

FRIENDS' SCHOOL:



*A hundred years
at
Saffron Walden
1879 - 1979*

John C. Woods

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Front cover: Engraving of original 1879 building.

Friends' School, Saffron Walden, Essex 1979



The main building facing north.

FOREWORD

In 1952 Friends' School Saffron Walden celebrated the 250th anniversary of its foundation in Clerkenwell in 1702.

In 1979 the school celebrates the centenary of its move to Saffron Walden.

On the former occasion "UNBROKEN COMMUNITY", the story of those 250 years written by David Bolam, was published but it is now out of print. Before his death in 1978 David Bolam welcomed the intent to publish an account of the 100 years at Saffron Walden for the occasion of the centenary.

The Board of Governors do not normally give access to the Minutes of their proceedings but they have been glad to do so to enable John Woods, the present Head, to base this narrative on the records contained in the carefully preserved minute books.

In commending this record of a century of life and service in one Friends School, we hope it may both interest and inform.

The century ends at a time when there is a renewed challenge to independent schools and when the Society of Friends is rethinking the role of the schools bearing its name. A school cannot stand still at the end of a century. We look forward to the future with hope and confidence, sure that the experiences of the past will help the school meet new demands and new opportunities in the years that lie ahead.

Godfrey C. Mace
Chairman—Board of Governors

1st January 1979



Looking east from the water tower.

THE OCCASION to mark one hundred years of Friends' School at Saffron Walden is the most recent of several centenaries. Since the foundation at Clerkenwell in 1702, the double century of the institution, its centenary as a school, and the centenary of its Old Scholars Association have passed in turn. Now the centenary of the school on one site, following the removal from Croydon of a firmly established concern to Saffron Walden can be recorded and celebrated.

There are many now living who have vivid memories from their own experience of some aspect of this latest century. The major part of this account could be created from the recollections of staff and scholars whose lives have been significantly touched. But such a history would omit crucial aspects of the story. The fabric of school life is made up also by the Committee appointed to manage the affairs of the school and care for the welfare of its members. The records of their deliberations and decisions have, according to historic Quaker practice, been faithfully recorded and carefully preserved. These records are the minutes written and approved at the time of regular meetings of the School Committee or Board of Governors. They reflect the thinking which preceded planning, responded to situations and dealt with crises. They show how the school appeared to the Friends charged with the duty of overseeing a complex institution involving educational, financial, social, administrative, residential and property matters.

This paper, using the words of the minutes where appropriate, is an attempt to paint a picture of the last century from these minutes. Deliberately ignoring other records, the impression shows how a written account of discussion and decision both reveals and conceals. The paper reflects the extent and degree of involvement undertaken by members of the School Committee. It presents a cameo of educational development, institutional management and Quaker administration over a century of vast and significant change in the world around. It shows how the Committee considered the school's purpose, problems and performances.

The original buildings which have stood at the top of the hill so solidly and securely for a hundred years have seen great changes within and beyond. Their static quality belies the movement, progress and development which has occurred about them. The experience they have harboured is witnessed both in the lives of children and adults and in the minutes, methodically and accurately recorded at each of over three hundred meetings of the Committee. Careful attention to detail, faithful adherence to principle and serious achievement of purpose are blended with sustained application of Quaker concern to form the background for the life that has throbbed through the buildings in the century since 1879.



The main building facing south.

IT STARTED with typhoid. In October 1875 the Superintendent, George F. Linney, reported to a special meeting of the Committee at Devonshire House, London, that there had been an outbreak of typhoid fever. The immediate task was to secure the health of the family, first, by supplying filters for the drinking water and then, by facilitating the withdrawal of children by their parents. But within a month discussion had taken place about the question of the desirability or otherwise of the removal of the school from Croydon. The threat both to health and to numbers demanded consideration of more radical solutions. A committee was appointed to collect information and report. Within two months this committee had assessed the value of the Croydon property at £22,000, estimated the cost of new buildings elsewhere and had its attention specially directed to Saffron Walden. Some members visited the town, saw several eligible sites, and noted that there was a good Quaker meeting with Friends who would cordially welcome the school. They reported that Saffron Walden was a very healthy town and appeared in every way suitable for a school, unless the distance from London should be considered a drawback. In February 1876 the School Committee received the proposals and concluded that it was time to suggest to London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting that it, as the body ultimately responsible for the school, should consider the desirability of a removal from Croydon.

In April 1876, although there was diversity of opinion, it was agreed to ask Quarterly Meeting to take steps for speedy removal. A joint committee representing the Quarterly Meeting and the School Committee recommended the removal and the establishment of a new

school in some other locality, offering the same general character and accommodation without fundamental change of system. The parent body was advised to adopt Saffron Walden, despite the desire to retain the school within its borders. The town had made a favourable impression on the large number of Friends who visited it before making the recommendation. They reported it to be beautifully situated on a chalk soil and in the midst of a pleasant country with a good supply of water from a deep artesian well. The site was considered to be admirable, situated on an open breezy hill above the town near the railway station and within a very easy distance of the Quaker meeting house. There was a considerable circle of Friends at Saffron Walden who would warmly welcome the school and would give that hearty and sympathetic support and assistance which was of so much importance in the management of a school of this character. Moreover, the land required for the school had been offered free of cost by two Friends in Saffron Walden. In October 1876 Quarterly Meeting agreed to the recommendation.

Two Quaker bodies, the School Committee and the Quarterly Meeting, took less than a year to make this major decision of principle to move from Croydon to an alternative site at Saffron Walden. There is a sense of urgency to escape from typhoid. There is a sense of determination to fulfil George Stacey Gibson's generous philanthropy and personal concern. His gift of land was firm backing for the sustained and persuasive argument which convinced the Committee to recommend the move. Their criteria were stated in their report. The selected site promised, first, to be healthy and, second, to provide the active concern of local Friends.

A building committee was charged to make all arrangements connected with the erection of the school premises at Saffron Walden. By November an architect had been appointed. In January 1877 the Committee approved plans for accommodation for 150 children at a cost of £16,000. Property at Croydon was sold, additional land at Saffron Walden was purchased, but a proposal for a detached hospital was deferred. Work commenced on June 25th with completion scheduled for the end of 1878.

When Caleb Kemp was re-appointed Clerk to the School Committee in May 1878, work had been delayed by the slow delivery of the

terra cotta. Legal matters were proceeding more expeditiously for by June the conveyance of the land had been completed, the deeds vested upon trust in the Quarterly Meeting and placed in the Trust Box at Devonshire House. In June, also, the personal interest of most of the Committee was fostered by a visit to the "New Schools", when fifty Friends, chiefly present or past members of the Committee, were welcomed and entertained by Saffron Walden Friends. They returned from their inspection and outing gratified at the progress made and the character of the work.

During the winter, severe and long continued frosts seriously impeded progress but not sufficiently to delay the re-assembly of the school at Saffron Walden after the summer vacation. When the School Committee met there for the first time at the end of August 1879 they recorded their thankfulness for the assembly of the family and the re-opening of the school at Saffron Walden on August 19th. They prayed that the Divine Blessing might continue to rest on the institution.

Fifty-eight boys and 32 girls were installed. £10.17.6 was paid for a year's fire insurance, £155 for the pantechnican which moved the furniture and effects from Croydon, and bills of just under £29,000 for the total cost of the new buildings. Normal duties were resumed after overcoming inconveniences and difficulties of the move. The report that the health of the school was remarkably good during the year is evidence of the confidence that the move was in right ordering.

So the Committee could turn to other matters. Before the move, after protracted consideration, and recording their considerable unanimity, they decided to allow the teaching of music to girls. This decision was to improve the career prospects for girls who frequently had difficulty in obtaining situations as governesses in the families of Friends because of their ignorance of music. Other academic matters claimed their attention in 1880 when the report of the examiner of the Cambridge Syndicate was particularly astringent. He thought the premises deserved the highest praise, the teachers seemed careful and painstaking, the discipline seemed mild but effective and the general management of the school pleasing. But he found serious weaknesses in the attainment. Some of the scripture was indifferent or bad, part of the history was entirely irrelevant, some of the arithmetic papers were

feeble and inaccurate. Of French he did not expect much, accordingly he escaped disappointment. But the bright and healthy appearance of the children and the admirable arrangements in the new buildings were good foundations for the academic improvement expected and needed. A year later a different examiner was better pleased. Spelling was the great weakness. Other defects did not prevent his general impression of satisfaction. He was impressed by the most pleasant and friendly feeling existing between pupils and teachers. His successor in 1882 noted this atmosphere as well as general academic improvement. Even though some of the older boys and girls seemed past remedy in dictation and the girls broke down in fractions, he judged that the school was well taught and the boys and girls showed evident proof of diligence and a wish to learn. There was hope for the future that, with the newcomers to the school, the Friends Schools would shortly take rank with others of the same class. In 1883 the same examiner was able to congratulate the school on the improvement and steady progress over three years.

The Committee could be well pleased with the successful move and the prospect of academic advance. Caleb Kemp presided as the work of the Committee unfolded in new surroundings. Close attention to keeping costs low, continued preoccupation with health, and the attempt to broaden the curriculum were matters which claimed the regular attention of the Committee. At the death of George Stacey Gibson in 1883 they recorded their thankfulness for his liberality and his discriminating and calm judgement and reiterated their faithful dependence on Divine Power. When Caleb Kemp retired from the Clerkship in 1884 the new schools were firmly established. Solid achievement and progress followed the upheaval of the move. One matter, however, promised further changes in the future. In 1881 the Committee received a report from an educational conference of London Yearly Meeting which had discussed the advantages and disadvantages of mixed education. The Committees with boys and girls schools in close proximity were recommended to consider whether they could not take advantage of this close union to introduce the practice of mixed education of boys and girls in certain subjects and classes. The recommendation was received without comment, but a woman teacher was later appointed, at £45 p.a., to take charge of a mixed class of the youngest boys and girls. The new institution was not to remain static.

In the eight years following the appointment of Henry T. Menell as Clerk in May 1884, the Committee were concerned with unfamiliar matters. Despite a reduction of cost per head from over £32 in 1883 to just under £30 in 1885 there was still a deficiency rising to £353 for 1889. The sum needed to balance the accounts depended on subscriptions from Friends in the constituent Quarterly Meetings. The Committee appealed for increased liberality. Coupled with this call for financial help was a plea to bring the interests and the advantages of the institution before Friends and parents in their own meetings. The need was two fold: first, to ensure that the Quaker support for the school was real and active; second, to arrest the decline in numbers. Financial difficulty was caused, partly, by the extent to which children of poorer Friends were admitted at a charge of little more than half the cost of maintaining them. The Committee were therefore anxious to foster concerned support from Friends. In 1887 members of the Quarterly Meeting were encouraged to show their Christian interest in the welfare of the school by more frequently attending the meetings for worship at Saffron Walden. There were doubts and fears in some quarters that the school was not doing its part in training the children committed to its charge so as to incline them to retain and value their membership of the Society of Friends. In 1889 the Committee reported that in twenty years 20 out of 518 children left the Society while 17 children and 3 teachers were admitted into membership. The Committee were feeling estranged from their Quaker base due to uninformed criticism. But in 1892, after a visit lasting a week from five Friends representing London Yearly Meeting, the Committee minuted their sense of encouragement at the renewed interest and concern for the welfare of their Schools. A Friends School needed to feel the warm, concerned interest of Friends.

The reduction in the number of scholars from 143 in 1884 to 99 in 1891 caused anxiety and discouragement. The Committee could account for the decline only from general economic conditions. They were afraid in 1886 that the falling off in the rates of admission was one of many proofs of the depression of trade, and more especially in agriculture, from which an agricultural county like Essex so seriously suffered. There were fewer boys and they were leaving school six or twelve months earlier than in times of greater prosperity. The Committee sought ways to arrest the decline and the financial deficiency. In

1886 a day scholar was admitted. A teacher who resigned in 1890 was not replaced. Advertisements were placed to attract non-Friend applicants. Henry T. Mennell, as the Clerk carrying this burden, must have been particularly pleased to see a slight increase in numbers again before he relinquished his office.

Before then another consequence of the decline occurred. In February 1890, after twenty one year's service, the Superintendent and his wife tendered their resignation due to anxious thought about the declining numbers. The Committee, believing that the time had arrived when the resignation should be accepted, proceeded to find successors. In April a special meeting of the Committee, men and women Friends meeting together, interviewed three candidates at Devonshire House and after long and careful deliberations appointed John Edward and Anna Phillis Walker as Superintendent and mistress of the school with the earnest desire that the decision they had arrived at might be the right one. A new era began, indicated by a change of title, without explanation, to Headmaster and Mistress of the Family.

However, one legacy of the previous era remained. In April 1891 a special meeting was called at Devonshire House to consider painful irregularities discovered in the accounts. Defalcation by the late Superintendent in excess of £500 had come to light. Charges made to parents had not been entered. Dates of admission and leaving of children had been altered. This was an agonising blow to a Committee which had confidently reported in 1888 that the moral condition of the school was such as to commend the confidence of parents. Action was necessary. The annual accounts were to be audited professionally. The names of entrants and leavers were to be recorded in the minutes. The Committee were to check in the minutes more regularly. Stewardship became a more painstaking and detailed responsibility. The burden of this lapse lasted until 1903 when the Committee received the first response from the Superintendent in a letter admitting his theft, describing his deep regret and sorrow, and acknowledging the Committee's great kindness and long patience. The Committee recorded satisfaction that the correctness of the charges they had to make was thus acknowledged.

Henry T. Mennell shepherded the impact of this discovery and of the initiation of the Headmaster who introduced gymnastic equipment,

recommended the regular admission of a limited number of day scholars, appointed a resident music mistress, arranged for cookery lessons in the town for girls and submitted plans for a chemical laboratory. Improvement in the educational standard was reflected in the separate reports each summer of the Cambridge examiner and of Friends appointed to visit and examine.

The life and work of the Committee was acquiring an identity. Men and women Friends met separately except on rare occasions. The women reported to the men, particularly about provisions, and made recommendations, but made no decisions. The full Committee met four or five times a year with a Sub-committee meeting additionally in intervening months to record details of financial transactions and admissions. In 1886 the Committee agreed to meet at 10.30 instead of 11.00 so long as present train arrangements from London continued to exist. It was becoming difficult to find Friends willing to devote the time and provide the wisdom needed. In 1887 the Committee's request was granted that the rules be changed so that a member was no longer automatically ineligible for further service at the conclusion of his term of service. The operation of the earlier rule had permanently lost the services of many most valuable members of the Committee. So began the possibility of continuous and uninterrupted service of up to fifty years enabling concerned Friends to work on behalf of the Society for the school they cherished. After J. Lister Godlee succeeded to the Clerkship in August 1892, significant but undramatic change occurred in the way the Committee worked. Hitherto, the minutes of the Committee related to the deliberations of the men except when they were occasionally joined by the women. In November 1893 women Friends joined the men after minute 18. In succeeding years this arrangement was repeated. The practice was formally adopted as policy in 1902 after the Women's Committee proposed that their work might be rendered more varied and effective by holding much more of the business of the Men's Committee in joint session with them. They suggested that separate meetings of the Committees should be held at 10.30 and that at 11.00 or so much later as the separate business might render desirable, the Committees should meet jointly for all other business. The consequent alteration of the rules was approved in 1903. By then regular meetings occurred in February and June on Fridays and in

October over two days, thus reducing by two the number of meetings in the year.

The opportunity for men and women members of the Committee to work together affected their thinking about the school. A report from Inspectors of the Board of Education recommended in 1905 that the Head Teacher on the girl's side should be given greater responsibility and thus relieve the burden on the Headmaster. The suggestion crystallised the thinking of the Committee. Although they considered that such an enhanced position might attract women teachers in the Society, they saw it as quite inconsistent with any plan of introducing mixed education throughout the school. The vision was of one school with overall responsibility and general superintendence in the hands of the Headmaster. The plain speaking of the Inspectors' report on other matters hit hard, but the Committee welcomed its usefulness and took note of suggestions about facilities, curriculum and less punishment for boys.

The accounts for 1896 showed a surplus of £29, the first surplus for 12 years. This gave confidence to plan future expansion. Proposals were prepared for new buildings at the east and west ends to include music rooms, laboratories, and accommodation for teachers as well as a swimming bath and gymnasium. The original architect was engaged and an appeal for £7,000 launched. The response was encouraging and work was commissioned. Most of the extensions were completed by the bicentennial celebrations on June 14th 1902. Gifts of £7,600 and loans covered the cost of buildings. These tangible signs of well being were ascribed thankfully in the minutes to the continued fostering care of Almighty God.

This conviction of a spiritual dimension influenced the curriculum. In 1898 the Committee, not unmindful of their responsibility in regard to religious training, believed it to be the concern of the Headmaster that the work of the Divine Grace might be fostered and encouraged and that spiritual development and progress might accompany the development of intellectual powers. In 1901 the Headmaster was asked to report on the teaching of Quaker principles. As the academic curriculum developed there remained at the core the intention to expose the children to some understanding of the Christian and Quaker basis of the school.

A Friends School had to take its place in comparison with the growing national system of education. Academic standards were judged by attainment in the new county schools established after 1902. The change in 1905 to the Cambridge Junior Local Examination was an attempt to find an appropriate external measurement of attainment. The professional standing of teachers was better secured in 1903 when the Board of Education approved the registration of teachers, initially for three years.

As well as initiating development, the Committee needed to cherish the normal work of the school and support the resolution of difficulties. Now that the buildings were established, deficiencies became apparent. Automatic flushing for the toilets, alterations to the drains, and inlet ventilation were among practical matters claiming attention that could not adequately be considered by the whole Committee. In 1893 an ad hoc committee was formed to consider repairs. From 1902 a regular sub-committee was appointed quarterly to supervise all questions of repairs and to examine the premises. The Clerk was more particularly concerned to know the circumstances which called for disciplinary action before making recommendations to the whole Committee. Expulsion of a boy for shop-lifting in 1893, and removal of a girl in 1901 on account of the difficulty of treating a corn on her foot and her continual refractory conduct were matters where the Clerk required adequate background information from the Headmaster. They needed a good working relationship based on mutual confidence. Overall responsibility involved considerable attention to detailed matters.

Concern for health was a constant anxiety. Tonsillitis, influenza, ringworm and scarletina, which cast doubts on sanitary conditions, were reported during this period. The Women's Committee pressed for a full time nurse for many months before the men concurred in 1899. The task of implementing the recommendation for a separate Sanatorium made by the Inspectors in 1905 fell to James B. Crosfield who followed Lister Godlee as Clerk in 1906. A subsequent inspection in 1908 made a similar recommendation. The need for this facility became more pressing as the school faced outbreaks of scarletina, scarlet fever and German measles. A hospital committee, appointed in 1909, commissioned the architect to prepare plans, attracted gifts of £2,600



The Avenue.

towards the cost of £3,500 and reported the use of the new sanatorium in February 1913.

James Crosfield, the Clerk, did not, however, assess that the Committee united with another of the Inspectors' 1908 recommendations that there should be a further extension of the system of co-education. Despite their earlier thinking in 1905 about mixed education throughout the school, in October 1909 the Committee minuted that they were not yet fully satisfied that the advantages would sufficiently outweigh the disadvantages to justify further changes in this direction. They noted that the question was one that had claimed and would continue to claim their careful consideration. That attention was quickly given for when they next assembled in February 1910, they approved a proposal, made by the Headmaster, that the system of mixed teaching which then existed in the highest and lowest classes should be extended to the rest of the school. No explanation; just the supporting assent to a plan presented to them. Their next meeting endorsed the practical application of the principle they had dismissed only months before! Men and women on the Committee had learnt to work together. Why not the teachers and the children?! The Committee quietly followed the purposeful lead of the Headmaster to initiate a radical change. A distinctive characteristic of the school in the future had been set in motion.

The Committee in this period imposed other aspects of the structure that the school was to become. In 1906 they agreed that the school should cater for children up to age 16 or 17 giving a course in preparation for matriculation. The first boy was entered in 1913. They requested the inspection in 1908 to obtain recognition by the Board of Education. The recommendations were detailed and comprehensive, but the Board was not yet ready to grant recognition. The Committee were given an objective yardstick which stimulated the changes of succeeding years. Meanwhile the school grew both in size and range of activities. The number of children increased from 128 in 1906 to 170 in 1913. The Committee granted funds to develop extra-curricular activities such as an educational holiday to the New Forest in 1908 and the school magazine "The Avenue" in 1910. Sunday evening meeting moved in 1908 from the meeting house in the town to the school owing to the very small attendance of Friends apart from the school.

The work of the Committee grew to keep pace with the expanding school. In this period the regular use of standing specialist sub-committees became established. Men and women were appointed to the Teachers committee in 1906. A Boilers committee was formed in 1909, and called the Premises committee for the first time in 1914. The original Sub-committee was becoming more closely associated with matters of finance and general administration. The Committee needed to ensure that the administrative structure enabled the school to function effectively. They had to prepare an insurance scheme for employees under the terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1906. They revised the fee structure, abandoning different rates according to means and applying a uniform fee applied to all children with the possibility of bursary help for those children of Friends in need of assistance. They appointed Trustees. They wrestled with the Inland Revenue over Income Tax in 1911. The extent and variety of matters before them led to a change of practice in 1910, when substantive items were placed first on their agenda, leaving routine matters until last, when they were becoming tired.

They needed their versatility to face the emergency of war in 1914. The Sub-committee, summoned hastily in December 1914, learnt that two days before the Headmaster had received notification that the school premises would be required for accommodation of 350 troops on the following day. The troops arrived at 2.00 p.m. and the school was broken up by 3.30 p.m. 160 children were dispatched to their homes with less than twenty-four hours' notice. A protest was sent to the President of the Board of Education. Friends were appointed to find alternative accommodation. Claims were made to cover compensation, loss of scholars and loss of connexion. Three special meetings at Devonshire House were needed in January 1915 to transact the business. The military occupation lasted eleven weeks before the school resumed. 32 scholars were lost to other establishments. Happily, the soldiers themselves gave no cause for complaint. By October normality was restored: the Committee honoured a bill presented as a result of boys turning a water course into the chalk pit which washed debris into the deep well at the cement works! In June 1916 the Committee were exercised about the state of affairs regarding men teachers and conscription. They were aware that some were liable to arrest as a result of their conscientious

objection to conscription for military service. The minutes reveal little other impact of the war on the school.

Reconstruction after the war was possible on a basis of increased numbers. 1918 began with 180 scholars. There was need for reassessment of the school's place in relation both to the Society of Friends and to the national system of education. In 1919 a Friends Education Commission visited to explore questions about the justification of Friends Schools, boarding schools, the principle of state aid and the reasons why Friends did and did not send their children to Friends Schools. In the same year the question of recognition by the Board of Education re-emerged so that teachers might qualify for pensions with the Government Superannuation scheme. Recognition demanded attention to academic standards and improvement of facilities. The Committee reaffirmed that admissions should continue on a basis of a statement of attainment supplemented by new entrance tests. They made plans for building development at a cost of £20,000.

James Crosfield handed over the Clerkship to Stafford Allen at the end of 1920, the mid-point of a significant twelve months. Florence D. Priestman was appointed to replace Lucy Fairbrother as principal mistress early in 1920. C. Brightwen Rowntree was appointed as Headmaster a year later. These appointments coincided with inspection by the Board of Education leading to recognition as efficient. The Inspectors were appreciative, sensing a generally satisfactory and improved standard since the last inspection. Detailed recommendations about academic matters and facilities were noted by the Committee and applied after critical examination. The Committee, clear that the school's duty was not confined to cleverer children, resisted the proposal that academic merit should be the major criteria for admission.

In 1922 Stafford Allen presented a minute of appreciation of the work of the retiring Headmaster and Mistress of the Family after thirty-two years' service. Thankful for all that had been accomplished under the care and guidance of these Friends, the Committee noted the steady increase in numbers and buildings, involving careful organisation and administrative ability. They recorded their appreciation for the long guidance in the way of intellectual and moral advance which had materially raised the educational standard. They expressed their

gratitude to their Heavenly Father for the way in which He had constantly sustained and directed these Friends.

The new Clerk and Headmaster presided over the completion of the building programme necessary for recognition. A new block of classrooms at the boys' end, a science laboratory, boys' bathroom, and a girls' hostel across the road (Hillcroft) improved both the boarding accommodation and the provision for practical subjects. Changes in the work of the Committee and the officers accompanied these physical changes. Following the creation of a Bursary committee to administer bursaries for Quaker children in 1920 the former Women's Committee was superseded by a House committee appointed to oversee domestic and health matters. Some reorganisation of duties followed the appointment of the new Headmaster. So that he could be free to organise all the educational and administrative work, the school accounts were delegated to the Secretary. A separate appointment of Mistress of the Family was made, as the Headmaster's wife had not assumed this responsibility for food, health and the general wellbeing of the household.

New opportunities did not eradicate other anxieties. Epidemics of influenza, mumps, scarlet fever and diphtheria threatened the reputation of a healthy environment. Refusal by the Board of Education in 1923 to include the school under the Superannuation Act threatened the professional standing of teachers, an uncertainty not resolved until 1927. Inflation challenged financial stability, especially as the adoption of the Burnham scale for payment of teachers increased the salary bill. Moreover, numbers had declined again to 149 by 1924 to create problems of balancing the accounts, especially when there was a burden of debt following the recent building programme. The prospect of installing pigs and a pig sty was light relief from more serious matters.

As the national provision for secondary education developed, the function of the school in relation to it changed. The school met a demand to admit children excluded from secondary education in maintained schools. The Committee declared themselves alive to their responsibility for these backward children of the Society. In 1923 they asserted that no child of a member of the Society of Friends had been refused admission on grounds of backwardness. At the same time they recognised the need to modify the curriculum in such a way as to make

it more easily adaptable to the needs of dull children. A modified form of Dalton plan, with group teaching and great elasticity in composition of form work, was introduced, even though it demanded greater effort in time and energy from staff.

In this period the Committee faced an agenda of 40 items at a regular meeting. Meticulous attention to details of fees payments, remissions following absence, applications, admissions and bills, formed the framework of normal business after substantive matters of policy had been considered. The Committee now numbered over forty members appointed by London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting, the six London Monthly Meetings, the six associated Quarterly Meetings and the Old Scholars' Association. They recognised the need to delegate. In 1925 they decided that applications for admission should be dealt with, not by them, but by the Clerk, another member and the Headmaster. The Sub-committee was appointed for a year rather than for three months as hitherto.

The stability of the established institution was jolted in 1925 by one of those crises in personal relationships which occur in communities when lack of close definition of specific duties occasioned a clash of personalities. In April two special meetings were needed at Devonshire House. The first was called to receive the Headmaster's resignation following difficulties in the position of his wife in relation to the Mistress of the Family. The resignation was accepted with deepest regret. The second was called at the request of the staff disturbed at the impending loss and likely harm to the school. The Headmaster gave hope of reconciliation, and the Committee allowed the resignation to be withdrawn. The House committee was instructed to define the duties of the Mistress of the Family in relation to the Headmaster and his wife. The upheaval subsided and the Committee could enjoy a summer with a new cricket pavilion donated by the Old Scholars' Association, not without the assistance of a loan from the Committee!

New schemes for development were considered in 1929. Proposals were made for a junior preparatory school to meet the need for Friends day schools, an efficient day school in Saffron Walden and a Friends boarding school for children between 6 and 10 years. The proposal to make room in the school for a post-matriculation group was quickly executed without dramatic change, but new funds and buildings were

needed for the junior department. Within a year Flint House had been purchased so that the new Junior School opened in the autumn of 1930.

The work of the Committee reflects the influence of outside events when they decided to give notice to staff of a reduction of salary by 10% in the light of the national financial situation in 1931. At the same time the Sub-committee was instructed to consider measures for economy. Recovery from war was now followed by economic stringency.

Towards the end of 1933 the Headmaster gave notice of his retirement the next year. The Committee noted the considerable educational advance since 1922. They acknowledged the Headmaster's mastery of detail, wonderful ability to find a way round every obstacle and especially the close and understanding friendship he had given unstintingly to all with whom he had come in contact. In September 1934 Gerald Littleboy, appointed after long and careful consideration, was installed as the new Headmaster.

Responsibility for a school was a complex matter meeting external pressures and institutional problems. To become more effective the Committee adapted procedure from time to time. In 1935 changes were adopted so that the Committee could have more time to deal with matters brought before them by the Headmaster in collaboration with the Headmistress in a carefully thought out report which should take the Committee fully into their confidence. Standing sub-committees were consequently given more responsibility with power to act if necessary before ratification by the Committee. A Nominations committee was established to bring in names for these committees: Bursary, House, Premises, Finance, (replacing the original Sub-committee) and Education (replacing the Teachers committee).

Before he relinquished his office as Clerk, Stafford Allen was concerned with matters crucial for the future of the school. There was growing consultation between Friends Schools, including a conference of Heads (1931) and a meeting of Chairmen about the educational needs of Friends Schools (1932). This was clearly not to imply loss of identity, for in 1935 a proposal that Saffron Walden should amalgamate with Sidcot was firmly rejected. The Committee considered that no useful purpose would be served by time being occupied in such discussion at an adjourned Yearly Meeting. Following a wise arrangement made in 1902, the lease on the Islington Road Estate, a former site of the

institution in London, was completed in 1934 realising £39,000. This enabled the Committee to contemplate a new Assembly Hall, Biology Laboratory and Geography room. After the last meeting which he served as Clerk, a request from Essex Education Committee was received to provide places for day girls at their expense. Stafford Allen, having served a term of fifteen years of steady change, handed to his successor the prospect of new and exciting development.

At the first meeting with Hugh T. Crosfield as Clerk in February 1936 the request from Essex was accepted and three day girls were to be admitted. The Committee approved also that post certificate work should continue, and that the retirement of teachers should be the same as for the state scheme. They agreed to increase the price paid for coal above the rate in the existing contract in order to increase the wages of miners. The school was becoming more involved in local and national matters.

New buildings allowed alterations of existing accommodation. The Assembly Hall enabled the lecture room at the centre of the school to be transformed into a library. Robin's Acre, purchased as a house for the Headmaster, released space in Hillcroft for other school purposes. With modification to the laundry, the introduction of a telephone system for internal use and numbers on roll reaching 200 in 1937, the Committee could reflect with some confidence on the development of facilities. Following their appointment of M. Sylvia Clark, as Headmistress, their appreciation, in 1937, of the retiring Headmistress also acknowledged the advance in the educational and intellectual standard during the period of her service to which she contributed her trained mind and sound scholarship.

The outbreak of war interrupted this progress. There is much evidence from the minutes of the impact of war on the life of the school. This is only partly accounted for by the new structure of committees which allowed more time for the Committee to hear reports of the school. It is also due to the sense of a community increasingly involved in its surroundings. Plans for evacuation during air raids, for trench systems and for supplying gas respirators were laid down in 1938. Matters of principle were raised by the Military Training Act. The Committee at first refused to give details of former scholars to the Ministry of Labour, but when it was made clear that this refusal to

comply with the Act constituted a breach of law, the Clerk was instructed to write to the Ministry with the information protesting against an educational institution being used for this purpose. When serving teachers came within the operation of the Military Service Act, the Committee decided to consider each case on its merits with a view to avoidance of hardship in individual cases, though they decided to give no guarantee of reinstatement after service. In 1942 boys and girls within the school were faced with the moral dilemma of conscription for military service. The school came to terms, as necessary, with other effects of war. Pig keeping was discontinued. Black outs, opening during holidays and decline in numbers were consequences of the decision to carry on at Saffron Walden. The school welcomed evacuees from Tottenham High School for Girls for two years. Hillcroft was commandeered partly for military and partly for expectant mothers. The offer from Sidcot in 1940 to provide accommodation for the School Certificate form for the period of their examination was gladly accepted. The Quaker concern for the distressed lay behind the hospitality to one hundred evacuees for one night and the admission of refugees at lower fees.

The work of an educational institution nevertheless continued. Normal routine proceeded as far as possible. In May 1940 the Committee were gratified with a favourable report from Board of Education Inspectors. Recommendations indicated the need for replacement of desks, the provision of common rooms and improved administration of the library. Even at the mid-point of war, in 1942 when Hugh Crosfield ceased to be Clerk, there was a sense of looking forward and outward. The Committee agreed to increase the number of girls from Essex to a maximum of twenty-five. They asked Friends Education Council to approach the Board of Education for recognition for government grants so that the school could endeavour to take an increasing place in the national education system. They responded warmly to a proposal for a central authority for Friends Schools.

These were themes developed by Howard Diamond who, as his predecessor had done, transferred from the office of Treasurer to that of Clerk, a service he continued until 1960. During this period there was a significant increase in numbers. From 200 scholars in 1943 the school almost doubled in size to 373 in 1957, due mainly to a growth in the

proportion of day scholars. This development arose from the Committee's desire, expressed in 1944, to cooperate with the local authority as closely as may be possible while safeguarding the prime purpose of the school as being a Quaker school. There was a scheme by which other selected scholars from Essex received assistance with the tuition part of the boarding fee. Consequently the number of scholars receiving assistance with fees from local authorities rose to nearly two-fifths by 1948. Indeed there were years when the numbers of applicants from Friends exceeded the number of places available.

This association with the local authority raised the question of even closer relationships. Officially encouraged to consider applying for Voluntary Aided status, this possibility was considered in 1945. In the end this was not proceeded with, partly because the school's endowment did not make the arrangement financially practicable and partly because of hesitations about making this denominational school the sole grammar school for the locality. The main apprehension was that there might be an increase in the measure of state control over all the activities of the school which would make it difficult to maintain the Quaker principles of its basis. However, the offer of placing both day and boarding places at the disposal of the local authority was accepted and implemented. In 1946 two Essex representatives were appointed to the School Committee. The arrangement with the county affected the structure of fees. The availability of assistance from public funds made a standard fee essential. The Committee justified a rebate on this fee to the children of Friends because of the large endowments made to the school by members of the Society in the past for the benefit of its members. The proportional value of this rebate, however, declined as the scale of fees increased in line with mounting costs. The decision to make the fee inclusive of extras was an indication that the Committee were concerned that parents should know in advance the extent of their financial obligations.

Post-war development followed two crucial appointments. In 1944 a new Headmistress, Jennie Ellinor, was appointed and two years later the post of Bursar was created, to which Eric Brown was appointed. The ensuing revision of duties made the post of Mistress of the Family no longer necessary. The confidence resulting from these new appointments, the expectation of continuing expansion and the general hope



Assembly in the Hall.

for a peaceful future led to definite proposals for further building development. The priority was the academic standing of the school, especially at Sixth form level, and facilities for academic work separate from leisure and living accommodation. The price of this priority was to close the Junior school. This step was regretted but made easier by the school's work continuing separately in the town. The accommodation thus released was converted as Croydon House for dormitories and domestic science. Development plans costing £35,000 were prepared, for which an appeal was launched among friends of the school in 1947. But at a time of annual deficits in the accounts and regular increase in fees, the target was not reached and plans were modified. Alterations to the kitchen and the provision of two new classrooms, with some consequent re-arrangement of use of other rooms, including common rooms separate from classrooms, were all that was possible before celebrations in 1952 to commemorate 250 years continuous existence. A birthday gift of hard tennis courts was completed in time for the formal celebrations. On July 22nd 450 visitors attended an occasion of thanksgiving with worship, an exhibition and specially commissioned music and pageant.

Howard Diamond regularly attended meetings of representatives of Friends Schools, first the Inter Schools Committee, later the Boarding Schools Committee. This increasing communication between Friends Schools grew from their common Quaker basis and boarding character, but concerted action was limited to areas which did not infringe the independence of each school. The idea of shared purpose and fortunes took root in this period, helped by the Clerk's faithful attendance and reporting. The Committee were conscious of the school's distinctive character. When the future of Friends Schools was considered in 1949 they judged it right to provide grammar school education but wished to keep the door open to pupils who might not normally be classified as grammar school pupils but could yet profit by the education the school had to offer. They thought that from its constitution and tradition, the school was probably as able as any Friends School to sustain this comprehensive role. They were much concerned lest the rising costs of education and the corresponding rise in fees would prevent giving the full service they desired. While determined to preserve their independence in all vital matters, they

thought that every possibility should be explored of obtaining such financial assistance from public sources as might become available. Independence, resulting in both Quaker character and payment of fees, produced a tension between priorities.

The structure of the Committee was extensively revised at this time. A Building Development committee, to undertake the principal negotiation with the architect, enabled the Premises committee to be concerned with maintenance and upkeep. In 1950 the Committee considered that consultation with assistant staff should be, not through representation on the Committee, but through the Heads and occasional conferences of Committee and staff. It took time for the Committee to face the matter of their own numbers. In 1946 they minuted that the Committee's size was too large but decided not to make changes. Five years later the issue was faced again, this time clearly identifying the functions of the Committee. Management needed a smaller committee. Spreading interest among Friends needed a widely representative body. Reducing the Committee from over 40 to a maximum of 25 for effective management would create the need for new ways to maintain the close interest of Friends. Proposals made by the Committee in 1953 to discontinue direct appointment by each of the six Quarterly Meetings associated with the school, but which did not hold London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting's ultimate responsibility, were not approved by the parent body. Further consideration brought an acceptable plan approved in 1954: a Committee of 24, 14 appointed by the owning Quarterly Meeting, 1 by each of the six associated Quarterly Meetings and 2 each by Essex Education Committee and the Old Scholars' Association. The new Committee took responsibility for the first time in July 1955.

One of the last tasks of the old Committee was to express deep appreciation to the retiring Headmaster, recording their very great regret at the loss of his services and acknowledging the steady growth in every department—buildings, numbers, Sixth form, and relationships with Essex. The Committee considered the strongest contribution which he and his wife made was to building the spirit and fellowship among those associated with the school. The Committee had facilitated academic attainment, with the first state scholarship in 1949 from the established Sixth form. They had fostered extra-curricular activity,

particularly in music, with concerts at Friends House and carols in Trafalgar Square, and in drama, with a major production each November. As they handed over to the new Committee they could do so in terms used by Howard Diamond on the appointment of the new Headmaster, Kenneth F. Nicholson, "We are entrusting you with something very precious".

The new Committee assumed responsibility just before the new Headmaster was installed in September 1955. Shortly afterwards an emergency challenged the qualities of them all. A fire broke out in the newly opened chemistry laboratory but disaster was averted. Once the damage was repaired the development of science was promoted. This was essential for expansion at Sixth form level, clearly a priority with decisions to separate the teaching of first and second year Sixth and to give preference to applicants whose parents undertook to keep them at school until 18. The report of a general inspection undertaken in November 1956 reflected a sense of satisfaction with the general condition of the school, its friendly spirit, and the contribution made by the staff. It expressed the view that the school should be in a position to send a larger number of scholars to universities. It drew attention to some weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some directions.

The report came when it was known that the Direct Grant list had been re-opened. Direct Grant status was the only possibility of commanding outright grants of public money once Voluntary Aided status was no longer contemplated. The advantages of reduction in fees charged to parents had to be weighed against the possible loss of freedom of the school to manage its own affairs. In 1957 the Committee judged that Direct Grant status might be a safeguard against the increasing difficulties with which independent schools would contend in the future. They were clear that in no way would state oversight prevent them from maintaining the best traditions of the school as a Friends' School of the future. An application followed this resolution between the conflicting priorities of the independence of a Friends School and of the need to keep fees as low as possible. But educational standards of work were a third priority and these did not match the admittedly high standard required for admission to the Direct Grant list. Following rejection by the Ministry in 1958, the Committee accepted that independent status was the only way forward. Despite the importance of maintaining the

standards of a good grammar school, they wished to reserve the right to admit children who could benefit from the education provided but who might not be suitable candidates for University entrance. It was clear that there could be no easy harmony between the claims of independence, level of fees, academic standards, the character of a Friends School and the desire to serve children for other than academic reasons.

As this door for the future closed, two other opportunities for cooperation with outside bodies opened, both in line with Howard Diamond's concerns. The increasing sense of common purpose among Friends Schools lay behind proposals to establish a joint Bursary Scheme applying to all children of Quaker parents in need of assistance. The Committee agreed to join the scheme in 1959. The proposal that Essex Education Committee might agree to a grant or a loan for capital development was an initiative consistent with the theme of cooperation with the maintained sector of education. The response was generous and prompt. A grant of £20,000 was received from Essex for capital development, later supplemented by a further £5,000. These expressions of the twin concerns for cooperation were initiated knowing that the third theme of numerical and academic advance was being accomplished. At this point Howard Diamond relinquished the Clerkship to his successor to shepherd their conclusion. When Joseph Hutchinson became Clerk at the beginning of 1960, his first task was to minute the Committee's deep sense of gratitude to Howard Diamond for his contribution to the development of the themes he nurtured during his Clerkship.

The grant from Essex formed the basis for renewed development plans. A new classroom block, named after the County, was in operation in 1961. A similar sum raised from friends of the school by 1963, augmented by a loan, a legacy and sale of property enabled the Committee to fulfil some of the revised building priorities. By 1967 the provision of improved changing rooms, a new smaller sanatorium, a junior boys' house (Gibson) in the former sanatorium, another classroom block (Crosfield) and improved accommodation for resident staff had been accomplished to consolidate the facilities needed for a school of 380 scholars.

With reduced size and more delegation to sub-committees, the Committee had more time for the Heads' reports as they developed a

more intimate and confidential character. The minutes recording victory by the boys over Newport school in 1960, breaking of the mile record twice in a term in 1962, performances of Verdi's Requiem with choirs of two other Friends Schools at Thaxted and Friends House, London in 1963, show that they were in touch with the life of the scholars. The Committee needed to know the good things to balance the reports they received from the Heads about indiscipline. This anxiety and uncertainty increased as the moral dilemma of society developed beyond the school. It was important to know about the welfare of scholars in trouble, especially if removal from the school was necessary. They needed to know in what ways the Heads required support and encouragement to face the difficulties of changing attitudes to behaviour. The minutes of the 1960's regularly record regret at the disciplinary problems caused by a small number of individuals. There was appreciation of and support for the Heads and staff in the attempts to overcome their problems. Running a school involved dealing with incidents of theft, smoking, drinking alcohol and relationships between boys and girls at a time when the traditional obligations to responsible behaviour were changing rapidly. The community felt the impact of individual irresponsibility.

The impact of change in society affected political and educational philosophies also. As the nation wrestled with the principle and consequent reorganisation to provide secondary education for all on comprehensive lines, Essex could no longer use the facilities of a small school with selective admission. In March 1962 the Committee learnt that Essex wished to continue to reserve boarding and day places. A year later Essex had made and implemented the decision not to send boys and then gave notice that they were unlikely to send girls after 1971. This swift reversal of policy broke the happy development of cooperation between school and local authority. It also indicated how closely the school's fortunes were allied to conditions outside its control.

The Committee could, however, control the structure of appointments to direct the life of the school. In 1964 the Headmistress retired after twenty years' service helping the school through the post war period of development and expansion. In the warm appreciation for the past, the Committee used the opportunity to review and revise the structure for the future. They agreed to the principle of a single Head of

the school. They recognised the recent development of close integration of the two sides into a single fully coeducational school. This change made it increasingly inconvenient to administer the school through a system in which authority was shared equally between two Heads. Consequently, they decided to seek an appointment on this occasion of a woman who would stand second only to the Head in responsibility. In the event they made an appointment which differed in part from their intention. Phyllippa D. M. Brown was appointed Assistant Head in charge of the girls' side responsible with the Headmaster for the running of the school. A senior member of the staff, Cyril A. Mummery, was appointed Deputy Head to take over responsibility of the school whenever the Headmaster was absent. However, this attempt to define and restructure responsibility among the senior appointments required review following the resignation of the Assistant Head in 1965. With the Head and Deputy Head continuing in office, the Committee authorised the Head to appoint the senior mistress, Joy E. Ashford, as Head of the girls' side.

Meanwhile, the internal life of the school developed to relate as closely as possible to contemporary needs and demands. In 1964 the Committee agreed to introduce Russian as the second modern language as a gesture by a Quaker school to international understanding. The scripture course was broadened by the introduction in 1966 of a human studies course. A half-term break in the autumn term was initiated. Responsibilities among senior scholars were more widely shared by the abandonment of the prefect system. A cafeteria system of meals was adopted so that day scholars could have mid-day meals in school to improve their integration with boarders.

The Committee themselves met the pressure of outside influence. In 1967 they decided to become a Board of Governors, with a Chairman instead of a Clerk, to be in line with standard practice in independent and local authority schools. This change of nomenclature to improve communication with the secular world did not bring significant change to the working of the Board. At their meetings the Chairman continued to be Clerk of the Quaker meeting, discovering the sense of the meeting and recording its unity in minutes accepted at the time.

When the Royal Commission on Public Schools started work, the group of nine Friends Schools explored the idea of integrating with the

maintained system on a new basis. The idea was attractive though the Governors in 1967 were clear that it was important to maintain freedom to select staff and pupils, to keep the size of the school small and to preserve its character. They identified this distinctive character as mild discipline, lack of snobbery, coeducation, tendency to freedom in behaviour, concern to help the less affluent, concern to provide for children of lower academic ability, modest way of life and openness to new light and educational experiment. The Governors noted evidence which showed that there was virtually no difference in performance between boys and girls and that scholars so responded to the situation at Walden that after two years they were doing rather better than their performance at first gave reason to expect. Although the Governors hoped that the question of surrender of independent status would be carefully negotiated both in principle and in detail, they were clear that their responsibility as Governors for policy in Christian education, staffing and finance should be maintained. The challenge to face new opportunities was an occasion to establish priorities of purpose and commitment. However, as the proposals for closer cooperation did not materialise, independence was still the only way forward.

At the end of 1967, meeting in London, the Governors, after careful deliberation, appointed John C. Woods as Headmaster from September 1968. They expressed their deep appreciation to the retiring Headmaster, minuting shortly before his death in March 1969, their sense that his greatest contribution had been the deeper educational resources of the school. They acknowledged that he put forward his ideas as a leader who sought to involve his colleagues and his scholars rather than to instruct them, that he worked as Headmaster using the Quaker way of doing business as an agreed move forward and, above all, that he thought deeply about education.

The Governors watched and guided as the school continued in similar directions amongst new circumstances. In 1969 new arrangements for worship were introduced reducing to one the number of occasions boarders were expected to attend on Sunday, maintaining evening meeting in school as that occasion. The pattern on Thursdays was altered so the whole school might experience something of Quaker silent worship. The moral education of children in a society which increasingly accepted more permissive conduct was a continuing con-

cern. Misuse of drugs followed increased incidents involving tobacco and alcohol. Governors considered the problems presented to them regularly in the school report. They frequently minuted support for the staff in the very difficult problems with which they were faced as they tried to maintain both freedom and discipline. They were aware of the background problems placed on children by questions of authority, discipline, affluence, sexual relationships in a pluralist and secular age. They hoped that the Heads and their colleagues would not feel restrained from preaching Christian values whatever the likely response. Following discussion with the staff, the Governors came to the view in 1973 that expulsion could no longer be maintained as an automatic sanction. As problems of behaviour became more complex, methods of dealing with them became more individual.

Cooperation among Friends Schools opened in new ways following the replacement in 1969 of the Boarding Schools Committee by the Friends Schools Joint Committee. The Governors approved the establishment of this group authoritative enough to deliberate and report on matters of broad policy. A request of the new body in 1970 for termination of fee rebates to Quaker children found the Governors not of one mind at first. They discovered unity at a subsequent meeting that the balance of advantage was in favour of phasing out rebate, providing all Friends Schools did so. The Board cooperated with the Committee in the investigation into reasons for the decline in numbers of Friend children in Friends Schools and on the development of a common policy on advertising and publicity. In 1974 they had sufficient confidence in the Committee's authority to ask the Committee to pursue the idea for association with the state system. This sense of belonging to the Society of Friends was expressed in the musical cooperation between eight schools in performances of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at Thaxted and Friends House in 1974. In that year also an Open Day for representatives of associated Quaker meetings was arranged as an occasion separate from Parents Day. Governors found this new scheme to be in right ordering.

The wish to maintain the influence of the Society of Friends in the school was paramount. When the Governors considered the future role of the school in 1974 this was recognised as the essential basis in whatever approach opened in cooperation with the maintained system.

They thought it was important to develop such a relationship in new ways now that Essex had terminated the arrangements for sending day girls, both because it was educationally desirable and because in the economic circumstances of the time the costs to parents of independent education were very great indeed. They were convinced that the school had much to offer and much to gain. They identified the assets as the corporate commitment to a Christian approach to education, the expertise of the school in boarding and coeducation and the remedial care of children in difficulty. But again this wish to co-operate could not be fulfilled.

Attention to relationships outside ran parallel to development of the school itself. The Building Development Committee assessed the needs and priorities for the future. The purchase in 1967 of the site of the town's water tower gave the possibility of a recreation centre in the disused covered reservoir as the first of several alterations and improvements. An appeal was launched and the target of £60,000 amply fulfilled by the end of 1973. Backed by other financial resources, building was authorised and further plans laid for an additional classroom block (Leicester). The new buildings improved the academic and recreational facilities. Consequent re-arrangement of existing room improved boarding accommodation.

One adaptation of premises provided a basis for implementing further the concept of a unitary school. In 1969 the centre of the first floor in the main building was rearranged so that the Heads could work in adjacent rooms. Another stage in this process occurred in 1972 when the Headmistress, as the Head of girls' side had been called since 1969, resigned after her marriage. The occasion was taken to revise the duties of the three principal officers. The post of Dean of Studies was created for Cyril Mummery. Following the appointment of Ena W. Evans as Deputy Head, alterations in organisation and administration were possible to develop a different concept of joint responsibility in a co-educational school. Both Head and Deputy Head were given duties embracing the whole school.

Contemporary thinking about participation led to some consideration of the Governors' communication with staff and scholars. In 1970 they decided that representation of these groups in any formal manner to be both inappropriate and unnecessary. Instead, they set aside time



The Croydon Gate.

annually to meet both staff and scholars to consider matters of mutual concern. The structure of the Board was also examined. Like their predecessors, they identified the needs of the Board to be experience and professional expertise in all aspects of school policy and the representation of the school in its constituent area. In order to make new experience available to the Board, they considered proposals for limits by age and by length of service. In 1972 they agreed not to limit by age and received no clear lead about the limit to time of service. Clarity emerged in 1974 when they decided not to alter the existing arrangements. Although there was no formal change, there was a sense that the effectiveness of the Board was so crucial that alterations might be necessary.

By the time Joseph Hutchinson completed service at the table in 1974 the work of the body responsible for the management of the school had become more complex. Guiding a school attempting to discover Quaker solutions to non-Quaker situations was demanding. As the coherent community became more difficult to achieve, so cooperation with outside bodies, the Society of Friends and the local authorities, was becoming more tenuous and uncertain. At the time Godfrey Mace became Chairman in 1974 another crucial outside factor became more urgent and dominant. Economic inflation exerted new pressures. Membership of the Board demanded exacting involvement.

Inflation led to increased fees which led, in turn, to some decline in numbers. Fees of £555 in 1970 became £1,239 in 1975 and £1,680 in 1977. A school with 387 scholars in 1970 became one with 369 in 1976 and 336 in 1977. Governors faced current trends such as the greater use of the welfare state, official policy towards independent schools, the secularisation of society and the ambivalent attitude of the Society of Friends to its schools. These matters posed questions for the future, especially when the falling birth rate would add its effect on demand. The Governors sought to preserve the ideas for which the existence of the school stood, and to discuss what they should provide and for whom they should provide it. But alternatives for the future presented dilemmas and tensions. The provision of a Christian boarding education in a small school with academic possibilities might lead to the withdrawal of official Quaker support and some decline in numbers. To adjust the work of the school to meet unmet needs in society which other

people thought significant might prove impracticable and too radical. Governors recognised that they did not hold control of all the factors in the school's future. They saw their immediate responsibility to support the staff in their endeavour to realise the full potential of the children in their care, to keep the school running during an inflationary situation and to continue the dialogue with the maintained sector.

Support for the staff in a time of uncertainty demanded imaginative and powerful upholding. Scholars with an articulate dislike for discipline, exposed to the misuse of drugs and expecting greater freedom in leisure time, presented individual and corporate situations which required careful handling. Greater flexibility in admissions in order to maintain numbers challenged teaching methods in the classroom. As the staff faced unfamiliar tensions and uncertain situations, the Governors reiterated their appreciation for the concern and dedication with which the school was served. Yet morale remained high. Scholars at their annual meetings with Governors showed critical appreciation. When the wrought-iron gate, originally the entrance to the premises at Croydon, was opened to form part of the new complex of classrooms at Quaker Open Day in 1976, something of the past was incorporated with the present.

The producers of a short BBC film of the school in 1977 discovered a happy place, keen, with an admirable capacity for order achieved without rigid discipline. A performance of Verdi's Requiem in York Minster by a choir from all the Friends Schools indicated both musical achievement and Quakerly cooperation. The original Bursar retired in 1976 after 30 years' accurate financial administration and practical and imaginative care of the property. The Deputy Head took her wisdom and humour to a Headship in 1977 leaving a more truly coeducational school behind her. The appointment of Louis S. Trotter and A. Margaret Brandon in their places promised well for the years ahead.

But that future could well challenge the governors to make decisions which radically affected the school's fortune in rapidly changing circumstances. In 1977 Governors considered some of the inter-related problems and recalled their faith in the basic purposes which had in the past and still guided their progress. They were clear that responsibility for decisions rested with them, with the duty to report to London and Middlesex General Meeting. They recognised

that to take decisions in an evolving situation needed great knowledge and experience of the school. In October, therefore, instead of the regular termly one-day meeting, they met for a weekend conference to consider in greater depth several important matters of policy. They decided to seek again some form of cooperation with the local authority. In the event Essex was unable to make a favourable response. The Governors appointed a Business Affairs Working Party to maintain and if possible increase numbers in the school, by more effective marketing through advertising, publicity and the award of scholarships. The exercise of the weekend led them to a fuller understanding of the issues involved in the management of the school and a confident commitment to the future.

Their confidence was firm despite new problems of the times. They were challenged by senior scholars about the morality of banking with Barclays Bank because of its involvement in South Africa. They were aware of the difficulties caused by the violence of disturbed children. They were conscious that morale needed to be maintained in face of falling numbers. They knew that difficulties arose in a school community despite the attempt to create a structure and administration designed to eliminate aggressive tensions and to promote cooperative harmony and order.

As the Governors prepared to mark the centenary of the move to Saffron Walden with a birthday gift and a series of celebratory occasions in the autumn of 1979, they reiterated their confidence in the assets of the school. The leaflet "What the school has to offer", published for publicity purposes, drew attention to the tradition of Christian Quaker upbringing, to the response to the needs of changing times and to the ability of scholars to follow the careers of their choice with a degree of personal maturity and stability. They knew that finances were soundly based.

Understanding, commitment and confidence were essential for the present and hopeful bases for the future. These qualities had been present, too, in the past. The work of the Committee and the Board had lain behind the life and fabric of the school throughout the century at Walden. The lives of generations of staff and scholars were extensively and deeply enriched by this hidden but most precious asset: the Committee and Board.