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"HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH."

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Class C.

Beautifully set out and incredibly well written. The style is often very mature. It would have been better to cut down the introduction and concentrate on dealing with the main subject. All the same an outstanding piece of work.

DAVID MATHEWS

[redacted]

53, Colcot Road,

BARRY,

Glam.

BARRY GRAMMAR TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

IF YOUR SCHOOL WISHED TO FORM A FRIENDSHIP WITH A SCHOOL IN ANOTHER PART OF THE COMMONWEALTH

(a) Which country would you choose and why, and

(b) What could your school do to foster this Friendship?

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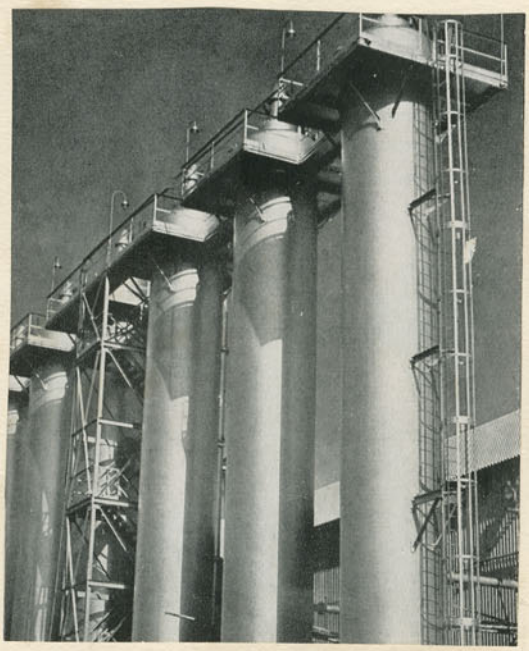
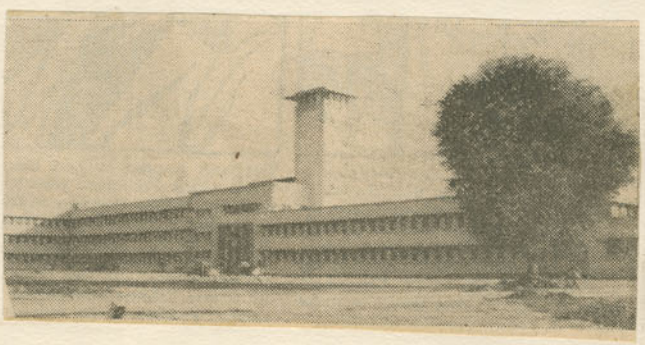
DELHI

One of the busy bazaars of the old city

Connaught Place, main shopping centre of the modern city





OLD AND NEW INDIA

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In a world of strife under the ever-present threat of the H bomb, one great example of unity stands out – the British Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has no written constitution. All its self-governing members are equal, while no compulsion holds them together (or forces them to make any decision, however unimportant.) The basis of the association is freedom. Uniting this family of nations is the Queen; 'Head of the Commonwealth.' Sir Winston Churchill in one of his speeches said, "The Crown has become the mysterious link, indeed I may say the magic link, which unites our loosely bound but strongly interwoven Commonwealth of Nations."

Of the countries of the Commonwealth, I think that India is the most interesting with whom to form a friendship. It is one of the Republics in the Commonwealth and therefore, does not owe allegiance to the Queen, but does, however, recognise her as Head of the Commonwealth.

India is a land of contrasts; with miles of parched fields and barren deserts in contrast with the picturesque Southern Bengal and the soaring mountains of the Himalayas with their historic Khyber Pass; the holy River Ganges and the tropical jungle. There are varieties of peoples, languages and religions, great cities and little villages. It is a country of ancient mystery and modern industry.

Although India is developing rapidly, 87 % of her population are peasants still living in villages where the houses are made of mud and straw and are thatched. Often on festive and religious occasions such as the Durga Puja festival held at Calcutta, villagers are to be seen flocking into the big towns and cities in their thousands. Poverty, so widespread in India, is her

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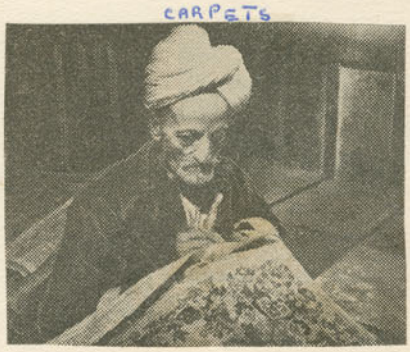
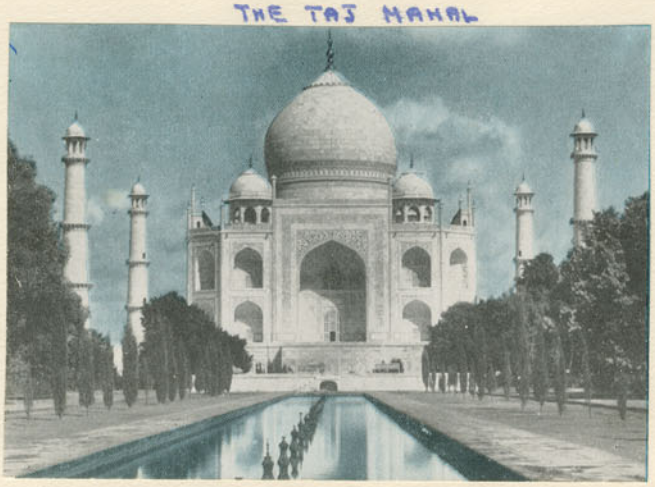
A WEAVER OF FINE CARPETS



A POTTER

THE TAJ MAHAL



A CRAFTSMAN IN PAPER MACHÉ

AN IVORY WORKER

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greatest affliction. Science and progress have yet to conquer it, for, as old scourges are removed, the population rises yet higher and food production can not keep pace. By now, however, the people of India have learned to live with their poverty and it sometimes has even a haunting beauty of its own. Indian peasants are the best mannered people in the world. The visitor is often shown around their village with unlimited courtesy and kindness and is often invited to dinner.

In contrast to this poverty, one of India's most interesting topics is that of her princes, both ancient and modern. When the British occupied India, there were many states, some as large as Wales, others as small as an old English village. Nowadays since 1950 at least, these princes are no longer recognised and most of them are living in retirement. The fabulous wealth of some of the ancient princes is famous the world over. These princes built great monuments, temples and palaces, the wonderful stonework, wood and ivory carvings being living examples of the ancient crafts of the Indians who are probably among the finest craftsmen in the world. An extremely outstanding example is the Taj Mahal in Agra built by Shah Jahan for his favourite wife Mumtaz Mahal at a cost of 4½ million pounds! India, a country of very old civilizations and traditions, still retains many of her ancient crafts. Many Indian craftsmen still know the secret methods used by their ancestors hundreds of years ago. Wood and stone carvings are found everywhere in India; some Buddhist monasteries being cut out of solid rock faces with very simple tools and a great deal of patience.

The wealth of the modern-day princes, though greatly diminished, is still great enough to be outstanding. One

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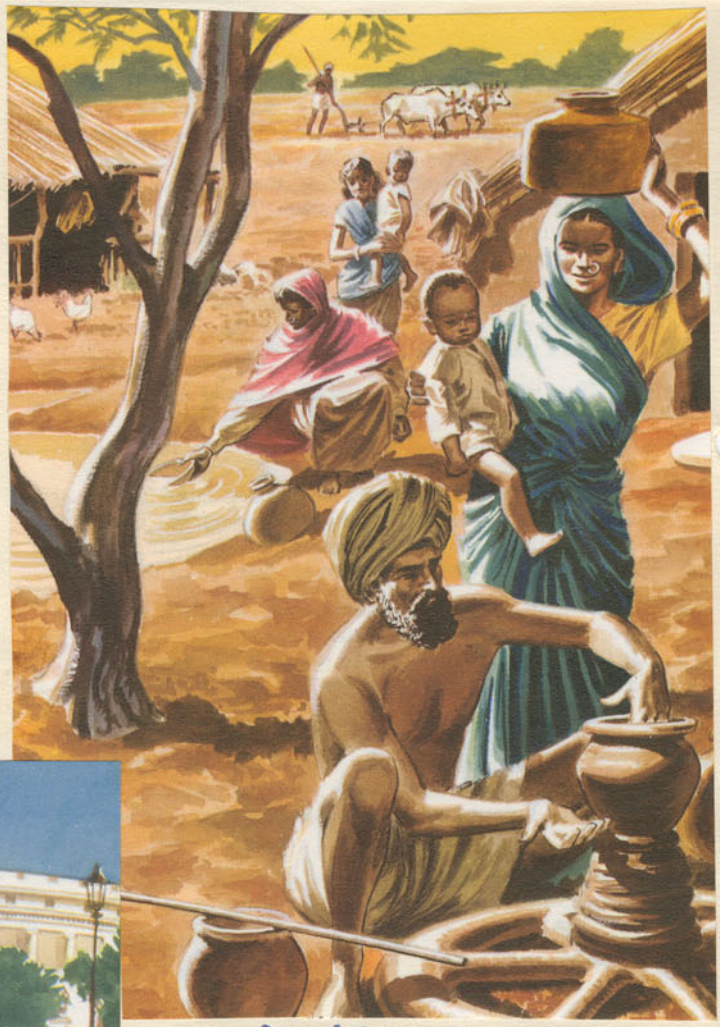
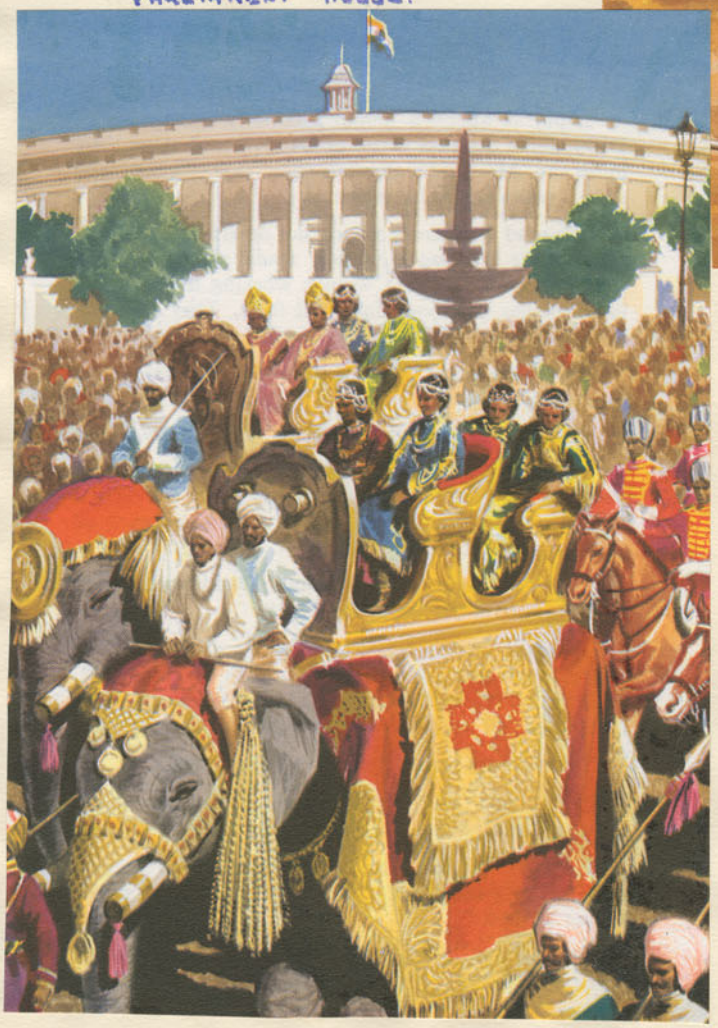


AN INDIAN VILLAGE

CEREMONIAL PROCESSION PASSING PARLIAMENT HOUSE.



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can imagine the gleaming jewels and traditional splendour the Queen will see when she visits New Delhi and Calcutta in all their architectural beauty. These and other cities have fine broad streets with super modern buildings side by side with old temples and narrow, crowded bazaars. How fascinating it must be to stand on the famous Howrah bridge spanning the Hoogly River and watch the traffic both ancient and modern pass by; lumbering bullock carts and double decker buses, bustling rickshaws and streamlined cars, and thousands of happy, friendly people. Everywhere in India one can see the results of the work of British people who devoted their lives to the country. The Queen's visit will assure the people of India of the goodwill of the island that has played so large a part in their past.

Religion plays an important part in the lives of the Indian people and although Hindu is the main religion, it is not the official one. All sects and beliefs (and there are many of them including over 8 million Christians), are equally recognised.

How does a teeming country of over 400 million people, with dialects and religious sects as varied as the scenery and climate preserve its unity? The answer lies in its elected political Head who is one of the greatest leaders in the world; Prime Minister Nehru. When I think of India, I think immediately of Mr. Nehru. He is a man of great charm and wisdom, with a sane and practical approach to world problems.

The end of the war in 1918 saw great unrest among the peasants who constituted the majority of the people. With the establishment of law and order and the spread of Western education, the demand by Indians for self-government became more and more pressing.

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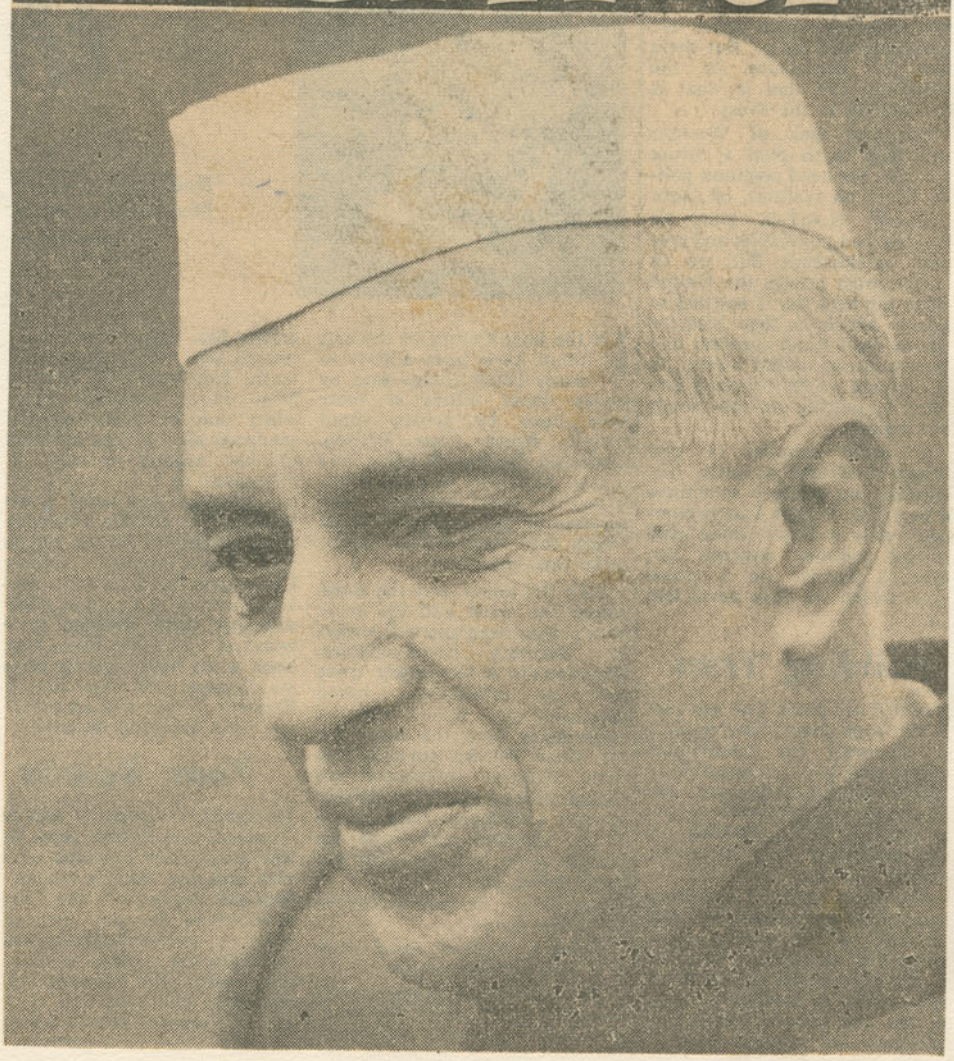
Nehru



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A Hindu Mahatma Gandhi, started the movement for India's independence. Since Gandhi's death, Mr. Nehru has worked on the same principles. Although a Hindu, his life is based on the Christian virtues and he has developed an intense interest in the masses of Indians and their problems, and have lies the key to his political power - the millions of India have given him their utter devotion and trust. Like Gandhi before him, he can persuade the whole of India by his transparent honesty.

Field Marshal Montgomery has said, "Much of what happens in Asia in general and in India in particular in the foreseeable future depends on Mr. Nehru."

While we boys can not directly influence the course of events it is possible for us to foster ties of friendship with the youth of India

After finding a suitable school boys of our school who were interested would form an Anglo-Indian Society. Our Headmaster would be quite willing to do so and would even help in forming such a society. A number of masters too, would willingly give of their spare time to help encourage this valuable friendship. The nature of the club would allow scope for many activities. Some of the boys may wish to have pen-friends, a widely used way of aquiring knowledge of peoples and countries. I think that monthly news-letters would be more popular. The first few letters would be descriptions of the school and the surrounding district, illustrated with drawings and photographs. As time progressed, these letters would become yet fuller as the activities of the club grew. A number of boys, both in India and here in Barry, are certain to be stamp or coin collecting enthusiasts and so coins and stamps could be exchanged along with small souvenirs of each country. Photographs of

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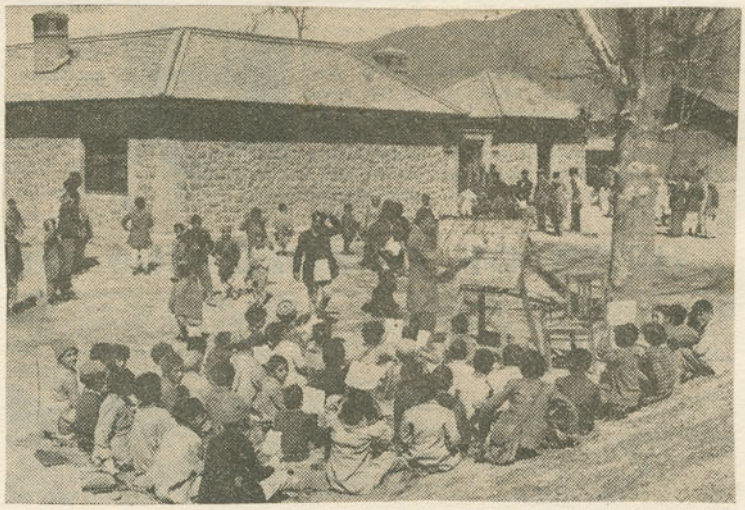
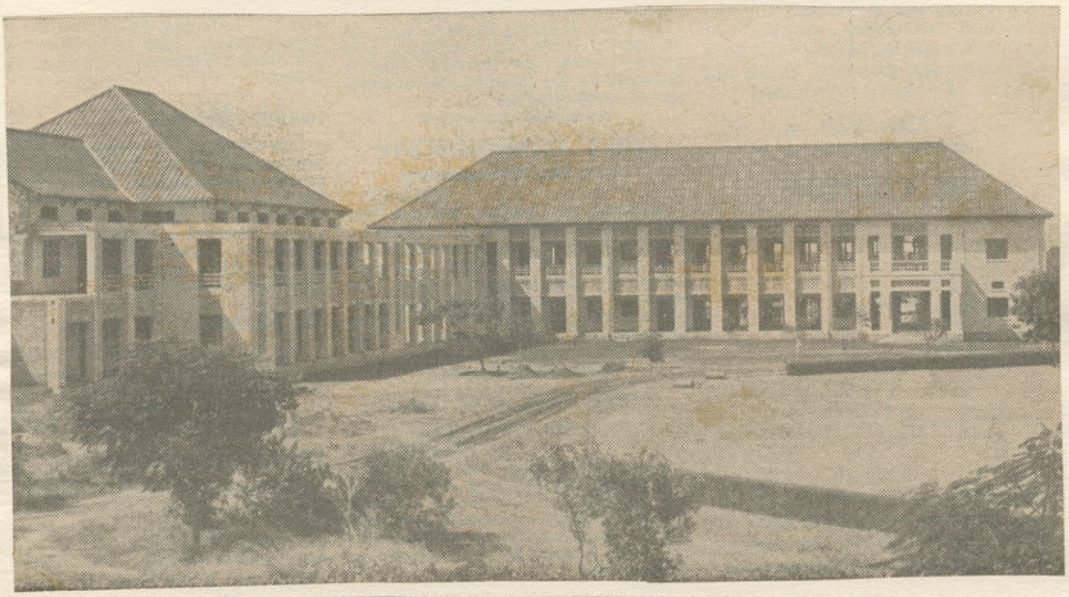
A
VILLAGE SCHOOL



A
MODERN
SCHOOL



OFF
TO
SCHOOL

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the British Isles, in general, as well as those of Barry, would be greatly appreciated. As all Indian schoolchildren learn English, books covering many topics could be sent for their library.

Presuming that the society's funds were sufficient, tape recordings of the school choir and orchestra could be sent along with messages of goodwill. A special recorded message could be sent for Commonwealth Day (May 24th)

Every year our school publishes a magazine, most of the articles being contributed by present and past pupils. The editor of the magazine, Mr Gwyn Thomas, a well known author and radio and television personality, is a master, and he could, no doubt, be inveigled into adding a special message in his editorial to the boys of the Indian school to whom the magazine would be sent.

Indian students are, and always will be, especially welcome in Wales, as the Welsh people have a certain affinity with the people of India. At Cardiff University, a large number of Indian students are in training and through the British Council in Cardiff, arrangements could be made for students to speak at our society meetings. On Christmas Day of last year my parents were delighted to entertain two Indian trainee students from Durgapur, a town whose gigantic steel works have been described as being the "Symbol of India's progress."

The Rotary Club of Barry, of which our Headmaster is a member, takes a lively interest in our school and its many activities. The International Committee of the Club would welcome members of the society to the Rotary meetings when Indian students from Cardiff University were speaking and in this way, very interesting information about India could be gained.

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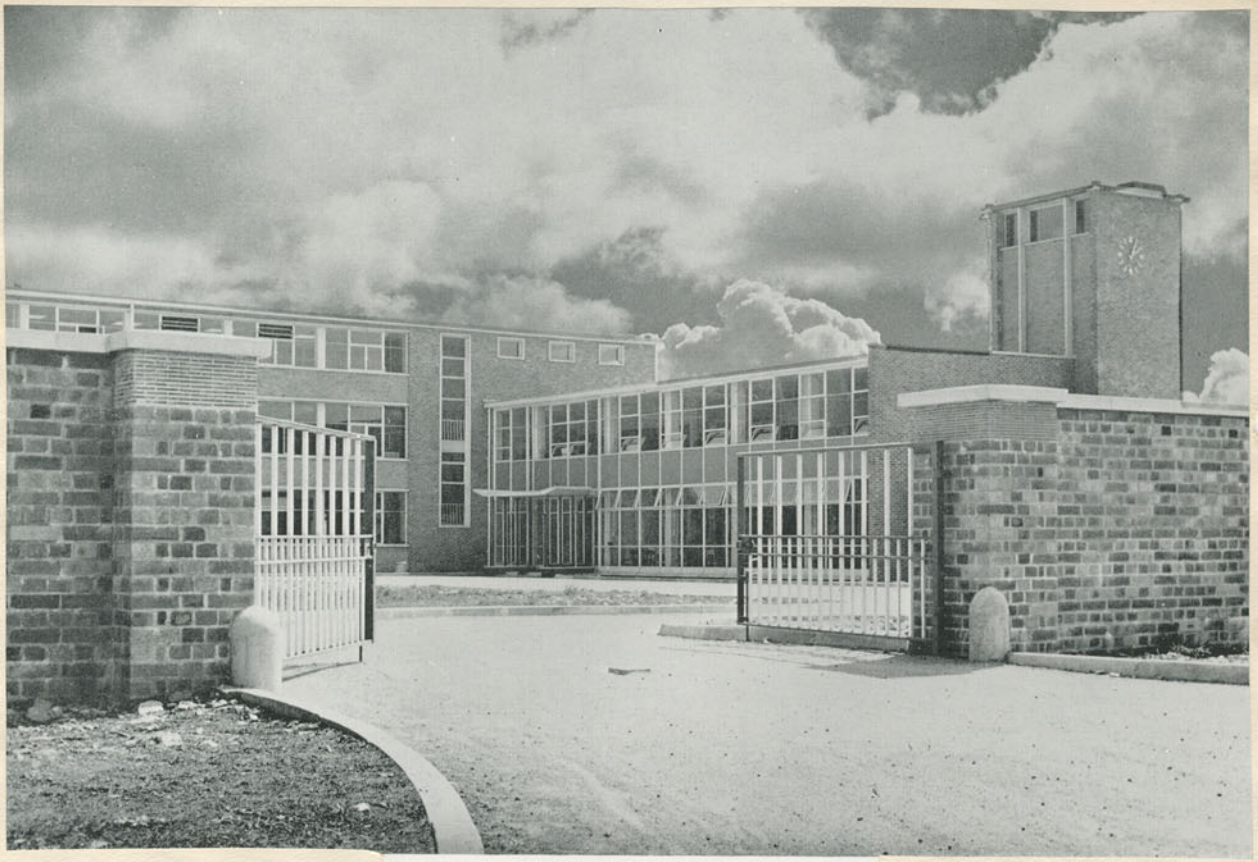
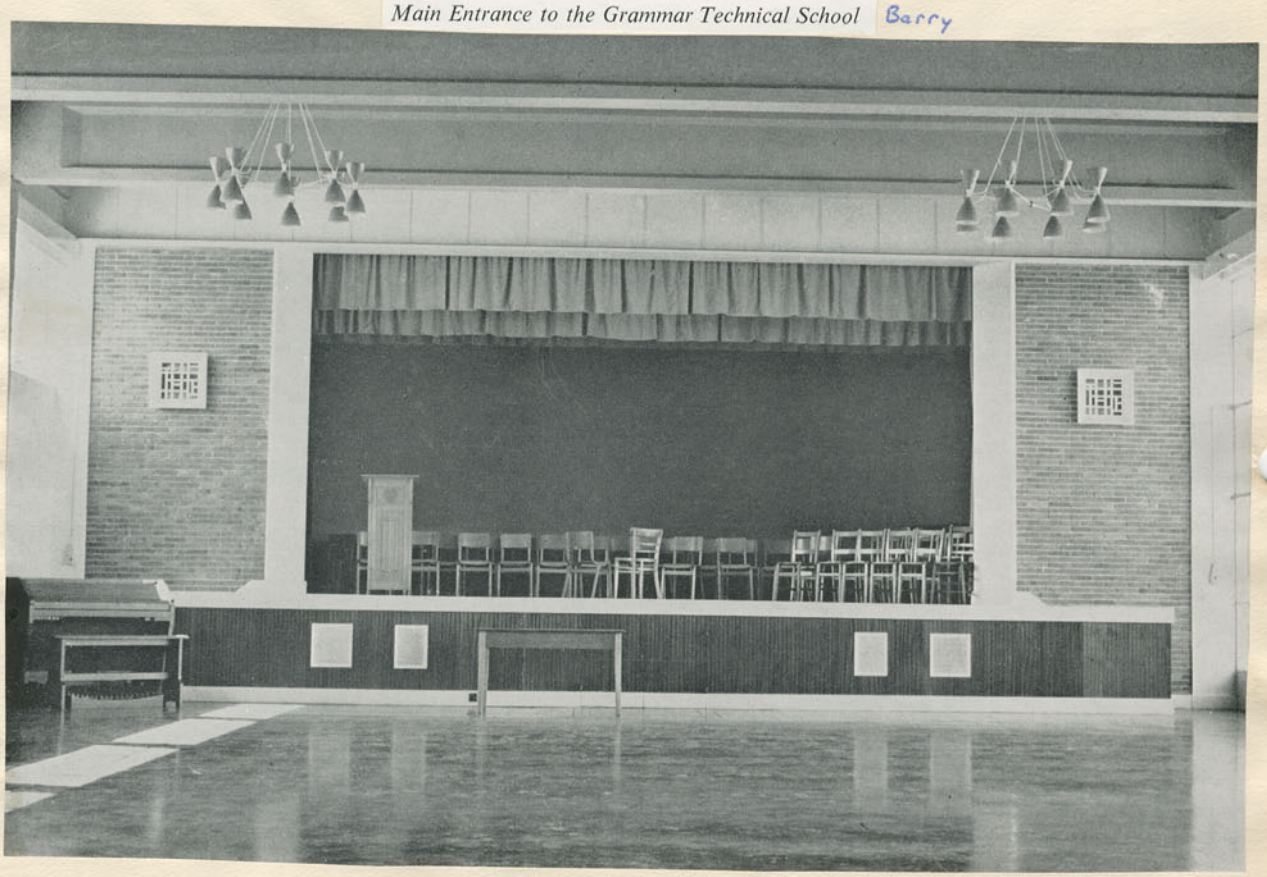


Main Entrance to the Grammar Technical School Barry



ASSEMBLY HALL

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European schoolchildren have, in recent years, been exchanging visits with children of other countries. Owing to India's great distance from Britain, however, this idea could not be considered. A suggestion, to which our Headmaster has given his consent, was to invite one or two Indian boys to come to our school for a year. The boys would stay with the families of members of the club thus entering fully into British life. On the whole, if carried out, this idea could prove to be the foundations of a long and lasting friendship.

A friendship between two sets of schoolboys may sound unimportant, but boys grow into men, men who will be the future moulders of the Commonwealth, and, if, during the next fourty years, India grows into a great Parliamentary Democracy, all our apprehensions about China would fade away. India's progress is vital to the freedom of the world and so the friendship between schoolboys could eventually be a valuable aid to world peace, for, "If the links are sound the edifice will endure."

BOOK LIST

The Land and People of India by H. G. Rawlinson.
A Picture of the Commonwealth.
Children's Newspapers.
Sunday Times and Observer.

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