

# 501

## A Pageant of the Ancient School of Ermysted

The script and research for the Quincentenary Pageant had taken two years in itself and had resulted in there being no Dramatic Society production for a year. Then, in August 1992, posters advertising the pageant and requesting boys to audition for roles in the play were put up.

A huge number of boys volunteered their services, not only for parts in the play, but also for stage management and lighting crews.

The auditions took place during several lunchtimes and Mr. Clough “Ye Bosse”, drew up a shortlist of the boys chosen for the performance.

These boys were called back one afternoon for the allocation of parts, but for the first few of these sessions, we didn't seem to get anywhere. Finally, Mr. Clough wrote up the cast list from scratch virtually and the rehearsals began.

More afternoons, lunchtimes and weekends were spent with the hard rehearsing of the actors, the choir and the orchestra, and we seemed to have something like a play forming. The rehearsal timetable was revised three times and as the rehearsals progressed, problems were located and the script hurriedly rewritten by Mr. Clough and Mr. Paley. Mr. Scott organised the music department and started the choir, orchestra, brass band and the numerous soloists practising their various pieces for the performance.

The rehearsals seemed to run fairly smoothly, apart from minor misfortunes such as Philip Lewis slipping backwards off the stage and numerous members of the cast dropping out at the last moment.

During the rehearsals numerous scenes were rewritten including the Quiz being dropped and the Detention Scene being rewritten by Mr. Paley. One of the choir/band pieces was also dropped.

Soon the time for the performance was but a week away and the atmosphere was becoming more and more fraught. There was a rush to get all of the costumes ready on time and to have all props ready also. There were last minute problems with the lighting and small problems with the script and people not knowing their lines, but it was basically ready. After two years of writing and re researching, and six weeks of rehearsals, we had a show to put on.

It came to the First Night. Everyone was a bag of nerves. With all of the costumes ready and the lighting out, all that we had to do was get it right.

After performing, and reflecting on the night's work, it had gone quite well after all. Of course, there was some slight hitches: people forgetting their lines, missing their cues, me breaking part of my bassoon during a performance, and Barnaby Watson forgetting who he was; but overall Mr. Clough seemed fairly satisfied, and the second night didn't seem nearly so daunting.

The high points for me of the performance were Ben Whittaker as Judge Jeffries, Philip Lewis as Stott and Howard Goodall as Capstick in the Detention Scene. On the final night, the play was filmed and Mr. Clough made his speech. Nick Dobson presented him with a bottle of wine.

So, all that time had come good. The pageant was a huge success and attracted a large audience. It was a worthy tribute to the 500th anniversary of Ermysted's.

I would like to thank the following people:— Mr. Clough for writing, directing and producing the pageant; Mr. Paley for helping him and rewriting some of the scenes; Mr. Scott for organising the choir, orchestra and brass band to provide the musical side of the pageant; Mr. Davies for organising the lighting, stage management and props; Mrs. Muhlemann and Mrs. Scales for organising the make-up and costumes; Mr. Grant for doing the research for the pageant; and finally all of the rest of the staff, pupils and parents who made the pageant the success it was.

Here's to the next 500 years!

A.B.J. (2W)