

Gardening Club

During the year the membership numbers have dropped, as usually happens—we always have a large number of new members in September!—and the faithful ones left have done all the hard work of weeding and tidying.

In spite of many apparently unconquerable difficulties, we have also been helped in some ways: III German boys very kindly made us a wheelbarrow and the more ardent gardeners have been allowed to go into first-sitting dinner to enable them to devote more time to gardening.

The shrubs so kindly given by Mr. Farmer and the Parks department have flowered and should do really well next year. Many members have brought and planted many bulbs and plants.

We would like to thank everybody who has helped us with plants, advice and encouragement—we always want more of these, especially the plants. (It is rumoured that the timely gift of a crocus bulb once turned away wrath most effectively!)

S.M.

Natural History Society

The Natural History Society was reformed in June 1958. Sixty people joined. Due to this late- re-forming, the Society's activities were limited by the time available.

A committee was formed and during the meetings many original and useful suggestions, concerning the future activities of the Society, were discussed.

Details of an ecological survey of a portion of the school grounds were worked out by the committee and work has begun on this project. The main idea being to show the distribution of plants in a certain area by dividing it up into quadrants; then drawing an accurate vegetative chart of each quadrant. When new charts of the same area are again drawn up after a lapse of a few years, the progression and retrogression of different plant species relative to their surroundings will be evident. Ecology is a comparatively recent study and a great number of things have to be discovered and can be discovered by the natural historian in such a way.

A quiz was held. The questions asked and answers given, showed the keenness and interest of the members. The meeting was enjoyed by everyone, especially the members of the winning team who were awarded a box of peppermint creams as a prize.

Three rambles were arranged, but a typical English summer prevented two of these from taking place. The one that was held started from North Hertford and followed the courses of the rivers Bean and Rib. A collection of insects, plants and aquatic material were collected and a bird list was made. A tired muddy but happy party arrived back safely, stimulated, we hope, by their experiences.

A museum was started and members were asked to gather specimens during the summer holidays. A number of specimens have been received although many more are required. The committee feel a nicely arranged

collection of specimens should form a backbone of the Society and is something of which it may be justly proud. Making a collection is also a way of showing a little appreciation for what the School has done for you.

K. WHEELER, *Secretary*.

The Chess Club

At our annual general meeting at the beginning of the school year we decided that playing in the local Schools' Chess League led to un-sporting tactics to win matches instead of playing the game for its own sake. We had fewer matches than by staying in the league but we managed to play schools we had never played before. These new fixtures proved most enjoyable as well as producing exciting matches. The juniors had their best season in the club's history, winning all matches. The senior team though poor in comparison still won more matches than were lost.

The teams were selected from:

Seniors: Hammond (*Capt.*), Waller, Wonacott, Dunwoody, Michaelson, Cohen, Celnikier, Grim.

Juniors: Johnson (*Capt.*), Drewith, Hill, Tomkin, Beardon, Mottram, Minter, Price, Green, Weyman.

Our sincere gratitude is due to Mr. Finlay for the many ways in which he has helped the club, and to the girls who prepared refreshments for home matches.

P. JOHNSON, *Secretary*.

Astronomical Society Report, 1957-8

After having been closed for repairs since May 1956, we were most grateful when, early in 1958, the Observatory was handed back to us, not only repaired, but resplendent in a new coat of paint. We now no longer have to carry a heavy telescope out onto the field, and set it up on its mounting during cold winter evenings.

During the year parties of members again attended the Gresham Lectures in Astronomy and Society members have been present at all the British Astronomical Association meetings at Burlington House. Three of our members have also become full members of the B.A.A.

Meetings of the Junior Section were held on Saturday evenings and during the dinner-hour. The Senior meetings were held on the first Friday in the month at 7.30 p.m. We shall be pleased to see any old Minchendenians at the Senior Meetings.

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all members, both Junior and Senior, who have helped with the running of the Society, particularly Keith Godfrey and Ludwig Celnikier, who were joint secretaries last year, and our President, Mr. Booth, whose help and interest is always a source of encouragement to members.

A. S. HOLDEN.