

at an ever increasing speed until he was plunged into the sea, amidst the cheers of the watching crowd. At times he would invite young ladies or children to join him in his tub.

In the 1930s Biddy gained further celebrity status after appearing on the show *In Town Tonight*, a popular BBC Home Service radio programme broadcast on Saturday evenings. In those days all shows were scripted, creating a considerable problem for Biddy who could neither read nor write. A local historian was brought in to coach him, using prompts to help him remember the script. Luckily the plan worked and Biddy was a huge success, the producers believing it to be the best show they had done.

Biddy continued performing until he was over 80 years old but announced his retirement from fishing and tubbing in 1963, following a serious operation. Sadly his retirement was short — Biddy suffered a fatal heart attack at home in 1964. He was 85.

At his funeral the church was crowded, the congregation made up of people from all walks of life. The Reverend Champneys Burnham, Rector of All Saints Church, said:

"Biddy had a great concern for people and told us that the thing we had to do was serve others humbly. If ever you had an example of service you have had it here, in Biddy, a man who served others and brought happiness."

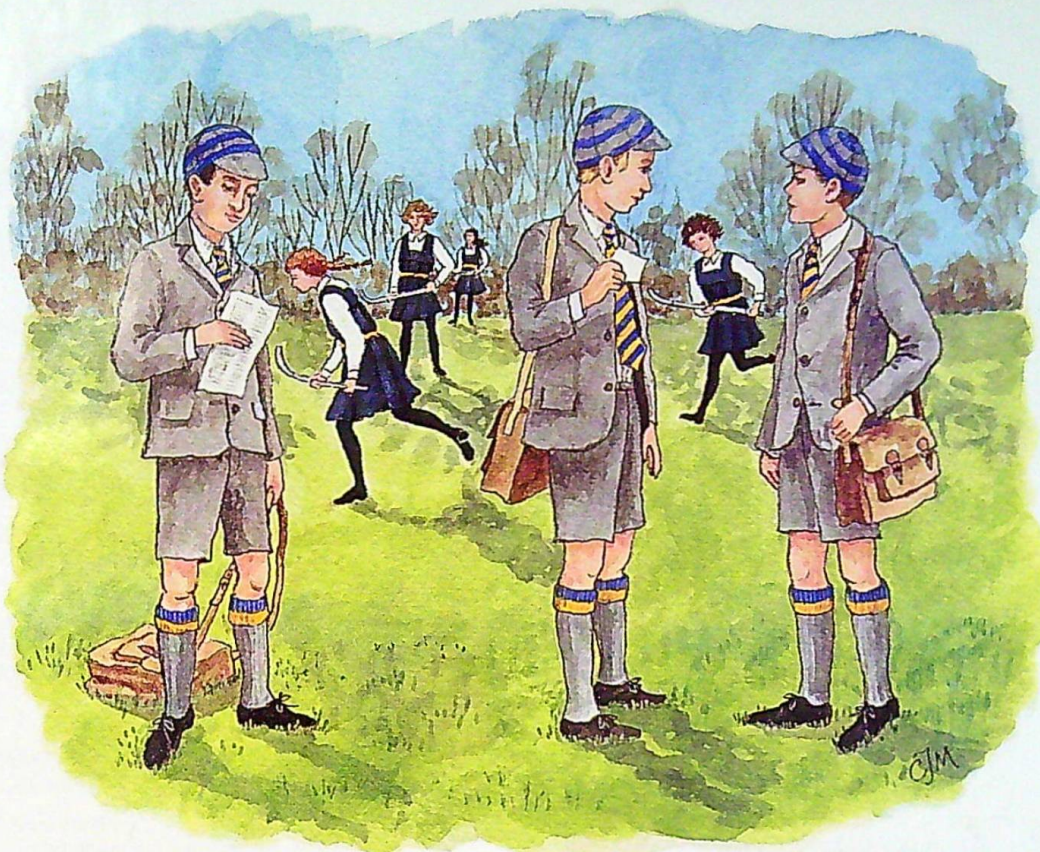
In the Fishermen's Museum in Hastings Old Town, Biddy's tub and oar are proudly displayed. Those who view it are reminded of a man who left a lasting impression on a great many people — a man whose aim in life was to create happiness and laughter.

KATH GARNER

## Beside the Sea

Sunlit days on seaside sands,  
Buckets held in little hands,  
Sandcastles to face the sea,  
Memories of you and me.  
Donkeys walking up the beach,  
Seagulls diving with a screech,  
Holidays were filled with fun,  
I remember everyone.  
Funfairs on the promenade,  
Having a good time wasn't hard,  
Smells of onions being fried,  
"Come and get them!" vendors  
cried.  
Children wanting candyfloss,  
Babies crying, looking cross.  
Happy sun-filled days with you,  
I hope that you enjoyed them too.

GRAHAM RAZZELL



## Memories of a Grammar School Boy

Life changed for me when I was 10 years old and in class four at the elementary school. My parents decided that I should go to the local grammar school (Ranelagh School at Bracknell in Berkshire) and to win a place I would have to take the scholarship examination with papers in English, arithmetic and general knowledge. Successful candidates then went to the school for an oral examination conducted by the headmaster and two senior staff members.

I passed the first stage and was invited to attend the school for an interview one Saturday morning. There were about a dozen of us: boys and girls all scrubbed clean and wearing their best clothes. The headmaster knew me, for I was a choir-boy in the parish church and he was a churchwarden. Whether that swung a decision my way I never knew, but one morning the post came and Mother told me the good news — I had passed.

As a reward for my hard work I was sent on holiday to an aunt who lived among the hop fields in Kent. Mother took me to Waterloo Junction and I was put in the care of the guard for the journey. I wore my new grey suit, knee-length socks with blue and yellow cappings, and my school cap, grey with blue bands.

Soon it was the start of term; I was lucky as I had a cousin who was two years ahead of me and he looked after me for the first day. The boys' cloak-room, or lobby, had pegs for our rain-

coats and lockers for our outdoor shoes. Close to the lobby was a small room under the stairs. This was the abode of the caretaker who made it obvious that he did not like small boys. Just outside the entrance was the prefects' room; we were told that prefects could give out lines or even cane wrongdoers.

The day began in the school hall with an assembly. The school hymn was sung, "Lord behold us with thy blessing, once again assembled here", and the headmaster welcomed newcomers. The head boy read the lesson from the school bible and we trooped off to our form room in the care of our teacher.

The rules were spelled out. School caps would be worn at all times outside the school grounds in term time, at weekends and in the holidays. Caps would be raised if a member of staff was met in the street and to any adult who spoke to us. School ties had to be worn at all times, though in the hot summers permission would be given for boys to go without. The girls wore navy gymslips, black stockings and white blouses in the winter months, and broad-brimmed felt hats in navy-blue.

Homework was mandatory: one hour every night of the week. We were issued with exercise books, squared for arithmetic, lined for English, interleaved line and plain for nature study and science. Pen-holders, nibs, pencils, rubbers, blotting paper, coloured pencils and paint-boxes all had to be bought and we had to

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pay for our textbooks. Exercise books, when full, would have to go to the headmaster who would look carefully through each one and initial the cover before issuing a new book.

The timetable was explained; there would be different teachers for each subject. New subjects were introduced: Latin, French, geometry, nature study as well as woodwork for the boys and domestic science for the girls. All work was marked out of 10 and each month the totals were added together and class lists presented to the headmaster at a Friday assembly by the pupil at the top of the list.

School games were important. In the autumn term the boys played football. Boots, flannel shirts, woollen socks and serge shorts had to be purchased. Hockey was played in the spring term. In the summer it was cricket and every boy had to wear white flannels, white shirt and white plimsolls. The girls played hockey in the winter months and wore their normal gymslips and blouses. White dresses were required for tennis in the summer. Boys were not allowed to play tennis.

The young men on the staff took games; one was a county hockey player. The woodwork teacher enthralled us with his tales of India where he had served as a young soldier. One day he called us to listen to his wireless, for the famous Cunard 534 was being launched. She would become the luxury liner *Queen Mary* before being converted into a troopship during the war. The senior master taught maths and physics. He had an unerring aim with a blackboard duster or lumps of chalk for anyone who nodded off in class.

So the pattern was set for the next five years; for most of us it would culminate in School Certificate examinations in 1939. Discipline was strict. Impositions were given for offences that ranged from riding bicycles down the drive to failure to complete homework. Three impositions in a week meant a caning for the boys from the headmaster.

Social life was full and active. Wet lunchtimes were opportunities for attempts at ballroom dancing in the hall with a senior boy playing dance music on the piano. There was a Barnardos Party every Christmas, sports day in summer,



△ Cricket remains a popular summertime sport at English schools. This match is being played at King Edward VI's Grammar School in Louth, Lincolnshire

DERRICK FURLONG

cricket on Saturday\* afternoons, the annual winter games against the Old Boys and the school play each year. We had numerous societies: the British Red Cross with training in first aid, a League of Nations branch, and elocution classes for a book prize.

There were exams each year and the work became more demanding. Science subjects assumed importance as we experimented with sulphuric acid and watched hydrogen pop at the end of a test tube. We plodded through history from the Norman Conquest until 1914 when it seemed history came to an end. Geography was descriptive of other countries; we had no visual aids apart from wall maps. We studied our set books in English literature: *The Cloister and the Hearth*, narrative poems like "Sohrab and Rustum" and, of course, Shakespeare, particularly *Twelfth Night*. In the autumn of 1938 *The Cloister and the Hearth* was serialised on the wireless. It was required listening every Sunday night at 7.30.

School Cert., as it was called, took place in June. The fifth form took 10 or 11 subjects — five subject credits were needed including arithmetic and English language. My mother promised me 10 shillings if I matriculated and boasted to her friends that she would never have to pay up. It was with delight that, one day in July, I raced home on my bicycle to tell her that she owed me 10 bob!

After the results we settled down to

work again. Lessons were a little more relaxed as we had time to learn some citizenship, to read Shakespeare for enjoyment, and to discuss current affairs. Unfortunately the annual school trip to France had to be cancelled because of Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia. The shadows of war were advancing and we dug air raid trenches at the edge of the playing field.

Many fifth-formers were leaving in the summer to start work in local offices. I stayed on to go into the sixth form, but on 3rd September, 1939, as I helped with an influx of evacuees, the head boy, who had been listening to the wireless, walked towards me with his thumb down.

It was war, and with that gesture my boyhood years were over. I left school to become a bank clerk before joining the army two years later. F.A. THOMPSON

## When We Were Young



When we were young the days were long,  
Our hearts were light, our spirits strong,  
With voices often raised in song —  
When we were young, remember?

But now, alas, our youth is past,  
The golden years are here at last,  
The time is ours to sit and sew  
Or watch that row of tulips blow.

Sweet memories now are all we have,  
To wring a tear or make us glad,  
For the years sped by on gossamer wings —  
A pot-pourri of wondrous things —  
When we were young, remember?

ANNE ANTOSHEWSKI