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# THE OLD ROAN MAGAZINE



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ISSUE 14

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19 March 2025

*Cover: Greenwich Park in 1620 (Royal Museums Greenwich, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons).*

Old Roan Magazine 2024

# WELCOME

‘We look forever forward...’

Welcome to the latest Old Roan Magazine - full of news, memories, reunions and more about Old Roans and the John Roan School today.

The future financial viability of the Old Roan Association has continued to be a key issue - for some years it has been relying on Tony Slaney's legacy, but, however generous, that is a finite resource. After lengthy consideration, the Association committee decided recently to increase the annual membership fee from January 2025 to £20. Importantly, this will now include those who took out a 'life' membership at just £5 many years ago. See pages 8 and 9 for a full report and the covering letter from the Association that is being sent with this issue.

Elsewhere, there is a report on the John Roan School's recent, and well-earned, 'Good' Ofsted rating, plus news on the Roan Theatre Company, Albert Lee's triumphant return gig at the School Field, the Association's Annual Dinner in November and the new edition of the Roan history book, Building a School for the 21st Century.

In addition, read about some of the latest Old Roan reunions (girls and boys), more Braithwaite memories (girls and boys), and a mix of reflections from schooldays



past. We look back on the very first Roan Magazine and a Girls' School magazine from the 70's. Sadly too, we remember some Old Roans who have now passed away.

Greenwich Park is almost joined at the hip with Roan - so from page 56 check out how the past is being recreated there right now.

On a personal note, this page customarily congratulates the new Association President. However, as for 2024/5 it's me, I'll pass and just say 'what an honour'!

Best wishes,  
KEITH BRADBROOK  
EDITOR



# KEITH BRADBROOK

## Old Roan Association President 2024/25

Roan has been a constant through my most of my life, so it is indeed a great honour to be Association President for 2024/5.

My Mum first spoke of Roan when I was very little - she got a place as a girl but the family couldn't afford it. Then my Dad's three bosses - the Jarvis brothers - were all Old Roans and one, Leslie, always greeted me with 'Floreat Roana' and I learned half the school song in Latin before I was eight.

So, there was only one place I was going to. But living on the Isle of Dogs all my friends went to schools on the North side of the Thames and I don't think I saw any again for years.

At first, it was a lonely trek through the foot-tunnel and Greenwich Park to Maze Hill but other Island boys like Jimmy Humphrey, Mark Wiggins, Russell Trew and Colin Smith soon followed and I lived near Paul Turner who was two years above me.

I loved almost every minute at Roan and have always counted myself so lucky to have gone there. The standards and pride instilled at the school have always been benchmarks to try and aim for. A lot of the things I am passionate about today stem from my school days - writing, art, music and of course the

Lake District, where, after initiation through Braithwaite, I now go once or twice a year to walk. I was never a Wainwright bagger but I hope to have topped all his 214 fells by next year.

There were lots great people in my year (1966-73) and across Roan. I am still in regular touch with Keith Banks and Ron Edworthy and see a few regulars at the Annual Reunion Dinner. At school, I was close to Terry Thurley, who was my Best Man as I was his, and also Dave Davis. We keep in touch but I don't see either as much as I'd like.

On the teacher side, Keith Banks and I went to see our Form Master Terry Hall (Physics) not so long ago and then both Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas in Norfolk not long before they died. All were tremendous inspirations for me. My favourite master, as I am sure he was for many, remains Alfie Knott and I can still hear those tinkling ivories from his lunchtime Boogie Woogie piano sessions drifting down the corridor. Alfie and his wife, Beryl, also looked after me when I broke my arm at Braithwaite.

As school football captain, I first came to Old Roan through football and played with some wonderful players in the First Team including Bryan (Boggy) Marsh, Brian West, Paul Petty, Bobby Grimwood, Cyril



Davies, John and Jimmy Hardy, Johnny Leach, Dougie Weaver and many more. A number of us also played on Sundays for a successful side and I played semi-pro at Bromley for a while before returning for more seasons with OR. I once played in a First Team side with seven Keiths! Mssrs Thomas, Silcox, Hedges, Mexter and me, plus two others I now forget.

My Roan connections deepened further in 1980 by marrying Daryle (néé Hayes), a Roan girl - we never met at school but through football and social events at the club. We have two wonderful sons, Elliot and Tom (both, I am proud to say, great footballers) and now three lovely grandchildren - Tommy, Reiss and Betsy. Daryle's year (1965-72) have reunions and will meet again this October.

Having edited our class magazine, I got the journalism bug and left

school for a reporter's job first in East London then Romford and some stringer stints with nationals covering everything from weddings to murders. But newspapers only went so far for me and in time I left to take on roles leading wider communications for the British Red Cross, working for a while in Geneva and Pakistan, the London Docklands Development Corporation when Canary Wharf Tower was going up and later Essex County Council. But half my career, in two periods, was spent heading communications and campaigning for the children's charity the NSPCC and I am very proud of my role in national public awareness concerning child protection and the introduction of key legislation. I once had a one-to-one chat with Mrs Thatcher in a No 10 back room. She waltzed over and said 'Evil...' and I'm still not sure if she was talking about me, her or the issue...



*Keith (standing 3rd r) in an Old Roan First Team... this time with only three other Keiths! Mexter (goalkeeper), Thomas (standing 2nd l) and Silcox (front r)*



*With a 1966-73 year group at last year's Annual Dinner - (l-r) Andy Emeny-Smith, Jeremy Novis, John Titcombe, Keith, Pete Wise, Stuart Horsburgh, Ron Edworthy*

Number one memory though is walking out at Wembley with my life-time hero Bobby Charlton before an England v Brazil game. I was involved in charity events for the end of the old Wembley ground and I even had my last ever competitive game on the hallowed turf!

Apart from a busy family life, walking in the Lakes, still watching Charlton, enjoying the OR Golf Society days and in retirement having written a couple of novels, I now edit the Old Roan Magazine and became a John Roan School governor over two years ago. It has been incredibly rewarding to see the School's huge improvement under Principal Cath Smith and Ofsted's recent 'Good' rating. The John Roan School thrives again.

As I am sure they are for many Old Roans and the students of today, a great number of my Roan memories are linked to Greenwich Park. How lucky we were to have

such a special place just across Maze Hill. For me, having walked through it every day for seven years, played football in it at dinner-times and after school, visited it regularly since I was a toddler, used it as a location for a book and still return time and time again, the Park is a part of me.

So, it has been very exciting to see the extensive landscape renovations going on there, especially the restoration of the Grand Ascent - General Wolfe's hill. Many Old Roans will have already seen the developments but if you haven't yet and can get there then you have a treat in store.

Roan has been there for so much of my life, being President of the Association for 2024/25 is very special and I look forward to meeting as many Old Roans as I can this coming year.

KEITH BRADBROOK

# MY PRESIDENT'S YEAR

## Not Much Work – Plenty of Play

It hardly seems almost a year ago that I was asked (in absentia) by the Committee of the Old Roan Association at the 2023 AGM to become President. Time does seem to pass more quickly with advancing years. In briefing me on the duties of the President, Monty Smith explained that there was little to do apart from participate in the Annual Reunion Dinner at which a speech was required. With that assurance in mind, I drove one Saturday morning to Neil Haslam's house to pick up the splendidly impressive chain of office.

My first opportunity to wear it was at the Founder's Day celebration at St Alfege's Church. I'd been to Founder's Day several times in my capacity as a John Roan Foundation Trustee and had always found it very stimulating. The range and quality of the music performed is impressive. Indeed, some of the individual singers have so impressed me that I have a Spotify playlist of the songs they performed. Thanks particularly for the introduction to Adele!

There may not be much work involved in being the President but there are ample opportunities for play. I was able to attend the second concert given by Albert Lee and his band at the Club on Guy Fawkes Night. His performance compensated for any lack of



*Mick Roberts*

fireworks elsewhere. Based in Los Angeles, it is heartening that he finds the time to perform for Old Roans during his tours of the UK and share reminiscences of his time at school in the '50s and his encounters with famous rock musicians over the years. The evening ended with some dancing, evoking memories of events there in the '70s.

I am a great fan of the Roan Theatre Company and attend their plays whenever possible. The Company took on a serious challenge with their production of *Clue*, a play based on the Cluedo board game, which requires almost perfect



comedic timing to succeed. They brought it off with great aplomb and the production attracted sell-out audiences to The Bob Hope Theatre.

One of the players in Clue, Sarah Coleman (Mrs Peacock), wrote a brilliant murder mystery entitled Curtain's Down, which was performed in January and provided a hugely entertaining evening which I attended. No - I didn't work out who the murderer was.

The Annual Reunion Dinner can only be classed as 'play', though it didn't always feel like that in the preceding weeks worrying about what to include in a speech. I decided to play a straight bat and talk about 3 themes: growing up in Greenwich, memories of my time at the school, and my involvement in the John Roan Foundation. It was a surprise when, as I was recalling Spoken English lessons with George Witten by reciting 'Lord Larry's library was literally littered with literary literature', to find many of the assembled company joining in!

I was delighted that many of my school cohort were able to attend the Reunion and join me at the top table, together with three Old Roans from the Girls' School whom I'd know for many years.

My guest speaker was Trevor Drury whom I met at school and has been a lifelong friend. To his careers as a City money broker and, latterly, a black cabbie, he could easily

have added stand-up comedian. I was very pleased he accepted the invitation: his speech had the audience in stitches. Cath Smith gave an admirable speech and her pride and satisfaction at the School achieving a 'Good' rating in their recent Ofsted inspection was apparent. Well done to her, the staff and the students.

The qualities of the school and its students were on display at the Celebration of Achievements Evening held at the School in December. The evening started with a bit of fun when, during the reception, the Major of Greenwich - Dr Dominic Mbang - and I compared our chains of office to see which was the more impressive. The Old Roan one takes some beating!

Achievement Awards (we used to call them prizes) were given to students in Years 11 and 13. Linda Nelson, the Chair of the John Roan Foundation, presented the John Roan Exhibition Awards. The guest speaker was Dr Joshua Fasuyi, an Old Roan and a surgeon in the NHS. He and the Mayor addressed the staff and students, encouraging them to take full advantage of their potential and the opportunities open to them. This evening is a perfect opportunity for the President to gain a fuller understanding of what is happening at the school. It was impressive - which I am sure is reassuring to all Old Roans.

MICK ROBERTS (1957-64)

# FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

*Mick Roberts, Old Roan President 2023-24, introduces an important change in the way the Association will fund itself going forward from 2025 and what this will mean for all members.*

During my year as President, I've reflected on times past, at school and at the Old Roan Club. But I've also given some thought to the future of the Association. We are an ageing organisation and, with only a small number of new members in recent years, membership of the Association is declining. That stimulated thoughts about the future viability of the Association which I've shared with the ORA Committee and other members who attended the Annual General Meeting in March.

The Committee's sincere hope is that the Association can continue to flourish for many years but one serious concern we have is for its financial viability. For the past ten years we have benefitted from the legacy left so generously by Tony Slaney. But that resource is finite and will run out. Current membership fees fall far short of the annual running costs of the Association and the Committee's view is that, for the financial health of the Association, the aggregate membership fees should cover the Association's annual running costs.

At present the annual subscription is £5. Many members, who benefitted from buying life membership at the time they left school, have made just a single payment of £5. With this level of subscription, the Association costs exceed its income and we have relied heavily on Tony's subsidy.



The main item of past expenditure has been printing and distributing the Old Roan Magazine but there are additional costs. The Association has committed to funding breakfasts and food-related issues at the school for those in need which cost £2500 per term. It also envisages future expenditure to celebrate the Centenary of the Hope Memorial Camp at Braithwaite and the 350th anniversary of the founding of the school in 2027.

Costs could be trimmed by stopping publication of the Magazine but there is a widespread view that the Magazine is the lifeblood of the Association and the thing that unites us. Its continuation is seen as

vital. However, to reduce costs, consideration is being given to more widely distributing the magazine as an electronic pdf. For those members who are content to have their magazine available only in digital form, a saving can be made on printing and postal costs. A new Association website is also being produced to store magazines.

Notwithstanding any potential magazine-related savings, at the Annual General Meeting, following a detailed discussion, a resolution

was passed that the membership subscription should be increased from 2025. This was endorsed by the ORA Treasurer. Therefore from 2025, the annual subscription will increase to £20 for all members, including life members.

The Committee sincerely hopes that members will recognise the sense in this outcome and support the decision.

Further details on how to pay next year's subscription are given below.

## FUTURE MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT

All Old Roan members are asked to update their Association Standing Orders as soon as possible to £20 payable from 2 January 2025.

All current 'Life Members' are asked to set up a Standing Order as follows:

Barclays Bank: 20-98-57

Account Number: 90678112

Name: Old Roan Association

Payment Date: 2nd January 2025

Frequency : Annual

Members who pay by cheque, please increase the amount to £20.

## OLD ROAN MAGAZINE CHOICE

For next year's 2025 edition, Association members are invited to choose in what format they would like to receive the Old Roan Magazine.

Those who wish in future to receive an electronic PDF version via e mail instead of the traditional paper format are asked to email Bernie Hampton, Association Secretary, at [berniehampton@btinternet.com](mailto:berniehampton@btinternet.com) who will record the change. Those who wish to remain receiving a printed paper version need do nothing and they will receive their copy in the post as normal.

# A 'GOOD' SCHOOL!

Principal Cath Smith updates on good news from The John Roan School

The new school year started with a huge celebration - our best ever A Level results placed us second in Greenwich and secured over 32% of students with a place at Russell Group universities, including Cambridge and Imperial College. We were lauded at the Royal Borough of Greenwich 'Great in Greenwich' event in September and have experienced an unsurprisingly high interest in the school since then.

Shortly before the summer break, we were celebrating at the annual United Learning Best in Everyone Awards as Elly Porter, our Assistant Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form, was presented with 'Leader of the Year' and Joey in Year 13 achieved the 'Best in Everyone History Award'.

For the first time in my tenure, the school is now holding waiting lists in all year groups, and we are over-number in some years. Our Sixth Form provision, now based at the Maze Hill site, has proved very popular and we hope to swell numbers further in September since we have now had over 700 applications for the Sixth Form next year!



*Cath Smith sharing exam results with students*



*The Maze Hill 6th Form Centre*

But perhaps the most momentous event of the school year to date was the visit to the school by five Ofsted inspectors in October 2023. Since March 2018, we have been burdened with the 'Inadequate' judgement of the inspection at that time and so we were proud to welcome the inspection team into the school.

For two days the inspectors were in lessons, talking to staff, students, governors and United Learning (our Trust). They seemed to leave no stone unturned as they looked at student work, examined the curriculum and evaluated the effectiveness of the quality of education our students receive.

The team were full of praise for the school. In particular, they highlighted our success in creating a culture of high expectations and noted that students achieve well in many different subjects. I was especially pleased that they noted the strong sense of community at the school – shown through the positive behaviour of students and the ways in which we celebrate our diversity. They praised our inclusivity and noted that our staff ensure that students are kept safe and encouraged to work hard and be ambitious for themselves.

The inspectors praised our ambitious curriculum and the strong subject knowledge of our teaching staff. They also praised the ways in which we



develop students beyond the formal curriculum, ensuring that a John Roan student can benefit from a rich variety of enrichment experiences, including visits and guest speakers.

The overall judgement was that we are a 'good' school across all categories. We are now firmly on our next journey – taking us from good to great!

We have been pleased this year to make a strong connection with a family of Old Roans - Ikeche, Ebere and Chima Eze have all been educated at The John Roan and are now all playing football at a high level. Ebere is in the Crystal Palace first team and has also played for England. None of them have forgotten their roots and they have set up the Eze Foundation. Ikeche has been in to school several times (often with his brother and several of his also successful school friends) to talk to the students, inspire them and provide them with motivation to do even better. Ten lucky Year 8 students were awarded New Balance headphones at the end of last term, rewarding them for hard work and commitment to their studies. Year 11 were delighted to come in to school one morning in the middle of their mock exam period and be given a free breakfast by Ikeche who was in great admiration of the early morning booster sessions many were coming in to school for!

The Eze Foundation supported our International Culture Day when students and staff came to school in clothes to celebrate their countries. An event after school saw groups of students showcasing information and costumes linked to their countries, dancing to national music and then sharing national dishes in a cultural food festival. Maze Hill Hall was packed to standing room only in this hugely popular event.



*Today's John Roan students*

# MILUN'S SCIENCE FORUM

*Every year the John Roan Foundation awards a Roan student a place on the prestigious London International Science Forum (LISF) – an incredible chance to further their science experience with like-minded students from all over the world and meet top international scientists. Last year the prize went to Milun Vara-Dove. Here he tells his Forum story.*

The 64th London International Youth Science Forum was a 15-day residential programme from the end of July to the beginning of August hosted by Imperial College London. Motivated to be selected, I faced an interview panel having researched issues relevant to my A Level subjects: Maths, Geography and Chemistry. The interdisciplinary nature of my A Level subjects propelled me towards climate change, in particular, the technological advancements of carbon capture and storage. With my passion for science, I was ecstatic at securing the Forum spot.

I was very proud to represent the UK as a flag bearer at the Forum's opening ceremony and still have the vivid memory of walking across a room filled with over 500 students, teachers, scientists, and staff from 82 countries. The opening keynote speech was by Nobel laureate Professor Ben Feringa on nanotechnology and



*Milun with Professor Ben Feringa*

homogenous catalysts, which gave me a wider conceptual understanding of physical chemistry. Talking to him about his career inspired me to delve deeper into different scientific disciplines at the Forum.

A visit to Imperial College's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering the next day provided insight into infrastructure development through designing and testing a model suspension bridge in a group competition. Later that week, a Science Forum Bazaar showcased a diverse array of projects and ideas from international students, highlighting how the Forum

attracts the highest calibre of student scientists.

My understanding of climate change deepened in the second week. Professor Christopher Aiden-Lee Jackson's discourse on the geological record of climate change provided invaluable insights into the intersection of Geography, the carbon cycle and climate science, all featuring heavily in my A Levels. Drawing from his research, I connected the dots between climate and geology and since applied this to my understanding of geographical concepts.

A visit to the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University proved pivotal, as a lecture

on mapping meltwater across Antarctica underscored the urgent threat to ice sheets and coastal regions. This reinforced my interest in climate science and fuelled my aspiration to apply to Cambridge University.

A 'Sharing World Customs and Fashion Evening' event was held which gave me the opportunity to learn about different cultures and I joined the UK section to sing 'Wonderwall' by Oasis to share some of ours.

At the Forum's farewell party, the event came together and I reflected on all my amazing experiences and opportunities - meeting new people, establishing lifelong friends from multiple



*Milun (3rd I) with Forum friends*



*The Science Forum – Milun's in there somewhere!*

countries, memories of making pasta and playing football at Hyde Park in between lectures.

Looking back on this fascinating and enriching opportunity, I'm very grateful to The John Roan Foundation for funding my place. Not only has it helped me with crafting my personal statement but it has also given me first-hand experience university life away

from home, managing my time with lectures and being responsible for my own wellbeing. These skills will be invaluable when I attend university - hopefully Cambridge University!

MILUN VARA-DOVE

*This year the Association will be funding a second place at the Science Forum for a John Roan student.*

## NEW OLD ROAN WEBSITE

The Association is developing a new Old Roan website to replace the current, rather out-of-date, one. The new site – [www.oldroanassociation.org](http://www.oldroanassociation.org) – will come on stream shortly and until then will feature a holding page.

The new site will include important information on the Association itself, access to previous Roan/Old Roan Magazines, Roan photo-galleries ranging from school, sports and drama production archives to present-day material and the ability to contact the Association directly either to update details or send through information and news.

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)



# OLD ROAN REUNI

In time-honoured fashion, the Roan Pavilion at Kidbrooke was packed last November for the Annual Old Roan Reunion dinner. It was a night to celebrate too with Old Roan President Mick Roberts, who is on the John Roan Foundation Board, speaking of the Foundation's continuing great support to students and, especially, Principal Cath Smith revealing that Ofsted had just judged John Roan to be a 'Good' school.

As President, Mick (1957-64) spoke of the three special ways he remembers, and is now involved with, Roan. First, as a pupil and the warm memories he has from his Maze Hill days. Second, for the many wonderful times he spent socialising down at the Club as an Old Roan – the great friendships he had and still has with so many ORs. And third, now through the Foundation, how he is able to put his considerable business and administrative talents to work for the benefit of the school and its students.

The Foundation funds many aspects of life at the school today – from Braithwaite visits to music facilities – and Mick spoke his pride at being



*Mick Roberts and his guests (l-r): Paul Davis, Paul Watts, Angela Langley, Gill Drury, Trevor Drury, Cath Smith (Principal), Mick Roberts, Maxine Davis, Graham Johnson, Willy Easterling and Alan Clarke*



# ON DINNER 2024

able to support this important work and keeping our Founder John Roan's legacy alive.

Cath Smith's Ofsted announcement was greeted by cheers in the Pavilion and rightly so as all involved with the school – staff, students, parents and others – have worked extremely hard in the last few years to raise expectations, standards and pride at John Roan. Cath reported the school is now forging ahead on so many fronts and its academic results have been extremely successful, with many students now going on to top universities, including Cambridge.

The 6th Form, now operating from the Maze Hill site, is growing numbers rapidly and is one of the school's particular success stories.



*Mick Roberts at the dinner*

With Toastmaster extraordinary Graham Johnson doing his stuff, Mick's Guest of Honour was Trevor Dury – 'short-term pupil and long-time Old Roan' – who entertained with jokes and stories... many of which you would never hear at a school assembly!

As every year, the evening was rounded off with a rendition of the School Song but such is the dire state of the Club's piano that not even Stuart Horsburgh's mighty musical talents could rescue the combined result – something like dying cats watching Charlton losing six nil at home to Hartlepool on a cold, soggy night. Something must be done this year to save our ears!

## 2024 ANNUAL ASSOCIATION DINNER

This year's dinner, to be held as usual at the Club Pavilion, Kidbrooke, will be held on Friday, 6 December. Details will be sent out in the normal way but anyone wishing to know more should contact Monty Smith – [montague10@btinternet.com](mailto:montague10@btinternet.com)

# BRAITHWAITE MEMORIES

*The Braithwaite Centenary feature in the last issue of the Magazine generated memories of the Hope Memorial Camp and the Lake District for many Old Roans.*

## **ALAN (MAC) MCPHERSON (1964 -71)**

The Braithwaite articles in the June 2023 edition brought the memories back for me – and inspired a journey.

Adventure. Companionship. Homesick. Dandelion and Burdock fizz. Kendal Mint Cake. Quaint villages from another time. Thin sleeping bag on wooden floors. Tin plates and cups. Tobogganing on a plate. Coledale Beck. Brown trout caught and fried. Catbells. Amazing views. Clean air. Being wet. Exhausted. OS maps and compass. Lost. Found. Blisters. Letters from home. Postcards sent.

I visited Braithwaite in 1965 in my first year at Roan and again at Whitsun 1966 aged 12, just before the World Cup. I don't remember the coach journey except it was



*Old Camp buildings from The How*

Old Roan Magazine 2024



*Coledale Inn from The How*

long: the M1 ended at Rugby in those days. After nearly sixty years, memories are faint and mostly fleeting images but I do have some photographs taken on my Brownie 127 and some by Nigel Ballantyne.

The photo of the camp buildings was taken from the top of the hill (The How) that we would slide down on plates or cardboard. I doubt that would pass a modern risk assessment. The photo of Coledale Inn was taken from the same hill. Inspired by nostalgia, I visited Braithwaite with my wife, Janet, in October 2023 and stayed at the Coledale Inn. We walked around the village and to the camp where we were lucky enough to find the caretakers Yvonne and Alan with dog Jess who invited us to look around. The bedrooms are basic but a luxury compared to the hut I slept in.

We also visited Keswick to try to find the window ledge at the railway



*The station window ledge then*

station where I had perched in 1966 exhausted after a long hike. The station closed the year after that trip and the building has been incorporated into a hotel but I could see the very same window ledge inside. Back in 1966, I was more cheerful on the coach than the boat trip around Derwent Water. The fellow on my left on the coach was Trevor Lord, who accompanied me and Andrew Megson on a day trip to Annan in Scotland to visit Megson's grandfather. Our journey from Braithwaite was by train to Penrith, then another train to Annan via Carlisle and Gretna Green. Quite an adventure for three youngsters and I wonder if it would be allowed these days.



*Alan with Trevor Lord (l) and Andrew Megson (r) on the coach*



*The station window ledge now*

I also have a postcard sent to my parents of Housestead's Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall dated Friday, 3 June 1966 saying we had visited the Wall the day before. Friday was a free day and I had stayed at camp playing table tennis and fishing in the beck. Another postcard of Bassenthwaite Lake is dated Wednesday, 1 June 1966 and says I had received two letters from home – the postal service was obviously better in those days!

Braithwaite was a wonderful opportunity and part of the fine education offered by Roan. Happy memories and I am so pleased the camp is still serving young people today.



*Alan (c) on the Derwent Water boat*

### DAVID PRESTON (1959-64)

My first connection with Braithwaite was in the early '60s. A choice was 'offered' of two weeks sailing on the Norfolk Broads or two weeks hill walking in the Lake District. I chose Braithwaite, possibly because both would undoubtedly entail getting wet during the day, but, as the sailing trip required camping under canvas, I was less likely to get wet at night if I went to Braithwaite and slept in a tin hut. My father having been at Roan when Arthur Hope was Headmaster may have been another influence.

Getting kitted-out was simpler than today. No Vibram soled boots, Gortex or Lycra (thankfully). Simply a trip to Sam's army surplus store near Woolwich Arsenal for hob-nailed boots and a cotton anorak. I see that a shop with the same name is on the same site but now sells chicken burgers. Some recollections:

- Catching my first brown trout in Coledale Beck with a worm.
- Being chased into Bassenthwaite Lake by a herd of bullocks.
- Being permanently hungry - normal for a teenage boy but alleviated

when food parcels arrived from the school after the first week.

- Annoying one particular prefect with a Latin-like chant based on his name.
- Drinking water from a beck near Coledale Hause with very unpleasant consequences.
- Limited washing facilities. Not a problem for 14-year-old boys but we must have smelt badly after two weeks!

I was unaware at the time that my Braithwaite trips were to have a long-lasting influence, but...

- I'm still attempting to catch brown trout but now try to do it properly.
- I'm still being chased by bullocks.
- I'm still walking and have been fortunate to walk most of the hilly parts of Europe and further afield.
- I've never drunk out of a mountain stream again!

Although I now live in Kent, good fortune allows me to spend as much time as I like in the Lake District. When driving past the camp I slow down and smile!

### AMANDA LIVERMORE

Braithwaite is a special place indeed.

### HELEN WEBSTER

Those holidays ignited my interest in the great outdoors - it really opened my mind to a different landscape and gave me a taste of adventure. So grateful to the teachers who gave up their time to take us, especially Lesley Neville who wanted to make sure the girls got to go too while the boys' and

girls' schools were amalgamating. Eternally grateful. Such a special place in my heart. Made new friends too as well as having fun with established friends.

### NICK WHITE

I remember it from the '70s. Hallowed turf in my humble opinion.

### SALLY BARRY

I went there on a geography field trip - was ace.

### CHRIS WENBORN

Memories of sliding down the slope towards the cabin first thing in the morning whilst there was dew on the ground... enamel plates.

### TERRY THURLEY (1966-73)

Currently up in the Lake District & popped into Braithwaite and the Hope Memorial site - bought back



wonderful memories. Whilst visiting the site, I met Daniel, Vice Principal of the school, who told me

that the school goes to the site a number of times a year. Yeah!



### MICK LEMMERMAN

Yep, I was also there in the '70s. Responsible for my love of mountains.

### TREVOR CRADDUCK

*The Braithwaite feature in the last edition included an article from Trevor, a Lakes veteran and Hope Memorial buildings benefactor. Those of us who were lucky enough to enjoy trips to Braithwaite while we attended Roan and now bask in the memories of those visits to the Hope Camp owe a debt of gratitude to Arthur Hope for his visionary investment and to the numerous trustees who, over the many years, have served tirelessly*

to ensure the facilities were not only kept in good condition but also undertook the rebuild and upgrades. The local caretakers have always kept an eye on the camp and also tend to be overlooked by those benefitting from their visit to the Lake District. Hopefully, yes, pun intended, the camp will continue to give pleasure to young visitors for another one hundred years.

### PHIL COLEMAN (1972-77)

Just brings back loads of memories of time at Roan, including my name being drawn out of the hat to not go to the Lake District, gutted and still not forgotten.

### ANTHONY FRY

Many happy times at Braithwaite as a pupil, an old boy and independently. I must go back again before I'm completely incapable of climbing even The How.

### JERRY DENNIS

Three great holidays with the school in the late '70s early '80s

### DAVID CLIFTON (1959-65)

David copied this 1962 fun photo of the Junior Braithwaite trip that year on the Old Roan Association's Facebook page.





# ALBERT ROCKS ON!

A triumphant return for Albert Lee - rock, country, you name it, world-renowned guitarist and Old Roan

Picking up from leaving the Roan Club in Kidbrooke clamouring for more when he played his first gig in October '22, Albert Lee - legendary guitarist who has played with them all - returned with his band in November to a rapturous Roan welcome.

Albert attended the boys' school in the '50s before embarking on an epic guitar career that has seen him play with the very best from Eric Clapton to the Everley Brothers, and from Emmylou Harris to Jackson Browne. And for this follow up gig, he wowed the audience with another selection of hits and crowd pleasers.

As always, Albert's guitar virtuosity was there for all to see and hear despite his dressing room being one of the changing rooms in the Pavilion which he announced were 'still freezing' since he first entered them all those years ago.

Book-ending his songs and solos with a few fond memories about his school-life, Albert also reminisced about the music legends he has played with. He spoke about special sessions with Jackson Browne, his touring with Emmylou Harris back in the '70s and meeting the famous songwriter Jimmy Webb at the Troubadour in Los Angeles and going back to his house to jam.

Perhaps Albert's most poignant memories were of his years playing with the Everley Brothers and how he first met them while playing in London. Albert



*Albert and his band - with Iain Petrie (l), Tim Hillsdon and Alan Petrie (r)*



*Albert's mighty 'axe'*



*In session - Albert rocks on!*

revealed that the two brothers, Don and Phil, didn't always see eye to eye and he had to fill in when one went missing or pulled out of performing.

So, another superb gig by Albert and his band - a final show on his UK tour - and dare we hope he might make yet another Roan return in the future? As all who were lucky enough to be there on the night will concur... we hope so!

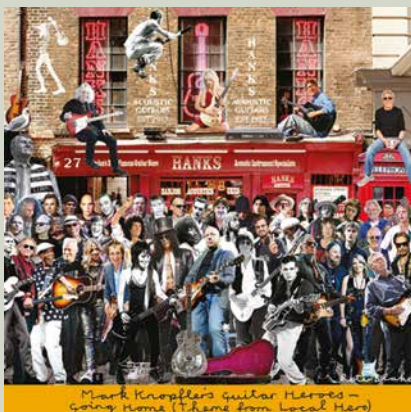
## ALBERT'S 'GOING HOME' WITH THE STARS!

Old Roan Albert Lee joined a host of guitar greats to feature on Dire Straits Mark Knopfler's charity recording of his magical hit 'Going Home', released in March.

Albert was one of a mighty who's who of guitar stars on the single in aid of Teenage Cancer Trust in the UK and Teenage Cancer America in the States.

Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Sting, David Gilmour, Peter Dinklage, Dave Mason, Ronnie Wood, Joe Walsh, Buddy Guy, the late Jeff Beck, Pete Townshend and many more all feature and appear on the

record's promotion cover! Where's Albert? Clue... he's sitting up high!



*Albert and all the greats!*

# A SPOT OF ALBERT

*Well-known to many Old Roans, Laurence 'Spot' Hughes tells of his long love of Albert Lee's music and his many gigs to see the great man.*

Like many of us born in the '50s and raised in BBC Britain, music was part of my life from an early age. You start off by listening to the stuff your parents listen to and I still love the Mozart, Vivaldi and the others my Dad, particularly, favoured. Radio was central in our household and Dad ran a speaker from the set in the kitchen as far as it would go up the stairs. I can remember lying in bed listening to Radio Luxembourg regularly fading weaker then getting stronger and playing... what? Pop I suppose.

So, I grew up in the Beatles and Stones generation and my tastes developed as I grew away from the banal, repetitive chart records towards the less middle of the road material epitomised by the John Peel Show. I still have scraps of paper with my own weekly top ten of songs making the lower ends of the charts - Tamla Motown, Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding and even The Band.

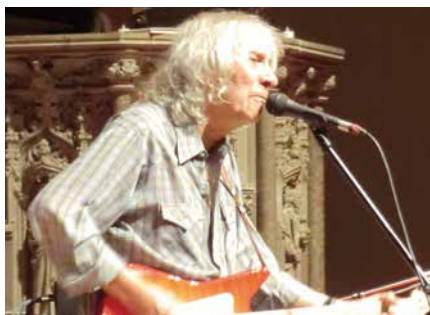
At Roan, my music appreciation really developed. I met like-minded classmates and, unfortunately, learnt that although I had a good ear for music, I didn't have the physical control, or aptitude and tenacity, to play an instrument. With Alastair Mitchell (Mitch), Barry Bartlett (sadly no longer with us) and other friends both in and out of school, we got old enough to go to gigs, mostly local like

Woolwich Poly and Goldsmiths but even into the big city - with the Blind Faith and Rolling Stones concerts Hyde Park in '69 as stand outs.

At a local youth club disco, Osmosis, at St James' Church Hall in Kidbrooke Park Road, the DJ (Big Bob Salter) played what are now classics such as High Ho Silver Lining and All Right Now for us to dance to. He also booked a couple of progressive bands like Help Yourself and Brinsley Schwarz while they were still green enough to do tiny venues.

It was a friend, Vanessa Lee, who with her sister, Becky, lived further up Kidbrooke Park Road towards the 'Sandie Shaw' end, who said to us '... my brother is playing in a group at The Black Prince...' So, I got the bus to Bexley and was introduced to Heads Hands and Feet who instantly became my favourite group. In a small venue with a small audience (no seats), they blew my socks off and I danced all evening. That was it, I was hooked. What music, what talent! After the gig, because I knew his sisters, I remember being given a lift back to Kidbrooke in Albert's red mini - three of us squeezed in the back with guitars across our laps.

Barry and I clubbed together to buy HH&F's album (still one of my favourites and still on my shelf), and we went to other gigs like Hyde Park (supporting Grand Funk Railroad), the Weeley Festival (August Bank Hols '71) and others at long forgotten venues.



*Spot's photo of Albert at a 2014 gig*

Often on my walk home from school across the Heath, I would call in at a second-hand record store at the top of the Village facing All Saints. Occasionally, I'd meet a friend there from Eltham Green School making his way home to his house near Maze Hill - Chris Difford, whose name many of you will know. Now I had a new favourite guitarist ('Our Albert' as we, possessively, called him) to look for among those listed on the album covers. This led me to find some great albums - Joe Cocker, Jackson Browne etc that are still amongst my favourites.

I love Albert's stint with The Hot Band - Emmylou Harris' backing group and there's an Old Grey Whistle Test concert on BBC iPlayer which is a delight. I also remember seeing him play at Brighton in Eric Clapton's band on the same night Liverpool won the European Cup (taped to watch later that night!).

I'm not sure when Albert started doing gigs under his own name. The first I remember was at the Woolwich Tramshed (apparently about to re-open) sometime in the '80s I suppose. Other places I have seen

him live either with his own band or with Hogan's Heroes include Dartford (twice), Ashford and Canterbury. On one memorable occasion, when visiting our daughter at Bournemouth Uni and driving through Wimborne, Dorset, I spotted a poster for a show in the town that evening and there were one or two single seats available. Of course, over the years I have got all Albert's solo albums.

In more recent years, since his 75th birthday celebrated by a show at Blackheath Concert Halls, memorable Albert gigs have included the Gulbenkian in Canterbury (postponed for a couple of years because of Covid) where I recognised his sisters after about 40 years and we caught up.

Since Mitch's move to Faversham barely five or six miles from where I now live, just like back in the '60s and '70s, we have been regular companions at gigs and sporting events. And it was at a

Dartford Working Men's Club show (the Cotton Club) when Mitch said 'wait here a bit, I just want to have a chat with Albert's management' which started the long process to get Albert and his band to play for the first time at the Roan Club.

Now he has played at the club twice - and very special gigs they have been.



*Spot's Heads Hands & Feet 1971 flyer he still has*

# ROAN THEATRE COMPANY

*Another top production from the Roan Theatre Company - this time the very popular Clue, which has almost a cult following among theatre-goers.*



Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn and written by Sandy Rustin, Clue is always a draw whenever and wherever it is staged. And the Roan Theatre Company's four-night run of the play at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham from 29 November to 2 December was absolutely no exception.

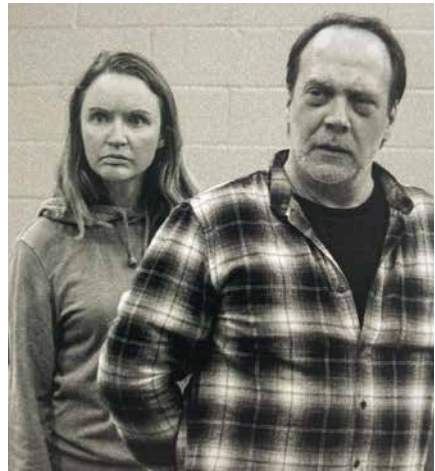
Directed by the Company's excellent Teresa Wilkins, the production was also right up there with the best as packed audiences every night lapped up the murders, madness and general mayhem as are Clue's trade-marks.

The all-action RTC ensemble kept up the pace all through as victims fell, red-herrings came and went, and the instantly recognisable names of the characters as used in the much-loved board game played to their true colours. Set in a grand house, of course there were the renowned Cluedo rooms too... the Library, Lounge, Hall...

This was a great evening's entertainment, extremely well-produced and acted, and it's no wonder the show with so many seats sold was financially successful.



*Teresa Wilkins - Clue Director*



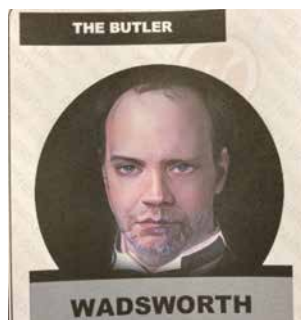
*Clue rehearsals*





### THE CLUE CAST:

Wadsworth .....	Stuart Mitchell Smith
Yvette .....	Aysev Ismail
Miss Scarlet .....	Megan Abell
Mrs Peacock .....	Sarah Coleman
Mrs White .....	Helena Houghton
Colonel Mustard .....	Jack Woolf
Professor Plum .....	Graham Johnson
Mr Green .....	Joe Wilkins
The Cook/Telegram Girl .....	Mandy Brown
Mr Boddy/Motorist .....	Ben Wilkins
Cop/Police Chief .....	Trevor Talbot
Newscaster (voice) .....	Leonard Quaife
McCarthy (voice) .....	Graham Johnson



Director .....	Teresa Wilkins
Stage Management .....	Glynis Watson / Frankie Lord / Ros Fogden
Set Design .....	Teresa Wilkins / Angie Muirhead

## ROBERT LOUIS IS COMING!

Two great Robert Louis Stevenson favourites are up next for the Roan Theatre Company - the thriller Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and the ever-popular Treasure Island.

Both productions are at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham - Jekyll and Hyde running from 24-27 July and Treasure Island between 6-9 November. The RTC's website - [www.roantheatrecompany.com](http://www.roantheatrecompany.com) - will have details.

# MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT

## A Roan Whodunnit...

Award winning West End director, Don Marwarehouse, was found brutally murdered, but who killed him? Was it Paige Turner, the budding new starlet? Or Stan Dovisch, the stage manager who has family connections. How about Kurt N Rodd, ASM and fiancé of Paige? Nick O'Teen, a rival director who may be the teensiest bit annoyed? Helen Back, once the leading lady and now relegated to the bit parts? And let's not forget Faye Tality, former movie star. Why would any of these people want the director dead?

So, the Eltham venue was packed in January for for Curtain's Down, a murder mystery night staged by the Roan Theatre Company, led by its incomparable Sarah Coleman who wrote and directed the performance. The audience loved it and here's hoping there will be another show in the future.

And the murderer?... see page 267...



*Sarah Coleman*



*Murder!*



*Suspects...*

# GRAHAM JOHNSON – A DRAMATIC LIFE



*Graham with his Noda lifetime achievement award*

*Graham Johnson (1960-67) is an Old Roan legend in his own lifetime and has recently been awarded a lifetime achievement award for his huge contribution to the stage as if to confirm it. Actor, director, all-round dramatical virtuoso, a fixture as presenter and master of ceremonies in countless Old Roan events, here Graham reflects on his dramatic life.*

I was very honoured to have received the Noda Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023. The National Operatic and Dramatic Association (Noda) represents over 2,500 groups throughout the country and is divided into regions; this award for me relates to the London region. I suppose

it recognises my stamina for having survived more than 50 years working with the Roan Theatre Company!

My first memory of 'acting' is as a small boy when my father used me as a human dummy for a ventriloquist act. His character was called Dickie Rhubarb and I can remember him performing in a street party in downtown St Johns (between Deptford and Lewisham) to celebrate the late Queen's Coronation back in the 1950s. I also remember coming downstairs when I was small wearing my father's white shirt back-to-front, interrupting a party my parents were hosting and impersonating our vicar. Unfortunately, the congregation laughed which whetted my nascent desire to 'entertain'. How irresponsible adults can sometimes be!

From there, the gap stretches to my years at Roan when I performed in a couple of George Witten's school plays, the first being Macbeth with the brilliant Ray Stone giving an electrifying performance as the eponymous tyrant. Being staged at the school by the pupils there, it meant all the parts, including Lady Macbeth and other female roles were performed by boys.

It seems strange that, with the Roan Girls' School situated a mile down the road, we didn't make use of the pupils there to play the female parts.

Adrian Jackaman played Lady Macbeth well I seem to recall, but maybe 'Come you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here' might have been more convincing coming from a voice from Devonshire Drive! I suppose we were being true to the Shakespearean tradition of an all-male cast!

After leaving Roan, I started acting with the Old Roan Dramatic Society (ORDS - as the Roan Theatre Company was known then). My first production with them was *The Housemaster* with a cast that included Steve Rider (whom I believe went on to great TV heights...). I also acted with the Greenwich Youth Theatre which was part of the newly-formed Greenwich Theatre. The site of the theatre was a bombed-out shell of an old Music Hall venue and its restoration was down to the tireless work of Ewan Hooper, a stage, film and television actor who lived locally. I remember going around houses in Charlton raising money for the project.

It became a very well-respected theatre in the late 1960s and through the 1970s with quite a few productions transferring to the West End. One in particular, *Forget-me-not Lane* by Peter Nichols, I remember having quite



*Graham (2nd r) in a Roan revue*

an impact on me and I'm pleased the Roan Theatre Company staged it last year at the Bob Hope Theatre. The original Greenwich Theatre cast included Anton Rodgers, Joan Hickson (Miss Marple), Michael Bates (It Ain't Half Hot, Mum) and a very young Stephanie Lawrence who went on to perform in *Evita* and *Starlight Express* in the West End. This gives a flavour of the quality of performers the theatre attracted.

ORDS productions continued at the School in Maze Hill until November 1993 with a performance of Neil Simon's *California Suite* which I acted in. Unfortunately, the cost of hiring the school became somewhat prohibitive and we suddenly found ourselves looking for a new home.

Luckily, Alfie and Beryl Knott, two stalwarts of the group, knew the head teacher at Eltham Green and he invited us to use the Tyler Theatre which stood in the grounds of the school. Although it was disappointing to leave



*A master of Roan ceremonies!*

the Roan School after such a long association, the Tyler had a distinct advantage - it was a theatre rather than a school hall and had raked seating included.



*Graham in Macbeth while at Roan*

The 130-plus capacity was perfect for our needs and we commenced our productions there with *Why Me*. There we remained for twenty years until the school became a Sports Academy and decided they'd rather have a gym than a theatre and demolished it. What barbarism! So, again, we were homeless.

We researched a number of locations, but none was really suitable. This is where a very



generous legacy from dear Tony Slaney saved us from collapse. Suddenly, venues that previously would have been out of reach became affordable. We settled for the Bob Hope Theatre as well as some productions at Greenwich Theatre studio. Our first production at Bob Hope was Dad's Army which was a big success with Trevor Talbot's tour de force as Captain Mainwaring.

And so we carry on! As for me, well, I'm still performing and directing. Each is enjoyable in different ways. The pressures are different too. When acting, one feels the stress before going on, but once on, the adrenaline kicks in and the nerves subside (at least that what I find). But directing is totally the reverse. Once the curtain goes up, the nerves intensify!

Why do we do it, I hear you ask? Not sure really, although for me perhaps it goes all the way back to that back to front white shirt! We do it because we enjoy it, naturally, and for the friendships we make along the way. Usually, a close bond develops between actors and director throughout a rehearsal schedule and people become lifetime friends. I've certainly made a lot of them over the years through the theatre, sadly some no longer with us. I've enjoyed working with so many, but if pushed, I'd like to mention Trevor Talbot, an exceptionally talented actor and director, and someone you can trust wholeheartedly on stage.



2007 - the Dad's Army production



*Graham (front centre) with the cast for the 1993 ORDS Music Hall*

Trevor and I have worked on a great many Roan productions over more years than we would like to own up to. But, throughout, I can't remember a single moment of falling out (which in the theatre world can be remarkable!). He's sort of semi-retired now, so his wife, Annette, sees more of him but I'm sure he, like me, has many happy memories of past productions we worked on.

The Roan Theatre Company seems in pretty good shape at the moment. At the time of writing this, we shall soon be embarking on rehearsals for *Jekyll and Hyde* at Bob Hope and later in the year I'll be directing *Treasure Island*.

Please support both productions if you can!

I'm now going to exit, stage right.



*Graham in Weekend Breaks - 2022*

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)

# OLD ROAN GOLF SOCIETY

The Old Roan Golf Society goes from strength to strength with another two successful golf days during the year – at Eltham Warren in the Summer event and the Farleigh course in November for the Winter event.

Captain for 2023 was Guy Wilkins and he has now been succeeded by Steve Nelson for 2024. Society organisation, as always, continues to be in the safe hands of Tony Nuttall.

Individual winners for the two 2023 events – Raj Prabhaker (Summer) and Andy Daniels (Winter) – both donned the now traditional 'Roan Masters' green jacket, complete with the Roan crest. And to cap their performances off, both winners also picked up a prize in the team events.

## **Summer 2023 results: The Warren**

*Individual 1st:* 40 pts, Rab

Prabhaker (handicap 20)

*Individual 2nd:* 39 pts, Robin

Brown (24)

*Individual 3rd:* 35 pts, Guy

Wilkins (19)

*Nearest the pin:* 9th, Tony Sproul (5)

*Nearest the pin:* 14th, Tom Fish (11)

*Team 1st:* 90 pts, Lucian Howlett

(12), John Stickings (24), Patrick

Gregg (28), Raj Prabhaker (20)

*Team 2nd:* 85 pts, Steve Nelson

(28), Trevor Drury (11), Robin

Brown (24), Mark Edwards (18)

## **Winter 2023 Results: Farleigh**

*Individual 1st:* 41 pts, Andy

Daniels (28)

*Individual 2nd:* 39 pts, Andy

Wishart (14)

*Individual 3rd:* 37 pts, Richard

Thomas (13)



*Summer Winner - Raj Prabhaker*



*Winter winner Andy Daniels in the green jacket picks up the trophy from Captain Guy Wilkins*

*Nearest the pin 11th:* Paul  
Witchalls (24)

*Nearest the pin 16th:* Adam  
Davies (14)

*Team 1st:* 94 pts, Andy Daniels (28),

Matt Podger (22), Tony Nuttall (12),  
Dave Nuttall (17)

*Team 2nd:* 88 pts, Nick Riley (28),  
Andy Wishart (14), Stuart Bell (14),  
Paul Newell (21)



*Winter Old Roan Golf Society players*



*Winter team winners (l-r) - Matt Podger, (Captain Guy Wilkins), Andy Daniels,  
Tony Nuttall and Dave Nuttall*



# WENDY REMEMBERS ROAN

*Wendy Berry, daughter of Lionel Berry and now in her 90s, got in touch from where she lives in Leatherhead to say how much she enjoys hearing Roan news.*

'I was so interested to read in the Magazine about Braithwaite. I remember my father (Lionel Berry, Science Teacher and later Vice- Head 1923-1963) telling us that he had to go to Braithwaite to be interviewed by Mr Hope, the Headmaster, when he applied for the post, but I didn't know that that was in the very first year of the Camp's existence.

Though he never went up there again to my knowledge, my Father was always interested in what was happening there, and my Mother and he donated two trees for some anniversary! They've probably long since disappeared! Incidentally, Father was known as 'Basher

Berry' as presumably he dished out the punishments.

The Roan School and the Dramatic Society were my father's life. We even thought it was all more important to him than his family and our home was often filled with Old Roans coming to play tennis or just visit socially, which my mother nobly involved herself with.

Though I only attended Roan whilst the school was evacuated to Ammanford for three years, I made several friends. One of whom was June Layson and I would like to hear if she is still alive. A few years ago, there was an article with news of her young brother Ronnie but I didn't ask then. I have found a very tattered photo of a group of presumably my class in Ammanford including Ronnie and June. I remember a few names.



*Lionel Berry*

I am still glad to receive the Magazine and delighted to see names that I remember, mostly from old boys who faithfully visited my Father in his last years, notably Trevor Talbot and Graham Johnson from the Dramatic Society.

I look forward to seeing the next edition to see how much news there is which rings a bell! Many thanks for continuing to send it. Don't stop!!

*Wendy also sent in her Commemorative Plate for the 1977 Tercentenary of the Roan School.*



# THE JOHN ROAN SCHOOL BOOK – A REVISED EDITION

For those of you who have not already purchased the history of the John Roan buildings called 'Building a School for the 21st Century' by Tom Davies, you may be interested in the revised version with some minor amendments recently published.

The book covers the school's rich history from its foundation, describing its life through successive phases, to the present day. It contains many fascinating illustrations (you may even be in one of them!) and covers both the Boys' and Girls' schools. It should grace the bookshelf of all Old Roans.

Those without a copy here's how to buy one:

First, make a BACS transfer of £12.70 (£10 + P&P of £2.70) to the Foundation account:

John Roan  
Foundation  
Sort code: 08-92-99  
Account no. 67319954

For the reference, use  
OR plus your initials  
i.e. Josephine Bloggs  
would be ORJB.

Then email  
Jan Farmer  
(janfarmer27@gmail.  
com) confirming that  
you have paid and  
giving your full name  
and address including  
postcode. Jan will  
then send you a copy  
by post.

Happy Reading!



*Building a School for the 21st Century by Tom Davies*



**The  
John Roan  
School  
Greenwich**

**Building a School  
for the 21st Century**

**Tom Davies**

# BIG REUNION FOR THE BOYS OF 1963-70

Paul Baker on the reunion and how it was organised

In May last year, a number of school friends from 1963-70 met at the Bexley Beer festival. Dave ('Fergy') Ferguson orchestrated the event and a photo of the attendees - Dave Ferguson, John Whitmore, John Girdwood, Chris Clare, Paul Baker, and Bryan ('Boggy') Marsh was published in last year's Magazine. We realised that it was approaching sixty years since we met in our first year at Roan and it seemed like the ideal time to arrange a reunion for a wider group from our year, particularly as we had very much enjoyed meeting up.

The aim was for an inclusive, informal event and to invite as many of the 91 people from that year we could contact. The obvious person to organise it all was Colin George who

had arranged the last get-together in 1988, but, unfortunately, we had lost contact with him a couple of years previously. We are of an age that has not fully embraced social media so contacting people would be a challenge.

John Girdwood contacted Bernie Hampton from the Association who provided the contact details for twenty people, 14 of whom we had lost touch with. Unfortunately, the spreadsheet had no email addresses and only two mobile phone numbers so landline numbers were called, followed by letters where no landline was provided or, in many cases, it was out of date. Eventually, contact was made with a further ten people, most of whom were enthusiastic about meeting. Only two people



*Class 3G*

Old Roan Magazine 2024



*Class 3M*

weren't reached – Geoff Moore and Brian Chattaway. Sadly, two people had passed away – Phil Hoare and Bob Hills. Barbara Hills wrote to give us the sad news that Bob died on 29 May 2023 from complications of Parkinson's disease which he had suffered from since he was 40.

The reunion date chosen was 27 October to enable as many people as possible to attend. Unfortunately, it wasn't convenient for Chris Finlay (whose wife had booked a cruise), Chris Spooner (as it was his 50th wedding anniversary) and Mike Stroud who had to attend an RNLI event.

The next breakthrough was tracing Colin George through his sister Lynne who, unsurprisingly, remembered several of us who went to parties at their house whilst we were at school! Colin provided an excellent document from the last reunion which had contact details for 53 people including address, phone number and details of wives

and children in many cases. As the contact details were from 1988, nearly everyone had moved, except for Derek Sanders who was at the same address. Nevertheless, there was enough information, together with 192.com, to trace some people, including Graham Balderstone, who lives in Essex, and Lindsay Walder who has moved to a house on the sea front at Mumbles, Swansea. Alan Baldwin lives in Los Altos, California after a successful career at Intel. Graham, Lindsay and Alan were added to the email distribution list that was used to communicate with everyone, although they would not be able to attend.

Remarkably, one of our number has no email address, mobile phone, TV, or internet access. Updates to Hamish Wilkie, who volunteers at a local hospital, were by letter or phone.

Brian Smith kindly forwarded an email to his brother, Richard, on our behalf. Surprisingly, Richard was on



*Class 3S*

a hike with Graham ('G') Smith & Jon ('Moll') Mallone. Richard decided not to attend but G and Moll were added to the list.

Trevor Dee contacted us after reading about the reunion. Trevor now lives about five miles from Inverness, having spent sixteen years on the Isle of Skye. His wife is disabled and, as he is her carer which makes it difficult for him to travel any distance, he wouldn't be able to attend. Trevor is also in touch with Chris Holman who is unfortunately extremely ill with dementia and in secure accommodation.

Regular email updates were sent to the ever-growing distribution list. Ideas about who else we might contact were shared, together with pleas for photos that could be projected on the evening. Eventually, fifty people were contacted. Letters to several others were unanswered, including those to Ron Skelton, Ian Whitelock, Roy Thrower, Tony Hodder, and Colin Wesbroom. For

various reasons, including health and distance, fifteen people would not attend, including Andy Gritten, Boggy Marsh (in Thailand), Steve Bower, Pete Squire, Steve Todd and Ray Yenkana (lives in Vancouver).

The final list of expected attendees on 27 October was:

### 3G

Paul Baker, Dave Boughtwood, Kevin Brewer, Mick Bullen, John Card, Chris Clare, Des Coughlan & Rosa, Dave Ferguson, Dave Franklin, Ken Freston, Colin George, John Girdwood

### 3M

Colin Harwood, Chris Howe, Chris Huggett, Jeff Laws, John Mallone, Martin McDonagh, Colin Palmer & Linda, Garry Pendergast, Steve Rance, Terry Randall, Steve Salmon & Lesley, Derek Sanders

### 3S

Graham Smith, Mike Strong, Russ Taylor, Colin Walker, Mike Walpole,

Alan Watts, Roger Wensley, Brian West, John Whitelock, John Whitmore, Hamish Wilkie

Several people had asked if it would be possible to tour the Maze Hill school in the afternoon and Keith Bradbrook was able to set this up for us. Some people took the opportunity earlier to visit the Plume of Feathers pub to remind them of times past, and then eleven of us spent a happy hour touring the old school building. It's fair to say we were all impressed by the changes that have been made since we left and the tour brought back floods of memories, especially the school hall. We were also impressed by how clean and tidy everything was, although this may have been due to it being the last day of the half-term holiday.

Following the tour, several people ate at Midpoint Restaurant, a Turkish on the riverfront, and only a short walk from Roan. Over a glass or two of wine, happy memories of our time at school were shared.

We then headed for the school field to get things set up for the evening. Jim Love, who runs the school field, was very helpful in arranging tables and ensuring the projector was working correctly, and a table was set aside to display photographs, magazines (loaned by Monty Smith), programmes from various Founders Day and Prize Day events and, wonderfully, a school cap with a Rodney badge!

People arrived promptly from 5pm and, to simplify identifying everyone, name badges were worn. Schoolday memories were soon being exchanged amid much laughter and some serious conversations. It was remarkable that everyone attended who said they were coming - in fact, attendance was over 100% as Leigh Steward joined us as well, making twelve people from each class - 3G (Green), 3M (Milne) & 3S (Skuse). A number of people had travelled a long way, but special mention should go to Garry Pendergast (Canada), Des & Rosa Coughlan (Barcelona), Chris Huggett (Inverness) and Mike Walpole (Ireland). Three wives risked



*All together on 27 October at the School Field*

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)





*At Charlton*

boredom to attend, but claimed they enjoyed the evening – Rosa Coughlan, Linda Palmer and Lesley Salmon.

There was an excellent buffet provided by Lindsey Love (Jim's wife) and once everyone was seated, Alan ('Will') Watts asked for a few moments of quiet reflection as we remembered those of our number who had sadly passed away. Eight people were named – Dave Button, Jim Hardy, Bob Hills, Phil Hoare, Mark Jones, Dave Lee, Paul Petty and Ed Saunders but there may be others we're not aware of.

As we all ate, good and past times were remembered by projecting photos that had been sent in. These included class photos from 3G, 3M & 3S and also 4A, the long all-school photos from 1966 and 1969 and various staff, Braithwaite and school cruise shots.

Later, 'team photos' were taken to remember the whole occasion –

firstly by class and then of everyone – and before the evening ended, we had a rendition of the School Song, unaccompanied but all three verses sung with gusto!

Finally, three people took the opportunity to attend the Charlton v Bolton Wanderers match on Saturday at the Valley, preceded by a tour of the Charlton Museum (which was a great success). The match, however, 0-2 to Bolton, was a great disappointment for John Girdwood, Chris Huggett & Moll who joined season ticket holders Paul Baker, Will, Fergy and Steve Bower at the game.

Judging by the emails we have now received, people thoroughly enjoyed the event and it was a pleasure to share memories with friends from long ago.

*If anyone wants digital copies of any photos or documents, please contact Paul Baker - [paul.a.baker@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.a.baker@btinternet.com)*

# REUNION... PIECE OF CAKE!

Eleven 1973-80 Roan girls from form 1B had their cake and ate it when they got together for a highly enjoyable reunion at the Cosy Club in Guildford in September last year.

Celebrating 40 years since they left school, together with a whole host of old photographs and memorabilia, all shared with a backdrop of 70s music, there was a special cake with the Roan crest on it. And if that wasn't enough, a game of Pass the Parcel was played with a prize of a school uniform-matching, bottle-green pair of pants!

The afternoon sparkled with many stories from their school days, and the former Roan girls rounded off their reunion with a Power Point presentation of their time at school and of the various trips they went on.

One of the group, Catherine Stock (née Lakin), said: 'We all really enjoyed the occasion and are planning to meet up again this Summer!'



*The Roan Girls of 1973-80, (l-r): Alison Thompson (née Brown), Pat Parsons, Joanne Land (née Garrett), Kay Gilyard (née Savage), Miriam Donaghue, Kate Stacey (née Reeve) Catherine Stock, Amanda Davies (née Williams), Shalini Gupta, Ruth McGregor, Lesley Marden (née Dean)*

# FRANKIE'S BACK WITH THE GIRLS

*Frankie Lord (Frances Ladd at Roan Girls from 1970-75) tells of how much meeting up with her former school friends has meant to her.*

June 1975 was probably the last time I saw my classmates at Roan Girls, but I had been constantly reminded of them and the school since I moved back to the area in 2015. More than the physical location of Roan, my memories of my time there had always been a big part of my thoughts and of who I turned out to be.

I didn't particularly take my education that seriously at the time but, nevertheless, the ethos of the school and its such inspirational and supportive teachers somehow managed to set me on the right path and gave me the confidence to enjoy life and the help to succeed in most of the things I have achieved.



*Frankie Lord*

More importantly, my sense of humour, fun and creativity evolved and stayed with me with thanks to my classmates.

Alison Chumley-Towner in my year found me on Facebook in 2021 to let me know that dear Miss Pollock, one of my very favourite teachers, had sadly passed away. I sent a message of condolence and shortly afterwards Alison confirmed that we must be the same Frances and Alison, just with slightly different surnames.

With Covid restrictions eased but still keeping us all on our toes in the early part of 2021, the Roan Girls arranged for me to join them in St James Park, London. I stood outside Charing Cross Station, the designated meeting point, watching everyone passing by (some in masks) to hopefully recognise and be recognised by the friends I hadn't seen for nearly 47 years!

Immediately putting me at ease, Alison, Jane, Susan, Cheryl, and Lesley arrived and we set off for a chatty walk to the Royal Park! It was the best day! It couldn't have gone any better and I could only hope that I might be invited to meet up with them again in the future.

Miraculously and very generously, the girls have included me in so many of their days out and various get-togethers since, adding culture, best locations for eating packed lunches (whatever the weather)



*Back row: Lesley Tricker (nee Ferguson), Cheryl Allen (nee Nicks), and Frankie Lord (nee Frances Ladd). Front row: Jane Harnden (nee Sackett), Susan Johnson, and me Alison Chumley-Towner (nee Chumley).*

and most of all, their kindness, huge sense of fun and zest for living life as only ex Roan Girls can do.

I have met up with others from my year, Anna, Gaynor, Leslie and Irene to name a few and am

looking forward to meeting more. I now have new memories and so look forward to continuing this wonderful and so unexpected reunion.

Thanks Girls!

## FLASHBACK! HELLO & GOODBYE...

The Roan girls in Frankie Lord's year at the Girls' School, 1970-77, celebrated twenty years on leaving Devonshire Drive on the day of Princess Diana's funeral - 6 September 1997.

Despite how the country was gripped that day, 26 Roan girls attended the reunion at the Roan Club in Kidbrooke and shared their school memories into the wee hours.

The year group are still going strong today and, as you can see above, meet up regularly.



*Mrs Leach, Girl's School Music Teacher at the 1997 reunion*



# MAG BRINGS THE BOYS TOGETHER

*A piece in the 2023 Magazine has prompted a successful Roan reunion. Steve Baker (1972-79) sent in a photo featuring Roan boys in a 1979 prize-giving and hoped reproducing it would help bring some old school-mates together again. Well it did – quite a few in fact. Here's Steve's report on the occasion.*



*The prize-giving photo in the 2023 issue*

Following the request put out in the 2023 Magazine, we were all amazed and delighted at the uptake. Must have been something Mrs Mullins put into those school dinners to have created bonds that run so deep!

Eighteen individuals from Form 1H (tutored by the consummate gentleman 'Reggie' Hoare) responded after a gap of almost 50 years. As a result, a dark Winter's evening at the Club Pavilion in January was brightened considerably by the first of what we hope will be many get-togethers. Wonderful hours were spent exchanging stories that spanned the many years since we were at school together.

In our group photo, from left to right, are: Graham Lawrence, Phil Savage,

Simon Bishop - at the back behind Dave Sears - Sat Chana, Chris Lay, me - Steve Baker, Murray Spencer, Gary Micklewhite, Phil Coleman, Garry French, Roger Lade (School Captain in 1978/9), Martin Stone and Peter Bush. Messrs Beaurain, Ewin, Oakley, Sales and Wilmshurst, were all away on their travels but hope to make the next assembly.

Special thanks to Jimmy for being such an excellent host and for arranging the sustenance.

If there are any pupils, teachers or members of any of the Old Boys' sports teams from the 1972-79 era who recognise any of the above names and who would like to join any future gatherings, please get in touch with Steve Baker on 07865 497613 or [smbaker04@gmail.com](mailto:smbaker04@gmail.com).





# ROAN AND BEYOND

Alan McPherson (1964-71) on his Roan memories and busy life after leaving school

Strange to think this article will trigger memories in someone who knew the young person I was half a century ago and will be read by others who were not born then. As I write, I can 'see' as if in a film the Headmaster's office for my pre-school interview with Mr Garstang while my mother sat behind.

I was one of Plumstead's Timbercroft Primary School's contingent to ascend to Roan in 1964 having passed the 11 plus – Graham Callow, Trevor Daniels, John Dennis, Peter Wild and me. We met again in June 2014 for a Timbercroft re-union at Shrewsbury House. Two things struck me, apart from how well we had all aged after 50 years: I was the only one still working full-time and John Dennis talked about the Old Roan Association. It was a few more years before I subscribed to the Magazine and each edition brings memories flooding back.

I missed the first week at Roan in 1964 after falling from a tree the day before school started that September, sustaining a nasty double compound fracture of my right forearm that required three operations. I developed the ability to write left-handed, a degree of ambidexterity I retained through life. I was still expected to do



*Alan taking the register*

the cross country run around Greenwich Park with my arm in plaster. Mr Hopwood said: 'You've broken your arm not your leg. Off you go'. I was in IIIB that first year with Nigel Ballantyne who made me form captain. There is a photo of me taking the morning register.

Living in Plumstead meant catching buses to and from school. There were many options that were explored over the years: the 53 from Plumstead Common to Blackheath, or the 51 and change in Woolwich, or the 122 from Plumstead bus garage via Lakedale Road. All of them involved walking, running, chasing and jumping on and off bus platforms. The top deck of the bus was also the place I learned Latin and French vocabulary.

Despite being an accomplished sprinter at primary school, I was

not sporty at Roan. I joined the Curlew Rowing Club at Greenwich following an invitation read out at assembly and enjoyed the drama of rowing on the Thames, but not the cold and the mud. I also managed to get a javelin through my ankle at the sports ground - poor Mr Thorpe was castigated for the lack of supervision. I remember the long weekly walk from school to the sports ground down Kidbrooke Park Road, sometimes with David 'Chip' Porter who lived along there and was a good friend.

Other memories: free school milk until 1970; John Dennis reading the football report at Monday assembly; the blue cap button of my house Rodney; Nigel Ballantyne unfolding from his Mini after parking against the playground wall; Founder's Day at St Alfege Church; a visit to the Planetarium at the Royal Observatory; the double staircase at the Maze Hill main entrance; an exhilarating ride on the back of John Hollands' Norton 750 Commando across Blackheath and over Shooter's Hill one lunchtime.

My poor A level results in Economics, English Lit and History could be attributed to exam-phobia and an obsession with playing bridge. Paul Bienkov, Ian Williams and I played at any and every free moment. After A levels, seven of us celebrated by travelling in two cars to camp around Weymouth, Torquay and Newquay. Ian Williams took his mother's car and Phil

Pearce had his own. The other campers were Paul Bienkov, Trevor Puddifoot and Tony Burgess, plus a friend of Paul and Ian.

From Roan, I joined The Electricity Council, then at the apex of the highly structured and bureaucratic nationalised electricity industry. I was sponsored for a four-year thick sandwich Business Studies degree at Ealing Tech, now Middlesex University, which meant I was paid to go to college. My first work project was to write a brief on electric cars for Frank Dobson, later an MP and Secretary of State for Health under Tony Blair. The photo of me taken for a graduate recruitment fair at Olympia shows me still wearing my school tie with pride. I graduated in 1975 and was awarded my degree by the late Vic Feather, General Secretary of the



*Alan at Olympia wearing his school tie*



*Vic Feather presenting Alan's degree*

TUC, and a man of considerable political influence in those times.

I remained with The Electricity Council specialising in Industrial Relations and specifically written industrial agreements. I was the calculator of national pay settlements and was at ACAS in the mid-'70s supporting the negotiating team across from Frank Chapple (later Baron Chapple of Hoxton) and the electricity unions when the legendary beer and fish and chips arrived late in the evening. A settlement was reached and there was no electricity strike. During that period, I spent a month at Didcot Power Station in Oxfordshire for industrial experience and later worked there in the '90s as the Personnel Manager.

I married my childhood sweetheart,

Janet, in 1976 and we have two daughters and a granddaughter.

In the '80s, I moved to Paternoster Square by St Paul's as Industrial Relations Officer at the Central Electricity Generating Board, a period that included the national miners' strike. I briefed senior management every morning on the flying pickets at power stations, while the CEGB endeavoured to keep the lights on, and collected food door-to-door for the Kent miners in the evenings. In 1988, I got my first company car when I moved to CEGB South Eastern Region at Bankside where I was responsible for industrial relations from Dungeness to The Wash to Southampton.

The CEGB was closing old power stations and the practice was to

announce the news formally at site meetings of a few hundred power station workers. One Friday, I visited Richborough in Kent in the morning where they were very polite, and Northfleet on the Thames in the afternoon when most of the audience had been in the pub. Tough times. That industrial evolution was replicated on a grand scale when the Government privatised the entire industry in 1989/90 and thousands lost their living one way or another. The CEBG was transformed into private companies with global ambitions: National Power, PowerGen and Nuclear Electric. I was allocated to National Power as CEBG South Eastern Region evaporated overnight.

I reinvented myself as a Personnel Manager, becoming a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development, and helped set-up the new National Power offices in Swindon. We moved home from Welling to Wootton Bassett (now Royal) and then to Wantage. It was a difficult time as the organisation downsized, rightsized, and downsized again and again with Personnel as both the instrument and recipient of organisational change. Nobody was immune. I found a reprieve by becoming the first Personnel Manager at a power station: Didcot A. But it was a short respite from rationalisation and, when that job disappeared in 1996, I followed the international path and joined a small team that took over the running of the first (and

only) privatised power station in Pakistan: Kot Addu. My two years in the Punjab were an incredibly rich experience – a story for another day perhaps.

On my return to the UK, I was appointed Head of Training and Development. A year later, the National Power divested into a UK and an international company with no need for an internal training function. So, I made my last team redundant – including myself after 27 years' service. The anticipated glittering prizes of internationalisation proved to be a poisoned chalice for once-proud British energy companies: there are no longer any UK-owned large energy companies to the best of my knowledge.

After a year's sabbatical, I reinvented myself again as a Human Resources consultant. One of my first contracts was with the world's largest natural resources company, based in London. It was an Australian company with a can-do culture. And I did, acquiring the sobriquet 'the Wise One' while on a development programme in Melbourne. I was subsequently given HR responsibility for the company's operations in the Middle East and travelled to Iran, Syria, the UAE, Pakistan and Algeria, while having business trips to Trinidad, Australia, and the United States. When a suicide bomber terrorised our Pakistan team while at a church service in Islamabad, the expat team relocated to a new office



*Alan today*

that I had set-up in Dubai with the support of an Emiratee sponsor. At some point, I became an employee again although I maintained my limited company for several years - just in case.

In 2003, I was asked to support the company's Liverpool Bay oil and gas business operated out of an office in North Wales for 3 months. I worked there for 12 years, commuting Monday to Friday from Oxfordshire with a flat in Chester. I was able to bring all my varied experience to that business and created a progressive HR culture that I am proud of. Part of that culture was integrating HR with the operational business and more than once I completed the offshore survival course including escaping from a helicopter airframe upside down under water with just my own breath in the rebreather. Happy days.

Eventually, the UK business was sold to a European global energy company and travelling to Milan with them I did my best to assimilate to the new expectations. But of all the cultures I had worked with over the years, this was the most challenging. Work became a chore and was no longer much fun.

Then I attended a reunion with my Timbercroft and Roan pals from half a century before, and realised I was the only one still pursuing a career. My final HR challenge was to negotiate a golden goodbye.

I have been very happily retired since 2015. I am a curious and strategic school governor at several schools (Chair of two) and Secretary and Treasurer for the local allotment association where I have three plots. More recently, I have felt compelled to commit my memories to paper, including reaching out to friends and acquaintances from the past. I am also putting names of the 1964-71 Roan cohort to faces in the 1969 school photograph: please contact me on [alanmcp@aol.com](mailto:alanmcp@aol.com) if you're interested.

If there is one thing that I have learned, it is that life is short and every moment counts, especially the companionship of like-minded people who create the experiences and memories, good and bad, that enrich life. Make the most of your memories - before they are lost.

ALAN MCPHERSON



# THE BOY WHO UNWITTINGLY SHAPED MY LIFE

*Derek (Del) Dreher (1949-56) remembers a Roan contemporary for special reasons and looks back at his important career.*

The sad news conveyed by Nettie Pollard in the last Magazine (2023) of the death of John Marshall, my contemporary, struck the most powerful of personal chords.

My father, an intelligent and well-read man, was forced by his father to leave school early, despite pleadings from his Headmaster and teachers. This left him with a keen sense of embitterment. He was in no doubt that this had significantly impaired his life prospects thereafter. So, when I successfully passed the 11 plus and secured a place at Roan, he made it abundantly clear that I had to seize to the full the opportunity this offered and to pursue the key objective of educational success relentlessly.

From the outset, news of the extraordinary cleverness of John Marshall ran through all three classes of the 1949 intake (I was in the Third Form; he in 3A). For the next 3 years, through sustained hard work, I was fortunate to come top of the class throughout and, unfortunately for me, my father saw this as the normal template for success. When John Marshall and I came together in the 4th Remove year, inevitably he finished top and I came second. My father was incredulous, deaf to my perfectly rational argument

that John Marshall was, overall, simply cleverer than I and that finishing second was a really decent result. He argued that I had taken my eye off the ball by playing too much sport (unfair actually) and, in consequence, severely limited my activities that summer holiday. But to be entirely fair to him, he was always supportive and regularly came to watch me play football and cricket. He was full of admiration for the unfailing friendliness and good manners of the boys he met.

John Marshall and I went our separate ways in the 5th Form (I Modern 5th - he Science 5th). After good CGE results, I entered the Modern 6th and at the end of a productive first year I was rated by the daunting Headmaster, HW Gilbert, and form master Stan Beale, as a strong potential candidate for Cambridge. On being asked by my father what I proposed to do for a career after Cambridge (if I ever got there), I was unable to say. On reflection, this, combined with my father seemingly still being unable to come to terms with the John Marshall defeat, sealed my fate.

My father, without bothering to consult me first, went to the school and saw Gilbert. He insisted that I be entered for the Civil Service Executive Officer competition on the



*Del (standing, 2nd r) in the OR Cricket 1st XI - mid '50's*

basis that this would offer secure employment with some prospects for advancement. I suppose that I could have dissented but this would have caused intolerable tension at home. So, I sat the exam, secured an interview and was accepted for the War Office. I left Roan with 4 good A levels, having had the immense privilege of captaining the football, cricket and tennis First Teams and having played a number of games of football for London Schools. I had also been the grateful captain of Drake House.

In retrospect, my father's intervention with Gilbert was entirely vindicated. After National Service in the RAF, where I was trained as a Russian linguist to enable me and other National Service colleagues to monitor Soviet air activity in the Warsaw Pact countries (and accumulating an A level in Russian along the way), I was fortunate to

have a successful and rewarding career in the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury. I finished as an Assistant Under Secretary of State (just below Sir Humphrey) passing many of my Oxbridge rivals along the way. I was fortunate to have had a series of challenging assignments, including the role of Political Adviser to the Commanding General in Northern Ireland at a time of high IRA terrorism (not much fun for my wife and a very young son and daughter); being part of a team engaged in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union; advising the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the replacement of the Polaris nuclear deterrent with Trident; managing the Defence Budget; and running the 4-nation development programme for the Eurofighter (now the Typhoon fast jet). These and other roles meant working with a succession of Cabinet Ministers, conflicting

experiences which could fill a book on its own. And after all that, I am still employed as a Government consultant.

Like many others, I married a Roan girl who had a fulfilling career as a teacher. I had a number of great years playing football and cricket for the Old Roan – with terrific footballers including: John Leach, Peter Duffield, Alan Dawe, Bo Shepherd, Tony Rickson, Fred Jacobs, Bob Grimwood, Paul Petty, Jimmy Russon and latterly the legendary Joe Broadfoot, whose skill as a cricketer matched his footballing brilliance. I also played a number of games for the Amateur Football Association. It was a particular privilege to have played with so many stellar Old

Roan cricketers of the likes of John Williams, Peter Williams, Bryan Endersbee, Graham Chambers, Alan Dawe, Terry Barry, Ken Farrer and John Huntley (who often graces the Magazine with moving and literate tributes to those sporting luminaries who regrettably are no longer with us.)

As numerous articles in the Magazine attest, some enjoyed the Roan experience and others did not. I am firmly in the former camp. Friends for life were made and the school, through the excellence of its teachers (Binnie, Morey, Beale, Whitten, Hopwood, Westmarland et al) established the educational and moral base for a rewarding life. That has certainly been so for me and I will be forever in Roan's debt.



*The 1972 Old Roan 1st XI football – Del (front, far r)*

# KEITH'S 'REUNION' CHARITY GIG!

Stuart Horsburgh and his band helps Keith Banks raise over £1000 for Alzheimer's

Keith Banks (1966-73) staged a charity music gig near his local village in Essex and organised an Old Roan 'reunion' at the same time.

Held at Abberton near Keith's home in Peldon in March, the successful event was in support of the Alzheimer's Association as Keith's wife Jane has suffered from the condition for several years.

Keith invited Stuart Horsburgh from his school year to bring his band, DNA, for the gig and local villagers danced the night away to a mix of Beatles, Rolling Stones and many other classic sounds.

'What a great night!' said Keith, 'And I'm so pleased with the amount of money we raised for the cause.'

As the hits kept on coming, Stuart, mainly on keyboards, took the lead with a thumping sax for Madness's One Step Beyond. His band included Chris Pike (guitar/vocals), Neil Anzani (bass/vocals) and Andy Burring (drums).

There was a wider OR 'reunion' with Ron Edworthy and Keith Bradbrook, both from Keith and Stuart's year, also at the gig.

'Having Stuart play was terrific and with all of us there it was an Old Roan night too.' Keith added.

Stuart's band will be in action again during the year. There's a jazz trio in July, trad jazz in August, a ceilidh band in September and a Christmas pop hits singalong in December.



*Ron, Stuart and the two Keith's at the village gig - Keith Banks (r)*

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)

# GREENWICH PARK REVEALED

*Greenwich Park is very dear to Old Roans and the John Roan students of today – boys and girls alike! Across the road from the Maze Hill site, the Park has for decades been Roan's next-door neighbour – almost an extension of the school itself. A great deal of the school's past and social history is linked to its iconic open spaces, avenues, trees, gardens, secret places and Greenwich Park's own glorious past – so much of it associated with time and the exploration of the heavens through the Royal Observatory.*

*Whether Old Roans have slogged across it running the gruelling cross-country course, had lessons in it, walked through it back and forth to school or to St Alfege Church for Founder's Day, played in it at lunch-times or after school, held reunions, had romantic liaisons or got up to a hundred other things in it, Greenwich Park is a back-drop to countless Roan memories.*

*So, Old Roans will be very interested in the Park's considerable renovations to it in recent times. The important £12 million project, Greenwich Park Revealed, began in 2021 and has been nearing completion especially with the huge groundworks to restore the Grand Ascent - the stepped, grassy hill up to General Wolfe's famous statue.*

*Here the Magazine takes a look at the project in Roan's back-yard.*

From his lofty position on top of his weather-beaten white stone plinth beside the Royal Observatory and the Meridian Line, General Wolfe's statue looks out on an incredible panorama of London. The vast urban sprawl of the Capital spreads out as far as the eye can see – the Thames, the City, and, even with



*The new Grand Ascent in preparation*  
Old Roan Magazine 2024





*A panorama of the works under-way from General Wolfe's statue*

the addition of huge modern skyscrapers and office blocks, there still is St Paul's Cathedral in the distance.

Thousands upon thousands of visitors every year flock to the park for the view and to soak up the Park's incredibly rich past – time, telescopes, space, Longitude, clocks, GMT. All that and the multi-layered history of Greenwich itself, from royal palaces to the Old Naval College, Nelson, the Painted Hall, Cutty Sark and the Thames.

Now, and since 2021, the Park has been focussing more on itself, with a detailed programme of important groundworks, renovations and activities – Greenwich Park Revealed. Apart from new initiatives such as a new learning centre, trails and play areas, arts and culture events, archaeology projects and on-going tree and planting works, major landscape restorations and developments have been progressing. Across the Park, there has been work on the Wilderness area behind the flower gardens and the gardens and its lake themselves, Conduit Avenue and head, Flamstead House, One Tree Hill, the Reservoir, tree avenues and General Wolfe's statue and viewing area.

A wonderful new community café has been opened just inside the Park entrance towards Blackheath from the Maze Hill school. Named after Igotius Sancho, a writer and composer who once lived near Greenwich Park and in 1774 became the first black Briton known to vote in a general election, the café was previously a private, residential lodge and now sits in a newly landscaped space called Vanbrugh Yard.

Work began last year to restore the eroded 17th century Baroque landscape viewed from the Queen's House up to General Wolfe – the Grand Ascent – and has been nearing completion. This is re-introducing the view created for Charles 2nd and involves re-forming the iconic grassed steps complete with new avenues of trees.



*3D image of how General Wolfe's statue area will look*

King Charles remodelled the Park to a formal design by André Le Notre – gardener to Louis XIV of France and the landscape architect who designed the gardens of the Palace of Versailles. The tree avenues were originally planted with elm trees that were wiped out by Dutch elm disease. They were re-planted with poor-quality Turkey Oak trees in the 1970s and the works involve removing the damaged ones and planting more resilient, semi-mature lime and elm trees.

The General Wolfe statue area has been re-paved for a new, fresh look and all the major restorations are available to view on the Park's website – go to [www.royalparksofgreenwich.org](http://www.royalparksofgreenwich.org) to start – which includes a fascinating 3D fly-through showing how the finished project will look.

## GREENWICH PARK'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The iconic view across London from Greenwich Park has produced numerous paintings, drawings and photographs over centuries. And, images from different times have allowed the Greenwich Park Revealed team to track the ways the park's treescape has changed since the 17th century.

*Photos: Royal Museums Greenwich, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.*



*JMW Turner's view from Greenwich Park (JMW Turner, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)*



*View to the Queen's House and the Royal Naval College - St Paul's Cathedral in the distance*

'We are extremely lucky in Greenwich to have a World Heritage site right on our doorsteps,' says Denise Hyland, Chair of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Group on a video explaining the project. 'It is like a living museum. So much history, the landscaping is beautiful and the views are completely iconic.'

Denise adds that the Park is returning to its hey-day of the 1600s, and when you think that John Roan founded his school in Greenwich from 1677, this demonstrates how long the Park-Roan links have been running

Greenwich Park Manager Graham Dear says: 'We're starting a programme of replanting with disease-resistant elms and flowering lime trees so that our much-loved park will have avenue trees for another 400 years.'

## ROAN AND GREENWICH PARK



### CROSS COUNTRY...

Garry (Pud) Pendergast winning his third Senior House cross country race in 1970. The race circled the Park finished along the avenue of trees over the wall from the Maze Hill school.

### REUNIONS...

The Roan Girls' School class of 1962 at their reunion in August



1985 at General Wolfe's statue: Brenda Purkiss, Marilyn Judson, Gillian French, Jacqueline Lelliot, Christine Clements, Paulette Roiz de Sa: Linda Spring, Catherine Saltmarsh, Jane Hackett, Barbara Bray, Pat O'Brien, Diana Montague, Yvonne Roiz de Sa and Mary White.



### TONY SLANEY...

Our late, great and extraordinarily generous Old Roan benefactor took this traditional General Wolfe statue photo back in 1974 – no Canary Wharf Tower and gigantic office blocks in view across at Docklands then.

# ROAN'S PAGES OF HISTORY

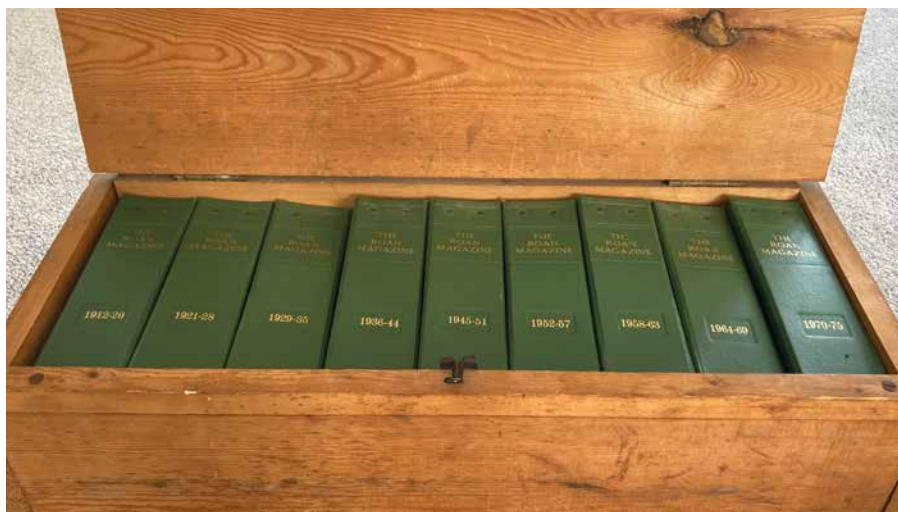
There had been various Roan publications at times in the past, but in March 1912, the year The Titanic sunk, the first edition of the Roan School's Magazine was published. Sixteen pages of the 'Head Master's' letter, House, cricket, swimming, football, Debating Society and Aero Club news, the Roan Magazine also included some 'Old Boys' Notes and the first instalment of a list of all Association members... with their addresses!

Just over 112 years later the Magazine is still running - now the Old Roan Magazine, with it having undergone the odd change of name and direction on the way.

What a vast store of Roan history is stashed away on all those

editions and pages. Countless sports reports, Braithwaite visits, school dramas and heads and teachers passing through. A rich tapestry of the Old Roan Association's past too, right up until today - the Presidents, the dinners, the sport, the reunions and, sadly, the continuing ranks of former Roan boys and girls now longer with us and who are remembered as part of those years gone by.

Shortly after I took over as Editor of the Old Roan Magazine for the December 2020 issue, I took possession of a long, heavy wooden box about the size of a cat's coffin. Inside, there were nine, bulky green binders chock full of Roan Magazines - from the first March 1912 edition to the much



*The cat's coffin... green binders of Roan Magazines from 1912-1975*

thicker November 1975 issue, which in its first few words was lamenting that this was 'almost certainly the last edition in its present form'.

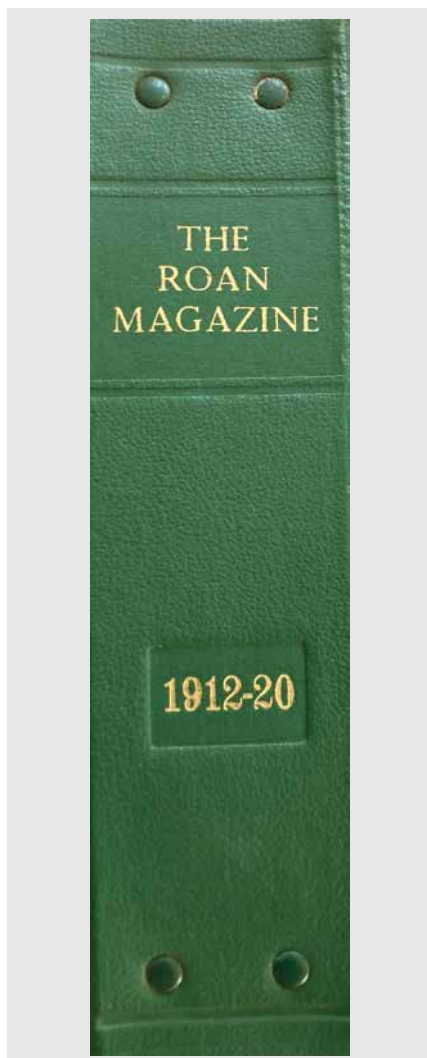
Of course, the Magazine in all that time had been produced by the School. Yet, through some different guises, and for many years now published by the Association, the long and proud history of the Magazine has been maintained. The massive contents of the cat's coffin doesn't tell all – for the complete set from after '75 to the present day to help with the Braithwaite centenary article in the last edition, I had to rely on Neal and Hilary Haslam (previous keepers of the box!) who kindly proffered a bag full of Magazines, Old Roan Chronicles and other material to tell the full story to the present day.

Such is the value of the Roan gold-dust held in all these pages of history that the Association is seeking to load them onto the new Old Roan website now being produced ([www.oldroanassociation.org](http://www.oldroanassociation.org) - see page 15) as an archive assessable to all. The whole thing will take a little time but, in addition at least to the most recent four issues, we will start with the earliest editions and work through.

The Old Roan publication of today will continue to highlight the Magazine's precious archive in each issue, but here we take a look at that first 1912 edition, reminding

ourselves of how things got started. The articles include how the Roan House system began and the origins of the Old Roan Association itself.

## THE EDITOR



*The Magazine's first issues in a binder*

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)



## ROAN'S PAGES OF HISTORY

# The First Issue

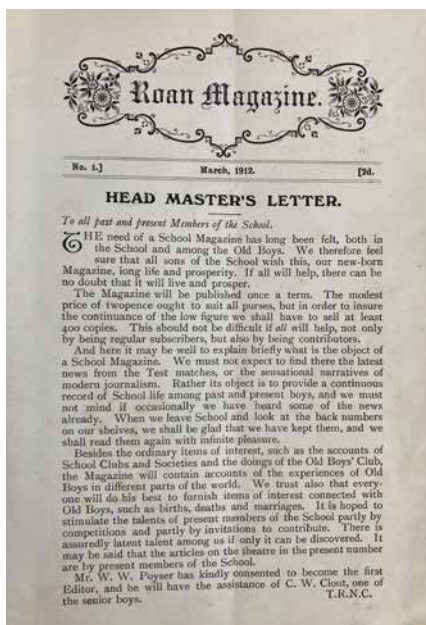
*Writing on the first page of the Roan Magazine's first edition in March 1912, T.R.N. Crofts (MA) submitted his 'Head Master's Letter'.*

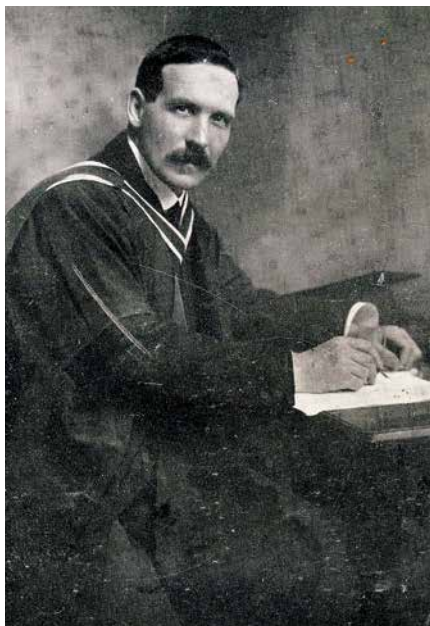
To all past and present Members of the School.

The need for a School Magazine has long been felt in the School and among Old Boys. We therefore feel sure that all sons of the School wish this, our new-born Magazine, long life and prosperity. If all will help, there can be no doubt that it will live and prosper.

The Magazine will be published once a term. The modest price of twopence ought to suit all purses, but in order to insure the continuance of the low figure we shall have to sell at least 400 copies. This should not be difficult if all will help, not only by being regular subscribers, but also by being contributors.

And here it may be well to explain briefly what is the object of a School Magazine. We must not expect to find there the latest news from the test





*T.R.N. Crofts, Roan Head 1910 - 1915*



*W.W. Poyser - the first Editor*

matches, or the sensational narratives of modern journalism. Rather its object is to provide a continuous record of School life among past and present boys and we must not mind if occasionally we have heard some of the news already. When we leave School and look back at the back numbers on our shelves, we shall be glad that we have kept them, and we shall read them again with infinite pleasure.

Besides the ordinary items of interest, such as accounts of School Clubs and Societies and the doings of the Old Boy's Club, the Magazine will contain accounts of the experiences of Old Boys in different parts of the world. We trust also that everyone will do his best to furnish items of interest connected with Old Boys, such as births, deaths and marriages. It is hoped to stimulate the talents of present members of the School partly by competitions and partly by invitations to contribute. There is assuredly latent talent among us if only it can be discovered. It may be said that the articles on the theatre in the present number are by present members of the School.

Mr W. W. Poyser has kindly consented to become the first Editor, and he will have the assistance of C. W. Clout, one of the senior boys.

T. R. N. C.

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)

## ROAN'S PAGES OF HISTORY

# Old Boys' Notes

*A number of pages to the end of the first Roan Magazine are devoted to news about Old Boys, and the first part of a list of all Association Members beginning with Ayling, L. W. and ending with Nimmo, L.N., who both hailed from Catford.*

When an Old Boy begins to experience a feeling of pride for the School that knocked him into shape and fitted him for a larger sphere of action, when he can look back with pleasure to the careless freedom and associations of school life, and when on referring to his late masters he uses the prefix of courtesy, then it is that he becomes imbued with the spirit which is the foundation of Old Boys' clubs. The spirit of the Old Roan Association is to foster, and through the medium

of social and other activities, to create a healthy interest in the School and in the doings of those who bear the 'hall mark' of 'Roan'. School life at best is very short. The majority of us during our School days could not quite grasp the general scheme of education nor, if we could help it, did we smooth the paths of those who 'gloomed our souls with Algebra and things'. But in that gradual journey through the classrooms, life-long friendships were begun, and if for no other reason than to strengthen these links, an Old Boys' Association should be one of the School Institutions.

The coming of our Association has long been delayed, but already its members number over 180, including Old Boys who are in

## THE 'HOUSE' SYSTEM

The Headmaster has recently introduced the House System with the object of increasing and fostering the Corporate life of the School. The system is briefly this: the School is divided into six 'Houses', each containing about 60 boys. During his School career a boy remains in the same House and under the same House Master. Though one of the main objects is to build up health rivalry between the different Houses by means of inter-House matches and games, it must also be understood that in everything that concerns school life it is intended that members of the same House should feel not only a love for their School but also for their House, and must be zealous for its welfare.

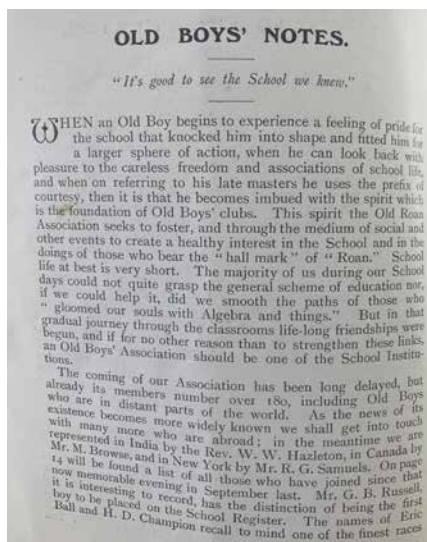
The Houses have been named from five Greenwich heroes - Wolfe, Nelson, Raleigh, Drake and Rodney.

distant parts of the world. As the news of its existence becomes more widely known we shall get into touch with many more who are abroad.'

*The notes go on to tell of how the Association came into being.*

The seed was sown on a certain day in July, 1911, when a team of Old Boys met and defeated the School Cricket Eleven, and during the tea we had together after the match, Mr Crofts suggested that a meeting should be held at the School some time in September to discuss the whole matter. This meeting was attended by a very representative gathering, and after a general discussion in which the speeches of the Old Boys revealed latent powers of oratory, the Association was founded, Mr Crofts elected President, and a Committee appointed.

*And so followed the first Annual Dinner at the Holborn restaurant on December 16th.*



*Old Boys' Notes*

Many circumstances combined to make it a most successful and enjoyable gathering, and one which will hold a permanent place in the memories of all who were present. The company... numbering well over ninety, represented a long period in the life of the School.

## THE AERO CLUB.

THE School Aero Club has made steady progress since its formation in November, 1910. The first models built managed with difficulty to make flights of 50 yards, but now distances of 200 yards are easily obtained. With several improvements recently effected it is hoped to attain still greater distances up to 880 yards.

Our flying meetings are held at Kidbrook, on the ground of the Aero Models Association. Arrangements are being made to hold two meetings before the end of this Term, and all the Club members hope to be out frequently during the summer.

# ZIG ZAG WOOFERS AND PEACOCK EYES

## The Roan School for Girls' Magazine

In a collaboration between the Art and English departments, the Roan Girls' School produced a lively and modern-styled magazine during the 1970s. Full of amazing drawings, poems, stories, some news and produced in landscape format, the publications are a fascinating insight into life for girls at Devonshire Drive at that time.

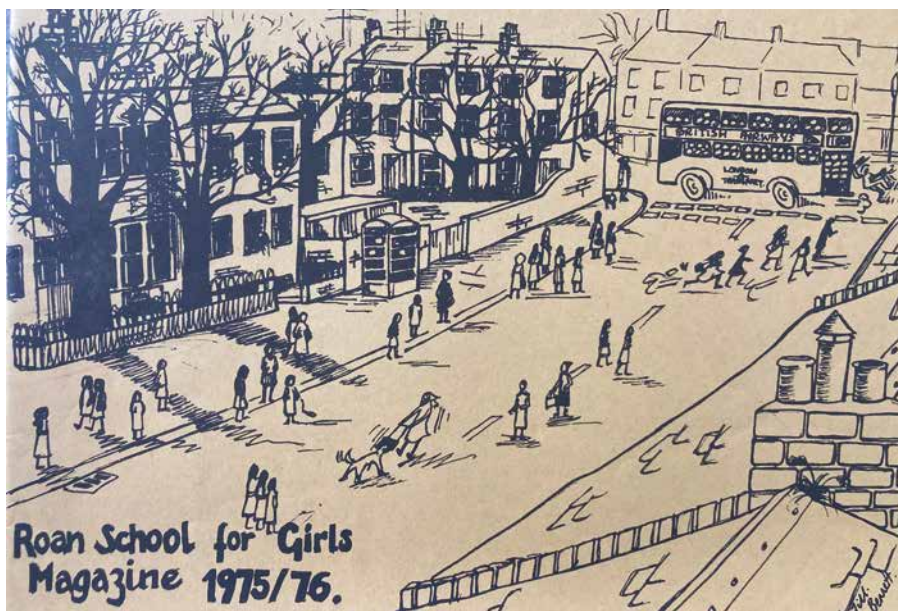
It's not clear exactly when the magazine first appeared – can anyone shed any light? – but thanks go to Alison Chumley-Towner (1970-77) and Hilary Haslam, née Chuter (1971-78), for raking out a couple of copies, for 1972 and 1975/6, and allowing us to take a look back and appreciate the wonderfully eclectic creativity of the girls at Roan.



*The 1972 Magazine cover*

Old Roan Magazine 2024





*The 1975/6 issue of the Roan Girls School Magazine*

# OLD ROAN GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

*The 1972 edition included an item on the Old Roan Girls' Association.*

'The Association has suffered a sad loss this year with the sudden death in January of Miss Elsie Allen, one of its most loyal and devoted members, Miss Allen was elected Secretary in 1937 and, in spite of extensive commitments both at work and home, served in the Association conscientiously for thirty-five years.'

The piece also noted with regret the death of Miss Florence Talbot, Roan gymnastics mistress until 1938, and Miss Lesley Clarke, Assistant Association Treasurer for some years. The item ended:

'We therefore extend a warm welcome to those leaving Roan this year to join us in the O.R.G.A. with a view to making the Association really representative of past members of the School.'

Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)

## The Jungle

# JUNGLE

the jungle  
by Sara Hibberd

Denseness and heat,  
A tropical atmosphere.  
Tall green trees,  
And the hum of mosquitoes.  
Shadows and creepers  
Lurching and waiting,  
Eyes flash like great sparks of fire,  
Red with wildness and rage.  
Exhaustion and tiredness,  
Through the humidity and busyness.  
Colours are vivid and brilliant  
Like freshly made toffee.  
The great grey greasy green swamps,  
That linger around to catch what they may.  
Great pools that are steaming and bubbling and gurgling,  
Just waiting and watching the days go by.  
The wildness and wilderness  
That keeps man waiting, watching, thinking about what to do next.  
A mysterious place is a jungle by moonlight.  
A steaming place with its screaming and screeching inhabitants.  
Like the monkey and parrot.  
And the leopard and tiger,  
Whose roar can be heard a mile or so away.  
With its grasses and leeches  
And creepers and creatures,  
It is a wonderful wonderful world.



## With the Boys... and winning!

*The 1975/76 issue tells of joining forces with the Roan Boys' School for some charity fundraising and beating them at football!*

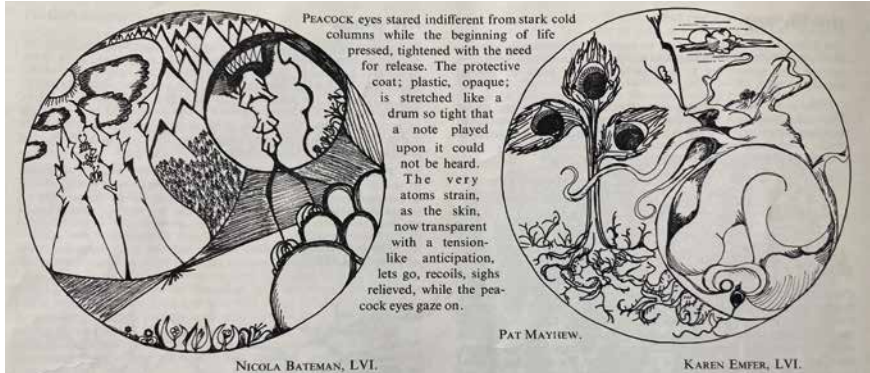
'Money was raised during both years ('74/'75) for the National Society for the Mentally Handicapped Children, mostly through the sale of Christmas cards, but also by a football match played early in 1975 against the Boys' School. Thanks largely to masculine chivalry the girls won this match!'

*Denise Barry reported on combining with the Boys' School for the Sixth Form Christmas Appeal.*

'This year, we undertook to raise enough money to take eighty old age pensioners to see the musical production of 'Dad's Army' at the Shaftesbury Theatre.'...

... 'The Sixth Form also ran two stalls at the Parents' Association Bazaar ... A Band from the Boys' School - 'John Howcroft's Tijuana Seven' played in the Hall during the dinner hour.'

## Peacock eyes....



## The Zig Zag Woofer

### the zig zag woofer

by Clare Cheesman

The Zig Zag Woofer is a very strange creature. He has got four legs, two at the front and two at the back. He has got three claws on each foot, which are used for gripping things. His body is plumpish with different coloured zig zag lines on it. His eyes are big and bright like car head-lamps so when you are with Zig Zag Woofer you don't need a light because of his eyes. When he walks about on all fours he doesn't use his claws otherwise he would pull the ground up.

The Zig Zag Woofer got his name because of the zig zag lines on his back and because of the woofing noise he makes.

## The Jungle

### the jungle

by Martina Pike

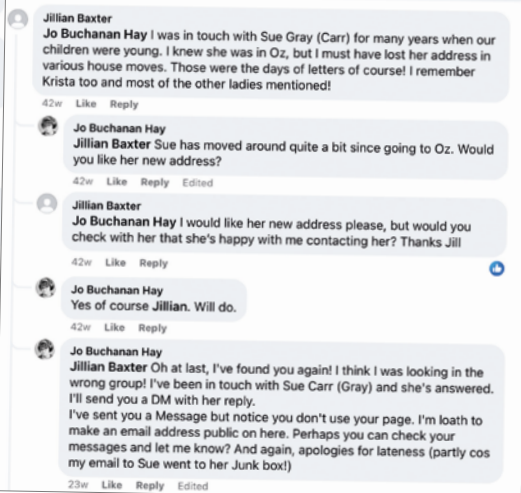
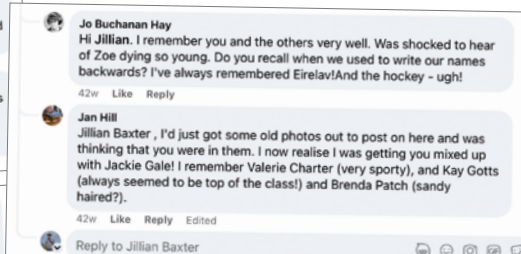
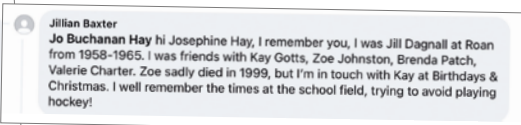
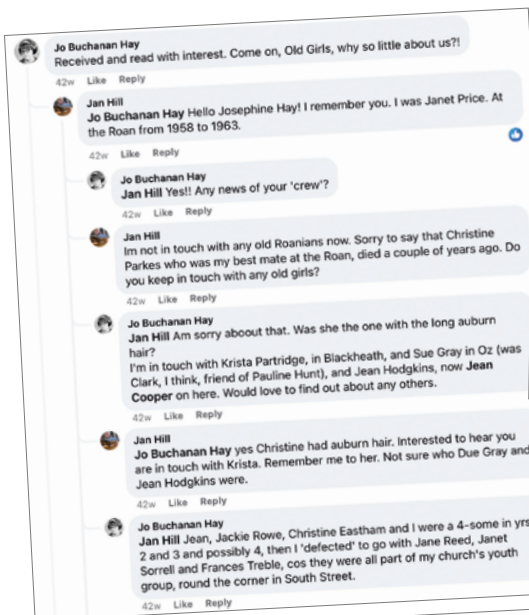
The hot musty air stinks of decaying leaves and shrubbery,  
The birds sing their everlasting songs.  
And the monkeys fly across your head, almost knocking it but not quite.  
You duck and fall on your hands and knees and waken the snakes.  
The trees are rotten and have fungi growing on them.  
Some trees are old and gnarled.  
The humidity, the denseness, the hot sun streaming down your face.  
Something moves, you turn and see nothing,  
But you feel something is there.  
The great air of mysteriousness is overwhelming.  
It's eerie and creepy, almost frightening.



# JO AND JAN START A STRIN

News from the Old Roan Association Facebook pages

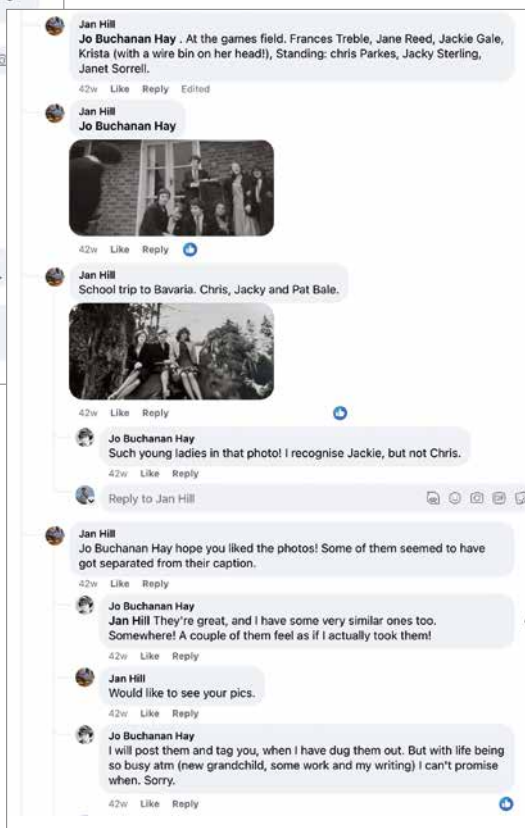
*When a Facebook post went up about the latest edition of the Magazine, Jo Buchanan Hay and Jan Hill started a gush of golden Girls' School memories.*





# G OF MEMORIES

facebook



Please send submissions to [oldroankgb@gmail.com](mailto:oldroankgb@gmail.com)





*Janet Sorell in 1963*

## facebook

Here are larger versions of the photos in the Facebook memories posts: see the posts for more details.



*At the Pavillion*



*At the Kidbrooke playing fields*



*In the playground*



*School trip to Bavaria*

# NEWS OF OLD ROANS



*Form 4F Spring Term 1952*

## **JOSIE JAMES (NÉE JACKSON)**

Josie's death was recorded in the last issue of the Magazine after a post on Facebook with the sad news by Josie's daughter, Sandra Gardener, who also attended Roan. But the item omitted this Roan Girls photo attached by Sandra 'Form 4F Spring Term 1952' on the back.

## **PETER HODGES**

With October seeing his 92nd Birthday, Old Roan Peter Hodges, who has lived in Norway for the majority of his life, wanted to see his school again and did just that on a recent trip to Blackheath. Here he is at the Maze Hill school gates when he paid a visit with his daughter, Therese.

Peter worked in Scandinavia for

Old Roan Magazine 2024

Shell Oil and is an expert in hydraulic fluids, even publishing a book on the subject in 1996. An expert skier – he still skis – and an accomplished sailor too, Peter's niece, Wendy Bates, tells us he has very fond memories of his time at Roan.



*Peter Hodges at the Maze Hill gates*

### DAVID LEEMING (1960-67)

David, who shared his Roan memories in the last edition of the Magazine, picked up a surprise piece of Roan memorabilia on e-Bay for £4 – this photograph of the Roan 1st XI cricket team in 1948. As you may see, the print has two arrows on it, in blue and red, saying 'Me'. After a bit of detective work in the Old Roan photo archive, the boy sitting in the front row on the right is J Barrett, and, presumably, this might once have been his own copy. David wonders if he is still around, or if someone knows about him? The archive copy has the cricket team down as the 1st XI for 1949 – and it gives all the names in the line-up, plus the teachers and the then Head, H. W. Gilbert.



*The ORA archive copy*

### TREVOR PUDDIFOOT (1964-71)

Business was booming down at Trevor's micropub in Greenwich, The River Ale House, when a bunch of the Association's committee members ventured along for a weighty chin-wag one night in January. The place was so packed there wasn't a table to be had, so some old legs had to perch upright



*David's e Bay Roan cricket photo*

for hours while chewing the Old Roan fat. The Landlord wasn't around that night so he couldn't be called upon to pull rank and shift a few regulars so the assembled Old Roan Great and the Good (or Bad, or Ugly...) could take the pressure off their aging pins.

### **JOHN BURTON (1946-48)**

The 2022 edition of the Magazine carried a feature on John's 'lifetime in nature' – a incredible life of work especially concerning birdlife which had its origins during his time at Roan when he and a group of schoolfriends monitored the extensive birdlife in Greenwich Park and other local areas.

John has lived much of his time near Heidelberg in Germany and now 93 he tells us he has recently moved along with his wife, Wega, to a magnificent residential care home there. The new place is situated halfway up a mountainside and they have a splendid paramomic view of the Rhine plain from their fifth-floor apartment.

'In Spring and Autumn, I'm expecting to see some interesting



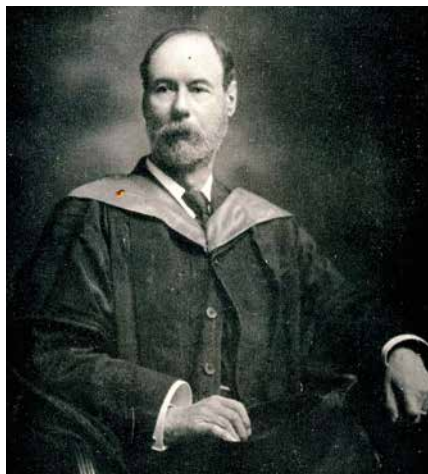
*John's new home on the mountainside at Heidleberg*

visible migration of birds past our windows. It's a known route of migrating Common Cranes. The food in the care home is excellent - like dining in a first-class restaurant every day and it even has its own large theatre/concert hall and gymnasium, among various other facilities. It's like a hotel and we feel very happy there.'

### **FRANK HAYWARD (1884-1888?)**

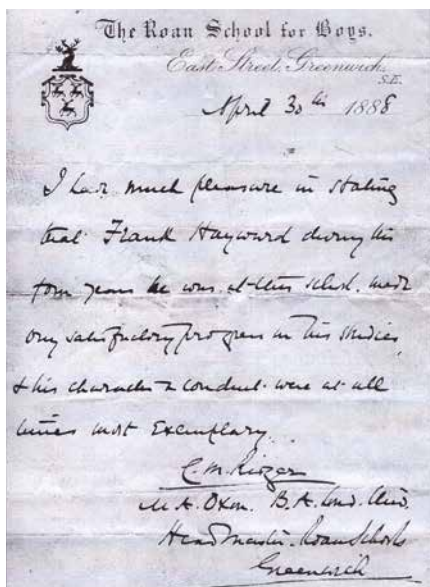
Frank was a pupil at Roan in 1888 when the boys' school was in East (Eastney) Street, Greenwich. His granddaughter, Brenda Haywood, sent in a fascinating archive document – Frank's school report, dated 30 April 1888, penned by the then Head, C.M. Ridger.

The writing is not the easiest to make out and seems to suggest that Frank was at Roan for four years – presumably from 1884. It reads:



*Head C.M. Ridger*





Frank Hayward's Roan School report

'I have much pleasure in stating that Frank Hayward during his four years he was at this school made very satisfactory progress in his studies and his character and conduct were at all times most exemplary' – signed C.M. Ridger, MA Oxon, BA (? ?) Headmaster, Roan School, Greenwich.

Sandra says Frank later worked for Goldfields and was sent by the company to what was then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Her cousin was born in Southern Rhodesia and she in the North.

Frank's grandson Bob Hayward informs us Frank was born in 1870 adding: 'I also have his original testimonial signed by all members of staff of the London office of The Consolidated Goldfields of

South Africa Limited. This is dated 10 October 1900 and was issued to Frank on his leaving England to take up an appointment in the Office of the Mashonaland Agency in Bulawayo.

'My great grandfather, George Olive Hayward, was a captain in either the Castle or Union passenger ships that sailed between Southampton and Cape Town in the late 1800's. I have some silverware tucked away somewhere commemorating one such voyage in 1888. So, it is hardly surprising why Frank, as a young man, was attracted in immigrating to Rhodesia.

'As a young child, I remember meeting my grandfather who spent his last few years at the New Manor Boarding House in Salisbury. In 1947, he dropped dead of a heart attack in the street having earlier in the day sold his car to one of my civil service bosses.'

#### DAVE BRYDEN (1954-61)

After describing his retirement in the last Magazine and in his 82nd year, Dave informs us he has enjoyed continuing his research into the poets of the Great War 1914-1918, and has been visiting Belgium's war sites especially those around Ypres. Completely destroyed in 1916, Ypres and its 13th century Cloth Hall has been faithfully rebuilt in original stones and brick and Ypres is now a wonderfully clean, bright, flourishing though expensive town.

'Apart from the excellent Old Roan Facebook site,' he says 'I



*Dave in his Charlton kit*

follow the 'I grew up in Southeast London' pages. Bill White is a regular contributor with stories of the school and I enjoy picking out Roan colleagues who comment on his writing. Monty Smith also keeps me in touch with happenings of Old Roans in the UK, some of which I'm afraid identify the passing of my contemporaries.'

Dave adds: 'The village is currently installing an outdoor leisure centre with netball, table tennis, swings and a five-a-side football pitch. I shall enjoy having a kick about there wearing my Charlton kit! Each week after our Friday market a large group of French, Belgian, and English sit down for a bottle or two of wine and several of us eat out every three or four weeks at one of the many fine restaurants within a few kilometres.'

#### **TONY RICKSON (1957-62)**

Dave Bryden also met up with his

old Roan chum Tony in Dover very recently. He reports that Kent-based Tony, after a career as a sports journalist, published his third book, 'Kicking On' in 2023. His first, 'Goooooal' came out three years ago and was followed by 'Football is Better With Fans'. All three are, Dave says, as expected, very readable... and inciteful. A fourth is on its way. Tony will be known for his successful Old Roan sports exploits playing cricket for the First XI and as a football midfielder.

#### **TONY ELLIOTT (1951-59 - PUPIL, 1963-74 - TEACHER)**

A number of Old Roans remembered Tony very well after he wrote about his Roan days both as a pupil and then a teacher in the last issue. Now living in New Zealand with his wife Judy, Tony looked back on his Roan times with great affection and various Old Roan remembered him with equal fondness. A few wanted to contact Tony directly and he was very happy to hear from them.

#### **Garry (Pud) Pendergast (1963-70),**

now living in Vancouver Island, Canada, had also met some friends, Peter and Ann Gilham from Storrington who knew the Elliotts, and said Old Roan Chris Spooner (1963-68) would also remember Tony from time spent on the Norfolk Broads.

**Graham White (1951-58)** wanted to contact Tony and remembers him from Braithwaite visits. Graham, who was awarded his Braithwaite

Badge which he still treasures, shares Tony's passion for New Zealand where he visited with his wife in 2009.

**Russell Trew (1969-74)** was delighted to read Tony was alive, well and thriving and wanted to send a personal message to him. Russell (who also remembers walking through the Isle of Dogs foot tunnel to school at Maze Hill with the Editor all those years ago!) added that Tony, Alfie Knott, Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas are Roan teachers he will be thankful for all his life.

### **ALISON CHUMLEY-TOWNER (1970-77)**

As well as helping to supply the Roan Girls' material for the item on its Magazine in the 1970s (see pages 66-69), Alison has a proud wealth of Roan memorabilia. Her haul includes the programme for the theatrical extravaganza - 'Roanarama Productions Shamefully Presents Their Version of the Hobnail Boot And The Dead Daffodil'. Alison (as Alison Ch-u-m-



*Alison at Roan*

ley) played Dandini and is credited with the Original Script!

### **OLD ROAN HANDICAP**

The punters and horse-racing enthusiasts amongst us will be pleased to know that there was a shock 25-1 winner of the Old Roan Handicap Chase ran at Aintree last October. Ryan Potter registered the biggest victory of his training career as Jetoile was first passed the post at the famous Liverpool track. No link to the school – outside of any betting of course – the race has been run annually since 2004.



*Jetoile winning the Old Roan Handicap*

### **DEVONSHIRE DRIVE**

The former Girls' School building, now refurbished into apartments, was looking particularly beautiful in the May sunshine. Memories....



*Devonshire Drive building*

# OBITUARIES

## **SQUADRON LEADER ERIC DOWNS (1932-39)**

Eric, who died in October last year aged 102, was a hugely influential RAF pilot and flying instructor with a distinguished and adventurous Service career record. So much so that when he turned 100, the RAF organised a special Spitfire fly-past over his house in South Cerney, Gloucestershire.

The fourth of 11 children, Eric John Downs was born on 24 September 1921 in Bermondsey. His father was a member of the new Independent Labour Party in Bermondsey, an associate of the activist Dr Alfred Salter, also an Old Roan, and a conscientious objector who was incarcerated in Dartmoor Prison during the First World War.

Eric and six of his siblings attended Roan. A Chess Club leader, he also starred in sports playing First X1 for Cricket and Hockey teams. His elder brothers, Bernard and



*Squadron Leader Eric Downs*

Les, also played sport for Roan as did his sister Margaret. In his first year, Eric went on school trip to St Merrion, Cornwall, but contracted impetigo and had to return.

Leaving Roan in 1939, he joined a firm of City accountants, then was injured in a Blitz bomb blast. He was called up for RAF pilot training in October 1941 and attended British Flying Training schools in Texas and Arizona, returning to England in the troopship Queen Elizabeth in March 1943.

Eric's eventful time flying RAF transport aircraft while based in India, Singapore and Malaya included an emergency flight to Shanghai during the famous Yangtse Incident.

On April 20 1949, the Royal Navy frigate Amethyst, the guard ship for the British Embassy in Nanking, came under heavy artillery fire from the units of the Communist People's Liberation Army while cruising the Yangtse River. There were many casualties including the ship's doctor, one of the 20 killed.

Eric, an experienced Dakota pilot, at short notice flew from his base in Singapore to Hong Kong via Saigon. His aircraft was loaded with relief supplies ready to be parachuted to the badly damaged ship. After a long flight to the RAF base at Kai Tak, he was preparing



*Eric (seated, 2nd r) in the 1939 Roan First XI cricket team*

to drop medical packages but an RAF Sunderland from Singapore had just managed to land on the Yangtse with supplies and an RAF doctor, despite heavy fire from the communists.

Eric and his crew headed for the scene on the Yangtse but were not now needed. So, he flew on to Shanghai, landing with the minimum amount of fuel. Able to refuel from barrels at the BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) facility and after embarking the air attaché and other embassy staff, he headed back to Hong Kong, before returning to Singapore, having been airborne for more than 37 hours in a few days.

On his arrival back in England in 1943 after his training in USA, Eric spent the next two years flying trainee aircrew for Bomber Command at No 9 Advanced

Flying Unit in Llandwrog, North Wales. By the time he was finally assigned to fly Lancaster bombers with 582 Pathfinder Squadron in June 1945, the war in Europe was over. His squadron then joined Tiger Force, destined for Okinawa, but on the surrender of Japan in September 1945, he was posted to 40 Squadron at RAF Abu Sueir, Egypt. Thereafter, from 1947-49, he flew Dakotas in the Far East.

In May 1947, Eric was posted to 10 Squadron at RAF Mauripur near Karachi mainly to evacuate troops and convey British personnel and refugees to safety during the Partition of India. His flying took him to 27 airfields in India and Pakistan, from Kohat on the North West Frontier down to Madras in the south. He witnessed many harrowing scenes and almost became a victim himself when an angry mob chased him through the streets of Calcutta. He recalled





*Eric (I) with his 1945 Lancaster crew*

being shot at while landing on small airfields in Bannu and Miramshah on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

From Mauripur, Eric was posted to 48 Squadron at RAF Changi, Singapore, in March 1948 at the start of the Malayan Emergency. Still flying Dakotas, he spent the next two years carrying out supply drops to the security forces fighting communist insurgents in the jungles of Malaya.

Returning to England from Singapore in 1949, Eric qualified as a flying instructor – heralding a 20-year career in which he trained more than 500 pilots. He served at the RAF's No 5 Flying Training School based at Heany and Thornhill airfields in Rhodesia from 1950-1953 before returning to the UK to work in HQ Bomber Command at High Wycombe. With

Wentworth Golf Club close by, Eric took the opportunity to add golf to his other sporting interests - hockey, cricket, football, tennis and squash, excelling at most and representing RAF stations and commands.

In 1955, Eric joined No 2 Flying Training School at Hullavington in Wiltshire, as a squadron commander, flying the recently introduced Jet Provost trainer. In 1959, he took up the position of OC Flying and Chief Instructor with the Royal Ceylon Air Force, flying Jet Provosts. His officers and cadets included four future air chief marshals of the Sri Lankan Airforce.

After 40 years as a flight safety officer in HQ Flying Training Command, Eric spent two years as OC Flying at the Primary Flying School (PFS) at RAF South Cerney. With 24 flying instructors and 24 aircraft, the FFS trained 355 students.

During his time at South Cerney, Eric organised the 1965 world gliding championships, a huge undertaking involving logistics,



*Eric on his 100th Birthday*

flying operations and airspace management. For his work he was appointed MBE.

Eric completed his RAF career with several years as senior operations officer at RAF Fairford, supporting two Hercules Squadrons and the first Concorde test flights. On leaving the service in 1970, he had flown 4,582 hours in 24 different aircraft types to 182 airfields on five continents.

For the next nine years Eric worked as a credit controller for the UBM Builders Merchants trading group retiring in September 1979 to a long life he called the '3Gs' – gardening, golf and grandchildren. He played his last game of golf at the age of 92, when his handicap had dropped from five to sixteen.



*Eric surrounded by his family*

Eric married Mavis 'Jimmy' Binnington in Singapore in 1949. She died in 2017 and they are now survived by their three children – John, Anita and Jenny – six grandchildren – Carl, Natalie, Shan, Beth, Tom and Katie – six great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

*With thanks to John Downs*

#### **CENTENARY FLY-PAST FOR ERIC**

There was an extra special present for Old Roan Squadron Leader Eric Downs when he turned 100 in 2021, apart from a telegram from The Queen – a fly-past over his house in South Cerney near Cirencester by a Spitfire!

The flight honoured Eric's incredible career as an RAF pilot and flying instructor which had seen him fly missions and tests all over the world and teach a huge number of pilots for the RAF and air forces overseas.

BBC TV covered the fly-past and interviewed Eric on the day about his prestigious RAF career right from his signing-up after he left Roan in 1939.

'I didn't fly Spitfires myself,' he told the BBC, 'I was a Lancaster man!'

Flying many adventures afterwards, Eric missed action in World War 2 due to peace first in Europe then Japan. Describing his war as a quiet and lucky one, he said 'I never bombed Germany which may be a good thing as I never killed anyone.'



*The 100th Birthday Spitfire fly-past*

## **PAUL BIENKOV (1964-71)**

*A tribute to Paul who died in 2004  
- with thanks to Alan McPherson.*

Paul Jan Bienkov was born on 24 June 1953 and died suddenly on 7 November 2004. He is remembered by classmates as an amiable, sociable fellow, caring and generous, with a natural charm, a ready smile, a good sense of humour and a quiet enthusiasm for life. Paul always had time for people.

His sporting inclinations were limited by a weak back from which he suffered throughout his life. Like so many others, he had a passion for playing bridge in the 6th Form and played club standard bridge for most of his life. After A levels in the summer of 1971, he celebrated with a holiday to Devon and Cornwall with some classmates - best friend Ian Williams (deceased), Tony Burgess, Alan McPherson, Phil Pearce and Trevor Puddifoot.

Paul's father Jan was a Polish navigator who served in the Royal Air Force during WW2 before marrying Pauline Wilkey and settling down in the UK. Paul grew up and lived on Shooter's Hill until 1975 when he married Jacqueline and they moved to Barnehurst and then to Dartford in 1992. Paul and Jackie had two children - Adam and Anna.

Paul joined Lewisham Council as a trainee with another Old Roan, John Hollands (1964-71), but their paths diverged as Paul moved into



*Paul Bienkov*

Personnel and John into Finance. Paul pursued his Personnel career with Bexley Council, Reuters, Tate and Lyle, Prudential, and LIFFE/ Euronext where he held a senior role. Apart from family and friends, Paul was passionate about the environment and campaigned locally for the preservation of green spaces. Paul was also a Group Scout Leader with the 10th Royal Eltham on Shooter's Hill combining his love for the area around Severndroog Castle with his interest in supporting young people.

## **DR IAN RICHARD PULLEN (1966-73)**

*Ian's brother Keith (1968 -75)  
remembers with great fondness a  
very bright Roan boy from a family  
with deep Roan roots.*

Ian was born in Woolwich on St George's Day, 23 April 1955,

to Edna and Alec Pullen. They planned to name him Richard Ian, but realised the initials RIP might not be the best and settled on Ian Richard instead. Two years later a younger brother (me) came along and we grew up in Kidbrooke.

My brother was a little bit weird because whilst I did 'normal' things involving chasing various-sized balls around the garden, that was not for Ian. One Christmas, he was given a Philips Electronic Engineer kit, started building radios, burglar alarms and electronic organs and branched out to set up a pirate radio station, broadcasting from our garden shed. At this time, the BBC was doing its damndest to shut the pirates down but the range of radio Ian reached was no further than our bedroom so, luckily, he stayed on the right side of them.

Roan School was in our blood - Mum and Dad were both Old Roans, both spending time in Ammanford during the war - and so, in 1966, alongside classmate Brian 'Arthur' Smith, Ian left Kidbrooke Park and headed off to Roan.

Ian was not known for his prowess on the playing field. Our cousin Kathryn recalls her mother (another Old Roan) driving past the sports ground when Ian was playing football, an activity that involved making sure he was as far away from the ball as possible at all times - something that he would be constantly reminded of for the next fifty years. However, he was

nothing if not flexible. He could put both feet behind his head at the same time and Kathryn recalls him sitting on the floor in the yoga lotus position doing his homework.

Ian delivered an excellent set of A level results and was joint recipient of the Roan Exhibition for his year. Head Dr Taylor was insistent he apply to Cambridge University but in those days Oxbridge was less welcoming to state school pupils so in 1973 he headed off to the University of Kent at Canterbury to study Electronics. He graduated in '76, stayed on to study for a PhD, and continued afterwards in a research and teaching role. He would have happily spent all his working life at Canterbury, but after ten years the funding dried up and he had to venture outside the academic world.

Luckily, his earlier incursion into pirate radio had not blotted his



*Dr Ian Pullen... then*

copy-book with the BBC and he fell into a dream job - working in its research department at Kingswood in Surrey. Not only could he 'muck around with stuff' like he had done as a child, but now he was being well paid for it.

Ian enjoyed holidays and travel. He embraced the world of 'Club 18-30', continued to embrace it long after his 30th birthday, and on one such holiday met a fellow mature '18-30er'. In April '93, Linda and Ian were married and they moved to Surbiton and she came to appreciate his sense of humour - like Black Adder, Fawlty Towers and Wallace & Gromit. They enjoyed more holidays, once visiting our childhood friends Susan Gill and her brother John (whose father Peter had been Dad's best friend at Roan), both now living in California. Linda and Ian had twelve good years together before divorcing, but continued to be the very best of friends.

Not too much is known (nor understood) about Ian's work at the BBC, but it is believed that he played an important role in the early delivery of digital television. He travelled widely, driving a car with strange equipment on the roof around the country, testing transmitter strengths. On several occasions, Linda accompanied him to the European Broadcasting Union in Geneva where he would present his work to an audience of fellow scientists. There must have been more than a hint of irony when he returned to Churchill College, Cambridge, who had



*Dr Ian Pullen... later*

refused him entry years earlier, to lecture to them. It is likely that these trips to Geneva, meeting with his pan-European peers, would have a profound effect on his political outlook in years to come.

After twenty or so years at the BBC, Ian opted for early retirement, and moved to the telecoms regulator, Ofcom, for a time before working in various consultancy roles within the telecoms industry.

Ian had a very stubborn streak and once he decided to dig his heels in about something there was little you could do to shift him. After our grandmother died, Pop moved in with Mum and Dad, and as he developed dementia, Mum became his 'de-facto' full-time carer, which in time started to take a heavy toll on Mum and Dad's well-being. For Ian, a 'line-in-the-sand' was breached and he was determined to do something about it, bombarding all the right people with all the right letters, of course all signed in the hand of 'Dr



Pullen'. Eventually, he won the day and for the last few months of his life Pop received the residential care that he needed, and Mum and Dad could start to enjoy retirement. And later, when Mum, now widowed, developed dementia, he would spend weeks at her home in Sandwich looking after her.

Something else that was non-negotiable in Ian's eyes was Brexit. Maybe on account of his work with the BBC, he loathed it, and was very vocal against it. Fighting for what he believed in, he attended protest marches and campaigned on the streets.

In his last few years, Ian found a second family, the community based around his local, the Duke Of Buckingham in Surbiton. With wall-to-wall sport available there, he belatedly embraced 'the beautiful game' and in 2019 we spent a memorable day together at Wembley cheering the Addicks on to last minute victory in the League One play-off final.

As Mum's condition worsened, Ian and I would share her care and pop to the local for our own therapy. In 2016, Mr Farage was standing in the general election for her local Thanet constituency, and one evening I received a text out of the blue. 'We're gonna have to find a different pub,' it read, "\*\*\*\*\* Farage just walked in!'

Late in 2022, Ian was diagnosed with Parkinson's. The available medication had very little positive

benefit and life became very challenging for him with Parkinson's masking other health issues. On 14 September 2023, he was taken to Kingston Hospital, where his heart stopped, doctors were unable to resuscitate him, and he passed away just before midnight.

As children, I was always thought of as 'the brainy one'. Yet in his life Ian achieved far more than I ever did academically and professionally, and I was hugely proud of him. He is remembered particularly as a quiet, kind, caring and gentle man with an understated but very real sense of fun. My brother Dr Ian Richard Pullen, IRP, may you Rest In Peace.

### **TERRENCE RUSSELL (1943-48)**

*Terry's daughter Anna's tribute to her father.*

Terry, who was born in Lewisham on Christmas Eve in 1931, the younger of two brothers, always spoke of his childhood as growing up on a farm having been evacuated to Kent. This was a truly happy time in his life and he stayed in touch with his evacuation family for the rest of their lives.

When he came back to London he went to Roan, enjoying his time there and forming life-long friendships. He also developed his love of all sports and represented the school at athletics, football and cricket.

Following his national service, Terry was a gunnery tank instructor at the Suez Canal, returning

to London to join the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, working at Somerset House. He married Olive and they had a son, Peter. Sadly, not long after moving to Owslebury in Hampshire in 1961, he lost Peter to meningitis, then Olive to multiple sclerosis.

Terry was a member of the local football and cricket teams and played in the table tennis league. He ran the village Youth Sports Club with friends, wound the Church clock, collected prescriptions for the elderly long past his own retirement, played cribbage for The Ship Inn and was Treasurer of their Spoof Club. His most well-known role was as Chairman, and later supporter, of the Village Hall for over fifty years.

Terry's Civil Service career was recognised with an Imperial Service Order, awarded by The Queen in June 1992 and he received the Outstanding Community

Service Award from the Mayor of Winchester in March 2016.

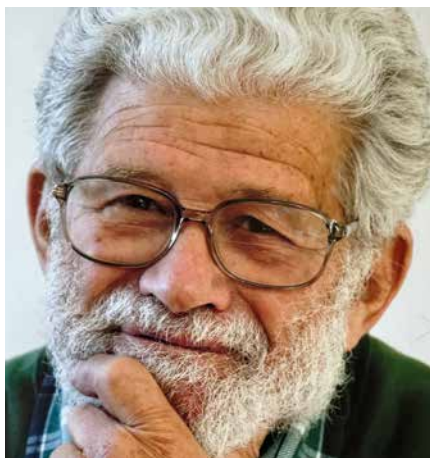
Terry married Carole, who introduced him to dancing, and they went on to have two children, Anna and Heather and six grandchildren - Zach, Caitlin, Hayden, Oscar, Noah and Toby. Recently, he was thrilled to attend the wedding of Harriett and Zach and to welcome baby Arthur, who is named after Terry (middle name) and Terry's father.

Pops, as he now became known, was a devoted and hands-on Grandfather, enjoying a role which wasn't possible for a working father of his own children. He was a familiar face at school pick-up and boasted that he was the envy of his friends with his six grandchildren.

Terry had a great sense of fun and a keen brain, which he kept active until the end with crosswords and Sudoku, just as he kept his body active with dancing and table tennis until just a few years ago. Although his deafness was a challenge, he could still make us all laugh with a quick-witted joke.

Getting out to meet people was a great joy to him and although Covid and a broken hip slowed him down eventually, Pops, with his magnificent head of hair, was often seen making his way up the road to the hall to talk to the people he saw there.

Terry was taken very suddenly in the end and slipped away peacefully with all of his family beside him.



*Terry Russell*

Old Roan Magazine 2024



*Terry and John – an amazing co-incidence. When news came in about the death of Terry Russell, an archive photo was located of Terry (seated far left) in this picture of the 1949 Roan cross-country team. Then a day later, news arrived of John Owen's death... and there he was in the same photo (dark vest), seated a place apart from Terry!*

### **JOHN OWEN (1941-49)**

*The last issue carried an in-depth feature on John Burton (1946-48), now 93 and living in Germany, and his eminent life-time in nature including his bird-watching in Greenwich Park while at school. The issue also carried John's obituary tributes to two other Old Roans and nature specialists – Keith Hyatt and Dr Alan Showler. Recently, John made contact again to bring news of the death of another Old Roan, John Owen, also highlighted in the magazine feature.*

I'm sad to report death on 9 March 2023, after a short illness, of John A. Owen, who was at the school when I was there in the 1940s. He was the younger brother of my close friend Dr. Denis Frank Owen, who was also a pupil and left in 1947, one of group of us at the

school who were keen naturalists as featured in the Old Roan Magazine.

Unlike Denis, Keith Hyatt and me, John, a quiet and modest man, did not make his career in natural history, but made a fortune in the wine industry. After retirement, however, he worked until shortly before his death as a volunteer in the Department of Entomology at London's Natural History Museum. There he did valuable work identifying and classifying certain families of small moths (Microlepidoptera).

### **DOREEN FIDLER (1943-50)**

*Marion Bond, Doreen's daughter, informed us of her mother's passing.*

My mother, Doreen Fidler, died on 30 December 2023 from pneumonia having just celebrated



*Doreen Fidler*

her 92nd birthday. Doreen loved her time at the Roan Girls School (1943-1950) in Devonshire Drive, Greenwich when her favourite subject was Geography. Doreen was sporty, excelling at netball, hockey and tennis in her schooldays. She loved music, sang in the choir, and joined in the drama productions.

Over the years, she attended the annual Old Roan reunion dinners until her declining mobility and dementia proved too much. She regularly supported the Roan Theatre Company productions at the Bob Hope Theatre.

### **PETER EDWARDS (1959-66)**

*Mick Roberts (1957-64) pays tribute to his friend – a popular Old Roan who played football for the Club and who forged an important career in publishing.*

Peter Edwards died on 21 March 2024 aged 75. He was born

and grew up in Plumstead and attended Roan from 1959 to 1966. In the sixth form he studied Latin and Spanish with Sam Beale and Derek 'Taffy' Evans. After A levels, he trained and qualified as a chartered accountant.

Once qualified, he carried out audits at a range of companies including the international publishing giant Marshall Cavendish who recognised a talented guy when they saw one and offered him a job. Their talent spotting was spot on. Within a couple of years, he was appointed Managing Director of their UK operations - a remarkable achievement for someone then less than 30. It was the start of a stellar career.

Throughout Peter's time at school and for several years afterwards he was a very committed and competent footballer, playing for Old Roan in the higher elevens from the firsts to the thirds and later for the veterans.

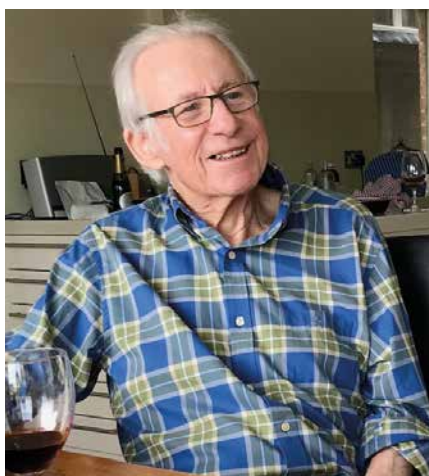
Keith Hedges – who so sadly died last year – was Peter's best mate at school. I'm quoting a comment Peter made about his old friend which says a lot about himself: 'He was the only boy who was a better footballer than me and better at schoolwork. Other boys were cleverer and others better footballers but none had the dual skills.' A typically generous tribute.

His work often required him to travel to the United States but

he regularly flew back across the Atlantic on Fridays - sometimes on Concorde - to turn out for the Club on Saturdays. You could tell when he was at the Club by the presence after the game of his two enormous Old English sheepdogs that he and his then wife, Shirley, owned.

One of the publications Marshall Cavendish specialised in was part-work magazines. Realising their potential as a foundation for a successful business, Peter left Marshall Cavendish and founded his own publishing company - GE Publishing - with a colleague from Marshall Cavendish, Liz Glaze.

Liz took the creative lead and Peter was the business and financial brain behind what became a very successful enterprise. In that venture, he demonstrated his considerable entrepreneurial talent with one of its innovative



*Peter Edwards*

and highly successful publications being the monthly magazine Essentials.

At the time his business was growing, so was his family. With Anne, he set up home in Blackheath and they had three children - Jessie, Claire and Harry, who between them have five children, with two additions expected later this year. Peter adored his family - an emotion fully reciprocated.

If I could choose one word to describe Peter it would be generous - to his family and his friends, in time, in spirit and in material ways.

On meeting him, he would invariably ask about your family and how they were doing. He bought a beautiful house near Nice and regularly invited friends, including several Old Roans, to holiday there. A lifelong fan of Charlton Athletic, when the club was resettling at The Valley in 1992, he bought three 40-year season tickets to help fund their venture. And if you were supporting a charitable cause, he would always donate generously.

Throughout his life, Peter was a bon viveur, enjoying good food and wine. Though his appetite was fairly modest, he was never happier than when sitting with family or friends at a restaurant table with a glass of Rioja or Bordeaux nearby, chatting and drawing on his fund of amusing anecdotes. His sense of





*Peter (front 2nd r) in the 1989/90 Old Roan Vets football team*

humour was a delight and he was excellent company.

Peter settled in a flat near St Paul's Cathedral overlooking the Thames, regularly spending time with his later partner Joy. They hosted a party early in each New Year that was great fun to attend.

In recent years his health deteriorated and he began to struggle with his mobility. Notwithstanding these challenges, his spirit never flagged and was always a delight to visit and spend time with - never, despite his misfortune, uttering a word of self-pity.

Peter will be sorely missed by his family and his many friends, not least the coterie of Long Ponders, a group of Old Roans who met regularly and enjoyed his company over many years.

A gathering of family and friends to celebrate Peter's life will be held on Wednesday 4 September 2024 from 3pm until 7pm at Davy's Wine Vaults in Greenwich. Peter's family has extended an invitation to Old Roans and friends who would like to attend the celebration.

### **MARGARET LEE**

*Nearly a Bond Girl... but she was a Roan Girl! Earlier this year, the media reported the death of Margaret Lee, 80, a prominent movie star in Italy the late 1960s and early 1970s. Born in the Midlands and educated at Roan Girls, Margaret had an amazing life on and off the big screen.*

If a major movie audition had gone a bit better for 20-year-old Margaret Lee, she could have been Sean Connery's Bond Girl in the 1963 spy-smash *From Russia With Love*. Instead, it was Daniela

Bianchi who played the KGB agent who seduces and then falls for 007. But Margaret went on to feature in a string of movies that made her one of the biggest Italian female stars and decades later it was her son, Roberto Malerba, who became one of the producers on the modern Bond film Spectre.

Obituaries reported that Margaret was born Margaret Gwendolyn Box in August 1943 in Wolverhampton after her mother had been re-located there during the Blitz. With the war over, the family came back to London and Margaret attended Roan Girls. The dates at Roan aren't known but according to one contemporary they spent their teenage years chasing local boy Mick Jagger around before he was famous.

After Roan, Margaret graduated from the Italia Conti theatre school



*Margaret Lee - Roan girl and Italian movie star*

and successfully answering an ad in The Stage became a Moulin Rouge dancer/performer. There she got a role opposite Elizabeth Taylor in Cleopatra (1963). Her scenes were apparently cut from the finished film but her name is still listed in



*In Kiss the Girls and Make Them Die (1966)*

IMDB (the Internet Movie Database) for a 'minor role (uncredited)'.

Margaret went on to play in more low-budget action films but her beauty and sensuality on screen helped her to win many more Italian movie roles. These included playing beside Fellini star Marcello Mastroianni and the Italian duo Francho Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia as the Dorothy Lamour type in Bob Hope and Bing Crosby's Road movies. She also acted in a series of thrillers between 1966 and 1971 by Klaus Kinski, the reported 'wild man' of European cinema. Later, she was said to confess to having a 'measure of 'Marilynesque regret' at not getting more romantic roles.

With her final screen credit at 40 in Neapolitan Sting (1983), Margaret moved to California. She was married three times, including to the producer Gina Malerba and, apart from Spectre, their son Roberto's producing credits include the Tom Hanks movie, Cloud Atlas (2012), V for Vendetta (2005) with Natalie Portman and Ocean's Twelve (2004) with a host of stars including George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon.

*With thanks to additional source material from The Telegraph, IMDB and various websites.*

#### **COLIN PALMER - CLARIFICATION**

In the May 2022 issue of the Magazine we included an item on the death of Alan Palmer (1958-64).

However, we mistakenly reported that Alan's brother, Colin (1963-70), had also died. We are extremely happy to say Colin is very much still with us!

#### **PHILIP WILLSON (1962-69)**

A tribute to Philip from his brother Alan appeared in the last issue and described what a bus, railway and Triumph car devotee he was. To prove it, here's Philip behind the wheel of a red London bus.



*Philip at the wheel*

#### **ALAN MUSSETT (1946-55)**

*David Veasey (1948-56) sent through news of Alan who died a couple of years ago.*

'I kept up with Alan and my wife and I had holidays with him in the UK from the time we retired. He had two years off school when he was 15 suffering from rheumatic fever. Having read physics at Imperial College, London Alan joined the then Royal College Nairobi in the '60s researching

rock magnetism, returning to the UK a few years later to join the Geophysics department of Liverpool University. During that time, he ran a number of research projects mainly in Kenya.'

### **ROBIN DOLDER (1950-54)**

*John Huntley (1951-56) on Robin's death.*

'I attended Robin's funeral in Crowborough in deepest Sussex and the wake in a pub afterwards. I was the only Old Roan present though it was very well supported. Robin came from a sporting family of several brothers. I recall playing Old Roan football with Tony Dolder and Neville, whom I think was an Old Dunstonian and a very quick bowler by Club standards.

Robin's wife, Sheila, attended Roan Girls from 1950-57 and they moved to North London where he played cricket for Finchley who were a more upmarket club than the Old Roan in those days.

I believe Robin worked in the insurance business with the Northern Group. He was a close childhood friend and neighbour of Graham Chambers who died a few years ago and was an a very amusing character, a very fine cricketer and after dinner comedian.

We overlapped at school - he was a couple of years older than me which is a considerable gap in

school years but by late teens it became negligible.'

### **LES ROBERTS (1955-62)**

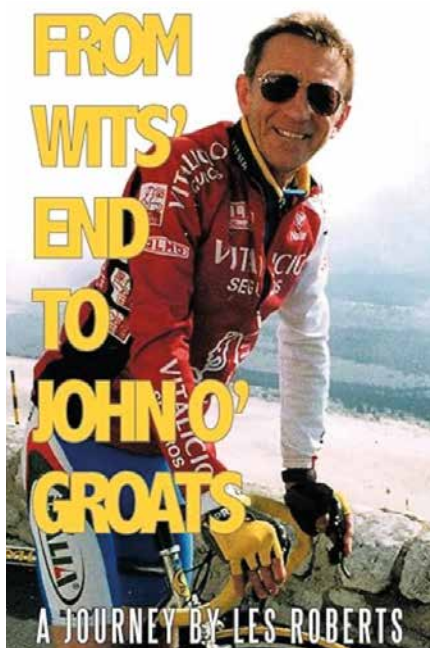
*Les, a truly inspirational athlete and cyclist, died at the end of 2023. Here, Paul Davis (1957-64) pays tribute to his very good friend.*

Les Roberts passed away 7 December 2023 just before his 80th birthday. He had been suffering from Parkinson's which was first identified in 1992 but we should never think of Les as a man grounded by this. He was an inspirational person, a great man and full of athletic energy and joie de vivre.

I remember Les at school only in so far as his contemporaries, Johnny Leach and Roger Barnes, were top cyclists and had state of the art machines which they



*Les Roberts - inspirational*



*Les' book*

travelled to school on. Les was a couple of years older than me and he and 'Leachman' also ran cross-country and they always seemed to win. Les stayed at school until A levels and then joined the Civil Service. He remained there until he took early retirement when his running career progressed and he took up a new role as a physiotherapist within Blackheath Harriers.

Many of us became good friends with Les after school and before he became a prolific runner. He competed successfully at senior level as a cyclist and revisited his cycling career after he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's

disease. I remember him telling me when he had been diagnosed saying that 'If this thing insists on moving in with me then it's going to be only bloody terms!'

Sixteen years later, in the summer of 2008, he rode from Land's End to John O' Groats in twelve days (he was 64) and then wrote a book - 'From Wits' End to John O' Groats' - which received acclaim amongst fellow athletes. This was partly a travelogue, part cyclist's tale and part memoir - a story of courage, endeavor and some very memorable wines. A year after this, Les prepared a video of him and his friends cycling through France on the Tour de France circuit which he managed to complete. Totally awe inspiring.

When Les left school, he raced on a bike through the 1960s and early 1970s quickly acquiring a First Category Licence, which he maintained all through his competitive cycling career. His initial dreams were of taking cycling all the way and turning professional but once he started mixing it with the big guns at national level, he soon realised that this would be a desperately hard way to earn a crust and so serious competition was given a progressively lower priority.

Part of this period was when Les and I and a few other friends and Old Roans used to get together. He considered it to be his gap year and time to catch up on his



social life which he had largely foregone in the name of sport. It didn't take him long to get back into sport though and he also became quite an accomplished musician with many a party held at his home in Keston.

Les and I used to train together for our respective sports (mine being Tae Kwon-Do) and we helped each other on training schedules. I didn't see him for several years and I was setting off for my evening run around Chislehurst when I bumped into him coming the other way. He enquired whether I was still running our old circuit and decided to join me advising that he was now a member of Blackheath Harriers. He had already ran from Keston and by the time we had returned on a small 5k run I needed St John's Ambulance!

He battled away with racing at Blackheath Harriers and in the 1984 track season, when Les had turned 40 and had become a 'Master', he showed no signs of slowing down. He could be relied upon to run well inside 15 minutes for 12.5 laps and sub 31 for 25. He took the European Masters for the 5000 metre track title that year and also the silver medal in the 10k Road Championship. In 1985, in the Olympic Stadium in Rome, a final lap of 60 seconds flat brought him the World 5000 metres title. He peaked in 1987 and subsequently retired three

years later in 1990 after noticing some of his motor skills were losing their edge.

Internationally, Les won the European Veterans Track 5000 metres and the Kent 20 -mile road race along with many cross-country competitions. Even after his diagnosis of Parkinson's, he and I continued to assist one another's training programmes and he was totally inspiring to one and all. I handed out his book to many of my students advising that when they faced adversity this is the book they should read.

Les married late in life and his wife Hannah was also a former Blackheath Harrier. They moved to Devon some years ago and Hannah took over Les' care as Parkinson's became more debilitating. He was receiving home hospice care for the last two weeks of his life but before that had battled against this terrible disease and was always chirpy whenever you spoke to him.

Les will always be remembered. He was a total inspiration, a great athlete and a great friend.

*The now merged Blackheath and Bromley Harriers were staging their own tribute to Les on 1 June at Norman's Park, Hayes Lane and some of Les' sporting record can be checked out on the Harriers' website - <http://www.bandbhac.org.uk/index.html>*

## **REG LENTLE (ROAN SCHOOL FIELDS GROUNDSMAN)**

As this edition of the Magazine was going to press, we heard the sad news that Reg Lentle, former groundsman at the school fields in Kidbrooke and known to so many Old Roans, had passed away on 12 May aged 87. His wife, Linda, had died in 2019.

Reg's son, Owen, who left Roan in 1983, said: 'He passed away quietly from pancreatic cancer. Up until the last, he still spoke with great fondness of his time as groundsman at Roan and working behind the bar at the club.'

John Girdwood, a member of the 1971 Roan England Trophy winning football team, said: 'Sorry to hear about Reg. He was an important member of the extended team /

family in 1971, with plenty of vocal support. He arranged coaches for supporters' travel to the away games, including the Newcastle semi-final tie, which offered optional, early-morning paddling at Whitley Bay. He was quite a character.'

There will be a fuller tribute to Reg in the next issue of the Magazine.

## **TERRY SHEPHERD (1964-1971)**

Terry passed away only very recently in May at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital - his wife, Christine and children were with him at the end. Paul Baker (1963-70) says Terry followed him to Imperial College, also studying Physics and he used to often meet him there. 'He was a thoroughly decent guy,' recalls Paul.



*Reg Lentle (standing far right) with the Old Roan First Team 1975/76*

# THE ROAN SCHOOLS PRESENT

Thanks to Hilary Haslam (1971-78) for these cherished pieces of memorabilia – a ticket and the programme for a joint Roan Boys' and Girls' 6th Form 'Gala Night' staged at Devonshire Drive on 8 December 1977.

The event proceeds went towards a Christmas appeal raising money for a kidney dialysis machine – and Hilary also had tucked away a

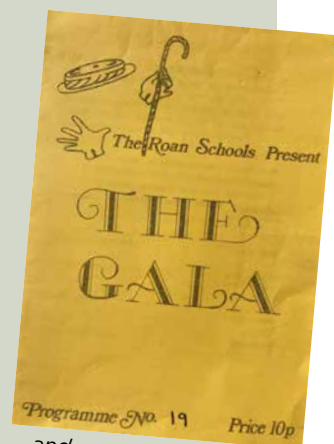
1978 press cutting of some Roan Girls' 6th Formers at the school prize-giving presenting a cheque to a consultant at Guys Hospital.

The Gala Night entertainment included amongst many delights – a 'Charus Line', Roan Renegades, A Tribute to Elvis, Teacher's Tango and Red Hot Cinders!

Who else remembers this magnificent Roan night?



*The Gala Ticket...*



*... and programme*



*The press cutting – Hilary (née Chuter) is far left*

