



Chairman's Notes

Roy Gittins

The columns of any O.S.A. newsletter are likely to abound with tales of past glories, or of inglorious and even embarrassing moments. We love to read about them (especially the latter!), to compare them with our own experiences, and then to comment knowingly that "It was different in my time". As we grow older, each reminiscence increases in length, decreases in credibility, and is retailed more frequently until it has achieved the well rehearsed certainty of a stage performance. I know that this does happen. I have two or three people in mind whose performances brought this aspect of human behaviour to my notice many years ago when I was still relatively young and impressionable. One of these friends was so nearly word perfect that a younger friend and I were able to mouth the words to each other as the narrative was delivered – with satisfying accuracy, in both mastery of the script and perfection of timing. More recently I am disturbed by an awareness of my own habit of producing a handful of set speeches which must have become tedious beyond bearing to the listener subjected to yet another performance.

The point of all this is that not only speech, but the written word too suffers from this 'repetitive word syndrome'. I am continually writing of the debt owed to members whose letters or telephone calls provide material for my comments on this

page – there I go, repeating myself yet again. I was quite determined not to allow this to happen, which should not have been too difficult as nobody has written to me in recent months. There must be some reason for this, but I am not inviting suggestions. Whatever the reason(s), the consequence is that I must draw from my own experiences at T.G.S. for further comment on this occasion. I apologise to all who taught at Tad. during my years for they must have heard this often.

My arrival at T.G.S. coincided with the first year of expansion into the eventual Comprehensive status of the school. There were insufficient periods of Chemistry on the timetable to occupy a new member of the department fully, and I taught a few periods of Maths to earn my keep. One of the very first forms of 'non-selective' children to enter T.G.S. and I were thus introduced to each other on the Leeds Road site under the shadow of John Smith's Brewery and I like to think that we are still on friendly terms almost fifty years later. I met one of those children (now aged 60!) recently on my last visit to the dentist in Tadcaster and she certainly showed no resentment towards her doddering old mentor – of course not, she is an ardent member of the O.S.A.

Anyway, to a Maths lesson one morning early in that autumn term. We were revising "Improper Frac-

tions" i.e. gathering the knowledge brought forward from the different Primary Schools in the area. At one point during the lesson I had written on the blackboard a number of improper fractions which were to be converted into mixed numbers by dividing the numerator (the top bit) by the denominator (the bottom bit). The first example was $8/3$, a number now etched indelibly into my memory. After allowing two or three minutes to work out the answers I pointed to the first example and was gratified to see a forest of hands straining to catch my attention – first year children are ever eager to please. Remembering one of the few useful hints to emerge from the post graduate course in Education, I invited a timid little girl who did not regularly volunteer information to provide the solution. Quite confidently she answered "FOUR sir." There was a moment of quiet disbelief followed by a great guffaw from one of the boys who had suddenly understood the reason for this gross error. "Aw sir!", he explained "She's tekken 'em away."

This is a tale I love to tell, have told frequently, and am likely to tell again in the future. There is even the possibility of my repeating it on this page with tedious, boring regularity. To prevent this unhappy prospect please send us more of your thoughts, memories and experiences. They are desperately needed.

It is nearly eighty years since I was a proud new pupil at Tadcaster G.S. and I am still proud to be an old (very old) pupil of the school. The Newsletter is always welcome, especially when fellow pupils of those far-off days are mentioned, although there are not too many of us left to mention them. Reading about the Smiths (I knew them well) in a recent edition spurred me on to share a few of my own memories. I hope they will revive the memories of some more 'oldies'.

My first journey to T.G.S. (and many later ones) was similar to a number previously described in Newsletters. From the cornfields of Ruddings Farm, Walshford, I rode on my green second-hand bike the four miles to Wetherby Railway Station. I reckon that things may have changed a bit. In 2004 they use Train stations. As I remember, the bike had cost a pound, which would be a fair price in 1927. I boarded the train and travelled to Tadcaster with my two mates, Frank Johnson and Ronny Pearson. We then made the rest of the journey on foot to the Leeds Road site in the angle with London Road. It had two imposing entrance doors, one for girls, facing the road, and one round the corner, looking over into the cattle market.

We quickly settled in, learning our way around and the names of pupils and teachers with ease – the school was much smaller and there were fewer of us in 1927. From the beginning I was known as 'Tubby' and

during my first lesson in the gym. Mr. Tunstall announced to all (including the watching Head, the Rev. Harries) that before Christmas he would have me climbing to the top of the rope. He did too! 'Tut' Tunstall was a real character! The boys went once a week on Cross Country runs, not a sport which came easily to 'Tubby'. My friend Cyril Durham and I usually walked back, accompanied by 'Tut' – on his bike.

The playing field (near to the station) was small and triangular, not big enough to play cricket or football matches. But we eventually acquired a new, more spacious one beside the Wetherby road, opposite the Bass brewery. Frank Johnson and I were privileged to play in the School team for the first match on a very rough pitch. He took a couple of wickets as our captain (Ibbotson) and his support bowlers bowled out the opposition for 47. I was behind the stumps...no byes – my size saw to that! When we batted we were doing badly in reply, at 30 for 8 wickets. Then Frank and I were able to stay together to make the required runs – in singles. The Head was pleased with us in Assembly on Monday morning.

I remember well another day on the playing field which started off unhappily when I accidentally broke the ankle of another boy in a football match during a games lesson. It was bad enough to injure a friend in this way, and my discomfort was not any easier as the injured ankle be-

longed to the son of the Deputy Head, Mr. Waring. who was watching from the touchline. To my great relief Mr. Waring did not blame me at all, and I was able to make some amends by carrying my victim to his home in Tadcaster.

Some of the teachers who taught me in 1927 were still at T.G.S. when my daughter, Susan, was a pupil during the 1950s. Mr. Tunstall retired about 1955, and Miss Watts (who took us for Nature Study walks) was still on the Staff when Susan left school. My first appearance coincided with the beginning of the Mr. Chapman era which went on into the 1960s. Long after he retired I had the privilege of meeting him again. Susan and I also had the great pleasure of sharing a table with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman at an 'Old Calcarians' luncheon shortly before he died. His memory was astonishing even in his late nineties.

I lived in and around Wetherby as schoolboy, farmer and retired (!) farmer until January 2000 when, sadly, I lost my dear wife Bessie. She was a wonderful wife and mother, and was certainly sent by God to become the loving cornerstone of our large family. For the first time ever I left Wetherby and went to live in York with Norman, my son. I have become something of a globe-trotter as we have taken holidays in Lanzarote, Madeira, and as far afield as New Zealand. Lovely places to visit, but it is lovely to be home again with my family.

REUNION 2004

Saturday, 25th September 2004 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

At The Grammar School, Toulston, Tadcaster

Bar and light refreshments

Come along and meet old friends. Let your friends know about this reunion

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Michael Orriel (T.G.S. 1954 - 1962)

I attended Tadcaster G.S. from 1954 to 1962, so I spent my first year at the old school building in Tadcaster and my second year split between Tadcaster and Toulston Lodge.

When we moved into the 'new' school it seemed fantastic compared to the old Tadcaster site. We had new laboratories, two new gymnasia, a new library, new desks, and so on. I stayed on into the Sixth form and was Head boy in my final year. I gained a place to read Mathematics at St. Peter's College, Oxford; I believe I was the first T.G.S. pupil to become an Oxbridge Mathematician, although I am sure others have followed since. I managed a second class honours degree and worked firstly as a research associate for Joseph Lucas before joining British Leyland as a computer analyst.

Having progressed through several different roles within the computer industry, I was unexpectedly made redundant in 1990. As computing seemed to have become a young persons' industry, it was time for a career change so I became a college lecturer teaching Information Technology and (yes, you guessed it) Mathematics. Three years later the college appointed me Head of I.T. and Mathematics, and I finally took early retirement in August 2001. Since then I have been working part time as a consultant to the examination board Edexcel on a government funded project called 'Basic and Key Skills Venture'. This means that I work mainly from home (isn't the Internet wonderful!) with monthly visits to Edexcel's London headquarters. My main hobby is competitive bridge; I am a life master and have represented Worcestershire in nu-

merous events over the last 30 years, being county captain from 1977 to 1989 and winning the county championship on eight occasions. I am married and have one son, Lloyd, aged 13. Although we visit Yorkshire regularly (my brother lives near Leeds), I have not managed to contact any fellow pupils from my era, but I would be pleased to hear from anyone who remembers me.

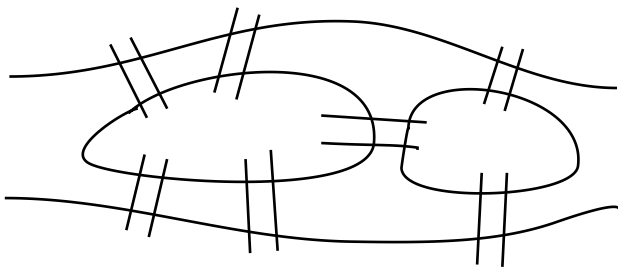
Michael's address:
32, Lakeside Drive
Shirley
SOLIHULL
West Midlands
B90 4SX

e-mail address -
orriel@madasafish.com

Tel. 0121 7449651

The Koenigsberg Problem

Gerry Nutton



The problem, represented in the above diagram, concerns the university town of Koenigsberg (later renamed Kaliningrad and now a small Baltic exclave of Russia, though at one time seat of the Prussian dukes) which stands on the river Pregolya. In the river are two islands joined to the river banks by six bridges; a seventh bridge joins the two islands. It was a tradition for students at the university to see if they could devise a route around the town which involved crossing each bridge once and only once. Can you solve the problem?

Only three people contacted me about this problem; two of them to tell me that it could not be done but didn't explain why. The third person, my former Maths department colleague, Pat Andrews (Teasdale), had clearly recognised the problem as one which appeared in the School Mathematics Project texts which we used in the seventies. Pat, as I would have expected, gave a thorough explanation of the problem.

In fact it is not possible to provide a route which crosses each bridge once and only once. So why should I set a problem which can't be done? I hope you will agree that it is not sufficient for anyone to say "I can't do this problem therefore it cannot be done". We need to demonstrate clearly that it cannot be done. Fortunately the work was done for us a couple of hundred years ago by the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler. The school text book said that he was a professor at Koenigsberg though I can't find confirmation of this. He did however hold the chairs in mathematics at St. Petersburg and Moscow and so might well have visited Koenigsberg. He is said to have demonstrated, without expending so much as a fibre of shoe leather, that there was no such route around the town. His explanation was as follows on page four - more or less!

