

MAKING STUFF AT BEDALES

Nick Wates (1964-69)

My mother Joanna Wates died in 2022 and my three Old Bedalian siblings (**Oliver, 1966-71; Jeremy, 1969-74; Roz, 1972-77**) and I had the joyous task of sorting out all the stuff she had accumulated living for 50 years in the same family home in Cumbria.

It was intriguing to discover a large number of items made by me at Bedales School, almost all of which were still in use.

As a contribution to debate about the value of the School, here are some recent photos of things I made there in the 1960s. They are not particularly special in terms of design or quality, although some are not bad. The point is that they were made by a teenager both in timetabled classes and during free time.

In those days premises in the School grounds were mostly left unlocked. I remember getting up at 6am on a Saturday morning, walking through an apple orchard to a historic timbered barn and weaving on a loom until it was time for breakfast. After breakfast I headed to a well-equipped workshop where I spent most of the day making stuff out of wood and metal. Privileged indeed.

Huge thanks to inspiring Bedales staff in the 1960s including **David Butcher (staff, 1963-92)**, **Bif Barker (staff, 1922-26; 1930-64)** and **Cor (Biddy Cormack, staff, 1929-71)**. Thanks also to fellow pupils **Tim Laughlin (1964-69)** and **Hugh Routh (1955-69)** for helpful advice.

Do you have stuff you made at Bedales still in use? If so, please send photos and brief descriptions to: alumni@bedales.org.uk and/or nick@nickwates.co.uk 📧



Belt, copper



Turned bowl, walnut



Glazed china bowl



Bowl, beaten copper



Acoustic guitar (prototype for ones made later with students in Africa)



Electric guitar (seen played by author at school dance)



Bracelet, copper



Brooch, copper with pin fixing



Turned eggcup, walnut



Workbench



Chair, walnut



Dressing table, mahogany



Stereo cabinet and speakers, oak



Table, mahogany, with inlaid chess board



Woven tablecloth

