

**THE  
MOUNTBATTEN  
SCHOOL**

**Poetry Festival**

**1984**



## The Mountbatten School Poetry Festival - 1984

Poetry, like music, is a very personal thing, so that any attempt at evaluating it must to some extent be a personal judgement; five different adjudicators could well arrive at five different "orders of merit". What is almost as certain is that if those five adjudicators each made a list of their "top ten" poems, their lists would be very similar. In other words, in spite of personal preferences, there are some qualities which the reader can expect to find in a "successful" poem. It must have something to say that is worth saying. It must say it in a way that makes use of the techniques of poetry - rhyme, metre, word-sounds and associations and so on, if it is to be truly distinguishable from prose; and all in all, it should provide the reader with an experience of some value.

We have no need this year to indulge in self-praise. In the "Cadbury National Exhibition of Children's Art", we not only had the unique distinction of having two prizewinners, Emma Crates and Roy Biddle (who won £20 each, and £50 for the school), while from other writers, Sarah Jones, Monica Wheatcroft, Katherine Goodwin and Lydia Smith received commendations in W. H. Smith's "Young Writers' Competition" and the school itself was commended on the quality of the poems submitted.

Reading and enjoying poetry is fine: making it - and in days gone by poets were called "makers" - is even better. My congratulations and thanks to our "makers" who allowed me the pleasant and difficult task of final adjudication.

H. N. Winkle

### OIKE!

I'm an Oike!  
I fink.  
Well that's what  
People call me -  
I fink.

It might be  
Because I go  
Round spraying things  
On walls like  
My name or  
Surnso for Surnso -  
I fink.

It could be  
The way I  
Walk or what  
I wear -  
I fink.

It might be  
My hair style  
Pink, yellow and  
Blue.  
If they make  
Fun of it  
I'll flatten 'em  
(Well jump on  
Their feet) -  
I fink.

Ian Wheatcroft 1H

### ONCE

"Once", said a Guinea pig,  
"I spent the summer days,  
Sitting in the corn fields,  
Amongst the Golden haze.  
I sat and watched the fishermen,  
Sailing in the sea,  
I sat and watched the young boys,  
Scaling every tree.  
Bees and birds and butterflies,  
Flitting from flower to flower,  
I sat and watched each one of them,  
For many a happy hour.  
"That," said the Guinea pig,  
"Is what I used to do,  
And it was such a lovely thing,  
A lovely thing to do!  
But now all I do is sadly stare,  
Into the white, hygienic glare,  
Of the laboratory room!"

Claire Sutton 1F

### MY DESK

Things are scattered here and there,  
A crayon, a paper with a tear,

Some books on astronomy. If you have time,  
Astronomy's the latest hobby of mine.

A letter from granny that's written in Dutch,  
A shoebox containing nothing much.

A comic that's tattered,  
A notebook that's battered.

Bookmarks with flowers,  
A pile of paper that towers.

Some scraps of card from a cereal packet,  
The beginning of a doll's knitted jacket.

If you have a very hard look,  
You'll probably see the guide handbook.

There's a case full of pencils and pens,  
And a dusty magnifying lens.

All these things on my desk you'll find,  
Unless of course, you are quite blind.

And somewhere on my desk my pen should lurk,  
I've got to clear my desk to do my homework.

Silvia Howard 16

## MY HEART

My  
heart is  
like a flame  
Full of  
desire  
For  
You, no other. It  
always remains  
the same. An  
endless breath  
of fire. For you  
but there is  
another that you  
class higher.  
One day you  
will discover.  
That I am the  
one, no other.

Clare Mayo 2H

## I WONDER!

I wonder, I wonder, how I could be  
A Sailor on the deep blue sea,  
Travelling to foreign lands  
Of coral reefs and silver sands!

I wonder, oh, I wonder why  
I'm not a spaceman in the sky,  
Flying fast through outer space -  
Giving meteors a race!

I'd love to be a mountaineer,  
Climbing hills both far and near-  
With big, brown boots and ice axe, too,  
I'm sure it's not too hard to do!

A racing driver sounds to me  
The sort of thing I'd like to be,  
Breaking records here and there,  
With people cheering everywhere!

But how could I be all these things?  
I'll just see what the future brings?  
And while I'm waiting I will be just plain and ordinary me!

Mark Sharp 2H

## ARCADEMANNOMIA

250 not a bad score  
(I glance at the boy on the machine next door)  
O'no look out, looks like he's scoring more!  
380!! Could I beat that,  
With Martian invaders coming  
ZAP!  
ZAP!  
ZAP!  
With red and green lasers  
You blast your way  
through their defences  
All through the day.  
Was it this morning I came in here?  
Or was it last night? I can't hear  
Myself think  
In this noisy racket.  
BANG - KERBOOM!  
What's that say?  
O - the ship of DOOM!!  
I don't want to play these arcade games.  
I'm getting out.  
To play real games.

Thomas Lee 22

## Nuclear Bomb

Maggie says it's a must,  
Labour want it bust,  
All the same,  
I'll bite the dust.

Maggie says let it be,  
Labour want nuclear free,  
All the same,  
I'll bite the dust.

But Reagan does agree,  
The earth should be bomb free,  
All the same,  
I'll bite the dust.

Andropov sees something wrong,  
In making lots of bombs,  
All the same,  
I'll bite the dust.

The leaders will learn their lesson,  
When the population will lessen,  
All the same,  
I'll bite the dust.

Colin Brown 2Y

## CRIPPLED CHILD

Why can't I get up Mum?  
The sun is streaming past the trees,  
Into my bedroom lair.  
And now and then I catch the breeze,  
Soft and salt with the morning air.  
And the curtains faintly whisper,  
Of how the wind does blow,  
And where the birds are singing most  
Alas, they whisper low.  
I strain to catch the sounds of life,  
that flutter from our road.  
They float away from hearing,  
Elusive, unbestowed.  
And the clatter of the childrens play,  
That's drummed onto my ears.  
Leaves me sad with hazy memories,  
Of those carefree distant years  
Oh why can't I get up Mum?  
And be just another child,  
With that child's unchosen future,  
Running free and running wild.  
The sun is streaming past the trees,  
Into my bedroom lair.  
And sometimes when I catch the breeze,  
Reality takes flight,  
And I'm walking on the windy shore -  
The only soul in sight.  
With the shingle rattling in my shoes,  
Fine droplets in my hair,  
And I'm talking with the sombre sea,  
Which sighs at all my cares.  
Or I'm cycling down a gusty hill,  
Or walking in the rain.  
Or wending through the woods, until,  
My dreams dissolve again.  
And I'm left to live with feeble hopes,  
And withered stalks for legs.  
That fell upon the slopes of life,  
Before the race began.  
Why can't I get up Mum?  
No, don't tell me why just leave  
And if you hear frustrated screams  
Just smile and say "it's teens"  
For I'll not live as you have lived,  
So leave me to my dreams.



### THE NORTH WIND

The wind will breathe  
"Freeze, freeze;  
All water freeze  
And hold the snow  
Against the glow  
Of paling sun,  
Its warmth to shun.  
Freeze, freeze;  
Freeze the leaves  
Of summer days  
And autumn haze.  
Freeze; like the frost,  
When day has lost  
Its golden light  
Then cold the night  
And cold the air.  
The frost will bear  
A cloak of ice  
To numb the life;  
All life that's weak  
And shelter seeks."  
Words on the breeze  
Whisper "Freeze,  
Freeze, now freeze!"

Katherine Goodwin 3J

### THE CHURCH

This ancient place  
Has weathered all the years.  
Through war and peace,  
Frustration and hypocrisy.  
It climbs towards the sky, its destination heaven  
But never quite fulfilling its hopes - ends in  
A perfect pinnacle.  
The bells have tolled throughout the years  
For grief, for celebration.  
But there comes a time  
When they will toll no more.  
Figures of gentry have trod this path,  
Their servants in their wake -  
A black trail of obedience.  
Now only a scattered few  
Wear out the tattered pews.  
And there comes a time when  
This ancient place  
Will stand isolated.  
Proud, but yet forlorn.  
And they will think -  
A fine example of Norman architecture,  
A library full of history books,  
A peg to grasp at wildly  
In times of dark despair.....  
This ancient place,  
That's weathered all the years.

Lydia Smith 3G

### The Silent Sea-shore

A silent sea-shore lies forgotten,  
Distant memories slip away,  
Like well-worn pages in a book,  
Night's creeping shadow closes in.

A silent sea-shore lies forgotten,  
The sea ripples against the rocks,  
Sea-gulls utter their dismal cries,  
And waves lap gently on the shore.

A silent sea-shore lies forgotten,  
A breeze whispers across the ground,  
The moon's silver shadow ripples,  
Glistening on the grey waters.

A silent sea shore lies forgotten,  
Neglected sand-castles stand forlorn,  
Together with entangled thoughts,  
And memories from distant times.

Donna Cooper 3G

### Felo de se

After fued  
feel the cold  
Dark room  
Lost control.

Length of rope  
Fisherman's knot  
Hangman's noose.  
Broken chair,  
Breaking hearts.  
Cracked ceiling,  
Cracking mind.  
Damp walls,  
Damp cheeks.

Ended life -  
Broken neck  
Broken wife.

### FRUSTRATION

An unfinished sentence,  
in an unfinished book,  
A questioning thought,  
A puzzling look.

A story that's untold.  
A twisted nursery rhyme.  
A clock that's wasting hours,  
slowly running out of time.

The world goes round in circles.  
Two add two makes five.  
My head is full of numbers.  
Am I still alive?

Frustration is the sentence.  
Frustration is the book.  
I can't explain the thought,  
because I'm too afraid to look.

Jocelyn Dimmer 4G

## THE MUSIC

The last echoes of applause  
Roll around the dome of the auditorium.  
Questions and answers.  
A pregnant silence,  
As a stillness overflowing with apprehension,  
Falls on the awaiting public.  
The musicians are poised,  
Wound up  
Like clockwork toys ready to unwind.  
Let the music flow out of their bodies.  
Tension - Adrenalin.  
In an instant  
A perfect cascading sequence  
Of chords bursts forth  
A magnificent, powerful body of sound,  
Perfect melody.  
Sweetly gently crescendoing harmony  
Flows to an exhilarating climax,  
Powerful, potent, melancholy.  
Conductor commands the musicians,  
Squeezing out every drop of musicality,  
Swelling, diminishing,  
Each a maestro  
Moving as one body.  
Warmth, force augments  
To the peak of perfection.  
Timpany rolls, fortissimo strings.  
Excitement becomes infectious,  
A trio of clamorous chords  
Complete the perfectness.  
An awed silence  
The audience is spellbound.  
The musicians are left  
With a feeling of patriotism.  
The bubble of silence bursts.  
A wave of acclamation  
Fills every man's ear.  
The performance is over.

### ALONE

Bye mum! Bye dad!  
The shout rings out in the evening air.  
I'm not scared to be on my own,  
But it would be nice to have someone to share  
The joy of being at home alone.

What was that?  
Who did I hear?  
Nothing-well, only the wings of a bat  
And that's nothing to fear.  
(During the day, I hasten to add.)

I look at the clock -  
Only one hour more.  
One hour to listen to the fairies mock  
And for the wind to howl and press at the door.

Claire Allen 4J

### LIFE IS A FUSE

Life is an endless ball of string  
Knotted, confused and tangled,  
Life is a fuse.  
Light the string to light the fuse  
Cut the string to cut the fuse.  
Cut the fuse and life is gone!

Life is to be, to know, to have,  
Life is a light that sometimes fails.  
Live the fuse,  
Know the fuse,  
And love the fuse.  
Fail and you're dead!

Life is a fuse, to be handled with care  
One slip and danger.  
Life is a limit of passing time  
Of fun, of joy, of sorrow,  
But when the fuse dies  
You die!

Life is a junction of paths to take  
To wealth, to love to happiness.  
But beware of the fuse,  
Beware of the match,  
Beware of the end,  
And death!

Angela Moore 4T

### LIFE IN EAST BERLIN?

6.15 a.m.

I woke to hear a gunshot,  
Murdering the silence of dawn.

I looked out  
Of my uncurtained window  
To see a guard  
On the wall

Aim

And take another shot.

I followed the line of his fire -  
Some poor bastard  
Was lying in the river,  
Dying.

Then the shot  
That he would never hear  
Killed me,  
A little more.

Roy Biddle 4Q

### THE TIME-KEEPER

The old, creaking staircase winds itself  
back into time.

He sat, hunched, a motionless figure.  
Just his fingers moved,  
Twisting in and out.  
Adept, perfect, harmonious.  
Minute fragments pass between them,  
Piecing together,  
The jigsaw of engineered perfection.

Time was born in this room,  
Created, produced and constituted,  
The ability to record and remember it.  
Yet time itself stood still.  
It lay on its back and refused to move,  
And nobody stopped it.  
He just sat and repaired his time pieces.

Sarah Jones 4H

### THE MOON IS FALLING

The man sits in his chair,  
And looks at his room, where  
Nothing has changed since he was a boy.  
The fire is still lit, the ornaments still  
Dustless on the shelf.

But outside - outside the moon is falling.  
The world the man knew has gone.  
Horses are warm-breathed. Now,  
Clanking, roaring, alien machines  
Cover the village with fumes -  
Yet, the village is a town.

To ask for four and six of cigarettes  
Is to demand mocking looks from the baffled  
shopkeeper.  
To go to the picture palace is to say "Eyes down."  
The moon is falling.  
To touch his wife, is to reach out at the empty space  
beside him in the bed.  
The moon is falling.

Geoffrey Moody 5H

### A COLD WIND

A cold wind blows over the water,  
Ice approaches the land,  
The hearts of men grow colder,  
The weapons of war are manned.

Laughter is hidden,  
The twinkling eye dulls,  
Friends shy from friends,  
As they wait for the cull.

The sad grow sadder,  
The bad grow worse,  
The sane grow madder,  
The mad, the reverse.

The living are dead,  
The dead remain so,  
The spirit of man,  
Falls as the snow.

A ray of hope for mankind,  
Lies in a weak winter sun,  
But treachery reigns,  
The end has begun.

The sheep are slaughtered,  
The shepherds aren't there,  
A child dies alone,  
There's no one to care.

Life, love, compassion,  
Even hope and truth cease,  
Leaving only the echoes,  
Of a distant, summer of peace.

Christopher Burrows 5K

SOUTHAMPTON - DAWN

An aircraft - torpedoed precisely overhead  
Has inadvertently polluted the urban dawn.  
An obtrusive white cord gathers the stained sky.  
Penetrating sunlight reflects off limestone blocks  
Erases a crisp, parched frost.  
A sparsely cuminolimbus done encases the awakening body.  
Through irregular rented buildings,  
Of past bomb-raids, rising damp, signs,  
And another king's era;  
The unchanging quaternary peel denotes the hour.  
Repairs on the clock tower are equally persistent.  
The parks of the city:  
Visual sanctuaries in the intricate city organism,  
With their statues, dropping-encrusted, and their  
Intoxicated tramps;  
Shoppers walk the paths, oblivious to the greenery;  
Blinkered by the need of time.  
The high street - north to south;  
Citizens flow along its arteries,  
Each a corpuscle of varying destination  
Resting occasionally in glass fronted organs of commerce  
The bells ring nine - all is as one.

Paul Collingwood 5Y

VANITY

The ornamented spectacle positioned her barely flattering posterior,  
On a carefully dusted and specially chosen seat,  
Her grandeur and intoxicating presence,  
Causing the intended heads to turn tamely.

The egotist immodestly unpacked her facial apparatus,  
Dabbing and altering unnecessarily.  
After this pretentious assurance of her valuable perfection,  
The self-admirer blatantly sought and received more attention,  
Taking on the form of flattering remarks resulting in false diffidence.

How full of her own importance she was,  
Her vain pride, swaggering charm and sensationalism.  
There was no self-deprecation, or retiring disposition,  
She was not self-effacing, unassuming, only conceitedly self-esteeming.

What, I wonder, is her true character, the content of her brain?  
What would remain after a heavy fall of rain?

Julie Witts 5K

### BEYOND

Pebbled wall beyond the ditch, resistant  
To the harsh, sweeping wind  
Rattling the wooden gate, disturbing  
Tufts of grass intermingled with rotting weeds.

Frozen air pierced by shafts of  
Brilliant light, diverging from a gold medallion in the sky,  
Touches, faintly, blades of jade  
Enhanced with a drop of dew.

Creatures flutter, scurry and hover  
Seeking and tending, survival for each.  
Colours to guise or colours to scare  
Thorough, organised and numerous in pairs.

Bent like his crook, an ancient figure emerges  
Armed with a purpose, resolute and strong;  
Turns the corner and climbs the hill  
Expands his lungs and whistles a tune.

Mud and oil collect  
In the grooves in the tarmaced road.  
Heavy wheels, gathering speed, attempt to  
Flatten and smooth,  
Succeed in polluting the life in the hedgerow  
Beyond the pebbled wall....

Maria Wheatcroft 5H





