

Art Club/Appreciation/Teachers



The above photo comes from Mr. Burnell and Tony Senior. Thank you.



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This photo is from October 1967. This is just before Mr. Hamilton retired. It shows Mr. Burnell and Brenda Patrick hard at work. Photo provided by Mr. Burnell and Tony Senior.

Art Club 1952-53



Back Row L-R: David Law, Roy Linstead, Johnny Johnson, Mr. Combs, Christopher Gascoigne, John Winter.
Front Row L-R: Jean Cowlshaw, Margaret Connolly, Joan Taylor, Irene Doughty, Maureen Elvidge.

The Art Club (School Magazine 1954)



Since all the work so far has been practical, there is nothing to report in the way of talks or discussions. Members are at liberty to tackle any branch of the subject though, at present, the majority participate in either water-colour painting or clay modelling. There have been no previous reports about the club, but readers may rest assured that it is very much alive and kicking. We offer our sincere thanks to Mr. Combs for all his help since the club's inauguration in 1952 and to Miss Parkin for her assistance during its first year of life.

Rodney Wood, U6A.

The Art Club (School Magazine 1955)



The Upper School seems to have no use for this Club, but it is kept active by the lower forms. Though these Art lovers seem to be lacking in ideas and still use the 'drawing on the wall' technique, they are in a position where Mr. Combs can mould them into Art-appreciating citizens. It is disappointing to realise this creative club does not appeal to the Vth. and VIth. but, in a few years' time, Mr. Combs' efforts will be rewarded with more members than he can manage. We offer our thanks to him for carrying on with this difficult and sometimes disappointing task in furthering our education.

Alec Wall, L6S.

Mr. J. D. Combs - a Tribute



The article below appeared in the School Magazine of 1956

Mr. J. D. Combs, A.T.D., began his teaching career at Hemsworth Grammar School on the 1st September, 1949. He died on the 26th February, 1956. He was a few months short of 34 years of age. A short life, a very short teaching career, yet he accomplished much. No one who was taught by him will ever forget him. We, his colleagues, will always remember him. After his early years as a boy at school, Mr. Combs studied Art at Swindon, at West Bromwich, and, finally, at the Brighton College of Arts and Crafts, when he took the Art Teachers' Diploma. For five years, from October 1941, to October 1946, he served in the Royal Corps of Signals. In his 6.5 years with us, we learned to appreciate the essential kindness of one of Nature's gentlemen. Kindliness and goodness were his outstanding qualities. He was a good teacher; he taught with a professional skill that inspired even the less gifted of his pupils, but it was his kindness and his intense interest in people for which he will be remembered. As Art Master, he was regularly responsible for the settings of School and Staff Plays. From December 1949, to 1955, there were 7 School Plays. Mr. Combs did the setting for 6 of them. In December 1950, he not only did the scenery for "Let's Make an Opera", but took one of the leading roles. In the same period of time there have been 6 Staff Plays. In 3 of them he was responsible for the scenery and in 2 of them was a member of the Cast. He ran an Art Class on Friday evenings and even managed on occasions to find time to turn out for the Staff Cricket XI. His interest in Music had been to take part in the Male Voice Choir and in the Four-Part Choir. If ever a man pulled his weight in a school, certainly Mr. Combs did so. He was interested in all our activities, even when time or inclination did not allow him to play a part directly. He was a grand schoolmaster. The profession of teaching is the poorer by his death. Goodness, kindness and fun; these qualities, allied to his keenness for his job as schoolmaster both from the narrow and the broad point of view, will always be uppermost in our mind, at the mention of his name. He was, indeed, a real Christian gentleman, or, as Chaucer would say, "A verray, parfit gentil Knight".

The Headmaster

Mr. Hamilton the Art Master



Mr. Hamilton, the Art Master, was not the one who became Head. Sheila Kelsall asked why I remembered him. The Art room had desks where the working surface could be raised to an angle suitable for drawing, with a ledge at the bottom which would support the paper and a flat bit at the top which would hold the paints and water container. At our very first lesson, Mr. Hamilton gave a spine chilling description of what would happen if we sat, with chairs tilted forward on two legs and the other two legs in the air. Someone would accidentally knock the chair from behind, throwing us forward so that we would hit our foreheads on the top ledge. This would spill the paint and water over us, as well as being painful. At the same time, the chair would tend to slide backwards so that we would then hit our chins on the ledge at the bottom. This would be terribly painful and might even break our teeth. As the chair slid backwards, the top would then hit us on the back of our heads. This gruesome picture was undoubtedly effective and I don't remember anybody daring to tilt their chairs!

Jean Burton (HGS 1936-43)

Lectures on Modern Painting 1963-64



During the Autumn and Spring Terms Mr. Burnell gave a series of lectures on Modern painting. These lectures, like those on "Art Appreciation" given the previous year, were accompanied by film-strips compiled by Mr. Anthony Bertram, M.A. The lectures, after a general introduction, proceeded to cover the origins and growth of modern art and to discuss several painters. The later lectures analysed the various divisions of modern art and the numerous "-isms" which make any study of recent innovations in the Arts a difficult task for the layman. Those who attended the previous year's lectures were able to extend their knowledge and, although the attendance was not large, those present learned much to assist in their understanding and enjoyment of modern painting.

Brian Hawkes

The Appreciation of Pictures 1963



From the School Magazine 1963

A series of twelve lectures was given by Mr. Burnell to senior forms during the winter term, finishing in March. These lectures, given on Thursday nights and usually lasting about an hour, attempted to break down the complexities of Art Appreciation into more easily digested portions: the artist's medium, line and linear construction, etc. The first four lectures were concerned with technique, showing some of the methods by which a painter achieves his effects. The later lectures discussed in some detail the ways in which pictures may be grouped by (a) subject matter and (b) content, pointing out that paintings by different artists, each depicting the same subject, such as "The Crucifixion", could have a very different content and a very different emotional effect on the observer. One lecture was devoted to the development of portrait painting, another to genre paintings, showing everyday scenes of working and middle class life. The final lecture was devoted to Modern Art, that reaction against realism which took place roughly at the beginning of this century. Any attempt to analyse this subject effectively would need much more than the hour given to it, but even so, the idea of the many different forms lumped together as 'Modern Art' was conveyed. The film strips compiled by Anthony Bertram, were in full colour and a pleasure to see. The success of this new venture was due to the way in which Mr. Burnell tackled his aim of removing prejudices and clarifying hazy notions in the minds of his audiences about the essential value and intention of Art. His material was obviously carefully prepared and he did not allow his specialised knowledge of his subject to make him lose contact with the more uninitiated of his listeners. All who attended would agree that they were provided with a worth-while experience and we look forward to the course of eight lectures in modern painting promised for next year.

Anon