

12 Smithfield Avenue,

Hippoholme.

Halifax HX3 8HZ

26. 3. 93

Dear Alan Swale,

As one of your father's appreciative
minions from the 1960s, I was very sorry indeed
not to be at his funeral this afternoon. Unfortunately,
as a Head myself, I had a long-standing meeting
arranged with my Chairman of Governors and our
local (Colne Valley) M.P. In keeping this appointment,
I was conscious of a certain disloyalty to your
father, since Graham Kidd is, I suspect, just
the kind of Conservative of whom your father would
most have disapproved "Aren't the Tories a horrible
lot?", I remember him saying; and I'm not sure
that he ever quite brought himself to forgive me
for working, in however small a way, for the Halifax
SDP candidate in the 1983 election - and thus
helping to lose Shirley Amundson her seat.

Your father was extremely kind to me
even before I moved to Here in 1962, to attempt
the daunting task of filling the gap left by the

death of Cecil Mackley. He sorted out my
 backward accommodation for me in a series of
 hilarious letters (which make me wonder at the
 time what sort of a man it was for whom I had
 agreed to work), even offering me at one point the
 courtesy of his garden shed, complete with
 detailed dimensions.

Herts was, in any day, a remarkable
 school: clever boy, an immensely talented
 staff, dominated, as only a small school could
 be, by your father's personality. (In 1973, as the
 newly appointed Headmaster of Crosby & Potter
 (another act of betrayal: your father was
 staggered me by telling me, some years earlier,
 that he would like me to succeed him), I
 found myself, involuntarily but appropriately, referring
 to him in the toast that I had the honour
 of proposing, at his farewell dinner, as 'Mr. Herts'.
 Some things, of course, he made personally his
 own, like the school play, which regularly
 achieved extraordinarily performance standards. But
 he also had other priorities - Oxbridge awards,
 the Ukky Rugby Sevens . . . In many ways he
 was a marvellous man ahead of his time. He

Certainly contrived to give me the feeling that working at Heald was special, and different from working at any other school. I think that he was probably right. I certainly feel the difference when I moved on to a large comprehensive; and today, in sight of retirement, and after more than 20 years of teaching, I can (I do regularly) say that my 5 years at Heald were the most enjoyable of all.

I was delighted to hear that my friend Stephen Fenley was to speak at my funeral. He will, I am sure, have done justice to your father's memory. Your father was, though my fault, only an occasional visitor to my home. I remember how on his first visit after our marriage, my wife and I were determined that the clock that he was given us should show exactly the right time. Alas, we did not ^{do} well enough. 'Twenty seconds slow', he announced disappointingly. Only last month, I was reminding him of his last words as he left the house after that so (fairly) recent visit: 'See you again in 10 years time!' A just rebuke to the irregularity of our invitation.

Twice I had the privilege of visiting him at Ashby Grange. I certainly enjoyed talking with him about Heath in the 1960s, and I think that he enjoyed it, too. I was glad to be able to tell him of what his help and encouragement had meant to me in my career, and to many others, I have no doubt. I learnt from him lessons that I have tried to implement in my own schools, especially the importance of ensuring that colleagues feel valued for their contribution to the work of the organisation: what your father, in his military style, would have called "man management".

The mood at his funeral, I trust, will have been of thanksgiving: a big man, living a long life, and scattering blessings along the way. I shall be as of many, I am sure, remembering him with gratitude & affection.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Brian Evans