



# LEE Hurst Swan SCHOOL

## A CENTENARY HISTORY

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SHIRE PUBLICATIONS



# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
BACKGROUND	8
LEE Hurst CONVENT 1914–53	12
SWAN SCHOOL	22
LA RETRAITE 1953–96	34
BOYS AND GIRLS TOGETHER 1996–2013	48
INTO THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS	60
INDEX	64



# INTRODUCTION

AS WE REACH THE MILESTONE of one hundred years of education at Leehurst on Campbell Road in Salisbury, it is an opportunity to reflect on the origins, formation and development of the school, and to pay tribute to the former pupils and staff who studied, worked and lived here.

Leehurst Swan School now is very different in many ways from the school that started over a century ago. Today Leehurst Swan educates boys and girls from age two to sixteen. It is a vibrant, happy, learning community and it embraces much of modern education. I sometimes wonder what the founders of the school would make of a school with no blackboards, no chapel and where none of the staff wears habits. I am sure they would not have thought education of both boys and girls through to sixteen *together*, in the same classes, was suitable! They would not have known about computers and digital learning, homework being set 'online', or communication by email. Some would probably have been aghast at the ubiquitous digital downloading of music, the mobile phones, text speak, Facebook and YouTube videos that have become so much part of young people's lives today. The technological revolution has transformed not only youth culture, but also the approach and substance of education and is reflected in the way our present pupils look forward to their changing lives ahead.

Teachers have always sought to forge young lives and help them towards their goals. The girls who attended Leehurst from the first days of the school were educated by the Sisters of Christian Education who wished to prepare them for their role in the world of the time, and to educate them in knowledge and love of God. As times have changed, so have the style of education and the curriculum: needlework, domestic science and typing have been replaced by computing, design technology and photography. O levels became GCSEs and then modularised, and SATS examinations have arrived. The role of women in society has changed beyond recognition, careers and opportunities are different and greater, but the desire to prepare girls, and now boys, for their future continues to

Opposite: One of the many stunning pieces of artwork produced by Leehurst Swan pupils that can be seen around the school building.

sit alongside our spiritual goals. The details may be different but the vision remains the same; this book records the pathways down which this school has travelled over the years.

The history of the school is like a strong rope of many strands running through the ages. From its very inception Leehurst was a community committed to education and learning, to serving God and helping others. Former pupils speak fondly of their teachers and peers, reflecting lasting relationships that developed during their time in the school. The Swan School too, as it grew from tiny beginnings in the hands of one remarkable person, created its own special ethos which is very evident in the way staff and former pupils remember their time together. This sense of cohesion continues as we move on into the twenty-first century; we are a family school, associated with some families for many years, as children are educated on the same site as elder siblings, and generations succeed one another. Christmas and Easter celebrations that draw pupils and staff together reinforce the significance of this community spirit.

Four headteachers of the school pictured in March 2012, from left Roger Leake, Rosemary Simmons, Mary Paisey and Sister Patricia Talbot.





The importance of the past cannot be underestimated, so it is hoped that this book will bring together the different sections of the Leehurst Swan community as we celebrate one hundred years of education on this site. It is an opportunity for Swan pupils and staff to see their history recorded and continued, whilst the various names and phases of Leehurst and La Retraite are marked for those who were part of that tradition. In all this book aims to inform present generations of the rich heritage they have inherited and to help them play their part in the future pattern of events.

Our thanks go to all the generations of pupils and staff who have contributed to the school over the years and without whom there would be no school today.

R. N. S. Leake

Christingle service  
in St Mark's  
church, December  
2012.