

THE RAGLAN SCHOOL 1928-1949

21ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

From Mr F. E. Geary

Headmaster 1934 - 1941

Mr F.E. Geary, B.A., M.Ed., now Divisional Education Officer of the North-East Division of Essex, was Headmaster of the Boys' School from 1934 to 1941. He has sent the following contribution with a request that it be "thrown into shape" for the Raglan booklet. However, it has not been edited! We think that those who knew Mr Geary and the work he did for Raglan will enjoy reading his words in their original form.

FROM MR F.E. GEARY, HEADMASTER 1934-41

Nearly seven years at Raglan and well over one thousand children in that time – and now, a series of memories of one of the happiest periods of my life.

A memory of a young staff; as a youngster of 33 I was the oldest man on the staff. A group of young people who gradually grew together as a team, linked in a common cause and in the ties of personal friendship.

A quick glimpse of pre-war Sports Days when Bush Hill Park turned out in full force for the social event of the year. What hats and frocks! And sometimes one feels sentimental as an old tune brings back a Raglan Concert.

An epidemic of chicken-pox and giving a quick daily glance at 400 boys to spot the spotty ones. Developing one single spot myself! Four small boys all bitten the same day by a dog, and all in the same place!

The happy days of school journeys to Dovercourt, the Isle of Wight and to Belgium when teachers and pupils really saw each other for the first time. The sight-seeing, the ragging, the occasional anxiety – a boy late for a meal of down with a chill. The shockingly bad football team which eventually made good.

A daily routine. The fresh young voices at Morning Assembly. The regular slog at lessons, the relaxations of lighter tasks. Visits from parents – long, short, fat, thin, rich, poor, over-anxious and neglectful, bellowing and benign – a curse from one and a carpet from another on the same day. The vast majority a delightful crowd out to do everything possible for the good of the school. One made many personal and lasting friendships.

The school cap. I never cared for the R.S. on it and in its place introduced the school badge as worn on the blazer – one of my few lasting achievements!

Evacuation. 400 children in 17 villages. Each time we visited the whole bunch we travelled 150 miles; and we had pledged ourselves. It was an anxious time.

Back at school and War at its worst. An oil bomb fell over night: fifty yards from the main school – thank God. Occasionally on an infrequent visit back home I am stopped. "Do you remember Frank N____. He was at Raglan under you. I am his mother."

Well, there it is. Raglan as I see it now. If you are part of it, a parent, a child, cherish it. Get all you can from it, for it has much to give – and put back full measure, pressing over.

A very happy coming of age and thank you, Raglan, for the joy you gave to me.

F.E.G.