



## School Days: Ventnor Secondary Modern School, 1953/4

*Today, perhaps more than ever before, with so many ideologies and with such speedy communications, we need tolerance for the other person's point of view.* These words could have been written today, but are more than sixty years old - they are the opening lines of the 1953/4 Ventnor Secondary Modern School magazine.

The Headmaster at that time was T G B (Ben) Howe, the Senior Mistress was Miss I M Clark, and the Senior Master was A W ('Rumbo') Lewis. The magazine is full of detail about school activities: in October the pitch was marked on the new playing field, and Flight-Officer Stainforth lectured on the life in the Women's RAF, while in February there was a heavy fall of snow and 158 scholars were absent, and in March the School came third in the All-Island Quiz at Cowes and there was a visit to the Cinema to see *The Ascent of Everest* (a documentary about the 1953 expedition where Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers to reach the peak).

There were many clubs and societies. This description by Joan Hookey, who was in class 4E, will surely ring a bell with anyone who was ever part of a school choir: *All is in an uproar when Mr Lewis walks in, then all is so silent a pin could be heard if dropped . . . Mr Wellington enters with Miss Watson close behind and then papers start rustling and the choir is ready to begin. Mr Wellington raises his baton and Miss Watson plays a chord, but there is someone gazing out of the window and paying no attention at all so down comes Mr Wellington's baton and he waits till every eye is upon him and then we try to start once more. This time one whole line is sung before we have to stop. Oh dear! How many times do we stop for the same thing, over again and again . . . but choir rehearsals are always fun even if we do get shouted at and sing the same old thing.*

Two notable events that year were the school production of *Carnival Nights*, and a school trip to Switzerland. *Carnival Nights* took over the whole school, everyone seemingly involved in acting, singing, painting sets and making costumes, and 210 students taking part on the stage when at the end of March three performances played to capacity houses in the Town Hall.

The school trip to Switzerland took 17 girls and 3 boys on a ten day visit hoping, according to the magazine "to meet young people from all over the country on whom to air their own particular brand of French!" This photograph shows the group setting off from Ventnor station, with headmaster Ben Howe standing at the back. Back row: Mrs Molly Sedgewick, four unknown girls, Iris Russell, Ann Fisher, Elaine McLeod, four unknown girls, Mrs Thomas, Gwen Croad. Front row: John Gardiner, two unknown boys, Janice Wickert, two unknown girls, Steven Brooks, Richard Etherington, unknown boy and girl. If anyone can help us put names to the unknown faces, please do get in touch.



**SCHOOL OFFICERS**

*Head Boy:*  
Autumn Term: LIONEL MEW  
Spring and Summer Term: EDWARD SANDLE

*Head Girl:*  
Autumn Term: MOIRA CLARK  
Spring and Summer Term: SHIRLEY COLENUTT

**PREFECTS**

MOLLIE ATTRILL	MAUREEN WINCHESTER
MARY BULLOCK	HILARY DODD
GWYNETH LEWIS	ANGELA BROWN
DOREEN RAYNER	JOHN GARDINER
BERYL RUSSEL	KEITH GATRELL
YVONNE WESTOBY	ARTHUR BARTON

**SUB-PREFECTS**

GEOFFREY PATTENDEN	RICHARD ETHERINGTON
--------------------	---------------------

**HOUSE CAPTAINS**

<i>St. Andrew:</i>	
JOYCE WORRALL	JOHN GARDINER
<i>St. David:</i>	
MARY BULLOCK	NIGEL URRY
<i>St. George:</i>	
BERYL RUSSELL	ROBERT BROOKE
<i>St. Patrick:</i>	
GWYNETH LEWIS	DEREK HUNT

3