This Year’s President: Ian Tweed [1961-1968]

Ian Tweed entered the School in 1961 from Northgate Primary School in Bishop’s Stortford. He had a very successful management career with Sainsbury before retiring in 2000. He has for many years attended the Annual Dinner along with a number of his contemporaries from the 1961-68 era. He writes the following article about himself and his time at Newport.

At last President!!

Had I known it would take this long I would never have taken the eleven plus.

Exactly the same as my predecessor, David Morris, I hit the hallowed territory of Newport Free Grammar School in September 1961. I can vividly remember walking up the Bury Water Lane under the Lime Trees, which are still there, staying in close contact with the few friends who had come with me from my Primary School. All of us were desperately trying to come to terms with the fact that having been the tallest people and in charge of a different school six weeks earlier we were suddenly four foot midgets surrounded by blooming great giants and complete strangers. It had not helped one iota that we had been transported into an environment that had all the appearances of Harry Potter’s Hogwarts and that we had, like many of these strange giants got there by train.

We had joined a contingent of about 300 who occupied premises on the South side of the Bury Water Lane. The Ryder Field on the North side, having at that time no buildings on it appeared to us in its own right to be the size of a small county. To further the confusion and bewilderment, as first year pupils we entered the second form, and then to discover that a year later in our second year we were to be in Form Three and the year after that [our third year] we would be in Form Four. Then as if some genius of a planner had finally realised that with this procedure we would be the only school in England with a Seventh Form a second Fourth Form was invented which was called the Upper Fourth. Apparently it seemed a bit too difficult to work out that re-naming the Second Form and calling it the First Form might be the solution. However, the problem had been solved and those in their fifth year at the School were in the Fifth Form [I think].

We quickly settled into our new regime and rapidly learnt how to avoid being thumped, tripped up, denied a fair share of lunch, losing bits of uniform to the express train which passed through the station five minutes before ours arrived [the wimps used the bus] and accepting that it was part of everyday life to be slippered or hit on the head with a blackboard rubber by our kind, caring and
affectionate Masters. The figurative “weapon of mass destruction” was however, the cane which I had the pleasure [Pleasure!!] of receiving twice; once for letting off fireworks in a single compartment train carriage and the other for placing a moustache on the portrait of Dame Joyce Frankland which seemed to me at the time a vast improvement. I had been seen by Dr. Elcoat, who was recovering from measles and peered down at me in the then library from his bedroom window. I hoped he would have had a sense of humour and realised it was just a playful prank on my part. He did not and I was caned.

We had lessons and homework from day one. We ended up with satchels so full they were as heavy as we were and which had to be lugged all the way to station and then another mile from the station to the school. We also found we had to do sports every week. I broke the 220 yards school record on one occasion and because I had three lumps of cheese pie for lunch only just lost a 100 yards race to Martin Szaj who had legs twice as long as mine. The most memorable cross country was in the winter of 1962-3, one of the worst on record when a good old vertically challenged friend completely disappeared into a snow filled ditch just in front of me. We really liked to think we were fearless in those days.

After eight O-Levels, three AO Levels and three A-Levels Newport came to an end and I entered “civvy street” without the faintest idea of what I wanted to do although I did know that I could not handle another three or four years on a University Course. We had undergone some psychology tests when we were 15 years old which had indicated that I would be well suited to the medical profession. As I had given up Biology the year before and gone “arty” that did not seem to be a good idea. So I was stumped as to what to do. Two months after leaving Newport and gently encouraged by Mother’s growing resentment of me being at home doing nothing I ventured into Sainsbury’s shop in Bishop’s Stortford and got myself a job as a warehouseman. From warehouseman I progressed to a career in management and eventually ended up running Sainsbury’s overall operations in most of Essex and part of Suffolk. We moved from Hertfordshire to Essex to Hertfordshire to Shropshire to Suffolk and eventually back to Hertfordshire much to the chagrin of my children who even now are unsure from where they really come. Early retirement ensued in 2000 and I am currently working part time as the Operational Director for a Builders Merchant.

I think that is enough of me. I have one request to make in this my Presidential year. A lasting legacy of my school life was the making of good friends. Since leaving Newport as students at least five of my year have got together on the first Saturday in October and attended the O.N. Society Annual Dinner. We always have had a good laugh and enjoy reminiscing. Sometimes there is a little bit of silliness but we carry on with each other as if we had never been apart. So my plea to you all is this. Please try very hard to contact of some of your old school colleagues and get them to come along to the Annual Dinner, or if you are not able to do that come along yourself and join with the rest of us in making next year the best attended O.N. Society Annual Dinner ever. I promise you will enjoy it. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Ian Tweed

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
1. Friday 19 February 2010: 20.00 onwards; Gathering of ONs at the Coach & Horses, Newport
The committee hope that as many ONs as possible who are in the Newport/Saffron Walden area on the evening of 19th February 2010 will endeavour to make every effort to come to the Coach & Horses at some time during the evening. This occasion, which is always a thoroughly enjoyable one frequently brings together ONs who have not seen each other for a long time. The date of this “Gathering” [always a Friday] is chosen to be as close as conveniently possible to Foundress Day which is on the 20th February. Please try to come and support this year’s President Ian Tweed.

2. Sunday 21st February 2010: Church Service at Newport Church to Commemorate Foundress Day
This service was highlighted in the July newsletter. It will be part of the Newport Parish Church’s normal 10.00am service of Holy Communion and will be conducted by the vicar of Newport the Reverend Barbara Sherlock. Eric Este [1933-39] will give the sermon, Richard Priestley [Headmaster 1991-2006] will lead the Prayers of Intercessions and other member of the Society will read the lessons. This service is being advertised to everyone connected with the School [Pupils, Parents, Staff, Governors as well as Members of the Society]. There will be some refreshments after the service. The Vicar of Newport and the PCC have greatly supported the idea of this Service and so the committee hope that as many members of the Society who are able to attend will do so. This is a new venture and one which everyone hopes will be a success. It will only be a success provided that members of the Society come in good numbers to support it. Please make a note of the date and do try to attend.

2. Saturday 1st May 2010: Annual Football, Hockey & Cross Country Matches v the School
As in the previous three years there will be two Hockey Matches. The Woman's Hockey Match will start at 9.30am and the Men's Hockey Match will start about 10.45am. The Football Match will start at 10.15am and the Cross Country Match at 11.15am. If you wish to take part in any of these matches please complete the enclosed proforma and return it to the O.N.Society Secretary at the School in good time. This occasion has now become a major event in the Society’s and the School’s calendar. Apart from the players many other ONs [as well as Parents of students who are playing for the school] also come along and support the matches. Refreshments will be served in the Club House [next to the pavilion] after the matches. Please make a note of the date and try to come on 1st May. This date has been chosen because it does not clash with any league Hockey or Football matches and so as many ONs and school players as possible will be available to play. As usual Di Reed will organise the two ON Society Hockey teams but it is important that those who wish to play Hockey for the ONs send the completed proforma to the ON Secretary at the School.

3. Sunday 4 July 2010: Annual Mixed Hockey and Cricket Matches against the School
The Mixed Hockey match will start at 11.30am and the Cricket Match at 2.00pm. If you wish to take part in either or both of these matches please complete the enclosed proforma and return it to the O.N.Society Secretary at the School. Arranging for the mixed hockey match to be played in the morning and the cricket match in the afternoon makes it possible for ONs to take part in both matches if they so wish. Tea, to which everyone is invited, will be taken between the two innings of the cricket match at about 4.30pm in the Club House next to the Pavillon. Di Read will organise the ON Society Hockey team but those who wish to take part please complete the enclosed proforma and return it to the ON Secretary at the school.

4. Annual Golf Match between the Society and the Saffron Walden Golf Club: The match will take place on a Friday in either September or October 2010. The actual date will be given in the July 2010 newsletter. Anyone who may be interested in playing and would like more information please contact Michael Price 20 Mandeville Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4AQ; Tel, 01799 5022228 Mobile Tel. No. 07890868824.

5. Saturday 2nd October 2010: AGM at 6.00pm: Annual Dinner at 7.00 for 7.30pm.
Please make a note in your 2010 diary of these two most important events. Further details will be given in the next newsletter which will be sent out in July 2010.

REPORTS AND RESULTS
1. Annual Mixed Hockey Match; Sunday 5th July
This was a game of two halves which the ONs won 6-2. The match was very even in the first half and at Half Time the scores were level. In the second half the ONs played very well and thoroughly deserved their emphatic win with John Snelling scoring a hat trick. The following played for the ONs [including substitutes]; J.Johnson [94-01]; J.Totty [95-02]; C.Hollidge [98-05]; R.Hollidge [96-03]; N.Evans [93-2000]; J.Snelling [99-06]; G.Deary [03-08]; A.Mitchell [98-05]; K.Wood [74-81]; K.Dalley [53-60];

2. Annual Cricket Match; Sunday 5th July
This year rain did not affect the match at all which the school won deservedly. As usual this was a limited overs match. The ONs batted first and made 161 all out in the last of their allotted 40overs. The school were cruising to victory by the end of the 25th over but then quickly lost four key wickets and eventually had to work hard to reach 165 for 7 in the 36th over in order to win. The following played for the ONs [including the 12th man]; S.Murphy [Schoo]; N.Williamson [2000-05]; P.Carr [59-64]; N.Dawson [98-05]; M.Dixon [93-2000]; W.Ingham [97-02]; A.Referne [school]; M.Gibson [school]; K.Wood [74-81]; K.Dalley [53-60];
This year the ONs have regained the Burgess Trophy having won the football match, the woman’s hockey match and the mixed hockey match. The School won the cross country match and the cricket match. The men’s hockey match was drawn.

Unfortunately the Golf Match was cancelled again this year by the Saffron Walden Club at the last minute as they were unable to put out a team. Michael Price ON [65-71] who has taken over the organisation of the ON team from Don Hirst had got an ON team together ready to play and so it was sad for him to inform all the ONs involved that the match had been cancelled. The Committee are most grateful to Michael Price for his all efforts. He has been assured that the match will take place next year [2010]

4. AGM: Saturday 3rd October 2009 at 6.00pm
This took place at the school and was attended by 22 members of the Society. Minutes of the 2008 AGM were distributed shortly before the meeting. The Treasurer, Graham Harding presented the audited statement of accounts for the year ending 31 May 2009 copies of which were distributed to all present. He explained the salient points and informed the meeting that the statement of accounts clearly showed the Society’s finances to be in a very healthy position. The following elections were made for 2009/010:

5. Annual Dinner: Saturday 3rd October 2009
This was held in the main School Hall. 63 people attended. There were a number of ONs present who were attending for the first time as well as some who had not attended for a very long time. The Head Girl, Daisy Hardcastle proposed the toast to the Pious Memory of Dame Joyce Frankland. Edward Miller [1952-58] proposed the toast to the School to which the Headmaster, Sean O'Hagan replied. In his response the Head said that the School continues to make excellent progress. Exam results are very good and there are a wide variety of extra-curricula activities taking place in which large numbers of students are involved. He was proud to report that the guest speaker at Speech Day had been David Bell, the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Children, Schools and Families who had stated that he had been very impressed with the School and congratulated it on all it is achieving. The Head Boy, Ben McNally gave an excellent and confident speech in proposing the toast to the Society to which the President, David Morris gave a very witty and entertaining reply which was much appreciated by all present. An innovation at this year’s dinner was a short musical item by two members of the Sixth Form [Ellen-Jane Bailey and Jenny Brand] who were present at the dinner in their capacity as Senior Prefects. In January this year [2009] the School staged a highly successful production of the musical “Les Miserables”. Ellen-Jane Bailey one of the main stars of the School’s production sang one of her songs from the musical. She was accompanied on the piano by Jenny Brand. The quality of their performance was so good that they received a standing ovation from all those who were present.

4. Dinner at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge:
The July newsletter contained information about the possibility of arranging a dinner at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge provided there is sufficient support for such a function. Members were asked to reply on the enclosed proforma to state if they would definitely support a dinner at Gonville and Caius College. Sufficient support was not forthcoming and so the committee decided that they could not go ahead with arranging such an event. However, the committee have decided to review this situation to see if it is possible to hold a dinner at the college at some future time. The committee are most grateful to all those who replied.

5. The Old Newportonian Society 100-Club: As reported in the July newsletter, 2009 has been another highly successful year for the 100-Club. A record 219 membership tickets were sold. The committee are most grateful to all ONs who support the 100-Club which enables the Society to support the School in a number of different ways as well as ensuring that all the necessary administration costs are covered.

Current membership of the 100-Club will end on 31 January 2010. The committee very much hope that all those who purchased tickets this year will renew their membership in 2010. The cost of one ticket is £12 and there is no limit to the number membership tickets anyone can purchase. If you wish to join as a new member then please complete the relevant section of the enclosed proforma and send it with your cheque to the ON Society Secretary at the School. Please make cheques payable to the ON Society 100-Club. The
closing date for entry into the first draw of the new year is 31 January 2010. Those ONs who are already members of the 100-Club will, as usual receive a separate invitation to renew their existing membership.

**Winners since the last Newsletter**

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<td>£30</td>
<td>D.Kenworthy</td>
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**New Members since the last Newsletter**

**Deaths**
The following deaths have been reported to the Secretary since the last newsletter:

Alan Hodding who died on 2nd July 2009 had a long and distinguished career in ship broking. In 1972/3 he was President of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping.

Michael Turner died on 10th July 2009. He was chief executive of Associated Book Publishers and helped to translate into English the cartoon adventures of Tintin, the Belgian cub reporter, written and drawn in the original by Herge. He was known by everybody in the book world and had a full page obituary published in The Times on Tuesday 4th August 2009.

James Pipkin who died in July 2009 had a very successful career in banking after serving in the RAF during the war.

Brian Hills died in July 2009. He had a career in Town and Country Planning becoming the Principal Planning Officer for Epping Forest District Council from 1974 until he retired.

Robert Hutchin died on 2nd June 2009 after a long illness. He had been an engineer with British Telecom.

**Retirements**
In July 2009 two long serving members of the Teaching Staff, Nigel Partridge and Gordon Scott retired.

Nigel Partridge was appointed as Head of Music in 1984. He very quickly made his mark and was soon staging wonderful concerts and being the musical director of a whole string of Musicals culminating in a truly sensational production of “Les Miserables” in January this year. His concerts were legendary and the Big Band which he formed was always a great hit whenever they performed. He will be greatly missed.

Gordon Scott was appointed as a Deputy Head in 1985 and proved to be a highly effective administrator. He was the prime mover in getting a network of computers into the school and for many years he had responsibility for the School budget. However, he will always be remembered for his contribution to School Hockey. He was one of the main driving forces behind the building of the all-weather hockey and football pitch. He was a highly successful hockey coach. As a result of his drive and enthusiasm there are currently hockey teams in every year at Newport. Some of the teams he has coached have gone on to achieve great success at national level. Although he has officially retired he will continue to coach hockey at the school.

We wish them both a long and happy retirement.
Proforma for taking part in the Sporting Fixtures against the School
Saturday 1st May 2010

Football_______________;     Cross Country_______________;
Men's Hockey Match_______________;     Woman's Hockey Match_______________

Sunday 4th July 2010

Cricket_________________________;     Mixed Hockey___________________________;
Please tick on the appropriate line

Name [Block Capitals]__________________________________________________________
Address [Block Capitals]_______________________________________________________
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Tel No._______________________________________________________________________
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Application for membership to the O.N.Society 100-Club for 2010/11
The cost of annual membership is £12.00. There are no restrictions on the number of tickets any member can hold. Cheques should be made payable to the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I wish to apply for [please print in words]_____________________ticket[s] for membership of the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I enclose a cheque for £______________

Name [Block Capitals]__________________________________________________________
Address [Block Capitals]_______________________________________________________
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Tel. No._____________________________________________________________________
Email Address_________________________________________________________________