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STUDYING IN COMFORT



Devonport High School

AT

PENZANCE

CORNWALL

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Happy faces in the dining-room at Ponaandane, one of the mansion hostels.

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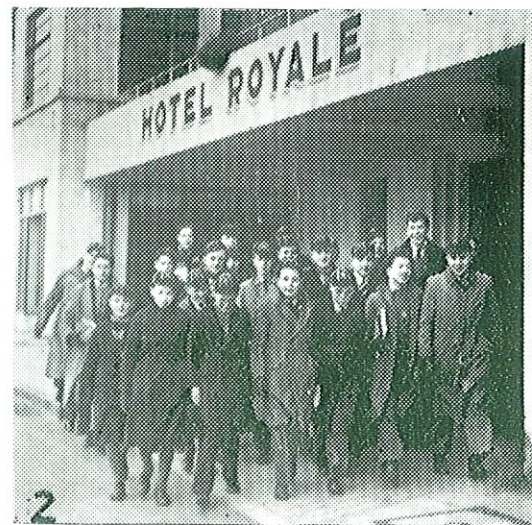
LUCKY BOYS OF DEVONPORT

PENZANCE AIDS HIGH SCHOOL

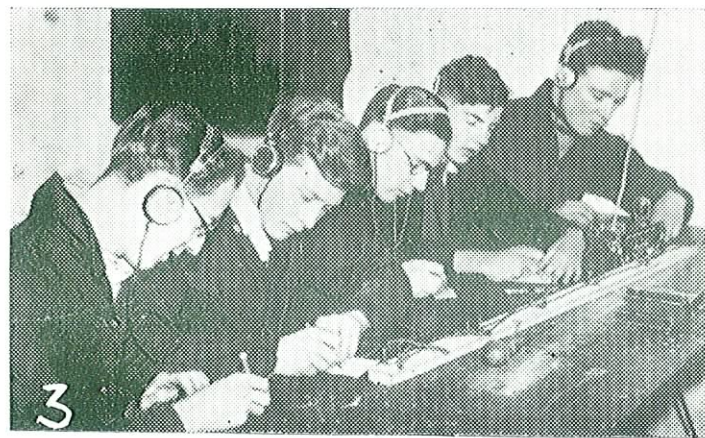
Living in modern hotels and mansion houses, fed on rations far more abundant than would be possible in private billets, the boys of Devonport High School, evacuated to Penzance, are said to be the best-looked-after schoolboys in England.

A "Western Morning News" reporter who visited them found the claim to be fully justified.

When circumstances made it necessary for the school to be sent to Penzance, the town was already crowded with evacuees and refugees to the extent of more than half its own population, and there was already a housing shortage before the war. The problems presented to the local authorities of finding accommodation for a big school and homes for the boys, their masters and masters' wives and



Some of the 78 boys at the Royale Hotel leaving for school.



Members of the School A.T.C. Squadron studying Morse.

families, seemed to be insuperable until somebody suggested the bold scheme of maintaining the school as a unit and accommodating it in hostels.

SELFLESS SERVICE.

It was a big idea, it has been carried out in a big way, and it has met with big success. It is the outcome of willing and selfless co-operation between Penzance billeting and education authorities and the school authorities. But even this would have been insufficient were it not for the loyal co-operation of the masters and their wives, who supervise the hostels.

When the school came to the town there were several large premises vacant. Ponsandane, home of a branch of the Bolitho family, had just been vacated by another organization. Tredarvah, home of the late Col. Harvey, was empty. Both these houses stand in their own grounds. Mount's Bay Hotel and Marine Hotel on the Promenade were empty. Mount Prospect Hotel, overlooking the bay, and the Royale Hotel, a new building, and the Rookery, home of the late Lord St. Levan, at Marazion, were empty.

These were placed at the disposal of the boys—not all at once—and they are quartered in ideal circumstances.

As far as possible they have been grouped according to their school houses, which makes for keen competition in every school activity. Because hotels are being used, it is possible for the senior boys, at least, to have study bedrooms, which afford them privacy and opportunity for



The school band, organized and led by K. W. Roekey (centre).



Air Training Squadron, learning the mysteries of an aero engine. They receive lectures from R.A.F. officers and visit R.A.F. aerodromes. The squadron is about 100 strong.

concentration on their studies. In every hostel there is a common room, and games are provided, including billiards, skittles, table tennis.

THEIR OWN KINEMA.

They have their own talking kinema. There are a debating society, a chess club, a hobbies club. They have also their own dance band, organized and led by K. W. Rockey, who won an open scholarship in natural science at Jesus College, Oxford, last term. The boys have supervised prep. on four evenings a week.

Health is well catered for. Arrangements have been made by the county medical officer for immediate attention, and sick bays have been provided. Apparently the only occupants so far have been football casualties.

When our reporter, with a photographer, arrived at Ponsandane, they were invited to lunch with the boys . . . "We sat with them, feeling perhaps a little like Will Hay's pupils. But we had what they had—and as much. That meal was a tribute to the household management of the hostel. It is possible to do things when you are catering for 40 or 50 that would be out of the question on family rations.

FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

What struck us was the atmosphere of friendliness and good order. Masters and their wives were more like brothers and sisters to the boys than superintendents and

disciplinarians, and there was mutual respect and goodwill. The boys are happy. We saw no dull faces. Living together as they do, there is no room for homesickness. At first little groups used to pop home for week-ends. Now well over two-thirds have elected to stay on at Penzance, even for half-term. That fact speaks for itself.

This happy atmosphere is a tribute to the way the masters and their wives have run the hostels. It has been a 24-hours job, and it has been hard work. Sometimes, when it has been difficult to get sufficient staff, the masters' wives have done the cooking and the housework themselves. That in a mansion house with 40 occupants is no joke. Their compensation is that they feel it has enabled them to do a very fine piece of war work. The parents of the boys owe to them more than they can ever know.

The classrooms are housed in seven different buildings in the town, with Richmond Sunday-school as headquarters. It has called for a tricky bit of organization to keep the curriculum going, but it has been accomplished by arranging the lessons so that while the boys stay in the various buildings, the masters change over during the morning and afternoon breaks.

The boys have the use of the local secondary school laboratory for biology, and they also use the manual-room and gymnasium at that school. For physics and chemistry they go to the Mining School laboratories in Morrab-road.

AIR TRAINING SQUADRON.

The school has its own Air Training Squadron, who are taught the mysteries of aero engines, signalling, navigation, and drill. They receive lectures from R.A.F. officers and visit R.A.F. aerodromes. The squadron is about 100 strong.

There is opportunity for sport of all kinds. On Sundays the boys are encouraged to attend their normal places of worship. A special service has been arranged by the vicar of St. Mary's, Rev. W. P. Gilpin, at 10 a.m., at which several of the staff attend, and the head master reads the lessons.

Plymouth and Devonport parents may be assured that their boys are having all the advantages of a boarding school education and training at a cost of no more than 6s. a week above the ordinary day school fees.

The school now has Mr. W. H. Buckley, who succeeded Mr. H. A. T. Simmonds, as its head master, and he is delighted with the conditions. Both he and the other masters stressed the gratitude they felt to the Town Clerk of Penzance (Mr. R. C. E. Austin) for what he did to assist the school in his capacity of chief billeting officer, and to Mr. W. F. Jackson, the county education officer, for his co-operation on the educational side.