



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

Telephone: Private (Neills) : Leiston 40

7th Nov. 53

Directors :
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

Dear Shaw,

Sorry to be so long. I simply couldn't think of any funny inscription. Such must come spontaneously, and after my birthday celebrations I feel empty.

So you'll just have to lump it, me lad.

Looking forward to your visit...I'll make you talk of your work for a change; I'm sick of talking about mine...guess you are too in yr place.

All the best,

Neill



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

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15 4 54

Directors :
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

Spring cleaning, bonfire of papers, snatch from fire burning letter to "My Dear Shaw". Had wondered why you didn't reply to my witty letter re writing something funny in the book. Put it down to old age. Anyway, I wrote the damn thing even if you never saw it.

Just back from a co-ed conference at which Lyward was the honoured guest. I had to fight him all the way; didn't understand a thing he said, all mysticism and to me just damn all. A teacher asked him how he'd give sex instruction. "The poetic way. I'd talk about the sword that required a sheath." The majority was on his side...Bedales, Barnes of Wennington Hall, St George's, Harpenden, all the religious character-moulders. Lyward claims 100% cures. Dunno how he does it with what he calls his stern love. This all off the record of course. I rather liked the guy all the same. No one in the conference got down to brass tacks at all. I tried my damndest but no reaction but awkward silence.

Do you know anything about Lyward's methods? He says he only met you once for 5 minutes. Struck me as being a self-contained lad with his own set views...like the rest of us, but this semi-religious, semi-moral attitude makes me so tired. I'm sure he tells his boys that masturbation isn't wrong...but not good to do. He was silent on my plea for the superseding of masturbation by adolescent Beischlaf.

Yours,

Neill



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7 8 54

Directors :
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

Dear Both,

Your place gave me a pain in the neck, but an X Ray showed no broken bones. Hence I have instructed my solicitor to demand only £1000 compensation. I enjoyed the visit, thanks to both of you. Off the record I'm glad we went to Tenterden, for the difference of Stimsung in the two places was remarkable. Your lot are free; L's lot are Stonised...but the odd thing is that both methods seem to get results. It was nice to get so warm a welcome from the Lywards.

What about a return visit, both of you? Next term? Give me notice so that I can tell the pupils they mustn't swear in front of distinguished visitors.

All the best and many thanks for a most pleasant stay.

Yours,

Neill



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

Telephone: Private (Neills) : Leiston 40

7 Dec. 55

Directors :
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

Ta for the enlightenment. Yr own Magistrate article is fine. One sane island in a sea of Blimps.

Just had to get rid of two bad problem boys of 10 and 11. I can't deal with em these days. Every kid in the school incensed at having every bloody penny stolen from locked tuckboxes, and when they began to pinch from shops and the cops were out for them I got rid of em. The younger was sent back to the donor...Margaret Lowenfeld. How you can go on all these years without getting sick of sick boys I dunno. Easier for you maybe living apart from em.

Glad to see you anytime. I'll possibly be here all the vac from 19 Dec to 19 Jan.

What a hell of a time I have getting teachers. If it goes on the school will have to close up. And I ain't got no dough to retire on.

The best to self and the wife,

Neill



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Telephone: Leiston 40

3 7 56

Directors:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

What do you make of Lyward? He is being hailed by so many book reviews as a wonderman. Maybe he is but neither himself at the conference two years ago nor what Burns says about him in his book is understandable by me. Obviously his ways are different from yours and mine...the Mr in book title shows that, and when we visited him remember a youth called him sir. He seems to get much success in his work but I wish I knew how. Burns takes care to point out that L doesn't believe in self-govt which would appear to be a fake and only play. Puzzles me. At the conference all the teachers who raved about him were the ones who were up again me most of the time, hence I conclude that somehow he has used their ways with a genius of his own. At the conference he evaded the sex question.

I am of course conscious of the innate rivalry that we all have but I don't think I grudge George his fine publicity; yet I suppose I have a vague feeling of what? chagrin that the reviewers who have hailed him would not hail me or you. Also years ago an unkind visitor who had just come from his place said to me that Lyward didn't like my work at all.

What do you think? Is he a public school Homer Lane? Even Homer nodded a lot; I can't imagine any Commonwealth inmate calling him Homer or bloody bastard as yours and mine have so often done. In short why successes with totally diverse methods?

My best to the family,

Neill



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

Telephone: Leiston 40

9th July, 56

Directors:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

I know how you feel about L's getting in first. To me he is not a rival for his job is curative, mine ain't now. If I could grasp his method I'd be glad to judge him fairly; he is too esoteric for me. A plain guy like Lane I could grasp but L's language (at that conference) was so vague to me that when the meeting was open after his talk I said: "I know that Lyward does a fine job, have known for years, but today I haven't understood a damned thing he said." Oddly enough the religionists at the conference, e.g. Bedales head, all went into rhapsodies about him. The Little Commonwealth was a one man show, so is S'hill, so is yr place, but I feel that others can carry on because our principles are fundamentally simple. L's is certainly a one man show which is likely to die with him unless his staff do realise how it is all done.

Sorry we are so far apart. But one day I'll phone you and say I am coming. I still recall my visit and a youth's shout: "Why the hell don't you shut the bloody door after you, Shaw?" Then that visit to L and the boy's "Sir". Nay, the system may work wonders but I feel that that sir is a gate I'd never open.

All the best to the family,

Neill

Gott, I have sleepless nights about getting staff. Simply can't get qualified teachers and any ad is answered by a crowd of neurotics who want freedom for themselves.

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Telephone: Leiston 40

21st Sept. 57

Directors:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

Dear Both,

It was good to be with you again and a little sad to leave not only a comfortable bed but a landscape of quick hill and dale to return to flat Suffolk, but I grant back to an equally comfortable bed.

I'm sending on a couple of books and a copy of Drama (if someone hasn't snaffled it) for you, Joan.

The Shakespeare, illustrated, is by John Bell, Exeter, MDCCLXXIIII, 8 volumes but No 3 missing. I guess it has no value at all. It belonged to Lord Gwydyr of whom I never heard.

The ITV thing hasn't brought me a single letter, but I never expected to get any pupils through it. It shd have shown at least some sign that kids learn. I have long ago learned that publicity doesn't mean a damn thing; it is too ephemeral.

My Scottish heart is happy because I went to a sale yesterday and for £11 got 6 armchairs, a sofa, 4 chests of drawers and a big bundle of forks and spoons. The bleeding heart will of course break when in three weeks I see the springs sticking out of the chairs.

All the best, you nice folks.

*I'm no name &
yr house.*

Hee

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

Telephone: Leiston 40

31 58

Directors:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

I am sending you a book on the Heart by my old friend the nature cure Thomson in Edinburgh. Hide it from yr orthodox man for T is a "quack." The book is to me marred by its attacks on medicine but its diet and general optimistic way of looking at the heart strike me as valuable. I've often seen bad heart cases at his Clinic improve wonderfully after three weeks or so.

All I can say is that if my own heart or liver or what not goes wrong I'll hie me to Thomson and bypass drugs and injections. I've often gone there for my kidneys.

Anyway the book won't depress you; if it doesn't buck you up I'll be surprised.

Love to Joan too.

*You must think of
T's Diet. If you want
to keep free of attacks later
cut starch & sugar &
alcohol. Eat fruit like
hell.*



SUMMERHILL SCHOOL LTD., LEISTON, SUFFOLK

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20 6 60

Directors:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

My Dear Shaw,

Alas, I shall be in Scotland by the end of July.
We close on the 25th and I set out that day by car...but of an effort to drive
1000 miles at 76.

Sad, for I'd have liked a chin wag with you.

S. Socy hasn't yet got the Charity Trust through. I wish I cd be optimistic
abt its being able to touch charity funds. I have only 33 pupils and six leave
this term; only two so far coming in. Only the wicked flourish, devils like you.
And I haven't even the consolation of hoping for a better life beyond, for I
don't believe it. Pity for it would be fine to believe that I'd meet men like
Reich and Edwin Muir and many old friends departed.

All the best,

Neill

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL, LEISTON, SUFFOLK
(Proprietors: A.S.N. Ltd.)

Telephone: Leiston 40

Principals:
A. S. NEILL
ENA NEILL

9 August 65

Replied OLS on hol. Sent letter back.
Sugg. Mulberry B.

Dear Shaw,

Do you take em as young as nine? I am too old for bad problems.
I know you want high I.Q.s and this lad seem pretty high. Let me know so
that I can reply to the mother.

Hope you are flourishing. We are full up (60% 'anks) with a long
waiting list, proving, in spite of the Bible, that the wicked do flourish.
As for a sinner like you.....well, you'll get your reward later on!

Yours,

Neill