

Then we must have equipment. Again, we are grateful that we do not have to ask Mr. Brown, "May we have . . . ?" but it is far more likely to be, "Could you use . . . ?" from him. Consequently, the men on Bag Duty (lovely term) have the chance of losing only the best equipment.

Then we think about the players. It seems odd that not so long ago the question seemed to be, "Who will make up the team?" whereas now it is, "Who must we leave out?" Indeed, last year we had a complete shadow XI, led by Chris Stanley, bowling his unders.

In those earlier seasons it seemed to be Andrew Coles who carried the batting, swagger and all. What a player, and what a temperament. When captain, he would be quite likely to declare with himself on 49, departing from the crease with that grin.

Then we gradually became better balanced, with more players who could make their specialist contribution. Thus a couple of seasons ago, we were very proud to have supplied two members of the County team simultaneously, namely the Steve already mentioned, and John Haycox. This was the first time this had happened for ages, and how thrilling it was.

It was around this time that our fielding, for which we are justly famous, reached a peak from which it has seldom departed. When fielding is mentioned, Ian Smeeton's is the first name to spring to mind. Not only was he a superb cover/mid-wicket, but he loved telling people how much he actually enjoyed it. So, you juniors, it isn't just a chore.

Close catchers have been more difficult to find, but it was most unfortunate that the Police Force apprehended Russell Tunstall after only one season in the 1st XI. He had taken some incredible catches on his way up the school, but one at De Aston last year was the finest I have seen on any cricket ground. Another player who was with us for one season only was John Way, whose seamers were so accurate, subtle and controlled.

We have had some fine captains in recent years, who bear increasing responsibility for the game throughout the school. Simon Carter was a tremendous help last year with his most able coaching of junior teams, and this tradition is being continued. Long may it remain, because one demonstration shot by a 1st XI captain is worth far more than anything a coach can say. This enthusiasm is contagious, encourages everyone to work together, and ensures present and future 1st XIs of the essential ability and pleasantness which makes senior cricket such a delight.

Well, that is nearly senior cricket, but not quite. I must mention the contributions of cook supervisors, mothers and girl-friends in helping with teas, of fathers with umpiring and coaching, the dedication of scorers, the support of successive Headmasters, and the forbearance of an understanding wife.

If I have one request to make, it is to the Clerk of Weather. Could he please arrange the weather on match days to be quite definitely good or bad, to spare the agonies involved in making speculative decisions as to whether to go ahead or not. And could the G.P.O. provide a telephone with a built-in cooling system which prevents it becoming red-hot around 12.15 p.m. on match days.

Yes, cricket is a great game!

I.C.S.

RUGBY

'Heave! Heave!' There is great concentration in the scrum, sixteen soaked bodies piled together like a large heap of muddy laundry. The ground is muddy and every time you plant your studs in the earth and push, your foot loses its grip and slides you back for several feet. The rain pours down your neck as you try to push the other team into the future. The ball hits your foot and slides out of the scrum, which resembles a huge thirty-two-legged spider. The scrum-half shouts 'Break!' and the sixteen first-formers emerge. You pick up the ball, but it is wet and slippery and slides from your hands. You bend down to recover it but somebody very large and heavy runs into you. Suddenly you find yourself wallowing in the mud. You get up and run down the field, using every ounce of strength in your body. Somebody in front of you throws the ball with extreme force into your stomach. Three yards to go. You make a desperate leap for the ground, fall heavily and discover that you've scored. The whistle goes and yours is the winning try!

SIMON DOBBS, Form 1



Arts

MUSIC

A report on school music during the year tends to become a chronicle of certain events heard in public. However natural this may appear to be, the most important parts of our activity lie in the fact that music is going on all around us day by day; stated in other terms, it is the preparation of such events which is of prime importance. In this respect both staff and boys have given an immense amount of time, talent and trouble.

In the Autumn term three events may be noted — the annual Commemoration service, the inter-House Music Competition, the Christmas service.

At the first, the Choir performed Brahms' 'How lovely.' Having lost a largeish number of experienced tenors and basses at the end of the previous term this was an encouraging start to the year, with promise of better things to come.