

## **A Salopian Legacy**

The 'Salopian' tends to feature success stories of the great and the good, so here is something a little different. It features the impact of the dramatic floods that arose in the aftermath of the terrible winter of 1962/63.

The river's Oxbow feature had linked up to the north of the town such that the Kingsland Bridge had become the only access point. Much of the town - the Frankwell district in particular - was inundated. Sitting in the school buildings we had a birds-eye view of the devastation below. I was one of those who appealed to our Form Master, Robin Trimby, on the basis that in all conscience we couldn't sit idly by and do nothing. It is significant to note that, at this time, relationships with the townsfolk were probably at an all time low. A boy from Ridgemount had been assaulted on a Saturday afternoon and in retaliation a stooge had been deployed the following week whilst others, in civilian clothes, laid in wait and duly gave the perpetrators of the assault a good hiding. It was believed that the townsfolk regarded us as 'the privileged snobs up on the hill'.

This story begins with Robin Trimby backing his Form's plea to help the townsfolk and going to the Headmaster for permission to do so. The outcome was that we went out to help with the Army, equipped with some of our 'Tub Pairs'. We acquitted ourselves admirably receiving thanks from both the Army and the Town Council. Following which, we were invited to help in the clean up of houses in Frankwell and were deployed with shovels and cans of Jeyes fluid.

This gave rise to 'Social Services' becoming a 6<sup>th</sup> Form option instead of, then compulsory, CCF attendance. I was privileged to be in that beginning of 'Social Service' starting with visits to help redecorate homes and visits to vulnerable people and developing into visits to the RNIB Training Centre at Condover Hall. One memorable event was a cricket match against staff and patients of Shelton Psychiatric Hospital, which we were instructed to lose. It was educational when a patient struck a glorious six and then burst into tears, but what was perhaps harder was arranging a significant number of overthrows from the last ball so that the visitors won!

Having suffered intense bullying, mainly down to a medical condition, I found myself compelled to leave in the midst of my 'A' levels. With my educational promise of University destroyed, I left in 1964 feeling very bitter about my Salopian experience. I went on to have a middle of the road career in Commercial management, mostly in the Defence sector, but also in the Rail, Nuclear and Energy sectors living and working in various locations throughout the UK, before Retirement in Scotland.

All the while, that kernel of a Social Conscience that had been developed at Shrewsbury in 1962/63 never left me. I began by helping at 'Cardboard City' at London's Charing Cross via St Martin's in the Fields and London City Mission. Subsequently I worked on a Care Van and helped to run night shelters for the homeless in Edinburgh, as well as helping Bethany Christian Trust support vulnerable adults to return to society. In Retirement, I continue working with refugees, vulnerable adults, and people from other cultures. This includes helping to found a 'Community of Sanctuary' and a monthly International Café in Perth.

So, in spite of what I suffered, I and those I have served and still seek to serve are indebted to Shrewsbury for the Legacy of a Social Conscience.

*Floreat Salopia*

Graham Kingsley-Rowe (Rt 1960 – 1964)