

“1908 — 1928.”

I am glad that I have been asked to contribute a word to the “Coming-of-Age” volume of the School Magazine. The first number of the *Cestrefeldian* was published in 1908 by a group of senior boys, with the approval and help of the Headmaster, Mr. James Mansell.

The School had been completely rebuilt in 1846, and the Rev. F. Calder and the Rev. F. B. Allison had been Headmaster in turn. Mr. A. E. P. Voules followed in 1886, and during his term of office the number of boys rose to over 100. He is remembered partly for his great work in laying out the School playing fields, and when he retired he left the finances of the School in a very flourishing condition. Mr. Mansell succeeded Mr. Voules in 1894, and the 1898 additions - laboratories, gymnasium, art rooms and classrooms – remain as a memorial of his work. Mr. Mansell was also responsible for the wood-work shop and the separate Junior School.

When the first number of the Magazine was published the number of boys in the School was over 200, and this number steadily rose to 320 in 1921. Mr. Mansell was also responsible for the great development in the social life of the School, and the Magazine chronicles the formation of the House system, the Cadet Corps, and numerous Societies and Clubs. He was also responsible for an organization of the School which has proved a sound foundation for the superstructure which has since been built upon it.

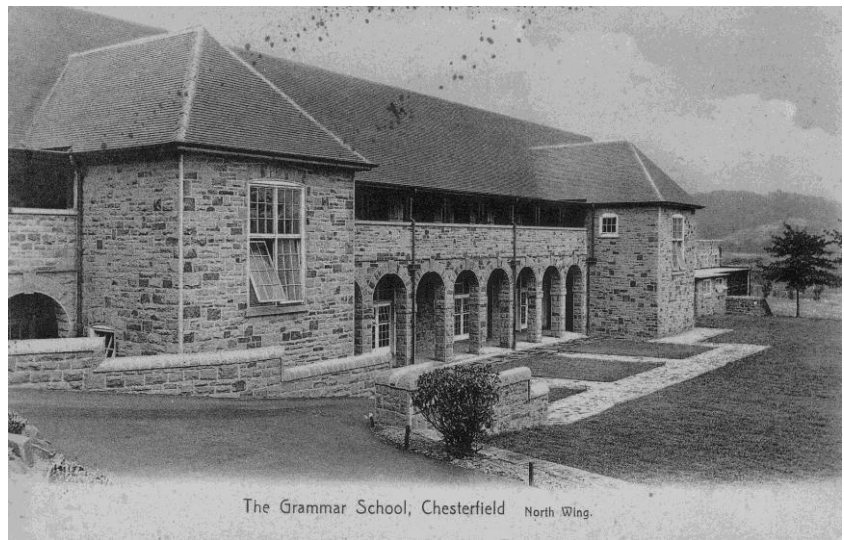
Numbers have now risen to 550. The years 1921, 1922 and 1923 were critical. The School had received a heavy blow through the War, and good Masters were difficult to get. Various causes made School life short, and the vast majority of the boys left before they were 16. The Board of Education threatened that they would not recognise the School as a Secondary School at all. Great efforts were made, and soon an improvement was manifest.

Practically no one now leaves before he is 16 years old. The Sixth Form has increased from seven to nearly 80, and in July last there were 120 boys over 16 in the School. The Science and Mathematical Sixth has been divided into Upper and Lower Sections (which are taught separately). Two other Advanced Courses have been organized and are “recognized ” by the Board of Education. These are known as the Classical and Modern Sixth and the Modern Sixth. Each in turn has been divided into an Upper and a Lower Section. Boys from these Forms are much sought by local firms, banks, and the like, and the Scholarship record at Universities is good. An Upper Vb and a Lower Vc were added, and a year or so later, an Upper Vc. The latest Form to be added has been a Third Form to the Junior School.

It would be difficult to enumerate all that an efficient and energetic body of Governors has done for the School since 1921. The Staff has been nearly doubled and salaries increased. What was Mr. Mansell's private house has become “School.” It has provided a dining hall, Headmaster’s room, kitchens, rooms for caretakers, Common Rooms, Library, Book Depot and Classrooms. Much re-painting and re-decorating has been done. Extensive alterations to the heating of the building were carried out in 1923 and 1924, and a new boiler was installed. Further extensive alterations have now been carried out, and a boiler large enough to heat not only the present School, but the new Hall when this is built, has been introduced. The whole of the sanitary arrangements and drainage have been re-modelled. Two excellent fives courts and substantial bicycle sheds have been built; gardens and terraces have been laid out; the cricket pitch has been renovated; the kitchens re-equipped and re-furnished.

Contracts for the purchase of 27 acres of playing fields at Brampton, and of Hurst House in Abercrombie Street, have just been signed. The playing fields will solve one great difficulty created by the growth of the School, while Hurst House will provide a residence for the Headmaster and accommodation for the two lowest forms of the Junior School.

A new wing, comprising eight new classrooms, cloakrooms, staff rooms, lavatories, and a range of art rooms is now approaching completion. It is a handsome stone building, and it will be a most welcome addition to our accommodation. Considerable structural alterations are being made to the older buildings, and the plans include a new laboratory, a changing room with baths, additional cloakrooms, and more lavatory accommodation.



An engineering workshop has been built, and is now being furnished. The upper field has been levelled and a terrace constructed. This will both improve the look of the building, and prevent mud from the field getting into the classrooms.

As to future plans, we must soon make four new Forms, and there must be a corresponding increase of Staff. We must try hard to save for an Assembly Hall, because it has been impossible for some years for the School to “see itself.” Our new fields at Brampton require some surface levelling, and a pavilion must be provided. We should like a Biological Laboratory and a Museum, and our Fives Courts should be roofed in. Two pillars which support the roof of the Gymnasium ought to be removed, and the existing floor replaced by a modern gymnasium floor. We need a new organ - our morning Assembly takes the place of the Chapel of the Public School.

Then I much want a fund —£5,000 at least – the interest from which could go to helping our boys to Universities, to “Articles” of apprenticeship, to Technical Colleges, and the like. I should suggest that money be lent, so that on repayment the principal would grow. This endowment fund is a vital need, to supplement what the Governors are able to do.

We hope to get all or most of these things in time. We are an independent School, and therefore we cannot go to the rates; we must get our money by our own unaided efforts. The Old Boys’ Association has a small nucleus of some £300. The desire to help is there, and many recognise their debt to the Old School, which has certainly been -one factor in their success. If only one in a hundred of our Old Boys repaid to us what has actually been paid to him or for him in free education, maintenance grants, grants in aid, and grants for further education, we should start our new Hall at once, and be well on our way with our Endowment Fund.

This retrospect should not close without a word of thanks to a succession of Editors, both boys and masters, whose self-sacrificing labour has enabled the Magazine to be produced continuously and has done so much towards the general well-being of the School.

A.C.B.



The last resting place of Headmaster James Mansell and his wife Sarah in St Bartholomew's churchyard, Churchdown, Gloucestershire.

With thanks to local resident Edward Boucher.

