

Jane Laing, who took up the idea of this publication five years ago, came to Friends' School Saffron Walden in 1990 as Deputy Head, and was Head from 1995 to 2001. Her years at school encompassed some significant changes as the school prepared itself for the challenge of the twenty-first century.

Hilary Halter (née Hockley) was a scholar at FSSW from 1941 to 1947. With her husband, Lionel Halter, she started a printing and publishing company in North London, which they ran for nearly thirty years, before retiring in 1998. She is a member of the Editorial Board that produces the Old Scholars' Magazine and is President-Elect of their Association.

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A BI-CENTENARY ODE

OR

RESUMÉ

OF

CLERKENWELL, ISLINGTON, CROYDON & SAFFRON WALDEN SCHOOLS

1702-1902

When Clerkenwell was rural in the long, long ago
Ere Fothergill at Ackworth, did seeds of knowledge sow,
Our pioneer John Bellers, did sound the trumpet call
For the Children, Quaker Children, and poor folk one and all.

His comrades in profession who many a storm had stood
In defence of light and freedom, he roused in earnest mood,
These poor in world's belongings, claimed the more their need
Education for life's battle, for the children he did plead.

And thus in 1702, two hundred years ago
For the poor was raised in Clerkenwell, both old and young, a home,
Clothing, food and occupation, for the old who still were strong
And those too weak for labour, with these to dwell among.

And the Children, Quaker Children, were clothed and fed and taught
To equip them for this battle, nor was money spent for naught,
All honor to our forebears, no strangers to life's strife
Beacon lights to aftertime, tried Christians by the life.

Money, time, and labour, were poured with lavish hand
By noble sires, and matrons, an earnest, faithful band
For Jesus, Church, and Conscience, with them no empty cry
Their watchword, reading in His steps, "For Christ to live or die."

To Islington migration came in 1788
Again was raised the banner, school teaching up to date,
And here through many an after year, with seasons ebb and flow
The children, Quaker children, did play, and learn, and grow.

You'll remember 'twas in Islington, down its famed thoro'fare
Where Gilpin took his wondrous ride to Edmonton and Ware,
In Edmonton may yet be seen, the Bell of ancient fame
From which his wife, beheld her spouse, ride past with might and main.

No turnpike gate that open flew, "as though he rode a race"
Nor swine or chancicleer agog, to haste our Jehu's pace,
But as long as good old Saxon rhyme, shall grace poetic page
The story of John Gilpin's ride, shall stay from age to age.

In eighteen hundred and eleven, change was again writ large.
Anxiety of varied kind, o'ertook those then in charge,
And the worthy older people, who a burden great had proved
In finance and in other ways, to Plaistow were removed.

There was found an habitation, more suited to their needs
Where in quiet and in comfort, they spent a life of ease,
And so henceforth the children, the youthful mind to teach
This grand old Institution did leave none out of reach.

It grew in public favour and pursued its onward way
And brings us to an era remembered e'en to-day
When Islington no longer was rural, but a town
And merchandise, and enterprise on every side had grown.

We still have some surviving of this historic time
When 1825 was reached, and again we draw the line,
To Croydon, dear old Croydon, the Quaker heralds came
And the children, and all then in charge, commenced a glorious reign.

There captain Dymond took the helm and piloted the ship
By Wandle's flowing river, a pleasant country trip
And down through many an after year, the good ship sped her way
The Alma Mater of our clan her crew all stalwarts they.

Brady, Sharp, and Fryer, Smith, Robinson and Linney
Did each in turn the vessel steer, their watchword, ready, steady,
The boys and girls by thousands, beneath her flag unfurled
Have reaped the fruits of knowledge, and launched upon the world.

In manhood, and in womanhood, full many of these have thriven
But fortune's smiles, and failure's frowns, have mingled as they've
striven,
To other lands our sons have gone, and daughters too though fewer
To find a home by industry or toil would perhaps be truer.

Again the plaintive farewell sounds in 1879
To Surrey, beauteous Surrey, renowned through aftertime,
To Addington and Beddington, Croham, Duppas Hill
Round which a thousand memories of the past will hover still.

The Croham pebbly path race, the cricket pitch of Duppas
Where on the way, for curds and whey, we stormed our granddames
palace,
The cottage too at Addington, we hied for toothsome bloater
And the haunted Church at Beddington, a legend far remoter.

Twice on Sabbath day we filed, with slow and measured tread
To the sacred shrine, God's acre, where lay our sainted dead,
The faces so familiar too that met within that fane
Where (unadorned its honor'd walls) did waiting worship reign.

Barrett, Sterrey, Dymond, the Marshes, John and Hannah,
True servants, and handmaidens to break the Heavenly manna,
Whilst a Bedford, Lucas, Morland, overseeing watching all
A faithful band of worthies, alert to the Master's call.

May the mantles of these valiant ones be borne by all to-day,
Who fill those seats at Croydon, a gifted, bright array,
Hand them down to loyal sons, and daughters too of Fox
A dauntless host to keep unfurled the banner of the cross.

And so another voyage our good old ship has taken,
Has weighed her anchor, and has sped to the shores of Saffron Walden,
Again the ensign has been raised, and floats aloft her mast-head,
No blood-stained banner, but the flag of peace and progress blended.

Capt'n. Walker and his faithful mate, are now in full command,
Right well they navigate the ship, nor easily alarmed,
If storms arise, or sickness comes, each sailor's held in rein
And ready, steady's still the word, 'till normal comes again.

Long may she ride, o'er wind and tide, the Quaker youth to brighten,
To fit them for this mundane sphere, its battle brunt to lighten,
And so be taught of higher things, the life that is immortal
For Christ and glory travel on and enter Heaven's portal.

All hail we then the valiant sons of the fathers gone before,
Of Fox, and Penn, and Barclay, and chieftains many a score
With the martyrs of New England, who sealed with blood their doom
And trod the gallows platform, to glory through the tomb.

But now we're in for honours and fall on days of ease
In senate represented by our Joseph Albert Pease,
Adown through Quaker lineage he bears an honor'd name
Of worthy sires, a worthy son, we yield him glad acclaim.

So too we've Mayor of Gloucester, the leader of our band,
Our President of O.S.A., his Worship, Samuel Bland,
While Stone, and Gilkes, and Bedford Marsh have shared this civic treat,
And Falmouth has its Horniman, the Old School's first M.P.

Yet above all brothers, sisters in our day of waning hours,
Let us worthily uphold such an heritage as ours,
Quit ourselves like men and women for the Lord
In the spirit of our Quaker sires, who trembled at His word.

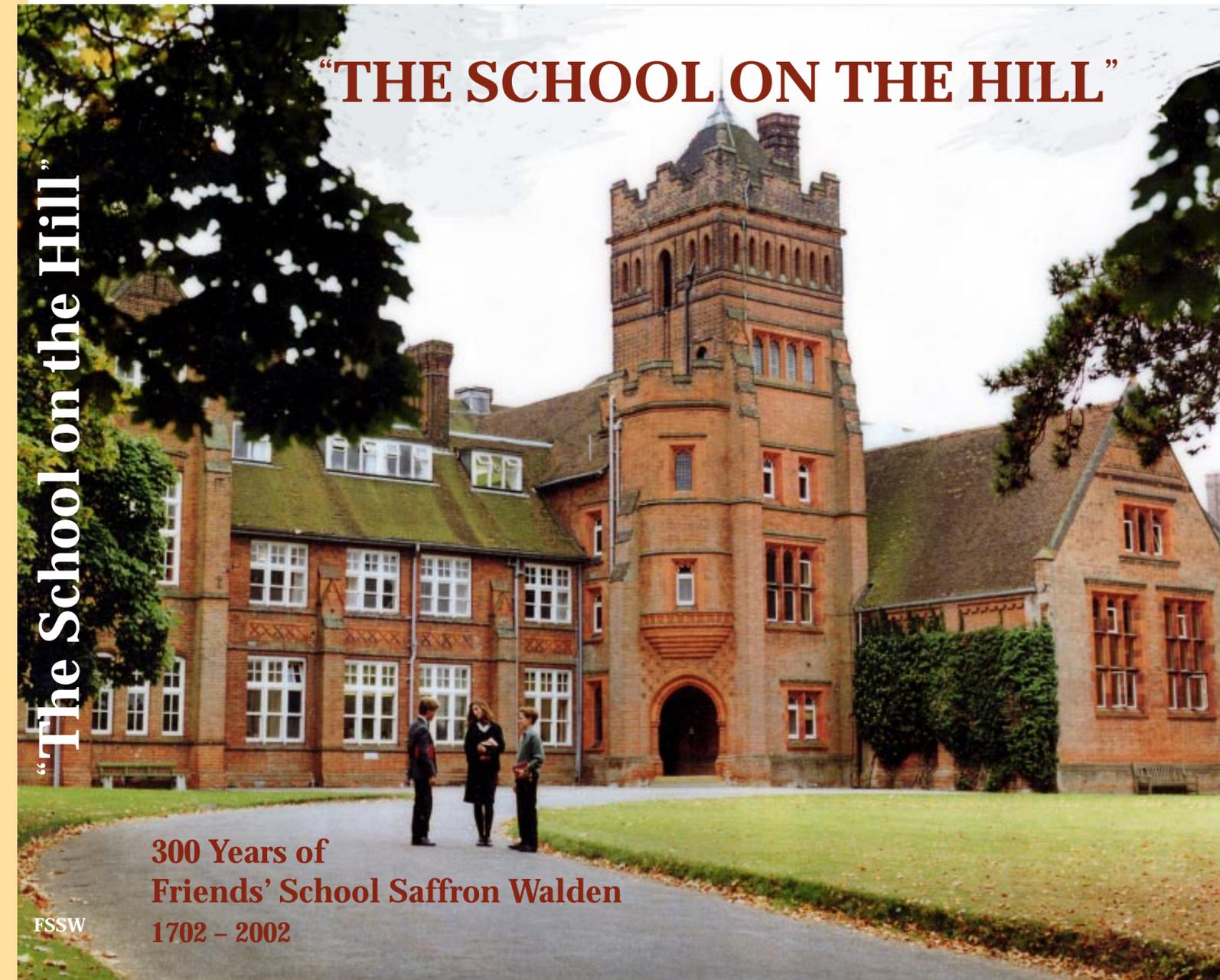
That in the great hereafter, we too may join the throng
Who through the countless ages chant the everlasting song
To Him, around whose footstool the saints for ever blend,
Him first, Him last, Him midst and without end.

So now we raise own halcyon song of praise unto the Lord,
Two hundred years of blessing, for which to be adored
Mid all the ills and sorrows, along life's chequered way,
The fiery, cloudy pillar, hath led from day to day.

Oh! what myriad voices would join us in our lay,
Could we but rally forces on this bright zenith day
For absent, present, and yet to come, a glad united band
We roll along Hosannah strains to swell from land to land.

*The above was composed, and read at Saffron Walden, by
JOHN G. ARMFIELD,
on the celebration there of the Bi-Centenary of the School,
13th and 14th of 6th Month, 1902.*

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The School on the Hill is a celebration of 300 years in the life of the oldest continuously surviving Quaker school in the country. The Friends' School, started in 1702 as part of a Workhouse in Clerkenwell, moved after more than a century in Central London to Croydon, and in 1879 came to its present home on the hill above Saffron Walden in Essex.

The book serves as a complement to Unbroken Community, David Bolam's history written for the School's 250th anniversary in 1952. Memories, anecdotes, profiles and personal stories from former scholars and staff, together with some of the views of present-day pupils, build up an entertaining picture of the School as it embarks on its fourth century of existence.