



Founded 1125

# Historical Fiction Writing Competition

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## Legacy

Sunlight caught the school's red towers, casting a majestic shadow over the cricket field. Albert, an old student of the school, walked up the main drive. A wave of nostalgia washed over him, and he pictured his class, the first year to be taught on the new school site, crowding excitedly through the gates. Walking on, Albert remembered many years back when the site had first opened. His parents had believed he was a likely prospect for the first year, and so he was there at the gazebo when the Prince Consort placed the original stone. It had been a town wide holiday.

Turning the corner into the cloisters, Albert imagined yet more figures, this time not dressed in school uniform but in builder's attire and inserting bricks into the walls of the original school building. Albert recognised them to be the builders who had constructed the school under Waterhouse's supervision and plan. As he walked further into the school, he saw figures of men dressed more formally than the others, discussing matters that led Albert to recognize that they were men of Parliament, who, forced from London in a tragic plague, were gladly accepted into refuge by the schoolhouse. He walked on past the classrooms he had studied in, imagining his old teachers. The lessons they had taught him, both in their subjects and in the ways of the world, had been an important part of his life.

Albert saw 12<sup>th</sup> century monks, setting up the first foundations of a school in the abbey, then watched as the robes gave way to Tudor doublets, and the religiously centred education system gave way to one that encouraged and taught men to think freely, for the thoughts in their head to become their own. As he came past the room where he had used to have his history lessons, he chuckled as he remembered re-enacting the Civil War, and the healthy debate that shook the schoolroom when half of the class emerged as Royalists and half as Cavaliers, the royalist half giving a cheer when it was learned that the school had been used as a garrison for those soldiers who favoured the king.

He now turned his imagination to the future. He pictured new electric lights, pleased in the fact that the school could continue to teach after early dark in winter, without the use of dim candles. He envisaged electrically lit projectors, enabling teachers to show the class slides taken from far off places. He saw streams



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of younger boys filling the halls, chattering away to themselves with words he couldn't understand. He then imagined an empty school, all students and teachers driven out and away by some fierce war or deadly plague, leaving the school an empty carcass, with the life given by the people more than the buildings in which they learnt. But he discarded this, safe in the knowledge that the school would be eternal, a long-lasting beacon of hope, and the bright future to come.

By Adam RC (9C)