doing of it and do it as well as they were able. It was the pursuit of that kind of self-forgetting service which generations of men and women had found to be the way to personal fulfilment, personal happiness and personal significance.

A vote of thanks to Dr. Mackay, who asked for the usual day's holiday, was proposed by the Head Girl, Pamela Parrott, who also presented a bouquet to Mrs. Mackay.

#### PRIZE LIST

**Form Prizes:** 2.A R. Exon; 2.B Susan James; 3.A N. Snell; 3.B Jacqueline Tyler; 4.A Audrey Champlon; 4.B A. Thomsen; 4.C P. Newton; 5.D Patricia Daniels; 5.J Lesley Hill; 5.W Anne Sproson; Up. V.C M. Cook; Up. V.G S. Fisher; Up. V.M Valerie Taylor.

**Merit Prizes:** Verity Prowse; J. Hill; Sally Bennett; R. Williams; P. Maslin; Carol Britton; Caroline Hosken; D. W. J. Cason; A. Ginn; D. Rogers; Frances

Haste; Heather Northover; Christine Severinsen.

**Subject Prizes:** English: Caroline St. John Brooks, Jean Holbrook, Heather Northover; French: Caroline St. John Brooks, Patricia Palmer; German: Cynthia Birtwhistle; Latin: Sarah Taylor; History: G. S. James, Frances Haste; Geography: A. G. Breens, P. Maslin; Chemistry: A. R. Gent, I. E. Stone; Physics: D. R. Livsey, N. I. K. Royse; Mathematics: D. J. Gulwell, P. R. Higgins; Music: Susan Gait; Art: Valerie Gould, Susan Weeks; Religious Education: Anne Sproson; Woodwork: P. Robson, C. Bell; Cookery: Marilyn Longman; Needlecraft: Susan Hucker; Physical Education: G. R. Smart, Carolyn Barlow.

**School Prizes:** School Captain: A. J. F. Browning; Head Girl: Hazel Deeks; Drama: B. D. Organ; Rabley Prize for Service to the School: Diana Huntley; David Hamilton Prize for Prowess at Sport: A. M. Fulwood; Field Week Prize: R. J. Fill.

**Academic Shield:** Howard House; Captains: Mary Fulwood, J. Webber.

**HOUSE SHIELDS, 1964-65**  
Athletics S; Cricket H; Cross Country (Senior) S; Cross Country (Junior) S; Games C-H; Hockey C; Maritime Gun H; Drama S; Netball H; Physical Education S; Rugby (Senior) C; Rugby (Junior) C; Association Football H; Tennis C; Swimming H.

Key: C — Clare, H — Howard, S — Stafford.



**HEADMASTER** Mr. D. P. Rendall, Canon R. G. Rawstorne, chairman of the Governors, and Dr. J. Mackay, headmaster of Bristol Grammar School.