

Reward Crowns Effort A tale of a school magazine and threadbare football shirts

by Stephen Miller

It's late 1951 and Emsworth County Primary School is still suffering from the aftershock of World War II. School funds are low and across the country rationing of many commodities is still in place.

The school was attempting to relaunch its first post-war magazine *The Emsworthian*, but with the funding issues and the severe shortage of paper in the country, this seemed unlikely.

In addition, the First Eleven soccer shirts which had been used since pre-war days were in a very sad condition and would not take to the field again.

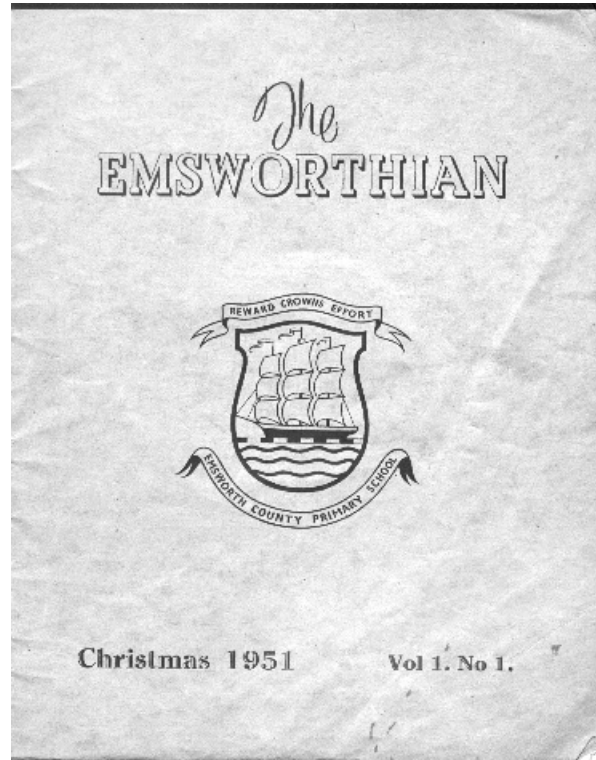
Tough times!!

But tough times breed spirit and resourcefulness, and the school set about tackling the problems.

Mr W C King, the school's headmaster, picks up the story in an excerpt from the first post-war edition of *The Emsworthian*.

"It is many years now since the School Magazine was published, and since publication momentous events have taken place, events which have unfortunately resulted in a scarcity of materials, more especially of paper.

The scarcity of this particular commodity renders the attempt to revive our Magazine a decidedly hazardous venture. Indeed so unsatisfactory were the prospects, that the members of the Staff at the last Staff Meeting decided almost unanimously that the postponement of the attempt was advisable, and but for the most generous offer from friends, who must for the time be nameless, to print the first edition free of cost, we should have felt compelled to abide by the decision of the Staff.



As it is, after some hesitation, we have agreed to proceed with the good work, but it must be emphasised that only the most enthusiastic support coupled with ready sales of the copies produced, will enable us to continue.

'REWARD CROWNS EFFORT' is to be our new School Motto. Let us hope that the success of our venture in reviving our School Magazine will prove that this motto has been well chosen.

Good Luck to the new EMSWORTHIAN."

So, despite all the obstacles Mr King won the day and the magazine was duly published at Christmas in 1951.

The resulting content provides us with another piece of the history of life and times of Emsworth and its residents.

It included highly entertaining sections on

- School Appointments (House Captains, Prefects and Monitors)
- The four houses of the School – Ross, Nightingale, Cavell and Lister
- Stories and Poems
- Accounts of trips to the Festival of Britain and various Festival Singing Events
- The Salvage Drive (to raise money for the First Eleven Football Team Shirts)
- Class Notes (Forms VII and VIII – Boys)
- Sports News and Results
- Results from the Gosport Handicrafts Festival
- Students' Artworks

So, *The Emsworthian* was published, but what happened about that little matter of the torn first eleven football shirts? This amusing extract from the magazine will help to explain and give an insight into the children, their humour and the background to life in Emsworth in the early 1950s.

“THE SALVAGE DRIVE

Early in the Term, two of our football shirts (bought pre-war second hand) ripped and proved unrepairable. In order that the First Eleven should be adequately clad in a manner befitting the school they represented, something drastic had to be done – and quickly.

Alas, when the Sports Fund was examined, the kitty was bare. No decency there! Money must be got – but how? Various suggestions were made – from jumble sales to robbing banks or getting lead off the School roof and selling it for scrap. And then came the great idea! What about waste paper? So and so in North Street gives 1d. a lb. Someone else in Westbourne Avenue goes one better – 16/6d a cwt. – and so the idea grew. Not only waste paper, but waste magazines, waste books, rags, waste apples, waste conkers and waste what-have-you.

The hunt was on. No-one was safe – all cupboards were liable to search. The Headmaster at once locked all his record books up and put various small rolls of paper in a safe place under lock and key. Mr Brooks locked his car regularly and counted his tools in a manner not heretofore seen. The caretaker counted the desks and examined the roof daily. School exercise books were checked hourly lest they be sacrificed to the cause.

Every morning from half past eight to nine, and from a quarter to one to one, queer processions could be seen staggering drunkenly towards the woodwork hut, the centre of operations. Some had sacks out of which they emptied books and magazines for sale, apples for sale, paper for waste, rags for waste, or conkers for sale. A pair of football boots realised 5/-. Small carts rolled up, some from even as far as Westbourne and Thorney Road. Parents and Parents of old students joined in the drive, and the pile grew. So did the money realised.

Scenes in the Woodwork Hut were reminiscent of Charlotte Street at its worst. “Roll hup!” “Roll hup!” Comics three a penny! Dan Dares 1d. each! Books 6d., each! Conkers 20 for a 1d.! Apples 5d. a lb! “Roll hup!” “Roll hup!” And while this was going on, Wooden and his gang were taking the waste-paper, weighing it, and putting it ready for collection.



Reward Crowns Effort. The School Motto of Emsworth County Primary School in 1951

Continued overleaf

Reward Crowns Effort continued



Teaching Staff at Emsworth County Primary School in 1951. Back Row 1st Left – Mr Stokeley, 4th Left – Mr Reid, Middle Row 3rd from Left – Mr King, 4th from Left Mrs King, 5th from Left Mrs Le Fevre

Three days after starting we had £6 and were well and truly launched. The following School Week – another five days – brought in another £13, and thus 8 working school days brought in a total of £19 – a gallant tribute to the unremitting work of so many all through the School.

On the strength of the first three days the Shirts were immediately ordered. They have arrived and the First Eleven are resplendent in navy blue shirts with amber sleeves and collars. They look very smart indeed and now we wait for some wins with which to celebrate the wearing of such finery. The shirts came to £16-15-0, leaving us with a balance of £2-5-0. We hope to use this in the near future to purchase stockings to match, half the cost being borne by the team members themselves.

Before closing may I thank all helpers and all who helped so energetically and practically in bringing so much cashable waste – £19 worth of it.

On behalf of the First Eleven I would like to thank the two gallant Senior Girls, Doreen Lander and Josie Greer, who gave up so much of their spare time to knit a gloriously bright green jersey for the goalkeeper. My thanks also to the anonymous donor of the necessary wool."

The article is anonymous but it does give us a clue as to who was behind the efforts.

The chief stall holders were listed as – (Brian) Sperring, (Brian) Wingham, (Ivor) Stephens, (Gerald) Middleton, (Fred) Tickner, (Derek) Leggett, (Leonard) Dorey, (Peter) Ayling, Marie Cripps who acted as a 'Fashion Expert' and (Malcolm) Wooden who led the waste paper collections.

The Christian names were not included in the article and therefore contain an element of guess work. I hope they are correct?

Mr D G Stokeley reinforced the value of the content of the magazine in his editorial column.

"The publication of this issue marks the re-creation of "THE EMSWORTHIAN". The work in it is largely the work of children, and I would like to thank them for their contribution.

I make no apology for the lack of adult literary style in the writing, which I claim is natural and expressive. As far as I know we are not blessed (or should I say cursed) with any budding genii in Emsworth County Primary School, but we have some four hundred happy, healthy, and sometimes naughty youngsters of whom we are proud."

Remember those football shirts?

A sobering footnote appeared in *The Emsworthian's* 'Sports News and Results' section. The score and an account (by Monty Reid) recording the maiden outing of the First Eleven in their resplendent new shirts appeared –

Friday 19th October (1951):- School (Emsworth County Primary) v Westbourne Senior School at Emsworth Park – Lost 1-7

Possibly because we were wearing our new shirts for the first time, and the ground was a bit muddy, we were afraid of getting dirty, and played generally as if this were a drawing room game or some nursery play, in which one had to be careful not to wake the baby.