

Phil enjoys degree success at age of 70

# It's never too late to learn

ALVINGHAM Mill owner Phil Davies has gained a fine arts degree at the age of 70 and sold one of the sculptures in his degree show for £500.

He has achieved his late-blooming academic success as a one-day-a-week student at the Hallam University, Sheffield, to which he has driven each Monday for the last five years.

When he started at the age of 63, he was unimpressed by the thought that he would be 70 when he finished, said his wife Ann, who told the media about his achievement.

"He's too modest to say anything but I am very proud of him," she said. He had fitted his homework into all his activities for the village and its millennium committee, including writing a 24,000 word history of Alvingham and North Cockerington and keeping the local press up-to-date with village news, she said.

Of his graduation ceremony she said, "There he was with 30 young ones. He looked like the professor."

Phil missed out on university

when he was of normal student age. He trained as an engineer with his employers and at night classes.

"But I have always worked with graduates and felt that one day I would like to try for a degree if ever I had an opportunity," he said.

He had to wait until his sixties for that chance. He completed a foundation course at Getisby College before being accepted by Hallam.

At first he had three fellow students from this area to share driving but they dropped out in turn for various reasons, leaving Phil on his own. "The driving was a bit of a hind," he said.

But although he was the only one on his course in which he specialised in sculpture, he was accepted by the young students, he said. "They just treated me as one of them. It was gratifying and rejuvenating," he said.

Phil's engineering experience helped him when making his own sculptures and he revelled in Hallam's facilities for working in all sorts of materials.

One of his sculptures attracted more attention than he expected when it was shown in

the degree exhibition. He said it originally he intended it to express his feelings about the media reaction to the Paddington rail crash. He was struck by how much publicity was given to rail deaths, averaging five a year, and how little to 3,800 road deaths a year.

The completed piece involved 3,800 pieces of colour-coded telephone cable and willow logs. "The original inspiration was no longer apparent," he said.

He was amazed when a local businessman rang wanting to buy it. Taken aback by such an unforeseen idea, the sculptor put him off, but the would-be buyer, who has his own computer software business, rang him every day for a week.

Finally Phil realised he had to give in. "I had no idea what to ask for it, £5 or £1,000. So off the top of my head I said £500 and he accepted."

The work is now hanging on a wall in the owner's fashionable flat in a converted warehouse on Victoria Quay and may be about to move with him to Paris.



Phil Davies - a graduate at 70.

## Antique clocks go in raid

TWO antique clocks, valued at nearly £5,000, have been stolen from a Louth house with other property.

The burglary was made known as police warned of a spate of early evening burglaries. They repeated their plea to householders to fit timers which will switch their lights on if they are out when darkness falls.

Two video recorders and a camcorder were stolen with the two mantle clocks from a house in High Holme Road, bringing the value of the haul to £6,500.

The clocks, which have ornate casings including gold and painted panels, are French and date from 1875-90. One is valued at £3,500 and the other at £1,500.

The camcorder, a JVC digital video camera, has a model number DVL 9300 and is valued at £990.

The video recorders are a Toshiba V255R, valued at £250, and a Panasonic NVF7610 valued at £200.

Anyone with information about the property or the burglary, which took place overnight between Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, can contact Louth police on 604744.

## Parked car vandalised

THE front grille was pulled off a car in Park Avenue, Louth, last week. The damage, inflicted overnight between Wednesday