

my age had terrible nightmares about the war – but I slept peacefully. My father and mother believed that children should be protected from what might upset them. Of course, it was long before television so it was possible for a little girl not to know what war was. Today, with television, it is possible for young children to be very frightened by things that they cannot understand and before they can cope with them. I find that is very sad because I am very glad that I was protected – that I was allowed to be a child who did not know how terrible the world could be for some people until later, when I could cope with it.

But I knew that the war was bad. I knew that we had had to dig up our flower garden to plant vegetables and have chickens. There was a big food shortage. There was a big metal bucket that we put on the stove and into it we put all the peelings of the vegetables and the smell of it went through the house. That was what we fed the chickens on. Each of us had a little dish with a little butter on it and that was our ration – as much as we could have – for a week. It was very little and, when it was finished, there was no more. We also had very little meat, very little fish and cheese. But there was free milk and orange juice for all children and there were lots of vegetables and bones for stewing to make the lovely sauce called gravy – and, although bread was also rationed, we had bread and gravy if we were still hungry after the meal. I did not see a banana until after the war. There were only lovely brown and sticky dried bananas that were kept on a high shelf and I still remember climbing onto the shoe box to steal one at a time!

Clothes were rationed so we all wore other children's second-hand clothes. I had a girl cousin who was a bit older than I was and I looked forward very much to boxes of her old clothes coming. As children, we did not care what we looked like. It was wonderful. I see how clothes-conscious you are today and I think, "Oh dear! Please be children and do not think of fashions!" We had a cellar – part of the house that was underground and, when

the siren went – Vooo! Vooo! – to warn us that the German bombers – the airoplanes with bombs - were coming over, we hurried downstairs to sleep in the cellar, under the kitchen stove where it was quite warm. Sometimes I woke up, back in my own bed, and realized that my father must have carried me upstairs without waking me.

When I was 11 years old, our English teacher asked us to write a composition on 'War'. I told my father and he went to the phone to ring the school and I did not write that essay. War was not a suitable subject for his little girl! He always kept this picture of me by his bedside – little Angela with a small truck full of toys! I took my responsibilities towards my family of toys very seriously and my mother told me that, one day, she heard a big sigh beside her (*Sigh!*) and a small voice said, "Mummy, I have 16 children and I can't cope!" Now I have 325 children as my family – you! I still wonder sometimes whether I can cope! God bless you.



REFLECTING ON A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL EVENT

Assembly 68 – May 11th 2003

I congratulate you all on yesterday's event. What a lot of parents came! Most form teachers tell me that only about 4 parents in every class did not come – and that was excellent. If your parents were among those who did not come, please encourage them to ring up and arrange a meeting this week. Some people in Bangladesh think that teachers are dragons who eat parents for breakfast! Please tell your parents that our teachers are really very friendly and want to meet them so that we can work together with them, for your benefit..

Thank you for working so hard to make a nice *mela*. I was most interested to see the nice food that had been made. I hope the boys had helped to do some of the cooking also. One of the things that has happened in the UK as boys and girls have been given subject choices is that a lot of boys have taken up Cookery for an O level subject and they do it very well, because, of course, boys enjoy eating and are very fussy about food so they often make very good cooks! Our new room upstairs makes a lovely Upper Assembly Room, doesn't it? We really enjoyed those lovely extra fans. Thank you, Superintendent for hiring them, and we look forward to ceiling fans one day.

I was sorry to see just two things – one was that, even though the letter home had specified that you should come in school uniform, a lot of Junior School pupils came in their own clothes which was naughty. The Senior School were allowed to allowed to come in their own clothes as a special privilege - and very nice you looked too. We all tried to look nice and this is one of the things that it is right to do at a social function. It is one of the ways in which we show our respect and affection for each other on such occasions – to look especially nice. There are some people who think it is not cool to look as though they have bothered – but they are usually just very immature.

I think that the social life of this school is developing very nicely. Everyone looked as though they were enjoying themselves and I noted a lot of you being very helpful. It is interesting how having a good time DOES involve hard work but, afterwards, we say, "Phew! But that was fun, wasn't it?" Some of you have been writing on 'An unforgettable holiday' in your creative writing for me and, time after time, you told me that a really nice holiday needed someone to plan it carefully, not lose the tickets, work hard to pay for it and arrange that everyone in the group, especially if it was a big family group, arrived safely. Good things always need someone to do the planning. If we have an entertainment, people need to rehearse and that is hard work too.

Guitarists, do remember that you need a 'technical run-through' - the expression in the professional theatre for a practice with all the equipment, checking on plugs and mikes and where people are going to sit or stand. You played very well and please will you play your second song to us in Assembly this week some time?

Each time the school arranges something new, we are a bit worried. Will it work? This time, we had our Parents/Teachers Meeting on a Saturday, which was new; there was a *mela*, which was new, there was a cultural event, which was new and we did it all upstairs, which was new. We did not know if it would work but, thanks to all of you, it worked very well and I am sure that, next time, it will work even better as we learn to have a good time together socially.

I know some of you and your parents were very disappointed in your term and examination reports. Please do not be depressed. Do your best and work hard in school, using the teachers here to the full and always asking your teacher if you do not understand. At home, let your parents help you to plan your evenings properly so that you get a good balance of relaxation and home-work – and get enough good food and sleep. Then you will see better results at the end of this term.

God bless you.



SHARING WITH OTHER SCHOOLS LIKE OURS

Assembly 69 – May 12th 2003

Our Superintendent and I went to a meeting of DISA yesterday – Dhaka International Schools Association. It began about 2 years ago when the Superintendent of the American International School, Michael Popinchalk, was being interviewed for his job