

Steve Downes (A250) who died on October 14<sup>th</sup> aged 78, was one of a group of Foundation boys who came from the Greater Manchester area and began their LWC life in 1957. He stayed on into the 6<sup>th</sup> form and left in 1964, having spent his senior years in School House.

Steve had many interests at school. Amongst them were fishing, which entailed energetic cycling to local ponds, lakes and canals and back again in time for roll call; and hockey, which he played to a sufficiently high standard to be selected for various school teams including the 1<sup>st</sup> 11.

However, his contemporaries will probably remember him most as someone with two other main enthusiasms. Firstly, things scientific and technical: he was part of a group that spent a lot of time in huts fiddling with radios, trying to get TVs to work and building and repairing all sorts of electronic equipment. Secondly music: he played guitar, drums and trumpet in two bands, both called The Problems, which formed in the Lower and Upper 6<sup>th</sup> and had brief moments of glory playing at the annual School Dance.

These enthusiasms followed him into life after LWC, albeit with some false starts. An engineering course at what was then Salford College of Technology didn't work out, neither did a brief spell in Banking. For a while he worked in Insurance but eventually he joined a company that designed and installed industrial and domestic electronic control systems and this suited him well. As his experience and skill developed he was able to set up his own control systems business and initially from a base in Manchester built up a client list from all over the country. He moved to Milton Keynes in 1992, where he completed an Open University degree, and then later to the Forest of Dean where he and his wife Anne enjoyed the rural life in a cottage with an acre or so of land attached. His company, Kingsway Electrical Installations, continued in business till he retired in 2008.

As for music, throughout the 70s and 80s Steve played semi-professionally in the Manchester area in a successful Function Band and later in one which was more jazz orientated. The move to Milton Keynes and then the Forest of Dean largely meant the end of the Manchester scene but he continued to find musical partners wherever he was and played regularly in local venues, usually on an amateur basis.

He kept in touch with several of his fellow LWC musicians and as a result in 2008 he played at the LWC Proms in The Park when various members of The Problems re-formed to support the event. Later, from 2013 till 2019, he played in a Birmingham band called Slow Train which included another of The Problems who was also in the Proms performance that day.

He is fondly remembered by his friends from the 1957-64 era.

The first photo is of Steve on a School trip to France circa 1961/62; the second shows him (first left) in one of the LWC music rooms rehearsing for The Proms in The Park in 2008.



