

# THE BLANDFORD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARUNDEL  
STREET SENIOR SCHOOL EVACUEES  
AT MARTIN, FORDINGBRIDGE

DECEMBER 1939

## FORWARD

We have entitled this the “Blandford” Magazine, since “Arundel St Boys Senior School” has ceased to have any corporate existence. But it is, none the less, the Christmas issue of our old magazine, compiled by the little band of evacuees – now resident in Martin, Hampshire. You will scarcely recognise it in its new guise so woefully shrunken, but this being war time and we far from home, we have to economise on materials.

When we were evacuated Fate led us to Martin, and Fate could scarce have been kinder.

Picture a real English village, the houses, mostly thatched, straggling along three quarter mile of road; every third house a farm; beyond the houses, on each side, fields, just fields, reaching away to the downs that rise in every direction; the nearest railway six and a half miles away; the nearest regular bus service one and a half miles away on the Blandford-Salisbury road.

Remote! Isolated! “How awful”, people say. “What do you do with yourselves?” It would fill this book to tell you what we have “done with ourselves”. We spent our first week enjoying the beauty of the surroundings. The next week we started “school” in the village hall, known as the Blandford Hall, thanks to the kindness of the owner, Mrs Hibberd and the Trustees. And forthwith we started on a survey of Martin – geographical, geological, industrial and historical. For the next few weeks we were busy surveying, measuring, drawing plans, writing essays, making models, visiting the downs and museums to search out all the history of the district.

It was a task of absorbing interest and was supplemented by journeys to Salisbury that were both pleasant and profitable educationally. When the dark evenings came, we opened the hall for recreation on three evenings a week, and some of us are becoming quite expert at darts and table tennis, not to mention Draughts and Ludo.

Besides these organised efforts, the children have found interests of their own in the farms and cottages where they are billeted. Far from finding the country dull, they have found their days full of activity and interest.

Their healthy surroundings, the peace and safety of this lovely place, good country food, early bed-times and happily spent days have wrought great improvement in their health and physique. Many are obviously putting on weight and the freedom from illness of any kind has been remarkable. Parents doubtless have many reasons for taking children back to the dangers of Portsmouth, but consideration for the welfare of the children can scarcely be one of them. The future will show whether evacuation was wise or necessary, but at any rate, the evacuees here are receiving the benefits which will affect all their lives – the sort that cannot be got-out of books or bottles.

I could write reams on this evacuation business, its merits and demerits, and the difficulties we have had to face, but space forbids, and I might end by being arrested for using bad language or sued for libel, slander, defamation of character, sedition and goodness knows what else - all at once!

I have left it to the children to write of Martin and their experiences here, but cannot close these remarks without paying tribute to the good people of the village. In every direction the children and staff have met with kindness and care. This evacuation has been described as ‘the greatest social experiment of our time’. The villagers will probably echo, “You’re telling us!” We have had our troubles and difficulties, but experience has shown that these were not very terrible when tackled with determination. Now we feel that we have put our troubles behind us; the children are undeniably happy, and if they lack some of the advantages of life at home, they are receiving compensation of lasting value.

I have to thank Mr Johns for the most enthusiastic help in all that we have done or attempted to do. Together we have plotted and planned like a couple of conspirators to keep our group happy and contented, and to maintain our entity as a part of Arundel St School. Mr Williams, our head teacher, has had no enviable task in backing us up. But it’s a long lane etc etc, and we are beginning to feel really settled at last.

What does the future hold for us? What will happen at Christmas? Shall we be here to produce another mag. Next July?

We cannot answer these questions – but we can hope. We send Christmas greetings to all past and present scholars of Arundel St School, and to all readers of this magazine.

And in case any are tempted to feel sorry for us, “exiled” in the out-of-the-way spot, let us say that we are very much alive and kicking, having a good time, and getting on nicely thank you, with a good job of work. Come up and see us some time – but don’t come often!

J.L.Jordan.

## QUOTATION!

“I am told there are people who do not care for maps and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the Standing Stone or the Druidic Circle on the heath; her is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see or two-pence worth of imagination to understand with.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

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The next might well have been written about Martin :-

“Unnumber’d cottages and farms  
That have for musing minds  
Unnumber’d charms.”

George Crabbe

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## RUMOURS!!

1. That Dick Byng last saw his feet about three weeks ago.
2. That Bob Bleach likes a good blow.
3. That Mrs Kerly is not quite sure whether her house is a common room, inquiry bureau, first aid post or universal supply stores.
4. That the householders of Martin will not store quite so many apples this year as they usually do.
5. That W.I. stands for Wriggling Imp.
6. That some boys love their Wellingtons so much you can't part them!
7. That mud sticks most down Tidpit way.
8. That the song of the moment is "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes."
9. That some of us wish that Martin was still more "off the map" than it is.

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## OUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS

By Myrtle Morris. Aged 13.

Being an evacuee here in Martin has not meant that we have suffered a loss of education. We have been for several walks with the teachers, observing the different places of interest. Also on two special occasions, Mr Jordan has arranged with the local bus-man to take us to Salisbury, first to the Cathedral and museum, and secondly to Old Sarum.

On the fourth of October, a crowd of us boarded the local bus and started on our first journey, full of expectation. It is rather a straight road to Salisbury but just like a switchback. We alighted at the bus stop, and were divided into two sets, the boys and the girls.

Our set then made its way towards the famous Cathedral. On first catching sight of it, we were astounded to see this magnificent building towering up into the sky, and the

beautiful lawns surrounding it. The first thing that impressed us on entering was the height and length of it. We went all around the Cathedral, including the chapels, cloisters and chapter house, and saw many famous tombs. After this tour we came out and had lunch nearby, after which we visited the shops, where some bought cards and some games.

Our next place of interest was the museum in St Ann's St. It contains many specimens of interest. Two of these are "Hob-nob" and the giant which goes by the name of St Christopher. There is a legend attached to these two, that on special occasions they were, and are now, carried through the streets. Lately they have been used in the Jubilee Coronation and Armistice celebrations. When we had seen so many interesting things, such as window-fulls of people dressed in old-fashioned clothes, we came out after an interesting two hours.

The Second Educational Journey took place on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>. The morning was spent at the cathedral and the afternoon at Old Sarum.

On our arrival at the cathedral we were met by the vergier, who escorted us to seats in the nave, and we listened to the morning service, which included the reading and singing of the litany. At the end of the service the Head Vergier met us and showed us around. While this was being done we heard the choir practising, and it sounded beautiful, especially when they sang the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd", conducted by Sir Walter Alcock.

We learnt that the spire was 22 inches out of truth. This was because it was put up after the tower had been built. This caused the arches to slope inwards under the extra weight.

After we had been shown around the Cathedral and many things had been explained we found our way back to the bus and had dinner.

About an hour and a half was spent in visiting the shops, and later we boarded the bus and went for a mile-and-a-half ride which brought us in sight of Old Sarum.

A walk round the outer earthwork was then taken. It gives a beautiful view of all around, the fields below looking like a patchwork quilt. On entering the Inner Bailey the first thing of interest we saw was the site of the old cathedral and cloisters. The one-time drawbridge is now converted into a modern bridge

which has been erected on some of the stone that the drawbridge once stood on.

The Custodian showed us around and pointed out all the different items of interest, and told us that just before the last war there had been excavations which had brought to light many old relics, of coins, weapons, eating vessels and parts of archways.

Many walls are still to be excavated; but the kitchens were found, and in them ovens and by them a great stone bench. There is a room built inside, which contains things dug up by the excavators. There are among these parts of stone archways which have been pieced together and heads carved of stone; one of these heads had its mouth open and a frog in it; another showed a mermaid twisted about a snake.

The lawns around the walls are kept beautiful and when the Government has money enough to spare a fresh excavation will be carried out.

We had our photograph taken by Mr Johns as we stood at the exit between two sections of the old walls, then we once more crossed the deep ditch, by means of the bridge, and so eventually got to our bus again. We got in, and so were taken, after a most enjoyable day, back to Martin.

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## EVACUATION “SHORTS”

Concocted by our Smart Seniors

S.O.S. = Sausages on Sunday or Sew Our Shirts.

A.R.P. = Aren't Rabbits Plentiful.

P.T. = Permanent Torture.

O.H.M.S. = Oh Hitler! Make Speed.

R.A.C. = Rations After Christmas.

B.E.F. = Beef Every Friday.

S.R. = So Restful.

A.F.S. = A Friday Social.

A.A. = All Alert.

N.C.O. = No Common Officer.

A.F.S. = A Fine Survey.

V.G. = Village Green.

B.B. = Beautiful Billets.

G.P.O. = Green Peas Often.

A.M. = Autumn Mornings.

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## DAYS ON A FARM

By Richard Byng. Aged 11.

I like it very much on a farm. And here are some of my farm jobs. I feed the chicken and fowls and collect the eggs. I go out every day to drive the cows in to the cowshed to be milked. On Saturdays I clean out the fowl-house and pump the water for the cows and horses. When I collect the eggs I have to look in the manger in the stable. I go with Mr Barter to the fields to take some water for the cows and horses. Then after the horses have had a drink they have a special harness for ploughing and dragging put on.

One day when we were harvesting we trapped a rabbit under a sheaf of corn.

Most of the farms are just starting sowing wheat for next Spring, because the ploughing and dragging is finished.

When the wheat harvesting was being done rabbits were very cheap because they kept coming out of the corn. If the shooters had been there, rabbits would have been no more than threepence each.

About 4 o'clock a lorry from United Dairies Ltd. Comes to collect the milk, so the farmers do the milking about 3 o'clock.

I mix the food for the pigs, then I go and feed them. I have many jobs to do on the farm but I enjoy doing them and still like farm life very much.

Editorial Note: If Richard's appearance is anything to judge by, farm life certainly suits him!

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THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS  
MARTIN

By Dennis Irvine. Aged 11

From original notes – made when the Seniors, under Mr Johns, paid a visit to the church.

Martin Church existed in Norman times, being built in A.D. 1080. The church then measured 24ft x 17ft. It had two doorways , North and South. The present church contains a Nave, Chancel, South Transept, North Chapel, West Tower and South Porch. In 1220 A.D. the West Tower was added: on the archway are two orders of Chamfer. The first window on the South side of the Nave was put in in 1290 A.D.; there are trefoil windows and a Priest's door, which is used for priests only. The East window dates from 1220. In 1390 the South Porch was built. There were two Transepts, but one was made larger and became the North Chapel. East of the S. Transept there was a window placed there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the roof was supported by a tie beam, King post and braces. East of the Transept was a chantry with a piscine and ogee arch, and a painted barrel roof. In 1560 a Squint was put in so that people could see the altar from the North Chapel. Near the North Chapel was a private pew with a five-light window. On the pillars was another set of Chamfers with a Cross cut in them. Outside the S. Transept was a sundial.

In 1450 the Tower was extended, and other buttresses added to the Norman buttresses already there. In 1550 a window in the North Side of the Nave was put in. The church is 85 feet high to the top of the spire. There are no flying buttresses.

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## OUR EMERGENCY SCHOOL

By H. Woodward. Aged 11.

In the village of Martin there is a hall, called the Blandford Hall, where we have our school. Inside the hall there are three rooms: The largest of the three is the middle one, and the other two are small. The senior girls and the junior girls are in the two small rooms. The boys are in the largest room. There are designs on the wall, which were painted by the children. We do the same work as we do at home, and do all our work on trestle tables. The girls do knitting and sewing in the afternoons. When it is time to go home at tea time we all help to clear up the room and pack up the books and everything else. Some evenings the master opens the hall for amusement, and we play games, darts and table tennis. In the largest room there are four lamps hanging from the roof, and two beams. Sometimes during the week we put the trestles against the wall and then we have gymnastics and physical exercise. We are very lucky to have this fine hall lent to us to carry on our education.

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MARTIN  
DRAINAGE AND HEALTH

By W. Woodward. Aged 12

Martin is a little village in the N.W. corner of Hampshire, nearly on the border of Wiltshire.

Until a few years ago the village suffered terribly from floods. But now ditches have been dug on either side of the road, and tunnels run under the road through the village to drain it.

The village is nested in a dell with downs surrounding it; that is why the water runs down towards the village. To the West like the Pentridge downs and to the East the Rockbourne downs. Though no stream runs down through the valley, the village has ample water supply. Most gardens in the village have a well. If some of the wells run dry, there is the village pump, which stands on the Cross, a green in the centre of the village. That will never run dry because it is bored down too far, where there is plenty of water.

Not many people in the village suffer from illnesses, because they are too well built by having country air always. Two doctors visit the village every week, but there is no resident doctor. There is no dentist in the village; if anyone wants a tooth out they must go to Fordingbridge or Salisbury.

Some people in the village have taps in their houses; but in these cases they have placed tanks on the roof, and water is pumped into them from the well, and flows down pipes to the taps. The same system is applied to rain-water. All country people use rain-water to wash in, because it is soft. Farmers have to be careful with the cows, because they get diseases such as foot and mouth disease.

Everyone ought to be healthy in the village because the air is so fresh and the countryside so open. The houses are spaced well-apart, and each has a large garden or fields around it.

There is no main drainage system for the houses, and no collection of refuse, so this has to be burnt. But as most houses have fires or furnaces always burning, this is easily done.

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## OUR GIRLS

I am so used to looking upon myself as part of a Boys school that I forget at times that we have both Girls and Infants with us, part of our little school at Martin, with their own respective teachers in the persons of Miss Jarvis and Miss Sandy, who have entered into the task of running our emergency school with every success. We poor males (meaning Mr Johns and myself) would have been hard put to it to take needlework with the girls or play at rabbits with the Infants. Thank goodness we had our two lady teachers to come to our rescue.

At one time we had quite a considerable section of Senior Girls, and they did jolly good work in the survey, working happily and successfully in co-operation with the boys. But alas! They have passed hence, (most of them), to "pastures new". We hope they are as happy as they were in Martin.

J.L.J.

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## On Windmill Hill

By Myrtle Morris. Aged 13

I stood on top of Windmill Hill,  
And gazed away to the West,  
And marked the Dyke that sprawled along  
The swelling down's low crest.

My mind went back to ancient times,  
To days of long ago  
When Britons gathered in their might  
To meet their Saxon foe.

I saw them struggling up the slope  
To breast the rampart steep,  
The combat raged along the ridge,  
Men fell back in a heap.

And then across the valley wide  
There came great shouts of glee  
For Britons once again had won  
A glorious victory.

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## MY BILLET AT MARTIN

By Thelma Woodward. Aged 8

Martin is a nice quiet place and it lies just along one street. It is nine miles from Salisbury and six miles from Fordingbridge. There are not many buses going go and fro. There are two shops, a church, chapel, school and village hall, where we have our school.

When we came here in September there were lots of flowers, but now there are very few. Most of the leaves have fallen off the trees. It is November now. There are not many apples left on the trees. There are all kinds of berries – spindle, sloes, elder, hips, haws, privet and black bryony. There has been much wind and rain lately.

I am billeted at Mrs Haines' and it is very nice. There is a very large room in the house and we have four bedrooms. In the evening we go to club and have games. On Saturdays I go out for a walk until half past twelve and then I go home to my dinner. I have been here, in Martin, twelve weeks to-morrow, November 24<sup>th</sup>.

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## MY BILLET IN THE NEW FOREST

By Alfred Hore. Aged 13.

For the last two months I have been living in a large house with five acres of land joined to it. Our neighbours were Mr Dean and his wife and his two daughters living on a large farm on our right and on our left Miss George lived on a farm called Bracken Hill, and that was a very large farm for poultry.

The lady of our house was Mrs Field, and she had two daughters, Audrey and Margery; we had a maid named Dorothy and a gardener named King and we made friends.

And near our house we had a Roman burial ground. Many wild ponies came by our house and if a careless person left a gate open they would wander into our woods, then into our garden and trample down the flowers. Some ponies wander down lanes and roads, and the country people call them "Lane Creepers".

Then one day we had a telephone message from Mr Schoon, our billeting officer saying that we were going to be moved to a village named Martin, and we were very unhappy, and were going to go back to Portsmouth, but we changed our minds. When we got to Martin we did not go much on it, as it was not open country as we had lived in before, but we are getting more used to it now and we like it better, as we have more school, and we have a club in the evenings to go to and that gets us out of the housekeepers' way.

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## MARTIN DOWN

By Robert Bleach. Aged 13

Martin Down is a swelling down of chalk lying to the west of the village, and runs parallel with the main road.

It has an historic Romano-British encampment, with great earthworks, including the famous Bokerly Dyke.

This has a very interesting history of the early English people and their enemies such as the Saxons, Danes and Jutes.

We know all this because in about 1898 Col. Pitt-Rivers excavated many parts of the Dyke and rampart, and most of the things he found he put into a museum in Farnham.

Some of the things he found are: coins, Roman pottery, bronze ring, tools, and razor, and flint weapons such as arrow heads and scrapers. An iron key found is thought to be Romano-British.

But the most interesting thing about Martin Down is the great Dyke already mentioned, a deeper ditch with steep sides rising to a rampart, wandering along the crest of the downs for seven miles. It was built in Romano-British times, about the year 600 A.D., as a defence against the Saxon invaders pouring down from the north. They could not penetrate from the South for a great forest region lay there. Bokerly Dyke stretched across a gap in the forests, and behind it the Britons took refuge after their defeats at Charford and other places. Many fierce fights must have taken place along the crest of the Dyke, and from the relics dug up we can imagine something of the life of those living behind its protection. Its sides are still steep, but now it is the home of thousands of rabbits.

A few years ago, farmers used to go to Martin Down to shoot, but the owner of the land suddenly "put his foot down" and went to court about it. The farmers lost the day, and were fined, so now only the keepers shoot over the down.

Part of the boundary between Hampshire and Wiltshire passes along Martin Down, so that here one can step from one county to the other.

It is a fine place for picnics, and the views around are find.

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## COUNTRY LORE

To a townsman one of the most interesting sides of country life is the survival of ancient customs, the origin of which is sometimes obvious, sometimes lost in the mists of antiquity. Some of them linger on in this quiet corner of England. I am indebted to our good friends Mr and Mrs Main for most of those I mention;

Their old shepherd, for example, never “knows” how many lambs he has until their tails have been docked – bad luck to count them before. In some parts of the countryside hiring fairs are still held, when farm-hands wishing to be hired for the coming year attend – usually in October, when the harvesting is over – wearing a sign of their occupation. Thus a carter wears a piece of whipcord on the side of his cap, a shepherd a piece of wool on his coat lapel, a cowman a piece of hair from a cow’s tail tucked under his cap (hence the name “cow-lick” for a lock of hair coming down on the forehead.)

We were told, too, of the “mummers” visiting the house at Christmas-time, dressed in their quaint costumes and performing a sort of semi-religious play, having something to do with the triumph of St George over the Devil – probably one of the oldest forms of drama known in England. That was some years ago. There are no mummers now. Some farmers still celebrate “Harvest Home”, but the custom is dying out, and being replaced by less romantic but probably more useful appreciation in the form of bonuses for work well done.

We have learnt, too, some odd bits of information about the wild – rabbits will not use a run once a human foot has stepped on it; foxes raid a fowl-house by breaking through a hole or weak place in the planking and bite their victims in the head; a badger burrows under from outside the house and comes up through the floor (unless it is concrete!) and he bites his victims through the back. A badger does more damage in one night than a whole season of foxes.

Frequent expeditions with their hosts have given the boys a great deal of knowledge about rabbits, hares, stoats, hawks, rats and many other wild creatures.

J.L.J.

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## DISCOVERY!

It was on a Friday afternoon that the first discovery was made. The village of Martin, not hitherto known to us even by name, came into sight on that gloomy, wet afternoon. Then it was that we discovered the kindness of folk in this little cluster of cottages.

From that time our discoveries have been many and various. Once in a large school with many classrooms and having set lessons, the children are experiencing a small, but comfortable hall, and been given their schoolwork in an informal and "family" manner, which I feel sure has been a refreshing surprise to them, leading them to discover the invaluable but rarely appreciated facts that the gathering of information and the acquiring of interest in all things are enjoyable pursuits.

When in their new homes these boys and girls have not been slow to realise that in some cases manners bred in a town are not regarded with favour in a quiet village, and that gentlemanliness has very little to do with worldly wealth or rank.

With the fall of darkness on the village all seems to vanish. Then it is that these young people discover that the country child amuses himself indoors, not being able to slip out down the street to the cinema or the Fun Fair.

One day a lady said to me, speaking of her evacuee, "I told him he was not going out on Sunday unless he wore his best suit, especially as he was off to church." Yes, these children have discovered that Sunday is a day of rest, as far as is possible in a farming country; that it is different from the other six days of the week; that a visit to the church or chapel is still regarded by country folk as a necessary and wholesome duty.

And there have been countless discoveries made by the children when out on the farms: the age-old industries of hay-making, harvesting, and ploughing, with their associated pastimes of ferreting, trapping and shooting. It has been a great pleasure to see the joy in the faces of youngsters allowed to ride the farm horses through the village, or walk behind the plough.

Perhaps one of the greatest discoveries made by these children has been the meaning and value of comradeship. They have been on innumerable walks with me over the Downs and have found interest in the wild flowers and birds, the hill

encampments and ancient tracks. Some of them have been taken at the week-ends to the splendid museum at Farnham, twelve miles away, and spent hours absorbed in sketching and making notes for themselves. Examples of their painstaking study are to be found elsewhere in this Magazine.

It is to be hoped that such discoveries so far touched upon will lead these children, if they have not already done so, to the revelation of the secret of life in the country: its unhurried yet purposeful accomplishment of a task that needs forethought and care in its preparation and clear vision to appreciate the desired aim. Then they will understand something of the sureness and strength underlying country life, and maybe something of the tawdry cheapness of much that passes for worth in the towns.

H.J.Johns.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Fordingbridge

Dear Boys,

I suppose I ought to say “and girls” as well, because during the past three months we have been a Mixed Department.

I want, first of all, to congratulate you on your excellent conduct while you have been in your “homes away from home”. It is a great pleasure to me and the staff to hear such good accounts of your behaviour in the villages in which you have been billeted. Well, we expected it from Arundel St. boys and you have not let us down.

I am sorry that so many have returned to Portsmouth, but the reluctance of the boys to go home and the regrets of the householders that our boys were leaving shows that we have not outstayed our welcome.

To you all I wish a Happy Christmas, and hope that you will all remain here in safety rather than take the risks of returning to Portsmouth. Your masters will do all they can to make your holiday enjoyable as possible and I’m sure in time to come you’ll talk about your Christmas in Martin when other Christmases are forgotten.

And now, before I close, I would like to thank all those Billeting Officers and Householders who have done so much to make our stay so pleasant.

To all who have contributed in any way to our comfort and pleasure we say “Thank you, very much”, and when the time for leaving arrives I hope all you boys will say, as I was taught to say when I went to a party, “Thanks for having me.”

Once more “A Happy Christmas to All.”

Your friend and headmaster,  
F. Williams.

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## TRIBUTE

In thanking the good people of Martin who have made our time here so very enjoyable, we must not forget to pay tribute to our sole remaining helper, Miss Gladys Bleach. Though her own school days are not so very far behind her, Gladys has proved indefatigable in taking children for walks and assisting to run our “club” and has cheerfully performed any tasks allotted to her. She is deservedly popular.

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## FINIS

‘Well, well,’ as the pup remarked when he bit his tail for the first time, ‘this must be the End!’

The production of this, our first “War-time” magazine, has been, as was the Survey, a ‘labour of love’, and we hope it has given you as much pleasure to peruse it as it took us to produce it. While I have done the “execution” on the cyclostyle, the childrens’ contributions have been faithfully reproduced, and as the advertising gentlemen say “originals may be seen at our office.”

Mr Johns, Miss Sandy and Miss Jarvis join me in wishing all at Martin a Merry Christmas.

J.L.Jordan