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ANNOUNCEMENTS
The Hawks Club - Portugal Place Project: The Editor has been asked to advise those members of the College who are also members of the Hawks Club that the Portugal Place Project will proceed with expedition now that planning permission has been obtained for the use of 18 Portugal Place as a permanent Club House. Any member of the Hawks Club who has not already received any of the Bulletins relating to the Portugal Place Project is requested to send his name and address together with a request for the Bulletins to: The Hawks Club, c/o Byron's Lodge, Grantchester, Cambridge CB3 9NF.

Johnian Society Golf Meeting. The competition will be held this year on 17 July. Details may be obtained from D.E. Roberts, 4 Greville Drive, Birmingham, B15 2UU.
When William Wordsworth went up to St John's in October 1787 he was expected to study mathematics as his major subject. Why was this, what types of mathematics were then being taught, and what did he achieve?

At Cambridge at that time the influence of Sir Isaac Newton, who was professor of mathematics there from 1669 to 1702, was still of great importance. Mathematics was the dominant subject in the university, and its study was compulsory for all students, together with moral philosophy and theology. The students had no choice of subjects. The final degree examination (the Tripos) was in mathematics, philosophy and theology, but honours were limited to those candidates excelling in mathematics. The undergraduates were allocated in classes before the examination, with a right of appeal for those who considered they had been placed too low. The results of the examination determined where they were placed in order of merit within the class. Consequently there was intense competition between the candidates, particularly between those intent on the highest honours. Those who achieved the highest class, first class honours, were known as Wranglers. There were two lower classes of honours, Senior and Junior Optimes, and a pass degree. Separate examination papers were set according to the standards expected in the different classes (Howson 1982).

Some Tripos examination papers from the relevant period are available in published form (Wordsworth 1877, Ball 1889). They reveal the scope of the topics studied. These can be roughly divided into arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, astronomy, optics and mechanics. A form of calculus known as Fluxions was also studied, but not differential calculus. Here are some examples of the problems set. Questions 1–7 and 11–12 were set to prospective Junior Optimes and 8–10 to Senior Optimes in 1802, and 13–14 were set by dictation to candidates in 1785. No problems were ever set to candidates for a pass degree, but they were examined in book work, which could be learnt by rote.

1. If $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ell of Holland cost $\frac{3}{4} \mathpunct{\text{\textpounds}}$, what will 12% ells cost?
2. Find the interest of £873.15s.0d for 2½ years at 4½ per cent.
3. Solve the equation $3x^2 - 19x + 16 = 0$.
4. Sum the following series $\frac{1}{1 \times 2} + \frac{1}{2 \times 3} + \frac{1}{3 \times 4} + \ldots$ ad infinitum.
5. Inscribed the greatest rectangle in a given circle.
6. Prove that the diameters of a square bisect each other at right angles.
7. Given the sine of an angle, to find the sine of twice that angle.
8. Given a declination of the sun and the latitude of the place, to find the duration of twilight.
9. If half the earth were taken off by the impulse of a comet, what changes would be produced in the moon's orbit?
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