



Newsletter

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Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of the Newsletter. The organ for all ex-Craft, Central, Technical and post-amalgamation Old Boys.

Editorial

A Very Happy New Year to all our members!

Are you a 'glass half full' chap or a 'glass half empty' type? Those of the former persuasion will probably not quibble with the title of this Newsletter: 'Spring 2014'; while those of the latter will probably emit a sound vaguely resembling, 'Ugh!' As I write this at the beginning of January gales are sweeping in from the Western Approaches, a succession of Severn bores is advancing menacingly up the Bristol Channel, rain is lashing mercilessly against the windows in a manner befitting of any Gothic novel worth its salt, and, to cap it all, there has been a landslip near Stonehouse preventing the faithful old 125s from threading their way through the Golden Valley.

Of course, one reason for calling this the 'Spring' Newsletter is that schools begin their 'Spring Term' in January. Many of us might have thought that something of a misnomer as we shivered during a P.E. lesson on a freezing Monday morning, perhaps looking forward to the comforting warmth of Gus's metalwork shop with the forge blazing away; warming our hands near the gluepot in Messrs. White and Marchant's woodwork shops or even enjoying a pre-school warm-up in Jack Reynolds' boiler house where the glow of the furnace and the smell of the coke thawed out frozen limbs after the journey to school by bus, bike or Shanks's pony.

Whatever the weather throws at us over the coming year there is much to look forward to. The Winter Olympics in February; the World Cup in June and July; for those with political interests, the European Elections in May, the Scottish Independence Referendum in September and, on a more sombre note, the commemoration in August of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Annual Dinner 2013

Report by David Boulton

The 2013 Annual Dinner was held on Friday 6th September at the Whitminster Inn. This was a break

from the tradition of holding the Dinner in November and was well attended with 63 diners; if the 15 apologies had attended we would have equalled those at the 2012 Dinner.

The usual excellent meal was followed by our President, Keith Urch, proposing 'the Loyal Toast'. We were again very pleased to welcome Dr. Stuart Wilson who updated us on Marling activities. He included details of a visit by the bomb disposal squad to destroy a grenade found in the canal which is being renovated. A hole was made in the playing fields and, under directions, Stuart detonated the explosives. *(There is no truth in the rumour that the grenade had been clandestinely manufactured in Gus's metalwork shop, circa 1965, by Reggie Price and other unknown co-conspirators in a desperate effort to get out of games. Neither can it be verified that the grenade was, in fact, one of Horace Waldron's 'joke' cricket balls. Ed.)*

The absence of a guest speaker generally met with approval and I requested the attendees to observe 'The Association' toast'.

An amazing £320 was realised from the raffle sales with Martyn Young leading the sellers. I forgot the raffle numbers so the draw was simplified to each winner having the prize in order instead of lucky dip from a bag. We are indebted to Richard Wheeler, as Keystone Joinery, for sponsorship.

Thanks to £52 of donations, an overall profit of £320.57 was realised.

2014 Annual Dinner

The 2014 Annual Dinner has been fixed for 3rd October. Full details will be published later in the year but we hope that the slightly later date will encourage more to attend.

Diary Dates

The Association Annual General Meeting will be held on 6th October 2014 at 7:30pm in Marling Staff Room. All members are welcome to attend.

Sid Brews' Trophy

John Giles writes:-

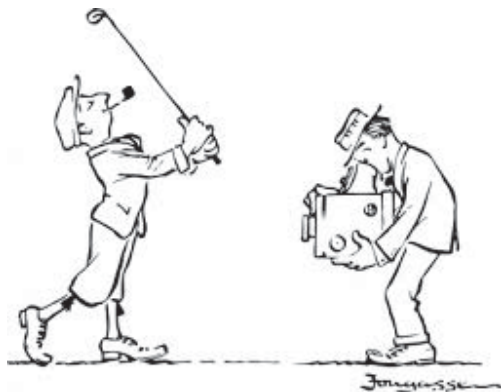
The Old Boys' Golf Competition has been arranged for Sunday 18th May 2014 at 10.00 on Minchinhampton

Old Course. We would be pleased to see some new faces as well as the regulars!

Results of the 2013 Trophy are as follows:-

1. R. Fellows
2. T. Knight
3. G. Clark

Congratulations to them and thanks to all who took part.



Members' Memories

A recent request for news items has turned out to be successful with a number of items being submitted, some of which are reproduced here. We will endeavour to include them all over the coming year.

David Boulton writes:-

'Edwin Benton was struggling with his memory and I asked our Internet members for assistance.

Now that the Cricket Season has commenced Edwin's thoughts went back to playing in the School Junior Cricket team between 1953 and 1955 and he remembered playing away matches at Wotton under Edge, Dursley and Kings School at Gloucester but cannot remember how we travelled to these away games. The only game I can remember the transport arrangement was to Brimscombe, which we played on a Wednesday afternoon and we caught the Stonehouse to Chalford service bus which stopped at Downfield. The cricket match was played on Brimscombe Football ground and it probably was the worst playing pitch in the area!'

Tony Andrews emailed:

'As to the away cricket matches, all were by coach: firstly with Lock's of Eastington and then Hands of Horsley. Bookings made for the complete season.'

& Chris Blick emails:

'I think that you will find that the two local bus companies competed to provide transport for the Downfield Schools and these were the Red and White Bus Company operating out of their Depot at Dudbridge

(now the site of Sainsbury's Supermarket) and the Western National Omnibus Company from London Road Depot at Stroud, now Waitrose Supermarket. There must be a story here about supermarkets but I will leave that for another day! It was later in the 1950s that W. E. Beavis commenced operating from Bussage Garage and entered the "school work zone".'

Then Roy Perrins followed up:

'But first you had to get to the school which, for me, meant a 3 mile bike ride from Painswick.

I seem to have been forgetful even then as several times, although I knew I was playing, I forgot the time so cycled to school early in the morning and with my trusty penknife slid the front door lock across!! ran down the corridor to the team selection board and out again...

Sometimes it meant cycling home and coming back in the afternoon, Silly me.

At 75 I'm glad to get that confession out at last!'

Long Service

In February 2012, Brian Stevens (51-56) of Eastington celebrated 50 years of refereeing. The 73-year-old took out his whistle for the 2,921st time to take charge at Charfield for a Stroud League match. An expert School marble playing champion, Brian was forced to cease playing football in 1963 after sustaining two fractured cheek bones in one season and took up his refereeing career. He progressed quickly and made his League bow in 1970 as a linesman for the Preston versus Halifax clash before moving up to become a referee. Brian never forgot his roots and could be refereeing Liverpool on Saturday and a local youth match the following day. He has lead International matches at home and abroad but the FA Cup Final eluded him.

From Len Gaston in New Zealand:

Some of you may be wondering how the New Zealanders have been coping after the severe earthquakes. Fortunately this year we have not suffered a lot with them, just the odd rattle to remind us that they are still about. They have suffered a lot in the north of the south Island at a place called Seddon which some of you may know as the Blenheim area and they have been rattling away up there all year but damage has been slight. In the Christchurch area the situation now is repairs, the biggest of which is the infrastructure. It is very uncomfortable to drive around as you have to combat potholes, road closures, and machinery. The contractors are busy digging the roads up to mend sewers, waste water systems and every thing else that travels under ground for our convenience. A bit funny that as some of it has come from our convenience!!! This is a very costly exercise and is unlikely to be finished in the next three years or more. You can travel in the car from point 'A' to point 'B' but it doesn't mean that you can come back the same way. Doesn't do your shock absorbers any good either. Saw a machine working a month or so ago which actually drilled a trench under the ground to the size of pipe required and

then when the length was achieved the pipe was attached to the drill bit and pulled back through the hole it had dug. Evidence is now being seen of survival down in the city itself as the adventurous are starting to rebuild and there are so many open spaces down there now we have a job to know what was there. We have a prominent Labour M.P. who resigned her Parliamentary seat to become Mayor of Christchurch and I am wondering how she will get on with the National M.P. who is in charge of the Christchurch rebuild.

We are very settled in our new house, been in it two years now and the village has grown considerably and is yet to get even bigger, I hope I can hang on long enough to enjoy the facilities that are coming. I must be one of the oldest Old Boys now.

Summer is now upon us and we hope that we had suitable barbecue weather for the Christmas period, no doubt some of you hoped for the white stuff. But whatever we got lets hope we all had a good time. Best wishes to you all from Steve and me, Len.

Bob Young emails: I do not have any real “news”, but do offer my comments about the last dinner:

After an absence of some 40 years this year I attended only my second Old Boys’ Dinner. One every 20 years is pretty poor form I know, but my excuse is that, living and working in Australia for 35 years, it is hard to get back to the UK.

Well, I have now retired and my wife and I are spending much more time in the UK, having just purchased a ‘lock up and leave’ apartment in Tetbury. So this year I attended the reunion and was expecting to know very few people, but much to my surprise and pleasure no less than seven class mates attended. It was so interesting trying to recognize the faces and correctly put names to them. I believe I did quite well picking six without too much trouble. My only failure was not really my fault as Colin Pates was always several inches taller than most of the kids in the form, but as he told me later “you all kept growing, I didn’t”. So I am now slightly taller than Colin, a surprise for me.

We all but one shared the same table and I listened with interest to the tales of life after school. Travels, work, families, sport interests, just about every subject was covered. Not surprisingly for “baby boomers” we all appear to be happily planning for our retirement and I was pleased to learn of Michael Moore’s cruise around the world on the Queen Mary in 2015. Others have a passion for keeping fit and cycle at every opportunity.

Drew Buck had some wonderful tales to tell of his adventures cycling in Europe on a 100 year old single gear bicycle and his adventure in Australia’s outback. Bruce Hendrie, on the other, hand is still a very good athlete and is rated in the top 30 veterans for running in England!

Will Nichol has a fascinating life as photographer for a regional newspaper. Colin Pates still “enjoys” working as an accountant locally. Dave Hedley is another fan of cycling and in fact cycled to the dinner from Cheltenham!

Apart from catch up time we all had memories of school times and pranks and could have spent longer

reminiscing, but, alas time moved on and we had to leave for home, so we agreed we would do it all again next year. God willing.

Farewell

Ellery Young (1958-61 Drake) collapsed and died in Gloucester City Centre on 27th August 2013, younger brother of Robert who also attended School.

Graham Thomas Smith (1949-54 Drake) aged 75 died 1st September 2013 at Cheltenham General Hospital suffering from prostate cancer. He leaves his wife Jennifer, a daughter, son and five grandchildren.

Robert ‘Bob’ Tiley, aged 71, died suddenly on December 6th at his home for almost 50 years at Castlemead Road, Rodborough. A valiant Parish Councillor of 30 years, he fought tirelessly to stop development of Rodborough Fields. He is survived by his sister, son, daughter and two grandchildren.

Desmond ‘Des’ Gardiner (1937-41 Drake), aged 87, died on December 8th at Gloucester Royal. A star of School football, he was encouraged by Gandhi (who fed him barley sugars when travelling to away games) and a former stalwart of Chalford cricket and football clubs. He is survived by his long time partner, Tilley Rock.

Ronald B. Ireland (1946-51 Drake) aged 79 died suddenly and unexpectedly on 18th October 2013 at Minehead. He moved to Bath to work for the MOD and retired to Minehead enjoying his passion for steam trains, becoming known as Rocket Ron. He was a well known sportsman excelling in football, rugby, cricket and golf.

Dave Elliott writes:-

‘Ron was born in Uplands in 1934. After attending Uplands Junior School he started at Stroud Boys’ Technical School in 1946 and became a member of Drake House. Ron was always a bright and attentive member of class and soon began to display his talents on the sports field as an excellent footballer and cricketer and a serious competitor on sports day. Throughout his life Ron was a great supporter of Aston Villa.

At school Ron opted to do metalwork and in the workshop, with the encouragement of Harry Throup, he started to build his first working steam loco, which he called ‘Titch’.

On leaving school in 1951 Ron started an engineering apprenticeship with T H & J Daniels of Stroud, working in various departments before finally operating a large boring machine. Not bad for an apprentice!

After National Service with the RAF Ron worked in Hereford before taking a job with the MOD in Bath. Throughout this time Ron was pursuing his passion for Steam and in 1984 applied for membership of the West Somerset Railway. So great was his enthusiasm that when he retired he moved to Minehead to be near his beloved railway. After a period working on locos as a

fireman Ron qualified as a driver and was absolutely devastated when he was forced to retire at 70. However, the rules were changed and he managed to drive on until he was 75. During this time Ron had several opportunities to drive a recently built loco called 'Tornado' which reputedly cost £3million.

Ron died suddenly and unexpectedly at his home in Minehead. On the day of his funeral West Somerset Railway laid on a special train to take Ron together with his family and friends on his last journey from Minehead to Bishops Lydeard. The chapel was packed to hear tributes from his family and the General Manager of the West Somerset Railway.

Dave Elliott '46-'51



(Editor's note – The construction of 'Tornado', the first full-size main-line steam locomotive to be built in Britain since 'Evening Star' was turned out of Swindon Works in March 1960, is an achievement of stupendous magnitude. Weighing in at 165 tons (including tender) all components (apart from the boiler) were fabricated in Britain. All the skills which were taught at the Stroud Boys' Technical School were employed, albeit on a massive scale and it is heartening to know that the ability to turn, cast, forge, weld, solder, braze, shape etc. is alive and well and happening in Britain today. What Fred Dibnah affectionately called 'Back-Street Metal Bashing' surely has a future here and we should do everything we can to ensure that young people are persuaded to study 'Proper Engineering').

For more information on Tornado:-

www.a1steam.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LNER_Peppercorn_Class_A1_60163_Tornadowww.a1steam.com

Michael Wear writes:-

The article from the 1963 School Magazine, quoted in the last newsletter, was written by one C G Levitt (Gandhi). The nickname 'Badger' was given to me when I started work; at school I was always 'Tubby' Wear. I knew Glyn Rowling, once umpired with him at Miserden, in a Slad Exiles home game. When asked which roller he wanted on the pitch, Russ Hillier replied, 'I want the umpires to walk up and down the wicket during the tea interval.'

I did not take any football programmes to Australia. I watched very little soccer in Australia but saw Everton

play on the SCG. I did get involved in helping to run an all-Pommie team in an Australian League.

I lived in the Sydney suburb of Balmain, then a bit run-down, now very posh. Balmain has its own Rugby League team, the Tigers, and I became a fan. Nowadays I am a Castleford Tigers fan, having worked in Castleford for nine years.

My family used to poke fun at my football programme collection which numbered over a thousand. I've not been to a professional football game for over 30 years. I've been to the Millennium Stadium, the New Wembley and Murrayfield, all to RL Cup Finals.

Over the years my programme collection kept growing, my great friend, the late, great, Aish Painter (1951-56, Arnold, same as me) used to send me programmes. HE travelled widely watching football until his first stroke at 38.

About ten years ago I was getting ready to retire and move, so time to clear out. Apart from Swindon Town programmes and the one from the 1966 World Cup, I got rid, sold the lot for £4,000. My daughter stopped laughing.

(We are very grateful for Michael's contribution and glad of the opportunity to right a gross calumny perpetrated by CGL. We can only conclude that he was being a VERY Naughty Boy! – Ed.)

And finally:-

Form 2 History Exam.

Instructions:

- Attempt all questions.
- Do not attempt to answer more than one question at a time.
- Do not write on both sides of the paper at the same time.
- Protractors may not be used.

Question 1: What, in your opinion, was the most significant event of the nineteenth century?

A: This was when George Stephen's sons discovered steam and invented the Rocket thus disproving the theory that Watt's pots never Boyle and starting the Industrial Revelation, the most important thing to happen in England since the Disillusion of the Monasteries. This was a Good Thing.

And Henry Ford said history was bunk.

That's all for now, chaps.

Get in touch! Stay in touch!

Chas Webb – Hon. Editor.

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