

End of a long career

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AT THE recent end of term assembly at the Downs School, Compton, pupils and staff gathered to say goodbye to seven members of staff who were leaving the school.

Headmaster Mr Graham Taylor told pupils that Mr Bill Evans, the only remaining founder member of staff, was retiring after 28 years at the school. Mr Evans began his career in the same catchment area nearly 40 years ago when he took up a post at Hermitage School, running the handicraft centre. In those days the village schools took pupils up to the school-leaving age and children from surrounding villages were brought to the centre each week to learn craft subjects from Mr Evans.

When in 1960 the centre at Hermitage was closed and the Downs School opened to take senior pupils from the downland village schools, Mr Evans moved there and has remained ever since.

In the early days he taught games and mathematics in addition to craft subjects but later, when the Downs School became com-

prehensive, he found himself in the position of head of the newly-formed faculty of creative and practical arts. Some of his first pupils must now be in their fifties, and he has certainly taught many of the parents of present pupils.

Throughout his long career Mr Evans has always enjoyed teaching, and does so to this day — his only regret being that the new computer-aided design courses have arrived too late in his career for him fully to accept the technological challenge.

His career has spanned several major changes in education: the introduction of separate secondary schools, the CSE examinations system, the comprehensive school system and finally the new GCSE examinations which have provided a fresh challenge in the past two years.

Speaking about his time at the school, Mr Evans said that he has always enjoyed his work and despite many changes in the school, the happy atmosphere has always remained. Although he will be sorry to leave his many friends at school, Mr

Evans does not plan to stay idle during his retirement, as his hobbies, which include archery, bowls and wood-carving, will keep him busy.

Mr Taylor said that words could not describe the full contribution he has made to the life of the school, having been involved in practical tasks like the construction of the pool and the barn, and as careers master establishing early links with industry. On behalf of staff and pupils he wished him well in his retirement.

Other staff leaving included Mrs Carol Clay, who as teacher of English for the past 17 years has helped a large number of pupils with her quiet patience, and Mrs Jenny McNeil, who has contributed for 16 years to the science and PE Department and who presented the school with a challenge shield, to be awarded for badminton.

Mrs Pauline Mordue, Mr Steve Poole, Mrs Sue Croft and Miss Julie Sunter were also thanked warmly for their contributions to the school and wished well in the future.



Mr Graham Taylor (centre left) bids farewell to Mr Bill Evans (centre right).