

Braziers Park Programme

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BRAZIERS PARK SCHOOL OF INTEGRATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

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CHARGES

Members and Associates

Friday Dinner to Monday Breakfast	£2 17s. 6d.	£2 10s. 6d.
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Saturday Tea to Sunday Dinner ..	£1 11s. 6d.	£1 7s. 6d.

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Experimental Dance and Drama

"THE SCENE is a market-place in an Eastern city. A Youth, full of an enjoyable bewilderment, stands in the centre, obviously a stranger. A group of market-women and flower-girls make fun of him and form a dance round him. This is broken up by the cavalcade of a notability. As the commotion dies away the Youth is approached by the Tempter, a suave and opulent gamester and intriguer who has been watching him. The Tempter leads him in turn to a party of drunks, to the harlots, and to the gamblers. In each group he is welcomed riotously, becoming the centre of attention and flattery until finally, his money squandered, they all turn on him. Famine strides through the mocking crowd; all except the Youth and the Tempter fall dead. The Youth tries to revive a young harlot whom he loved, but his evil companion is concerned only to rifle the dead figures. Struck with horror, the Youth sees the bodies come alive again in the form of swine which he has to feed as they herd round him. Then he has a sudden feeling of revulsion and remorse. He comes to himself and, at the moment when he drags himself away, the swine are transfixed and remain in rigid gestures as he turns to walk slowly homeward.

These are the main episodes of the second act, in dance and mime, of *The Prodigal Son*, as produced by a group who worked under the direction of Eva and Glynn Faithfull on the week-end of May 16-19 at Braziers Park. The role of the Prodigal Son was taken by Ann Burdess and that of the Tempter by John Liddell. Part of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" was used for the music. The working out of the first and third acts, and the composition of a spoken "Prologue in Heaven" and an epilogue, have been left over for more detailed study during the Braziers Summer School.

The discussions of the text and its interpretation by the group during the week-end proved to be very valuable and were moreover an essential part of the dramatic treatment of the story. This integration of an artistic with an intellectual approach to social relationships—a problem of which Braziers has as yet only touched the fringes—showed promise of interesting developments. During the week-end the main theme of the drama emerged as the transcendence of human values and of the continuity of group life over the exact distribution of goods and over retributive justice.

In order that there should be an opportunity during the week-end of combining spoken scenes with dance and mime, a prologue to the second act was worked out. The following lines, begun by Vi Flutter and finished by Glynn Faithfull, are what was produced on the basis of the group discussions. The whole act, with prologue, was presented to an audience after tea on Sunday, the steps of the terrace and the lawn serving as a stage

**Provisional Prologue to the Second Act of
"The Prodigal Son" in Word, Mime, and Dance**

Messenger: Now you who are watching this play must try to see with God's eye, to whom light and darkness/nearness and distance, are the same. You will gaily follow the Younger Son along the enticing road that leads across the plains and over the mountain pass which is the frontier of a far country. Before him the sun shines on the towers of a great city, greater than he has ever seen. The gates are open and the many-coloured crowd throngs in towards the market-place. He hastens to join them, impatient to play his part in the larger world. How monotonous seem the daily tasks of home, how small and mean the farm—a tiny image far away at the back of his mind !

God (speaking from elevation to R. of Stage):

Far and near are alike to me. I am in the market-place; I am in the farm. In the eager heart of the Younger Son, in the sorrowing heart of the Father.

(The Father and the Elder Son approach slow)/ to centre of stage)

Messenger: And on the farm the slow days pass, while the corn grows to harvest and the fruit ripens: each hour with its appointed task.

Father: Whether there is feast or funeral, birth or marriage—

Elder Son: The horses must be watered, the herds driven out to pasture—

Father: Whether the heart rejoices, whether the heart breaks or the mind is distracted with grief—

Elder Son: The cows must be milked, the eggs collected, and the cat put out at night.

God: Present, past, and future are all alike to me. I am in the feet of the dancers in the market-place at the same time as I see the shadow of famine stalking over the burning land.

Father: Lord, the ways of cattle are easy to know, but the ways of children and men are full of strife. For many months now I have been troubled about my son young Azael, the darling of all our tribe. He was a lad of many gifts, sharp of eye and rapid on foot and with a heart that did not regard danger. And now I have let him go. I had to. He was unhappy. He took to brooding with sudden angry outbreaks, full of ready explanations but accepting no reason. Our world was too small, he said. Why did we keep him at home to do what any hired foreman or trained scribe could do ? 'Was not his brother, my first-born, more than ready to care for all, and capable of supporting my authority and sway over man and beast ? "Give me my portion," he said "and let me go to some place where things other than sacks of corn and bales of wool fill people's minds and their houses. Let me find a better world with freedom to do what I want." Lord, Lord, why should our best efforts and hopes run out and turn to bitterness like rain in the stony desert, and our own offspring burden our days]

God: I am both hope and sorrow, I am the old and the new. When men reject me in one place it is still me they seek in another. They insist on making me after their own image and then have to destroy their own idol.

Father: I saw that to keep him back meant peace for none. I let him go and now my heart aches because I know he does not see the traps and snares of the world. He will look only for adventure and will find himself face to face with death.

God: I am creation and destruction. Those who would seek new life must know death,

Father: And Ell, my elder boy, was angry when I gave Azael half of his mother's dowry and a string of nine Arabian horses laden with treasure. "Is this just?" he said "Does God so rule the world that those who earn and make must give away, and those who dream must take? Why should Azael learn by squandering ?"

God: I neither rule nor measure. I am the comet and the unmoving North Star. I am the rain and the desert. I am all that is, and for me there is no final losing and finding. When men take, it is me they take, and when they give it is I who am given. The Rod of Iron that men see in my hand is forged in the heat of their denying me. Go now, and think of what you would do if you saw your Azael coming from afar, pale, weary, and empty-handed.

Creative Learning and Teaching

The Week-end of June 6-9, 1952, at Braziers Park

THE MAIN THEME of the week-end was "the proof by doing" that all participants had far greater creative powers than they had thought.

To prove this, we had the experience of Mrs. Jeannie Cannon with painting and modelling and that of Dr. C. Gattegno in mathematics and poetry. Both had in their own spheres made people aware of

their powers in creating forms and in gaining confidence enough to wish to improve upon their standard of achievement.

The course of the week-end was planned in order to give as little time as possible to theoretical discussions and the maximum to experiments. Still, it was interesting to attempt to see whether we could agree upon the meaning of our title. Verbal expressions were not always very happy. When people were asked whether they lacked the creative spirit, several said that they did. Then the leaders maintained their conviction that everyone was creative, that often preconceived ideas stood in one's way of realization, and that it would not take more than the week-end to shake these wrong beliefs. A definition of "creation" as a new synthesis gave rise to an interesting discussion. In particular, the two meanings of "new" were spotted: one for the individual and one for society; and it was agreed that the value judgement could be left out and there could still be creation and synthesis for the individual, even a new synthesis, though it might not be outstanding socially. Perhaps it was for that reason that creation was bottled down by most people—because they would not dare.

We all dared on four occasions: twice with plastic media, once verbally, and once purely mentally. The painting and modelling sessions were as usual very successful and most enjoyable. The participants looked at their efforts amazed, and felt that here there was a line of development for them. When we attempted to paint our Scottish friend in his beautiful kilt and against that crimson background, colour, shape and perspective challenged us and were partly overcome. Nothing more was needed to make us feel that our hands, sight and mind were evolving a synthesis that could be satisfying (relatively) because of the feeling of oneself present in the undertaking.

The poetry session was a delightful experiment. No one expected from it what it yielded. First we were given impromptu the order to write a poem on any topic. Nothing more was said, some people were shocked, others resented being asked, utmost of us tried, and we had a great feeling of admiration for all the poems read. They were all different, showing a sense of humour, rich in tone and subject matter. The second exercise was different: we had to write on "The New Synthesis". From this, too, we got a set of interesting and astonishing productions, making it plain that the participants were more than just literate people. It was fun, and we hoped that the best of our productions would appear in the Braziers Park Quarterly. [It is hoped to publish a selection in our next issue.—Editor.]

The mathematics session was conducted with the group divided into two minds: the one that of a teacher who thinks mathematics is as natural as breathing, and the other that of the majority of the participants, who had queer ideas about the subject, gathered at school. We were able, through the careful use of our imagery, to see how we can merge our images and our actions into thoughts which are mathematical only because we disregard the particular nature of the elements concerned.

"To spin" is clear to all; to spin figures round their centres is almost as obvious; to select the circle because it is the only figure always coincident with itself whatever the amount of spin provides a mathematical definition. Coincidence of figures by rotation round their centres shows the variety of figures: a square coincides when the rotation is a quarter of a whole circle, a hexagon when it is a sixth — but a circle for any

amount. This, for a mathematician, may be very advanced, and can be an introduction to the "Group Theory", a modern chapter of higher algebra.

All had little difficulty in stating what they saw and felt, and their statements were mathematical utterances—but they did not know it.

We enjoyed our creativeness, and that week-end.

In Brief

Puppets made an appearance at Braziers during the experimental painting and modelling week-end of February 15-18, led by John Liddell, who with the help of Joan and a friend gave an attractive display after dinner in the miniature theatre set up for the purpose in the inner hall.

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The following week-end Norman Glaister gave a talk on "The Herd Psychology of Politics", basing some of his remarks on the work of Wilfred Trotter and Professor Lionel Penrose. In a critique of modern dialectical thought, Harold Walsby pointed out that "dialectical materialism" as practised in Russia today is only the first stage of dialectical thought through which Hegel passed. "Formal" thought assumes the absolute validity of Aristotle's law of contradiction, i.e., that nothing can both be and not be at the same time. Marx saw that division and unity were each necessary to the understanding of the other. Lenin, unlike Marx, seems to have stressed division and conflict as permanently necessary, agreement being only temporary.

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Jean Lindsay, directing the music week-end of February 29-March 3, gave a talk on seventeenth-century music, with gramophone illustrations, and delighted the company with the session she called "Musical Frivolities". An unusual note was struck during the same week-end by a talk on forestry by John Rowland, and a tree-planting session under his direction at which everyone planted at least one tree. The exhilaration of a morning out of doors planting trees on a really beautiful, crisp day, full of the promise of spring, contrasted delightfully with the cosiness indoors of music and wood fires.

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A conference of organizations concerned with international travel abroad was convened on March 7-10 by Caleb Gattegno, L. es Sc., D.E.S., Dr.Phil., M.A., Director of the International Training Institute, and R. Glynn Faithfull, B.A., Secretary of Friends of the Future, Teachers and others interested in the exchange of school children between different countries for holiday periods discussed the difficulties they encountered in this, and its effect on the children concerned. Mr. Cammaerts, of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, set up by the U.N.E.S.C.O. National Co-operating Body for Education, described the work of his organization. The people attending the conference were highly efficient practical organizers, and some were at first inclined to regard Dr. Gattegno's theoretical approach as rather aside from the work in which they were actively engaged. After a phase in which there was a tendency to use to the full this unique opportunity of comparing notes with other executive workers to the exclusion of theoretical considerations, it became

clear that Dr. Gattegno's approach had not been without value to them in their own individual syntheses.

On March 21-24, under the heading "Religion and the Social Sciences", Alfred Cannon put forward his personal approach to religion, and pointed out that although religion and social science were really complementary, the cleavage between them existing in people's minds today was an obstacle to progress. The method generally in use at Braziers, of dealing with the positive aspect of any situation first and leaving negations to reveal themselves as bases for further discussions, proved particularly successful in bringing about a very full understanding of the different points of view between all participating, and the week-end finished with a feeling of satisfaction as of something achieved.

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Braziers Research Council held a very successful meeting on March 28-April 1, and provided ample material for its members to work on before its next meeting in October,

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A lively and very interesting week-end was that of April 4-7, when three members of the University of Liverpool--Professor W. E. Collinson, Professor of German and Lecturer in Esperanto; R. Glynn Faithfull, Lecturer in Italian; and Erika Wirtz, Lecturer in German--ran a course entitled "Learn to Learn a Foreign Language". This was a novel experiment in a direct method of teaching which proved very successful, for at the final session both the Italian and German groups gave a short sketch in their respective languages learnt entirely during the week-end, though several of those taking part had no previous knowledge of the language in which they were conversing. Professor Collinson pointed out that although a foreign language clearly cannot be learnt in one week-end, such a course gives beginners a flying start by stimulating their interest and removing imaginary obstacles.

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During the period covered by the above short accounts several experimental painting and modelling week-ends were held, at which Jeannie Cannon continued to introduce new features from time to time. At the June week-end B. Sheppard, B.A., spoke on the Saturday afternoon about "Experiences in Colour Associations", discussing the psychological effect of colour in one's surroundings, and what colours are most frequently associated with different emotions, and why. These experimental painting and modelling week-ends, now established as part of the work of Braziers Park, have clearly also become part of the lives of many of those who come to them, not once but regularly, to create and be refreshed.

CAN YOU HELP US?

If any readers have copies of the earlier issues of the Quarterly (Numbers 1-4) that they no longer require, we should be most grateful for their return; for these issues were allowed to go out of print before we had completed our sets for Braziers Park Library.

**HANDBOOK OF LECTURES AND COURSES
SUMMER, 1952**

This list is an outline only of our programme. If any of the titles interest you, do please write for a detailed syllabus, with time-table and reading list. This will place you under no obligation to attend, but will show you the full scope and intention of the Course.

JULY 29 **INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR**

AUG. 12 jointly with the International Training Institute
 Leader: Dr. C. Gattegno

First week: **Education for Service v. Education for Leadership**
Second week: **The British Culture**

AUG. 15-29 **SENSORY SUMMER SCHOOL***

Freedom and the Discipline of Reality

The choice between illusory freedom in fantasy and real creative freedom within the limits of attainable experience.

As at earlier Summer Schools, only the first week will be planned in advance, the second being planned by the School in the light of what has been achieved in the first. The general framework of both, however, will be the same, with one full day's expedition each week. Experimental painting, modelling, dance, drama, and music will form part of the School's activities. The following session titles will be included in the programme:-

Authority, Convention, and the Service of Humanity

The Impotence of Will Power

Religion as the Link between Freedom and Discipline

Goodness, Self-love, and Altruism

Freedom to Experiment

Speakers: Alfred Cannon, R. Glynn Faithfull, Eve Fisk,
J. Norman Glaister, Seton Pollock, Harold Walsby.

Painting and Modelling: Joan and John Liddell, Jeannie Cannon.

Music: Cassie Russell.

Dance and Drama: Eva and Glynn Faithfull.

AUG. 29-SEPT.1 **Working House Party**

SEPT. 5-8 **Experimental Painting and Modelling,**
 Jeannie Cannon

SEPT, 12- **Ideas about Ideas**
 Harold Walsby

SEPT. 19-22 **I Define My Religion**
 Seton Pollock

SEPT.26-29 **Does it Matter What We Do ?**
 J. Norman Glaister

Details of programme and charges are available from the Secretary.]

TRAVEL

There are frequent trains from Paddington to Reading, 10s. 10d. return fare. The fast trains do the journey in 45 minutes. Coaches leave Victoria Coach Station hourly from 7.30 a.m. (arriving Reading Station 9.40 a.m.) to 10.30 p.m. Kemp's buses to Wallingford, Benson, and Abingdon start from Blagrove Street, a few yards from Reading Station, and pass Braziers Lane (2s. 4d. return), which leads straight to Braziers Park. Times are as follows:

<u>Reading South</u>	<u>Braziers Lane</u>	<u>Braziers Lane</u>	<u>Reading South</u>
a.m. 7.30	a.m. 7.58	a.m. 9.39	a.m. 10.10
8.45	9.16	10.38	11.10
9.00	9.34	11.09	11.40
11.15	11.44		
11.45 (not Sat.)	12.16		
p.m. 1.15	1.44	p.m. 12.38	p.m. 1.10
2.45 (Sat. only)	3.16	2.09	2.40
3.15	3.44	2.38	3.10
5.15	5.44	4.38	5.10
5.45	6.16	5.09 (Sat & Sun.)	5.40
7.15	7.44	6.37	7.10
9.15	9.44	8.38	9.10
9.45 (Sat. only)	10.16	On Sunday morning the first bus leaves Reading 11.45 a.m.	
10.45 (Sat. only)	11.14		

Goring is three miles from Braziers Park and has train connections with Reading, London, and Oxford, but there is no bus service. Taxis can be hired at the Station.

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