



Letters to the editor

► *Sad loss of village school*

I first became acquainted with Holton-le-Moor Primary School when I visited a sports day in July 1955 and thought what an idyllic situation for a country village school; so I was delighted when my eldest daughter, Heather, started there the following August. Little did I think then I would have a child in that school – obviously not the same one – for the next twenty-three years.

The school was then in the capable hands of headmistress Mrs Grace Foster and Mrs Charlotte Bows. With only about thirty children at that time they were able to give them essential grounding in the three Rs and also interest them in the natural science around them and take them on trips to the post office, bakeries, police station, etc. Each child was made to feel a worthwhile member of the school and encouraged to reach their potential.

Being a country school, the seasons played a part in the children's life, like springtime and harvest and as it was a Church of England school the children attended St Luke's Church for special services, holding their own harvest thanksgiving. The local vicar would also visit and talk to the children.

Music and drama were not neglected. Mr Foster, the headmistress's husband, taught the recorder, forming a group which entertained in care homes. The school Christmas play was a big event with every child taking part. In the summer, the March Yard was ideal for the sports day which also attracted many villagers. Every child took part in each race for their age group be it flat race, egg-and-spoon or sack race. Holton also competed in inter-sports against other local schools.

By the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the main building in 1964, I had two sons there, Michael and Robin. Parents and friends were invited to a bunting-bedecked school for displays by the children with Maypole dancing and an anniversary cake to share.

Numbers in the school fluctuated and at one time there were rumours that a dwindling roll could mean closure. Fortunately, it didn't happen. Numbers were increased when children from Claxby were bussed to Holton following closure of their school.

By then two more of my sons had started, Russell and Andrew, to be joined in later years by younger sister Sarah.

In 1972, a new classroom was built and opened by the Bishop of Lincoln. This was a big occasion. Soon after this, Mrs Bows and Mrs Foster took their well-deserved retirement.

Mr Des Hardcastle was appointed headmaster, followed by Mrs Jennifer Glue and the present headmaster, Mr Malcolm Boot, but the tradition of the Christmas and sporting events carried on.

For a short while, as there was no 'meals on wheels' service in the village, hot dinners from the school canteen were delivered to some of the elderly by the older pupils – who called it 'meals on legs'.

In its last few years the school organised a village carol service and carol singing around the village.

My experience as a parent of a pupil ended in 1978 when Sarah left, but I still maintained my interest in the school. I never once regretted sending my children there and am grateful to the school for its input into their lives and for the happy memories they have of their primary school days.

There has been a school in the village for more than 200 years – the first one opened in 1783. The school has played a big part in enriching village life but sadly it closed at the end of August this year. Holton le Moor is the poorer for its closure.

Mrs Connie Barr, Holton le Moor,
Market Rasen

► *More on Bracebridge Library*

I was very interested in Maureen Sutton's article about public libraries which appeared in the July edition of 'Lincolnshire Life' but must say, Bracebridge had a public library in the very early 1930s. I am eighty-eight now and can remember calling there on the way home from school. It was in Ewart Street, just behind the house of our schoolmaster – lovely Tom Brown.

After leaving school I joined Boots. For the ten-shilling (50p) yearly ticket I could borrow all the newly published books. Oh happy days!

Edith Smith, Gainsborough

► *Alford Manor House*

I am researching the history of Alford Manor House, sometimes known as Tothby Manor, and wonder if any readers have

any old photographs, or cuttings from newspapers, etc.

Can I also thank readers who helped me with my first book which is now in print.

Thank you for a wonderful magazine and for putting our county out there with the best.

Kaye D Gordon, 99 George Street,
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► *The gardens of Grimsthorpe*

The article about the gardens at Grimsthorpe Castle which appeared in the August edition of 'Lincolnshire Life' brought back memories to me. In 1959 I left the farm that I had worked on since 1946 and went to work with other casual workers. From time to time we worked on the Grimsthorpe Estate.

On one occasion the head forester asked me to chop up weeds and a little bit of grass away from the castle garden wall. The next day, a newcomer to our gang carried on where I had left off. When Lady Ancaster saw this she went to him, she said: "I don't like weeds but I do hate bare ground." Not knowing who she was, the young man carried on chopping up the weeds and grass. Lady Ancaster then shouted: "Stop him, somebody stop him, can't somebody stop him!"

But when I was digging out soil so a new path could be laid in a new garden, she came and talked to me as nice as can be. She was not aware that I had chopped up some of the grass near the castle garden wall.

Another day, four of us were planting out seedling trees when Lady Ancaster crossed the road in her car to speak to us. The other three nipped behind a building and left me to find out what she wanted to know. After she had left me, Binner, who was a funny man, said to me: "You shouldn't have kept saying 'what' to her like that." But according to Chalkey, who was in charge of one of our gangs, "Binner has too much on it."

Jim Stubbley, Rippingale, Bourne.

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