

## CHAPTER B1 - THE HEADMASTER: MICHAEL DUANE

*The conduct of schools, based upon a new order of conception, is so much more difficult than is the management of schools which walk the beaten path.*

*John Dewey (Experience and Education, 1938)*

William Michael Duane<sup>1</sup> was born on 25 January 1915 in Dublin, the only child of John Joe and Ellie Duane, both working class Irish Catholics. Having survived the First World War, John Joe's untimely death - in one of the many bloody skirmishes following the Easter Uprising of 1916 – was tragic. John Joe was not one of Michael Collins' rebels. It is our understanding (from Margaret Duane, whom we interviewed in 2006 and now sadly deceased) that he was shot by accident at work or on his way to work, and this was very much a case of him being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Ellie Duane, as far as we know, was a domestic servant, taking whatever work was available when her husband died.

### ***B1.1 - Childhood and Education***

Although Duane was very young at the time, he remembered the fearful sounds of artillery fire, and of being carried in his mother's shawl as they fled from the fighting. They went to Portarlington, a small town 45 miles southwest of Dublin, where young Michael was entrusted to the care of his grandparents (the Duane's). Times were hard then, and like so many others of that era Ellie Duane was forced to leave Ireland to look for work in England so that she could support her son.

The next five or six years were extremely unhappy for Duane. His grandparents resented having to take him in and they treated him badly. Aged 10, he was put on a boat to join his mother in England, making the sea crossing alone. Shortly after his arrival, Ellie Duane applied for the position of Housekeeper to two Catholic

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<sup>1</sup> Duane rarely used his first given name William, and in this book we follow that practice by referring to him as Michael Duane (abbreviated to Duane or MD). However, in referencing works and documents by him we retain the initial W, thus Duane, W. D. Note that this distinguishes him from his second wife Margaret, referenced by Duane, M. Somewhat confusingly his first wife was also a Margaret (Margaret Mary Banks), but she is not referenced here – neither is his daughter, by his first wife, Margaret Mary Banks, who was also called Margaret!

gentlemen in Hampstead, North London, taking her son with her to the interview. Although she did not get the job, these gentlemen offered to take Duane under their wing and he became a ward of sorts, remaining with these people for the rest of his educational life. Margaret Duane was unable to tell us why Ellie Duane had left her young son with two strangers, as Duane had never really spoken to her about this in any detail. She did, however, tell us that Duane had a very close and loving relationship with his mother, who did not desert him as a child. He was taken out for trips to places like London Zoo and to Lyons Corner House (for tea) when his mother could afford the money and time.

Margaret Duane also told us that Ellie Duane had always wanted her son to enter the priesthood, which might explain why she gave him up in the way that she did. Duane's early schooling certainly points in this direction. His first school was the Dominican School in Archway, North London. From there, at the age of 11, he was sent to the Jesuits School, a few miles away in Stamford Hill. It was here that he began his ecclesiastical training, developing his views on indoctrination and punishment:

*Fear of physical punishment in the education of children has a very long history! Dictators operate on exactly the same principle – fear! What did the Jesuits say? ‘Give me a child until the age of six then you may do with him what you will!’ I was educated by the Jesuits but, because I was eleven by the time I was in their hands, they didn’t have a real chance to indoctrinate me. I was only beaten twice in seven years, so either they thought me malleable enough, or I enjoyed my school. I certainly look back on it with some affection.*

*Contrary to what people believe of the Jesuits, their central teaching was that whatever you do, however trivial, you must do it to the best of your ability and if you fail to do what you sincerely believe to be right, then you are committing a grave sin. (Laiken, Undated)*

While at the Jesuits School, Duane and his peers were interviewed for the priesthood. All of Duane's friends were accepted straight away, but he was not: instead, he was asked to finish his schooling first and then go to university before taking this final step. Unable to understand why he had been treated differently, this upset Duane terribly:

*For some reason, they must have seen something in Michael and we don't know what – Mike didn't know what and why he was different to all his friends. He felt a bit miffed about this at the time ... that he didn't get accepted* (Duane, 2006) p8

We have no idea what Duane did immediately after leaving school, but in January 1935, aged 20, he began a degree course at Queen Mary College, London, graduating three years later with a degree in English Language and Literature. Then, in 1939, he underwent teacher training at the Institute of Education (IOE), after which he joined Dame Alice Owens School in Islington, North London. It was around this time, and probably soon after he left university, that he married his first wife, Margaret Mary Banks, whom he had met at university. Their first child, Anthony, was born on 14 October 1940, which was also the year in which he began his army service - just after the outbreak of World War Two (WWII) in September 1939. Later children by Margaret Mary were John, (1943), Margaret (1947) and Simon (1955). He subsequently acquired two stepchildren (Hamish and Stewart) when he was remarried to Margaret Johnson.

### ***B1.2 - The War Years***

Duane joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1941 as a Second Lieutenant. In 1942 he was promoted to the rank of Captain, where he was second in command of a squadron of tanks. In the same year, he became Staff Captain of a Brigade. Other advancements followed; the most significant being his promotion, on the battle-front, to Major in 1945. He served in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, and was also the Liaison Officer between the British and the Americans, working under General Miles Dempsey, Commander of the Second Army, and Field Marshal Montgomery.

His war record is impressive: mentioned twice in despatches, receiving the 'Croix de Guerre Avec Palme', Belgium's highest honour and made a 'Chevalier de l'Ordre de Leopold II Avec Palme' for his services in France and Belgium<sup>2</sup>. After the war, he joined the United Nations Association of the UK (UNA-UK) and was its chairman for a time.

On discharge from the army, Duane was given an impeccable testimonial from the then Brigadier V FitzGeorge-Balfour, who himself had a distinguished military career. The testimonial is cited in full in Berg's book, and can also be found in the Duane archive held at the IOE (now in a closed file, MD/2/3). To re-quote two of the paragraphs from Berg:

*He has undoubted organising ability and powers of leadership, while his independent character ensures the capacity for original thought and sound judgement. . . .*

*His many interests are reflected in considerable independence of opinion and character, but he gets on equally well with those who do not agree with them; though he enjoys putting over his views, he never rams them down other people's throats and is quite broad-minded enough to appreciate the point of view of others. (Berg, 1968b) p.25*

In stark contrast, Dr David Limond, a lecturer in the history of education, has described Duane as follows:

*Duane could be autocratic (one former student has described him as having an aristocratic bearing); he could be vain (I have several indications that he enjoyed flattery) and frequently exhibited an unwillingness to compromise which may have gone beyond*

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<sup>2</sup> One of Duane's decorations was for leading his platoon across a stretch of river, under cover of darkness, and through enemy lines. By commandeering a number of small paddleboats from a lake in Brussels, he was able to get his men across, under the noses of the Germans, without making any noise. His Croix de Guerre and promotion to the rank of Major was 'for the courage and bravery displayed during the glorious battles that led to the liberation of Belgium'. Whether Duane considered the battles as 'glorious' is a moot point, however he did play a key part in the D Day Landings by providing British Intelligence with crucial information prior to the assault. His brief was to obtain surveillance of German munitions in Antwerp Harbour; no easy task when one considers he was in occupied France when he received his orders. To get to the harbour, Duane drove through the enemy lines at night (with headlights switched off) and rested up in the woods by day. (Source: Margaret Duane)

*assertion of principle and entered the realm of downright stubbornness. He was self-assured and even conceited, and I confess that I have not always found myself liking him at the most basic human level. If it is said that here I am not passing an academic judgment, then so be it. (Limond, 2003) p.71*

Limond, however, never met Duane. Nor do we believe that he met any of Duane's students or indeed anyone that knew Duane well. Therefore we were forced to conclude that his observations were based purely on archive materials, probably the same materials that we had examined at the IOE, or secondary sources. The IOE materials provide full details of Duane's army career so we were surprised that he (Limond) did not make the obvious connection – that Duane's 'aristocratic' bearing could come from his army and Jesuit training where, in the former, he held the rank of major; a title that he chose not to use in civilian life, hardly the actions of a conceited man. We, who did know him and were his students, remember a man of impressive demeanour – but that is not the same as aristocratic, or indeed autocratic.

Margaret Duane, in responding to Limond's criticisms of her husband, had this to say on the subject:

*He was in a tank in the D Day landings, he was a tank commander. This chap doesn't want to know about that does he? No! There was one of those poems that he wrote and I mean, talk about having a breakdown after the war, you know, you could understand it, couldn't you? He didn't have what some people call a good war, he had a terribly, terribly rotten war, and that didn't help, it didn't help at all. He describes it in this poem – how they were walking on bodies, it was absolutely awful. (Duane, 2006) p.8*

Here is the poem in question as supplied by Margaret Duane. Entitled 'The Camp' it deals with the liberation of Buchenwald Concentration Camp where Duane, as Liaison Officer between the British and the American forces, witnessed first-hand the plight of the Buchenwald inmates.

### **The Camp**

*The Corps centre-line ran alongside  
Beech Wood. The leading division  
Paused. Urgent calls crackled  
Demanding medics, food, ambulances pronto*

*Behind barbed wire skeletons with skins  
Stared out from shaven skulls.  
Around us neat piles of  
Dead and dying, like logs  
Layered criss-cross with dangling heads*

*Bursts of fire from pale soldiers  
Ended the slouching arrogance  
Of guards who failed  
To leap to instant orders  
Officers turned a blind eye.*

*In this camp, poised on the tips  
Of bayonets, hate and madness swayed,  
Outraged love burst from the barrel of a gun.  
There remained only tears  
For the dying in Buchenwald*

*Michael Duane (undated)*

Another, equally haunting, poem of Duane's (also provided by Margaret Duane) is about Falaise, claimed by some to be one of the fiercest battles of WWII. Around 10,000 German soldiers are thought to have lost their lives at Falaise with 50,000 or more taken prisoner:

### **After Falaise**

*His men, flung like discarded dolls  
Lay close around the young captain.*

*Old in war beyond his years he lay  
Tranquil*

*Ghouls, stealing among the bloated dead  
Emptied wallet and holster and hacked away  
His ring finger*

*On the grey tunic, tight with corruption,  
Campaign medals and an Iron Cross flashed  
Indifferent pride*

*Around his stinking corpse snapshots  
Of a young woman and two fair children  
Lay scattered  
Larger than death his sex had risen  
Still yearning for his new, young  
Widow*

*Michael Duane (undated)*

As was (and still is) the case with many war veterans, Duane never spoke about his war experiences. It was not until the 1990s when he was in his twilight years that Margaret Duane began to understand the effects of the war on her husband, and why he had sometimes suffered with spells of depression. He was a changed person afterwards, so too was the world that he returned to.

### ***B1.3 - The Post War Years***

In the 1940s secondary education was reorganised in the light of the 1944 Education Act. As you will see later (in Chapters C1-C3) the way was also being paved for a new type of school - the comprehensive. In line with these reforms, some educationalists were advocating a bolder, more progressive, approach to teaching which included the rejection of Corporal Punishment (CP). All of these developments were close to Duane's heart.

Following a short spell back at Dame Alice Owens, he tutored at the IOE for a year. It was at the IOE, in 1947, that he first met John Newsom, who would become influential in his career<sup>3</sup>.

#### ***B1.4 - Howe Dell County Secondary School***

In September 1948, Duane, then 33, was appointed headmaster of Howe Dell, a new County Secondary School in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. John Newsom, who was the County Director of Education at the time, had encouraged Duane to apply for the job<sup>4</sup>. When John Newsom asked him how long it would take to put Howe Dell on its feet, he replied that he would need at least three years. He was told that he would be given five years — with no questions asked.

Because Howe Dell was not quite ready, Duane was asked to take the headship of Beaumont Boys' School in St Albans for one term. He agreed willingly and, judging by the praise from the Divisional Officer, this temporary role was very successful:

*This School is so very different from the one you took over in September that anyone connected with the former establishment would scarcely recognise it as the same School now. (Berg, 1968b)<sup>5</sup> p.27*

John Newsom was also pleased with Duane's efforts, writing to him to say that, with his headship, Howe Dell could become one of the greatest jewels in Hertfordshire's educational crown. (ibid, p36)

But the Howe Dell headship was to prove far more challenging and would end in disaster. When the school opened in January 1949, not all of the accommodation was available: some lessons had to be taught in a school that was four miles away, and this situation continued until the summer of 1950. Staffing was another serious issue. After the war, there was a chronic shortage of experienced teachers, and problems with the recruitment of administrative and domestic staff too.

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<sup>3</sup> John Newsom, was knighted in 1963 for his report 'Half our Future'. This report was about the 'average child' and was one of the milestones in the history of comprehensive education.

<sup>4</sup> He was also on the interview panel with the Divisional Education Officer and the Chair of Governors, a woman, who was in tune with Duane's progressive ideas and welcomed the policies he put forward for the school.

<sup>5</sup> This can also be found at IOE, in file MD/2/3, now closed. The name of the Divisional Education Officer is D. Goacher, and the date of the letter is 14 December 1948.

The pupils, from relatively poor, working-class backgrounds, were drawn from six village primary schools, and the intake included some older children from a nearby orphanage. These children were barely literate, having been educated in elementary schools where different age groups were all taught together. Their IQs ranged from 51 to 120. Many could not read at all. ((ibid, p.36)

Duane believed that, if he and his staff were to educate these children successfully, it was necessary to adopt some of the newer, educational methods that were emerging at this time. In essence this was a friendlier, less structured, approach to teaching which included the removal of fear from the classroom. This, though, went against the traditional view that discipline could best be maintained through CP<sup>6</sup>.

Despite the many difficulties, he developed a good working relationship with his teaching team and with their support abandoned CP. Together they introduced a system where the children were asked to take responsibility for their actions: key to this approach was involving them in considering appropriate, alternative forms of punishment.

The school had been open for about a year when it was asked to participate in a UNESCO research project, the aim of which was to determine how children would react to two black teachers in the school. (James and Tenen, 1953) The following extracts from the UNESCO report provide a flavour of the school's policy and what Duane was all about:

*The headmaster and his staff were enthusiastic believers in the new method of education. The headmaster had previously been a lecturer in educational method, and had taken over this school in an attempt to translate principles into practice.*

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<sup>6</sup> Although Duane's plans for the school were endorsed fully by the Education Authority, the rejection of CP was a contentious and divisive issue. For many teachers, the cane was seen as an essential work tool; some even considered the practice of flogging to be a contractual right. Corporal Punishment was also viewed by many to be an aid to education itself and was used unashamedly in this context.

*They interpreted learning in this widest sense, so the emotional needs of the children as individuals were considered to be as important as the more conventional academic requirements . . .*

*. . .*

*The headmaster and his staff made it their business to know as much as possible about the home life of each child, and to help each to understand and resolve its personal problems. In his spare time the headmaster visited the villages from which his children were drawn, and talked to the parents in their homes and at village meetings, explaining to them his aims in the school.*

*. . .*

*In the daily life of the school the aim was self-discipline: not authoritarian, imposed from above by more powerful adults, but collective, and the few general rules there were had been arrived at after discussion with the children and evolved from their common experience, not without dust and heat. There was no corporal punishment . . . Because the aims of the headmaster and staff were to free the children from the distortions caused by fear, and to help them to acquire self-confidence and the ability to live harmoniously, the treatment of misdemeanours aimed at being constructive rather than retributive. Relations between children and staff were very informal and friendly. (ibid, pp13-14)*

Although Duane had the support of his staff and the parents, the Governing Body (GB) was a different matter. Here there was a lot of opposition to his ideas, and in particular to the concept of self-discipline. A big blow for Duane was the replacement of the progressive chair of governors with one who was very much a traditional authoritarian. This man, Alderman G. Maynard, was a powerful member of the local Conservative Party. He had considerable influence in the area and on the mainly Conservative GB.

In contrast to the previous chair, Maynard was opposed to Duane's progressive ideas, and had strong views on CP too. He insisted that Duane be made to use the cane — which Duane refused to do. The two did not see eye to eye and according to Margaret Duane this was because Maynard believed he (Duane) was a communist. Duane was, in fact, a socialist at this time and had no communist leanings whatsoever. His son, Simon (Duane, 2007), confirmed this:

*I do remember that he was very anti-Communist Party. (I believe he regarded its members as reactionary, and he was certainly not a Soviet sympathiser).*

Within months of Howe Dell opening, rumours and complaints about the school started to circulate. Fears about communists were rife at this time, and one rumour was that some teachers were spreading communist propaganda. Other complaints were about inappropriate sexual behaviour amongst the pupils (a girl's knickers had been pulled down when the children were playing boisterously on a pile of hay in a barn) and the fact that the pupils had seen a sex education film, supposedly showing a black man and a white woman. This however was a well-known black and white filmstrip on human physiology by the biologist and educator Cyril Bibby in which the male figures were shaded more strongly than the female.

There was also a formal complaint from the Royal Victoria Patriotic School orphanage at Essendon, near Hatfield, that the children attending Howe Dell were taking a different view on life compared to the children who attended other schools in the area. It seems they were not being taught to 'know their place' in society. (Royal Victoria Patriotic School, 1949)

These complaints resulted in several small school inspections, and a special inquiry to investigate the 'knickers' incident. The inquiry committee consisted of just two people; one was Alderman Maynard. Interestingly, no evidence of indecent interest was found. However, the committee took this opportunity to express its concern about other matters that were unrelated to the investigation, in effect challenging Duane's methods and his leadership in general<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Correspondence relating to the inspections can be found at the IOE, in file MD/2/4, now closed. We saw these pre-closure.

The parents and teachers, however, were perfectly happy with Duane and what was being achieved in the school. In a questionnaire that he sent to 150 parents, many of whom were said to be semi-literate, he received 137 replies (a commendable 91% response rate). (Berg, 1968b) p.33

Some results:

- 72-percent said their children were happier
- 62-percent said their children had become more interested in school work
- 57-percent said their children had become more self-confident.

But this parental involvement did not impress some of the governors, who considered Duane's actions to be inappropriate and ill advised. He was instructed to never again communicate with the parents in this way.

The teachers, who wanted to express their support for Duane, sent a letter to the GB requesting permission to take part in the meeting to discuss the inquiry's findings. They did not receive a reply. At this meeting, the governors denounced Duane's policies, stating very firmly that 'a five year programme as envisaged by the headmaster at the expense of the children could not be tolerated.' (Berg, 1968b)<sup>8</sup> p.26. The meeting was stormy, at the end of which Duane offered his resignation. But this was ignored.

Alderman Maynard and the governors appear to have been in a very powerful position, more powerful in fact than the Local Education Authority (LEA) which had appointed Duane and approved his policy for the school. By the autumn of 1950, the GB had engineered a formal inspection of the school. We say 'engineered' because it was very unusual to inspect a school formally that had been open for only 20 months. New schools were normally allowed a far more generous time frame (up to seven years) in which to settle and become established before any formal examination took place.

The inspections were made on 20th September and the 7th, 8th and 9th November 1950. The printed inspection report by HMI was issued in January 1951. (Ministry of

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<sup>8</sup> Also in IOE file MD/2/3, now closed.

Education, 1951). The conducting HMI was a man who believed in CP. When this inspector presented a verbal report to the GB of the Inspectorate's findings, he denounced Duane's policies despite some of his colleagues finding areas of work in the school to be 'good', 'very good' and even 'outstanding'. It seems the children blossomed in the arts and crafts but unsurprisingly did not measure up in the more academic subjects such as English and Mathematics. *ibid*, p.5

While the Inspectorate appears to have acknowledged the effects of the poor accommodation and staffing problems on the smooth running of the school, the inability of the children to perform to the required academic standards, because of their low IQs, was strongly rejected. One is tempted to ask "what's new?"

By now Duane was a well-respected figure in the district, and was selected as a Labour candidate for a seat on the Rural District Council (RDC) albeit he did not pursue this. Duane was also a Justice of the Peace (JP), often sitting on the same bench as Alderman Maynard, who was chairman of magistrates. The Alderman had already expressed his concerns about Duane being a JP, and the RDC nomination infuriated him even further. Four months after the inspection report, the GB met again to discuss progress. At this meeting the governors called for Duane's dismissal, citing poor inspections and Duane's election to public offices while employed at the school as their reason.

John Newsom must have been completely taken aback, if not embarrassed, by the GB's decision. In the summer of 1950, he had taken Duane with him on a trip to Holland, visiting a number of secondary schools and attending an international conference on secondary education at which Duane was a speaker. His contribution to the symposium was well received, and John Newsom was particularly pleased because he (Duane) had drawn on the successful work at Howe Dell.

The GB's resolution to dismiss Duane never went to the Divisional Executive, chiefly because Alderman Maynard considered this unnecessary. Many of the Howe Dell governors were also on the Divisional Executive so in his view this stage of the dismissal process was unimportant. But those members who were not Howe Dell governors objected strongly to the manner in which the dismissal was being handled, and at a council meeting formally claimed the resolution as their right:

*They stated that there was not sufficient evidence to make a recommendation concerning dismissal and by eleven votes to two recommended that no action be taken against Mr Duane pending an early full inspection of the school by the Ministry. (Berg, 1968b) p.38*

Meanwhile, both the parents and teachers appealed the GB's decision, sending petitions to the Divisional Education Officer and the Minister of Education. There was plenty of support for Duane from outside too - from prominent educationalists, leaders in the community and others who approved of his work at the school.

Duane had also started legal proceedings against the governors and was supported in this by his union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT). He did this, fully aware that a headmaster who appears in a court case, even if he wins, would have difficulty finding another job. But he had a young family to support and could not afford to take too many risks. Even if he was successful in his claim for unfair dismissal, he would still have to work with the same governors so he was in a no-win situation. It was at this point that John Newsom intervened and advised him to resign. Duane took Newsom's advice and on tendering his resignation was immediately suspended with pay.

On leaving the school, Duane was given a glowing reference by Mr Bowmer, a member of the Divisional Executive:

*I was a member of the interviewing committee at the time Mr Duane was appointed Headmaster of Howe Dell School, and was very much impressed by his personality*

*The effect on both children and parents was even better than our wildest hopes. Apart from his exceptional educational ability and experience, Mr Duane has a quality of leadership which is rare even among headmasters. (Berg, 1968b) p.39*

Howe Dell closed in 1954, but was reopened as a primary school in 1955. It was probably not the first new school to be closed in very dubious circumstances, and would certainly not be the last.

There is a large section of Berg's book that is devoted to Howe Dell; it is almost a story in itself<sup>9</sup>. What we found interesting was the parallels with Risinghill. It is probably for this reason that Berg gave such a detailed account of what happened to Duane at this school. Most, if not all, of the documents used by Berg for this part of her story can be found in the Duane archive held at the IOE.

### ***B1.5 - Alderman Woodrow Secondary Boys' School***

Duane had no difficulty securing another headship; once again getting John Newsom's support. His next headship, in 1952, was at Alderman Woodrow Secondary Boys' School in Lowestoft, Suffolk. It was at Lowestoft that he met Margaret Johnson who would later become his second wife. At that time, Margaret was married and had two boys, Hamish and Stewart. Her youngest son, Stewart, was a pupil at Alderman Woodrow and she remembered him coming home on Duane's first day at the school and telling her that the new headmaster was quite strict. This surprised her as there had been rumours that the school would become another Summerhill (which was nearby) and as such would be more lax<sup>10</sup>.

Duane's leadership style has often been compared to that of A.S. Neill, who founded Summerhill, the renowned small, private, non-authoritarian boarding school that still exists today. However, these two headmasters were working in completely different environments. Summerhill was set in the countryside and chosen by parents who could afford to pay the fees and wanted this particular type of education for their children, whereas schools like Howe Dell, Alderman Woodrow and Risinghill were state schools located in largely working-class areas where ordinary parents had very little choice or control over how their children should be educated.

During his time at Alderman Woodrow, Duane had one or two brushes with authority but managed to put his stamp on the school without too many problems. This was Labour country albeit that the town of Lowestoft was in the middle of a Tory-controlled district. Consequently there was less opposition to the comprehensive

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<sup>9</sup> We have seen the original documents relating to this period at the IOE and now understand why Berg spent so much time on this part of Duane's career – but there is no room to examine this aspect of Duane's earlier life further here, except as needed for the following chapters

<sup>10</sup> When Duane arrived in Lowestoft he did visit A.S. Neill, headmaster of Summerhill, mainly because he wanted to know how Summerhill's School Council meetings were run by the children. Over a period of time, he became great friends with Neill, but was not his protégé by any means. (From Margaret Duane.)

concept (something Labour was championing) and to his (Duane's) progressive ideas.

Corporal Punishment was one of the key issues that he wanted to tackle. As with most schools in the country, the boys at Alderman Woodrow were caned regularly. It was even reported in Berg's book that one teacher at this school habitually threw hammers at the children.(Berg, 1968b) p.42 Duane, of course, was not prepared to allow this state of affairs to continue and approached the matter in the same way that he had at Howe Dell, calling a staff meeting to express his views about CP and then trying to win the teachers around.

In the interim, his way of getting over the problem was to insist that, if any caning was to be carried out, it should comply strictly with the regulations. By making this stipulation, only he, as headmaster, would be allowed to use the cane.

After years of flouting the rules some teachers were not happy about this and deliberately ignored his instructions.

*Once he heard a boy cry out in pain, and walked into the class-room and found a master beating a boy with the blackboard ruler: he took the boy straight out of the class and into his own study. Later he discovered that this particular teacher, when Mr. Duane had addressed the school at assembly, would take his class into his room, shut the door, and say, 'Well you can put all that right out of your minds. He thinks he runs the school but he doesn't. He's only been here a year and he doesn't know what he's talking about. I'll deal with you the way I like, not the way he likes, and I want that understood!' ibid, p.41*

Once again, slowly but surely, Duane started to win over the hearts and minds of some of the teachers. Those who were persuaded began to appreciate that there were alternatives to CP while others realised that, despite their personal views, they had to abide by the rules.

Over time, the school adapted to his policies and routines but Duane was becoming increasingly restless. On the surface, education appeared to be moving in the right

direction but where the 'big' issues were concerned, nothing much had changed. In a published letter to the editor of the 'Lowestoft Journal', he aired his frustrations quite forcefully:

*Sir – Good discipline exists in a school when the parents and the teachers are agreed about the aims and the methods of rearing children. The most educated seven percent of our population pay for well educated teachers in private nursery, preparatory, public and direct grant schools to teach their children for 16 years in classes of under 20 to become literate and intelligent . . .*

*. . . Less fortunate teachers struggle to teach the forty-one per cent at the "bottom of the pile" for barely 10 years in classes of over 30. No wonder they do not speak, read or write as their teachers would wish; nor do they go to the university....*

*Language (including maths, science, music, art ...) is intelligence; that is why the wealthy keep their young in education for 20 years. And they now do this the more easily because three quarters of the population, through taxes, pay for the very expensive institutions like grammar schools and universities that are attended by less than a quarter of the population, while the rest have to make do in secondary modern and so-called comprehensive schools, so they are doubly suckers! Is it, therefore, an accident that the least educated do the deadening jobs that require little initiative?*

*It (corporal punishment) has been almost universally out-lawed in other western countries. It can be associated with psychological perversion affecting both the beater and the beaten and it is ineffective in precisely those cases in which its use is most hotly defended.*

It was around this time that Duane decided to look for a more challenging role. He had made no secret of his desire to return to London at some point as this was where he had always wanted to be:

*I want to work in an area where the problems have not yet been solved where the children are being pulled by their environment into completely impossible shapes. I have to be in a job where I can be used and burnt out, with nothing left in reserve. This means London. London is a battlefield. (Berg, 1968b) p.239*

This was when he applied for, and was appointed to, the post at Risinghill. In contrast to his difficult ending at Howe Dell, Duane left Alderman Woodrow on a positive note: the last school inspection report was a good one. Among other things, it showed that he “gradually, but surely, gained the confidence of the staff” and there was a “good team spirit in the school”. (Ministry of Education, 1957)

He was also liked and respected by the children; two of whom contacted us in 2006 to tell us how Duane had influenced their lives. The first, Michael Foreman, is a well known illustrator of children’s books and is an author in his own right:

*I cannot emphasize too much Michael Duane’s impact when he arrived at Alderman Woodrow. I can see him now, bounding across the stage at his very first morning assembly. He was such a contrast from the previous regime – a sudden switch from ‘learning’ to ‘education.’*

*He was crucial to the life I have lived. There have been others along the way to whom I am indebted, of course, but I would not have met them without the initial belief, direction and support given to me by Michael Duane. The belief was the most important factor. He made an ordinary working-class boy believe that he had a talent for something. (Foreman, 2006)*

Similar views were expressed by Jonathan Cooper, at the time (2006) a successful teacher and lecturer in art:

*At that time my parents and teachers were trying to get me to enrol for evening classes at the Lowestoft School of Art. I was rather an introverted child, lacking in confidence so I held back. One day Michael Duane called me into his office. ‘Take this money,’ he said,*

*handing me a sixpence. 'This is your bus fare. A bus leaves from outside the school in five minutes. Get on the bus, go into Lowestoft and enrol at the Art School.' This I did and my future career was thus decided, teaching and lecturing in Art Education for the past forty years!*

*He knew his pupils as individuals and recognised their strengths. His approach should be a role model for today's teachers. He acted instinctively for the good of the child. Some educationalists today seem to think more of their own research and status than they do of their own students. It seems that the less contact they have with students the better and 'on line' and 'PowerPoint' talks continue to distance them from an individual approach.*

*Michael Duane helped shape my future and it was through his actions that I saw my way forward. I came from a working class background with little hope of success, having gone to the local secondary school after being termed a 'failure' at the age of eleven. My hope is that Michael Duane's message will get through to this test ridden, target based society that we now find ourselves in and that it is not too late! (Cooper, 2006)*

To finalise this part of Duane's story, we leave you with some extracts from a report produced by the Borough Education Officer in Lowestoft, presumably in response to a request for a reference from the London County Council (LCC):

*I have no hesitation in saying that Mr Duane is one of the ablest Head Teachers I have met. He is very widely read and possesses an alert and receptive mind and can see educational problems and opportunities in a wider range and with truer educational perspectives than is the case with the majority of Head Teachers. He deserves a school that will offer him wider opportunities than is afforded by his present school and I have no hesitation in recommending him to you*

*Of all his qualities I should certainly put as one of the highest his awareness of the needs of children and adolescents, he has a keen insight into child life and I have a feeling that no matter how large a school may be he would know the individual needs of every child in his school. (Lowestoft Divisional Education Officer, 1959?)*

Michael Duane did have a way with children and, as you will see later, managed to turn around some of Risinghill's most disaffected pupils. That he had a more difficult job winning over his staff is not that surprising. Despite all the promises about educational reform, few were prepared to stray too far from the established path and this included those who, on the face of it, openly supported the comprehensive model.

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