

## Recollections

### Arches

Climbing into the sky

Flagstones worn shiny

By years of young feet.

Shuffling, jostled

Corridors.

Laughter and the clatter-bang of bags

On wooden desks.

Stairs groaning upwards

To shiny passages.

Picture bedecked walls:

“First XI, 1939...”

“First XV, 1920...”

Deep wooden panels

Reaching up to domed white ceiling.

Tattered hymnbooks,

The wheezing of the pumped organ,

Voices rising and falling:

“Oh God our help in ages past...”

“O Lord God of truth, whom to know...”

Dark, bat-like gowns floating down passages.

Voices teaching, preaching, chastising:

“Tearing up the paving stones...”

“Your cycle marks will be SO small...”

“Hug the wall, you criminals!”

The cycle shed

Filling with ragged boys

Ragging,

At the end of the day

Spilling out of the gates,

Being part of it,

Belonging.

Keith Butler, August 2000