Archive Department – From The Vault

The inaugural meeting of the newly formed Debating Society was held on a Saturday evening at 7:15pm on August 24th, 1907.

The Headmaster, Horace Dixon was elected President and Thorold Housemaster, Mr Thorold was elected Secretary. On taking the chair the President sketched out briefly the object of the Debating Society and the method of procedures.

The President instanced the Oxford and Cambridge Union Debating Societies as models of what such a Society ought to be and after pointing out the benefits to be derived from such a Society, he urged members not to be “deterred by nervousness or self-consciousness from getting up to express their opinions before their schoolfellows”.

The first motion to be discussed before the house was 'That too much attention is being paid in Australia to athletic sports'. This was moved by Mr Delpratt and opposed by Mr Walker. There also spoke the President, the secretary, and Messrs. Hides, Pain, Chapman, Raymond, Lascalles, Armstrong and McConnel. After the mover had replied, the question was put to the vote and was supported 31 for, 21 against.

The Headmaster was very pleased with the results of this, the first debate, and the intelligent interest displayed by the school.

The second debate did not go as well and was attributed to the bad choice of topic ('That the present system of Library taxation is harsh and ought to be abolished') and the larrikin-like tactics of the opposition and the deaf ears of reason from the powers that be. The President summed up by saying "Though the opposition had numbers on their side, they evidently had not the courage of their convictions to come forward and talk reasonably on the matter." The vote was 53 against to 9 in favour.

Debating continues to thrive today with over 100 boys and 15 staff involved.

The earliest known Debating photograph is the Debating Team in 1964.