

Newsletter

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Welcome to the July 2010 edition of the Newsletter

Editorial

Since the last edition of this newsletter in April the United Kingdom has undergone its periodical review of the progress and performance of its elected representatives at Westminster and delivered its verdict. Much has been found wanting. Mr Brown has been sent packing, bag and baggage but who should replace him in Number 10 has been a decision not easily arrived at. And so we find ourselves with a coalition government led by Mr Cameron, ably abetted by Mr Clegg as his deputy. Time will tell how well this arrangement will succeed. Of course this is not a political newsletter and we must be careful to remind ourselves that it is not our place to endeavour to exert influence and to remain entirely non-partisan. However we cannot allow the opportunity to pass to note that with a change of government we now have a new Secretary of State for Education in Mr Michael Gove. It is our understanding that government policy is not to encourage the founding of new grammar schools, still less secondary technical schools. This would seem to be a pity and perhaps a lost opportunity to reinstate some highly focussed rigour and provide a stable foundation for academic courses and subsequent examinations which stretch the most able and provide universities and employers with candidates who can demonstrate excellence in skills and development potential in all the fields this country will continually and abundantly need in the years ahead if we are to hold our own and advance in this world we now refer to as the 'globalised economy'

We, who were fortunate enough to have benefited from an education at the Stroud Boys' Technical School, recognise the advantages we were afforded by receiving an excellent all-round grounding in academic and practical subjects as well as opportunities on the sports field and in the creative arts. Let us hope that such qualities and standards are revived, maintained developed and encouraged in our present education system in the years to come.

As I write this there are cheers and groans in equal measure in the world of sport. Robert Green, the hapless England goalkeeper, is awaiting his fate as Fabio Capello considers whether he can be trusted as a safe pair of hands in the rest of the tournament. Over in Canada, however, Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button have achieved a famous one-two victory for McLaren in the Canadian Grand Prix and we should congratulate them and the team on that remarkable and continuing success. Perhaps some of it will rub off and influence the England team in South Africa.

2010 Centenary

A gentle reminder to all our members and readers that 2010 marks the centenary year of our school on the Downfield site. As you know, a plan was hatched to produce a special centenary edition of the school magazine, the first to be published since the amalgamation in 1965. This project is making good progress but your editor is still looking for contributions. If you have any anecdotes, stories, experiences (good or bad!) famous successes, spectacular failures, reminiscences or observations in general please do not keep them to yourself. Your editor would be very pleased to hear from you. Contact can be made through the usual channels. So come on! If you replaced Kipper's mint imperials with moth balls on April Fools' Day 1952 tell us about it!

Blue Sapphire!

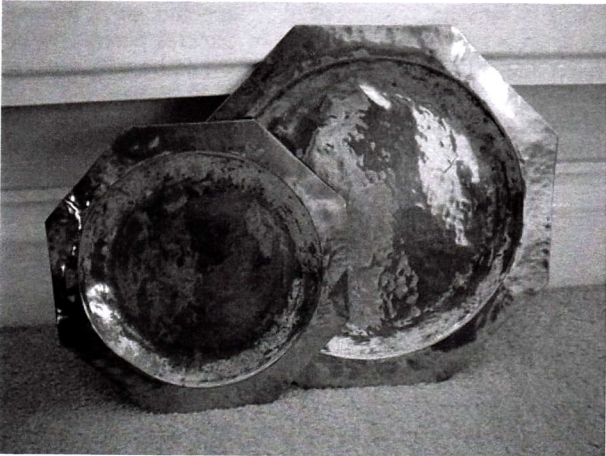


Len and Eileen Gaston celebrated their Blue Sapphire (65th) Wedding Anniversary on 24th Feb 2010 at their home in New Zealand. Len's 85, and has given up golf and bowls, and Eileen 83, has given up golf but is still playing bowls, so age is gradually creeping up and spoiling things. They still enjoy life and managed to consume two bottles of red their son, Steve, gave them though they were driven home!

Obituary

William Frederick "Bill" Lewis (1946 – 51) of Lightpill, Stroud died 16th May in Gloucester Royal Hospital aged 75. He leaves his wife Marie and two sons and four grandsons. A packed Crematorium included several Old Boys.

Space constraints preclude us from including many interesting items which come in from time to time but please be assured that real efforts will be made to 'catch up' in future issues. Pictured below are some photographs of highly accomplished metalwork by Graham W Kirby which emerged from Harry Throup's workshop.



Graham writes:-

'I attended SBTS from 1945-50. My initial stay was for four years but the school leaving age was raised by one year which extended it to five years. I caught the Railcar from Chalford station to Downfield Halt each day.'

'I was very keen on Tech. Drawing and metalwork under Harry Throup. The metalwork shop with its steam engine and forge holds many happy memories for me.'

'The brass and copper pieces were made during my fourth and fifth years. The copper plates were intended to be the two tiers of a cake stand but I ran out of time to complete it. The school entered various items of wood and metalwork worthy of merit in the annual Stroud Show held in Stratford Park each summer and I won prizes for several items. I often wonder whether schools teach pupils these craft skills today!'



Michael Hopper MBE

In the April edition we were pleased to announce that Michael Hopper had been awarded the MBE for services to the DWP and we are now able to publish a photograph of the happy occasion which took place at Windsor Castle. Michael is shown above with his wife, Sylvia.

Archive Request

Does anyone have a 1959 School Magazine they would be willing to loan or donate? The School Archive now possesses a complete run of these much sought-after publications, however 1959 is proving to be elusive. If you have one of these vintage issues we'd like to hear from you.

And Finally:-

Overheard near the canteen:-

First former No 1, "I've got lots of new engine numbers this week"

First former No 2, "And me. I think that's why they built the railway next to the school!"

That's all for now, chaps.

Get in touch! Keep in touch!

Chas Webb, Hon. News Editor.