

1950



The Stratford Theatre Party (July)

During the last week of the summer term the Sixth Form paid its annual visit to Shakespeare's birthplace. After an uneventful journey we arrived, only to be greeted by pouring rain. We managed to find our caravans in spite of the elements, or rather all except the Lower Sixth girls managed to find caravans; they were in a converted 'bus, which defied all Greenough's efforts to drive it away - someone should have told him that the engine had been removed.

We visited the Memorial Theatre on five occasions, and we saw King Lear, Julius Ceasar, Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure and Henry VIII. All seats except those for Measure to Measure were booked in advance. To get tickets for this play we had to start queuing at 6-30 a.m. and so the party was split up into four groups, and each queued for an hour. We were very well rewarded, however, by a highly entertaining production and a first class view of the Duchess of Kent who visited the theatre that evening. The stars this year were Peggy Ashcroft, Gwen Frangcon-Davies, Anthony Quayle and John Gielgud, and so it is not surprising that everyone was highly satisfied.

We had other sources of entertainment besides the theatre. All our members went boating at some time, many every day. The highlight of the "Regatta" was when Nobby took Gladys a-rowing. After being involved in a collision, Gladys, thinking the boat was a complete wreck, decided to swim for it. By the end of the week one or two were accomplished oarsmen. Swimming was another favourite pastime. On Monday, most people went for an early morning swim, on Wednesday the number had dwindled to four!!! Several people went to Anne Hathaway's cottage; most of them, profiting by last year's experience, took the 'bus to Shottery. On behalf of all who went to Stratford, and who had such a wonderful holiday, I would like to offer our sincere thanks to Mrs. Burn and Miss Metcalfe, who did the organising, and without whom the holiday would have been impossible.

Donald Clarke, U6A.

Theatre Parties



This year, Theatre Parties have been fewer than many of us would have wished. Four of the ones arranged were to see Shakespeare, including a 3rd - and a 5th - form party. The most unusual was the Young Vic's rendering of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", which met somewhat mixed criticism in seeking to strike a fresh note. The "excursion" to Wolfitt's production of "King Lear" was especially outstanding, thanks to a small matter of a broken lamp in the 'bus - increasing the total cost of the evening by one penny! A new idea was a party to Wakefield Grammar School's presentation of Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion", which also met with mixed comments. Of rather a different nature was a visit to a French play - Moliere's "Le Medecin Malgre Lui." It was delightful and could have been improved upon only by our understanding it properly!

Gladys Alderman, U6A. Holgate.

1951



Theatre Parties

There have been several. A small party went to Ackworth to see an amateur performance of Christopher Fry's "The Lady's Not for Burning" and a large group of Sixth Formers saw Donald Wolfitt's production of "As you Like It" in Leeds. We have also seen "Hamlet" performed by the Sheffield Repertory Company, and a large party visited Leeds to see the University's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Almost the whole School saw the film "Henry the Fifth" at a Pontefract cinema.

Thelma Robinson, U6A.

1952 The Stratford Theatre Party



On a beautiful morning on the 21st July, a party from school set off by 'bus for Stratford. The journey was broken at Leicester when a certain member of the party who shall be nameless found a bargain in a pound of oranges. The journey was resumed after about twenty minutes and our old acquaintance, the orange buyer, soon found that cheap oranges and 'bus rides simply do not mix. Another stop was made at Warwick where lunch was taken at a roadside hotel. Approximately 2 hours later the 'bus turned into Rayford Pleasure Camp on the banks of the River Avon. The equipment was stowed away and some members of the party took their first swim. The ensuing days were passed in various pursuits. The river proved a great attraction and swimming and rowing were fully enjoyed by everyone. It was a matter of great conjecture who should emulate Gladys Alderman's feat of the previous year and fall in the river. Richardson obliged us, but it would seem that such things are common in these parts, for the boatman was heard to say "That's the third today."

The boys of the Lower Sixth found washing up very irksome and, because of the pressing domestic situation, Margaret White agreed to become official washer-up for the duration of the holiday. The theatre was, I am sure, greatly enjoyed by everyone. The three productions visited by the party were Henry IV Part I, Richard II, and The Tempest. At the end of the week we regretfully left this Warwickshire beauty spot, and many of those pupils who were staying on next year expressed the wish that they should return next summer.

James Stead, U6S.

Mexborough



During the Summer term of a party from the 4th, 5th and 6th forms visited Mexborough to see a performance of Shaw's "St. Joan" by Mexborough Grammar School Staff. There have only been two theatre parties this school year. The first was to Ackworth to see "Our Town," and the second to Leeds University to see "Twelfth Night."

James Ainge, J.A. L6A

Stratford Camp

On a damp morning in early August we all assembled in the school yard to await the 'bus which was to take us on our journey to Stratford. After dinner in Warwick we arrived at Stratford in pouring rain and tramped through the wet grass to our respective caravans. This deluge, however, did not persist and we were lucky to have a week of generally fine weather, although the River Avon overflowed its banks owing to the excessive number of water-nymphs in our party who unintentionally joined the swans. The official camp life-savers did not seem to be very eager to save these nymphs from a watery grave and we all wondered why this was. Was it because they wanted to see someone drown or didn't they like the thought of getting wet? Perhaps one of the life-savers thought that his rather unusual taste in head-gear might lose its fashionable shape on getting wet. Nevertheless, this particular member of the party, being a good scout, made up for earlier lack of enthusiasm when he decided to do his good deed for the week on Friday night. He and the other inmates of "Clem's Place" completed their round of knocking up by about 3 a.m. but, receiving little response, they disconsolately returned to their beds.

Last year we were exceptionally lucky in having the opportunity to see five plays at the Stratford Memorial Theatre, although some of the productions were not up to the usual high standard. The five plays were "Macbeth", "The Tempest", "As you Like It", "Volpone" and "Coriolanus". Many of us also enjoyed the film "Ivanhoe", which we found time to visit in the course of the week.

I think that all of those who went to Stratford last year would agree that we had a very enjoyable week and would join in thanking Mr. Walker for organising the party and Miss. Metcalfe for doing all the catering. Also, we should like to thank all the other members of the Staff who helped to make the week a success.

1953

The Stratford Theatre Party

The Stratford Theatre Party was once more a very great success. During the week we saw four plays: one comedy, "The Taming of the Shrew", and three tragedies, "King Lear", "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Richard III". Yvonne Mitchell, Peggy Ashcroft, Michael Redgrave and Marius Goring gave excellent performances, and the productions were wonderful. We also visited places of historical interest such as Shakespeare's birthplace and Ann Hathaway's cottage. The Avon proved a very great attraction, and the good weather enabled us to spend most of the day-time on the river - with the girls "rowing"! On the way home, we visited Warwick Castle, where we saw many art treasures, including the famous "Warwick Vase". We thank Mr. Walker, Miss Ward and Miss Wimpenny for organising our holiday and for keeping a watchful eye on us during our stay at Stratford.

1954

Theatre Parties

This year, the theatre parties seem to show a Norwegian bias since, of the three plays seen, two are by Ibsen. "The Doll's House" was produced by Leeds University Theatre Group and the "Enemy of the People" by the Ackworth Drama group. A party, one hundred strong, visited the Arts Centre at Doncaster to see "The Merchant of Venice".

1955

The Stratford Theatre Party

On the afternoon of Saturday, 6th August, the HGS party arrived at Rayford 'Pleasure' Camp, Stratford-on-Avon. Shortly afterwards, two weary, mud spattered individuals who hadn't been able to raise the bus fare, arrived on bikes. After a meal and a wash, the whole party rushed down to the Memorial Theatre to see Glen Byam Shaw's excellent production of 'Macbeth' with Sir Lawrence and Lady Olivier as Macbeth and his lady.

For the following six days, the party, suitably divided, amused themselves in, or around, Stratford. The river proved to be the most popular attraction and the HGS punt (seating capacity six) with twelve bodies on board, became a common sight on the river and it was even to be seen through the gloom up to 10.30 p.m. Accidents were frequent, both on and off the camp. Not a day passed without someone getting a good soaking in the not-too-clean river Avon. Accidents in camp were more varied - beds collapsing, doors splitting in two, tables collapsing, cups and glasses breaking. Stratford was thoroughly explored and the places of interest were visited. Many of the party walked out to Shuttery to see Ann Hathaway's cottage with its beautiful garden. The trip to Oxford also proved to be popular, especially among the more romantic members of our party. Another feature of our visit was the Morris Dancers who were to be seen cavorting round town each evening. I hear that some of the more energetic members of our party joined in.

The Memorial Theatre is in the centre of the town and we were fortunate in seeing four plays there. Apart from 'Macbeth', we saw 'Twelfth Night', 'The Merry Wives of Windsor', and 'All's Well That Ends Well'. The company included, as well as Sir Lawrence and Lady Olivier, Anthony Quayle, Angela Baddely, Michael Dennison and Joyce Redman, which naturally made the standard of the acting extremely high.

I am sure that everyone enjoyed the week and some want to return again this year. I think even the Staff enjoyed it. The courage of Miss Whitworth in taking charge of the party is still a thing to be wondered at. The School members enjoyed her company and that of her three helpers, Miss Elliot, Miss Parkin and Miss Kilner, even though their job was to keep a maternal eye on us.

Robinson P. U6A (Talbot)

1956



The Stratford Theatre Party August

Various methods were used to convey the party of fifteen to Stratford-on-Avon last summer, but despite the fact that one member was considered to have "eloped" or "emigrated" on the way, everybody finally arrived in time for lunch. The week began well with an excellent performance of "Othello" on the first night. The inconsistency of the weather, the frequent soakings (both in and out of the Avon), even the fact that the "pleasure" camp looked like a mud flat failed to quell any spirits. We were fortunate in seeing a cycle of fine plays at the Memorial Theatre: "Othello", "Love's Labours Lost", "Merchant of Venice", "Hamlet", and "Measure for Measure", and the acting of such personalities as Emlyn Williams, Alan Badel, Harry Andrews, Basil Heskens, Margaret Johnston and Janette Sterke, was at its best. Another highlight of the week was the very fine display of Roumanian Morris dancing

performed by a visiting professional troupe, and if certain members were seen stamping their way back to camp, it was due to Roumanian influence.

Warwick itself was thoroughly explored, the castle especially proving of great interest, and the surrounding villages of the Cotswolds were visited, besides the usual places like Shakespeare's birthplace and Anne Hathaway's cottage. Rowing on the river, despite soakings from the rain and the "oarsmen" proved a popular pastime - even the breaking of a punt-pole could not deter the would-be punters.

On behalf of the party, I would like to extend grateful thanks to Mr. Walker who made the holiday possible; to Mr. Johnston who was in charge of the party, and to Misses Ward and Hampshire who kept a maternal eye on us. Due acknowledgement must also be paid to Miss Ward's car, which, we hope, is still in running order!

Joan Martin, U6A Holgate.



A new angle on MacBeth

The trip to see 'Macbeth', performed by the Doncaster Amateur Dramatic Society, was to us perhaps the most memorable literary excursion this year. Although the acting did not quite attain a professional standard, the play was the most comic tragedy or tragic comedy we have yet seen. We would like to remind those who went of some of the more unfortunate incidents, as far as the cast were concerned, but we would like to make it clear that we do so only in a light-hearted way and intend no offence to anyone.

The tension is building up; Macbeth reaches for his dagger - "quick, pick it up! Pretend it's part of the act. These thick school kids'll never realise." All is going well, the plot is getting deeper and mysterious and so, just to spite the audience's laughter, we'll blind them with our new 400 watt laser

beam and behold some fool unrolls the back curtain and they sit dazed, cross-eyed for ten minutes - just enough time for a few more slips before they regain consciousness.

Our great admiration goes out to King Duncan, alias Lord, doctor, soldier, and several other odd jobs. We believe he has great potential as a Jack-of-all-Trades. We certainly must mention the half-dozen troops who made entry every so often, armed with three twigs, a prop, one Union Jack, and several tin hats. Their stamina, it was said, must be profound. Who would have thought six men could circle the stage every two minutes for three hours? - a marvellous job. (We are pleased to note that these six heroes have broken all records of long-distance stage-pacing).

Margaret Howarth, Margaret Preece (Photo), L6A