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SPEECH DAY REPORT, OCTOBER 1978

My Lord Bishop, My Lord Lieutenant, Your Grace,
Dr. Barnard, Mrs. Barnard, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome you all today, whether you are parents, friends, staff or girls, and particularly our chief speaker, Dr. Barnard, the Principal of S. Katharine's College, Liverpool, and Mrs. Barnard. Last Autumn, Dr. Barnard spoke to a group of our senior girls and since then, several of them have visited the College and were made most welcome. It is pleasing to strengthen our link with S. Katharine's.

I am also very pleased that Your Grace has spared the time to visit us and I know that your continued interest is appreciated by the school.

Another most welcome guest is the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire who is visiting us for the first time.

I enjoyed last year, my first in a boarding school. I did not have time to feel homesick myself: I was too busy coping with girls who did! Apart from that, everyone made me feel so welcome, and I must pay tribute to Miss Mayhew for her thoughtfulness and kindness to me throughout the year. She has asked me to give you all her very best wishes for a successful year, both academically and in all of the other activities.

One always hopes that events will run smoothly, and for this to happen, it is essential that those in charge know what should occur. Some of the present Upper Sixth who were new to the school last year, were astonished when I mentioned to them a few weeks ago that I, like them, had also joined the school last September. "We thought you had been here several years", they said, "You always knew everything." I have mainly one person to thank for that. From before the start of the Autumn Term, I was primed before each main event, with many humorous anecdotes and warnings of potential pitfalls, by last year's Head Girl, Penny Hill-Wilson. I cannot thank her

enough for her valuable help and support. I would also like to extend my grateful thanks to her two Deputies, Elizabeth Brook and Helen Simpson, who so ably backed her and shared the many duties.

The first main event last year was the 10th Sponsored Walk, a special effort being made to celebrate the Silver Jubilee. The sum raised was £ 3 600. The walk ended with a barbecue in the grounds of Chatsworth, and we are very grateful to Your Grace for allowing us this privilege, and to the Friends for organising the details. Later in the term, the Christmas Bazaar was held, with the Houses organising their stalls and selling the results of many hours of work throughout the term. Father Christmas was a great attraction with his sack of goodies, though rumour has it that his descent of the chimney was rather precipitous so that he was suffering from several bruises!

The Chapel plays an important part in the life of the school. In the Autumn Term there was a very successful Harvest Festival with many gifts and beautiful flower arrangements, and our usual Carol Services at Christmas. In the Spring Term, as well as a special service on Ash Wednesday, there were two confirmation services, taken by the Bishop of Repton and the Bishop of Warrington respectively. In May there was an Ascension Day service, giving the day girls another chance to come to a main service. Some day girls do join the Chapel Choir and therefore do attend the two choral services on Sundays. It would be pleasing if other day girls who live near could come in on an occasional Sunday to join with their Houses.

Anyone who has visited the Chapel since last February will realize that in place of the pipe organ there is now a new Allen Computer organ. This has been much appreciated by Mr. Brockbank, who joined the staff last September as Director of Music. He now has nine organ students and a waiting list of others who wish to learn.

At the beginning of last year, the choir consisted of some experienced girls but also many new members, including one in the altos, a little off-putting at first for the rest, but I am delighted to say that they have accepted me as an occasional member who attends for pleasure and relaxation, when pressure of work allows. The choir was swiftly licked into shape ready for the Commemoration Service on Speech Day and from then onwards, worked hard on a very varied selection of music both for the Chapel Services and also for the Buxton Music Festival. The choir was entered for the under 18 section, without its oldest member, and they not only won their class, but later, at the concert in the evening, were judged to be the best choir of all the classes that had performed that day and were awarded the Edwin Moss Cup. The woodwind group, trained by Miss Lomas, also won its class at the Festival.

Other musical events included very successful Junior and Senior concerts, Wilson House supplying the second half of the programme for the latter, being the winning House in the competition during the previous term. There were two professional recitals, one called the "Age of Gold" by Miss Lorna Lewis and Mr. John Chapman, when they demonstrated several fascinating old wind instruments, including crumhorns, and later in the summer term, another lecture-recital by Nancy and Noel Evans on two pianos.

The House Drama competitions also provided much entertainment, the senior competition being won by Selwyn and the Middle School competition by Powys. There were some outstanding individual performances by Diane Thornhill, Helen Pinchbeck and Georgina Board. We are very grateful to Miss Watts for adjudicating so carefully and kindly at the music and drama competitions.

There were various outings by different year groups to see plays, including "Antony and Cleopatra", "The Taming of the Shrew", "She Stoops to Conquer" and the film of "Julius Caesar". The Upper Sixth also went to Manchester to see "Pimples" which turned out to be a typical University Student Revue, but very thought-provoking and enjoyed by all.

The geography department had some day outings in mixed weather and a ski-ing trip to Aviemore in February, remembered by all 32 girls who went with Miss Marsden and Mrs. Fearn, as their coach was the first to get through after the terrible blizzards and the last to leave before further blizzards cut off the area. The snow was appreciated by the skiers, 28 of whom gained silver awards, while Laura Wildgoose won the Medallion for the "Best Skier of the Week".

In the Easter holidays, a party of 35 girls, including some Juniors, went to Guernsey with several members of the staff. I have been told that they brought back most of the shell beach with them from Herm!

Mrs. Wilby took a group of girls to a coalmine at Pleasley Colliery, and during the Upper Fifth course organised by Mrs. Hargreaves at the end of the Summer Term, another group went with Mrs. Wilby to London, to visit the Headquarters of William's and Glyn's Bank and the Stock Exchange; this was followed by a visit to the Midland Bank at Chesterfield. There was also a disastrous visit to Wimbledon, on the one day when not one ball was hit owing to rain!

The Natural History Society run by Miss Cooper had outings to Riber Zoo, Tansley Garden Centre, Matlock Bath Aquarium and several local field excursions, and indoor meetings in the winter. The Biologists joined the Geographers on some day outings and groups of girls also visited a sewage farm, Derby Infirmary and a dairy.

Several clubs flourished both in and out of school. A photographic club met regularly to take, develop and print their own photographs. Badminton was played throughout the winter by several girls, golf was played in the summer and matters of great moment were discussed by the Debating Society. Scottish Dancing flourished for a while and the chess and bridge clubs also had a large number of members until the BBC were inconsiderate enough to choose the same time for their Vet. serial. Thankfully the new series is on a different evening this year!

A Junior Red Cross Group was started during the year, and by the end of the Summer Term, 25 girls had been enrolled, and 16 of them had passed the First Aid Certificate Examination. I am very grateful to Mrs. Thornton and Miss Grant and their various helpers who have come in regularly to take the meetings.

The Physical Education Department had a very successful year. In Hockey, our under-16 eleven won the South Peak Championship. and several of the girls were selected to represent Derbyshire. Elizabeth Brook was a reserve for the under-18 team, Jill Cook and Jane Rayner played in the under-16 first eleven, Deborah Yates played in the under-16 second eleven and Eleanor Pearce was a reserve.

In the summer, our under-16 Tennis team won the South Peak Championship and then, representing South Peak, won the Derbyshire under-16 Championship.

However, it is in Swimming that our girls excelled themselves. Deborah Barton and Deborah Yates won the Royal Life Saving Society's Derbyshire Championships. Deborah Barton then won the Midland Championship and was placed 5th in the National Championship in Coventry. Sonja Swingler gained her Advanced Teacher's Certificate for Life-saving and Susan Lord and Ferrelyn Wilson-Apperson gained Distinction Awards. These are the highest awards ever gained by anyone in the school. 7 girls gained teacher certificates, 6 gained awards of merit, 61 gained Bronze Crosses, and 68 gained Bronze Medallions. We were all delighted when we learned that the school had been awarded the Mrs. Henry Cup by the Royal Life-Saving Society for gaining more Bronze Medallions than any other school or swimming club in the country. As we congratulate the girls concerned on this marvellous achievement, we must also thank Mrs. Fearn, Miss Williams and the other staff, including those at the Matlock Lido for their help and encouragement.

Of course, in spite of all of these activities, some academic work was done, and the quality of it is evident in the very good sets of Q and A level results. Some girls have achieved some excellent grades, while others have done better than they or we expected, and they are all to be congratulated. Fifteen girls from last year's Upper Sixth have gone on to Higher Education, 9 to University and 6 to Polytechnics and other colleges. Their choices of careers are becoming more enterprising, one of them having just started to read Production Engineering at Nottingham University, while one of our present Upper Sixth is applying to read Electrical Engineering. I am sure that the girls would be the first to acknowledge that their successes would not have been achieved without the patient help of the staff, and in particular I would like to thank Mrs. Hargreaves for her excellent work in the careers department.

Many of last year's Upper Fifth girls have returned so that the present Lower Sixth is large, each girl following her own choice of subjects. Three of them are hoping to attend a "Skills in Management" conference at Sherborne School in the New Year and others will be attending an engineering course at Nottingham. There are places in industry for girls with the required abilities and it is up to the girls and their parents to respond to these developments and to look beyond the more traditional courses and careers to the wider opportunities available.

The Lower Sixth are now all housed in either Devonshire or Rotherwood, and when the building programme started last term is completed, making the new dormitories in Kennedy and Pigot available, the Sixth Form will be able to enjoy better facilities themselves.

During the year some members of the staff left us. Mrs. Harris departed at Christmas, after 6 years at the school, ending as Housemistress of Gresford. We all appreciated her beautiful flower arrangements and her boundless energy, not only with her own House, but in running the Tuck Shop.

In the summer, Mrs. Archer had to leave as she and her husband were moving away from the district. Although she was only with us for 2 years, she gave much of her spare time to the school and inspired many of you to appreciate her subject.

Last year was Miss Lavender's 25th at the school. She was very proud of the Junior School and pleased with their many successes last year. With her encouragement, they raised the largest amount of money on the Sponsored Walk and won the large Teddy Bear, which they Christened "Michael" after Michael Mosley. Several of the Juniors were successful at the Buxton Festival, and Margaret Flood House came third in the school Music Competition. Some of that talent is now in the Senior School. Miss Lavender is very pleased that the Junior School has again done so well at this year's Sponsored Walk, winning the stereo record player for having raised the largest amount of money per head. I am sure that the school will remember her great enthusiasm and ambitions for the Juniors and I hope that they will keep their enthusiasm alive as they go up through the school.

Mrs. Mosley left the Junior School in July after a total of 18 years. She has served the school so well, and we are very grateful for her devotion and help and for the generous gift of a collection of books for each form library. I am particularly indebted to her for giving up her newly-found freedom by agreeing to return part-time this year, at very short notice, to help Mrs. Willies in the Junior School.

Mrs. Parkes left early in the Summer Term as she was expecting a baby. We were all delighted at the news of the birth of Jacqueline before the end of the term and now that Mrs. Parkes has very kindly returned to take over most of my time-table, Jacqueline is giving much pleasure to many. I believe there are many willing pram-pushers for the lunch-hours, and several of the staff are becoming expert baby-minders!

Last term, Mrs. Corfield joined us to teach mathematics part-time and is now a full-time member of the staff. Mrs. Outram has returned to the school after a gap of a few years as a part-time member of the English and French departments, and Miss Crook has joined us to teach Biology and to be Head of the Science Department. We hope that they will all be very happy with us.

Finally, I would like to express my very grateful thanks to the academic and House staff who have all been so helpful and encouraging in my difficult task, and also to my secretary, Mrs. Hunter, who has remained so calm and efficient and tolerant of my inefficiencies. I would also like to thank the Bursar, Major Hobbs, for his fund of knowledge and expertize in organisation which make the school run so smoothly. Their help, and the support of the Bishop and the Governors, and also that of this year's Head Girl, Susan Vaughan, and the rest of the Prefects and sub-Prefects, are making this term of office very enjoyable for me. Thank you all very much.