

RISINGHILL REVISITED – PUBLISHING PROPOSAL

Title: Risinghill Revisited

Sub Title: *The waste clay*

Authors: Risinghill Research Group

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Synopsis:

When Risinghill, a new purpose built co-educational comprehensive school, opened in Islington, north London on 3 May 1960, no one could have imagined that it would be closed just five years later, among extraordinary press interest, and that a book chronicling its demise would make publishing history by becoming the UK's first non-fiction best-seller. *Risinghill: death of a Comprehensive School* (1968) catapulted the author, Leila Berg, to fame along with Risinghill's progressive headmaster, Michael Duane. Berg's book was hugely contentious, and in some universities and colleges of further education is still being talked about today.

The various aspects of this cause célèbre has been mulled over thoroughly by the educational community, with one of its members (Brearley) declaring in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* (1968) that the truth of the Risinghill affair was probably too complex to ever be told: an observation that, until now, has proven to be the case. *Risinghill Revisited* (RR) lifts the lid on what really happened at the school, and includes for the first time the voices of the Risinghill pupils. Described at the time as the 'waste clay' of an educational experiment that had gone horribly wrong, their contribution to the debates about the school (and thereby the wider debate(s) about progressive education synonymous with the comprehensive) is a valuable one, adding another (political) dimension to the Risinghill story, which has largely been ignored.

New material is presented, obtained from: Duane's widow, Margaret Duane, and Leila Berg before their recent deaths; various archives holding documents that were not available to Berg when she was researching her book; and a detailed survey with the pupils, and some of the former staff of the school.

Risinghill Revisited is a story of deceit and obfuscation, of authoritarian and arrogant attitudes towards children, parents and teachers, and of the politics of an education system that was (and still is) seriously flawed.

Rationale for the book

To correct the misconceptions about: Michael Duane, the Risinghill children (and by implication the stereotyping of the working-class), and the school itself, specifically in terms of its designation. Risinghill was one of several, new comprehensives that were built in fulfilment of the *London School Plan 1947*; the aim of which was to narrow the educational gap between the elite grammar schools and the secondary modern schools catering for the vast majority of children. Risinghill, however, was officially named ‘Risinghill Secondary Modern School’ albeit that it was never referred to as such. This anomaly is examined in the context of the thorny issue of selection, the politics of the grammar and the powers of the establishment. Last but not least, it raises the question: Was Risinghill an attempt to bring progressive education into the state sector?

Primary market

Educationalists interested in: (1) the history of secondary schooling and progressive education, specifically in relation to the comprehensive; (2) educational policy, planning and politics; and (3) progressive education. Although the book is essentially an academic book, it does tell a human story - one that will resonate with today’s teachers, teachers of teachers and their students, educational administrators and the consumers of education, primarily parents and young people. There will also be a (small) market of former Risinghill pupils and teachers.

International focus

Risinghill School was renowned, and was very popular with visitors from overseas, notably educationalists from the USA and Israel. In fact Duane visited the States (on invitation) to talk about his work at Risinghill shortly after it closed, and had many other international invitations and contacts. Now occupied by Elizabeth Garret Anderson (EGA), the school seems to be of as much interest internationally as it was 50 years ago. By way of example, EGA was Michelle Obama’s first port of call when she accompanied her husband on his first state visit to London in May 2011. The EGA pupils were given the surprise of their lives when America’s First Lady dropped by, specifically to tell them that she and they had much in common: that she had not been raised with “wealth or resources of any social standing” and if she could achieve in life, so could they. Duane had delivered the same, powerful messages of self-belief to us a life-time ago, begging the question: What has changed?

Professor Shin-ichiro Hori in Japan, an admirer of Duane’s and A S Neill’s work, has expressed interest in this book. Hori has set up a number of Kinokuni Children’s Village Schools (free schools in the real sense) in Japan, and is

directly involved with the Kilquhanity Children's Village in Castle Douglas, Scotland.

Therefore, we believe there is likely to be an international market for RR albeit a small one.

Needs fulfilled

Provides a viewpoint from former pupils and teachers; an analysis of what ordinary pupils have achieved from an ordinary (if notorious) school; what the pupils thought about their education; and what the pupils think about the education system that is in place today. The book also examines more widely the perceived failure of the comprehensive, exposing in the process: (1) political agendas; and (2) the flagrant abuse of power, resulting in this case in the loss of a first-class career (Duane's), and the loss of a true, community school that was performing well in very difficult circumstances. Above all RR exposes the hypocrisy of an education system in which every child is supposed to matter.

Research focus

Primary research: This book is research based, albeit not from a conventional academic setting. It is based on extensive, archival research; surveys of, and communications from, some 100 ex-pupils and teachers; and from interviews with those intimately involved – notably Leila Berg and Duane's widow (both now sadly deceased). The research was aimed at trying to determine the true nature of the school, and the reasons for its closure.

Competition and parallel texts

As far as we know there is no direct competition for this book. Much of the argument of the Berg's Penguin Special of 1968 is presented, but Berg's book has been out of print for many years, and with the passage of time we have been able to draw on wider, archival and other resources to extend the scope.

What the intended audience is currently reading is an interesting question. One guess is that it is reading literature commenting on, or criticising, the changes to education brought in by the last Labour administration, the Conservative-Liberal coalition, and the current Conservative government. However, RR is not a conventional academic book, and is likely to appeal to a much wider audience - for example those outside academia who have an interest in: educational experimentation; issues of dealing with the behaviour of difficult adolescents; and the education of those considered to be 'failures', either because they come from disadvantaged backgrounds or are simply not academically inclined.

Evidence: (1) Our extensive searches and reading of the literature on Risinghill and Michael Duane. (2) Enthusiastic support for the book from senior academics at the Institute of Education (“this book must be published”) and others interested in our work. Indeed it was because of this interest that Routledge contacted us in May 2014 with an invitation to submit a publishing proposal for RR for (possible) inclusion in a series of progressive education monographs that it was planning. At the time, we still had quite a bit of work to do on RR and had not approached any publishers, bar Penguin, who, although interested in the idea of a sequel to Berg’s book, turned us down. But this was in 2005 when RR was still in the planning stage, and when we were quite naïve about the world of publishing. We did not, for example, provide Penguin with a publishing proposal. Routledge rejected RR on the grounds that it was not suitable for the series in question; however, it did receive two very good academic reviews, with one of the reviewers recommending that it be published elsewhere on the Routledge list as it had great potential. Unfortunately this recommendation was not pursued, probably because RR is a niche book, not a conventional hard-back research-based academic monograph of the type that Routledge is renowned for.

Unique selling points

- (1) Is written from the perspective of the pupils, who, until now, have not had a say in any of the debates about Risinghill or Berg’s book. More generally the considered views of pupils after their schooling are overlooked in the literature on education; more ‘objective’ measures being preferred (such as measures of academic success.).
- (2) Although RR is, as we have indicated, essentially an academic book, it has the potential to appeal to the public at large in much the same way that Berg’s book did; this being a human story, and with a conspiracy attached.
- (3) Is, in many ways, a sequel to Berg’s best-seller *‘Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive School (1968)’*. Berg’s book, despite its success, was never challenged seriously or supported by subsequent publications (leaving aside contemporary press articles and a few, short, academic articles), leaving scope for speculation and the creation of myths, both favourable to and against the school, to go unexamined. This book fills that gap.
- (4) It contains a dedicatory piece by Berg (‘The Next Room’), which contains moving recollections of the time and a passionate defence of Duane.
- (5) It brings together many threads concerning comprehensive education: progressive/libertarian education; schools administration; and governance in one famous case example.

Keywords

The following are suggested:

Risinghill, Michael Duane, Corporal Punishment, Comprehensive Schools, 11+ examination, Educational Politics, London, Survey, Questionnaire, Educational History, Grammar Schools, Academies, Working-Class, Poor, Deprived, Conspiracy, Hypocrisy, Non-academic child.

Contents

See Addendum 1 below.

Chapter summaries

See Addendum 2 below.

Editing

Not applicable – this book is a multiple-author monograph, not a collection of individual contributions.

Illustrations etc.

The book will contain some tables and graphs, particularly those chapters reporting on our surveys with the former pupils and teachers. We would like to include some photographs of the principle actors and of the school, also some press cuttings at the time of the closure as these would increase the appeal and utility of the book.

CVs

With the exception of John Bailey, creator of the Risinghill Research Group's website, the authors and contributors to the book are all former pupils of Risinghill. The main authors of the text are Isabel Sheridan (lead author), Philip Lord (co-author), and Lynn Brady with Alan Foxall assisting with research and the design, administration and analysis of the surveys with the pupils and the teachers.

None of us is attached to an institution for educational research or teacher training, but we see this independence as a positive advantage to books contributing to educational debate. Brief CVs follow:

Isabel Sheridan

Qualifications: Left school with GCE O levels and commercial qualifications from the RSA, later supplemented at the North London Day College. Never went on to gain any higher level qualifications.

- Career: Earlier secretarial positions, leading to senior administrative and PA positions at director level, and then office manager in a small, privately owned company later in life.
- Current work: Retired, but occupied with the writing of RR and its research.
- Other: Set up and managed (with daughter) a netball club for young players aged 11 to 16 from which one player was selected into the U16s national squad. This player is now captain of England's senior squad, and has been for a number of years. The club started in 2002 and amalgamated with a larger netball club in 2006.

Philip Lord

- Qualifications: BSc (Mathematics), MSc (Mathematics), Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- Fellowships: Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA)
- Career: Teaching, mathematics (London Borough of Hornsey, 1967-68)
Bio-mathematician (Medical Research Council, 1968-1978)
Electronic Publishing Consultant (Elsevier Science Publishers, 1979 – 1989)
Project Manager (GlaxoSmithKline, 1990- 2002)
Archiving Consultant (DAC, own business, 2002-present)
- Publications: Numerous academic research papers while at the MRC on epidemiology, lung morphology and automation of physiological measurements. List available on request.
- As independent consultant: Influential reports on digital information management and archiving for British Government departments and agencies (including the British Library, and National Archives), Research Councils, European Union, and the Government of the UAE, and cultural institutions (e.g. Tate Gallery). List available on request. Also reports on information management and governance for private companies.
- Current work: Semi-retired; part time lecturer at the University of Dundee for the MSc/MLitt in archival and records management studies. Retains a directorship in the Digital Archiving Consultancy.

Other: Leader of an Adventure Playground, Reading, 1967 and 1968

Lynn Brady

Qualifications: BA (Social Sciences, 1st Class Honours), PhD (Social Care, Brunel University)

Career: Personal Assistant to the Managing Director in a publishing company

Publications: Specialist Foster Care for Traumatized Young People with Challenging Behaviour: Appraising Joined Up Service Provision (2005).

Report: 'Where's my Advocate' for the Office of the Children's Commissioners office, (2011). Available at http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_513

Current work: Senior Learning Consultant and Freelance Advocate for Coram Voice, one of the oldest children's charities.

Alan Foxall

Qualifications: Chartered Engineer. Primarily an Electrical Power Engineer specialising in High Voltage systems. In addition, is an experienced Illumination Engineering and Control System Engineer.

Fellowships: Fellow of the Institution of Engineering Technology

Career: Has worked over the last 48 years in various industries including Petrochemical, Pharmaceutical, Food (Sugar), Automobile (Ford), Utilities (Electricity), Manufacturing (Transformers / Rectifiers) and currently in the Construction Industry.

Current work: Electrical Engineer, Crossrail.

Other: As an ex-pupil of both the original Risinghill primary school and Risinghill Comprehensive through its entire life, brings unique experience to the authorship team. Activities with children include time as a Venture Scout leader.

John Bailey

Qualifications: City and Guilds Intermediate and Final Certificate in Telecommunications

Career: Manager, UK Access Wideband Recording and Planning Policy, British Telecommunications (BT). (1962 – 66)

Records and Standards Manager. TeleCity Limited. (1999-2001)

Current work: Managing Director of Lidan UK Limited (Specialist Consultancy in Optical Fibre Networks, Civil Engineering and Network Records.)

Other: Website development, including the development and maintenance of the Risinghill Research Group website.

Sample materials

We have attached chapters B1 and C1 in Addendum 3 to provide a flavour of the style of the book. Please note these chapters, along with all the other chapters, are in the process of being ‘Harvardised’ and checked for uniformity of lay-out, etc.

Length of Typescript

Not known yet with precision, but the current text is ca. 120,000 from a quick estimate. If necessary we believe there is ample scope to reduce this (but possibly at the cost of reducing the immediacy of the story).

When ready?

Estimated August 2016. As mentioned above, there remains some work to be done on the referencing.

Referees/reviewers

A number of referees are possible in mainstream educational academia:

Prof Clyde Chitty, Institute of Education, London

Dr M. Fielding, Institute of Education, London

Prof Sonia Jackson, OBE, Institute of Education, London. (Wife of the late Brian Jackson, educational author)

Among those working in the area of progressive education:

Prof Shinichiro Hori, Kinokuni Children's Village, Japan

John Gribble, The Libertarian Education organisation, UK

Sheila Hancock, the actress, has also shown a keen interest in RR. Risinghill features in her latest novel, *Miss Carter's War*, where, at page 419, she acknowledges our help with the research for this part of her book.

Please note we have not approached any of those mentioned above as assuming the role of referee.

Other publishers

We have approached just one publisher at this stage, suggested to us (by an independent source) as someone likely to be interested in RR.

Addendum 1

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Addendum 2

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The voices of the Risinghill children may have gone unheard if two of them, Isabel Sheridan and Lynn Brady, had not kept in touch. It is nearly twelve years since they met again – after many years – and started to talk about their old school and Berg’s book; a discussion which led to them revisiting the Risinghill story from the perspective of the pupils, and with the perspective of passed time. A small team was put together to form the Risinghill Research Group; key players in the drama, notably Leila Berg and Michael Duane’s widow, Margaret Duane, were contacted; other ex-pupils and former staff were reached; and through public archives and private documentation made available to the Group the story could be retold.

Risinghill Revisited’ is a complex story, leading to a structure of six parts, A to F, each comprising a varying number of chapters, following through different themes. A few chapters have addenda, and in some critical documents are reproduced as appendices. There is the usual front matter (including a Preface) and back matter to assist the reader.

PART A – PRELIMINARIES

This Part comprises two chapters (A1, A2).

Chapter A1 provides background information for those unfamiliar with the Risinghill story and the events of 50 years ago. It also helps to make RR’s interweaving threads (of which there are several) more comprehensible. The main players in the drama are introduced here so that they may be placed in context in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter A2 records the reminiscences of each of the authors contributing to this book, describing how they have fared in life, and their motives for updating the Risinghill story. These statements can be read as supplementing the research undertaken with their fellow pupils in Part E.

PART B – PEOPLE, POLICIES AND ATTITUDES

A few individuals were central to the Risinghill story: Michael Duane; Leila Berg; and various officials in the educational hierarchy of the early 1960s. This short section introduces: (1) Duane and his attitude to Corporal Punishment (CP) in schools; (2) the issue of CP from a social and political perspective; (3) Leila Berg, Risinghill’s contemporary commentator; and (4) the educational hierarchy where the organisation, and the delivery of

educational services in England (known at the time as a ‘national system, locally administered’), is discussed for the benefit of those unfamiliar with it. This describes, succinctly, the organisational context in which Risinghill was expected to operate, and the pressures placed upon it as a result. Here the major players within the ‘delivery’ hierarchy are also introduced.

Part B is divided into four chapters (B1 – B4).

Chapter B1 provides a biography of Michael Duane up to the point of him becoming the headmaster of Risinghill. The story begins with his birth in Dublin in 1915 to working class parents, the circumstances of his father’s death in the Irish ‘Troubles’ of that time, and the difficulties of his early years when he was fostered in Ireland, then in London as a result of his mother’s inability to support him. The next part of the story deals with his schooling in London where he was trained for the Catholic priesthood, and after rejection for this, his tertiary education and training as a teacher before joining the Royal Armoured Corps soon after the outbreak of World War II in 1941. His war record is impressive. He was decorated twice and was promoted on the battle front to the rank of Major, not that he used the title in civilian life. His involvement in the D-Day landings and the liberation of Buchenwald Concentration Camp affected him deeply, as can be seen from two of his unpublished poems, which are included here.

On his return to civilian life, he picked up on where he had left off – teaching at Dame Alice Owens Grammar School in Islington, north London. From there he went to the Institute of Education (IOE) where he took up a teacher training position under the guidance of Sir John Newsom, the respected author of the 1963 *‘Half our Future’* report. Next came two headships at Howe Dell Secondary School in Hertfordshire and Alderman Woodrow Secondary Boys’ School in Lowestoft respectively. The Howe Dell headship was a difficult one from which he was forced to resign - on account of political pressures linked to his refusal to use CP, and his progressive approach to education. His resignation from Alderman Woodrow in 1959 (to take on the Risinghill headship) was amicable. In these two headships we note the maturing of his views on child-centred education, and his approach to CP, which attracted criticism from both the political right and the left – all presaging themes from his headship of Risinghill.

Chapter B2 looks at the issue of CP in schools - a major factor in the difficulties Duane faced with his employers, who appeared to use his refusal to use CP as a lever to oppose other elements of his policies. Here we examine in more detail Duane’s attitude towards the practice, but before doing so review the history of CP in schools and other institutions as a means of control.

In England CP was abolished in schools in 1999 whereas many other European countries had outlawed it long before, as early as 1783 in Poland. Holland and France followed in 1850 and 1887 respectively with most others abandoning

the practice soon after. This chapter documents: (1) the slow progress made by England towards the abolition of CP; (2) the inconsistencies between the public and private policies of the LCC in this regard; (3) how the issue was used by some of the LCC officials to beat (metaphorically) Duane; and (4) his reactions to this. The chapter ends with a description of the public reaction by said officials to the revelations made in Berg's book on this aspect of Duane's demise, and the closure of Risinghill in general.

Chapter B3 introduces Leila Berg, covering briefly: her pre-war political involvement; her early work in left-wing journalism; and her transition to children's author after the birth of her two children. Berg's fictional characters were often placed in situations and/or environments which working-class children could relate to, making her books very popular. Her later honours for this work are described here too. In 1965 she became involved in the campaign to prevent the closure of Risinghill, and three years later she published *Risinghill: death of a Comprehensive School*. The chapter concludes with a description of the authors' meeting with Berg while researching this book, in which she (Berg) records: her memories of Duane; the school; and the publication, success and reception of her book. A powerful piece Berg provided to us, originally intended as an introduction to RR, is provided in Part D as a last word.

Chapter B4 provides a description of the educational management structures at the time, and the various roles and responsibilities of administrative bodies. It also notes the interaction, relationship and tensions between the parts: central government, represented by the Minister of Education and the Ministry inspectorate); the relevant Local Authorities - in Risinghill's case the London County Council (LCC) - represented by the Education Committee and its sub-committees; and the Chief Education Officer (CEO) William Houghton and his senior subordinates, which included the local inspectorate. Significant personnel for Risinghill within the Education Department of the LCC are introduced (Messrs Houghton, Briault, Payling, MacGowan and Clarke). The change of local government structures to London, brought about by the Conservative administrations in the 1950s and 1960s, abolishing the LCC and introducing the Greater London Council (GLC) and its educational arm for central London, ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) is also described here. Further down the hierarchy, we outline the roles of the boroughs and their councillors; the school's Advisory Committee (AC) and its successor the Governing Body, (GB). A few other significant individuals are introduced, such as Sir John Newsom. In this chapter we also draw attention (briefly) to the stratification of secondary education in England, where (in broad terms) children were (and still are) segregated first by class, with the continuance of independent schools, then by academic ability with the 11+ creaming off of the top remaining 20% into grammar schools.

PART C – REVISITING RISINGHILL

This is a chronological retelling of the story of Risinghill – told with the benefit of: (1) hindsight; (2) further documentary evidence not available to Berg at the time she wrote her book; (3) the benefit of interviews with Duane’s widow and with Berg; and (4) contributions from participants who have hitherto been silent i.e. the Risinghill teachers and pupils. It is a story about the education of the working-class, and the administrative and political subversion of a well-respected, improving school which was serving all of its pupils and the locality well. At the heart of the story is Michael Duane, a progressive head who was devoted to his pupils, and fought hard to keep Risinghill open. Part C comprises 12 chapters.

The story starts in **Chapter C1** with a brief definition of a comprehensive school, noting that in general, and certainly for Risinghill, it was compromised in its original intention of providing education across all ability ranges by the creaming off of the most able students to the grammar. The history of state education in England is then reviewed, with a focus on the education of the ‘working classes’, culminating in the 1944 Education Act and the rise of the comprehensive model, and in London the comprehensive ideal enshrined in the *London School Plan 1947*. This advocated a single secondary school for children of all abilities, including the grammar level. The chapter ends with a discussion of the administrative/delivery system (‘national system, locally administered’) and its implications for Risinghill.

Chapter C2 reviews the post war developments in education, including: (1) the tripartite system of grammar, technical and secondary modern schools, and the 11+ examination; (2) the rise of the comprehensive, which was partly driven by parental dissatisfaction with the 11+; and (3) the *London School Plan 1947* and the introduction of London’s first comprehensive schools. This chapter also reviews: the lack of opportunities for those in secondary schools to take key examinations, such as the General Certificate of Education ‘O’ and ‘A’ Levels; the lack of curriculum guidelines for the new secondary modern and comprehensive schools (and therefore confusion about what these new schools were meant to deliver); and lastly the effects of post-war immigration on inner-city schools, which exacerbated the problem(s) schools were facing in specific areas of the capital.

Chapter C3 continues by examining the political changes in the 1950s when the Conservatives took over government from Labour. This was when the fight to retain the grammar began in earnest, and when the comprehensive ideal began to come under attack as a result. However, despite the political infighting, comprehensives were introduced - nationally and in London – but few really conformed to the original idea of a single secondary school for the full range of abilities as the integration of the grammar into the comprehensive was not achieved universally, and certainly not in London. In fact very few

grammars agreed to amalgamation, and in this respect the new comprehensive schools were fatally flawed. Strangely, contemporary criticisms of the comprehensives were not directed at this systemic problem, rather at the resulting manifestations flowing from the problem (noting, in passing, this error still persists today.).

Another bone of contention for the Conservatives was the Labour-controlled LCC, a powerful body that the Conservatives were determined to get rid of. Its replacement with the Greater London Council (GLC) is discussed here in the context of the politics of the comprehensive leading up to the closure of Risinghill.

The *London School Plan 1947* shows Risinghill as a new, purpose-built 13-form entry secondary school for 1,500 pupils (2,000 once fully comprehensive) with only two schools (Gifford Secondary School for Boys and Girls and Ritchie Secondary School for Girls) identified as transferring to it. We can presume expansion to 2000 pupils was subject to the identification of a suitable grammar school to join it. This did not happen. Owens Grammar School in Islington was the obvious choice; however, Owens remained separate, and two technical schools (Northampton Technical School for Boys and Bloomsbury Technical School for Girls) were chosen to join Risinghill instead. An Advisory Committee (AC) was established, containing some well-known names, notably John Newsom. There were differences of opinion between the AC and the LCC's Chief Education Officer, Houghton, in relation to the development of Risinghill; differences that affected the school later.

Chapter C4 reviews: the late gestation, birth and infancy of Risinghill; Duane's relationship with the LCC officials; the school itself; the children and teachers; highlights of the school's organisation and policies; and the school's Governing Body (GB) which replaced the AC, once the school was established.

Duane's appointment started in February 1959. He was given facilities at Gifford School in which to prepare for Risinghill, but was also asked (by Houghton's officials) to run Gifford at the same time. A concurrent headship had not been mentioned by the AC during the appointment process, nor did this form any part of Duane's contract of employment. Therefore he was free to decline the secondment, which he did on the basis that he wanted to focus on Risinghill. This marked the beginning of tensions between him and the LCC officials, who appeared to disapprove of his educational ideas, methods, and indeed his very appointment. Those sitting on the AC, however, supported Duane's policies fully.

The school opened on 3 May 1960, with very little of the publicity expected for a school of this kind, something that is examined in the context of Berg's suspicion of it being destined for closure before it had even started. For those children, who were due to leave school in the summer to start work, there was no incentive to mix and make friends with the other pupils and, in some cases,

to behave or even attend lessons. The repercussions (mainly fights between the boys) are discussed here, as are the problems associated with the scattered nature of the site (children getting lost *en route* to lessons in consequence and/or finding it easier to truant), and building defects on account of cost savings of £36,000. The organisation of the school (into houses and tutor groups) and the integration of the pupils and teachers are also described, as are the pedagogic difficulties caused by a shortage of staff, a grossly disproportionate number of children in the lower ability groups, and the replacement of the AC with a GB unsympathetic to Duane's policies. In addition, the removal of CP and the introduction of a School Council are discussed here.

Chapter C5 begins by describing the settling down of the school by the end of 1960 where there was a marked reduction in the fighting between the rival factions; the older boys, who caused most of the trouble, having left at the end of the summer term to start work. The forming of a corporate identity was also beginning to assert itself, as evidenced in the school sports teams where earlier differences amongst the boys were being set aside. Much of the credit for this was attributable to the School Council; however it was beginning to suffer from the apathy of the staff towards it – mirroring a phenomenon reported in a recent NSPCC survey. The school also had a new intake of 286 first year pupils in the September, but this conformed to a pattern which persisted throughout the school's life in being heavily skewed towards the lower ability range (ca. 35% in the lowest ability, only ca. 2% in the highest ability - the desirable norm being 20% for each of the five ability bands). Despite the problems, 403 parents made Risinghill their first choice of school so the 'rejects' constituted quite a high proportion. We do not know if and how these rejects differed in profile from those accepted, which leads to a discussion and analysis later of: (1) the evidence for claims made by the LCC for closing the school on the basis that it had become unpopular; and (2) the provision of a better distribution of first year pupils in the higher ability range for Starcross, the school which replaced Risinghill. Further uncertainties (and changes) viz. the anticipated size of the school roll and the number of forms at entry are also discussed in this and the ensuing chapters. Last but not least, the school had a thriving Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which supported Duane's policies. This was another unusual feature of schools in the early 1960s; there being very few active PTAs then.

Chapter C6 charts the school's progress during 1961 – 1962. Duane's non-confrontational way of resolving some of the issues, such as truancy and bullying, are illustrated here by the stories of two former pupils. Of note were the increasing successes in the GCE and RSA examinations. As the school blossomed, links were being forged with the immigrant communities (in particular the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities), which helped in the easing of racial tensions. Although CP had been banned, it was still administered by some teachers – a very serious attack by one master on a boy

occurred, and despite a non-caning public policy by the LCC, Duane received no support from Houghton.

An informal visit by a Ministry of Education inspector, Mr Munday, resulted in a complimentary verbal report to Duane, which is cited here. The only significant event to have ruffled the feathers of some was an impromptu sex education lesson by Duane to a group of boys who were about to leave school. Duane, in typical fashion, was clear and explicit in answering all of the questions put to him. Due to its success, Duane produced a report for his staff (with a view to introducing sex education lessons formally) and he was supported in this by the teachers, the PTA and even the Family Planning Association, who used the report in one of its publications anonymously. Everyone was happy bar Houghton's officers, who would later berate Duane for creating a 'bad image' for the school. During this period there were early signs of the problems to follow: changes to the GB, which removed those who supported Duane's policies; and the first signs of the school being run down (the closure of a whole department, and the reduction of staff and other facilities) barely 18 months after it had opened.

Finally a review of the *London School Plan 1947* resulted in the 'grammarisation' of the comprehensive, marking the beginning of the end of Risinghill, and arguably the end for Duane, who was appointed on a remit that ran counter to this.

Chapter C7 describes a surprise visitation by the LCC inspectorate in January 1962, and the sequel to that. Twenty inspectors descended on the school to carry out what was, in effect, a full-scale inspection during which no pleasantries were exchanged with the staff, and where no immediate feedback was provided to Duane. This was a very different visit to that undertaken by the Ministry's inspector six months earlier. The LCC's examination was in great detail, even the caretaker was interviewed (we know from personal contacts that his views were misrepresented in the unofficial report which followed.). The contrast between the reports of the LCC and the Ministry of Education are noted here. Where the latter had been positive and supportive, the former was very negative, criticising Duane, and separating him from his staff. Duane received a copy of this report, which ran to 32 pages, just days before being summoned to County Hall where he was berated and ordered to bring back CP, something he refused to do. Duane's detailed response to Houghton, which he never received a reply to, is reproduced here as an appendix. Months later another, smaller visitation from the LCC inspectorate resulted in a glowing report – amusing the staff who were not doing anything different. We looked for any cause that might have triggered this inspection, but did not find one. The only thing of note was that, along with other schools in London, Risinghill had participated in a LCC-endorsed survey conducted by the IOE into race relations in schools. Three Jewish Communist members of the school's teaching staff objected to the IOE researcher being Lebanese, causing friction

with the other six Communist members of staff and this, in turn, spilled over to other staff members. Inexplicably, when the issue came to the attention of the LCC, it sided with the three Jewish Communists. Duane was ordered to stop the survey immediately. However the year (1962) ended with two high points – a rousing prize giving and a splendid nativity play.

Chapter C8 looks at the events of 1963, a period of relative calm before the inevitable storm. The number of ‘O’ Level GCE passes increased, and the school had its first ‘A’ Level successes. Nationally, and even internationally, the school was attracting the attention of educationalists, evinced by the complimentary comments of visitors. From the Ministry’s viewpoint, Risinghill continued to impress - as shown by the statements of its officers. Though increasingly successful academically - for those designated more able, and even for some less able - Duane did not see academic success as the sole measure, believing that all children, irrespective of background and/or native ability, should be developed and esteemed as equally important. Ironically, Michelle Obama was to preach much the same message in 2011 from the same pulpit in which Duane had once stood. Undercurrents in this period support Berg’s suspicion that the planning (or plotting) of the school’s closure had long predated 1965.

Duane’s reputation was spreading, and he was receiving many invitations to speak on child-related topics, even at the House of Commons to MPs. However, the net was closing on the comprehensive - as evidenced by the divisions in the Labour Party on the amalgamation of the grammar. At its 1963 conference, Labour adopted the policy of removing the 11+, squaring the internal dilemma by promoting the comprehensive as delivering a ‘grammar school education for all’, which contained its own contradictions. Meanwhile Duane continued with his work, but his inclusive methods ran counter to the opinions of Houghton and his subordinates who favoured the grammar school model. At the end of the year Risinghill lost eight experienced teachers due to retirement and promotions to other jobs in other schools, but were not replaced – another blow on top of existing staff shortages.

Chapter C9 witnesses the first public attack on Risinghill by a Conservative Alderman sitting on the main board of the LCC. This was in the run up to the GLC elections. At a full Council meeting, he used an out of context quotation from an article in ‘Punch’ magazine about Duane’s inclusive methods, focussing on his removal of CP. Unfortunately for the Alderman, his plan to discredit the school (and with it the comprehensive) misfired as the press homed in on the remarkable reduction in children on probation at the school since it opened (from 97 to just 9 in four years) with Duane emerging from this smear campaign as a hero. Incidents like this gave the school publicity, but also exposed the inner-city comprehensive for what it had always been - a large secondary modern school with all the attendant problems of truancy, and poor examination results compared to the grammar. In short, it was a far cry from

the ‘grammar school’ image that was being cultivated, and in today’s parlance Duane was ‘off message’.

In June 1964, the school was subjected to yet another LCC visitation; the reasons for which are unclear. This time the conducting inspector was a Mr Clarke, whom Duane had crossed swords with over the Gifford headmastership affair. Suffice to say this visitation (the third from the LCC in so many years) did not go well, mirroring the first LCC visitation where Duane was found to not carry his staff with him. Verbal feedback (or to be more precise, a tongue lashing) was given on this occasion with Duane later describing this meeting as one of the worst experiences of his teaching career. Once again he was summoned to County Hall to discuss the results (without the benefit of seeing Clark’s report) where he was told that he had failed to establish the right image for Risinghill, and that there was to be a drastic (unspecified) reorganisation. By the autumn of 1964, however, the closure of Risinghill was now being proposed for reasons that, according to the officials, had nothing to do with Duane whatsoever: namely that a girls’ secondary school, Starcross, was occupying space (on a temporary basis) in Kingsway College, and because Kingsway was expanding, Starcross had to move out. With parents (allegedly) now preferring single sex education, and with Risinghill’s school roll falling (though there is a suspicion that this was, in part, engineered by Houghton’s officers), it was decided that Risinghill should close, and that Starcross should take over its premises.

Chapter C10 examines the obligatory period of consultation before Risinghill could be closed, and the relevant parts of the 1944 Education Act, namely Section 68 (the rights of parents to appeal to the Secretary of State) and Section 76 (on parental choice of education) and how weakly the latter applied in the case of Risinghill, and more generally. The LCC’s consultation process with the parties involved is reviewed here. This included: the Risinghill and Starcross teachers; the heads of Starcross and Kingsway College, but significantly not with Duane; the GBs of Risinghill and Starcross; and the parents of the children at Risinghill and Starcross (the former of which were treated with arrogance and disdain by the LCC.). All were opposed to the proposals, except the individual least affected - the head of Kingsway, who was neutral. All of these objections were ignored. Clearly from what the LCC officials wrote and said at the time they thought their decision was final – a *fait accompli* no less. The GBs of the two schools were informed and agreed to the proposals, but in the case of Risinghill there seems to have been some curious features to the process. Moreover, no consultations were attempted with the wider community and their elected representatives on the Education Committee. During this period, large sums of money were promised to Starcross to refurbish the Risinghill premises whereas over the previous 5 years Duane’s requests for funds for urgent repairs were refused on the basis of there being no money in the budget. This chapter also discusses further the dubious

issue of Raisinghill's falling roll, and the falling secondary school population in London generally.

Chapter C11 describes the period from the end of the consultation to the school's closure in July 1965. Here the LCC's submission to the then Secretary of State for Education, Anthony Crosland, is examined along with Crosland's handling of the affair. During this statutory period of deliberation we note the continuing press comment on the case (nearly all of which was hostile to the closure) and other aspects of the appeal and consultation process, notably the rights of parents under Sections 68 and 76 of the Education Act.

Part of the atmosphere around this matter at this time was a rumour that there had been sexual irregularities at the school. The authors examined this issue in detail as the rumour appeared to have come from County Hall: they found that it had no substance whatsoever, and provide evidence in this respect.

There is a strong, political thread running through this chapter, and once again the politics of the comprehensive are examined. Labour had regained power in the previous year with a very slim majority, and though Crosland was well known as a supporter of the comprehensive, others, including Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, were in favour of retaining grammar schools. Crosland was developing Circular 10/65 at this time, and we look at the politics surrounding this, which coincided with direct appeals to him from: Duane, the Raisinghill staff and pupils, the probation service, high ranking representatives of the ethnic minority groups, and the public at large. Most important was the PTA appeal, which raised some very serious issues about Raisinghill's falling roll and the integrity of some of the LCC officials. It is an explosive document, which is included as an appendix. The chapter ends with a description of the poignant last day of the school, and Duane's farewell message to the pupils.

Chapter C12 concludes our story of Raisinghill by looking at the immediate aftermath of the closure. The views of teachers are presented here, mainly through the quotations provided by Berg from her interviews. There was continued press interest, particularly in response to Berg's book, published in 1968. This also evoked interesting correspondence in the press from both supporters of the school's closure and those opposed to it. Of particular interest is the correspondence from Margaret Cole (wife of the libertarian socialist G.D.H. Cole) who was chair of the LCC's Higher Education Sub-Committee (one of three sub-committees involved with the closure of Raisinghill). Cole, however, in her letters to the press never once disclosed her connection to the school or to the LCC, and wrote vigorously in support of its closure, castigating Berg in the process. The correspondence from Terence Constable, former Head of Languages (for only a short period) about Raisinghill's last few months is equally interesting, and is also reviewed in this chapter. There is suspicion of his contribution to the debate (*The Raisinghill Myth*) being a put up job, but one that found favour with Cole. Having said this, there are some aspects of Cole's

findings that we agree with, notably her criticisms of Berg's portrayal of us (the Risinghill children) coming from deprived and decrepit homes. Despite these faults, we believe that Berg's account of what happened at Risinghill was accurate. Duane's papers (now housed at the IOE) show this to be a matter of fact, not fiction. We also believe that, had Berg not written her book in such a flamboyant style, undoubtedly going over the top with some of her descriptions of Islington, her book would not have been a best-seller. In this respect, perhaps the end justified the means. We did tackle Berg about this as it was a sensitive issue for the pupils who participated in our study.

PART D – AFTER RISINGHILL

This section comprises four chapters (D1-D4), which deals with events post Risinghill up to and including 1997. The first (D1) brings the reader up to date with the politics of the comprehensive, and the second (D2) with the continuation of Duane's battle with the ILEA, and through into retirement. In chapter D3 we present the results of our research with some of the former teachers of the school, two of whom were interviewed by Berg and feature in her book. Last but not least, we present a piece (*The Next Room*) that was written by Berg in anticipation of this book.

In **Chapter D1** we look at the response to Crosland's Circular 10/65, which came into force shortly after Risinghill closed, and the political milestones up to 1997. For example:

- The 1966 Local Government Act (Section 11) which contributed to the costs of teaching immigrant children to read and write in English;
- The Public Schools Commission (1968) which recommended the integration of independent schools into the state system, but was not implemented;
- The removal of Circular 10/65 in 1970 when, under the Conservatives, Local Authorities were no longer required or requested to go comprehensive;
- The reinstatement of Circular 10/65 (with Circular 10/70) when Labour was returned to power in 1974;
- Labour's 1976 Education Act which abolished selection by ability: a policy that was repealed three years later when the Conservatives won the 1979 General Election.

We also look at the legislative changes thereafter (up to 1997), all of which have contributed to the current market-driven system of today which favours one at the expense of another. The 1988 Education Reform Act, and the 1992 Education (Schools) Act stripped away the powers of LEAs, bringing to an end the 'national system, locally administered' where the central government, local government and the teaching unions had worked in tandem to deliver the full range of educational services. The National Curriculum was also introduced

during this period, as were Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) and school league tables together with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). These changes marked the beginning of the privatisation of schools in the state sector, to be discussed in more detail when bringing the politics up to date in our concluding chapters (Part F).

Chapter D2 completes Duane's story (from the autumn of 1965 through to 1980 when he retired from teaching) and documents his inability to obtain another headship despite being an 'unattached head teacher' on a full head's salary for 15 years. During this period, he applied for over 200 headships in and around the London area. It also lists the job offers made to him by the ILEA, one of which was for a schools inspector in Nigeria. His acceptance of what he called his 'non-job' at Garnet College (where he was not allowed to teach) is documented here, as is his fight to get the teaching ban lifted. His prolific activities as a public speaker and popular lecturer on educational issues are reviewed here too - up until he died in 1997. In this chapter, we also look at his political and religious leanings, touching briefly on his stance on anarchism, and his progressive education admirers, notably A S Neill (founder of Summerhill) and Professor Shin-ichiro Hori, (founder of the Kinokuni Children's Village Schools in Japan, and the Kilquhanity Children's Village school in Castle Douglas, Scotland). Duane's publications are also listed here.

In **Chapter D3**, we examine the results of our attempts at eliciting the views of those (Risinghill) teachers we could find after a gap of 40 years. As was to be expected, it was harder to find the teachers than the pupils, but we did succeed in contacting eight of them, either through the questionnaire we prepared, or by other means. These teachers were at the school for varying durations, and were teaching different subjects. Their separate recollections and views of Duane are recorded here, along with their thoughts about the school, the CP ban, and the reasons for the school's closure, where some support is given to the idea that there was a hidden agenda. If any pattern emerges, it is that they perceived Risinghill as a significant episode in their careers; but towards the school and Duane, support varied from the enthusiastic to the sceptical. Not all of the teachers surveyed were against Duane, and there were shades of opinion about him (something missing from Berg's account). However, it was clear that there were a small number of authoritarian Communists who caused disruption and dissent, but who seemed to have had the ear of the LCC.

Chapter D4 concludes this section by reproducing a piece, entitled 'The Next Room', written by Berg for inclusion in RR; a project that she was very excited about. It was originally seen as an introduction to this book, but we feel it is more fitting to place it here, as a valedictory piece. It stands for the passion that she felt for the school, and its children, and it is also a moving tribute to Duane. While we do not necessarily agree with all her depictions of the time, we do share her concern and passion.

PART E – THE WASTE CLAY

This section comprises five chapters, and is devoted to our research with the pupils.

In **Chapter E1**, we describe the process of contacting the pupils, and the provision of a questionnaire to elicit their views on a number of issues. We look at: their age while attending the school; when they attended the school; which schools they came from; and gender, ethnicity and mother tongue (given the high proportion of immigrant children.). A discussion is provided about how this sample might represent the full population of children who attended over the five years of the school's life. The results are also considered in relation to ad hoc emails, letters and telephone conversations received from those who did not complete the questionnaire, but were keen to participate in the study: the same comments apply for all of the other chapters in this section.

One of the key objectives of this study was to establish whether or not the pupils agreed with Berg's depiction of them being poor and deprived, and living in an appalling area. In **Chapter E2**, we look at their responses to questions about their families; their parents' occupations; their housing; the area in which they lived; whether they worked outside of school hours; and how they socialised. Many of the pupils chose to supplement their responses to these questions with anecdotes, and we include some of these here.

We continue the 'deprivation' theme in **Chapter E3**, largely because we received so many interesting comments in response to this issue. While many of the pupils were aware that they were poor in comparison to some of their friends, who lived in better homes, and whose parents had a better income, there is no support for Berg's contention that they were deprived in the wider sense of the word. The majority, for example, reported that their families were, on the whole, happy families, and they had fond memories of their childhoods. This reflected our own recollections, adding weight to the view of educational researcher, David Limond, also Margaret Cole, that Berg dramatized the conditions of the area and the pupils' home backgrounds for rhetorical effect. Whether this was done deliberately, or was a genuine (mis)perception, ideological or not, remains unclear.

In **Chapter E4**, we look at the pupils' attitudes to Risinghill by examining their responses to questions about the school, Michael Duane, and the teachers. As with the previous chapters in this section, E4 is freely illustrated with quotations from the pupils. Thus the chapter presents and discusses questions concerning: perceptions of Duane; recollections of the teachers; the policy of no CP; discipline; and bullying. We also looked at recollections of the school itself: the building(s); layout and facilities; its organisation and ethos; and it being a mixed school as opposed to single-sex. Comparisons are made with other schools, and comparable areas – including recollections of previous schools, and other schools attended when Risinghill closed. In addition, we

look at the pupils' views of their own behaviour at the school and, where relevant, with regard to the law. Regarding Duane, there was ambivalence about his no caning policy, agreeing with it at one level, but regretting that it might have encouraged bad behaviour; however there was almost universal respect for the man as a teacher and human being. Likewise, there are mixed recollections of the teachers, some finding a teacher inspirational, others finding the same teacher intimidating. This part of the study demonstrates that Risinghill was nothing like the image sometimes presented i.e. of a state school being run on the same, radical lines as A S Neill's Summerhill.

Finally, in **Chapter E5**, we look at how these pupils fared in life and how they viewed education at the time that they responded to the questionnaire – 40 years after Risinghill, and with their life experiences to further inform them. We look at the experiences of those who moved on to other schools from Risinghill; in most cases the new school (Starcross included) was viewed less favourably. The pupils' ambitions on leaving Risinghill were, for the most part, focussed on careers (and earning money), or looking forward to building a family. We looked at the careers which followed – as expected a vast variety, but included many which could be counted very successful by our current standards of assessment. They include: the establishment of successful businesses; professional people; artists; as well as tradesmen and women. Most of the respondents had found their careers satisfying with a few going on to achieve high, academic success. Answers to the open-ended questions (for 'likes' and 'dislikes' of Risinghill) and what was useful to them in later life, are presented and discussed. Only six respondents noted that attending Risinghill had a detrimental effect on them. Interestingly over 70% of the respondents thought that the school should have remained open. However, though there were not many replies to the question whether they would have sent their children to the school, some replies showed distinct reservations. It notes the high number of respondents saying that instilling respect for others, followed by teaching the three R's as the most important aspects of education. We also looked at the qualifications obtained at Risinghill and then later. The chapter ends with a presentation of the rather equivocal attitude to education as of 2005/6 where some scepticism about the value of examinations is noted. Finally we asked the respondents how they felt about life now - a high percentage reported contentment and happiness (but note, this was just pre-recession.).

PART F - CONCLUSIONS

This section comprises just two chapters, the first of which (**F1**) brings the politics of education up to date, and the second (**F2**) rounds off the book by: (1) pulling all the different threads of the Risinghill story together, and presenting our conclusions about these, along with our collective thoughts about how the affair could inform current, educational questions; and (2) our parental experiences, and personal views of the education system.

In Chapter F1, we look at the educational milestones from 1997 up to 2015 with the ‘Every Child Matters’ (ECM) agenda very much in mind. All of the changes that have been made (on the back of parental choice, improving standards, etc) are viewed in this context, as are many other associated issues, including truancy. From an academic perspective, we discuss (briefly) the value of examinations, comparing the performance of the comprehensive against the grammar in this respect. At the same time we look at the changes from the GCE to the CSE and from the CSE to the GSCE with a possible return to the old GCE if the current Conservative government gets it way. The introduction of academies and free schools are discussed – again in the context of ECM - but also in the context of David Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ where we examine what this means in practice. The chapter ends with a review of the 1944 Education Act (including David Bell’s thoughts on the 60th anniversary of the Act in 2004), asking the question: What has been achieved in real terms since then?

We believe that there were ulterior motives behind the closure of Risinghill – if not a conspiracy, then at least informal plotting - and in **Chapter F2** we elaborate on this. The driving forces behind this seemed, to us, to have operated at a number of levels: there were the ‘local’ tensions within the LCC (between the permanent, salaried hierarchy and the elected, voluntary hierarchy which came and went every time there was a local election) and the central government where the politicians arrived and disappeared in a similar fashion. The vagaries of the ‘national system, locally administered’ added to the confusion, and this, coupled with the extraordinary powers wielded by CEOs, permitted the assassination of Duane and his school.

Objectively, it is not clear from this distance how far the LCC officials were operating with, against, or at least independently of, the wishes of the elected representatives of the people of London, but based on the evidence we have uncovered we believe the practice was widespread. Added to this mix was the ever contentious subject of educational politics – right against left (and against the authoritarian, Communist left) and divergences within the Labour Party itself. We conclude, with speculation, whether the situation for disadvantaged children and/or lower ability children has changed much over the years. Possibly not, the 11+ may have gone, but there is still selection - in the way that schools are funded and operate in general. There is a confusing plethora of schools where the emphasis is on examinations, performance and testing; and there is still class division – with the wealthier parent benefitting the most from the state system or opting out of it all together. In this set-up there is no place for the imaginative, practical child, and ultimately the happy child, which is a terrible indictment of the society that we live in.

We end **Chapter F2** (and the book) with our personal thoughts about Risinghill, and today’s education system.

ADDENDUM 3