

The following images and text were kindly scanned from a **1971** issue of *The Elizabethan* by

**Nick Dean**

## Common Room Changes

The end of the last summer term saw the loss of four valued members of staff, who will be remembered with affection for many years. Mr. John Pearce had joined Queen Elizabeth's (then in a **new** building off Queens Road!) in 1932 as an assistant Master teaching Scripture. By 1936 he was Housemaster of Underne and in 1950 he became Second Master. It is not known to many, that it was he who started Hobbies Day back in 1933 or that he was the backbone of the Dramatic Society for more years than he cares to remember; we are all aware however that he was the School Librarian and that he built up the library from a mere three thousand books to thirteen thousand, and that his generosity both in advice and material help, was often embarrassing, overwhelming and known only to the recipient. His administration of the School has left its mark and is a tribute to him: we remember him as a munificent Christian.

Mr. Jack Covington joined the School in 1944 as Senior English Master and quickly founded the Elizabethan Union and began to produce the School Play — he clocked up seventeen productions before handing over to others. To describe him as an 'academic' is, in this anti-academic world, asking to be misunderstood, but he was an academic in the best sense of the word: widely read, not just in English Literature, owner of a photographic memory, (is it true that he knows Henry IV part 1 by heart and taught it at 'A' Level without having a text in front of him ?!) and possessing an enthusiasm few could match, he engendered awe and probably a little despair in his pupils who realized they could **never** catch him out: we remember him as a stimulating teacher.

Mr. Derek Fry (O.E.) was above all versatile: to watch him picking up and imitating a local dialect while on a School Journey, often to the wonder and amusement of the 'natives', was to realize his strange genius. In languages, music and drama he showed an uncanny flair and gave great service to the School, while at the same time made sure these serious activities were punctuated by uncontrollable laughter caused by his brilliant mimicry.

Mrs. Vaughan-Thomas was a lady of charm and grace who earned the deep respect and affection of all who met her: We trust that the links she has with the School will continue. Mr. P. Livingston left us for the very different world of Junior School, while Mr. P. J. Deacon went to take up his ambition to join the Church.

We wish all our leavers a happy future whether it be in retirement or new situations and thank them for their service.

Mr. John Finnett died tragically at the end of a long illness he had borne with almost superhuman effort, and our sorrow at the time has now mellowed to an even deeper respect than we had for him when alive. As a Classics Master with connections at Oxford, and a stalwart organiser of Chess and the Elizabethan Union he gave a great deal to the School and we mourn his untimely passing.

To replace those who have gone we welcome no less than thirteen new teachers. Mr. R. M. Jones, our new Second Master, has had a great deal of experience as Senior English master before coming to us and is the author of several books. He has kindly agreed to

take Mr. Fry's place in the Dramatic Society and we look forward to his first play in the Spring. The Rev. J. Bloice-Smith has taken over as Senior Religious Education Master, while the Mathematics Department has been joined by Mr. P. J. Gebbett. Mr. G. L. Graham is an energetic Rugby player as well as a craftsman, and joins Mr. Gould teaching handicraft; Mr. A. F. Harlow is teaching Scripture, Mr. F. W. Mumby, Mr. B. E. Stimpson and Mr. McBride Modern Languages and Mr. S. A. Richey English. It is a great pleasure to welcome ladies and Mrs. M. E. Weale and Mrs. E. S. Dunpeth are taking Geography and Music respectively. Mr. Terry has not been mentioned in these columns before, but he is so well known that he needs no introduction—if Q.E. boys are losing weight it is largely due to Mr. Terry's Gym periods. Mr. Pearce is teaching Biology and Mr. Birchall, Art. Mr. J. G. Morris has added 'Director of Studies' to the title he already held as Senior History Master, and Mr. H. G. Thomas has taken over from Mr. Jack Covington both as Head of English and Housemaster of Stapylton.



Jack Covington, B.A.  
Head of English and  
Stapylton Housemaster  
1944 - 1971.



John Pearce; assistant  
Master 1932 - 49; Second  
Master 1950 - 71; Underne  
Housemaster 1936 - 71.

The following article from the the *Barnet Press* was kindly scanned and sent in by

**Jas Cowen**

# Two stalwarts retire from Q.E. School

TWO long and successful teaching careers came to an end this week, when the summer term ended at Queen Elizabeth's Boys' School, Barnet. Two of the school housemasters retired after a total of 66 years at the school. They are Mr. John Pearce, the second master (deputy head), who has been at Queen Elizabeth's since the school moved into the present premises in 1932, and Mr. Jack Covington, who joined the staff in 1944.

Both masters have played enormously important roles in the development of the school, particularly in the post World War II years. Their work, both in teaching and in the school's extra-curricula activities, has been largely responsible for Queen Elizabeth's successful reputation in many fields.

Both men have also been deeply involved in wider aspects of the teaching profession, becoming leading members of national educational bodies. Mr. Pearce served for 22 years as honorary treasurer of the School Library Association, and Mr. Covington's service to the Assistant Masters Association culminated five years ago in his appointment as chairman for a year.

## Up the ladder

Mr. Pearce, known to generations of pupils as "J.P.," joined Queen Elizabeth's "at the bottom of the ladder" as a teacher. In 1936, he became housemaster of Underne House. Then in 1950 he was appointed second master.

As a teacher, Mr. Pearce imparted to his pupils knowledge of scripture, mathematics, English and French. As a housemaster, like Mr. Covington, head of Stuypton House, he imparted kindly advice, sympathy and, at times, necessary correction!

The head of the religious education department, Mr. Pearce was president of the school Christian Union. He was also the originator of the annual hobbies exhibition, which he started in his second year at the school.

But Mr. Pearce will probably be remembered most for his work as school librarian. He took the library over in 1936 and completely reorganised it. He then set about expanding and improving it. As a measure of his success, the library now contains a well-chosen 13,000 books. In 1936, there were just 3,000.

Mr. Pearce's services to the School Library Association go back to its very first days. He was one of the 60 or so founder members, and was the first secretary of their North London Regional Group. In 1938 he was elected to the committee, and was re-elected year by year until 1944, when he was appointed acting treasurer. Four years later he became the treasurer, and held the post for 22 years.

In his 32 years on the committee, including the 26 during which he bore responsibility for the association's finances, Mr. Pearce saw membership grow from about 200 to over 5,000, income from a little more than £100 to over £20,000, and the association's status from that of a small band of committed enthusiasts to a body of national standing.

Outside school, Mr. Pearce, who lives at 9, King's Road, Barnet, is a diocesan reader, known widely at churches throughout the diocese of St. Albans. Aged 62, he sees the pending re-organisation of the school as a convenient time to retire.

"When you see yourself becoming senile, it's time to retire," he told our reporter—a remark typical of this ultra-modest, dry but warm-humoured man, for whom senility is many years distant.

## Literature

Mr. Covington, who celebrated his 62nd birthday last week, was head of Queen Elizabeth's English department from the time he joined the school, and his love of the English language and of English literature spilled over from his lessons in the classroom to the after-school hours.

In 1946 he founded the school Elizabethan Union, a society for debating, discussions, and lectures by distinguished visitors. He served as chairman and then as president, and developed the union into a debating society of unusually high quality, highly successful in inter-school competitions.

After World War II, Mr. Covington revived the school dramatic society and produced 17 successive school plays from



RETIRING this week after long teaching careers are Mr. John Pearce (left) and Mr. Jack Covington, both of Queen Elizabeth's Boys' School, Barnet.

1947 to 1963. In the role of producer, he showed almost professional skill, and succeeded in drawing excellent results from his casts of necessarily raw amateurs.

Born in Gosport, Mr. Covington won a scholarship to University College, Southampton, in 1926 — after the examination was postponed by the General Strike! He graduated two years later, and then spent a year in the education department. As a student in training at Taunton's School, Southampton, he came under the guidance of Dr. Horace King — now Lord Maybury-King—who later became Speaker of the House of Commons.

## A minor

In 1929, he was appointed to South Shields High School. He recalls that the headmaster there jokingly questioned whether his signature on his contract was valid, as Mr. Covington was then still legally a minor! He was in fact only 20 at the time, and as a sixth-form teacher, had to teach English to pupils just a year or two younger than himself.

In 1931, he moved south to Hertfordshire and spent 13 years at the newly opened Letchworth Grammar School, before moving to Queen Elizabeth's 27 years ago.

Mr. Covington's work with the Assistant Masters' Association began in 1929, when he joined

Hertfordshire branch and in the Hertfordshire Joint Four.

In 1954, he was elected executive member for Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Northampton, and he remained in this position for some 10 years until his election to higher office — that of vice-chairman of the association.

## Chairman

Service on a number of committees followed, and in 1966, Mr. Covington was elected to the association's most important job — that of national chairman. Since then, his work for the association has not lessened. He is currently a member of no less than 46 committees, and chairman of five of them.

Throughout his time at Queen Elizabeth's, Mr. Covington has lived in Letchworth—at 3, Field Lane. "When I first took the post at Barnet, I looked for a house here but I still haven't moved," he said.

Left a widower three years ago, Mr. Covington has two children, who both graduated from university, and three grandchildren. His retirement this year is perhaps a little earlier than would have been the case without Plan C. "It is probably wise when a major change like this is taking place to let my successor in at the beginning," he says.

And his views on Plan C itself? "It can be good," he says.