

MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL



POETRY FESTIVAL
1989

FIRST YEAR

The winning poems were chosen from an impressive collection of entries. In the event "The Bubble" gained first place because of its exact observation; the fragility of the bubble popping 'silently on a blade of grass', its 'colours swirling', changing course 'at a breath of wind'. The whole poem showed an eye for detail and the ability to choose simple but effective words. "The Sea" also had a lively sense of the power of words; 'a starfish combs the grounds', the sea which throws 'buckets of spray' then 'wears the cliffs away'. This is using language to paint vivid pictures and would be impressive in a poet of greater years. In 'The Used Toy' Victoria Wyatt has managed to tell a familiar story with a freshness and feeling which make it linger in the memory. Particularly the final lines

"He stares into the gloom of the attic
Longing to be loved
Once again:

The final poem selected, "Church" tackles a more complex theme and understandably does not always succeed in maintaining the dynamics of poetry. But I liked its thoughtful approach and strong ending.

THE BUBBLE

A bubble is blown,
Perfectly round.
Rainbow colours swirling,
It floats weightlessly
Through the air
Changing course at a breath of wind.
It shimmers in the sunlight
Bringing joy to the child.
Slowly, it drifts to the ground
And pops silently on a blade of grass
The child blows another
And the cycle begins again.

By David Varney 1DJ

THE SEA

The sea is glimmering blue
Throwing buckets of spray,
And without leaving a clue
Wears the cliffs away.

Deep down in the ocean,
Fishes swim around,
And with no visible motion,
A starfish combs the ground.

By Colin Stratford. 1WW

THE USED TOY

Out into the warm summer sunshine
The little girl,
Walked proudly out of the toyshop.
Her auburn plaits
Bobbed up and down in the air.
Her new addition cradled in her arms.

The golden coloured teddy-bear
Bristled with newness
He seemed to grin from ear to ear
With happiness.
At the thought of someone to care for him.

Now,
It sits dejectedly amongst cobwebs
The happiness of childhood,
Is just a memory.
Bald, moth-eaten and minus an eye
He stares into the gloom of the attic
longing to be loved
Once again.

By Victoria Wyatt. 1DJ

CHURCH !

As you enter the hushed atmosphere,
It makes you overlook the disgusting human race.
It makes you feel insignificant,
And unimportant
Depressed but yet full of life.
And as you stare in amazement
At the work within the walls
Your tongue searches for words to express your feelings,
A chilly atmosphere turns your blood cold
And you move slowly round the church
Astonished everywhere you look.
A woman prays like a statue
A mournful expression on her face
And as if she had just killed a dragon,
She slowly stands up and signs
Maybe, the world has some hope

by Amy Mordan 1KG

SECOND YEAR

'When Dad Died' impresses me greatly.

It has the ring of truth, of emotions recollected and communicated with genuine feeling. The words match the emotions they describe:

".... a fiery state of emotions

Writhing and twisting in the spirals of my mind"

"... A bitter hurricane grasping with icy fingers."

Amanda Maynard has produced a genuine poem and is to be congratulated.

"The Wood in its True Colours" deals with the topical subject of pollution and succeeds very well in its series of sharp contrasts between the woodlands of our imaginings and as they are in reality.

The last two poems "City Gent" and "My Onomatopoeia Poem" have a lightness and humour both helped by the use of rhyme which gives them pace and immediacy.

Just the poems to read when you need cheering up.

When Dad Died

First it was numb, dull shock
Freezing my thoughts.
Then it thawed to a fiery snake of emotions
Writhing, twisting in the spirals of my mind
Anger and horror become a raging pain.
Like fire it spread,
Burning.
The tears I cried did nothing to calm the searing flames.
My thoughts twisted together like an unwoven fleece.

For months, for years it fights on;
A never ending prison sentence,
A bitter hurricane,
Grasping with icy fingers.
I tried to pretend it never happened.
Soon he'd come back
But it didn't work.
The silence set in ...
The missing photographs ...
Like rain after a storm, it returned
More violent than before.
Then again it faltered...

Now it remains, slowly burning,
Waiting to be rekindled by a chance spark.

by Amanda Maynard 2LT

THE WOOD IN ITS TRUE COLOURS

The wood isn't only
Leaves crackling underfoot
And the birdsong in the air

No. It's lame ducks, cut on bottles
In the pond
And the head of scum on orangey water
Where the kids have built a dam

Ferns flick flecks of water onto my lips
Whilst waving dementedly like tails
It tastes bitter-sweet
Like chemicals
And looks greasy where a can of oil has been dumped
Further upstream.

Yes. There are bank-voles
And their holes in banks
But there are also bank-voles dead in polythene bags

And there's more.
You could be here all night
But I'll leave you with two thoughts
For you to decide - Am I right?

There's trickling water calming your nerves:
And a rusty old trolley and two cans of DERV.

by Thomas Putnamster 21st

City Gent

Bowler, briefcase, suit and brolly
Brogues, braces, loads of lolly
Through the crowd they strut and run
To the office, not much fun
Phones are ringing, typists buzzing
Faxes whirring, meetings starting
In the pub a hasty snack
Then the office, "must get back"
Phones still ringing, meetings ending
Letters written, now need posting
Bowler, brolly off the stand
To the tube, paper in hand.

by Nicholas Buenfield 2JWF

My Onomatopoeia Poem

Crack, crack went the egg on the shelf!
Ding, dong went the door!
Split, splat went the custard on the mat!
And here comes some more !!!...
Splish, splash went the duck in the pond!
Boiiing went the spring !
Ping, pong went the stretchy band!
And there's still a lot more to sing !!!...
Rat a tat tat went the letter box!
Bong, diddy Bong went the drum !
Crash, Bang, Wallop went the pile of books!
There's only one more to come !!!...
Drip a drip, drip went the water tap!
Creeeeeeeeek went the floor!
Whirr, Whirr, whirr went all the cog wheels!
And I'm not going to tell you any more!!!!

by Alison Smith 2H

THIRD YEAR

Four very different poems but each possessing considerable power.

The imagery of "The Angel" is its strength and the first verse is particularly memorable. I look forward to reading more of Esther Franklin's poetry.

I was moved, also, by the compassion evident in Ben Ferguson's "Children of Courage"., To have watched a T.V. programme, seen beyond the 'entertainment' and entered so fully with the feelings of the participants, shows considerable maturity.

Rhyme and metre are not always easy to achieve without distorting the sense of what the poet wants to say. However, Hayley Ayres manages to overcome these problems remarkably well in "Autumn" with its excellent description of a fox, a robin and a deer in the woods. I particularly liked the foxes' "cold copper stare" and the description of Autumn leaves as "red and gold cast offs". Finally, "I Sit Rigid with Tension" deserves its place for the feeling it conveys of the unbearable existence of victims. All bullies should be made to learn it by heart.

The Angel

Running like the wind he came,
Feet like snow, hair of flame,
The world will never be the same
Since the shining angel came.

Talking like a storm he spoke,
Telling tales to the many folk.
Some were about the magic oak,
That brought him here to help our folk.

Soon he'll have to say Goodbye
And shimmer back into the sky.
The world will never be the same,
Since that shining angel came.

by Esther Franklin 3F

Children of Courage

The excited preparation for the big night begins,
They put on their brave faces,
As the T.V. make-up artists prepare them for the crowd.
They sit before the staring prying eyes.
They hear people whispering behind their backs,
"Ugly, Unlucky, Rejected, Deformed."
They whisper,
The brave expressions are fading,
They feel so vulnerable, A girl tells her tearful story,
She speaks of things that we believe could not happen,
Her story ends,
She goes off stage,
Back to her life,
Back to her daily painful, dreary, bravery.

By Ben Ferguson 3

Autumn

A fox rustles through mounds of thick, ochre leaves
Mist curling in front of his face as he breathes.
He sniffs for a time at the crisp Autumn air,
And fixes the woods in his cold copper stare.

A robin pipes boldly his loud joyful song
Telling the tale of a Winter that's long
And hard for the birds as they all soon will know
That food's not so easily found in the snow.

A deer now lifts up her fine, delicate head
From the water she's drinking to search up ahead
Her ears pricked to catch and suspicious sounds
She instantly leaps off in effortless bounds.

All that seems left in the woods are the trees.
Their red and gold cast-offs are blown in the breeze
And as they're tossed up to the grey Autumn skies
They are silently observed by three pairs of eyes.

by Hayley Ayres

I sit rigid with tension
Nobody to sit with me.
Everybody quiet,
Waiting to see my next move.
My next move.
What is it to be?
Walk away. Pretend not to hear them.
Hope they'll leave.
But they don't.
They follow,
Haunting me with their vicious remarks,
Tearing me to pieces.
Feelings?
Yes, I do have them
But THEY don't realise.
With every jibe
Another part of me snaps.
Somewhere, surely there has to be a place for me.
A place where people will leave me alone.

"It was only a joke"

A line I am used to
A line I have grown to hate.

I leave, my thoughts buried deep
I am shut off from the rest of the world.
Unable to tell anyone of my hurt inside.
I wonder when it will end.
If it will end.

FOURTH YEAR

There were a number of poems on the First World War in this group, most of them well conceived, but in 'Conflict' Sara Baxter has managed to combine many of the strands which make up the misery of war. She suggests the soldiers village home, the fear of being handed a white feather, the physical discomforts of the trenches, the hollowness of the whole endeavour. Rhyme and metre are used to good effect, and the poem ends movingly; 'Only my world shall weep tonight.'

In exuberant contrast 'Dance' has your feet tapping; the pleasure Saffron Gamblin takes in dancing - whether disco or ballet - is infectious, a delightful poem. 'Death For Religion' deals with the shooting of prisoners during religious conflicts and with its strong images - 'Facing a wall of anguish' - has considerable impact. I admire Simon Bennett's ability to recreate the scene so vividly. In very different vein Matthew Humby's 'Pens' will strike a chord with everyone who has ever sat - or taught - in a classroom. Matthew has studied his subject well and extols the endless fascination of the ball point 'dragging along the paper' - 'love to see it die slowly'. The ring of truth here!

CONFLICT

All of my village, they urged me
To leave my world, my family
Which I had loved, to join a war
And fight with those both rich and poor
Who did no longer understand
The words of hope, or warmth of hand,
Remembered only in their land.

I sang your songs, I won your war
And I feel bitter to the core.
I struggled on between the fire
Through muck and water, tangled wire,
Till, wounded, I lost all endeavor
Abandoned in atrocious weather.
And all, to avoid a small white feather.

Of all the world which urged me on
And sang the patriotic songs;
Of all the world which made me leave,
Confused, but hopeful... and deceived.
O fall the world which chanted "fight!"
Only my world could see my plight,
And only my world shall weep tonight.

Sarah Baxter 4KG

DANCE

Dance is world of movement and sound.
You can make your body glide or bound.
First there's Ballet with grace and flow,
With crisp turn and pointed toe.

Dance is word of rock and soul.
It can make your heart leap and your senses roll.
Tap is fun and full of zest,
Beating out the rhythm in time with the rest.

Dance is a word which can tell a story
Or can make the dancer jig in glory.
There's Disco, hot and full of beat
With gyrating people with their frenzied feet.

Dance is a word of happiness and joy.
It can send you dancing with a boy.
The Ballroom dancers with poise and grace.
Are all sliding and swirling with smiling face.

Dance is word of drama and song
It can give you pleasure which will be lifelong.
Country dancers skip and weave,
If you start to watch them you'll never leave.

Dance is a word of groove and style.
It makes you feel great mile after mile.
Breakdancers spin all over the floor,
As onlookers clap and shout for more.

I love to dance it's dramatic, excessive.
I can fling myself round and be really impressive.
Go over the top, dance with passion or rage.
Who needs an audience, a script or a stage?

My actions speak louder than words even yelling!
And my feet needn't bother with grammar or spelling.
To those who say words mean more, I say blow'em!....
I'd rather be dancing than writing this poem!!

Saffron Gamblin. 4DD

DEATH FOR RELIGION

Sands littered with brass gunshells,
Footmarks varying in size indicating ages,
Orders such as "NEXT" given without guilt or compassion.
Mocking of beliefs with barbarous consequences.
Adding to the eventual anti-climax.

Who merited death because of religion?
Facing a wall of anguish
Odours of bodily fluids,
Memories of blood curdling cries
Embracing both mercy and terror.

The bloodstained stone of the wall
Showed nothing but pain and suffering
Patches still fresh and damp
Seep lackadaisically into the desiccated bricks
In the slow heat of the day.

Simon Bennett. 4DD

PENS

Pens, writing pens.
Dragging along the paper
Tearing and ripping
The tiny molecules.
Running out when not supposed to.
The temptation of chewing the end.
Breaking the fin nib.
Throwing it about to and fro.
Landing with a hard smash.
Crippling the inside.
Love to see it die slowly.
Rubbing and blowing it.
To get the last
Ink out!

Matthew Humby. 4DD

FIFTH YEAR

'Angels in the Attic' is a beautiful poem, delicate, evocative, imaginative. Lines of verses linger in the memory:-

'Whilst nightly pours
The silent ladled light'

or 'The Angels cry insomnia with their saltless tears'. Superb!

The delicacy of 'Angels in the Attic' is very different from Timothy Ball's vision of Armageddon in 'The Mushroom'. I particularly like the way he moves from a global view of nuclear destruction, to the particular:

"A priest is on his knees holding a wooden cross,
But not even the tools of his trade can prevent
Armageddon".

Mortality is also the theme of 'Where lies John Smith' with its echoes of Gray's Elegy, Catherine Blundell suggests the ephemeral nature of man's life and the speed with which even the memory of that life can fade. Nicely done particularly addressing the reader as 'John' in the last line.

Finally, Simon Kimsey's 'If Only Tonight We Could Sleep' is light weight but attractive in its dream like quality, and, unlike 'John Smith', its desire for the moment to last forever. I enjoyed the Angels who would 'Bury us deep in his Velvet Arms'.

ANGELS IN THE ATTIC

The angels in the attic
Are crying,
Unheard,
Cursed with eternity.
On their beds of straw
They lie,
Chill-limbed,
Heady,
Pale
And stiff,
Whilst nightly pours
The silent ladled light
Of moonbeams
Through the panes,
The dusty diamond-panes,
Dirty outside,
Never cleaned.
The angels cry
Insomnia
With their saltless tears.
The rain sheets down
Outside.

Wendy Parker

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THE MUSHROOM

The spore is launched on the mind
To travel far and reproduce.
A mushroom grows,
Consuming everything in its path:
People, whole houses, even streets.
Nothing is too large to be sucked into its hungry vortex.
In a multitude of colours it blossoms and blooms,
Rising triumphantly it reaches higher and higher towards the heaven
As if to claw at the Creator Himself.
Only He is safe, still an infinite distance away.
As hurricane winds tear buildings from their foundations,
A deep rumble crescendos as it ricochets off monolith landforms.
Ready-brek men stumble aimlessly around ruins in desperation,
Illuminated by an eerie glow.
A priest is on his knees holding up a wooden cross,
But not even the tools of his trade can prevent Armageddon.
Living matter becomes wiped out in a flame of vapourisation.
The tempest dies,
And then,
Nothingness.

Timothy Ball 5LF

WHERE LIES JOHN SMITH?

Where lies John Smith?
A man of years.
Who left this world just hours ago
Where likes he now?
And who regrets his life of woe?
Where lies John Smith?
Millers Apprentice
So cruelly crushed under a horse's dray
Who cries for him now?
And who wishes he'd lived another day.
Where lies John Smith?
The parson's heir
Who became a missionary in foreign places
Who prays for his soul?
And looks for him in strangers' faces.
Where lies John Smith?
Brave if not honest
Who went to soldiering at sixteen
Few wait for this return still yet
The years have passed, he's not been seen
Forget not the men of past and present
Anonymous now they are gone
Although your life is young and pleasant
You'll be forgotten one day, John.

Catherine Blundell 5KQ

IF ONLY TONIGHT WE COULD SLEEP

If only tonight we could sleep
In a bed made of flowers
If only tonight we could fall
In a deathless spell

And Breathe..
And Breathe..

If only tonight we could slide
Into deep Black Water.
Then an Angel would come with
Burning eyes like stars.
And bury us deep in his velvet
Arms.

And the rain would cry as our
Faces slipped away.
And the rain would cry,
'Don't let it end.'

The following poems gained
Certificates in the National
Poetry Competition run by
Cadburys.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

This is the year, I swore,
My poor old teddy would go,
No more late nights,
My nails would grow.

This is the year, I swore,
All my pocket money would last,
No more pigging out,
I'd go on a fast.

This is the year, I swore,
I'd keep myself nice and clean,
No more smelly B.O.
My hair would gleam.

That was the year, I swore,
My resolutions would at last succeed,
No more impatience,
A brand new me.

But that was the year, I swear,
Absolutely nothing worked out,
I grew fat and thick,
And more blackheads did sprout.

THUNDER

A warm humid night,
Ten twenty and still not dark,
Peaceful and calm.
The thunder starts.
Softly at first.
The noise growing louder,
Tearing through the dim sky,
Soon peters out to nothing.
The rain comes down.
Not hard.
Slowly and carefully.
Drip by heavy drip.
Drumming rhythmically on my window.
Drumming me to sleep.

Giles Edward James Hammond. 3KG

BADGERS

Shy creatures are badgers
With skin like seals, rough and strong.
Snouty are their noses
With a tiger striped face,
Black and white like a humbug.
Eyes gleam, button shaped and jet black,
Fearful as a deer.
It silently patters along
With It's dwarf like feet
Back to the sett with it's family waiting.

Katherine Price 2KG

City Gent

Bowler, briefcase, suit and brolly
Brogues, braces, loads of lolly
Through the crowd they strut and run
To the office, not much fun
Phones are ringing, typist buzzing
Faxes whirring, meetings starting
In the pub a hasty snack
Then the office, 'must get back'
Phones still ringing meetings ending
Letters written, now need posting
Bowler, brolly off the stand
To the tube, paper in hand.

by Nicholas Buenfeld 3WW

