

End of an Era Report

The Minster School. For those who were at the Grammar school in the 50's to the 80's it was a small school based around the Minster and its music, sport and in particular rugby, and a liberal (humanities based) holistic approach delivered by staff who spent a lifetime dedicated to the cause and saw teaching as a way of life and not a job. The school had boarders and pupils came from diverse social and geographic backgrounds. You only have to read some of the archived stories to understand just how it was. Today's school bears little resemblance to the one of the past and significantly much of the changes has been comparatively recent.

The Society, established in 1906, provides ex-student of the Minster School, Edward Cludd, Southwell Minster Grammar School a point of contact to meet and maintain ties. It is not for me to speculate about the validity of these changes that the school has gone through but the society has found very great difficulty thinking through how to cope and communicate with today's realities. The society continues in a seemingly perpetual crisis, in terms of active membership, and appears not to have the capacity to adapt to the realities of the world in which today's students of today live in. The society must be able to free itself from a preoccupation with set piece events (in particular formal dinners) and embrace a flexible technology based approach to keeping in touch. Maybe it will fall to the next generation to come to terms with today's realities.

The strategy for the Society. I foresaw a three pronged approach; a website that is effectively an archive of the written and aural history and stories from the School that would have some regulation and structure; closely linking to this a photographic archive on Flickr; finally an interactive site (Facebook) that could cope with chatter, controversial topics and instant communications

The website had been set up to make available material, photographs and stories to the members of the society and the public in general that has not previously been seen. We also have separate sections that announce future reunions, records of past ones, an archive, as well a section that illustrates the lives of great servants of the school. We have the best of the public photographs from Steve Pulford's archive and we can thank Margaret for these. It has been developed to a strict set of rules that separates content from comment and attributes all the content to individuals. I have resisted turning the site into a listed of who has passed away except those who have given lifetimes of service to the school and who we will not see the likes of again. I have been a champion of technology and tried to balance a sense of history with technology. We have also deliberately kept away from advertising apart from the mentioning accommodation in Southwell

The website allows access to a photo hosting facility called Flickr and the numbers are staggering

Photos available 1215

Image viewings 635K

Most popular 1971 whole school (3 images) with 34K viewings

Least popular 1958? 1st X1 cricket with no viewings yet

Facebook. Despite great and continuing opposition/apathy from many older members a Facebook presence has been established thanks greatly to the efforts of Hannah Woods (nee Watson) and membership stands at about 300 and is rapidly growing. The Facebook Group performs the specific function of being free from any sort of constant and provides the platform for any member to express their view on any topic. It is hoped that in the longer term this will be the venue of choice for ex-students of the School.

The website has now in a frozen state and there are currently no plan to update or revise it. We hope that will still be used by individuals bourn after the war to catch up on old memories, for the current generation to image what a great school could be like and to history students seeking material from the past. Personally I have got to the point where I have contributed what I can and the website and Flickr effectively in a frozen state and they will not be added to. Facebook will remain active and will no doubt thrive. Anyone will however be able to copy or download any part of the website or images or to link to them. I will relent and help any other person however who has the technical competence to develop the sites further and shares my standards on how it should be done. If that sounds dogmatic then so be it. If you want to contact me then you can do it on dpadley@me.com or another member of the OSS Committee