

Varndean Loses Its "Mr Chips"

MR C. W. PANNETT RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS' SERVICE

FORTY years is a long time to serve one school. A master or mistress who devotes his or her lifetime to succeeding generations of pupils tends to become not only a well-loved figure but, above all, something of a legend which, eventually, seems destined to emulate the famous brook and "... go on for ever."

For the teacher, life has been school for so long that when, at last, the time of severance draws almost too grim a prospect to view with anything but sadness and distaste.

In no small measure, this must apply to Mr Cecil William Pannett, B.A., who has been on the staff of Varndean Grammar School for Boys since 1920. Born in Brighton in 1895, he was educated at Brighton Grammar School. In 1915 he qualified for the teaching profession, but owing to the war was unable to complete his Degree Course. Instead, he joined and served with the Royal Sussex Regiment, followed by service

nearly 700 students—the same thing applying to the staff, which now number almost 40.

Since 1932, when the present headmaster, Mr E. J. Hutchins, joined the staff in succession to Mr W. J. Stainer, he has been closely associated with Mr Hutchins in the difficult task of compiling the school time-table. This has become an increasingly tricky undertaking as sixth form subjects have increased and doubled themselves.

Growth of Opportunities for Youth

"The opportunities and rate of growth here have developed amazingly since I joined the staff," he said. "One of the greatest changes I've seen is that any boy, from any background, can now get to a University."

Mr Pannett, a bachelor, lives with a sister at 4, Davigdor-road—a house number recently acquired after 20 years' residence! Apart from the totally-absorbing school life which has engaged his interest and energies to the exclusion of much else, he enjoys music and concert going and "... hopes to catch up with some reading" after his retirement. He also hopes to do some travelling, particularly as his brother is Vice-Consul in Marseilles.

More than all these pursuits, however, Varndean's own "Mr Chips" hopes to be able to help out whenever necessary. In this way, he'll be enabled to step from 40 years of ungrudging service to his well-chosen profession into the quieter academic waters which proffer harbourage for those who sail the educational seas.



MR C. W. PANNETT

with the then A.S.C. (later the R.A.S.C.) in Macedonia and the Caucasus.

After returning in 1919 he was asked to do some teaching—there was a great shortage of teachers at the time—and this he did before taking up his appointment—destined to last just under half a century—at the old Varndean school building opposite St. Peter's Church (known at that time as the Municipal Secondary School).

Head of Modern Languages Department

Since 1945 he has been head of the modern languages department, and was school librarian for some 17 years. His subjects have been French and Spanish, also German (though not the last just recently), and he has the satisfaction of knowing that scores of his former pupils are scattered all over the world in worth-while jobs, some of them as university lecturers.

In answer to a "Herald" reporter's question he paused for a few moments then said that he must have taught in the region of nearly 3,000 pupils.

He has seen the school intake almost doubled—there are now