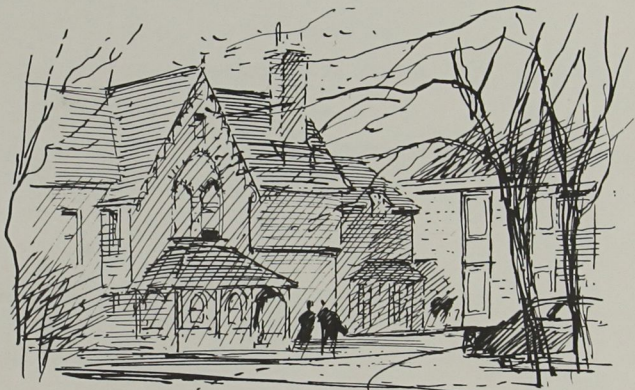


The Story of the
DORSET HOUSE SCHOOL
of
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Dorset House The Entrance Courtyard

1930 — 1986

Foreword by John Thomas, MBE

Foreword by Jerry Collins, MBE

The story of
 DORSET HOUSE SCHOOL
 of
 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
 1930 - 1986

The Lists of
SOCIETY HOUSE SCHOOL
of
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
1930 - 1931

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Foreword by John Casson, OBE

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FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure, and indeed an honour, for me as Chairman of the Board of Governors to introduce the story of Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy, founded by my aunt, Dr. Elizabeth Casson O.B.E., or, as we in the family know her, Aunt Elsie.

In 1928 when my parents were on a theatrical tour of South Africa, my father, Lewis Casson, received a cable from Aunt Elsie, his younger sister, which read, "Can you lend me a thousand pounds". My father, combining his intention with economy, replied "yes" and arranged the loan. The money was to help Aunt Elsie to buy Dorset House, Clifton, from which our present school is named, and my father used to say it was the best investment he ever made. It was here that she began her pioneering work in occupational therapy under her own banner, and we all knew the house well. I remember my younger brother, Christopher, and I occasionally stayed week-ends there. I travelled up from Portsmouth (I was a young naval officer then) on a sports motor-cycle and Christopher by train from London. We had one dread, which was to be roped in to do Morris-dancing with some of the patients, with Aunt Elsie as the stern referee!

She was much loved by her ten nephews and nieces, and each of us at one time or another came under the spell of her strong personality. She was a most determined lady, who nearly always got her own way because it never occurred to her that any sensible person would disagree with her. But she had great charm and an irrepressible humour. When she showed her affection, which was often, the warmth of her smile was captivating.

What cannot be denied is that she was an eccentric, a real eccentric in that she saw herself as normal and other people as somewhat eccentric. For example, she spent a lot of money on clothes from expensive dressmakers, and yet never seemed to look fashionably dressed. I remember

one evening when she joined our family at the theatre, in the days when one "dressed" for the occasion. I can see her now striding along the pavement towards us in a long well-cut gown, carrying a small suitcase in one hand, a large rolled-up umbrella in the other and wearing on her feet a pair of brown "sensible" country brogues!

What we all remember about her, however, was her untiring energy, her infectious enthusiasm for whatever she was engaged in, her utter integrity, her warm-hearted kindness and her deep Christian beliefs.

My dear cousin Hugh carried the Casson flag for Dorset House from 1948 until 1978, and I was greatly honoured to take over from him after he became President of the Royal Academy. And so Aunt Elsie's flag still "flies and the city has not fallen". Wherever she is now, I hope she approves of us because her approval was always something to be proud of.

Here then is the story of Dorset House so admirably put together by Betty Collins, a former Principal of the School. It is my sincere hope that those who read it will learn something of and be impressed by, Aunt Elsie's achievement.

John Casson

PREFACE

Occupational Therapy is still one of the youngest of the professions supplementary to medicine and, as with all youngsters, its early years have seen growth, experimentation, change and eventual acceptance by the older professions as a fully-fledged member of the medical team.

It is because I have been privileged to play a part in this that, when asked to record the history of Dorset House, I agreed perhaps a little too readily. Had I appreciated the extent of the undertaking I might have been more hesitant.

The years up to 1946 had already been recorded, but from that time onward the archive material, of which there was no lack, had to be collated. Many fascinating hours were spent reading old press cuttings, sorting photographs, checking the minutes of meetings and trying to fill the gaps by talking to past students and staff whose memories of events could augment my own. This last exercise sometimes produced conflicting evidence as no two people ever remember things in quite the same way. It also produced a wealth of anecdotal material which, if used, would have needed several volumes. Selection, therefore, while essential has not been easy and readers may well find that some events, which for personal reasons were important to them, have had to be excluded, and for this I can only ask their indulgence.

After considering various formats I decided to present Parts I - III chronologically as many of the developments of the school were linked with the changes taking place in the medical and social scene generally. However, certain subjects, which did not fall easily into the chronological pattern, have been dealt with separately in Part IV.

Part I (1930-1946), covering the beginning and early years, has been reproduced from the original "Story of Dorset House" which was produced in booklet form in 1950. No attempt had been made to re-write or edit this as historically it reflects the aspirations and attitudes of the times. Particularly the 'Foreword' by Dr. Casson and the 'Profile' of her by "A.W.R." are essential to the understanding of the ethos on which the school was based.

In parts II and III a change in style may be apparent, this having been written more than thirty years later. Whereas in Part I all the staff involved in the pioneering stages of the school are mentioned by name, this obviously has not been possible as the school has grown in size and staff have come and gone. Thus, from 1946 onwards only some of the longer-serving staff are referred to in the text. At one stage the possibility of appending a list of past staff was considered. However, although records of salaried staff are available, no complete list exists for those who were paid weekly or on a part-time basis. Therefore as an incomplete list could cause hurt to those omitted, this idea was abandoned.

During the writing of the chronicle there were moments when I was tempted to deviate from the narrative to include some relevant anecdote which, interesting or entertaining as it might be, would have interrupted the sequence. To overcome this difficulty a few reminiscences have been collected together in Appendix A.

Throughout the preparation of this story, I came to rely heavily on Harry Dennison, who had recently retired from his post as Bursar. Not only did he fill in some of the gaps in the narrative and cast a critical eye over the text, but more importantly gave of his time to put the early drafts onto a word-processor. Sadly he died suddenly before the final stages were reached. To him, to those who willingly contributed anecdotes, and to all whose 'brains I have picked' I would like to record my thanks.

For me, writing this has been an enjoyable, if nostalgic, experience. It has been a lengthy process, largely because of the extent of the period to be covered. If, as I hope, this record is continued, a decadal update would prove easier and ensure its accuracy.

Betty Collins
December 1987



Dr. Elizabeth Casson, O.B.E.

PART I (1930 - 1946)

FOREWORD

(Written by Dr. Casson in 1950)

This booklet is the joint production of several old friends of Dorset House. I have been asked to write a foreword to explain why it has been published.

The Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy is the outcome of an idea, and new students joining it need to understand that idea and to realise their part in co-operating with its development.

When I first qualified as a doctor I decided that, from my hospital experience, I would take up psychological medicine, and went to one of the best mental hospitals as a clinical assistant. I had been used enough to busy people when I was house-property managing under Octavia Hill, and to ill people in bed when I was a medical student, but I found it very difficult to get used to the atmosphere of bored idleness in the day rooms of the hospital. Then, one Monday morning, when I arrived at the women's wards, I found the atmosphere had completely changed and realised that preparations for Christmas decorations had begun. The ward sisters had produced coloured tissue paper and bare branches, and all the patients were working happily in groups making flowers and leaves and using all their artistic talents with real interest and pleasure. I knew from that moment that such occupation was an integral part of treatment and must be provided.

A few weeks later I moved on to a job at Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water, where there was a tradition of many forms of occupation that had been handed on from its early days. The games, entertainments, competitions and the annual sports and craft exhibitions acted as stimuli to many patients during the whole year. Among those who were well enough to organise their own needlework and embroidery,

there was excellent occupation encouraged by the nurses, but it was all voluntary and no work was regularly prescribed by the medical officers.

My first real introduction to Occupational Therapy came from a description by Dr. David Henderson (now Sir David Henderson) of the small department he had opened at Gart Naval Hospital, Glasgow, which I was able later to visit.

The first large department I saw was in America at Bloomingdale Hospital, New York, which I visited on a holiday about 1926. It had a beautiful Craft House, built in hospital grounds, with large rooms for printing, book-binding, metal-work, weaving, pottery and a variety of other forms of employment. There was a large gymnasium nearby with a team of games instructors. The patients left their wards at stated times for 'work'. A few days later I visited the Boston School of Occupational Therapy, and the idea of an English School was implanted on my mind.

I searched out all of the same type of work in England that I could find. The patients in Dr. Jane Walker's Sanatorium at Nayland were making jewellery and were doing other crafts and she would have started a school herself if funds had been available. Dr. Helen Boyle's patients at the Lady Chichester Hospital, Brighton, were weaving. Each patient at Dr. Crichton Miller's Home at Harrow had an individual time-table for the whole day. It was long after this that I realised the splendid work that Sir Robert Jones had done in his big workshops at Shepherd's Bush during the 1914-1918 war.

Occupational Therapy began to be organised at Virginia Water soon after my holiday in America. Miss K. Phillips who had retired from the post of Chief Inspector of L.C.C. Infant Schools came first, to hold regular classes in embroidery. There were no trained Occupational Therapists available, but Miss Allen, who had worked with mental defective patients, started full-time work with a few looms, and very soon needed more help, so Miss Tebbitt was added to her

staff for a few months. Miss Tebbitt obtained a scholarship at the Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy, and came back to Dorset House in 1929.

In the meantime, I left Virginia Water to start a residential clinic at Dorset House on Clifton Down, Bristol, with the firm determination to work out all the ideas as to treatment that had been growing in my mind. One of these was the full-time planned day for all patients, and from this grew the Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy. In my early lectures to students, I was specially interested in pointing out that all stimuli that reached the brain resulted in instinctive or voluntary action. This may occur immediately, but if thwarted the mental energy is stored and the urge to action becomes involved and combined in sentiments that later become the motives of organised activities. There were plenty of these motives stored up in me, and it has taken all my activities since 1929 till now to express them.

The aim of Dorset House was to form a community where every individual was encouraged to feel that she had a real object; for a patient the object was to get well and to go out to a worth-while life; for a member of the staff it was to serve others with all the talents she possessed; for a student, to develop all her capacities for her life as an Occupational Therapist and to find the individual job that only she could do. Such objects demand ideals before they can be developed and many of us have found that just so far as we make the fulfilment of the Lord's Prayer our aim and object, so do we find the Kingdom of God is come among us.

Between 1929, the year of the opening of Dorset House, and 1941, when we were bombed out of Bristol, about 800 patients had been resident at the clinic. This booklet will tell you some of the work that the house was enabled to do.

When, owing to war conditions, Dorset House in Clifton closed, the nursing home moved to Clevedon and I moved with it and carried on here. The Emergency Medical

Services had arranged to use the Allendale Curative Workshop for the treatment of war casualties, but when Bristol had to be treated as a danger area all the service patients were sent elsewhere.

After a very anxious period of uncertainty as to its future, the Ministry of Health borrowed the School for the war period, and it was invited to Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove.

Miss Macdonald, who had been one of the School's most talented students, was appointed Principal in 1938 and had already shown her genius for administration. With the help of her staff, Miss MacCaul, Miss Harris and Miss Oldnall, and its few students, all full of purpose, loyalty and enterprise, she was able to guide the School through its many vicissitudes, from Bristol to Bromsgrove, from Bromsgrove to Oxford. Its debt and gratitude to Dr. Andrew Shepherd, Medical Superintendent of Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove, will always remain. His hospitality and wise guidance provided to the School a security that contributed in great part to its growth from the ten Bristol students to which it had dwindled to the hundred who regretfully left him for Oxford in 1946.

In its darkest hour the School was given a grant of £600 from the Lord Mayor of London's Air Raid Fund, which helped it in re-establishing itself in Oxford when the war was over.

There have been many others whose help has been and still is invaluable, especially Sir Geoffrey Peto, who watched over the School when the war nearly wrecked its work and who became Chairman of the Governors of the School and of the Trust that had been formed to hold Harberton House for it.

St. Margaret's
Walton,
Clevedon, Som.

ELIZABETH CASSON
Medical Director,
Dorset House School of
Occupational Therapy.

PROFILE

ELIZABETH CASSON, M.D., D.P.M.

DR. ELIZABETH CASSON has always shown a tendency to surprise her friends by cheerfully undertaking seemingly impossible tasks against apparently hopeless odds. Those who knew her when she was at work under Miss Octavia Hill in Estate Management, managing house property in Southwark, were quite sure that she had found her metier and that she and Miss Joan Sutherland and some of Miss Hill's other stalwart helpers were inseparables and fixed for life. But not so: what Elizabeth Casson had learnt in South London was that it was the Londoners themselves as well as their tenements that needed 'first aid', and she surprised her friends at the age of thirty by working for her matriculation and then becoming a qualified practitioner in medicine and surgery, ultimately achieving the distinction of being the first woman to gain the degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of Bristol.

Her first appointment in medicine was at the West Herts Hospital at Hemel Hempstead during the first war - a most valuable experience gained under what one may call conditions of high pressure and tension. Thereafter, though she had shown that she had the 'hands' and the aptitude of a surgeon, she surprised everyone again by electing to specialise in the treatment of nervous and mental disorders and joining Dr. Moore's resident staff at the Royal Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water. It was there that she not only proceeded to her doctorate but also gained the much coveted distinction of election to the company of Gaskell prize-winners.

Her attachment to Bristol, where she had graduated, and to Clifton Hill House, where she had resided under Miss Stavely, led her in due course to set up her own establishment at Dorset House on the Clifton Downs, where, with other forms of medical treatment, she organised and developed a school of occupational therapy. That she

succeeded at Clifton as she had succeeded at Virginia Water, at Hemel Hempstead and under Miss Octavia Hill, we all of us know. The subsequent history of her school, and her long tenure of the office of Honorary Consultant at the Bristol General Hospital speak for themselves.

Dr. Casson comes of an interesting family. Her father, Thomas Casson, is the subject of a leading article in a recent number of *The Organ* (October 1948), written in appreciation of his outstanding influence on modern developments in organ-building. Her brother, Sir Lewis Casson, the actor, is, of course, well-known. There was a Casson great-grandmother in Napoleonic times who organised community meals and slate-quarrying for the villagers of Festiniog when the industry was at a standstill during the blockade, and further back still was another ancestor after Dr. Casson's own heart - 'Wonderful Walker' - of Seathwaite-in-Dudden, who was curate there, in the eighteenth century, for seventy years. He kept school in his church on week-days, and spun at his wheel and taught all his own family to weave.

This passing reference to Dr. Casson's kith and kin and the stock from which she comes must needs be brief, though it is important because she herself is both proud of it and interested in it. A characteristic trait that must at some time have impressed her friends and acquaintances is her capacity for extending and keeping intact her circle of associates. She has not forgotten and does not forget any.

Such in brief are some impressions of an onlooker who, during forty-five years, has watched the inspired growth of Dr. Casson's work.

A.W.R.

BRISTOL AND BROMSGROVE

The history of Dorset House as a School of Occupational Therapy is in its early days inseparable from the history of Dorset House as a Nursing Home for the treatment of patients suffering from neurotic and psychotic disorders. In the summer of 1929 Dr. Casson appointed Miss Constance Tebbitt, then training in Philadelphia, as Principal of the School. Miss Tebbitt worked strenuously in the United States to gather material for use in training, returning to England for Christmas 1929. The School actually opened within the Nursing Home on New Year's Day, 1930, with Dr. Casson as Medical Director.

In the first three years Dorset House was not only a Nursing Home and Training School for Occupational Therapists, it was an enterprise, and an experiment and a thrilling adventure for those most closely concerned with it. To be part of it, whether as Medical Director, Nurse, Kitchen Maid, Secretary, Student or Principal, meant being part of a vital and living whole, and knowing that one had a contribution to make to the well-being of that whole. Behind it all was the dynamic quality in the work which Dr. Casson inspired and of which she was the centre.

During these first three years the bulk of clinical experience was psychological, the reason for this being two-fold. The demand for trained Occupational Therapists was for those equipped for Mental Hospital work, and at the same time it was far easier to provide facilities for this type of experience. The physical aspects of Occupational Therapy were never lost sight of, and during 1939 an embryonic Occupational Therapy department to demonstrate the use of this treatment for physical cases was opened at the Bristol General Hospital, though the work was confined to ward work and the patients treated were mostly heart cases. Most of the students' clinical practice was obtained with Dr. Casson's own patients and at this time the occupational treatment and training departments of Dorset House and the

School were intimately related to one another. The student's experience of Occupational Therapy included such varied activities as netball, country dancing, theatre and bridge parties, gardening and picnics, in addition to crafts.

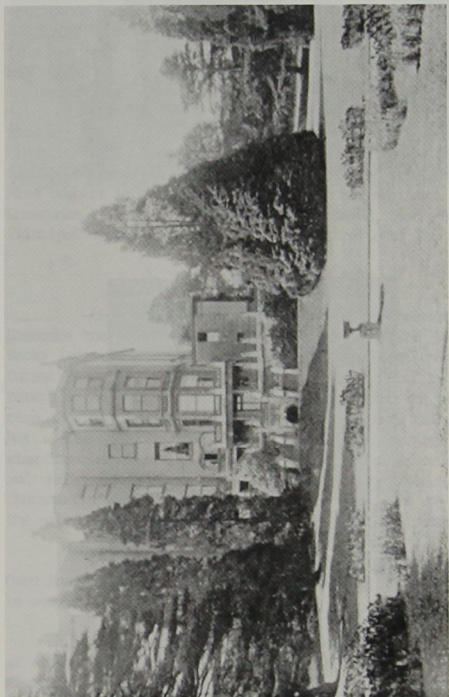
The School's premises were always expanding, from part of one room to two and from two to half a house. All early Dorset House Occupational Therapy staff and students will have vivid memories associated with their first residential quarters, 'The Garage', with its primitive approach and early English facilities for ablution!

In the beginning Dr. Casson gave the lectures on Anatomy, Physiology and medical subjects herself, while Miss Tebbitt taught the occupations and Theory of Occupational Therapy, ran the O.T. department, and supervised the students' work!

In addition to the work undertaken at the Bristol General Hospital some students helped with the running of Extension Guide Companies at Frenchay Sanatorium and at Winford Orthopaedic Hospital, thus gaining further experience in handling physical cases, and in particular occupying children with activities other than crafts.

By this time Miss Goscombe had become Senior Assistant to Miss Tebbitt, Miss Becky Lummis had come from America to join the Staff of the Department and Miss Albons from Sweden. Miss Vera Barber had also joined the Occupational Therapy staff and become its expert in all forms of needlecraft and dress-making, and later in weaving and spinning.

In 1933 Dr. Casson, Miss Tebbitt and members of the Occupational Therapy staff and students were invited to join the visit of the Royal Medico-Psychological Society to Santpoorte, near Haarlem, Holland. This visit really marks the end of the first phase in the development of Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy. In April 1933, Miss Tebbitt ceased to be Principal of the School and upon her



Dorset House, Bristol.



The Allendale Workshop, Bristol.



Treatment of a hand injury at Allendale.

appointment as Occupational Therapist to the County Mental Hospital, Chester, became instead Director of Mental Hospital Practice. At Chester Dr. Hamilton Grills gave continuous support and encouragement to the department and help and stimulation to the staff and students. Students were now able to gain hospital practice in a wider field. Miss Tebbitt soon needed a trained Occupational Therapist's assistance, in addition to members of the nursing staff who were helping the department, and another Dorset House graduate, Mrs. N.I.R. Clarke, was appointed to the staff at Chester. Mrs. Clarke was thus able to preserve the continuity of hospital practice for Dorset House students when Miss Tebbitt left in November 1934, upon her marriage. Miss Constance Tebbitt became Mrs. Glyn Owens, and is now Principal of the Liverpool School of Occupational Therapy.

After Miss Tebbitt's appointment to Chester, Miss Goscombe took charge of the School and, assisted by Miss Becky Lummis, ran the Occupational Therapy Departments in Dorset House and the hospitals. Miss Lummis had later to return to America and this was the occasion for the production of a pantomime written by some patients as a tribute to her. Miss Goscombe and Miss Tebbitt had a genius for devising 'combined operations' for staff, patients and students, and this was one of several original plays which were characteristic of Dorset House at that time, and to which the patients contributed as much as the staff and students.

In the April of 1934 Miss Goscombe married Mr. Owen Reed, Dr. Casson's nephew, and a new Principal had to be sought.

The School of Occupational Therapy at Philadelphia at which Miss Tebbitt had trained, and had later sent us Miss Lummis, now further strengthened the bond with Dorset House by sending Miss Martha Jackson, to be Head of the Dorset House Occupational Therapy Department and School, and

Miss Dahl to assist her. They found great building activities in progress, for Mr. Hugh Casson had re-designed the students' living quarters and his cousin, Mr. Peter Man, and a friend were carrying out his plans.

The number of students was increasing and in spite of the extended buildings, it was clear that the School was still out-growing its accommodation. In the September of 1934 there was an intake of eight new students, among them Miss Mary Macdonald, who had followed the development of Occupational Therapy with interest for a number of years and who had covered much of the syllabus before she came.

The summer of 1935 brought further development. The formation of an Association of Occupational Therapists was mooted (as it had been by others before) and Miss Macdonald and Miss Plater called a meeting of their student group to discuss the matter. The students agreed to write to all the qualified Occupational Therapists for their comments and support. Dr. Casson offered hospitality, and a first meeting was held at Dorset House, a second being arranged in Liverpool. Mrs. Owens became the first chairman of the group and Miss Macdonald the first secretary. Plans were made for the circularisation of Occupational Therapists of other hospitals and trainings, and for an inaugural meeting to be held in the spring of 1936. In this way Dorset House had the privilege of making an initial contribution towards the beginning of the Association.

No account of the Dorset House School could be complete without reference to Miss Joy Blew Jones, who took the Margaret Morris exercises. She also introduced Pottery to the School, and Mr. Holland of the Clevedon Pottery was most generous in his help. Miss Bennett, one of the first students, had become a member of staff, and with her animation and keenness, helped to keep the tradition of Dorset House going, while Miss Jackson and Miss Dahl settled in and took their bearings. Miss Martha Jackson was with the School for four years, but Miss Dahl had to return to America sooner. They were both unsparing of themselves.

Dorset House is much indebted to them for so courageously coming to take over the growing school, and particular gratitude is due to Miss Jackson for staying until Miss Macdonald returned from America in 1938 to be her successor.

The intensive study of Occupational Therapy in the United States and Canada, which Miss Macdonald had carried out after being awarded grants from the Pilgrim and York Trusts, showed her how the profession was developing in the two countries. In her travels she visited all training schools and a number of occupational therapy departments in a great variety of hospitals and rehabilitation centres. From this tour she returned greatly helped and inspired and ready to tackle the future development that Dr. Casson had planned for the School and treatment work at Bristol.

Miss Jackson had to leave for America in August 1938, ten days before four of her students entered (successfully) for the first examination set by the Association of Occupational Therapists. Of this group, two graduates went to New Zealand and one to South Africa, where they have contributed a great deal to the training of students in these countries.

By the time Miss Macdonald took over her duties, these included the supervision of patients' occupational treatment in Dorset House itself and in several surrounding hospitals, and the care of the growing School, with its eighteen students. To this was added the planning and opening of the Allendale Curative Workshop for out-patients suffering from varying forms of physical disease or disability.

There was a big team of enthusiastic Occupational Therapists ready to help. These included Miss Kathleen Barber, who worked at Allendale, Miss Turner and Miss MacArthur, working partly in Dorset House and partly in the

Bristol hospitals, and Miss Richardson, working at Hunt Green Sanatorium and in the School. Mrs. Owen Reed, during a long visit to Bristol, was also able to give some much appreciated help.

The first forty cases at the Allendale Curative Workshop were given free treatment and records were kept of their progress. Dr. Weissenbert, a physical medicine expert from Vienna, who was also an occupational therapy student, analysed occupations and their therapeutic application, and demonstrated to the students.

A paper was published by Dr. Casson in the Lancet (1st November 1941, p 516) giving an account of the experiment.

Then came the war. Until France fell, Bristol was little affected. Dr. Casson felt, however, that as the 1914-18 war had precipitated the establishment of Occupational Therapy in Canada and America, so, in this war, the importance of Occupational Therapy might become better recognised here. Representatives of the Services and of the Ministry of Health paid several visits to Dorset House and the Allendale Curative Workshop. All showed great interest, particularly in the wood-work, gardening and heavy basketry.

Dr. Casson was suddenly asked if the Dorset House School would train large numbers of Occupational Therapists for hospitals all over the country and some for abroad.

Then France fell. Blitzes came and for a time Occupational Therapy went literally into the cellars. Finally Bristol became an impossible place in which to run a nursing home or train students. Patients were dispersed - a few being taken to Clevedon with Dr. Casson. The School which dwindled to ten gallant and tenacious students struggled on for some weeks. Ultimately the students had to be sent home and taught by correspondence, while new premises were sought. Finances were at their lowest ebb -

(everything had always gone into the expansion of the work) - and the School was on the verge of closing. A temporary loan from a legacy, then a generous gift from the Lord Mayor's Air Raid Distress Fund, coupled with the offer of premises by the Ministry of Health - saved the School.

After many disappointments, Dr. Shepherd of Barnsley Hall Hospital, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, came to the rescue by a warm-hearted invitation to accept hospital-ity in his hospital which had been created as part of the war-time Emergency Medical Service. His Committee and the Ministry of Health warmly supported his generous offer. Miss Macdonald, with Miss MacCaul, Miss Harris and Miss Oldnall (Dr. Casson's Secretary who came to help with the re-establishment) and the ten students, were soon settled at Bromsgrove. The School cannot be grateful enough for the unfailing kindness and help received from everybody there during the five years' stay.

An excellent curative workshop was set up, as part of the unit, under the direction of Miss G. MacCaul, and became a very great inspiration in the rapid development and spread of Occupational Therapy in E.M.S. hospitals all over the country.

Owing to war conditions Dorset House was for a time the only surviving School. It had a patients' treatment department attached, where through carefully prescribed and closely supervised occupations, improvement in patients' conditions was giving demonstrable evidence of the value of Occupational Therapy. To the hospital and School came able and critical visitors from all parts of the world. This made all those connected with the experiment very much aware of, and somewhat fearful for, their responsibilities. They knew that the reports of these visitors would have a very real influence on important decisions taken in relation to the future of Occupational Therapy.

After much negotiation and at the request of the Ministry of Health, the School agreed to organise war-time

training courses to ensure a rapid and reasonably adequate supply of workers for other hospitals. The candidates were selected and given courses in line with their previous qualifications - Nurses, Physiotherapists, and Craft Teachers were among the trainees for the more responsible grades. Candidates without previous qualifications were given a brief training to enable them to act as Auxiliaries to the better qualified workers. Students entered every quarter for a six months' course; the Association ran examinations four times a year, and a regular flow of workers moved out into the hospitals. These courses which started in 1941 were subsidised by the Ministry of Health. The first financial allocation for the experiment was small, but by 1943 the value of the work had been so well proved that it encouraged the Government to arrange a subsidy five times as large. This is a very real tribute to the hard work, in difficult conditions, with serious frustrations, and with the all too brief trainings, of the war-time candidates.

Altogether over 200 Ministry of Health candidates were trained, 75-80 of them having since returned to complete their diplomas. Meanwhile, the full two-and-a-half year course (as it was then) was allowed to continue and there is no doubt that this acted as a binding thread of stability through the background of the very hectic shorter trainings. By 1945 the lists also showed that, since its beginning in 1930, the School had trained over 200 long-term candidates.

Mrs. Kuenmel had joined the School as Staff member and Miss Owen and Miss Kidston had joined as student staff. While following the course, they used their previous graduate qualifications in giving lectures to their fellow-students; after qualifying, they both continued to make a contribution towards the training of students. All the courses were carried out at a high pressure, students and staff working gallantly and until late hours. Some share was taken in hospital activities, and the Christmas parties in true Dorset House tradition were much enjoyed breaks in the busy routine.



The school at Bromsgrove – the weavers and the spinsters in the sun!



Miss MacCaul treating an air raid casualty.



H.R.H. Princess Mary, The Princess Royal and Dr. Shepherd on the occasion of her visit to Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove.

Dr. Casson paid the School frequent visits and, with the recovery of the finances of her nursing homes and the derequisitioning of the empty premises (the original Dorset House) in Bristol, she continued her generosity and encouragement to experiment and expansion.

One of the highlights of the Bromsgrove days was the visit of the Princess Royal - which was a sequel to the Royal invitation Dr. Casson had received to tell Queen Mary about the Occupational Therapy work and to take tea with her at Badminton. Queen Mary has since graciously accepted an album of photographs of the School and its workshops. Both Queen Mary and the Princess Royal showed keen interest in - and a wonderful understanding of - the work of Occupational Therapy.

The war ended and brought in its train the end of an era in the School's history. There was no possibility that the School might stay at Bromsgrove because the E.M.S. Hospital was due to be closed. It would have been desirable to return to Bristol but the very fact of the School's success, as witnessed by its growth in numbers, meant that it could not fit into its old quarters and with regret, this hope had to be abandoned. A further reason against returning to Bristol was that it had become apparent that a more central position in the country was desirable.

However, the implied need to move to a new location carried with it the fact of a permanent separation of the School from Dr. Casson's nursing homes; hitherto, the close contact between the School and the patients had been an integral part of the training and the loss of this was perhaps the saddest part of the need for change.

In the event, the School moved to Oxford, a major step which it will be appropriate to describe in Part II.

PART II (1946 - 1964)

THE CHURCHILL HOSPITAL YEARS

The foregoing was written over thirty years ago. It describes the early pioneering stages, and the laying of the firm foundations on which the School has since developed, and traces the history of the School up to the end of the war.

The search for a new home for the School seemed never-ending, but eventually spacious hutted premises were found in the grounds of the Churchill Hospital, Oxford, and thanks to Miss Macdonald's personal efforts, the School was able to negotiate the tenancy.

The move to Oxford brought significant and continuing benefits to the School. As well as fulfilling the requirement of a more central position in the country, Oxford offered excellent facilities for training. There were several hospitals in the neighbourhood and their authorities and the University were generous with help in arranging lectures, clinics and hospital practice, help which had been of very great value and much appreciated. In addition, students could have special access to Libraries, Museums, etc.

As well as teaching premises, the School also needed accommodation for its students. It is never easy to find good lodgings in Oxford where so many students are competing for them, and the School was fortunate in being able to acquire Harberton House in Headington. This building with its gardens, orchard and tennis courts became a very pleasant hostel for younger students and this was an attraction at least to parents, anxious regarding their daughters' welfare, even if not necessarily to the girls themselves. It would have been almost impossible for the School to function without this asset which, as a bonus, also provided rooms that could be used for day-time meetings and the occasional conference during vacations. Miss

Christer who was Warden from 1948 until her death in 1973, is remembered by her staff as a loyal and staunch friend and by hundreds of ex-students as a source of help and support in times of difficulty.

At the beginning of this new stage of Dorset House history, Miss Macdonald had been Principal since 1938 and had steered the School through the difficult war years. Her Vice-Principal at that time was Miss Margaret Kidston who was succeeded in 1952 by Miss Elizabeth Osborn. Mrs. Kummel was head of the Craft Staff, a position she held until her retirement in 1962.

Life was far from easy for both students and staff in the early days of the School's transition, and in fact the move into the hatted accommodation at the Churchill Hospital in the autumn of 1946 called on the one hand for much detailed organisation and on the other for sheer hard work.

Miss Macdonald was never happier than when planning, and one can imagine the copious lists, plentifully besprinkled with coloured asterisks and underlining, which dealt not only with the removal of furniture and equipment but also and more importantly with the continuing needs of the students at different stages of their training. Some were catered for in clinical situations in hospitals and others by correspondence during a prolonged summer vacation, while the entry of new students was delayed to allow time for the hostel to be prepared.

As for the hard work, it was done by the School's staff. The war having so recently ended, there was, of course, no labour available to carry out the necessary refurbishing, and cleaning materials and paint were rationed for a considerable time. The huts, which had been used to house Italian prisoners of war, had to be cleaned and the grass between them cut. Mrs. Kummel, for example, recollects that she spent most of the first two weeks in Oxford on her hands and knees scrubbing out the huts, and removing pin-ups and graffiti left behind by the previous occupants.

These early days were rendered even more difficult by the weather. The winter of 1946/47 was one of the coldest on record. The snow started early in January and did not clear until the end of March. Petrol was rationed and few people had cars. Public transport was limited. In spite of the snow which packed down hard on the side-roads and became polished like an ice-rink, bicycles were much in evidence. Otherwise, one walked and this had to be taken into consideration when planning time-tables which involved visits to hospitals and libraries.

The School consisted of eighteen Nissen huts, each having a floor area of some eighteen feet by forty feet, and six brick-built huts of about the same size. The Nissen huts had low curved roofs which limited the wall-height available for cupboards or notice-boards and visual material. The windows were in most cases situated at either end, thus making strip-lighting essential. The huts' greatest assets, in the view of the students, were the coke-burning stoves. These gave out a prodigious heat, wonderful for defrosting numbed bodies and providing a focal point around which to group for discussions. Some of them had the additional advantage of a skirt-like rail on which cans of soup or meat pies could be balanced. Although this practice was forbidden, as a canteen was provided, an appetising smell often wafted from lecture and craft rooms and was not, one suspects, too closely investigated by the staff! The stoking of these stoves was an essential element in the smooth running of the School, and through the years a sequence of interesting, kindly and often entertaining characters carried out this job. In necessitated a 7 a.m. start and one of the most conscientious stokers through rain, snow and shine was an eighty-year-old who came, to quote his own words, "to help you out ma'am" for two weeks and stayed for two years.

Although conditions were primitive compared with those expected of an educational establishment of today, the quality of the teaching offered was high, a fact which was appreciated by the numbers of applicants for places, only a proportion of whom could be accommodated.



The school on the Churchill site at Oxford.



- and in the winter of 1962-3!

Now that it was safely settled in its new quarters, the time had come for the stabilisation of the School to give it a permanent identity; and in 1948 a non-profit making limited company was formed to take it over. Dr. Casson remained the Medical Director and Vice-Chairman and Sir Geoffrey Peto was the Chairman of the Governors. The other Governors appointed at this time were Dr. H. Balme, Mr. Hugh Casson, Dr. F.S. Cooksey, Dr. John Johnson, Sir Percy Marsh, Mrs. Nugent Young and Dr. A. Shepherd.

In 1949 the United Oxford Hospitals were invited to nominate two Governors to represent the hospitals and the Ministry of Health. This invitation was accepted and Dr. R.G. McInness and Mr. J.C. Scott were appointed.

This new development in the School's history is best described in Dr. Casson's own words, in a letter to the students, written after the first meeting of the Company:-

29th September 1948

"My dear Students,

I am writing to explain to you that, in order to strengthen the future stability of the School, a non-profit making Company has been formed, to which I have handed over my responsibilities of ownership. The Members of the Advisory Committee have become Governors of the Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy Ltd., with Sir Geoffrey Peto as Chairman and myself as Vice-Chairman. I shall also still remain as Medical Director.

"The School has never been run for profit and all belonging to it have shown that they are working as one body. Now that it is a Company I hope that each student will realise even more than before her responsibility to the School. I know that the spirit of service will

continue and grow so that we can be of real use to the patients for whom we exist.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) E. CASSON"

So, on July 1, 1948, the Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy started on another phase of its history, with 180 students on the roll.

Finally, in 1949, Dr. Casson created a Trust, the purpose of which is to continue her work in spreading and integrating Occupational Therapy. While the School remained in its present form, it was to be the primary beneficiary. Harberton House was given to the Trust, and the School continued to rent it on the former terms. Dr. Casson appointed four Trustees - Mrs. Nugent Young, Sir Geoffrey Peto, Mr. Hugh Casson and Miss Macdonald. They were charged with the continuation of her work in the interests of the School and of Occupational Therapy.

A very great debt of gratitude is due to Dr. Casson for the contribution she made to Occupational Therapy - and for the establishment of this Trust. It may be of interest to some to know that the Trust was so formed as to be open to receive contributions and legacies from any others who might wish to contribute as well.

At the time the Diploma of the Association of Occupational Therapists, for which students were prepared, was a dual one allowing for qualification in either physical or psychiatric aspects of occupational therapy or in both if one so wished. A single qualification was covered in two and a half years, with an extra six months to complete the two. This was the equivalent of the three year overall course which was introduced in 1954, and the majority of students elected to cover both aspects as so much of the basic work was common to both.



Harberton House — the original hostel in Headington.

However, during the first few years in Oxford the student body was a mixture in regard to age and experience. Some were straight from school while others were considerably older people whose careers had been interrupted by service in the forces. Some other professionally trained people (e.g., nurses, physiotherapists, etc.) were attracted to this new profession of occupational therapy and others who had received short courses of training at Dorset House during the war now wished to 'upgrade' their qualification to Diploma level. Timetabling must have been a nightmare and it is to the credit of all concerned that from the students' point of view everything appeared to slot into place satisfactorily. The older students were well motivated towards study, but presented some problems to staff used to the more conformist behaviour of the school-leavers of that generation. Most of these women (there were no male students at that time) had held positions of some authority before coming to Dorset House and expected to be allowed to organise their time as they saw fit. The fact that the majority not only stayed the course, but look back with pleasure on their student experience, says much for the dedication, flexibility and good humour of all concerned.

Because occupational therapy had proved its value during the war the demand for therapists continued to increase. Girls were becoming aware of its career possibilities and many suitable candidates for training were coming forward. Although by 1950 there were seven occupational therapy training courses in England and one in Scotland, demand for places was considerable. It was decided, therefore, in order to make maximum use of the School, to organise two courses per year, each of forty-five students, starting in February and September respectively. This allowed for "boxing and coxing" as groups of students moved between School and hospitals, alternating with others who were able to occupy the spaces vacated. This system operated until 1969 when conditions rendered it no longer necessary.

In July 1951 Dorset House came of age and cele-

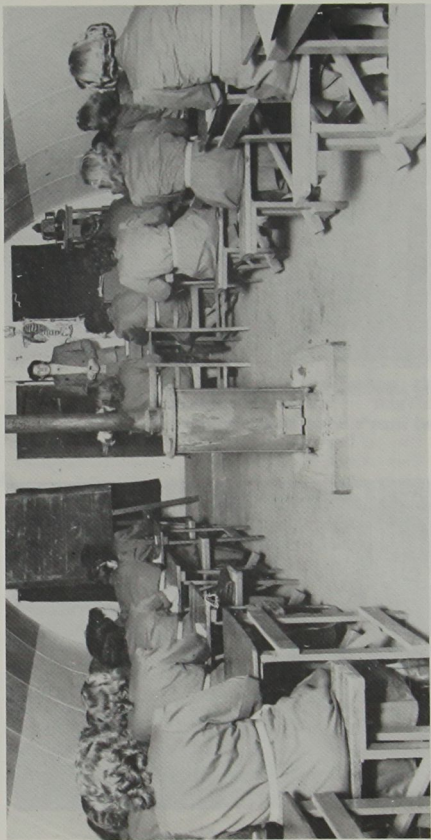
brated its twenty-first birthday by holding an Open Day, not the easiest project to plan within the limitations of the huts. This challenge was met by erecting a marquee between two rows of huts for the formal opening ceremony and by a carefully-planned series of tours through the huts to ensure a smooth flow of visitors. (History does not relate whether any independent souls attempted to establish a 'contraflow'). An interesting observation regarding the niceties of the period is that only the Principal and Vice-Principal were expected to wear hats, other staff members being considered too lowly to qualify for this!

By happy coincidence, Dr. Casson had been awarded the O.B.E. in the Birthday Honours List that year and in his welcoming speech, Sir Geoffrey Peto paid great tribute to her vision and effort in founding and establishing the School of which she was now the Vice-Chairman and Medical Director. She was then presented with a bouquet and a suitcase, the latter appropriately the produce of a workshop manned by the disabled.

In 1953, with the death of Dr. Balme, came the first break in the original company of Governors.

Only one year later, in December 1954, Dr. Casson died, aged 73, leaving grieving colleagues and friends but also a legacy of achievement which continued to inspire successive generations of staff and students.

In July 1955 a Thanksgiving Service for the life and work of Dr. Casson took place at the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Oxford. It was conducted by the Vicar, Dr. R.S. Lee and the address was given by Canon L.W. Grensted. It was attended by Governors, staff and students and representatives of the Association of Occupational Therapists and other professional bodies with whom Dr. Casson had been associated, as well as by her many relatives and friends. Mrs. Glyn Owens, who as Miss Tebbitt had been the first Principal of Dorset House, was also present. The



Miss Dawson lecturing — snug in the warmth of a coke-burning stove.



Analysing activities of daily living, with the help of Miss Davidson.



A metalwork class with Mr. Nott supervising.

service was followed by the now annual Open Day which was the last under that name, as it was decided that in future years this should be known as 'Founder's Day' and should be preceded by a short service of re-dedication at the local parish church, a practice which still continues.

A memorial fund was opened with the object of establishing what was then called a 'curative workshop' for the physically-handicapped in Oxford, as this had been a project hoped for by Dr. Casson. Sadly, after many meetings and negotiations, the various plans for this were frustrated and the money collected was used to equip a teaching area for physical rehabilitation when the School moved to new premises some years later.

In 1971 the Casson Trust, at Miss Macdonald's suggestion, offered the Association of Occupational Therapists a sum of money to provide a lecture of high calibre each year at the Association's Annual General Meeting, this to be known as 'The Casson Memorial Lecture'. This offer was gladly accepted and this continues to be a main feature of these meetings.

In 1956, only two years after Dr. Casson's death the Chairman of Governors, Sir Geoffrey Peto, also died and was succeeded in that position by Dr. Casson's nephew, now Sir Hugh Casson, who had joined the Board in 1948 and was happy to carry forward the family link. Dr. Andrew Shepherd, Medical Superintendent of Barnsley Hall, (the School's war-time home) was appointed Medical Director in succession to Dr. Casson, Dr. Shepherd is remembered with much affection by those who were students in the Bromsgrove days as a kindly, jovial man and an excellent lecturer. He remained as Medical Director until his death in 1963 when he was succeeded by Dr. E.F. Mason.

In the meantime, changes were taking place in the curriculum of the training. It had been apparent from the beginning of the decade that the division of the Diploma

into physical and psychiatric specialities was far from satisfactory, and that in any case most of the students were completing the dual qualification. The Report of the Cope Committee(1), of which Miss Macdonald was a member, endorsed this and the Association of Occupational Therapists therefore embarked on a revision of the syllabus which resulted in a combined qualification, and this was duly launched in 1954. It also entailed a re-organisation of the practical activities taught. In order to allow for the development of 'daily living activities', which the emergence of the concept of 'rehabilitation' was bringing to the fore, time spent on craft activities had to be curtailed. This caused some heartburning on the part of the craft staff who took pride in the high standard achieved by the students, but they readily appreciated the need for this new approach and during the coming years adapted their teaching to fit into the time available and to the challenge this represented. For two years the old and new syllabuses overlapped and another marathon of timetabling was embarked upon.

Another highly important outcome of the Cope Report was the setting up of the Council for the Professions Supplementary to Medicine (C.P.S.M.)(2) which came into being at the end of the fifties. This was, and still is, the State Registration and disciplinary body for certain professions of which occupational therapy is one. Again, Miss Macdonald was much involved in its planning and became the first chairman of the Occupational Therapy Board.

Co-inciding with the launch of the new syllabus in 1954 was the arrival of Miss Betty Collins to take over as Vice-Principal from Miss Osborn who had occupied that position for the previous two years. Miss Collins had been a student at Dorset House during the war on one of the Government-sponsored short courses. She subsequently 'upgraded' her qualification to Diploma level, and practised in England, and Australia where she had been Deputy Director of the Melbourne School before coming back to join the Dorset House staff. Her appointment was initially for two

years with the possibility of extending this if she was happy in the position. The fact that she remained for twenty-three years, seventeen as Vice-Principal and six as Principal, speaks for itself!

In August 1954 a notable event took place in Edinburgh. This was the first Council meeting of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (W.F.O.T.) which had been formed two years previously, and of which the United Kingdom was one of the ten Founder Members. Mrs. Glyn Owens (by now the Principal of Liverpool School of Occupational Therapy) was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Miss Collins attended this first meeting as an observer on behalf of Australia from whence she had just returned. This was the start of her long association with W.F.O.T. which is recorded later.

The founding of W.F.O.T. was indicative of the way occupational therapy was spreading throughout the world, and Dorset House was already playing a significant part in this. In 1946, at the request of the Greek Red Cross, a young woman, Roula Gregoriades, was given a scholarship to study at Dorset House in order to set up and run a rehabilitation service in that country. The help given her in getting this established was recognised by the award to the School of The Golden Cross of the Greek Red Cross, which Miss Gregoriades later came back to present. In the years that have followed students and staff have come from Africa, Europe, North and South America, the Far East and Australasia, all bringing interest and new ways of thinking which have enlivened the courses. Many have returned to their countries to make quite remarkable contributions in setting up rehabilitation services and training courses for both therapists and helpers.

Towards the end of the fifties, much thought was being given to the future accommodation of the School. The huts had served well as a temporary measure but cracks were appearing and weather-proofing was difficult. Miss Macdonald was concerned that, with the development of new training

centres and the general building improvement since the war, students might be reluctant to put up with such conditions however good the training offered. Moreover, the Churchill Hospital was anxious to pursue its own development plans, which required the use of the School site, and this provided a further spur towards seeking new accommodation.

From 1956 onwards, therefore, the item 'Future Plans' appeared regularly on the agenda of each Trust and Governors' meeting and many possibilities were discussed. It was felt to be important that the School should remain in or near Oxford because of the educational and social facilities there.

Miss Macdonald and Miss Collins spent many hours visiting possible properties, some of which provided a building site while others required the adaptation of an existing building to suit the School's needs. Miss Macdonald would sweep imperiously through such buildings, planning the School as she went, joining rooms with a new doorway, creating a new window here, and knocking down a wall there, and in her wake the Bursar tried frantically to prepare a rough plan of the building for later consideration, including, of course, all these alterations.

For various reasons, none of these possibilities proved to be acceptable, and in 1959, it was decided to make use of the extensive grounds attached to the hostel and to build a new school there. It was accepted that the site was somewhat less than ideal in that Harberton House was situated at the end of a narrow and, at night, lonely private road. However, plans were drawn up and planning permission applied for and all seemed set to proceed.

Then, in 1961, a property called "Hillstow" came on to the market. It comprised a large Victorian house, a small cottage and a coach-house; the owner, Headington School, had added a wing to the main house which was used as dormitory accommodation for boarders. It stood adjacent to the London Road, and the facilities it offered and its position in relation to shops, transport and several hospitals

were much superior to anything previously considered. It was decided to bid for it at auction and it was eventually purchased for £25,000.

It had always been the view of the Casson Trustees and the Governors that it was unethical to use money raised from the fees of present students to pay for the buildings to be enjoyed by those of the future. Thus the problem of financing the purchase and equipping of a new school had been faced early in the planning period and the help of an Appeal Consultant was sought. The sum aimed at was £50,000 (a considerable sum at that time although viewed from the present day, it would barely purchase a small semi-detached house!) and many and varied projects were embarked upon to this end. Past students were contacted and many contributed most generously. Donations were received from industry, with help from a very good friend of the profession, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, who not only contributed but also allowed the use of their very beautiful premises for a luncheon to interest businessmen in the Appeal. A sum to be used specifically for equipping a library was given by Mr. H.D. Savory, a relative of Miss Macdonald. A much-appreciated money-raising event was a poetry reading by Sir Lewis and Lady Casson (Dame Sybil Thorndike) given on a Sunday afternoon at the Oxford High School. This was one of the most pleasurable ways of adding to the coffers.

By 1961 there was just enough money available for the purchase of the Hillstow property, and it was perhaps fortunate that a condition of sale was that it should be handed over a year later, to give the previous owners time to rehouse the girls living there. That year allowed Dorset House time to plan the additions and alterations necessary, and most importantly to renew the Appeal in order eventually to cover the cost of these.

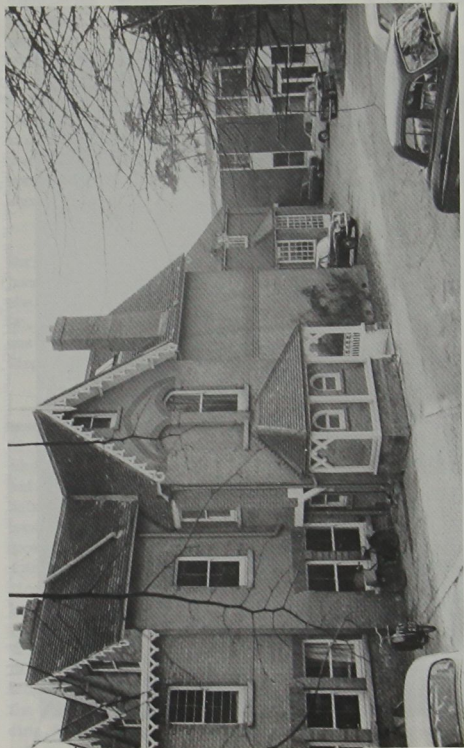
The original house, built in 1899, comprised a number of spacious, well-proportioned rooms and the usual smaller and attic rooms intended for servants' quarters. On to this had been built a wing of medium-sized rooms. All these provided well for offices, canteen and common-rooms,

libraries and small-group teaching areas, but it was necessary to build a further wing consisting of lecture rooms, cloakrooms and workshops. The ground floor of the cottage provided an excellent teaching area for activities of daily living, being similar in layout to the average small home, but ramps and other modifications were needed. The upper floor was made into a flat for the Welfare Officer, and the coach-house which had living accommodation above it was converted into a cottage for the caretaker.

In the autumn of 1964, although some of this work still needed completing, the School moved out of the Nissen huts and into what was to be its first permanent home. The Churchill Hospital, which had been a kindly and forbearing host for seventeen years, was waiting to expand on to the land occupied by Dorset House and within hours of the School's departure brought in a bulldozer. Thus the Vice-Principal, returning the same day to look for something left behind, found only a heap of rubble where her office had been. Sic transit gloria...!

During her early years in Oxford, Miss Macdonald, in addition to the work involved in running the School, decided to take the opportunity to work for a B.Litt. degree under the auspices of St. Anne's College. In 1964 she was awarded an M.B.E. for her contribution in the field of rehabilitation, a fitting recognition which happily coincided with the fulfilment of her hopes for the School's future.

The official opening of the new Dorset House (now no longer known as Hillstow) was delayed until the summer of 1965, to allow time for the building alterations to be completed. When planning this, it had been hoped that H.R.H. Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, might have been invited to carry out this function as she had been closely associated with the School in its Bromsgrove days, (see p..) but sadly she had recently died. In her stead H.R.H. The Princess Marina of Kent graciously accepted the invitation. The event took place on Founder's Day, 9th July 1965, and quite a stir was caused in Headington as the Princess arrived by helicopter in the grounds of the



The present school at London Road, Oxford showing the additional Casson wing.



H.R.H. The Princess Marina with the Chairman, Sir Hugh Casson at the official opening of the new building.

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre where she was met by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, the Lord Mayor and other civic dignitaries before coming by car to the School. After a welcoming speech by Sir Hugh Casson, the Princess, after paying tribute to the value of occupational therapy and the work of Dorset House, formally declared the buildings open. She was then escorted by Sir Hugh and Miss Macdonald on a tour of the School during which she unveiled a plaque naming the new 'Casson Wing' in memory of the Founder. It was a truly memorable occasion, being the culmination of many years of hoping, planning and sheer hard work by past and present staff, students, colleagues and friends, many of whom were able to be there to see the result.

In the summer of 1966, when the Council of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists was meeting in London, the then President, Miss Ingrid Pahlsson, visited the School to present a clock and plaque in recognition of Dr. Casson's contribution to the world-wide profession. This was accepted with pleasure and installed in the new Casson Wing.

At this stage in the history of the School, several changes in the Board of Governors had taken place. Of the original members Dr. Johnson who had been financial adviser to the School in its early days, had died, as too had Dr. Shepherd; and Dr. Cooksey, Sir Percy Marsh, Dr. McInnes and Dr. Scott had resigned at different times because of the weight of other commitments. In 1952 Mr. George Bredin, then Bursar of Pembroke College, Oxford, joined the Governors and subsequently became Chairman of the Finance Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Board. In the late fifties, they were joined by Dr. Celia Westrop and Miss Winifred McLeod for three and six years respectively, and by Mr. Harold Loukes, Mr. K.D.D. Henderson and Mr. John Talbot. In the early sixties, Dr. E.F. Mason, Col. L.K. Ledger, Dr. B.M. Mandelbrote and Sir Douglas Veale joined the Board, the last-mentioned specifically to advise regarding fund-raising for the new buildings. The interest and

support the School received from its Governors was invaluable in dealing with the complexities of the move and the impetus towards the next stage of development.

* * * * *

While all these local events were taking place, much had been developing on the national front. Four more training schools had been established in the United Kingdom, one being in Northern Ireland and a further one in Scotland. A useful link of communication was the Council of Heads of Schools which met regularly on a termly basis and elected one of its members to serve on the Council of the Association of Occupational Therapists.

Throughout the years, at any period at least one member of the Dorset House staff was involved either as a member of the A.O.T. Council or on one of its committees. This had the encouragement of the Governors who recognised such participation as being of value to the School and as a duty towards the profession.

Internationally, too, the School continued to play a useful part. A former student, Miss Alicia Mendez, who had been a delegate to W.F.O.T. since 1964, was elected a Vice-President of that body in 1968 and President in 1974. This was an honour for the U.K. and for Dorset House. Miss Mendez had entered the profession in the war years as an Auxiliary (see Appendix A) and having 'upgraded' to the full qualification, developed a world-renowned occupational therapy service at St. Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, where she was responsible for the clinical training of numerous students. She was later to become a Governor of Dorset House in 1985.

Miss Collins also became a delegate to W.F.O.T. in 1968 and a Vice-President in 1976. For eight years, she chaired the Education Committee which was responsible for establishing international standards for the training of occupational therapists.

In 1956 a former student of the School, Miss Betty Hollings, who was practising at the Wingfield-Morris Hospital - later known as the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre - in Oxford, was seconded for nine months to join a group of British physiotherapists in Argentina where there was a serious epidemic of poliomyelitis. Their purpose, in addition to carrying out treatment, was to set up a rehabilitation service that could be carried forward by the Argentinians when they left. Miss Hollings was, in fact, the first occupational therapist seen in that country and was faced with the task of demonstrating the value of this treatment and in training 'aides' to carry it out. A measure of her success was that the Argentinian government subsequently decided to establish an occupational therapy training school, and Miss Macdonald was asked to undertake this. She collected a team of three experienced occupational therapists, Miss Hilary Schlesinger and Miss Anne Rickett, former Dorset House students, and Miss Barbara Allen who had trained at the London School. They set out in 1959; Miss Macdonald, having lived in South America as a child, had a reasonable command of Spanish, but the others took advantage of the sea voyage to learn it en route. The stories of their experiences could well be the subject of another book, but suffice it to say that they achieved the task set them. With the project safely launched, Miss Macdonald returned to England, and the others were joined in 1969 by Miss Eileen James and Miss Joan King, both of whom later became tutors at Dorset House. This pioneering group stayed until the school was sufficiently well-established to go ahead without their support, under the directorship of Miss Carmen Forn, an Argentinian who had been training at Dorset House in the meantime. Argentina was accepted as a full member of W.F.O.T. in 1970 which indicated that the school had maintained the high standard of education initiated by Miss Macdonald and her team.

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PART III (1965 - 1986)

A PERMANENT HOME

The first few years at London Road were a settling-in period during which a certain amount of re-organisation took place. In spite of well-laid plans regarding the use of the buildings inevitably in practice these were found to need some modification. However, the relief felt by all that at last the battle with disintegrating buildings was a thing of the past, gave a welcome breathing space.

This was a time when the curriculum could be re-assessed and new projects introduced. There had, for some time, been dissatisfaction with the section of the A.O.T. syllabus dealing with practical activities and Dorset House made representations to the then Board of Studies (later the Education Board) in this respect. The development of "Activities of Daily Living", as assessment and re-training in rehabilitation, was of paramount importance, and the rigid requirements of the examination syllabus then in force were making innovation in this respect very difficult. As a result of discussions, in 1968 this section of the A.O.T. syllabus was revised to give the flexibility so badly needed. The Peto Rehabilitation Unit in the cottage (so named in memory of Sir Geoffrey Peto) now proved its worth, and students were able to experience the problems of living with a disability. As the School was now sited near shops, it was possible to go on shopping expeditions in wheelchairs and on crutches to try to cope with the problems of access and high super-market shelves. Even negotiating curbs was a hazard, as discovered by one student tipped out of a wheel-chair by an over-zealous young man eager to help! After a few such embarrassing situations, students became able to explain their position to over-helpful shop assistants and members of the public, and their activities were accepted in good part. They even had some publicity value in alerting local people to the hazards facing a disabled person.

At this time too, much thought was being given to the long-term future of the training. The need for degree level education either in occupational therapy or in rehabilitation (combining two or more disciplines) was being discussed by the A.O.T. Board of Studies, together with the possibility of developing a year of advanced training to 'top up' the Diploma to degree level. To this end, various schemes were considered by Dorset House and 'feelers' put out to higher education establishments with whom the School might link in order to achieve any such future programme. Although these approaches were favourably received, the talks never progressed beyond a preliminary stage as Government economies ruled out the possibility of students obtaining grants for a longer period of training, a situation which, twenty years later, still exists.

The late sixties saw the resignation of three Governors - Mr. Loukes, Col. Ledger and Mrs. Nugent Young, the last-mentioned being one of the original Governors who had been a great source of advice and help for nearly twenty years. Joining the Board at that time were Mrs. Gillian Williams (who later became Lady Williams) and Dr. Rosemary Rue, the Chief Medical Officer of the Oxford Regional Hospital Authority.

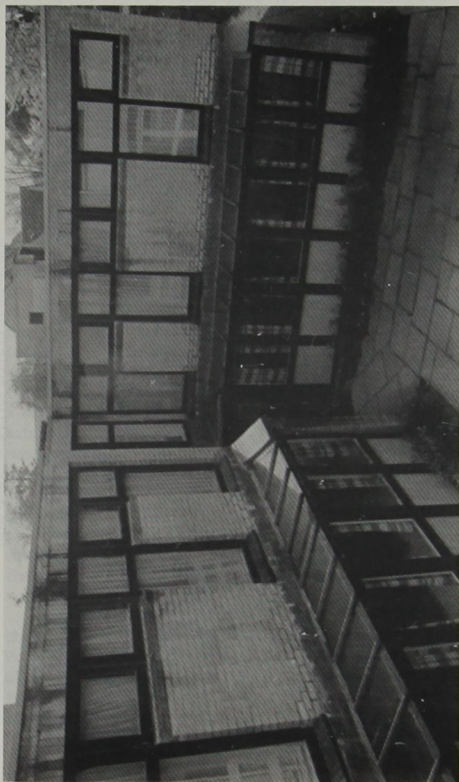
By the end of the sixties it was becoming apparent that the next major rehousing plan would have to be in connection with the hostel. By the nature of the building, it had been necessary to run it on somewhat institutional lines, and its location at the end of a private wooded road had made it necessary for students to be checked in at night. With the age of majority being reduced from 21 to 18 in 1970, it was important that a more liberal system should be adopted, and this was clearly not possible in Harberton House. In 1969 it was decided that Harberton House should be sold and a new hostel built.

Two properties came on to the market, No.1 Latimer Road and No.60 London Road, both immediately adjacent to the School grounds on either side, and they were purchased to provide accommodation for eighteen students. An advantage

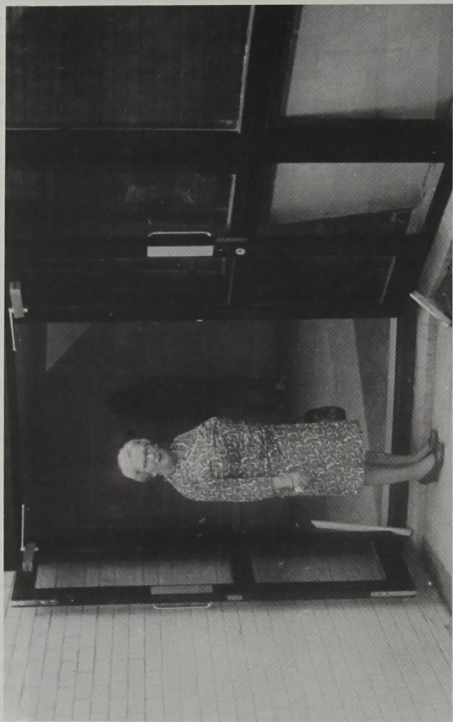
of the Latimer Road house was that its garden together with the School grounds offered the possibility of a site for the hostel building which was gladly accepted. The design of this new hostel seemed to be fraught with difficulties. The staff and students were consulted at an early stage, but their views did not necessarily match the architect's determination to provide what he saw as necessary in a hostel. In the long term, it became apparent that the advice of those who were to use the building should have been followed, but a serviceable hostel, offering accommodation to thirty-five students, was eventually completed and occupied in September 1971, when it was named Mary Macdonald House to commemorate the Principal who had done so much to get it established.

For some time, the entry of students twice a year had been creating a number of time-tabling difficulties and exerted great pressure on staff who were having to repeat series of lectures so frequently that preparation time was minimal. Also the February entry group was sometimes at a disadvantage in being out of phase with the normal academic year. In 1969, therefore, it was decided to revert to one combined entry in September each year. This necessitated the extension of the two main lecture rooms to accommodate this larger group.

In 1971, another watershed in the history of Dorset House was reached as it saw the retirement of Miss Macdonald after thirty-three years as Principal, during which time she had guided it from being a small group of students in a relatively limited field to a School with an annual intake of over eighty students receiving a broadly-based education which made them highly desirable members of a rehabilitation team. That period had spanned the uncertain pre-war years, the problems of war-time conditions and the re-emergence and development of the post-war years. The fact that the School was now not only an accepted feature of the Oxford educational scene, but that in that very conservative circle, wary of fringe developments, it was respected and considered worthy of support and encouragement was



The new hostel – Mary Macdonald House, opened in 1971.



Miss Macdonald in the doorway of the hostel.

largely due to her dedication, drive and diplomacy in dealing with the 'town and gown' authorities. Alongside this, she had written and edited two books on occupational therapy and had played a significant part in the wider professional field, both nationally through the A.O.T. and C.P.S.M., and internationally by helping in the pioneering stages of various projects overseas.

In order to give an opportunity for ex-students and staff to pay tribute to Miss Macdonald, a Reunion was arranged in July 1971, and again the Goldsmiths, good friends of the School, allowed the use of their hall for such an occasion. There, under glittering chandeliers and surrounded by cabinets of gold plate, past and present members of the School and numerous friends gathered to meet Miss Macdonald and enjoy a buffet supper and a chance to renew old friendships. Prior to this event, the office staff had undertaken a marathon task of contacting by letter as many as possible who might wish to contribute to a present for her. (This was not made easier by a postal strike which almost inevitably occurred at that time.) However, such was the response that a cheque sufficient to enable her to take a world tour was presented to her, together with a book containing the signatures of all who had contributed. Miss Macdonald was so overwhelmed as to be rendered temporarily speechless, a situation never previously encountered by her friends! This, together with an inscribed silver plate from the Governors and presents from the students, reflected the appreciation of many hundreds of people for Miss Macdonald's devotion to occupational therapy and to Dorset House through the years.

Miss Macdonald's successor, who was welcomed on the same occasion, was Miss Collins who had been Vice-Principal for seventeen years, and had thus been involved in all the developments of that period and the plans for the future. The transition was therefore less obvious than might otherwise have been the case, and the School moved into a new era gradually and without any apparent trauma. The newly-appointed Vice-Principal was Miss Joan King who

had been a student at Dorset House in the early fifties and, after practising in England and teaching in Argentina, had joined the staff as a tutor in 1969.

Further staff changes also took place about this time as long-serving members reached retiring age. Miss Hance, who taught weaving and had replaced Mrs. Kuemmel as Head of the Craft Staff in the early sixties, retired in 1973; sadly, she did not have long to enjoy her leisure as she died the following year. Mr. Maggs, who joined the staff to teach woodwork in 1948 also retired in 1973 and Mr. Nott, the metalwork and basketry instructor since 1949 retired in 1974. Miss Christer, who had seen the hostel through the transition from Harberton House, died in 1973 after two years in the new building and shortly before she would have retired. Her deep commitment to the school was reflected in a bequest of over £3,000 which was most gratefully received and used to equip the new library described later in this chronicle. It says much for the contribution of these people and for the teamwork of all the staff that, much as they were missed, their successors were able to move into a stable situation and carry forward the work and high standards that they had set.

The retirement of Miss Hance necessitated the appointment of a senior member of staff to be responsible for co-ordinating craft activities. Miss Sarah Maclure, a craft teacher who had joined the staff in 1964 was appointed to this post which she still holds in addition to her teaching commitments, being currently the longest-serving member of the teaching staff.

The early seventies saw the publication of the Oddie (3) and Tunbridge (4) Reports in both of which multi-disciplinary establishments were recommended, and much thought was given to the possibility of establishing one such in Oxford. However, while nursing and occupational therapy courses existed and might have linked, the lack of a school of physiotherapy in the area proved a stumbling block and discussions were abandoned for the time being.

Another topic of discussion was that of the name of the School. In the profession, Dorset House was often referred to as 'the Oxford School' and it was suggested that this might be more suitable as so much time had elapsed since the original Dorset House in Bristol had been its home, and to the majority of the profession the reason for the name was an enigma. However, it was pointed out that by this time, Dorset House was recognised in occupational therapy circles all over the world and that a change, without very strong reason, might cause confusion and even prove detrimental. The Governors therefore decided to maintain a traditional stance.

In 1973, Sir Douglas Veale, who had given so much of his time and experience to School matters, died and again it was necessary to consider augmenting the Governing Board. In 1974 Mr. Henderson resigned and Mrs. Margaret McCallum and Mr. John Wyatt, both educationalists, accepted invitations to join the Governors, Mr. Wyatt regrettably having to resign in 1977. In order to maintain the balance of the Board, another person from the educational field was sought, and Mr. John Mercer became a Governor in 1978.

Although throughout the years it had been the practice to consult students in a somewhat 'ad hoc' manner when changes were envisaged or problems arose, in 1973 a Staff/Student Council came into being to provide a forum for discussion and a two-way communication between the staff and student bodies. From this group, two members (one staff and one student) were elected to represent the Council at meetings of the Governors. Initially, there were fears that this might develop merely into a 'grumbling session' but from its inception, the Council proved its worth, and was particularly appreciated by the Governors who were able regularly to hear the considered views of staff and students on matters being discussed.

It had long been the aim of the profession to attract more men into its ranks and with better career

prospects (brought in by the Halsbury Committee in 1975(5)) this now seemed possible. In earlier years, the few men who had applied to Dorset House appeared to have been daunted by the preponderance of women and had gone elsewhere to train, but in 1976 three stalwart souls joined the ranks of new students and successfully completed the course three years later. All have since made a notable contribution to the profession, one having returned to the School for a period as a tutor. These three blazed a new trail, but there are still remarkably few men applying to enter what is unfortunately wrongly identified as a 'female only' profession. The advent of male students was a particular satisfaction for Miss Collins who had long hoped for this, and was able to see them well-launched when she retired a year later.

Miss Collins' retirement in the summer of 1977 after 23 years on the staff as Vice-Principal and Principal was marked by another Reunion, this time held at the School. She was presented with an antique silver tea-pot by the Governors and received presents and tributes from colleagues, students and friends. Miss Collins commented that, had anyone told her when she was accepted as a not very amenable student in 1945 that thirty-two years later she would be receiving such accolades, she would have thought that they had taken leave of their senses!

Miss Jean Edwards was appointed in May 1977 as Principal Elect and became Principal in September. Unlike her predecessors, she had not trained at Dorset House but at Botley's Park School in Surrey. She had, however, been a clinical supervisor and tutor at Dorset House during the sixties, after which she worked in Canada where she studied for B.O.T. degree, and on returning to England gained an M.Sc. for research at Manchester University. Apart from her other qualities, her experience in higher education was felt to be advantageous to the School if, as was hoped, a degree course came into being.

In 1978, Sir Hugh Casson decided to retire from

the Chairmanship of the Governors, a position he had held for twenty-two years. His interest, generosity and humour had ensured not only his support in all the School's undertakings, but had brought to formal occasions a lightness of touch that put people at their ease and was much appreciated by young and old alike.

After a year during which Mr. George Bredin, the Vice-Chairman, presided, Mr. John Casson became Chairman, once again carrying forward the family interest.

Since the building of the new hostel, there had been a welcome lull in constructional activities at the School, but in 1979 another project was undertaken. This was an extension of the woodwork shop. Hitherto, woodwork and metalwork had been taught in separate rooms but these were now grouped together in the enlarged workshop. By re-organising the other workshops, space was freed to increase the area given to the teaching of home rehabilitation skills. Soon afterwards, an extra store-room was provided to contain equipment used in the teaching of the treatment of physical disability.

1980 was a memorable year, as Dorset House reached its Golden Jubilee. On 7th June at a Reunion buffet luncheon, over one hundred people met at the School to celebrate the occasion. As well as current staff members and Governors, there were present representatives from each decade of the School's history. It was a happy and informal gathering which was hosted by Miss Edwards, Mr. Casson and the staff. After the luncheon, Miss Macdonald spoke of the history of the School, and Sir Hugh Casson rounded off the proceedings with his usual humour and encouragement. Miss Macdonald's speech was, in fact, the last that she was able to make at the School, as sadly since then ill-health has prevented her from taking any part in its affairs. It is consoling to know that on that occasion, she was able to meet so many of those she had launched on their careers, and to participate in the celebration of the School to which she had devoted so much of her life.

Another very long-serving member of staff retired in 1981. Mrs. Vera Brown had joined the staff in 1951 as Tutors' Secretary, a position she held until 1963. After a break of fifteen months she returned as Welfare Officer for ten years before finally becoming Assistant Bursar. The Welfare Officer, apart from dealing with health problems, had always borne the main responsibility for seeing that students in lodgings were adequately housed, and during her time in that position many hundreds of students had cause to be grateful for her support in that respect.

One occasion that had been lacking through the years was that of a formal presentation of Diplomas. Because of difficulties in timing, as the examination results arrived after the students had dispersed, the Diplomas had been posted with a congratulatory letter. However, many students felt this to be rather an anti-climax after three years of hard work, and in 1981, at their request, it was decided to begin holding an annual Presentation of Diplomas in the Autumn Term. The Chairman, Mr. John Casson, gladly accepted the invitation to present the Diplomas on this first occasion and the majority of those who had qualified during the Summer Term were able to return with relatives and friends to receive the fruits of their labours.

During the late seventies, the syllabus was once again being reviewed. Again, it was becoming overloaded as the teaching of new techniques was included. The qualifying examinations were still conducted centrally by the College of Occupational Therapists (the professional section of the recently re-constituted British Association of Occupational Therapists) and this limited the individual schools in their attempts to re-organise and update their curricula.

In 1981, therefore, a newly structured educational system, to be known as 'Diploma 81', was launched by the College, whereby each training school was given the responsibility for devising its own curriculum and conducting its own examinations, subject to validation and moderation by

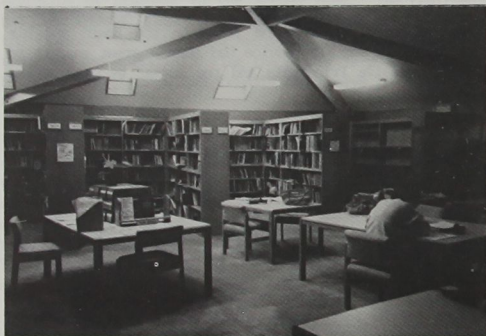
the College. This was welcomed as giving much-needed flexibility and the opportunity to develop a new approach. It also heralded in a period of very hard work for staff who had hours of planning meetings to attend while still teaching to the curriculum in force prior to the change-over.

During this time, sadly the School lost the services of the Vice-Principal, Miss King, due to injuries caused by a car accident. She had been on the staff as tutor and Vice-Principal for 16 years and had provided continuity during the change of two successive Principals. Her place was taken by Miss Jill Freston, also a past student of Dorset House, who had been a staff member since 1966 and who had shouldered the responsibilities of Vice-Principal during Miss King's sick-leave.

In 1983 Mr. George Bredin, who had served the School as a Governor and Trustee since 1952, decided to resign because of the illness which led to his death a short while later. Mr. Bredin had undertaken various responsibilities during his thirty-one years on the Board and his courteous help and wise advice had been a great support to three successive Principals and the Bursar by whom he was much missed.

Dr. Rue resigned from the Board in 1984 and her place was taken in 1985 by Dr. Dulcie Gooding, Community Medicine Specialist at the Oxford Regional Health Authority. Also joining the Governors at that time was Miss Alicia Mendez, being the first occupational therapist to become a Governor of Dorset House where she had originally trained as a war-time Auxiliary student.

The planning of the new syllabus for 'Diploma 81' brought to the fore another need. One of the features of Dorset House was its extensive collection of books and journals which, for an independent school reliant on its own resources, had been somewhat exceptional. The actual library space, however, was cramped and unattractive for



The New Library.

students needing space and quiet for study. With the additional development of audio-visual equipment, it was becoming apparent that the time had come when the re-arrangement of space was no longer possible and that a further extension was the only solution. Thus in 1985 another building project was underway on the lawn behind the main school building. There are advantages and excitement in being on the spot to watch the development of a building, but no doubt the inevitable delays that occurred must have stretched the patience of all concerned to exasperation point at times. However, by the summer of 1986, the new library building was complete, if not furnished, and on Founder's Day it was officially opened by Lady Williams, a long-time Trustee and Governor who had acted as Chairman of a Working Party which had guided the project from its inception.

During the summer vacation, the task of transferring and arranging books and archives was carried out so that the library could be available to students at the beginning of the new term. One of the features of the building is an Audio-visual room where students can work without distracting others in the reading area. This has been named 'The Dennison Room' as a tribute to the Bursar, Mr. Harry Dennison, who had been particularly interested and active in promoting the use of computers and video equipment. This was particularly appropriate as Mr. Dennison was retiring in 1986 after thirty-one years at Dorset House, first as Accountant and then as Bursar. He had seen the School through many vicissitudes and achievements and will be well remembered by hundreds of students who looked hopefully to him each term for dispensing their grants from the D.H.S.S. Not least of his accomplishments was a capacity as a rhymester, an example of which is shown in Appendix B.

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PART IV

CLINICAL PRACTICE

As with so many other professions, occupational therapy emerged from a perceived need in a practical situation, and in the early days of Dorset House much of the students' training was carried out on the job in close contact with the patients from the beginning. This, however, offered experience only in psychiatric treatment, and as the potential scope of the work was appreciated, wider facilities became essential, and the Allendale Curative Workshop (see page ...) was set up, not only for the benefit of patients but also to provide training for students in physical aspects of treatment.

As qualified occupational therapists began to emerge from Dorset House to set up departments in a number of hospitals, more facilities for clinical experience became available and made it possible for more students to be accepted for training. As other training schools came into being and produced their own qualified therapists, the clinical training opportunities widened, allowing for a welcome 'cross-fertilisation' between students and staff.

By 1954 all students were spending at least one year of the three year course in occupational therapy departments away from the School. There, under the skilled supervision of experienced therapists (subsequently termed 'clinical supervisors') they could put into practice the theoretical knowledge they were gaining in the School.

Inevitably over a period of more than fifty years, changes in treatment and health administration have meant that the emphasis of teaching has shifted. Experience considered essential in the fifties (such as the treatment of tuberculosis and poliomyelitis) is now unnecessary while the treatment of the very young and the aged is of increasing importance. Also the present policy of treating people in the home environment whenever possible has highlighted the need for experience in the community in social service

departments. Thus over the years many hospitals and treatment centres have been involved in students training for varying periods of time, and an incalculable number of clinical supervisors have contributed to this vital part of the course.

The hospitals in and around Oxford have assisted the School in this way, several since 1947 when the School moved to this area, and this has been particularly valuable in past years in providing experience on a part-time basis which has allowed students to work in the clinical field while still attending lectures in the School. In the case of the further-flung hospitals, the School has had to rely heavily on the clinical supervisors to arrange suitable tutoring, and this has invariably been done with good-will.

For some years, during the fifties and sixties, a part-time tutor was based in London to co-ordinate the training at a number of hospitals in that area, and to arrange lectures and study facilities for the students assigned there. This ceased when regular meetings between clinical supervisors and School tutors were started. In 1978, a new post of Clinical Practice Co-ordinator was created, the duties being to arrange each student's clinical placements and to follow up and monitor progress by visiting hospitals and keeping closely in touch with all involved in the training programme. The first person appointed to this post was Miss Jill Freston who subsequently became the School's Vice-Principal.

Also, during the fifties and sixties the School's earlier links with the United States were revived. An arrangement was made whereby some students were able to extend their clinical experience in American O.T. Departments under the direction and supervision of the Philadelphia School, and in many cases free accommodation was also provided. This was an opportunity much appreciated, and in a number of cases resulted in the students, when qualified, working in the States for a time before returning home. It had been hoped that a reciprocal arrangement could

be given to American students here, but unfortunately due to exchange rates at the time this did not materialise.

While it is impossible in this brief account to pay tribute to each hospital by name, special mention must be made of a few that have been assisting Dorset House with student training for nearly forty years. They are, in Oxford the Churchill, Warneford and Littlemore Hospitals, the Radcliffe Infirmary and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, formerly the Wingfield-Morris Hospital. Further afield, mention must be made of Bexley Hospital in Kent, the Maudsley Hospital in London and Farnham Park Rehabilitation Centre near Slough.

To the staff of these hospitals, and to all who have been involved in the clinical aspect of the course, the School records its thanks. Without this support, it would be impossible to construct a well-balanced programme of training, which at the end of three years enables a student not only to have a sound theoretical basis, but to have confidence in putting theory into practice.

THE STUDENTS' UNION

In the early days at Dorset House, the student group found little difficulty in communicating its views and making its needs known, as it was small and in close proximity to the staff who could be approached easily and informally.

This became more difficult as numbers increased, and inevitably a time came when a more structured situation became necessary. Thus, in the sixties the Dorset House Students' Union came into being. Records show that at that time, apart from timetabling, attendance at lectures, uniforms and library facilities, the major concerns were in

relation to grants and accommodation, matters which still cause anxiety today.

In the early seventies, close links were formed with students' union of other O.T. establishments and joint events and meetings took place, several hosted by Dorset House. From this, an O.T. Students' Association (O.T.S.A.) was formed and for a time this body was active in putting forward views and suggestions to the Association of Occupational Therapists, which welcomed this interest. However, continuity is always at risk in a changing population of students and at present O.T.S.A. has gone into abeyance.

One major advantage of having a formal student organisation was that it could be affiliated with the National Union of Students from whence certain travel and other benefits could be obtained. In recent years an Area branch of the N.U.S. has been set up, which enables Dorset House representatives to liaise with other student groups to their mutual benefit.

In the late sixties and early seventies, when nationally there was a great deal of students unrest, members of the Dorset House S.U. acted with considerable maturity and wisdom in resisting outside pressures and manipulation, thus allowing their studies to go head without disruption. This was in no small part due to the qualities of the leaders they elected, but also to the basic common sense of the majority for whom the goal of qualifying to practise their chosen profession outweighed other considerations.

Since the formation of the Staff/Student Council (see page 37) members of the S.U. have represented their colleagues at the monthly meetings, and at those of the Governors who, in this way, are able to keep in touch with student opinion and activities.

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

People attracted to occupational therapy as a career are necessarily those with wide interests, and this is amply demonstrated if one stops to read the notices on the board outside the common room. Within a surprisingly short time, newcomers to Oxford have been caught up in one or more of the activities on offer which from time to time have included sports, music, drama, yoga, politics and religion. Many have helped with youth clubs, Guides and Scouts, but the timetabling of the course, which required periods to be spent away from Oxford, has made these voluntary service activities difficult to maintain. At one time, Dorset House boasted a hockey team which played in the local park and rumour has it that one student obtained her hockey 'blue' by being included (quite illegally) in one of the University teams. This, however, has not been authenticated. More spectacular was a rugger team that enjoyed a short-lived success, and records show that in 1959 and 1960 a crew entered the Mudhook Yacht Club race in Scotland, flying Dorset House colours! It appears that they came eleventh out of thirteen in the first attempt; the result of their next effort is lost in the mists of time!

Through the years, Dorset House students have earned for themselves the reputation of being enthusiastic both in their work and their recreation, a fact that has been appreciated by the young men of Oxford, and the phrase 'wastage through marriage' crept into the professional statistics. With the social changes of the last two decades, marriage has not such a high priority, but when contemplated, the possibility of family planning can enable marriage and career to go forward simultaneously, and happily this is now often the case.

At recent re-unions it is interesting and encouraging to find that the majority of those whose families are now in their teens are returning to the profession where their skills, enhanced by maturity, are much appreciated.

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THE STAFF

In researching this history, one of the outstanding features that has become apparent is the length of service of so many of the staff. This applies equally in all fields - administrative, teaching, domestic and maintenance.

In these days of frequent changes and thrusting pursuance of careers, this could be viewed as a drawback, but happily this does not seem to have been the case. Younger staff have, of course, come and gone, bringing enthusiasm and new ideas and leaving a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of the School and the education it provides. This, however, has been against a background of support and stability provided by the long-serving members whose loyalty, patience and concern for the students, the School and the profession of occupational therapy has been paramount.

In addition to the full and part-time staff, there have throughout the years been numerous specialist lecturers, many drawn from the University, the Polytechnic, the College of Further Education and local hospitals, who have given series of lectures and demonstrations, and many of these, too, have become firm friends and valued colleagues in the overall teaching team.

Those who have perhaps too often been taken for granted are the domestic and maintenance staff on whom the whole well-being of the School has depended. Under a succession of Welfare Officers and Hostel Wardens a gallant band of cleaners, canteen ladies, stokers (in the early days), gardeners and maintenance men have quietly gone about their business, and even in the days at the Churchill Hospital, where the huts were far from glamorous, the appearance and comfort of the premises were a credit to their efforts. An obvious 'family atmosphere' has existed among them, and several lasting friendships have been made. Among those with particularly long service may be mentioned Mrs. Edwards who joined the staff in 1947 and in spite of a

ten-year break has thirty years of service to her credit, Mrs. Williams, now Mrs. Marks, who started in 1957 and Mrs. Rowlands who worked at Harberton House from 1969 until its closure, since when she has taken the students' lodgings in 60 London Road under her wing.

Apart from these and everyone who has been mentioned by name in the fore-going chronicle, there are so many people to whom one would like to pay tribute if space permitted. All ex-students will doubtless remember certain individuals who played a significant part in their own training and will deplore the fact that no personal reference is made to them. In a period covering fifty years, this obviously is impossible.

However, at the re-unions which take place from time to time, names are recalled and stories re-told - often humorous, sometimes slightly scandalous, but always with affection, and this is perhaps a better tribute than the printed word.

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THE CASSONS

The story of Dorset House up to this stage in its history would not be complete without reference to the support given throughout the years by members of the Casson family.

Tribute has already been paid to the enterprise and foresight of Dr. Elizabeth Casson, who not only founded the school but was instrumental in promoting the development of the profession of occupational therapy in this country. She also had a most persuasive way in enlisting help from influential sources, not least of these being members of her own family who came forward to support her, during her lifetime and continued their interest and help in subsequent years to this present day.

Dr. Casson seems to have been blest with many talented nephews, and records show that the first to be involved with the school was Mr. Owen Reed who, in the early days at Bristol, produced plays in which patients, students and staff were members of the cast. A student of that era recalls how much these were appreciated, and the high professional standard that was achieved.

Sir Hugh Casson, another nephew, joined the Governing Board of the school in 1948 and became Chairman in 1956, retiring in 1978 after thirty years, during which time he had helped to steer the school through a change of venue and various building projects with the hazards and crises that were inherent in these. Despite his busy professional life as an architect, and later as President of the Royal Academy, he was always available for discussion, advice and practical help, and his lightness of touch on formal occasions gave these an atmosphere of relaxation and enjoyment.

Throughout the years, up to the time of their respective deaths, Sir Lewis Casson (Dr. Casson's brother) and his wife Dame Sybil Thorndike showed great interest in the school, and always visited and talked to the students when

their work brought them to Oxford. On one occasion when acting at the New Theatre they stayed for the week at the Lodge (Miss Macdonald's house adjacent to the hostel) and caused much interest among students and staff, as they sat in the garden declaiming the lines they were rehearsing for the next production. Their generosity in helping to raise money for the Building Fund was entirely in character and greatly appreciated.

The most recent member of the family to help the school is Mr. John Casson, O.B.E., son of Sir Lewis and thus another nephew of the Founder. He became Chairman of the Governors in 1979 and as such has continued enthusiastically to carry forward the family interest.

Inevitably as time passes and changes occur in higher education, old associations may have to give way to fresh needs. However, whatever the future, for those who have been associated with Dorset House during the past years the name "Casson" has a real significance and evokes warm and friendly memories, and will remain a source of inspiration.

* * * * *

This short history of the School has been written so that its readers may understand something of the spirit that has inspired its founders and all who have served it in any way. It is hoped that all who come to the School, either as staff or student, may find the way to enter into this spirit and to carry on its work and traditions.

Of necessity, this chronicle of events has finished part-way through a decade. By 1990 other developments will need to be recorded as Dorset House is a dynamic institution always changing in response to the educational needs of the period, and whoever updates this chronicle in the year 2000 A.D. will undoubtedly find it a very interesting task.

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Miss Constance Tebbitt
(Later Dr. Owens)
1930-1934



Miss Mary Macdonald
1938-1971

**DORSET HOUSE
PRINCIPALS**



Miss Betty Collins
1971-1977



Miss Jean Edwards
(now Mrs. Mitchell)
1977-present

Unfortunately, no photograph is available of Miss Martha Jackson who was Principal from 1934 to 1938.

Appendix A

SOME REMINISCENCES

BRISTOL - 1937

My first thoughts of Dorset House are of its beauty, situated on the heights of Clifton surrounded by trees and the green of the Downs.

I was there for a year, waiting to begin my nursing training and remember summer teas on the terrace where Bran, Dr. Casson's dog, snapped at the wasps. The terrace and garden by moonlight were quite magical.

There were well-appointed single rooms for the patients, with wards for those more disturbed. There were no lifts and all hot water and food-trays were carried upstairs. I filled hot-water bottles from a huge kettle boiled on the attic gas-ring.

Although patients were well accommodated staff were not pampered, and at the Clevedon Annexe one froze by candle-light.

The occupational therapists lived over the garages. Their ancient lavatory was a nightmare, which Doctor eventually inspected. Among other defects they complained that when seated their feet dangled, so Doctor, ever sympathetic, asked the carpenter to build a platform round the pedestal, thus ensuring secure 'enthronement'!

The occupational therapy department was a large room full of tantalising handicraft delights. 'Margaret Morris' dancing was also an important feature, the patients wearing flared linen dresses for this activity. Staff were differentiated by their overalls. Nurses wore blue, domes-

tic staff brown, and occupational therapists green with white shoes.

Miss Jackson was then Principal of the School, Miss Macdonald being in Canada.

My final memory is of the very professional plays produced by Owen Reed. Patients and occupational therapists took part, and particularly outstanding were 'Eager Heart' and 'The Emperor and the Nightingale' done as a shadow play with Dr. Casson in the main part.

Margaret Hancock

AN AUXILIARY - SEPTEMBER 1943 - MARCH 1944

Auxiliaries were mainly school leavers - eighteen-year olds - and the course was for six months. There was a war on and we were needed to help in established O.T. Departments around the country. There was no uniform, other than green overalls, and as clothing was severely rationed, our mufti consisted mainly of school uniform with the badges removed.

The work to be covered in the time was extensive, with written and practical exams at the end of the course. Subjects included the basic sciences, medicine, surgery and applied O.T. Techniques also had to be mastered - for it was the era of crafts - and final samples produced. A period of local physical practice was also included. We worked all day and frequently night as well. Discipline was rigid. We had to 'sign on' i.e. put our names in a book, if we wished to use the lecture rooms or workshops after 6.00

p.m. and woe betide anyone found outside the hatted dormitories after 10.30 p.m. We accepted it all without question.

As well as the academic and practical work there were also the domestic rotas. These covered cleaning duties in the school areas, helping with the washing up in the main hospital dining room for approximately 250 people and stoking old-fashioned boilers with coke. These were the only means of heating the 'huts' in which we lived and worked. The trade name of the boilers was Tortoise. They were certainly slow burners but very temperamental and in all respects they were a nightmare. We all disliked stoking duty. We emerged at the end of the six months as partially-trained OTs willing to be drafted wherever required in the U.K. The need was in hospital or rehabilitation centres for war injured, both servicemen and civilians, miners and factory workers. It was almost entirely physical rehabilitation.

We were plunged in at the deep end, yet had enough knowledge and skills to make a useful contribution. We had our fees and board paid by the Ministry of Health plus ten shillings (50p) a week pocket money whilst we were students. Our salary was to be £150 per annum.

UP-GRADERS - 1946

The first set of 'up-graders' were selected from the ranks of auxiliaries - there were sixteen of us - who had all had at least eighteen months clinical experience. The course was for ten months and was to up-date and increase our knowledge in basic science and medical subjects, with additional craft activities and a clinical practice in psychiatry.

The School was still at Bromsgrove when we started in February but in the summer of 1946 the main nucleus was to move to Oxford. From September - November the up-graders

and some finalists from the three year course were to stay behind with Mrs. Kuemmel, who acted as our personal tutor and 'godmother'. We were to stay until after the written exams in November.

Finals in those days were a marathon, with nine three-hour papers, vivas in applied O.T. and in craft techniques plus finished samples. The papers were written during a week, followed by a gap of approximately three weeks before vivas.

Having completed the written exams we moved to Oxford and it was farewell to Bromsgrove for ever. We had felt rather an elite group when we were left behind, but on arrival at Oxford that idea soon vanished. We were superimposed into an organisation that was just settling into new accommodation and routines and we finalists must have been an added hassle for everyone. We lived at Harberton House and were allocated part of a hut at the school in which to gather together our craft samples and have some last-minute practice for the vivas which were to be held in early December. These were to take place at Harold Wood Hospital in Essex at least 85 miles away. Craft samples had been carefully packed and sent off in advance to be examined. We set off on the day of the vivas at about 7.00 a.m. in a coach, returning home again very late on the same night, totally exhausted.

We were actually only in Oxford for about four weeks, but having completed the papers we had more free time and certainly made use of it to enjoy the many facets of interest in the city.

1946 was a most memorable year for Dorset House and for the students who were the first 'up-graders'. To fill in our gaps of knowledge and attain the required standard was an untried experiment. It was an experiment that proved successful for we all passed as qualified OTs with the Physical Diploma.

'COOKING' FLAT WOVEN RUGS

The forties and early fifties still required students to produce reasonable sized craft samples for assessment at the end of the course. Mrs. Kummel - known to all as Mrs.'K' - was a superb teacher of a range of weaving skills, but even her marvellous tuition failed to find many students capable of completing an acceptable flat woven rug sample. These were intended to be 30" x 18" but most of them required the attention of her 'cooking' - as she called it. Nearly all the rugs finished up with one end different in width from the other and frequently neither measured 18". A few weeks before the final assessment of craft samples every cupboard in the place had flat woven rugs nailed to them by Mrs. K. in order to 'cook' them into shape. This was done by wetting and shrinking or wetting and stretching. The end results were usually miraculous, and there were few, if any, students who had their samples failed!

Alicia Mendez

1951 - 1954

I hated my first term at Dorset House, coming as I did from a secure boarding school background. Others quickly settled - I couldn't. They got boy-friends - I didn't. They used make-up - I never had and didn't know how to start. They seemed friendly and happy while I became increasingly obnoxious - but with good old British stiff-upper-lipness I always said 'Yes, thank you' when asked if I was enjoying the course. Never would I admit to anything else.

Gradually I settled in and some memories stand out:

- Of my probationary interview (at the end of the first term) when 'Mac' tore me to shreds. My only redeeming feature was that I 'took criticism well' - so I was allowed to stay.
- Of exercises to Charlie Kunz music. Whenever I hear it now I have a comfortable feeling of nostalgia.
- Of my first visit to a psychiatric hospital after only a few days of training. We did not have to go, but I was tough, wasn't I? In those days it was pretty horrific. My memory is of large clanging keys, unlocking and locking doors; of women sitting distant and hunched on benches; of a man sitting huddled in the corner of a ward, and another standing stockstill, and of being told that he was a 'catatonic schizophrenic'; and of sleeping very badly for four nights....
- Of shouting at Mrs. Jones at Farnham Park hospital, when she refused me time off to go to a May Ball, "just because I'm engaged you think I don't care; that's not fair and not true".
I stormed back to my digs, where some 30 minutes later she followed me and told me I was obviously tired and that probably it would be a good thing for me to go to my Ball. A lesson in true graciousness - even if it did make me feel small and guilty.
- Of showing impatience to a depressed patient and then having to hear her apologies for being so stupid. I have never raised my voice to a patient since.

There are memories of staff - of Mr. Maggs in woodwork, my favoured subject, always laughing and teasing; or Mr. Nott in metal and basketry, serious and gentle; of Mrs. Kuemmel with her strong accent and constant attempts on our behalf at 'cooking' our not so good efforts at weaving; of Miss Campbell and Miss Mason and of course of 'Mac', who ruled us with a rod of iron and whose humour we only rarely experienced.

As I write this it strikes me how much attitudes, behaviour and expectations have changed. Then there was the 'stiff upper lip'! We were taught not to show feelings. Today students are allowed feelings and encouraged to share them. Then we had to sign in (staff too) and every session had to be attended. Now greater freedom allows students to opt out of certain sessions (even if this is not always approved of). Then we were surrounded by rules - now tutors try to offer space for personal development. But one thing has not changed - then as now we had lots of fun!

Joan Davies (nee Wright)

* * * * *

1952 - 1955

My recollections start with a photograph I have of a group of us spinning in the sunshine with the Nissen huts in the background. To keep an even rhythm we used to sing 'The SkyeBoat Song'. A contrast to this are other memories of numbed extremities in mid-winter while spending hours 'tying-up' under a foot-power loom with the snow swirling outside the hut door.

Lectures started in a formal manner. We stood while the lecturer entered and walked from the door at one end to the blackboard at the other. Dr. Darcus used to stride in briskly to start an Anatomy lecture. In Psychology, Miss Macdonald's dachshund 'Dax' would follow her in and quietly go to sleep during the lecture.

It was a beautiful summer's day for Open Day in 1954. There was a marquee between two of the huts. I still have the programme of events. Dr. Casson was there - the last she was to attend as she died the following winter. The chair was taken by Sir Geoffrey Peto and an address given by Miss Helen Willard, the Director of the Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy, who was visiting this country.

Precious leisure hours were spent enjoying Oxford and the surrounding countryside, and I have a happy memory of a group of us in the first year of training having a picnic in the grounds of Blenheim Palace, when we made 'orange-peel' teeth and laughed so much that we could hardly keep still for the photograph.

Diana Wharton (nee Soane)

1958 - 1961

Memories of training at Dorset House in the late fifties are of Nissen huts, coke-burning stoves and scuttling from hut to hut trying not to get too wet. In winter everyone wore as many clothes as possible under their uniforms, and nothing was allowed to show at the neck, hem or wrist making the students look rather bulgy like 'Michelin Tyre Men' advertisements.

My first week at Dorset House was spent cord-knotting, wearing a 'Coollee' hat made from cardboard as protection from the sun. We sat in long lines, each student anchored to the chair in front by string, making scissor cords. These were to fasten our scissors to our belts for use when we went on clinical practice. It was quite usual to sever the cord by mistake when attempting to use the scissors, making constant repair jobs necessary. Undoubtedly good and ongoing practice in cord-knotting!

Jill Freston

1970 - 1973

I joined the course in the year after the school had reverted to having one large intake of students each September and was therefore one of eighty starting at that time. Formalities were being relaxed somewhat at that time and one no longer had to address one's peers as Miss except when on clinical practice, and even then there were some exceptions and complications. There was an instance when at the start of a clinical practice we were introducing ourselves. I said 'This is Miss Dunseath and I am Mrs. Gray'. I was interrupted by the supervisor who said 'We are on Christian name terms here - I am Mrs. Knight'. Old habits die hard!

Being a slightly 'mature student' (twenty-one as opposed to eighteen) I could marry without parental consent, but, as stated in the rules, not without the permission of the school. When I went to my tutor at the end of the summer term to tell her that I hoped to get married during the summer holidays she said 'But you are meant to tell us if you are thinking of getting engaged. I don't know what the reaction will be to marriage'. This was towards the end of Miss Macdonald's reign and I was interviewed by both Mac and her replacement-to-be Miss Collins, the outcome being that permission to marry was given on condition that my future husband did not 'darken the door of Dorset House'. Miss Macdonald always considered that her responsibilities were to the students and the profession and was fearful that spouses, however sympathetic, might hinder training.

Having been a student at the beginning of the seventies, I found myself on the other side of the fence as a tutor towards the end of the same decade. At a staff meeting to 'prune' the course I recalled how, as a student, I had sometimes returned home at the end of a day exhausted and frustrated by the pressure of it all. Other staff agreed that they too had a similar experience, but in retro-

spect felt that this was no bad thing! At any rate we survived and emerged triumphant.

Caroline Gray (nee Price)

1973 - 1976

The seventies were, I think, a period of great change at Dorset House. Most of the change is noticeable only in retrospect and for me, certainly, noticeable from the other side of the lectern. But at the time only some of the more important things were noticed. Things such as the change from trousers to jeans as acceptable garb (but only if the jeans were clean!), the lowering of the age of majority and with it the loss of "in loco parentis" and something which had nothing directly to do with Dorset House but has had dramatic effects on the social life, the entry of women undergraduates to the men's colleges.

My first view of Dorset House was that event common to all, the interview. Forewarned was forearmed, my cousin was then in her second year, and I came in best interview suit with parents also in best interview suits. We were all duly interviewed, and were obviously acceptable for I was in due course offered a place, something the wisdom of which a number of people must have pondered during my three and a bit years at Dorset House.

The course spread out over the three years in its time honoured pattern. To begin with two weeks of "General Orientation" spent doing group projects with inadequate equipment and making various useful objects such as an extremely ill-fitting dove-tail joint and a paper knife. The academic subjects gradually panned out before us. Anatomy with its paper bones, physiology was total confusion

having parted company with biology at a very tender age and psychology with its pile of Penguin psychology books which finally found a use as a substituted bed leg when we discovered the wonders of Hilgar and Atkinson's Introduction to Psychology.

Clinical practice then loomed. A whole year away from College, Oxford and friends and to which corner of the earth would we be sent. Where exactly was Oswestry? The year passed, not exactly uneventfully and then the return to Oxford and the build up towards exams and the even worse Vivas. Although light relief was provided by preparations for Founder's Day and, much more important to us, the Ball, which due to unseen forces was held at Rhodes House, a spectacular setting. And so farewell to Oxford and Dorset House.

Clare Taylor

1976 - 1979

I have a private little smile I reserve to myself for those occasions when I am the subject of some kind eulogy about how brave I was, how difficult it must have been for me, an elderly male O.T. student at the finishing school for doctors' daughters. The truth of the matter is, it was three years of total self indulgence, of intense pleasure equalled only, perhaps, by the similar period I spent later at Dorset House as a tutor.

Don't confuse me with the mature students who, having cast the chains of school and savoured a year or two of independence, return screaming and kicking against the petty tyrannies of School discipline. Now they really did suffer, if only from self inflicted wounds.

I was the original mature, mature student. Not for me the miserable digs, the painfully precise budgeting and self-catering typified in my mind by two girls, one who had to go to bed and wrap herself in a quilt to keep warm while she studied as she couldn't afford to heat her room, and the other who confided quite cheerfully that she had a cabbage and a piece of cheese to last her the rest of the week. By contrast, I had a comfortable hired house in Sutton Courtney with a wife to provide a warm meal on my return, do all the shopping and the ironing and after dinner, pausing only to kiss my wife and children goodnight, I retired to my centrally heated caravan, parked in the drive, kitted out as a study, where I worked in peace, warmth and seclusion till the early hours.

Oh yes, I did work. Probably the hardest I've ever had to do. But look at the competition. Bright young girls, bright as buttons and bristling with 'O' and 'A' levels. Could I ever forget Atkinson and Birney and fear of failure.

And at the end a Diploma. It should be illuminated in blood - but full, rich, heart warming blood, taken in the full flood of life.

Arthur Harrison

Appendix B

The Ballad of Dorset House

(With apologies to Mr. Longfellow)

Far above the Spires of Oxford,
Out beyond the teeming city
Lies the fabled Ton of Heading
Where the football soars the highest,
Where spectators shout the loudest,
Where the buses run the slowest.

There beside a noble beech-tree
Lies the School of Dr. Casson,
Older than the Morris Minor,
Young at heart like bursting blossom.

Therapy through Occupation
Was the subject of its Teaching;
Skill of hands was thought important
And the patients seemed to flourish.
Now in days we call enlightened
Other subjects crave attention,
Bones and muscles fret the Students
And the Black Art, Psychiatry,
Is the study they all cherish.

There the great chief, MinniCollins,
Called Akela, Laughing Mother,
Leads her tribe of modest maidens,
Leads them in the search for knowledge
To the goal of Registration
By the Board in London seated.
There to aid her sits the Kingbird,
Great in Vice as all acknowledge,
Uttering cries of mystic splendour,
Changing lectures, moving classes,
Mangling the great Time-table.

Many others MinniCollins
Has to help her in the teaching;
Tutors, lecturers, instructors
Make the Students' life a burden,
Force them on the Path of Duty,
Watch in sadness when the Students
Seek the path of idle dalliance
With the young men in the Valley.

In a corner of the building
Lurks a beast of prey, the Bursar,
Sallies forth to seize the Students,
Robs them of their little money.
Yet he makes but little profit
From his evil depredations,
For to him come MinniCollins
And her minions, hands uplifted;
Welfare Officer and Warden,
Teachers, Cleaners, Clerks and Typists
Take their salaries, laughing gaily.
Others too must have their portion,
Tax-Inspector, Plumber, Glazier,
S.E.B. and Rates-Collector,
These and half a hundred others
Want to share the Students' money.

But the Students, uncomplaining,
Bear their burdens, smiling broadly.
Sit - resit - examinations,
Sit and pass them, smiling bravely;
Take their Vivas, face the Torture,
Try to treat unknown malfunctions,
Leave Room 30 smiling sadly.
Then in August comes the Pass-list
To erase the mental anguish,
Ending sleepless nights of doubting.

Then the Students leave the Schoolroom
Smiling gladly, clutching papers
Filled with writing, called Diplomas;
Leave their youthful thoughts behind them,
Make their way to their Departments,
Where the patients wait their coming,
Longing for the word of kindness,
And the magic touch of healing.

* * * * *

H.L.D. - for the Finalists' Party July 1973



Boyer House
The Casson Peabody Wing & Mary Macdonald House - etc.

70 pages + 26 additions
i-xii; 8a-c; 14a-c; 18a-b; 20a-b; 22a-c; 28a-c;
34a-c; 41a-b; 52a-b
in total 96 pages