

February 1910



Headteacher's log

Monday 14

Mr Burrows, Field Sports Officer of the Country-side Alliance, introduced a national competition at today's assembly. To commemorate the life of 'Britain's most famous huntsperson', the Alliance is offering a prize for a piece of work judged the best by a child from each of five age groups. The work should include writing and illustrations. Credit will be given for variety and quality of expression, in prose, poetry, pictures, maps and, if possible, recorded music. Competitors can choose their own titles, but the first words of the composition are compulsory: 'I remember where I was when I heard that John Peel had spun his last disc.'

Tuesday 15

Parental nervousness about school outings is having unforeseen competitive benefits for children from disadvantaged and minority families. At assembly today, Benny Snareswell, whose father is in jail for poaching, received his trout-tickling certificate, and Pedro Romero, one of our Travellers, was awarded his certificate for horse whispering. Other parents threatened to sue us if their children were taken near dangerous places and animals. Both boys will carry forward credits for an NVQ in Rural Crafts when they are 18.

Wednesday 16

As you will see from yesterday's entry, we are already implementing the Tomlinson Committee's Revised Report on school qualifications. We are introducing the new national dissertation, which will be begun in Year 2, continued in every school year and presented in Year 13. I hope to be around to read 18 year-old Stephen 'Butch' Hardcastle's final chapter of *What I did in the summer holidays*, and Fiona Greengrass's *Furnishing my doll's house*.

Thursday 17

At assembly today we read prayers provided by Bishop Potsmoker for all church schools in the diocese. Our Bishop is to be Chaplain-in-Attendance at a duel with pistols between HM Chief Inspector of Schools, Dr Bloodaxe and his predecessor Dr Ironfoot, to be held on Saturday in Hyde Park. The dispute concerns remarks by Dr Bloodaxe in reply to Dr Ironfoot's complaints about the 'sabotaging' of the 'world-class' school inspection system that he set up before he left to become England football coach. A judge has ruled that bets on the duel's result are legal under the Government's new Gaming Act. Our very much alive Mr Peel is running a book in the staff room, and Ms Oakenstaff has put her dowry on Dr Bloodaxe.

Friday 18

Talking of gaming, Monday's dead-heat general election result means that education, a political football, is up in the air. Policy debates at all union conferences this Easter are to be held around roulette wheels, and at least two conferences have a fortune teller as their main speakers. Moreover, as the Budget thrown out by the House of Lords remains unpassed, schools, like everything else the Government pays for, have no legal money. At times like this, I wish I were a headteacher in 100 years time. Surely by then education will be more rationally predictable than it is now.

■ Leonard Bookman

