

FROM THE GARTON ARCHIVE

PICTURE OF THE MONTH 93 JANUARY 2020



This month's picture features the 'Biology Hut' at Lincoln School. The July 1956 *Lincolnian* magazine trumpeted its arrival in its editorial as follows:

'A new temporary building has been erected on the flat space outside the dining hall. It is going to house the Biology lab and, it is rumoured, VIM.'

For those readers who need a translation, 'VIM' was not a household cleaning product, but the nomenclature of the Sixth 'Modern' Form. In those days, and indeed for much of the history of Lincoln School on the Wragby Road site, there were two Sixth Forms; Modern and Classics. The Modern Form was for those pupils studying the sciences. Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics, and the Classics Form was for those studying the Classics (Latin, Greek and Ancient History), Modern Languages (French and Spanish), History, Geography and English. It was customary for most pupils to study for three 'A' levels, and for some to take the 'S' (Scholarship) level papers.

Headmaster Franklin's report to the Governors on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1956 included a reference to the temporary building which had been finished in time for the start of the academic year. He informed them that it would provide "...very essential accommodation for Biology, together with a large store for apparatus and a room for

Sixth Form study.” He also reported that there was still a need for up-to-date Science lab accommodation, and more adequate classroom space.

Pupils at the school during the 1950s, and certainly those in VIM, felt that those in the Classics branch of the Sixth Form were the favoured ones. This was partly due to the fact that, as a traditional grammar school, the most able pupils were encouraged (perhaps even expected) to study Latin, Greek and Ancient history as a preparation for furthering their studies at the ancient universities. They were also favoured in a more mundane fashion having been allocated a smart, roomy and well-furnished room, complete with individual bureaux in place of desks or tables, which was regarded as their home. This was located on the first floor of the main building above the west end of the cloisters (currently a History room), and overlooking the front lawns and Wragby Road. Hitherto, the VIM Form Room had been located at the end of the corridor housing the Physics and Chemistry laboratories, but that room was required to accommodate an additional ‘Remove’ (Fifth) Form classroom, in view of rising pupil numbers.

The rumour in *The Lincolnian* editorial turned out to be accurate, as confirmed by the Head’s report to the Governors, and from the arrival of the Biology Hut, those unfortunate ‘second-hand’ citizens were destined to share their social space with the intrusive activities of a working laboratory. As a ‘privileged’ member of the Classic Form at that time, I do not ever recall visiting that ‘temporary’ building, so there may be some inaccuracies in my story. If so, I would be delighted to hear from any former pupils who can correct any misapprehensions and/or provide further detail.

As with so many ‘temporary’ buildings, the Biology Hut served Lincoln School, and indeed Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School (LCHS), for many years beyond its planned lifetime, and came to be associated with the name of the legendary Biology master, My Herbert Ivan Sexton, who had been appointed to the staff of the School in 1964 to teach Biology and General Science.

Our records show that Ivan Sexton (he was known by his second name) was born in 1930, He attended King’s School, Grantham and Stamford School as a pupil, and went on to read Botany and Zoology at Durham University. He graduated with a BSc degree in 1953, and completed his Teaching Diploma at the Department of Education in Durham the following year. Lincoln School was his first appointment, and he retired from Lincoln Christ’s Hospital School in the late 1980s. He was originally appointed as a probationary house master, for which he was given a termly allowance of £10 as a supplement to his salary.

One interesting story about the hut during the later stages of its life at LCHS was related to me by Mr Simon Button, who has been a laboratory technician at LCHS for many years. He told me that the store room, referred to above, contained all manner of exotic resources required for biological study, and many of those, including body parts such as hearts and lungs, were kept in refrigerators. One summer holiday there

was an extended power cut, and staff returned to face the highly pungent smells of decaying flesh! Clearing up the mess would not have been an enviable task!

My story ends with the demise of the Biology Hut which, despite its 'temporary' and unglamorous lifetime, had served both Lincoln School and LCHS with distinction for many years beyond its life expectation! Below, Ivan Sexton, no doubt with mixed feelings, and surrounded by the debris of what had been his working environment for some thirty-five years, is forcing a quizzical smile which perhaps concealed his true feelings. There is some doubt about the date of the demolition, but my informants believe that the event took place during the early 1990s, which suggests that Ivan returned to the School after his retirement to participate in its ceremonial destruction. His dog appears to be utterly bored by the occasion!



**Acknowledgement**

My thanks to Jackie McDowell, a former laboratory assistant at LCHS, for kindly providing additional information about the dates of Ivan Sexton's retirement and the demise of his Biology Hut.

**Peter Harrod**

**Archivist for the post-1974 archives at LCHS**