



Burnley Heasandford Towneley TECHNALIANS

Newsletter Number 1 Autumn 2008

For all former Technical High School Students of Burnley

Following the 50th Anniversary Reunion at Fence Gate in July 2007 a continuing association (to be known as “The Technalians”) has evolved which it is hoped will embrace all those who attended one or other of the three Technical High Schools which existed in Burnley between 1946 and 1970. We have come this far guided by ad hoc meetings of small groups drawn from Alethea Belcher (Noble), Ann Brown (Rogers), Dorothy Coates (Haynes), Christine Stuart (Winterbottom), Joan Verity (Graham), David Brown, Peter Roberts, Ian Stuart, Graham Tennant, David Weatherill.

This Newsletter includes details of our first tentative steps to extend the friendships of our youth; and to help us reflect on our experiences together which have played a formative part in our disparate lives. We very much hope that we will have your support, wherever in the world you live. With e-mail and the internet we can all share thoughts, experiences and photographs very easily.

50th Anniversary Reunion at Fence Gate July 4th 2007

Forty people attended the Reunion, former friends often meeting for the first time in 50 years - teenagers to pensioners in one small step in time. There are currently two sets of photographs from the Reunion on the Technalian web-site for you to enjoy at your leisure.

Contents

SCHOOL VISIT page 2

Saturday November 16th 2008

ANNUAL BUFFET REUNION page 3

last Thursday in March each year

WEB-SITE page 4

www.technalians.org.uk

We found names for 190 people known to be in the 4th, 5th or 6th forms when Burnley Technical High School was formed in 1956. We made contact with 79 of these - 23 (29%) did not respond, 26 (33%) were unable to attend and 30 (37%), plus partners, did attend. Three married couples from BTHS were there. We were also pleased to welcome 3 members of staff. We listed six former friends who had died.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS OPEN FOR US

Saturday November 15th 2008

from 3.00 – 6.00 pm

As most of you will know, the present occupants of the school at Towneley are Unity College. Lancashire County Council are in the process of building new premises for Unity College on the other side of the Calder - on what were our school playing fields. When completed, the present building will be demolished, planned to be in July 2010.

The Head-Teacher of Unity College, Mrs Sally Cryer, suggested that we might like to have access to the school while it is still there; and this has been arranged for Saturday November 15th 2008 between 3.00 and 6.00 pm. We will have time to wander around the school buildings and indulge in a little corporate nostalgia. There have, of course, been changes over the years and fitting the present structures to memories of the past will stimulate considerable discussion.



History of the Towneley School Buildings

Based on notes on the web-site compiled by Ian and Christine Stuart

The school on Towneley Holmes was built, at an estimated cost of £46,070, as part of a reorganisation of secondary education in the eastern side of Burnley in the late 1930's. Senior boys were accommodated in the Central School in Todmorden Road (at the bottom of Lyndhurst Road), where the headmaster was Mr Harry Lancaster. The boys moved from Todmorden Road to the new Towneley Secondary Boys School on September 15th 1941. Designed for 490 boys, there were 403 enrolled in 1941. Building had begun in July 1938 and the plan had been for the school to open in August 1940, but poor weather during the winter of 1938-9 seriously delayed construction. As a result, Burnley Education Committee had to obtain special government approval to complete the building despite general disruption due to the outbreak of war. During these last years of the 1930's the playing fields and pavilions on Towneley Holmes (where the new Unity College building is being erected) were completed.

Following the passing of the 1944 Education Act, Towneley was reconfigured in 1946 as a Technical High School for boys. In 1956 The girls Technical High School at Heasandford was merged with Towneley to form Burnley Technical High School. Thus it continued until 1970 when Towneley became a Comprehensive School, and was known as Towneley High School from 1974. In 2006 Towneley became home to Unity College.


ANNUAL BUFFET REUNION including “Technalians” AGM

Following the success of the Fence Gate Reunion we intend to maintain an annual gathering on the last Thursday in March each year. To be aware of this fixed date may be of assistance to those who are only able to visit the Burnley area infrequently, especially those living abroad.

In 2009, we shall meet at the Belvedere & Calder Vale Sports Club, Holden Road, Reedley on Thursday March 26th at 7.00 pm (to 10.00 pm) when there will be a fork buffet. The cost will be approximately £10 per person. PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE IN YOUR NEW DIARY.

As in 2007 there will be opportunity to share your own photographs and other school memorabilia; and there will be displays of archive material we are gathering together.

As the “Technalians” evolves into an ongoing organisation we will need a somewhat more formal structure. The Annual Buffet Reunion seems the obvious occasion to devote a short period of time to the business of an Annual General Meeting.



Mr Ignatius Redhead tried to start a Former Student Association in 1961, after he became headmaster. A meeting in June was followed by a further meeting on Tuesday September 12th at 7.30pm in the school hall. (The “Burnley Express” carried advertisement on 9/9/61 p.4). In 1965 “a pleasant 6th Form Social Evening” was held at the Spring Bank Hotel but attendance of Old Students was disappointing according to the Headmasters Report

In 1991 there was a major reunion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Towneley school building. Former pupil, James Howell (1967-1974), put together an exhibition which was displayed in Burnley Central Library. There were pictures of staff, pupils, musical events, sports and of the buildings. Some of these were published in the “Burnley Express” in January and September 1991. A reunion of about 90 present and former staff was held at the Oaks Hotel in August; and about 500 former students attended a champagne reception at the school on October 15th

TECHNALIANS WEB-SITE

www.technalians.org.uk

Modern technology makes it very easy to maintain a central point of contact for a group like us where there are interested parties all over the country - and overseas as well. The Technalians web-site is as yet at a rudimentary stage with potential for all sorts of developments. There are a number of simple aims -

- (1) to provide information about Technalian events to be held and reports of events which have already taken place. On the web-site are notes of some of the key meetings which have taken place and photographs of all those who attended the 2007 Reunion. If you have an occasional contact with old school friends - or regularly go on holiday with them - send us a note and/or a photograph.
- (2) to open a means of contact with others. If you want to get in touch with someone you have lost contact with, you can make a start here: someone else may know where they are. Or if you want to meet up with other Technalians who live in your part of the world you could propose a meeting place.
- (3) to gather information of school life at Heasandford, Towneley and Burnley Technical High Schools (for example, if you want to know who were the Towneley House Captains in 1958 the information is there). Much of this will be drawn from school magazines and local newspapers and will record the coming and going of staff, school trips, notable sports personalities, and so on. In addition, information or photographs etc. you may have in your possession could be useful additions - or your ability to put names to faces in photographs could be invaluable. If you can add to what we have recorded, please let us know.
- (4) To provide a "graffiti" space where you can add your memories (good or bad), impressions, notes of skills acquired which have proved useful or other-wise. The "Memories of Burnley Schools" page on BBC Radio Lancashire's web-site proves you have interesting things to include.

If you have anything to contribute to the web-site, please e-mail it to Graham Tennant at barbara@tennantb.freemove.co.uk

Type "Technalian" into Google and you will find the web-site of Colin Ormston who was at BTHS in the early 1960's. He has pictures of his contemporaries and a detailed autobiographical account of his comings and goings.

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