



STROUD BOY'S TECHNICAL SCHOOL - OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Joint Newsletter Editor: Chas Webb
Email: Chazza999@hotmail.com
Tel: 01453 766918

Joint Newsletter Editor: David Mutton
Email: max3mutley@yahoo.com
Tel: 07721 470974

Hon. Secretary/Treasurer:
David Boulton
Email: Stroudstoba@aol.com
Tel: 01453 833411

Association Website: www.stroudboys-techschool-oba.co.uk

Welcome to the September 2011 edition of the Newsletter.

It is with deep regret that we must announce the death of our Chaplain, The Reverend Canon John Forryan.

He slipped away quietly after a short illness on 28th July at Gloucester Royal Hospital at the age of eighty.

John served the Association continually since election to the Committee in 1964. He rarely missed a meeting and regularly attended the Annual Dinner where he stood as a figurehead, leading the grace and quietly reminding us of the Christian values so assiduously upheld by the School. A man of many parts, a full obituary appears on pages two and three of the Newsletter. His funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church, Badgeworth on 10th August and, as expected, the large congregation of mourners included many Old Boys.

The Association and the world is the poorer for his passing. He will be sadly missed but will find good company in Harry Cooke with whom we are sure he will spend many happy hours in theological debate over a pint or two of celestial ale.

Editorial

It seems that each time your editor sits down to compile the latest edition of the Newsletter the news from around the world goes from bad to worse. No sooner had we witnessed the unedifying spectacle of Rupert Murdoch trying to appear humble while faced with a plateful of Erasmus than we were shocked by the dreadful multiple murders in Norway.

However, nothing could have prepared us for the mayhem that was about to erupt around us here in England. We have said on more than one occasion that this is not a political platform and we once again are careful to affirm that neutral position. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that something is rotten in the state of Britain. The causes and remedies are manifold and complex but they must be addressed. We cannot help feeling that a lack of stability at all levels is at the heart of the troubles.

We who attended the Stroud Boys' Technical School, its predecessors and its successor, enjoyed a first class education. An education which is perpetuated today at Marling School and fortunate are the boys who attend that establishment. Of course they were not all days of wine and roses but, on the whole, most boys benefited greatly from a solid academic education with a technical bias.

Taking the School as a foundation on which to build, it is not difficult to extrapolate a network of society as a whole in which to encourage, nourish, challenge and enrich our lives.

We hear much talk of 'The Big Society' and that 'we're all in this together'. Phrases that roll off the tongue with ease but which, by

Heavens, will need a persistent and constant will of iron by all of us to bring to fruition and make the lives of all the citizens of this nation, whatever their origin, peaceful, productive and enriched.

Annual Dinner 2011

The Annual Dinner will be held on Friday 4th November 2011 in the Marquee at the Whitminster Inn. 7:00 for 8:00 – midnight.

Such was the success of last year's Centenary Dinner that it was thought prudent to continue with the same venue this year.

Tickets are available from the Secretary in the usual manner. Ticket price this year is £19.95 and last date for orders is 24th October. (This will be strictly adhered to.)

This represents exceptional value. Tickets are available 'at cost' and we have the use of the Marquee gratis. We are indebted to Bernard Trott for negotiating this superb deal with the Whitminster Inn.

'Corkage' of £3.00 per bottle will be applied as per last year. Special diets can, within reason, be catered for. Please contact the Secretary for details.

The 'Prize Draw' will be held as usual and we are grateful to Alan 'Higgy' Hazelwood of GWR Consultants for sponsoring it this year.

Annual General Meeting

The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 3rd October at 7:30pm in Marling's staff room.

Changes of address etc.

Please advise the Secretary of changes of address as soon as possible. Similarly, if you obtain a new or amended email address please let him know. We don't want to lose you!

'Present Sir!'

Your editor is not known for rash or hasty decisions however, in a rather wild moment which recalled his reckless youth, he took it upon himself to 'digitise' the School Registers. This involves compiling a database showing details of all pupils who attended the School between August 1910 and July 1965. A promising start has been made but it will prove to be a marathon rather than a sprint. A worthwhile exercise, it will enable quick and easy reference to any boy's details and will preserve the records in an up-to-date format.

Marling's Academy Status

In May, as a result of a consultation request from Marling, your editor and President, Mr Keith Urch had a most interesting and informative meeting with Marling Head Teacher, Dr. Stuart Wilson

Obituary

REVD CANON JOHN FORRYAN
18 MARCH 1931 -28 JULY 2011

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

I think that John Forryan would have been quite content to have joined that group talking about all that had happened. John was a great one for telling a story; he always had a story, his addresses in church were always well illustrated with a story – or two, or three. As a parish priest the heart of his ministry was listening to people's stories, telling them his story and presenting the Gospel story.

John loved the narrative; the theology he'd learnt and he knew, but his parish roots had also taught him that to recount the narrative, the story, was to make connections with people's lives; in listening to the stories of others, he could make connections for them with the Gospel story of light and life.

The care with which John got to know families before and after baptisms, weddings and funerals testifies to his love of different stories and of linking them with the love of God at work and the hope of the resurrection.

John's story is one of faithful ministry for his Lord over many years, before and after his ordination almost fifty years ago in September 1961.

Alan Bennett in his play 'The History Boys', ends with the reminder that history and learning is about passing it on. John reminds us of that too; listening to the stories of others, telling the story of the Gospel, connecting the lives of the people of a parish with the story of Jesus Christ. Only through that confluence can we help God pass it on.

They said to each other, were not our hearts burning within us, while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?

Reflection on what has taken place – the need and the desire to go over the ground again, to tread the road again and to give thanks for what have been, to make new connections, to see it in a new light. That we do here and in these days following John's death.

John was born near the Warwickshire / Leicestershire border. As a boy he moved to Stroud because of his father's work and went on to attend Stroud Boys' Technical School. He served an apprenticeship at Fielding & Platt, hydraulic engineers. He was with the Royal Air Force for his national service and then worked for the Gloster Aircraft Company. After he'd met and then married Deidre in 1956, he worked in Hoffman's in Stonehouse, and by the end of the 1950s, felt called to ordained ministry, training at Wells Theological College.

He served his curacy at St Christopher's, Warden Hill in Cheltenham, then a relatively new church in a relatively new suburban estate – an early church plant. Son Simon was born at that time before the move to Watermoor, Cirencester, for six years where Lynn was born. Having weathered the swinging sixties in his Cirencester parish (I bet things really swung in Cirencester!) the family moved to St Paul's, Gloucester. It was here that John became well-known for being the Vicar on the bike – or not, as when the bike was famously stolen which resulted in a picture in the paper. John definitely wasn't the first Vicar on a bike and, thank God, he wasn't the last, but his tall, thin build made him easily recognisable.

In 1978 another move took John to Rodborough. Now, John was very proud of his Stroud roots. He'd lived in Wallbridge when young and regarded himself as a Rodborough lad. So it was a home coming when he went to be Rector. It's true to say that he is still well remembered in Rodborough for his friendliness and care for people, church goers or not, especially in difficult times.

During his time at Rodborough he regularly shared services with the Revd W Awdry, of Thomas the Tank engine fame, who had retired to live in Rodborough Avenue. There was a certain physical resemblance between the two of them, I'd say. John, though, was only the 'puff-puff parson' when trying to cycle up one of the Rodborough hills on his bike. Not when going across to the Prince Albert pub for a drink after Sunday service – it was there, he said, that the Prayer Books have handles! When he left Rodborough, the parishioners clubbed together to buy him a new bike – and that's the picture you see of him in church today - with the new bike.

Thankfully, it was only his old bike that was clapped out by 1991 when he left Rodborough for Apperley, Deerhurst, Forthampton and Chaceley by the Severn for the last seven years of his full-time ministry. During that time he was made an Honorary Canon and so was among the group of those clergy often heard spluttering 'only one n'.

This is only the sketchiest detail of what will amount to an immense amount of daily pastoral ministry, worshipping life, narrative teaching, caring heart. You will be able to add much colour and precious jewels to this story before us today.

Together we reflect and we cherish and we find much meaning and much faithfulness in this story for which we thank our faithful God today.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him and he vanished from their sight.

Expecting the unexpected. It might be a good motto for ordained ministry, but, it's probably just a good motto for life. The risen Jesus Christ was recognised in that unexpected moment with his travellers.

I don't know what moments in John's life he felt that Christ had been known to him unexpectedly but closely; I'm sure there were some. Those moments, realised often later rather than at the time that God's touch was felt. Those times, or moments, that give a renewed drive and motivation to ordained ministry having to cope, as it does, with much tedium too.

There are those less expected things about John. It's a peculiar facet of being a vicar that doing things that other people do normally are considered to be unexpected when done by a vicar. But I don't mean John was a trendy vicar, he shared skills and interests that added colour to his life and interest to the narratives he shared with others. The playing of the cornet and euphonium in his younger days with the Stroud Brass Band kindled a life-long love of that music. In later years he was compere of the Stroud Brass Band Festival and travelled to London annually for the Brass Band Championships. There he'd listen to the same piece of music played over 25 times by different bands and, probably inevitably, disagreeing often, with the adjudication since he notated each piece quite carefully.

He loved Elgar (Nimrod is never more moving than when played by a Brass Band) and shared in the custodianship and welcome of Elgar's birthplace at Lower Broadheath. As for the highly unexpected, in Stroud Road, John was once asked to bless an electrical shop where it always felt cold and things moved around inexplicably. He made the sign of the cross and the problem was duly solved. A bit of a shame he couldn't do the same for most of our churches where similar problems continue unabated.

Less, unexpectedly, John raised funds through sponsored bike rides and walks. He was Chairman of a branch of the NSPCC. He supported Aston Villa with his son Simon, which he enjoyed as there was always something to celebrate or complain about.

In retirement, John found settings for his ministry in hospitals local to his home in Brockworth and took services, not least his much-loved BCP 8am at St Mary's, Witcombe where his ashes will be laid to rest tomorrow. But not everything could be anticipated or expected with John –and we're thankful for that enrichment of his life.

When he was at table he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

The breaking of the bread and the sharing of it, the body of Christ, was, as we know, so central to John's sense of prayerful ministry. Many have valued the devoted way in which, with a real sense of humility in the presence of Christ, he has consecrated the elements and fed his parishioners with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. It's only right that we identify ourselves with this Eucharistic theme at his funeral.

But John broke bread at home too. With his family he shared meals, shared tears and hurts, joys and celebration. We give thanks for Deidre who supported John and ministered to him these many years in a loving, faithful marriage. And for love given and received for Simon and Carol, Lynn and Steve, Laura and Adam. John was a loving grandfather to Laura and Adam and enjoyed spending time with them after school and helping them with maths. He took Adam to Staverton airport to watch

the planes. Thankfully, he made it to Laura's graduation last month; he was proud of them both.

They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread'

In story, in reflection and thought, in the unexpected moment and close concern, in the breaking of bread, John has lived his life of faith, hope and love. And because the Lord has risen indeed, he is now transformed into the communion of saints who accompany us on our continued journey. Like the risen Christ, walking with us always, but identified only occasionally with ease but with excitement.

John continues with us in the cry that the Lord is risen indeed, in walking the road and telling the story – personal, but referenced to the Gospel, and in the breaking of the bread in church and at home, when loving fellowship is shared.

Thanks be to God.

Eulogy given by The Reverend Richard Mitchell, Vicar and Area Dean of Severn Vale Deanery, 10th August 2011



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and Chair of Governors, John Gilbert. The conversion process is a long and complex one but our understanding is that Academy status has been achieved, effective from 1st August 2011. We hope to bring you more details of this in a later Newsletter.

Chappie's Challenge!

As promised in the last Newsletter here is your chance to win one of three Annual Dinner tickets or book tokens of equivalent value!

There are ten questions:- Five are general knowledge and five can be answered by reference to the Centenary Magazine so if you haven't got one and want to enter get your order in now! Closing date is Friday 7th October. Answers, on a postcard please, to The Editor, Chas Webb, 25 Stanton Road, Cashes Green, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4LX or by email to – chazza999@hotmail.com

First three all correct out of the bag win. Please state your preference for either a Dinner ticket or book token.

Make sure you also include your name and address!

Questions are compiled by Bamboo Gasmain.

General Knowledge:-

- 1) Who 'stands' at the top of Rowcroft?
- 2) On what type of establishment might you still find the words 'Best in the West'?
- 3) The 1932-3 Australia v England test series was infamous for 'fast leg theory' bowling by England. What is this commonly known as?
- 4) Who is 'The First Lord of the Treasury'? (Name or title is acceptable)
- 5) In 1908 the Great Western Railway built its only 4-6-2 'Pacific' locomotive. What was its name? (Clue – 'Ursa Major')

Centenary Magazine Questions:-

- 1) Who was the first headmaster of the School?
- 2) Which master was killed in the First World War?
- 3) On what date did the School open on its Downfield site?
- 4) Where was our 'chariot of fire' wrought?
- 5) Who scored the winning goal in the 1910 Cup Final?

Another Centenary!

Residents of Stroud and its environs will in recent times have encountered and negotiated the complex roadwork system temporarily put in place to accommodate the re-routing of the Stroudwater Canal at Wallbridge. This is now complete and we can admire the new arrangements whilst crossing 'Stroud Brewery Bridge'. The canal was never far from School life and proved a magnet for lost footballs on the lower field, a rather optimistic resort for fishing or a place just to fall in. However, further up the 'cut' loomed the forbidding portal of Sapperton Tunnel and it was in 1911 that the last boat was taken through by none other than George Gleed's grandfather, George William Gleed

George writes:-

'When Sapperton tunnel was opened in 1789 it was the longest tunnel ever dug in England, at 3,817 yards, and provided a key link in the Thames and Severn Canal. Indeed, it was deemed so important that King George III himself made a trip to Sapperton to visit the site.

George William Gleed (pictured opposite with my grandmother) was a 'bargee' through the tunnel working for Smart's barges for 30 years. My grandfather spent virtually a lifetime on the canal. Sometimes he would go through the tunnel twice a week. But it was on May 11th 1911 that he entered the history books as the

last man to make the journey on a barge through the tunnel. He had collected timber from Cirencester and needed to deliver it to Stroud. However, on arriving at Coates he discovered that the tunnel had already closed and they had to restart the pumps so that he could get through.

When the tunnel was operational 'legging' was the the method used to get the barges through. This involved two men lying on the barge and pushing against the side of the tunnel walls. Using a pole was frowned upon in case it damaged the canal bed.

Granddad had no choice but to pole his way through that day. It was not allowed but no-one else was going to use the tunnel after him so it didn't matter. My father, aged 15 and also called George, was also present on that day. He led the pony over the top to meet his father at the other end at Sapperton.

Others may have tried to get through the tunnel since but I'm certain that my grandfather retains the honour of making the last trip on a barge. It is in the realms of possibility that someone may have gone through on a raft or canoe after this but granddad definitely took the last barge through.

Attempts to open up the tunnel as part of a wider canal restoration project are misguided in my opinion. It is a haven for wildlife and should be left alone.'



And Finally:-

Football with Harry Cooke:

HBC: 'Laddie, those boots are on the wrong feet.'

Hobbling second former: 'I know, sir. I borrowed them from Smith.'

That's all folks!

Get in touch – Stay in touch

Chas Webb – Hon. Newsletter editor