
ABINGDONIAN

June 1975

ABINGDONIAN

Volume sixteen, number seven

June 1975

Contents

Editorial—The new extremism	239	School Council	252
The New Dining Hall	240	Combined Cadet Force	252
Michael St John Parker	241	Societies	254
The Common Room	241	The King's Army	255
School Notes	243	Sport (incl. Rugby Football,	
Holiday Excursions	244	Hockey, Rowing, Cross	
Chapel Notes	246	Country, Badminton, Orien-	
Voluntary Service	247	teering)	256
School Music	247	Chess	275
Drama	249	Hello—Goodbye	278
TASS	251	Lists	277
Grundy Library	252	OA Notes	278

Editorial

The New Extremism

J. B. Priestley once said that the English avoided the absurdities perpetrated by the people of the Continent, because they were less concerned with being rational than with being *reasonable*. The quality of reasonableness is not so evident in England today. The new extremism, which is evident in many areas of our national life has not failed to affect the politics of education. In particular the decision to do away with schools which are good and which people want for their children, just because they do not fit the particular pattern which for the moment is in fashion, does not commend itself to moderate and reasonable people. It cannot be to anyone's advantage that next term's new boys will be the last to enter Abingdon School under the Direct Grant regulations.

The irony of the present position is striking. Grammar schools of all kinds, and especially Direct Grant schools like Abingdon, have never been more popular. Where five years ago we had two boys trying for every place, we now have five. Even termly increases in fees have not deterred the hundreds of potential parents who have put sons down for the school in recent months. From talks with other Headmasters, I know that this pattern is the same wherever schools like ours exist. There are several reasons for our present popularity, but one towers over all the others. Again and again new parents, coming to enter their sons, tell me that they are doing so because the comprehensive alternative where they happen to live is not good enough. In other words, the first effect of the brave new world in state education is that increasing numbers of people are looking for good schools elsewhere.

I do not believe that these people are wrong, for I would always trust parents rather than politicians on any matter concerning children's education. If the country were asked by referendum to approve the educational changes of the last

