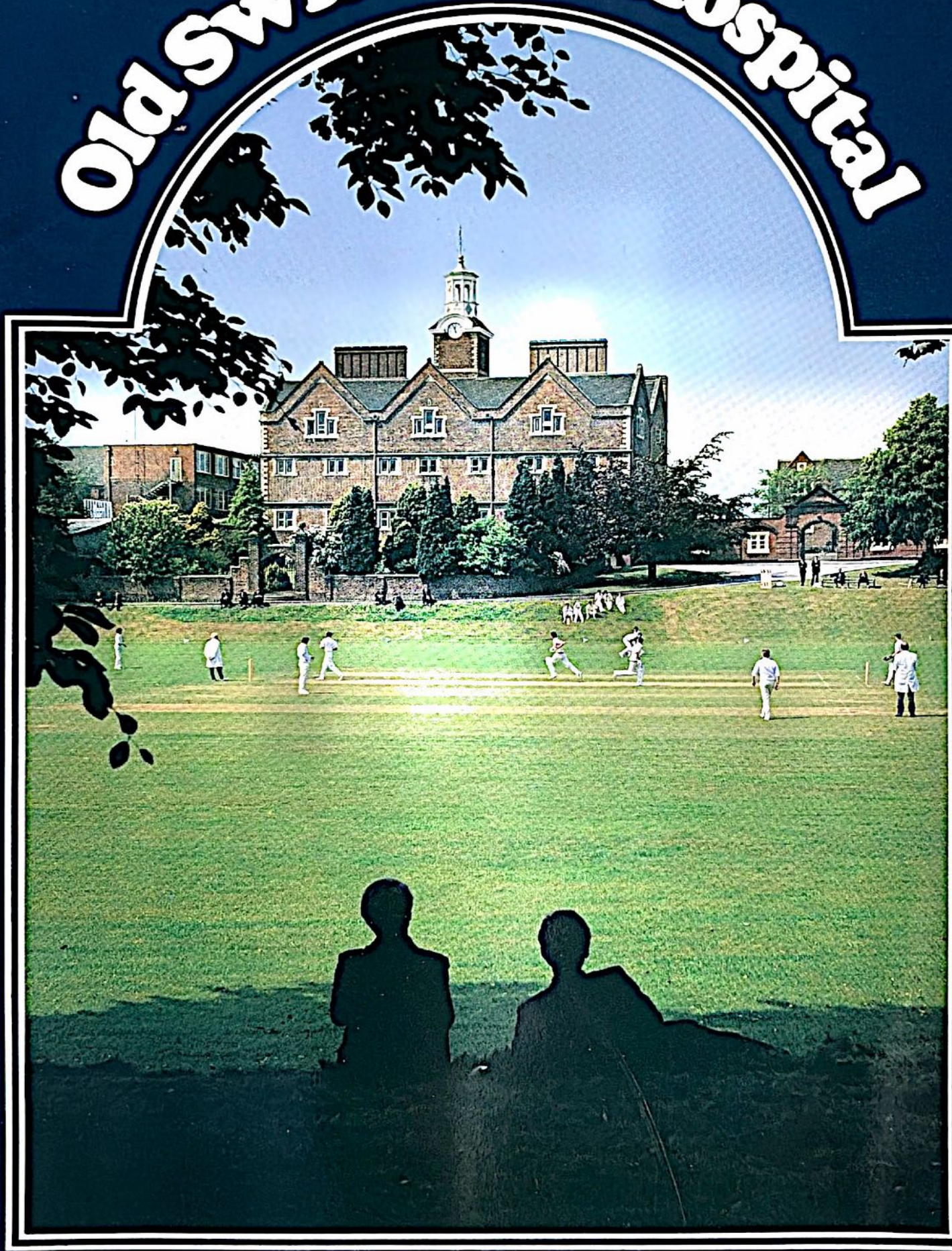
Old Swinford Hospital



Our foundation

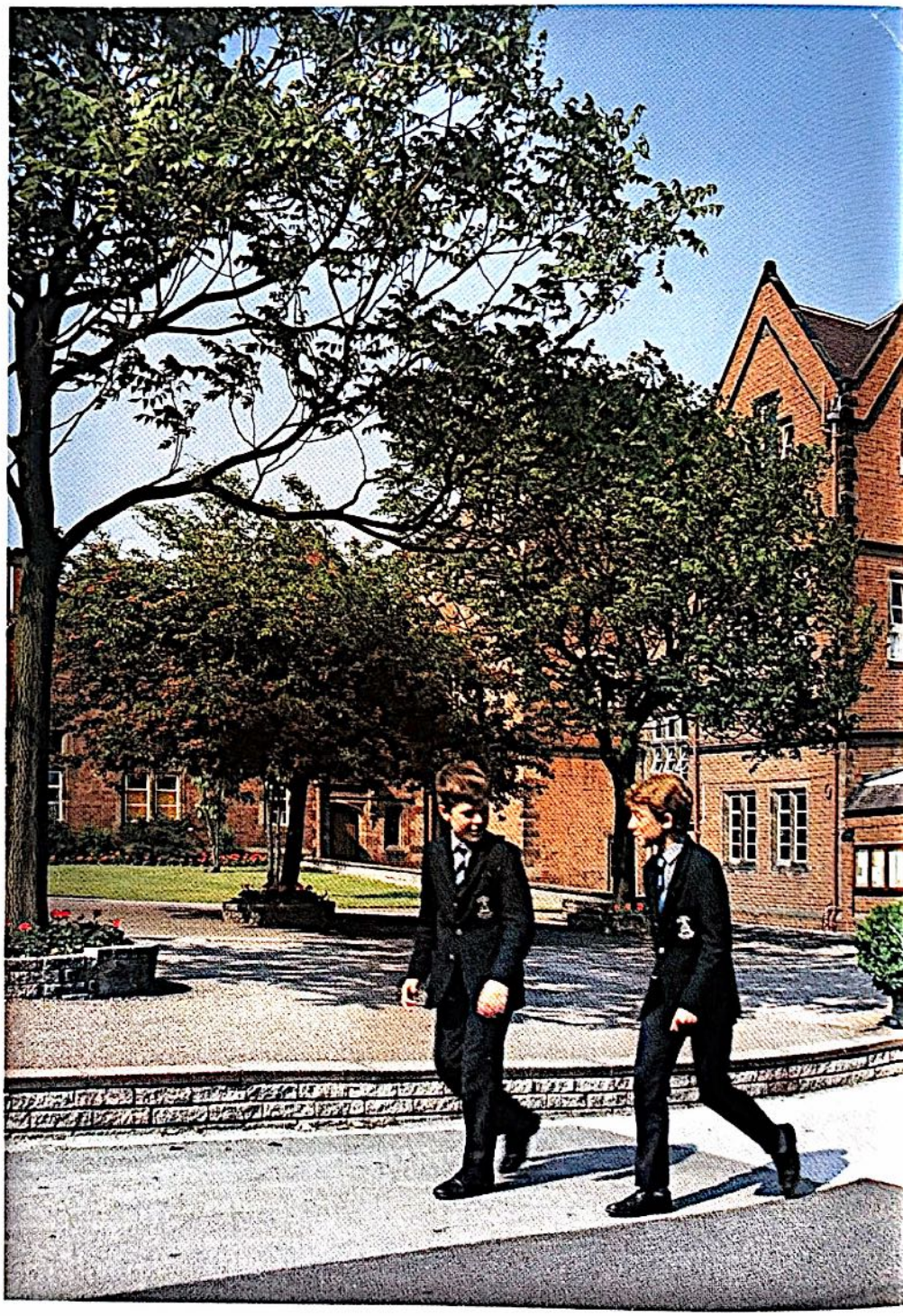
The School was founded in 1667 by Thomas Foley who took as his model Christ's Hospital, then in London. The word 'Hospital' was often used at that time in connection with charity schools. He arranged for all the boys to be educated free, and apprenticed at 14 when they were provided with the apprentice's uniform. We are still often known locally as the Blue Coat School. It was only in 1928 that boys at the School ceased to wear blue coats and corduroy breeches.

Under his will, Thomas Foley endowed the School with considerable lands and money. He laid down that his three sons and their descendants should always have places amongst the Trustees, or 'Feoffees' as he called them, who administered his generous endowments. The Foley family are still directly involved in the School today.

The income from the endowments is now primarily used to give financial assistance to parents who cannot afford to pay all the fees. In addition there are funds for academic Scholarships and Exhibitions. The Feoffees also pay for additional facilities of a recreational nature.

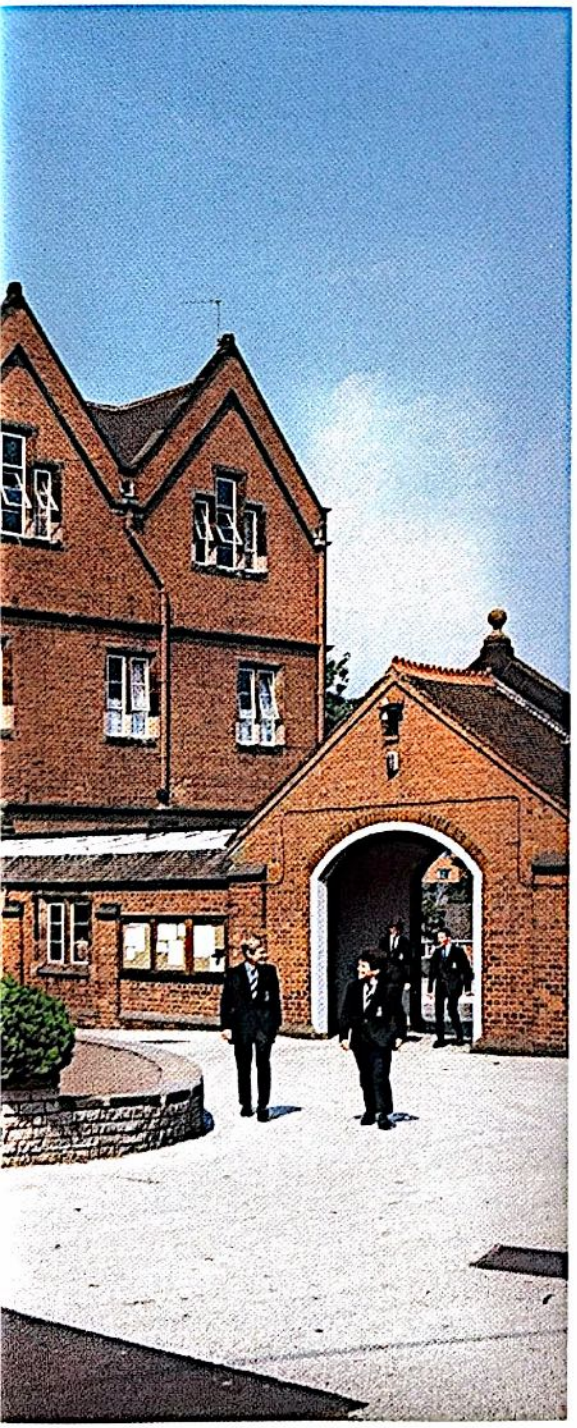
There are 500 boys in the School, with a very strong Sixth Form. Boys may enter at 11, mainly from Primary Schools, but half the boarding places are reserved for boys who enter at 13, mainly from Preparatory Schools. Boys also enter at Sixth Form level, and occasionally at other ages.

Under our Voluntary Aided status, granted in 1950, the cost of education in the classroom, as opposed to boarding, is automatically paid for by the Local Education Authority from which a boy comes. Under an agreement with our own Local Authority, we take 25 day boys at 11 each year. There is considerable demand for these places and boys must live very close to the School to gain a place. However, up to three-quarters of the boys are boarders and the School is run primarily as a boarding school, enjoying a very large measure of independence.



From the Headmaster

At Old Swinford Hospital we believe that there are a number of elements which are of prime importance in a boy's education and which embody our aims:



1. To provide each boy with the greatest possible individual attention in a disciplined and caring community.

2. To enable him to obtain the appropriate academic qualifications together with the practical skills which will act as a foundation for his subsequent career.

3. To develop a sense of community with the ability to work both independently and in a team; to accept responsibility and exercise leadership.

4. To help each boy to find something at which he can excel by providing a wide range of out-of-school activities.

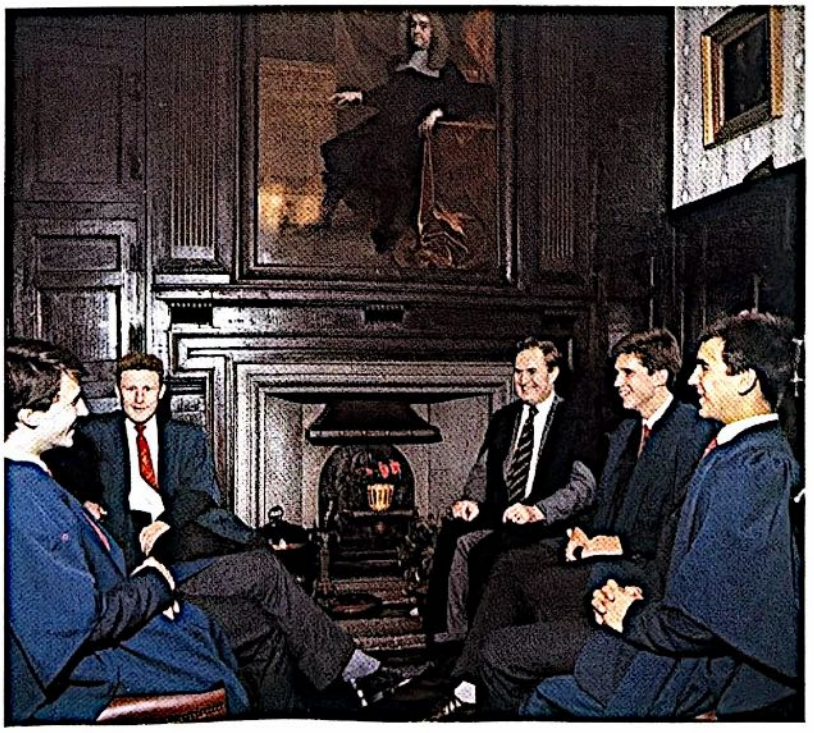
As a result of an education here, experience shows that boys who achieve success in any sphere of school life, quickly build up self-confidence and self-discipline. However, it is our firm belief that none of this can be achieved without close co-operation between the boy, his parents and the School.

We feel that one of our particular strengths as a Voluntary Aided School, is the ability to bring together talented boys from a range of backgrounds from all over the country.

Over the last decade we have been fortunate enough to be able to build a wide range of new facilities, including three purpose-built boarding houses. Although we are proud of our facilities, we still feel that the boys are our greatest asset. The ethos of the School is traditional and we expect high standards of appearance and manners from boys and positive guidance is given in these matters.

Please come to visit us. Stourbridge is easily accessible by motorway or rail, and we are on the edge of the glorious countryside of Shropshire and Worcestershire. You can be assured of a warm and friendly welcome.

The Oak Room, Old Swinford Hospital, Stourbridge



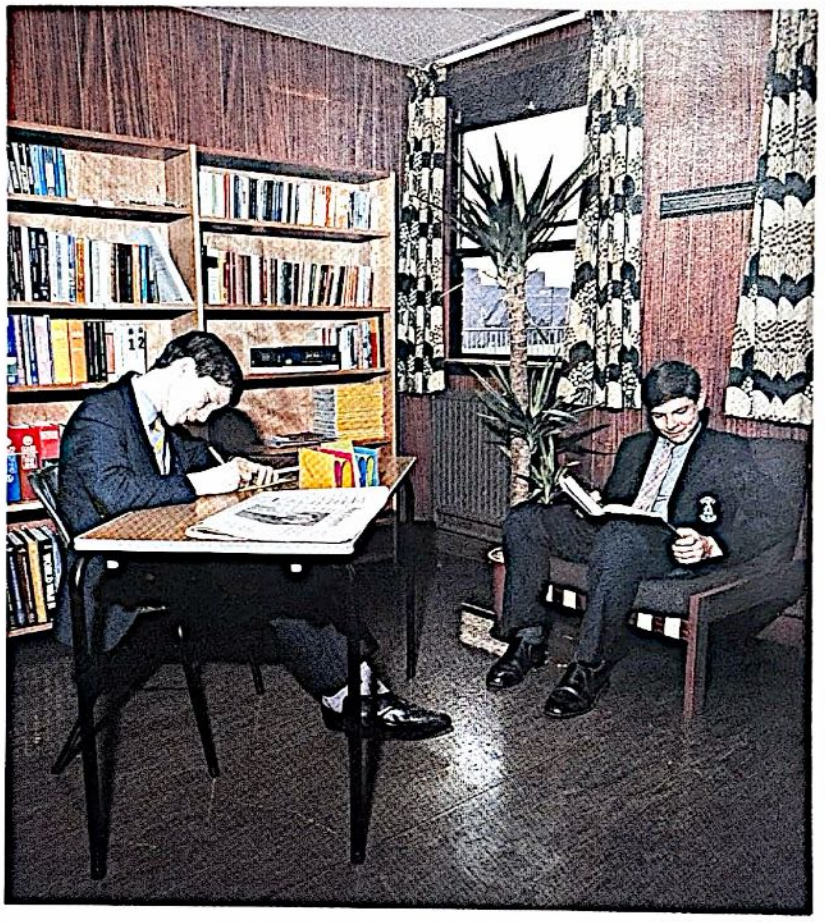


There are five Senior boarding houses each with about 60 boys, but a boy who enters the School at 11 will spend his first year in the Junior boarding house, Prospect. Its smaller size is ideal for a boy settling into boarding and, as in all the Houses, there is accommodation for the Housemaster and his family and the aim is to create a homely atmosphere. There is also a resident House Tutor in each House. Other members of staff assist the Housemaster as Tutors. Between them,

Housemasters and Tutors share the pastoral care of the boys and are concerned with every aspect of a boy's progress. Each boy sees his Tutor individually on a regular basis and encouragement is given to make full use of the opportunities in the School, both in and out of the classroom.

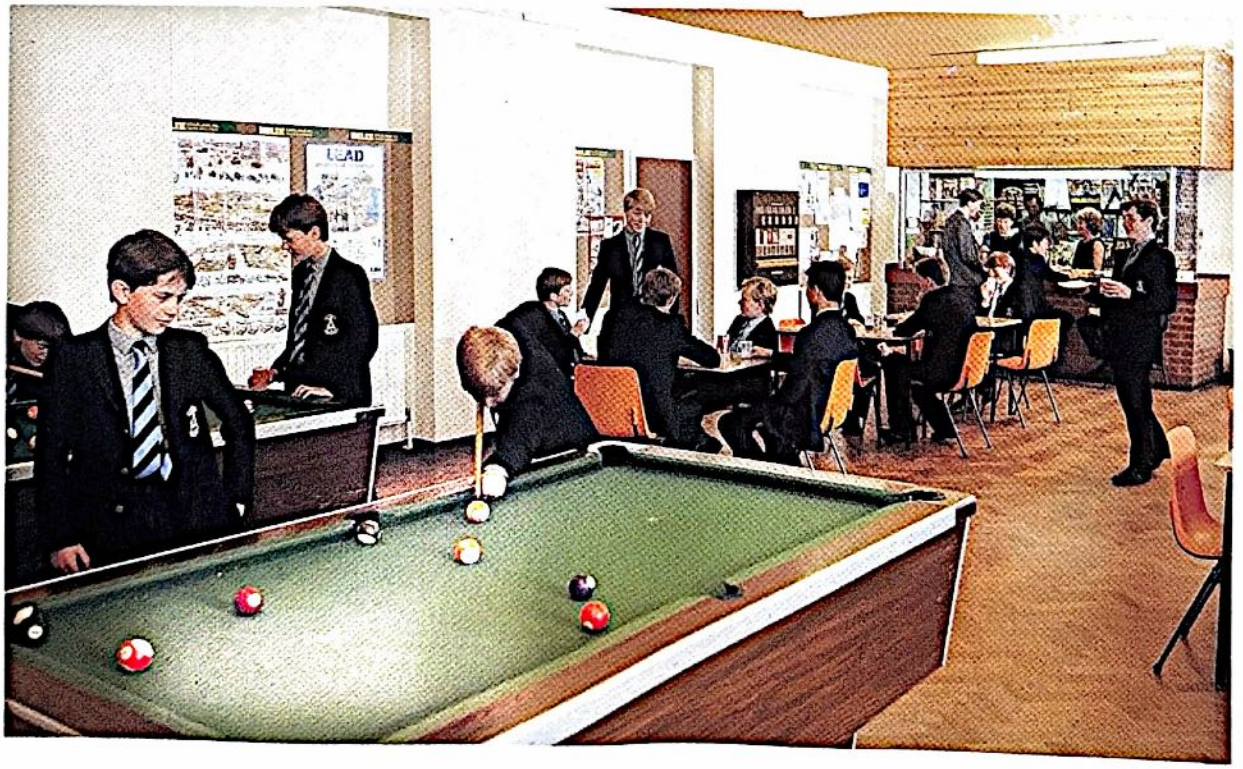
Boarding & care of the boys

Boarding accommodation is modern and very comfortable. All Sixth Formers have individual study bedrooms and are expected to help with the smooth running of the Sixth Form House. Younger boys sleep in dormitories where there are normally about 12 boys of the same year group. Within the Houses every boy has his own study carrel or work space. Prep. starts at 7 p.m. each weekday evening. Each House has several Common Rooms, together with a House Library and varied recreational facilities. Although the school laundry cleans the boys' uniforms, there are washing machines, driers and irons in each Senior House for the boys to use.



HEALTH

There is a well-equipped Sanatorium with a professionally qualified staff. A school doctor is specially appointed by the Governors. Local hospital facilities are excellent.





INTER-HOUSE COMPETITION

Every year there is a full programme of events in the Inter-House Competition. These range from all kinds of sports to academic work, General Knowledge, Music, Drama and Chess.

WEEKLY BOARDERS

Full boarders are in the majority, but weekly boarding is available. Weekly boarders may leave on Saturday after all school commitments have been fulfilled, normally after morning lessons. They return on Sunday evening or Monday morning.

THE WEEKEND

It is important that full boarders are meaningfully occupied during the weekend. There are normally inter-school matches on Saturday afternoons, but if a boy is not required for a team, he will have a choice of sporting activities for part of the afternoon. Boys are not allowed to go outside the School without special permission. However, expeditions are often arranged, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award, Scout Groups and CCF weekend camps.

On Sundays, there is a Morning Service for all boys.

On Sunday afternoons there are again organised activities. During the weekend there is, therefore, a balance between organised activity and leisure time. After games on Saturday and the Service on Sunday boys need not wear school uniform.

OUT-WEEKENDS

There is one out-weekend both before half-term and after half-term, but boys are welcome to stay at school at this time and many do. However, at half-term, which lasts a week, no boy may remain at school.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Boys of all denominations are welcome at Old Swinford but, although we are not a Church Foundation, worship within the School follows the pattern of the Church of England. All boarders are expected to attend our own Service on Sundays, although arrangements are made for boys of other denominations and faiths to attend their own places of worship, if this is the wish of parents. The Roman Catholic Church is particularly close to the School. The School Chapel has always been St. Mary's, Old Swinford and the School frequently attends Parish Communion there. Our Choir sings at this service and the local community appreciates the involvement of the School.

Boys are prepared for Confirmation by the Rector of Old Swinford and the Stourbridge Educational Chaplain also helps in the School.



Technological Skills...

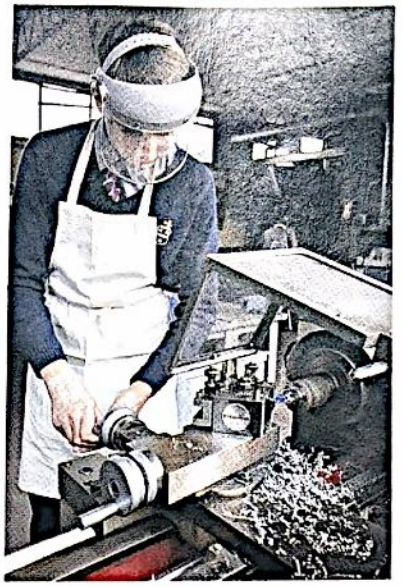
Since the Seventeenth Century the School has been aware of the importance of training boys for the industries of the day. We are fortunate to have a fine range of workshops where all boys are given training in practical skills and experience of working with all modern materials. The emphasis is on solving design problems and Craft Design and Technology can be taken to 'A' level standard. In addition, the training lower down the School can lead on to a technology course in the fourth year. This again involves problem solving.

Another vital area of technology developed here over recent years is Electronics. Boys can take this course up to 'A' level, but out-of-school projects can also be undertaken.

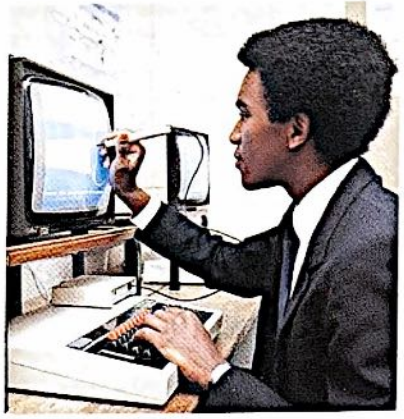
All schools have computers, but we are developing a wide-ranging Network around the School linking all buildings. This will give boys outstanding opportunities to use educational data and other software on the hard disk in the Computer Centre. All boys receive training in Information Technology which involves using Word Processors, Data Retrieval, etc. in the main Centre.

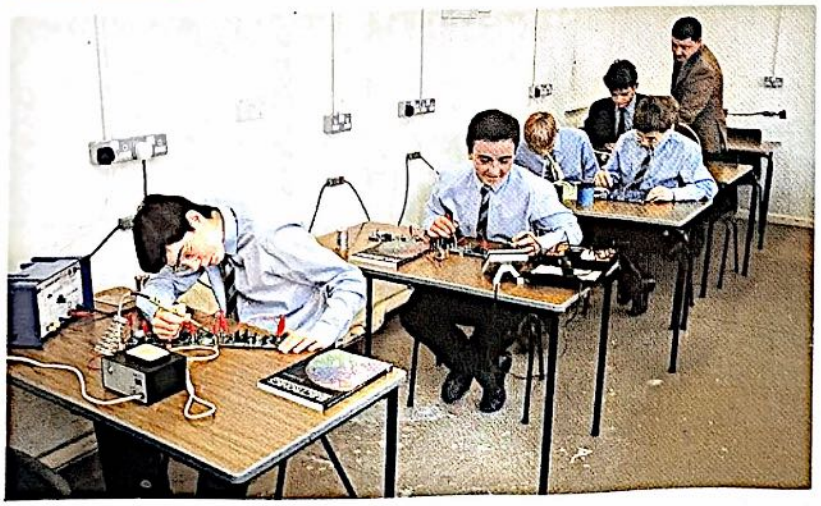
To encourage boys to use their practical abilities, each year the Feoffees, in conjunction with Royal Brierley Crystal, offer Project Prizes throughout the School.











...Art







A new Art Centre was opened in September 1982, and this is part of the Craft Design and Technology Department. There is a separate Pottery Workshop and the Design Club meets regularly.

The Sixth Form

Over twenty Advanced level subject courses are available in the Sixth Form. The full list is in the separate folder.

Those entering the Sixth Form are expected to have good academic prospects, based on their performance in the Fifth Form. It is possible for boys from other schools to enter Old Swinford provided they are promising 'A' level candidates.

Our Sixth Form provides not only an academic training but also gives boys opportunities to broaden their range of experience by taking part in the national Young Enterprise Scheme which involves setting up and running a Company at school for a year. Boys are also encouraged to develop their powers of leadership, not only within the School, but also by going on Outward Bound courses, grants for which are available from the Feoffees.

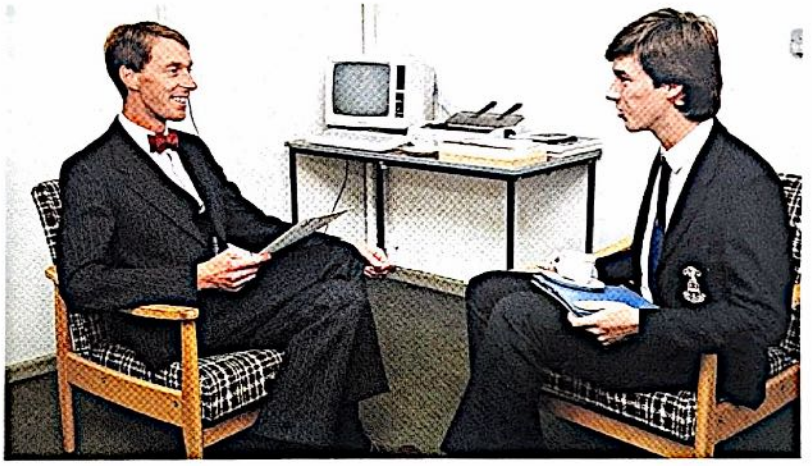
Within each House there is a Prefect system. School Prefects, who have particular responsibilities, are appointed by the Headmaster.

There is a Sixth Form Club which is run by the boys under the guidance of one of the Deputy Headmasters. Girls may be invited to the Club at particular times each week and there is a full programme of club activities.

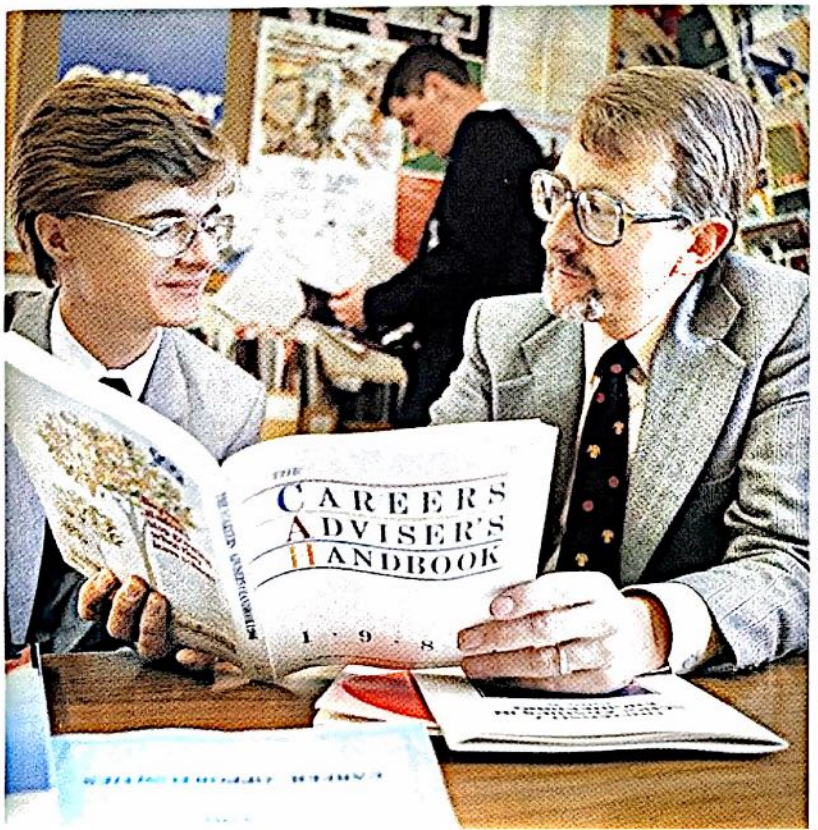
Sixth Formers are still expected to wear school uniform, though a suit may be worn in place of a blazer.

At all times, we expect members of the Sixth Form to set a good example to younger boys in the School, in terms of academic endeavour, extra-curricular involvement and citizenship.





Careers

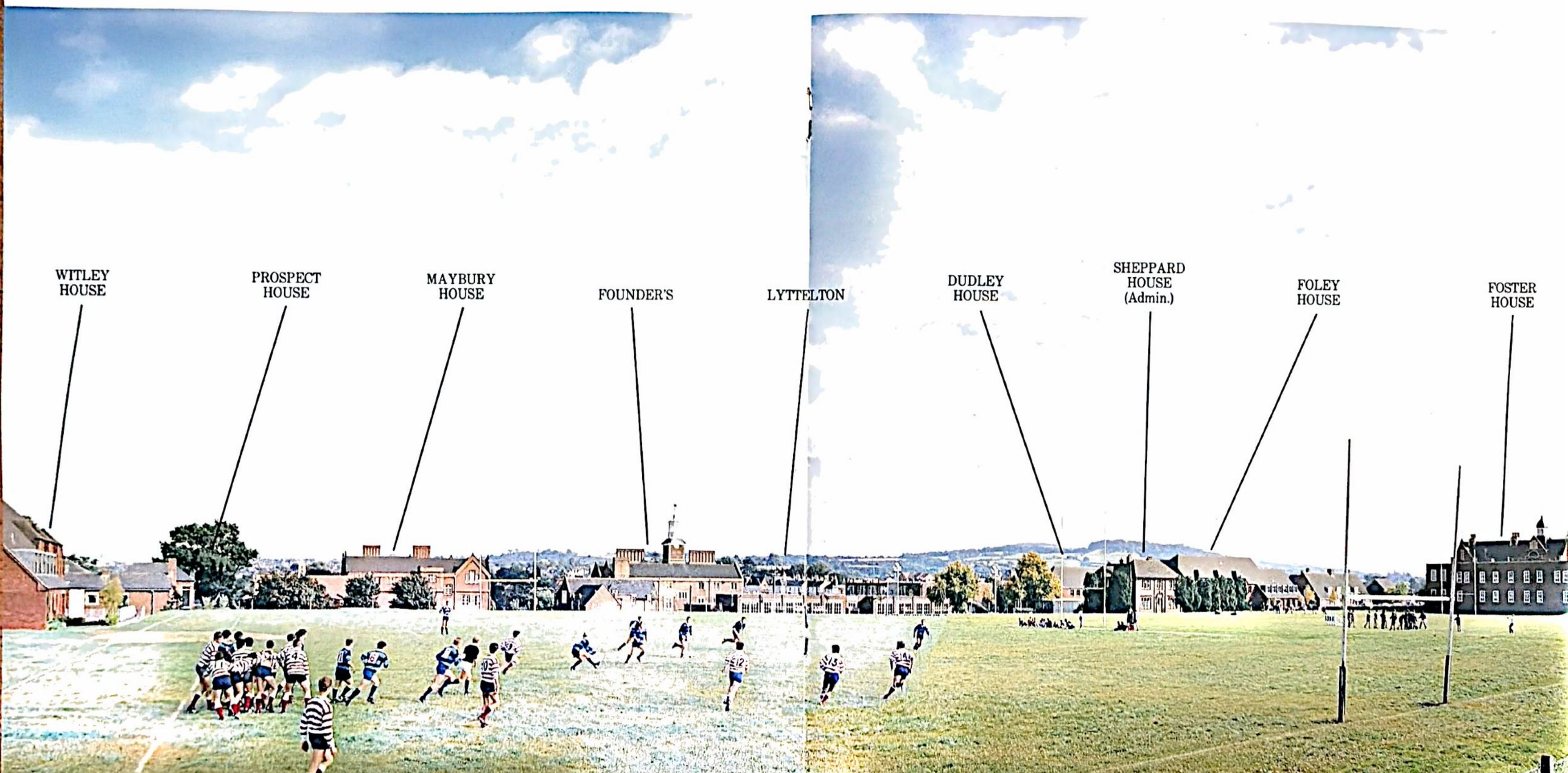


We place great emphasis on Careers guidance and boys are regularly interviewed by the Careers master. There is a Careers Centre open all day for boys to visit and this has a Computer terminal with up-to-date information.

Outside speakers are invited to address the Sixth Form. Boys frequently visit Universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, and Careers Conventions are held at the School for boys and parents.

In the Sixth Form boys take part in a Work Experience programme with local firms and a number of industrialists visit the School each year.

It is not unusual for firms to approach the School with a view to offering Management training to boys we nominate.


WITLEY HOUSE
PROSPECT HOUSE
MAYBURY HOUSE
FOUNDER'S
LYTTELTON
DUDLEY HOUSE
SHEPPARD HOUSE (Admin.)
FOLEY HOUSE
FOSTER HOUSE



Academic work

Our aim in the classroom is for boys to reach their full academic potential. Most boys' ambition is to enter Higher Education, especially University. Some boys will enter the Services or go on to Management Training.

As far as possible the curriculum is designed to suit every boy's talents and therefore we provide not only a wide range of options in traditional academic subjects but in addition we believe firmly in giving training in the latest technology and practical skills.

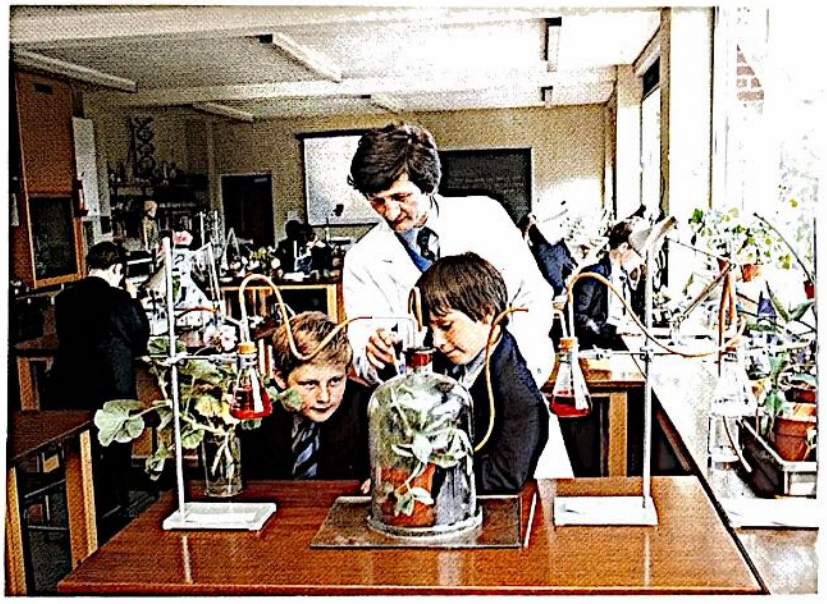
Great efforts are made to ensure a proper balance in each boy's programme of study.

Subjects available for GCSE are listed in the separate folder.

Careful consultation between parents, teaching staff and boys takes place before GCSE options are made at fourteen. Parents can consult the School about their son's progress at any time, and there are regular parents' evenings for each year group. There are also Grade Cards and Reports throughout the year.

To encourage boys to produce high quality work, subject masters may award Distinctions to boys for individual pieces of work which are then shown to the Headmaster. A book token is awarded for every three Distinctions. There is an annual Prize Giving in the Summer term on Founder's Day.

If absolutely necessary, Bad Work Cards will be given to boys who do not produce their best work. A boy whose work is giving cause for concern may be put on 'Daily Report'.









SCHOLARSHIPS

Boys who are in the second year, or who have gained a place for entry into the third year, may be invited to compete for our Scholarships, known as 'Lord Foley's Awards'. This examination takes place at the School in March each year and awards may be made up to the value of two-thirds of the boarding fee. The boy himself receives £40 a year to buy books. Awards are also made for special talent in Music or Art.

Similar awards are available for those about to enter our Sixth Form.



Music & Drama



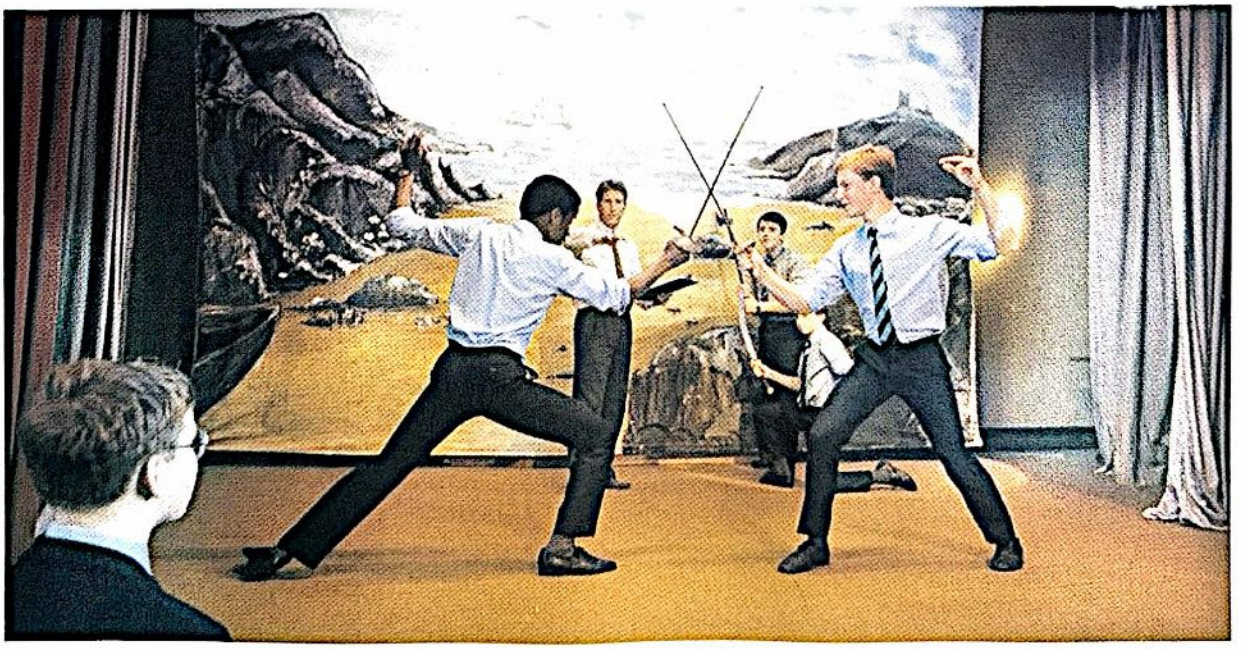
At least one third of the boys learn a musical instrument and there is an extensive range of teaching and practice rooms in the Music School. Many peripatetic teachers visit the School and no charge is made for these lessons, except in the case of Piano, Guitar and Percussion. The Director of Music is assisted by a young resident musician who joins the School each year, usually after completing a degree course.

Music-making takes many forms, from Operas and Musicals to Brass Bands, Orchestras and Ensembles. There is also an Inter-House Music Competition to encourage individual and group talent. The School Choir sings regularly in the Parish Church.

Music awards may be given under the Lord Foley's Awards scheme.

Drama flourishes and apart from the usual school productions there is a House Drama Festival. Boys are also encouraged to take part in public-speaking competitions and there are Junior and Senior Debating Societies. The Theatre Workshop, a group of parents and staff, provides the back-up for all dramatic and musical productions.






Nippon
Nippon

Sport





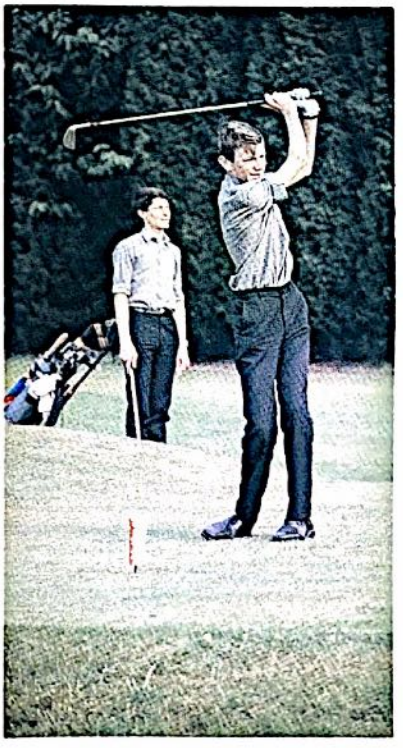
Virtually every sport is played at Old Swinford and in most we compete against other schools. The main sport in the Winter is Rugby Football, and Cricket in the Summer. All boys play these games in the lower part of the School, but more senior boys have a choice of sport on games afternoons. There are usually matches against other schools on Saturday afternoons.

For some sports, for example Judo, Squash, Fencing and Archery, expert coaches visit the School. We are also fortunate in owning the land of the local golf course.

The aim is not only that all boys should be physically fit while at school, but also that even those not adept at team games should be able to develop skill in some sport.

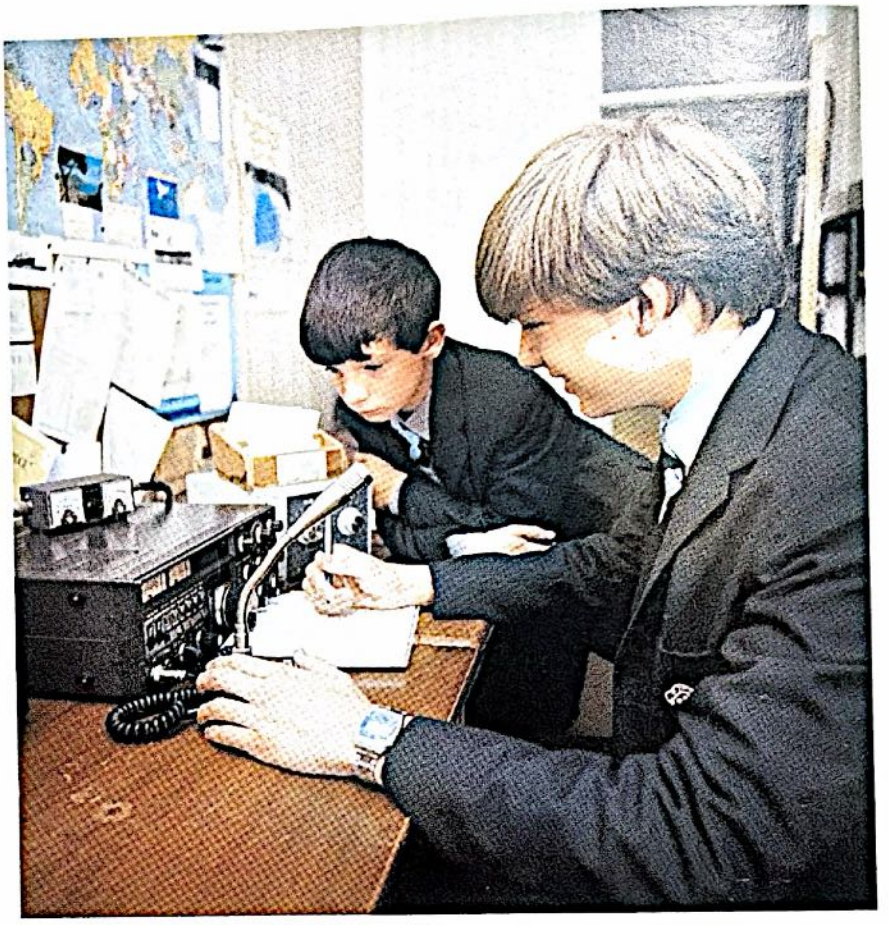




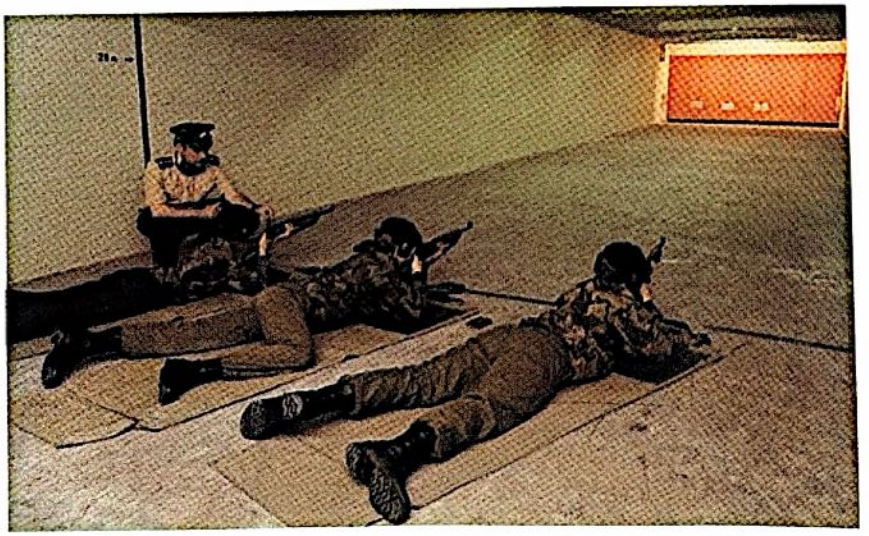


Beyond the classroom

The various extra-curricular activities are designed to encourage boys to discover new interests and talents and to develop them. All boys are expected to try some of the activities on offer. The range of societies is extensive and there are some unusual ones too, eg. amateur radio station, audio/video society and radio-controlled cars. A full list of current societies is given in the separate folder.









CCF

All boys join the Cadet Force at 13 and remain in it until they enter the Sixth Form. However, many Sixth Formers remain in the Force and annual camps, March and Shoot competitions and weekend expeditions to the Black Mountains are examples of some of the opportunities available for boys at all levels to develop their interests. There are both Army and R.A.F. sections, and some boys also have the opportunity to join a Police section. R.A.F. boys can go to Shawbury in Shropshire for flying experience and both Flying Scholarships and Sixth Form R.A.F. Scholarships have been won. All boys learn to shoot on the School's .22 range and the shooting teams take part in national competitions.

ADVENTURE WEEK

We believe that our arrangements for Adventure Training are unusual in a school. During the last week of each Summer term we arrange for as many boys as possible to undertake an adventurous activity away from Old Swinford. This means that the school year ends on a positive note and broadens a boy's experience. Examples of activities are: walking in the Yorkshire Dales, pony trekking, climbing and canoeing in North Wales, sailing across the Channel and narrow-boat expeditions. The Feoffees provide generous grants for boys to go on Outward Bound courses.

PARENTS' AND OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATIONS

Both Associations are extremely active in support of the School by providing money for extra amenities. Their fund-raising events include Christmas and Summer Fayres, but there are many social events, the highlight perhaps being the Parents' Annual Christmas Ball. Parents help at school in many ways, eg. in the Library, the second-hand Clothes Shop and in coaching and refereeing sports.



The terms and conditions set out in this prospectus may be amended from time to time, and its provisions, subject to any such amendments, will apply during the whole of the period while a boy continues to attend the School irrespective of age. Admission of a boy to the School and his retention in it, is conditional upon acceptance of them.

Designed and produced by John Catt Ltd.
Gt. Glemham, Saxmundham, Suffolk 09876M


OUSE