When Belmont closed in 1972 it came as a shock to many. It was partly a failure to adapt to changing times but in a privately owned school inevitably there had been a lack of investment in the building and in the end it came down to money. The old building was seriously in need of re-roofing, plumbing and wiring and ‘Nilla Burr and Christopher Barlow were both reaching retirement age. After one or two attempts to sell the estate as a school, they gave up. Like so many prep schools along the south coast, Belmont became just a memory. The estate was sold and the main building demolished. So if you see elderly, middle-aged gentlemen pottering about aimlessly in the region of Clayton Wickham, be gentle with them. They are probably former Belmont boys reliving some memories.

To purchase Belmont Hall history (020 8872 8522 (office), 020 8423 9560 (home).

Enjoying music and the grounds
Under Christopher Barlow, the music at Belmont flourished and the choir was invited to sing at several cathedrals. For many years the popularity of the Carol Service was such that a second service was held in St George’s, Hurstpierpoint. The grounds at Belmont were a delight for small boys and they were endlessly inventive in their appreciation of them. A spring near the chapel...