



Tadcaster Grammar School Old Students' Association

NEWSLETTER

For former students and staff

Number 29- June 2006



Chairman, Roy Gittins writes

There have been occasional suggestions that members would welcome news of 'T.G.S. Today' as a break from the memories of the past which regularly feature in this Newsletter. I am grateful to my old friend Oliver Simon for reminding me (again!) of this

suggestion and to another old friend, Chris Key, for outlining some of the innovations seen at T.G.S. in the past ten to a dozen years. Those who remember Chris as a young P.E. master from 1968 may not know that later he became Head of that department, switching to Remedial teaching before advancing years could render life in the gym. and on football pitches too demanding. He retired last year having been an Assistant Head Teacher at T.G.S. for the previous four years.

When I have visited the site it seems to have been years since there was not some area cordoned off to separate pupils and staff from the latest building site.

As one enters the site by the main gate on the Bramham road and passes by Toulston Lodge, the Sixth Form building to the right has now been extended. Sixth formers now have a 'Study area' in addition to their Common Room to which they have retired usually to gossip during the past 35 years. They now have a quiet place to work individually in an area well equipped with computerware. This extension has also provided some additional classroom space.

From Hall 1 the view past the Boys' Gym towards what was the football pitch and the cricket square has been completely obscured by the building of a new Science block which joins up with the existing laboratories to the

west i.e. to the right with the running track beyond. Again the generous provision of computers is a feature.

At the other side of the campus, on the playing field side of the buildings by the Girls' Gym, a new Library has been erected in an area known as the New Independent Learning Centre, while the corridor from the foyer (always referred to as 'the purple corridor' by Mr. Bicknell) now is the entrance to the 'Business and Enterprise Area' with an impressive Reception unit half way down the corridor. The School now enjoys the Special School status that was introduced about four years ago and is known as a Business and Enterprise College.

I understand that the next big venture may be the provision of a Sports Hall - which reminds me of the floodlit AstroTurf pitch which was purchased some ten years ago and which by now is well known to visitors to the school. This is a well-used facility, not only in school-time, but during evenings and weekends on hire to local clubs. I gather that Hockey is now a boys' game!*

I feel that a map would have been useful as a visual aid of the ancient variety, and I apologise if my entirely verbal descriptions have caused confusion. In that event - blame Oliver Simon! I must add that I apologise too for any inaccuracies which may have crept into the above. I cannot lay the blame at Oliver Simon's door, or that of Chris Key. Sadly it has to be my own careless reporting.

* There is the report of a young boy (many years ago) who took home an exam paper to show the family the new Multiple Choice section, which included the question - "Which of the following does not belong to this group (a) soccer (b) cricket (c) hockey (d) snooker?"

Dad said "Snooker. It's an indoor game." Mum said, "Cricket. The object of the others is to hit a ball into a net." Uncle Fred said "Soccer. You kick the ball rather than strike it with a wooden instrument"

The boy had chosen hockey as it was a girls' game.

Wine & Cheese Evening - Saturday, 15th. July
Toulston Lodge Hall from 7 p.m.

Spend a pleasant Summer's evening with old friends in the peaceful surroundings of Toulston. More details on page 2.

We're on the World Wide Web

Visit our new website at
www.tadcastergsosa.org.uk

I had a late placement at T.G.S., arriving two weeks into the new term – stary eyed and bushy tailed. But this delay of two weeks made such a difference. Everyone around me was already familiar with the routine – different rooms with different teachers for each subject, which regularly found me at the office seeking directions and then creeping in late. With a class well in excess of thirty there was little time for backtracking just for me and I struggled to grasp the basics I had missed, especially in such totally new subjects as Algebra and Latin. All too quickly I was running just to stand still.

The following year the whole school was housed in the new site at Toulston. We in the second year were now streamed and I was placed in 3C where I made some really good friends and enjoyed school – even the dinners. I had favourite subjects and teachers, which usually went hand in hand. But other subjects were a blur and I hoped I could survive each period without much input as invariably I was lost. In later years, when choices had to be made, some of my favourite subjects had to be given up and although school was fun, lessons rather got in the way! I can relate to the article by Louise Smith in the March Newsletter – life was good. I was a free spirit and I never got a detention and was never given lines. I did learn a huge amount but ran the gauntlet on more than one occasion.

In our form there was a group of six girls:- Beryl Thompson, Diana Townsend, Susan Jackson, Pat Bailes, Elaine Cooper and myself. Their photos were printed under 'Lost and Found' in issue No.16. We hung around together in varying degrees of friendship and rivalry and it was decided to play truant. Not all managed it, but three of us

did and we got away with it. So we pushed our luck, earning a few 'bob' waitressing in Wetherby until, on the fourth day, we were caught, plates in hand, by the 'kiddy-catcher'.

We were 'sentenced' to spend two Saturday mornings in school and having served the first punishment, probably causing much inconvenience to the supervising teacher, we were let off the second Saturday.

I rumbled on until we were in the summer of the year before we were due to take the "O" level examinations. At this point Mr. Bicknell called my parents into school and suggested that my place "...could be better taken by someone who wished to learn". So I left school at 15 with no academic qualifications, but other things I had learned. I took up an apprenticeship in Hairdressing, which gave me great satisfaction and in which I believe I excelled – though I still occasionally played truant from College! In addition to Hairdressing I had various 'careers' e.g. running a smallholding, Nursing, indeed anything to fit around family commitments until I could partner my husband, Wilson, in two very successful businesses. He had trained as a Signwriter and we set up our own Signwriting business, after which we opened an Art Gallery in Knaresborough in which we also retailed Art materials until our retirement in 2000. Obviously I have never been an academic and today I am still not computer-literate (by choice) but – I *can* ride a horse and milk a goat! Life has taught me so much more and I have travelled the world, the best education, alongside my wonderful husband of thirty years - another former T.G.S. pupil. But that's another story.

Wine & Cheese Evening Saturday, 15th July 2006 in Toulston Lodge Hall from 7 p.m.

Toulston provides the most pleasant surroundings for an event such as this. If the weather is fine you can sit outside with your friends: it really is a very different place out of school hours. So why not come along, meet old friends, renew acquaintances over a glass of wine. Tickets will be available on arrival for the modest sum of £5.

Spouses, partners and friends are all welcome.

One important point, though: if you intend to come, please let us know in advance if you possibly can, by any of the means given below, so that we have some idea of the number to cater for.

Please bring this event to the notice of your friends who may not receive this newsletter.

e-mail us at info@tadcastergsosa.org.uk,
drop a line to Roy whose address is at the foot of page 4
or telephone Gerry on 01937 832167.

Snake - Sixties Revolution at T.G.S.

- David Stainthorpe (1963 - 1968)

After reading the reminiscences of other former (mainly academic) pupils of Tadcaster Grammar School, I decided it was time to put my own memories on record

I regard my time at TGS to be an important time in my social life. Sure, I learnt things at school which have helped my course through life but I regard my social experiences and the lifelong friends that I made at school to be more important.

One of the events which had an immense effect on life at TGS was the SNAKE Revolution of 1966. I doubt that many readers will recall it because it was very quickly overpowered by Mr Bicknell et al and normal school life resumed. Rest assured though, it was an important event in the history of TGS.

I was inspired by the events which were taking place elsewhere in the world at the time; Paris student riots, Kent State University, anti-Vietnam protests, etc; and together with a number of friends we set about to try to change things closer to home at TGS.

You will recall that in the 60's there were many rules and regulations which today seem absurd, at the time they were infuriating!

There were segregated recreation areas to keep boys away from girls (it took me years to acquire the social skills to chat-up girls !)

Boys had to wear caps and girls had to wear berets, even in the sixth form. Prefects ensured that you still had them on even after you got off the bus at the end of the school day.

Prefects ! The prefect system was considered by us to be so elitist it was unfair. If you had the wrong background it was very unusual for you to become a prefect.

Fund-raising was directed towards the provision of a Cricket Pavilion for a minority: we wanted a swimming pool to be enjoyed by the majority.

We decided that it had to be a non-violent protest and purely driven to attract the attention of other students to the fact it was time for change. Posters and statements were placed on notice-boards - without permission of course - and these posters were replaced as fast as the dastardly prefects removed them. We had decided on the name "SNAKE" because no matter how many times our efforts were put down, we would always rise up again!

Our cause was gaining support and notoriety and fellow students were talking about our purpose and aims, but, after a very short period of a few days, we were rounded up and summoned to Mr Bicknell's office. As far as I can remember, there were around twelve of us, lined up as

if on parade. Mr Bicknell and Mr Beadleston (I think that was his name) the 'truant officer', proceeded to record our names for further action to be taken. Peter Watson, Philip Robinson, Martin Potts were amongst the group.

At this point I realised that I was in real trouble! I had persuaded my Dad that it would be a really good idea to purchase a duplicating machine which would be really useful in the grocery business in Thorner. He would be able to produce offer sheets and flyers at low cost to promote the business. He had no idea that my ulterior motive was that it was part of my plans to print propaganda as part of our campaign. Never mind the reprimand at school, far worse was to come from my parents!

Mr Beadleston duly visited all of our parents and informed them of the events that had taken place. We decided that it was time to disband and hoped that our efforts had not been wasted. As the ringleader, my punishment was that I had to stand outside Mr Bicknell's office for every break for the rest of the term. This actually resulted in my having the time to read 'Lord of the Rings' for the first time. I actually enjoyed my punishment !

A few weeks after our efforts, during the 'O' Level exams, I was returning home to Thorner with a friend after a morning exam (in those days you walked to Bramham or cycled). I was waiting at the Tenter Hill bus stop and a car stopped. The lady driver asked where we were heading and did we need a lift. Nothing unusual in those days - we were wearing school uniform and there were no fears of abduction, child molesting, kidnap, etc. In the car, she introduced herself as a TGS governor and that she was returning home after attending an extraordinary governors' meeting. My ears pricked up! She went on to say that the meeting had been called to discuss the actions of some students who had been protesting about a number of things. I could not believe my ears when she said that she agreed with most of the requests and that they deserved serious consideration. I dared not reveal my identity, I was far too shy in those days.

A few weeks later, my time at TGS came to an end and I did not return until my elder son, Paul attended TGS. I like to think that our small group of student activists was instrumental in changing some of the archaic rules and outdated systems at TGS.

Nowadays, I have established a very successful business in Tadcaster, Cyclesense, which employs Sue and my two sons, Paul & John and we still live in Thorner. If anybody is in Tadcaster who remembers me, please call in and say hello.

Next Issue - Postal Arrangements

As was explained in earlier issues, from August of this year UK postal charges will change significantly. The cost of sending a C4 envelope - this newsletter reached you in the C4 size - will be 67% higher whilst the cost of sending a C5 envelope will remain unchanged, though there are some overall price increases in the pipeline. We have no alternative but to use the C5 size.

To produce a newsletter in an 8-page A5 format would lead to increased printing costs and cause unnecessary limitations on lay-out. The Committee has therefore decided to continue with the present A4 format but to fold the newsletter so that it will fit into a C5 envelope. We hope that this will in no way spoil your enjoyment of the Newsletter.

The Website - Members' Response

Gerry Nutton

Since the launch of the site was announced in the March newsletter there have been almost 300 visits to the site. I'm pleased to report that the response we have received from members has been entirely positive and I thank those who have responded in one way or another. The language used to produce what you see on your screen is constantly being developed but unfortunately there is no universal agreement about what should and should not be included in the language. Most people will use the Internet Explorer browser but Mac users will use Netscape and there are other browsers available. According to our site monitor, 93.4% of visitors use Internet Explorer but four other browsers are being used to access the site. It is important, therefore, that you let us know if there are any features of the site which seem not to work for you.

I am aware that the photographs on the Archive page did not appear but that matter has, I hope, been rectified. I

am keen to know if the banner on the home page does not work for your set-up.

The number of people offering to accept delivery of the Newsletter via the website has been rather disappointing: some 17 members have so far volunteered to do so.

We need photographs for the archive. These can be sent to us as e-mail attachments or posted to us by normal mail. In the latter case the originals will be returned to you as soon as possible. Full details of how to go about this can be found on the website.

We should like to have on record as many of our members' e-mail addresses as possible. The simplest way of conveying your address to us is to send a blank e-mail to info@tadcastergsosa.org.uk, putting 'e-mail info' in the subject line. See 'Contact Us' on our website. Your details will not be divulged to any third party.

Thank you again for your encouraging response.

Subscriptions - Is it You? - Geoff Beevors (TGSOSA Treasurer)

In these days of global economies finances for the association are, at most, very modest. Nevertheless we do need to balance the books and cover operational costs.

With no other income this can only be achieved through membership subscriptions which are requested from time to time at the princely sum of £5. This figure has not changed since inauguration and is not collected every year.

Overheads, whilst normally modest, do mount up, these arising from incidentals (such as insurance and advertising to cover reunions) or primarily costs relating to the issue of newsletters, namely printing, stationery and postage.

Collection of subscriptions on a biennial basis, even at

the modest level of £5, is adequate to cover all operating costs.

Regrettably whilst many members have paid up to date and indeed, in some cases, beyond following the last request in November 2005, there remains a sizeable number who, for whatever reason, have overlooked making payment. I appreciate the amount is significant but request that those concerned now dig deep into their coffers and remit £5 to myself at the address below.

To identify if you are in arrears please check the address label. Unless '5' or '6' appears then you are in arrears and action is required to remedy as detailed above.

Geoff Beevors, 1 Ash Hill Drive, Shadwell, Leeds, LS17 8JT

Do you believe in pixies?

Here are a couple of puzzles about pixies. The first will be familiar to puzzle addicts, the second one perhaps less so.

Two Pixies

A traveller comes to a fork in the road and is unsure which of the two roads to take. At the fork are two pixies about whom the traveller has been informed. He knows that one pixie always tells the truth and the other always lies. Each of the pixies knows about the other's honesty or lack of it. The traveller can ask only one question about which road to take to reach his destination and can ask it of only one of the pixies. He doesn't know which pixie is which.

What question should he ask and what action should he take on receiving an answer?

Three Pixies

A traveller comes to a fork in the road and is unsure which of the two roads to take. At the fork there are three pixies about whom he has been forewarned. He knows that one always tells the truth, one always lies and the third is a ditherer who might tell the truth or lie. He does not know which is which.

The traveller asks each one in turn "Which one are you?" to which the first one replies "I'm not the one that tells the truth", the second one replies "I'm not the ditherer" and the third one replies "I don't like cabbage soup".

Which one should he ask for directions?

Please don't e-mail your answers. Answers will appear in the next issue and also on the website in about a month's time.