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THE OLD ROAN MAGAZINE



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Cover: Braithwaite – The Hope Memorial Camp – celebrates its Centenary in 2023

Old Roan Magazine 2023

WELCOME

‘Here’s to those that come hereafter...’

Welcome to another Old Roan Magazine.

With Braithwaite celebrating its Centenary in 2023, the Hope Memorial Camp continues to evoke huge affection for so many Old Roans, as it does for students at the John Roan School today. Steeped in Roan history and folklore, this issue has a special feature on Braithwaite’s amazing 100-year story.

We congratulate Mick Roberts on becoming Association President for the year ahead succeeding Chris Strong, and also pay tribute to some Old Roans and those associated with the school who have sadly passed away.

Elsewhere, the Magazine reports on a fabulous gig at the Club by Old Roan and world-renowned guitarist Albert Lee, a glorious but poignant Founder’s Day, the Annual Reunion Dinner and more. There’s a batch of memories from contributing ORs from home and abroad, reunions and an amazing Roan link to Australia’s Alice Springs!

Please continue to send in your news and memories and, this time, especially your reflections on Braithwaite – the ups and downs of time spent there.



Still bagging Wainrights myself, my ‘up’ was discovering the awe of the Lake District on my first trip in 1967 (!) and the ‘down’ by breaking my wrist on day one! Good ol’ Alfie Knott zooming me into Keswick Hospital in his little blue mini!

Whatever your Roan news or memories – whether of old wooden huts in Lakeland or your school days, the good and not so good – share with the Magazine.

My thanks again to some of those who have helped with this issue – Claire Foley, Bernie Hampton, Monty Smith and all the contributors.

Best wishes,
KEITH BRADBROOK
EDITOR

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com



MICK ROBERTS

Old Roan Association President 2023/24

Well, knock me down wiv a fevver! I never expected to be ORA President but am delighted. Now 77, am I the oldest ever?

There have been three phases of my association with Roan: being at school, as a frequent attendee at the Old Roan Club and, recently, as a Director of the John Roan Foundation.

Growing up in riverside Greenwich, we lived on Ballast Quay, where my Dad worked for a firm processing scrap metal. It wasn't well-paid, so I was definitely in the target group envisaged by John Roan: 'the poor town-bred children of East Greenwich'.

My local primary school was Old Woolwich Road School (subsequently renamed Meridian as the line of zero longitude passes through it) and the quality of teaching there, especially the emphasis on extra-curricular activities, was outstanding. However, I was the only boy in my year to pass the 11 plus and as the only local grammar school, Roan was the obvious choice.

In fact, the family that owned my Dad's firm had attended Roan. After I'd been at school a while, the firm's founder, Charles Robinson, gave me a Latin Primer – Dr Wm Smith's First Latin

Course, Principia Latina - in which he'd handwritten:

*Shades of C M Ridger MA
Headmaster Roan School for Boys
1877. I joined the school in 1877
when it opened at East Street, East
Greenwich as 10th boy/ W Buck
Esq. Secretary / Thus knowledge
is transferred from the dead to
the living / From slumber again to
slumber / The same race set for
the same / Floreat Roana! You are
part of me / This book revived my
youth; I am young again.*

Like many of Roan's '57-64 cohort, several of whom I am still in regular contact with, I look back on that period with great fondness. Roan provided me with a good and broad education and I did reasonably well academically, although I could never do better than 3rd in the top class. Two very clever boys always bagged the top spots. Whist not winning prizes, I remain proud of my certificates for 'General Proficiency'!

University never entered my head until one morning in the sixth form, a UCAS application form was put in front of me. My form master and Head of Maths, Mr Morey, more or less instructed me to apply. But what to study? The school's visiting London County Council careers advisor looked at my subjects, considered my out of

school activities, put a brochure in front of me showing a young man standing in the sunset, looking through a theodolite, on the edge of possibly the Ngorongoro crater and said 'Do Civil Engineering!'

So, I found myself studying it at Nottingham University. My three years there were wonderful - the University and City social life fantastic - but I didn't enjoy the course, except for the maths. That side led me to an MSc in Operational Research - basically using maths to address business and government problems - and that's what I spent my career doing.

In my 5 years away from London studying, contact with school friends weakened. During summer vacations, I travelled and sought work experience abroad and in 1966 I worked in Gothenburg, Sweden, watching the World Cup Final at Chalmers University. In 1967, I worked in San Francisco and experienced (perhaps, more accurately, witnessed!) the summer of love.

Returning to London to work at the Ministry of Transport, the Old Roan Club had become the social focus for many of my friends and I joined in with total commitment and enthusiasm. Looking back, they were amongst the happiest years of my life. Thursday nights and Saturdays after football not at the Club were unthinkable.

For some years, I lived and worked in The Hague but often returned at

the weekends, always visiting the Club. The things I enjoyed (and can mention here) were many: playing for the 6th Eleven (what we lacked in skill we made up for in camaraderie), football tours to Langenfeld and Sarrebourg, an Isle of White cricket tour (as a supporter) and the fun of Christmas Pantos.

Many new friends were made, some sadly no longer with us. Barry and Cathy Thomas became good friends - I bought their house in Southbourne Gardens and they witnessed Susanne and my wedding in 1977. And Chris Rodwell patiently tried to teach me the fundamentals of golf.

When Susanne and I started a family and my knees could no longer support the rigours of playing football, I went to the Club less but still maintained the friendships.

Our three children were born in Greenwich and the family lived in Blackheath, as I do now. Much of my career was spent working around the world before I retired in 2011 and for several years Susanne and I spent many happy times, often with our three children, at our house in a small coastal village in Mallorca. Sadly, Susanne died suddenly in 2015 and her demise had a major impact on me. I had to confront life as a single man taking up or resuming various activities to occupy me. These have included long-distance walking in the UK and Europe,



Mick (l) with the late Chris Rodwell (r) on an Old Roan football trip to Sarrebourg in France

singing in my local choir and fishing, in particular fly fishing on a beautiful stretch Hampshire's River Test. I have also devoted time to a charity dedicated to the memory of a colleague who died while working in Hong Kong. I mainly select students for MSc transport studies bursaries at UK universities who otherwise could not afford the course. I also help select the best MSc dissertation submitted, which earns a cash prize.

This led me in 2019 to becoming the ORA's nominated Director to the John Roan Foundation. I have enjoyed serving as the

Finance Committee Chair and on the Playing Fields Committee. It has been very rewarding to learn how the school functions and the various ways the Foundation's funding enables it to broaden its range of student experience through music lessons, travel to Braithwaite and the provision of mini-busses helping students access the Kidbrooke playing fields.

I feel privileged to be your President for 2023/24 and look forward to meeting many of you over the coming year.

MICK ROBERTS

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com

CHRIS STRONG LOOKS BACK AT HIS 2022/23 TERM OF OFFICE

Immediate past President Trevor Puddifoot was not able to attend the 2022 AGM due to a staffing crisis at his pub, so he was not able to pass over the presidential chain of office. However, after the meeting I was able to meet Trevor at the River Tavern, where he handed over the chain together with a couple of pints of his best real ale.

Held the last Friday before the summer holidays, Founder's Day is always a big occasion for the School and Old Roans, showcasing as it does the great variety of musical talent at The John Roan. 2022 was no exception and the music offering was exceptional, from the various orchestras, choirs and solo performers. Full credit to Head of Music, Andrew Barker.

Albert Lee's concert was at the Club in October and he put on a great performance of music with tales of playing with some of the biggest bands over the last 40 or so years.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Roan Theatre Company's production of *Forget -Me-Not Lane* - my first visit to the Bob Hope Theatre, but it won't be my last. I was most impressed by the acting, particularly the lead role, Frank, who was on stage for almost the whole play.

As usual, the Annual Reunion Dinner in November was a very pleasant and successful evening, giving Old Roans the opportunity to meet up



Chris Strong

with old friends and share memories of past sporting glories. Brian Hoy, my Guest of Honour and Chair of the Hope Memorial Trust, gave a talk on the Braithwaite Camp and the many changes over the years.

As in previous years, I, along with the congregation from the village, was at the Braithwaite War Memorial for the Service of Remembrance. I laid a poppy wreath on behalf of the Old Roan Association, continuing a very long tradition. It was a clear fine day with the fells making a fitting backdrop to the service.

A celebration of achievements evening was held at the School in December. The John Roan Foundation sponsors the event and I presented the various subject prizes and the prestigious Roan Exhibition, awarded to the top male and female students, based on their A Level results.

CHRIS STRONG (1964 -71)

THE PASSING OF LEGENDS

GORDON AND BARRY

Two Roan School and Association legends - Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas, both teaching colleagues at the boy's school from the late 1960s and into the 70s, and both revered in Old Roan history - tragically passed away within days of each other in Norfolk last year.

Their deaths in November, coming in such quick succession, was a huge shock for Old Roans everywhere and the idea that both are not around anymore is still a bit unreal. Both featured in the Magazine only last year, talking about how much they enjoyed their Roan days.

Tributes poured in for them from former pupils they had taught or had influenced in some way. Many



Barry & Gordon at the School Field in the 70s

other Old Roans paid their respects to two massive characters in the life of the school and Association.

There are full tributes to Gordon and Barry's valuable lives later in this issue of the Magazine.

CHRIS AND KEITH

Two more Old Roan legends, Chris Rodwell (1965-72) and Keith Hedges (1960-67) - both sporting heroes for the school and Association - have also passed away recently to the great shock of everyone who knew them.

Chris, who had lived abroad for many years, was a prolific Roan sports all-rounder and Keith, a huge Charlton fan with a cultured left foot, played football for Old Roan over many seasons. Both played a memorable role in the social life of the club.



Together at the club in the 80s ... Chris (l) and Keith (r)

Both incredibly well-liked and always highly-regarded, their passing has created a huge hole in the lives all family, friends and many Old Roans.

Full tributes to Chris and Keith appear later in the Magazine.

DELIVERING ON OUR VISION

John Roan School Principal, Cath Smith, reports on significant progress

Our school vision is that we are an ambitious learning community where pride brings out the best in everyone. Our PRIDE values of 'proud', 'respectful', 'involved', 'determined' and 'excellent' underpin all that we do.

The past twelve months have seen us emerge from the pandemic stronger and more confident with a greater sense of belief in what we are doing and a shared sense of growth and improvement. It is now over five years since the Ofsted inspection rated us as 'inadequate'. We are now confident that our educational offer is considerably stronger and we have the ability to bring out the best in everyone.

We are PROUD of our achievements:

Last summer saw our Years 11 and 13 students achieve the best results the school has seen for many years. Year 13 students gained places in universities around the country - a year group that had their GCSEs cancelled and the first half of their Sixth Form significantly disrupted. So it was especially pleasing to celebrate when they received their results and again in December at the Celebration of Achievement Evening where the winner of the John Roan Exhibition was also announced. Year 11 made us very proud; so many students making excellent progress and many choosing to stay on with us into our Sixth Form.



John Lewis (then) CEO, Dame Sharon White, with Roan students at Maze Hill

As a school needing to improve significantly and rapidly, through 2022 we had a 'School Improvement Board' to oversee this progress and to hold us to account. Meeting every four weeks, the SIB supported the Leadership of the school and helped to drive rapid improvements. In December, the SIB determined the intense monitoring could now stop and January saw a new Local Governing Board (LGB) set up with representatives from the John Roan Foundation, parents, staff and the local community.

It has been a challenge to turn around the reputation of the school in the local community over the past five years, but this year has seen us fill up in many of our year groups. This has been a significant milestone for us and we now need to set up an appeals panel for families of Year 6 children who want to send their children to The John Roan School in September 2023 but who have been placed on our waiting list.

We are a RESPECTFUL community:
The school always marks



Students taking part in a COP 27 activity day

Remembrance Day and this year was no exception when the entire school came together for readings, a silence and the Last Post. We also marked the anniversary of the death of Stephen Lawrence in April - a tree planted in his name grows in the Maze Hill grounds as a lasting reminder of the racial hatred that led to his murder.

We understand the importance of being INVOLVED:

We seek out opportunities for our students and staff to work with others both in school and in the community. In 2022, our Community Librarians once again reached the national finals for the Goldsmith's Community Awards and were highly commended at the Greenwich 'Do the Right Thing' Awards. Their voluntary work with Mycenae House and local care homes as well as with some local primary schools has been widely recognized and celebrated.

All students have been involved in a day of team building exercises, the cost sponsored by The John Roan Foundation, at an offsite activity centre. The challenges set during the day require team work, involvement and above all a determination to succeed.

Over the past year we have developed a number of links with businesses and residents in Greenwich who have then been able to support us in sparking ambition in our students. One group of residents has begun a mentoring programme with Year 12 students and we hope to expand this over time.

Our Sixth Form artists displayed their end of year work at the Woolwich Works last summer and our links with the Greenwich Titans and Charlton Athletic continue through our basketball and football provision for our Sixth Form.

Once again this year, we marked International Women's Day and the theme of 'Embrace Equity' through assemblies, PSHE activities and a seminar series where students were able to listen to, meet with and question a number of successful women who came to talk about their careers and the challenges they have overcome.

The JRSA have run a number of highly successful events bringing parents, students and staff together to raise money and have fun. The Summer BBQ is always a good event to welcome new parents to the school whilst the quiz nights and Bingo evenings are also great fund raisers for the school.

The JRSA have also established a gardening group who have refreshed the planters at the front of the school and planted bulbs along the front of the Westcombe Park site. Their major planning is however to create an 'Edible Garden' on the Maze Hill site, adjacent to the Technology Block

and where it is hoped that students and parents can work together with staff to grow vegetables, herbs and even fruit for use in cookery classes, to support Science lessons and perhaps even to develop dyes that will be used in Textile lessons.

We are DETERMINED to ensure that all students have the opportunity to realise their ambition:

The recruitment of staff to the school was a serious focus over the past 12 months with an absolute determination to only appoint the right people to each position. We started the academic year fully-staffed for the first time in several years, and with highly qualified subject specialists in post.

With the growing cost of living, we have been increasingly aware of the challenges faced by many of our families. A genuine bonus for The John Roan School is having a Foundation, an Old Roan Association and a thriving School Association.

The John Roan Foundation has continued to focus on supporting those students who are in the greatest need. This year it has provided travel grants for students to go to Braithwaite, uniform grants for families who need support in purchasing school uniform, sponsorship for trips and visits and has now set up a Cultural Capital Fund for the school to manage the support of such trips.

The Old Roan Association has started to provide funds to support students whose families do not qualify for free school meals and yet the school is aware of circumstances at home that make the cost of school meals prohibitive. Managed on a case by case basis, this has helped some families who have run up debts with the canteen as well as provided daily support for key students. Funding from the ORA has also enabled all of the Key Stage 3 (years 7 - 9) students to enjoy their cookery lessons. We had noticed that some students were unable to provide the ingredients needed to do their lessons and so this additional funding has enabled the department to centrally provide spare ingredients so that everyone is able to cook.

Our growing programme of visiting speakers has ensured our Sixth Form students hear from a wide range of successful people across a number of fields. This year the visitors have ranged from the CEO of John Lewis to professional Premier League

footballer, and Old Roan, Eze. We are always looking for more speakers, so if there are any Old Roans who could spare an hour to inspire our students, please do let us know!

We know that we need to be EXCELLENT in order to bring out the best in everyone:

The change we made 18 months ago to move the Sixth Form fully onto the Maze Hill site and have the main school all based at Westcombe Park has enabled us to develop Maze Hill as a specialist Sixth Form provision. This year our numbers grew significantly and we now have over 200 students studying for A Levels and vocational qualifications in the inspirational 1928 building. We have four students holding offers for Oxford and Cambridge and many more with offers for London universities such as LSE, Imperial College and UCL as well as Russell Group universities across the country. Students are all working hard now to achieve the grades they need.

Last summer the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF) was once again running as a live, face-to-face event and the John Roan Foundation was able to sponsor a student. Aeden Bullen attended the two-week residential and reported back to the Foundation at their meeting in September. Competition for the ticket is hotly contested and 5 applicants were invited to discuss their ambitions before the 2023 winner, Milan Splavskyi was chosen.



Remembrance Day at the John Roan School

POIGNANCY AND POTENTIAL

A heady mix at The John Roan School Founder's Day

There was a combination of superb musical talent and tangible sadness in July last year for the School's annual Founder's Day service at St Alfege Church in Greenwich. But jubilation too, as for the first time since the pandemic students packed the church out along with guests in addition to the 'live' video feed relaying the event back to others at the school.

Young John Roan musicians and singers excelled themselves across a wide range of pieces during the celebration of then 345 years since the founding of the School. From Stevie Wonder's Isn't She Lovely to Handel's March from Flavius and from Mozart to a great rendition of Aurora's Running With the Wolves, the wealth of talent was obvious.

The poignancy came in a special tribute to Logan Finch, a student who tragically died in December 2021 - his family were there on the day as special guests. Short poems were read out by Logan's school friends, candles lit and a truly wonderful piece played on piano and violin composed especially by Lucca De Almeida.

Guest speaker was Old Roan Paul Goldspring, Greenwich born who attended the School's Sixth Form from 1988-90 and who has gone on to become Senior District Judge (Chief Magistrate) for England and Wales. Part of his important role is to hear many of the most sensitive or complex cases in the magistrates' courts and in particular extradition and special jurisdiction cases.



ORA members at Founder's Day: (L-R) Isabella Gordon-Salem (School Capt.), Jane Harnden, Keith Bradbrook, Mike Tetheridge, Cheryl Allen, Monty Smith, Chris Strong (President), Mick Roberts, Linda Nelson, Cath Smith (Principal), Alistair 'Mitch' Mitchell, Maxwel Callingham (School Capt.)



Logan Finch

Paul shared some pearls of wisdom with students - tenets he said he had employed during his school days and throughout his successful career.

Aim high
Have big ambitions, not big dreams
Have a plan
Work hard
Learn to deal with knock backs

With all the trappings of a judge these days, Paul ended with a reminder: 'So remember - despite the fancy robes and titles I am just like you, we are from the same place. If I can do it I promise you can too!'



Mia Ogretmen singing Adele

After the Founder's Day service, the school held a special lunch back at Maze Hill where various achievement awards were presented to staff and students.



Paul Goldspring

OLD ROAN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to become a member of the Old Roan Association, or indeed re-join, then please contact the Secretary, Bernie Hampton - berniehampton@btinternet.com

Contact the Secretary also to notify the Association of any change of address, contacts or other member circumstances.

For Old Roan Magazine enquiries and to send contributions, contact: Keith Bradbrook (Editor) - Oldroankgb@gmail.com

OLD ROAN REUNION DINNER 2022

Braithwaite, the continuing good progress of the John Roan School and President Chris Strong almost, but not quite, seeing Freddy Truman get his 300th Test wicket in the 60s were the highlights at the Old Roan Association's Reunion Dinner held at the School Field back in November.

Once again, Old Roans packed out the Pavillion, although, as always, there was the odd familiar face missing along with a few late-arrivals as the London-bound A2 was at a standstill that night due to a protester dangling from a bridge at the Danson Park interchange. Happily, the caterers kept some dinners warm!

Chris Strong's Guest of Honour to mark the Centenary of the Braithwaite Camp in 2023 was Brian Hoy, Chairman of the Hope Memorial Trust. Brian's speech, which described the major developments of the camp over the years, how additional land

has been purchased and some of the ways in which the Centenary may be celebrated - such as tree planting - is covered in depth in this Magazine's main feature on Braithwaite (see page 28).

Chris himself, in his address, remembered his school-days with great affection, including being taught by both Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas who had just recently both died and were fondly remembered throughout the evening. He also paid tribute to the late Nigel Ballantyne, who always, he said, made characters come to life when teaching English.

Musing that children were given a lot more freedom in his youth than today, Chris remembered with his older brother catching a bus to go and see the England v Australia Test match at the Oval in 1964 when demon bowler Freddy Truman was expected to get his 300th Test wicket. As it turned out, they saw Fred pick up his 298th



Brian Hoy's speech



Chris Strong



At the dinner

but not the 300th which came the next day!

Our President probably did himself down a bit by suggesting he wasn't all that sporty when at Roan because he was a very good cross-country runner and ended up running a marathon in Zambia and subsequently six London Marathons.

In his speech, he suggested there ought to be some new words for the School Song - not to replace our much-loved version but to have an updated one. In fact, to kick this off, Hilary Haslam has already come up with a new wording (see page 43).

Principal Cath Smith reported that the John Roan School is making excellent progress with very impressive exam results last year. Also, that in Year 11 some 80% of students had decided to stay on in the School's Sixth Form.

Cath thanked the Association for new funding, from Tony Slaney's

legacy, to help students from families who are really struggling with the cost of living.

The dinner ended in the time-honoured way with a rendition of the School Song (the existing version!) played once again by Stuart Horsburgh on a piano that has definitely seen better days. Who knows, perhaps when Braithwaite was started up 100 years ago, or when Freddy Truman got his first England wicket...



Principal Cath Smith

ALBERT ROCKS ROAN!

Music legend returns for magical Club gig

Legendary guitarist and Old Roan, Albert Lee, rocked the School Field Pavillion in October last year for a marvellous sell-out, 'back to his roots' gig. Hugely well-known in his own right and who has played with so many icons in the rock, pop and Country world it's almost impossible to count, Albert hadn't stepped foot back in the Pavillion for decades but he played a timeless show to the delight of a rapturous audience packed with Old Roans.

When Headmaster Gus Gilbert in the late-50s suggested to teenage Roan boy Albert Lee ...'You're not making much progress here are you?'... the fledgling guitarist left at the end of the term to embark on a magical musical career that has long since secured his reputation as one of the all-time greats.

Albert has played with them all... Eric Clapton, The Everley Brothers, Emmylou Harris, Willie Nelson... the list is endless and his vast experience, massive talent and sheer longevity was all on show for his bravura performance at the Roan Club.

Backed by his band on keyboards (Alan Petrie), bass (brother Iain Petrie) and drums (Ollie Sears), Albert knocked out classic number after number - songs from Fats Domino, Dire Straits, Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly, the Everley's of course and Chuck Berry, plus a few of his own, including playing keyboards himself.



Albert with band members Iain Petrie (l), Alan Petrie and Ollie Sears (r)



Albert's rapturous reception

'It's great to be back!', said Albert, who came to the Roan School in 1955, 'A bit weird, but nice!'

In between songs, Albert revealed little nuggets of his time at Roan. Although he enjoyed school, he had started to play the guitar and the music gradually took precedence over everything. So, by the time Headmaster Gilbert had his 'word', Albert already knew what he wanted to do.

Like every wannabe in the early days and into the 60s, it wasn't easy making a name for himself. Albert told the gig of being paid £20 for a twelve-day Scotland tour - enough to get himself a new amp - and lusting after new guitars like a Gibson and a Les Paul.

Albert played at the also legendary 2i coffee bar in Soho which saw the emergence of skiffle and rock and roll here in the UK with the likes of Cliff Richard. He played abroad - Amsterdam and Germany - and then in 1964 joined Chris Farlowe (of Out of Time fame), staying with him for four years. Later, came a stint with Sandy Denny and then Albert met the iconic Everley Brothers when playing at the Troubadour, the Hollywood venue which broke so many acts including Elton John.

With growing success, Albert loved and excelled in Country music and in the mid-70s hooked up with Emmylou Harris when she asked him to join her band. After that, he had a long period in Eric Clapton's band.

In his now epic career, Albert has always played with the best in the business, continues to release his own albums and still tours widely in America and all over the world. His Roan Club gig was in a smaller venue that he is often used to but after he had wowed all those lucky enough to be there in October, he and his band said there was something special about playing that night.

'Coming back brings back lots of memories but there was a great vibe out there,' Albert declared. 'Sometimes venues are a bit impersonal but here at the Club because everyone was so close you could feel the audience's reactions. It was great getting such a warm reception.'



Albert and Eric Clapton

Albert may live in California now, but by returning to the Roan Club to play for everyone and the memories he shared with the audience, it was clear he still has evocative memories of the school and strong personal ties with the area he grew up in.

It's hoped Albert might return for another concert at some stage - and if he does it's sure to be another full house - but nothing is confirmed as yet so keep watching this space.

MITCH MADE IT POSSIBLE

October's memorable gig was a master move from Old Roan and long-time Albert Lee fan Alistair 'Mitch' Mitchell (1965-72).

'I've been a fan of Albert Lee for over 50 years from when I came across him playing lead guitar in a band called Heads, Hands and Feet (also featuring Chas Hodges of Chas and Dave!). They opened for Grand Funk Railroad at a free concert in Hyde Park in July 1971.

'Over the years, I have seen him play numerous times, at various locations - with his own band, with Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings and with Hogan's Heroes - all over the UK.

'One of the many great things about Albert is that he is willing to play at a variety of venues, of all shapes and sizes.

'So, in September 2021, some 50 years after the Hyde Park free concert, I found myself at Dartford Working Men's Club in company with fellow Old Roan and big-time Albert fan, Laurance 'Spot' Hughes, my good friend, and Old Roan girl Linda Nelson and her partner George Coe.

'At the interval, during another fabulous performance from Albert and his band, we chatted about how great it would be to have him play at the Roan Club, him being an Old Roan after all. What's the chances? Well, I knew he had previously played lots of small venues in SE London - Woolwich Tramshed, Greenwich Borough Hall, Mick Jagger Centre - so why wouldn't he?

'At the end of the show, Albert came out front to chat, sign autographs, sign CDs, etc and I asked him if he would be interested in playing at the Pavilion and who I needed to talk with. He said yes - whilst asking if the showers were still cold!

'I talked to Sue Hargreaves, his UK and Europe Tour Manager, to find a date that suited Albert and ourselves and it was actually pretty simple. What happened next in terms of the problems in putting the 'show' together is another story! But it was worth every minute to have Albert and his fabulously talented band play at the Roan Club.

'Here's hoping we can do it again!'



Albert at the keyboard

THE 'MARVELLOUS ALBERT LEE'

Music superstar Emmylou Harris paid tribute to Albert Lee in a recent BBC Radio interview.

Speaking to Sounds of the 70s DJ 'Whispering' Bob Harris, presenter of the legendary Old Grey Whistle Test TV music show, Emmylou



Emmylou Harris

waxed lyrical about Albert who was part of her Hot Band when she toured the UK in the late 70s on the back of her hit album *Luxury Liner*.

'That was such a great time, we were all so new and fresh,' Emmylou recalled. 'We had the good luck to find each other and along came the absolutely marvellous Albert Lee.

'Playing music together was such a joy and we loved hanging out together. When I was with those guys I always had such supreme confidence in them. It was always like a family.'

BRAITHWAITE CENTENARY

Hope Memorial Camp - 1923/2023

Braithwaite – the Hope Memorial Camp – celebrates its Centenary in 2023. It is 100 years since the Roan School for Boys' Headmaster, Arthur Herbert Hope, bought some land on an idyllic Lake District hillside having fallen in love with the area two years earlier. The camp's huts and other facilities were established and numerous parties of Roan pupils have been able to walk the iconic fells and enjoy the famous landscapes ever since.

Over the intervening decades, Braithwaite, the name of this small,

picturesque village just outside Keswick, has become utterly engrained in the life and history of Roan. The combined memories of Roan experiences there would top a mountain of dreams. An incredible memory bank that is still expanding as the John Roan School students of today continue to attend the camp.

How lucky Roan pupils and Old Roans have been in those 100 years to have had the chance to spend time at such a special place as Braithwaite. How lucky to have been so enriched by the



The Braithwaite Camp – a 100 years of Lake District memories



The view towards Braithwaite village from the camp

friends and relationships they have forged there, to have faced daunting challenges on the fells and in other activities that have all helped them grow and develop in their lives ahead. How lucky to have had Arthur Hope as a Roan Head with the vision in 1923 to hope that Braithwaite would inspire so many future generations of Roan students with the love of the Lakes, the outdoors and their school.

Over the following pages,

the Magazine tells stories of Braithwaite to the present day, looks back at events through the decades, includes memories of those who have attended and shows how the John Roan School enjoys the camp today.

We start with a tribute to Braithwaite from Chris Strong, the Old Roan Association's immediate past President and member of the Hope Memorial Trust which continues to maintain the camp.

MARKING 100 YEARS

Plans to mark Braithwaite's Centenary are not finalised yet but they include planting 100 new trees on the land – potentially involving an idea of Old Roans being able sponsor a tree – and equipping the camp with a new public-space defibrillator. This follows an incident last year when someone collapsed on the How.

Details of what the Centenary activities will be are to follow.

A UNIQUE PLACE

Chris Strong (1964-71) - Association President 2022/23 and member of the Hope Memorial Trust

Braithwaite is one of the unique features of the John Roan School. How far-sighted was former Headmaster Arthur Herbert Hope, when in 1923 he purchased 14 acres of land just outside the village of Braithwaite and built a camp made up of wooden huts. Initially just for the boys of the School, the camp has over the last 100 years accommodated numerous other schools, youth groups and various community organisations, giving thousands of people the chance to discover and enjoy this particular corner of the Lake District.

I came upon Braithwaite relatively late in life, in 2002 when I became the Old Roan representative on the Hope Memorial Trust - I never visited the camp whilst I was at Roan. As a family living in Greenwich, we did not own a car, hence I tended to walk everywhere. So the idea of going up to Braithwaite, which was effectively a walking holiday, did not really appeal. I preferred more active school trips such as sailing camp in Norfolk and skiing in Switzerland.

However, since 'finding' Braithwaite, I'm now a regular visitor to the Lake District and I'm slowly ticking off my Wainwright walks. The highlight to date was conquering Helvellyn, via Striding Edge. I did this in November a few years ago, accompanied by my cousin Dave, who for 30+ years was the Leader of Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team, so I was in safe hands.

John Roan Foundation Trustees and various Old Roans have an annual trip to Braithwaite. Over the years, money left to the camp in remembrance of Old Roans has allowed the camp to develop - for example the recent addition of the much-needed drying room.

The camp remains a really valuable asset to the school and every pupil gets an opportunity to spend time at Braithwaite. I'm sure they will be left with life-long happy memories of their time there.



Chris with his wife, Lesley, on a walk from Braithwaite to Buttermere

BRAITHWAITE GALLERY



1920s - Arthur Hope at Braithwaite



1923 - a walking party heads out



Cricket at the camp



At the old Braithwaite rail station



Overlooking Red Tarn



1976 - Braithwaite group on Scafell Pike



1972 - a Roan group on top of Skiddaw

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com

THROUGH THE DECADES...

1920s

After two Roan visits in 1922, Arthur Herbert Hope bought the Braithwaite land in 1923 and set up the iconic old camp huts. The June 1923 Roan Magazine reported on the boys' Easter evening arrival: 'What a home! The terrace one could faintly mark out, the windows - one almost thought oneself in Sydenham, the cheerful light of the lamps.'



Roan boys on the 1923 Braithwaite camp



Braithwaite Camp - 1923



Main hut mess room - 1923

1930s

Arthur Hope died in 1930 after having attended the Easter Roan camp and the School subsequently raised a fund to buy the Braithwaite land at a much-reduced price of £250 from his estate (only about £20,000 today). The Hope Memorial Trust officially took possession at a special ceremony at the camp at Easter 1933. Speaking that day, Mr L E Lee of the Trust said of Hope: '... 12 years ago he had descended on the village... made very welcome ... nothing would content him but that he must have some small holding in that village...'. The rest is glorious Braithwaite history!



Arthur Herbert Hope

1940s

The first post-war Braithwaite camp was held at Whitsun 1946. Three masters were in charge and 40 pupils attended. A Roan Magazine report says: 'We were at once struck by the beauty of Braithwaite. We are all very grateful for the opportunity of going to this magnificent camp site.'

1950s

Roan groups continued to visit Braithwaite. In 1956, Alfie Knott joined Derek Evans and George Hall to lead a party and wrote in the Roan Magazine: 'Every single member of the camp reached the summit of Scafell Pike; no higher achievement will ever mark a Braithwaite camp.'



The 1956 Braithwaite group

1960s

Cricket was often played at Braithwaite. In 1960, a camp team defeated the Braithwaite-cum-Thornthwaite Cricket Club, due mainly to the 'guiding hand of our Captain, H T Rogers, and to a fine innings by P L T Bevan.' Unfortunately, the opposition's revenge was swift. Roan were re-challenged in the second week of the camp, faced a much tougher, more mature team and despite some sheep wandering over the pitch were beaten.

1970s

The first Old Roan camp at Braithwaite was held, although fewer ORs went than was expected. The Roan Magazine reported: 'Our achievements ranged from attempts on the mountains to boating on the lakes, with pilgrimages to houses and graveyards, and drives in all directions'. As for some ORs themselves... 'The Bowder Stone was clambered upon with Doug Humphreys, Brian Chamberlain and others: at Wastwater, the older members ran into two young climbers, Tony Slaney and Alan Palmer, whose schedule of ascents included the Langdales, Scafell Pike and the Grisedale-Causey Pike circuit.'



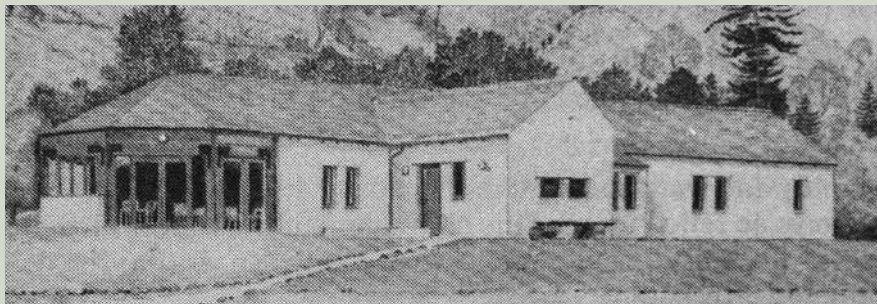
Braithwaite 1971: Teachers (l-r) Terry Hall, Derek Evans, Nigel Ballantyne, Head Dr Alan Taylor and pupil Brian Pinkstone

THROUGH THE DECADES...

1980s

Braithwaite camp is re-built! The old, but cherished huts are replaced with a new, modern-equipped block which still forms the basis of the now even further improved site of today. At an unveiling in April 1989, a driving force behind the new development and then chair of the Trust, Roan Head Ann Tonkin, paid tribute to Arthur Hope, the eccentric who was lovingly called 'The Ancient': 'The boys and he always wore kilts when they came here. He paid little attention to the rules and regulations and if he wished to run a seven-week camp in term time he did.'

In dedicating the camp's second foundation stone, Ann declared: '... we acknowledge the equality of opportunity for all our children and thank John Roan and Arthur Herbert Hope for their inheritance.' The Braithwaite building was completed months later.



The new Braithwaite building

1990s

In 1993, the Trust was instructed by an authority to plant 50 trees between the camp and the Whinlatter Pass Road and an extension was added on the north end of the building, funded by the Roan Foundation, including a multi-purpose room and facilities more suitable for children with disabilities.



Braithwaite 1991

2000s

The Hope Memorial Trust received a considerable legacy from the estate of Robert Jarrams who attended Roan in the 50s. He was Master at Caterham School and was a regular user of Braithwaite camp until about 1990.

2010s

Old Roan extraordinaire Tony Slaney sadly died in 2013 and left a sizeable legacy to the Hope Memorial Trust. Amazingly, Tony had never attended Braithwaite while at school from 1959-66 - his love for the Lakes and the camp came in later years. In May 2014, a large group of Old Roan's made the journey to Braithwaite to spread the ashes of their beloved friend and past Association President on the How above the camp. A fitting resting place for Tony and powerful, yet poignant, evidence of the lasting impact the camp had and continues to have on Roan students.



Old Roans at Braithwaite to spread Tony Slaney's ashes on the How

2020s

And the Roan story of Braithwaite continues into the present day. John Roan students attend the camp on a number of visits every year, experiencing and enjoying the Lake District as their school forebears have done ever since Arthur Hope 'descended' on Braithwaite in the 1920s. The Hope Memorial Trust continues to care for and develop the camp so that not only the John Roan School but also a wide range of groups and organisations from the Scouts and Guides to mountain rescue units can benefit from this unique place.



John Roan School students meeting challenges on the fells

100 YEARS OF TRUST

Brian Hoy - Chairman of the Hope Memorial Trust

The Hope Memorial Trust was established 100 years ago in 1923 to care for and maintain the Braithwaite camp for present and future generations of Roan students. Today in 2023, in Braithwaite's Centenary year, the Trust is still working as hard as ever to preserve the Braithwaite that we all know and love but also faces continual challenges to ensure the camp – the land, its buildings and facilities – are kept as up to date as possible and meet the modern-day demands of 'officialdom'.

The Trust's Chairman Brian Hoy was Association President Chris Strong's Guest of Honour at the Old Roan Annual Reunion Dinner in November. In his speech, he described the background of how the camp has been developed over the years and how the Trust copes with the often hidden costs and regulations of running it today.

Last year, a four-ton oak tree came

down on the Braithwaite land – it took out a neighbour's wall and very nearly a family. Trees are always coming down somewhere, it's what happens in the Lake District, but to clear it up and deal with other trees costs the Trust c£1000 a year. It shows what can hit the camp's budget at any time and generate something else the Trust has to deal with.

Arthur Hope first bought 14 acres at Braithwaite which later increased to 40 acres with two additional patches also acquired recently. But Brian was able to confirm the story that 'The Ancient' never actually stayed at the camp. A Braithwaite villager said that her aunt used to put him up in a guest house!

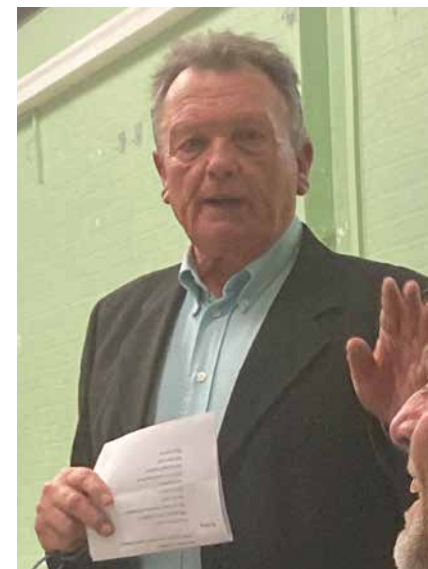
Over the years, a string of planning applications for the camp have been put in and Roy detailed the tortuous intricacies of the planning processes the Trust has had to

navigate. He paid tribute to ex-Roan School Head Ann Tonkin for her leadership for the building of the new camp block in 1989.

'When she arrived, she took one look at it (the camp huts) and condemned it. Quite rightly. Health and Safety and not suitable for mixed groups. The huts were just a place to sleep, eat and go to the next walk. Activities for the school then and today are much more far-reaching and we needed a new building. So, the John Roan Foundation funded a mortgage and the new building was re-built on the footprint of the old one. We were told there would be no way we would be able to do that if the huts hadn't been there.'

Roy praised others who have been particularly instrumental in the camp's upkeep and improvement. Past Association President Alan Weir who was Trust Treasure right up until his death in recent years. Jim Upton, former Roan teacher and ex Chair of the Trust. Martyn Bain, the Roan school-caretaker, who did fitting-out work for the new building and Ray Trickey, the first Premises Manager when the new block opened.

As well as Tony Slaney and in addition to the Roan Foundation, Roy acknowledged other key Braithwaite donors. Robert Jarrams, a former pupil in the 50s and Trevor Cruddock (1946-55), who funded the building of and equipment for the 'must



Brian Hoy speaking at the Annual Reunion Dinner

have' drying room. See Trevor's memories of Braithwaite on the following pages.

In the early 90s, the new block needed some expansion – including an activities room, staff room, a shower room – but the planning application was turned down. On the day of the appeal, when the venue was switched to the Braithwaite camp, the Inspector could see in-situ what the impact the improvements would make and the planning was granted.

Roy detailed the many regulations the camp now has to comply with and how these can be a constant drain on resources. New plumbing, improved sewage systems, fire safety testing and equipment,

REMEMBERING BRAITHWAITE...

TREVOR LORD (1964-69)

I had some happy memories of two trips to Braithwaite. This gave me a great love of nature and scenic beauty which has stayed with me a lifetime. When my employer sent me on a five-week Outward Bound course to Ullswater in 1971 they were amazed to learn I was excellent at orienteering and mountaineering and exhibited a great enthusiasm for the outdoors. Thank you Braithwaite!



Welcome to the camp

insurance and the installation of better windows. So many aspects of maintaining the camp and expense which never existed back in Hope's day.

The Trusts' investments have been very wisely secured and in relative terms the resources are there to ensure the camp's future. But it is a constant battle and Roy and the

Trust are loathe to increase costs to the School and students and others to come and stay.

These days a host of different groups and organisations use Braithwaite in addition to the John Roan School including, recently, some Ukranian families. The camp is now in use for more than 150 days of the year.

And what of the future?

Roy mused that a 'dream' would be at some stage to develop one or two lets on an area of camp land, possibly affordable accommodation for young people in Braithwaite – a way of securing extra income but also of paying back something more to the village and villagers for all the help and support given to the camp since Arthur Hope enjoyed such hospitality when he first 'descended' in the 1920s.

'The villagers used to help the children carry up all their camping gear and bags up to the camp. I don't know how, but I'd like to see this idea happen.'



The Common Room at Braithwaite

BRAITHWAITE MEMORIES IN THE EARLY 50s

Trevor Cruddock (1946-55) developed a life-long love of Braithwaite and the Lake District when he first visited the Hope Memorial Camp over 70 years ago. Although long-since moved to Canada, he has deep knowledge of the fells and has been an important donor to improve the camp's facilities, including funding a drying room. Here, he recalls some Braithwaite memories.

I started at the Roan School in 1946 having passed an early entrance exam to join nineteen other boys in the 2nd Form under Miss (Maggie) Morton who successfully tutored all of us to pass the 11+ Examination to gain entry into the school proper. Our first opportunity to visit the Braithwaite camp came once we had moved up to the Shell Form in 1948 – at the annual two-week camp during the Whitsun break of 1949 (early June that year).

I persuaded my parents to find the funds to allow me to join the forty or so boys from the Shell and Fourth (a year ahead of us) Forms. We went by bus from the school to Euston Station to catch the train first to Penrith, then to Braithwaite. Prior to Dr Beeching's dramatic cuts there was a branch line from Penrith out to the coast at Workington via Keswick and Cockermouth.

GOT BRAITHWAITE MEMORIES TO SHARE?

Whatever your memories of Braithwaite, either at school or afterwards, please share them with other Old Roans through the Magazine. Send them to: The Editor - oldroankgb@gmail.com.

Thank you!

As the train climbed Shap Fell, I became absolutely entranced by the spectacular scenery and could not wait to purchase a postcard to send home describing the beauty of that landscape. So started my love affair with the Lake District and mountains in general.

In those days the camp consisted of three separate buildings. One large hut that could accommodate 42 boys sleeping on straw palliasses around the perimeter of the room which also served as the eating and activities room. A slightly smaller connecting hut constituted the kitchen. There was a separate wash hut and latrines and a fourth, much smaller, hut farther down the hill to accommodate staff. The camp was rented out to other schools during the rest of the year which resulted in graffiti messages in the washrooms from boys to girls and vice versa. Whether such invitations ever resulted in real communications is doubtful.

We had two masters with us that year – Kenneth Binnie (History) and George Hall (Science). They had engaged a local couple to do all the cooking and all we lads had to do was peel enough potatoes for the evening meal and prepare our own sandwiches for the day's outing. To this day, I wonder if we wasted more potato with the peels than we left for that evening's meal. Indeed 'peeling' may not be the correct word to use given the mutilations to which the potatoes were subjected.

With all the excitement, the first night was rowdy after lights out but the next day Binnie and Hall marched us off to climb Catbells and made sure we were a thoroughly exhausted bunch by that evening. The masters also took us on other 'guided' tours such as up Helvellyn via Striding Edge and, on another occasion, across Coledale Hause and down to Crummock Water. But they were also extremely accommodating in allowing small parties to venture out on their own providing, of course, they were well informed of our proposed route and expected time of return.

Our clothing was not exactly suited to fell walking. Most of us wore our school uniforms (caps included!) which meant we were in shorts and just 'sturdy shoes' as recommended



On the fells in the 50s

REMEMBERING BRAITHWAITE...

TONY ELLIOTT, pupil (1951-59) and then teacher

Sleeping on the hard floorboards at Braithwaite left a lasting impression as did my first mountain climb with Derek Evans. As a London boy, Shooters Hill on a scooter had been my total hill climbing experience. The view looking down from Catbells over Derwent Water set my mountaineering compass that has been in full use here at home in New Zealand.

in the list of clothing to pack. Only in later years was I able to save enough to afford some decent boots, sturdy trousers and an anorak. I know some of the boys found the going tough at that first camp and some were certainly homesick. I think I was too engrossed in the scenery to ever feel homesick.

A year later, in the Fourth Form, we had another opportunity to go to Braithwaite at Whitsun. After my experiences the previous year, it would have been very hard to keep me from joining the party. On this occasion, we were taken all the way to Braithwaite and return by coach rather than on the train. It must have been a long day as the motorways had yet to be conceived and built. This year we took along the school cook, Maureen 'Mo' Connolly, and some of us were obliged to help her each day in the kitchen although she was game enough to come along with us on some of our fell walks. The music teacher, Mr 'Trotters' Trotman also accompanied us.

On one occasion, a party of us went up Scafell Pike via Ruddy Gill, around Broad Crag and Ill Crag then back down to Seathwaite via the Corridor Route. It was a blistering hot day and Styhead Tarn beckoned. We went round to the flat rock on the east side away from the Styhead Gill path and stripped off for a skinny dip. The water was, as might be expected, chilling and we were no sooner in than back out again sitting on the rock to dry off with the single exception of Trotters, who seemed to think that he needed to demonstrate his strength of character by withstanding the cold water ten times longer than anyone else. While he was still swimming, along came two nuns – yes, nuns in full habits – on the other side of the tarn where they decided it would be a good place to take a rest. Poor Trotters was stuck! We could all quickly cover up, but he had to stay in the water until the nuns moved off. We never quite knew whether this was the reason that persuaded Trotters to go into Holy Orders a year or so later. Had the cold water of Styhead Tarn induced a lifelong state of celibacy?

Easter in 1951 was in late March and, perhaps unadvisedly, it was decided to take a group of us to Braithwaite over Easter instead of Whitsun. It was



A Braithwaite memory wall in the camp

cold – very cold. One of the masters who had not previously visited the camp was bitterly complaining that he was wearing every single piece of clothing he had brought with him, and he was still cold. Apart from the kitchen, none of the huts were heated in those days.

In later years, some senior boys were invited to join the Shell and Fourth form boys at the Whitsun camp so I

made sure I was there again in 1952. I was due to sit my O Level exams that year so was not allowed to extend my Whitsun break beyond the normal one week. Unfortunately, there was some industrial action involving the railways so Ken Binnie, who had driven up separately in his own car, took me back down to Kendal where I was able to board one of the few trains heading for London.

A year or so later I was back with more senior boys to assist the staff. That year, George Hall and Kenneth Binnie had been instrumental in establishing the Braithwaite Badge of which I, along with Yeo Champion, Dave Rivers and Jimmy Watson, was one of the first proud recipients in 1954.

The big challenge was the Borrowdale Round. George Hall came and woke Yeo and me so that we could set off on foot to Keswick in time to catch the first (7.00 am) bus up Borrowdale. We alighted at Stonethwaite and proceeded up Langstrath over to the Langdales, back across to Broad Crag and Ill Crag, up Scafell Pike and down the Corridor Route to Styhead, then up Great Gable across the saddle to Green Gable and down to Seathwaite. As we descended Yeo and I had fears that we would miss that last bus out of Seathwaite at 7.00 pm but, by running most of the way down, we made it by the skin of our teeth. George was waiting for us back at the camp with our well-deserved suppers kept warm for us. I have a feeling he was just as proud of us at the challenge he had managed to set for us as we were of our own accomplishment.

George also set challenges for himself. In 1956, the year after I had left Roan, I was with my girlfriend on the traverse below Great Gable when we bumped into George, his brother Andrew and another of his climbing

buddies from the Fell and Rock Climbing Club (FRCC). That year was the club's fiftieth anniversary so George and his colleagues had challenged themselves to climb the 'three needles' above Wasdale. These consisted of Scafell Pinnacle, the Needle on Great Gable and Pillar Rock... all to be done in one day starting from the FRCC Brackenclough Climbing Hut at Wasdale Head and getting back that evening. When we met, they had just abseiled off the Needle. It is little wonder that George barely had time to say 'Hello' before scampering off into the distance to tackle Pillar Rock before nightfall.

Maurice George was a Roan boy a couple of years ahead of me. He and I were recruited to assist George Hall with his Evening Classes in mountaineering. We would accompany the group when George organised map-reading excursions or on weekend trips to either the Lake District or Snowdonia. George encouraged me to join the FRCC and I spent numerous hours on the 'other end of the rope' either trailing or leading George on a number of rock and ice climbs.

Sadly, I was obliged to hang up my rope and Karabiners when my wife and I emigrated to Canada in 1960. After all, there is not much opportunity for climbing in either Saskatchewan or Manitoba. By the time we moved to Calgary and were that much closer to mountains we had a young family and had also learned that the rock climbs in the Canadian Rockies demanded a lot of ironmongery – something with which I was distinctly unfamiliar and reluctant to learn about. Indeed, when one recognises that the Canadian Rockies (e.g. Mt Robson, 3954m) are about 4 times higher than the Lake District 'mountains' (e.g. Scafell Pike, 978m) there is also a certain amount of apprehension that ensues.

George Hall passed away in November 2008 - he was 95 and had just returned from a week's hill walking in Scotland. Not only was he still exercising his legs, but it would appear he was also exercising his car on his return trip as his children discovered an outstanding traffic ticket after his death. He had been caught for speeding in his BMW Roadster, no less, by the Lancashire Constabulary as he headed home from that venture. Although I had lost touch with George shortly after emigrating to Canada, I remain eternally grateful to him and Ken Binnie for introducing me to the beauty of the Lake District where I have subsequently spent many happy hours since those early school camps in Braithwaite.

From the John Roan School website, I came across this quote: 'For many students who visit Braithwaite it is a life-changing experience and the memory stays with them for the rest of their lives.'

This was most certainly the case for me.

BRAITHWAITE BADGE

Many may recall the Braithwaite Badge which was awarded to Roan pupils from the early 50s to encourage a continuing interest in mountains and mountaineering. Getting one wasn't easy – it took strong fell-walking skills and the ability to deal with most emergencies on the hills.

The badge called for: going to at least two camps; knowledge of First Aid and mountain rescue; additional interest in the Lake District such as geology or bird-life; topping at least ten tops over 2,500 ft including one from Skiddaw, Helvellyn, the Scafell Pikes and Gt Gable; completing a 15-mile trek; map-reading ability; and at a final camp – overall achieving 20 tops, including all summits over 3000



The Braithwaite Badge

ft, except Scafell, completing the Borrowdale Round (a gruelling multi-summit circuit) and to be able to plan routes.

At some stage the Badge stopped being awarded but it was reintroduced for a while in 1974.

BRAITHWAITE BROTHERS

Old Roan brothers David (l) and Stuart Horsburgh at the Hope Memorial Camp last year when they visited while on holiday in the Lake District. David (1962-69) confesses to taking it more sedately on walks these days while Stuart (1966-73) is still a keen Wainright-bagger.



The Horsburgh brothers at the camp

BRAITHWAITE – STILL SERVING THE ROAN STUDENTS OF TODAY

John Roan School Principal, Cath Smith, on how the School's use of the Hope Memorial Camp today is as great as ever.

'This year we are again fortunate to have been able to book five weeks at Braithwaite for our students. Twenty-six students in each of years 7, 8, 9 & 10 will each have a week at the Hope Memorial Camp, building memories and having great experiences.

'We are also able to send up a group of our Sixth Form Biologists for a week of field work in the Lake District. My hope is that more departments (perhaps Geography next) will be able to use the Camp as the base for their practical work. With 2023 marking 100 years of Braithwaite, it is especially pleasing to have been able to increase our presence in the village.'



Students crossing Fleetwith Pike's via Ferrata route



Out for a day on the Fells



Students on the How outside the Hope Memorial Camp

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com

NOT FORGETTING FOUR FREAKS

The Old Roan Theatre Company's well-received latest productions – Forget-Me-Not-Lane and Four Freaks From Iowa.

Flashbacks to adolescent days during WW2 and the 'dramatic' exploits of America's Cherry sisters from the 1860s to 1945 aren't only connected by the war... they were two utterly different scenarios brought together by the latest Roan Theatre Company (RTC) productions.

Peter Nichols' Forget-Me-Not-Lane, produced at Greenwich Theatre in 1971 and 2007, was revived by the RTC for four nights in November at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham. Skilfully directed by Graham Johnson, the NODA review said the play, although 50 years old, was 'still fresh and relevant'.

Four Freaks from Iowa, how the Cherry sisters rose from farm girls to great fame in the USA despite having a generally-accepted awful stage show, ran in the Studio at Greenwich Theatre again for four nights in March.

The real Cherry sisters were used to having vegetables thrown at them because they were so dreadful, but no-one was chucking any stale greens at this wonderful performance.



Sisters Effie (Helena Houghton), Addie (Sarah Coleman), Lizzie (Teresa Wilkins) and Jessie (Megan Abell) were superb as the Four Freaks, ably supported by their fifth sister, Ella (Glynis Watson).

These two productions revealed how versatile the RTC remains and we look forward to more shows in the near future.

TREVOR'S STAGE LIFE

A major part of Old Roan dramatics and star and stalwart of so many Old Roan Dramatic Society and Roan Theatre Company productions, Trevor Talbot (1965-72) has been awarded a much-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award.

Recently retired from serving on the Roan Theatre Company committee for forty-five years (thirty-eight of which were as Treasurer), Trevor was nominated by the committee for the award from NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association). The Company is a member of NODA's London Region.

Many others were put forward from similar amateur theatre companies and Trevor said he was very surprised when NODA awarded it to him. He wanted to thank the committee for the nomination and NODA for the award itself. The presentation was at NODA's annual awards event in June last year.

Roan Theatre Company's Joe Wilkins also won a Best Actor award for his performance as Martin in Weekend Breaks at the Greenwich Theatre Studio in February 2022 (see May 2022 Roan Magazine for a review), but sadly he was on holiday at the time of the presentations, hence no photo.

Trevor has appeared in, directed or been involved in approaching 100 productions over the years and remains a member of RTC, available

for supporting roles and behind-the-scenes support. So, with all that stage history behind him, the Old Roan Magazine asked him for some of his limelight highlights:

When did you first get interested in drama?

When I was at primary school. I was in a play and seem to remember appearing alongside a girl pupil, both wearing pyjamas. Probably wouldn't be allowed now! Roan was a good school for an actor to attend, as drama was strong, promoted by George Witten, Alf Knott and Nigel Ballantyne - God rest them!

Do you have a favourite part?

Difficult to answer, as I've been fortunate enough to play many good parts, all of which I've enjoyed. But I would have to mention appearing



Trevor picking up his NODA Lifetime Achievement Award

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com



Trevor playing Dick Dudgeon in the 1971 School production of *The Devil's Disciple*

on two occasions as Captain Mainwaring in *Dad's Army*, which gave me an opportunity to play my hero. I also particularly enjoyed playing two of Neil Simon's great characters, Oscar Maddison in *The Odd Couple* and Willie Clark in *The Sunshine Boys*.

What can you remember about Roan School productions?

George Witten, aided by Alf and Nigel, put together some memorable school productions and House plays over the years. I was proud to be a part of the team involved in the musical revue *1066* and *All That*, and also as Dick Dudgeon in Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*. In *1066* and *All That* I played the part of The Common Man, and it was then I felt I broke through as an amateur actor, losing any inhibitions, greatly inspired by George and Alf I have to say. Such are the inspirational qualities of memorable teachers.

The May 1969 Roan School Magazine review of '1066' endorses

Trevor's view. It cited: '...Talbot's Common Man was a wonderful piece of casting; he didn't put a foot, or a finger, or a stress wrong. He is a natural comedian and the relaxed ease of his performance was remarkable in one so young in years.'

Being involved in productions at the school was an enjoyable example of 'team sport' and the feeling of camaraderie was tremendous - something you greatly missed when it was all over. Not being built for physical sports, this came pretty close to it...

Incidentally, in *The Devil's Disciple*, I recall that, apart from playing a solicitor in the first part of the play, the part of the hangman at the end of the story was played by none other than Arthur Smith (what ever happened to him?). So, I was very nearly hanged by A. Smith!

Who are the stand-out performers you have worked with?

There are many talented performers in the Roan Theatre Company, but I would have to say that the one I have enjoyed working with the most is Graham Johnson. Both Graham and I have



Music Hall with Alfie Knott (l) in 1992



Graham Johnson and Trevor in 2006

been in the RTC since 1970, when we were known as The Old Roan Dramatic Society (ORDS), prior to which we were at the school together, although there were four years between us. We have played opposite each other on numerous occasions, particularly in comedy roles, to the extent that we could read and anticipate each other at every turn, making it a most enjoyable on-stage experience. Hope he feels the same way!

How healthy is amateur dramatics today?

As with any company or organisation, amateur dramatics is struggling to survive these days, mainly from the after-effects of Covid and also now the cost-of-living crisis. 'Bums on seats' are at the heart of it all, and people are still not making a full return to such events as the theatre following the fear of mixing socially caused

by the pandemic. And do they have the disposable income to be able to do so, even if their fear factor has improved? The cost of putting on a production is ever increasing, and as we have to pay to hire the theatres we use, in the absence of having our own facility, we currently show losses on our productions. But thankfully, due to an inheritance we enjoyed a few years ago from the great Tony Slaney, we are able to soldier on. Others have not been as fortunate.

You seem to like comedies...

Playing in a comedy play is by far the most rewarding acting style, with immediate responses from your audience providing your delivery and comic timing is right of course. We sometimes ask ourselves 'why do we do it?', with am-dram being an extremely time-consuming hobby, full of setbacks and difficulties. But that question is



Trevor as his beloved Captain Mainwaring in Dad's Army (2007)

answered by the buzz we get from hearing the laughter of an audience when a comic scene works well. And that's why we do it.

Have you ever dried up on stage?

Happily, I have managed to avoid this nightmare throughout the past fifty years or more, except for on one occasion when I was playing Billy's father, Geoffrey, in Billy Liar. The words had never been a problem during rehearsals, but on opening night I dried/lost concentration in one scene, quite unexpectedly, and had to be given a prompt to get me out of trouble. Having re-studied the script, I was confident it wouldn't happen again but to my horror on the second night exactly the same thing happened in precisely the same

place. This sort of thing does knock your confidence, but you have to bounce back. I was delighted that, after this, the crisis passed and the remaining two nights went smoothly.



Joe Wilkins in Weekend Breaks

350 IN 2027

... and a new school song?

The Roan School was founded in 1677 and so will reach its 350th anniversary in 2027. It's still a way off but some discussions are beginning to take place at the school and elsewhere about how best to mark this special milestone.

The John Roan School itself sees 2027 as, potentially, an important occasion to showcase not only the history of Roan but where the school is today, its progress and achievements and its standing in the local community.

What are the thoughts of Old Roans? Do you have a view on how the 350th anniversary could be marked? Send in what you think and all ideas will be passed to the Association Committee in the first instance. Send to oldroankgb@gmail.com.

One idea in the mix is to have an updated version of the School Song – not as a replacement for the existing words (or indeed the Latin version) but with more modern verses. Association President Chris Strong mentioned this in his speech at the Annual Reunion Dinner. The existing words and music were first noted in the School Magazine in March 1913.

'Keeping the music, perhaps we could have a competition,' said Chris, acknowledging that one new version has recently been penned by Hilary Haslam (1971-78):

*Here's to old John Roan, who lived in days gone by
A Greenwich boy who gave us, our school we have today*

*We must prove to him we carry all his pride, you hear us cry
All girls and boys together now united as we say
We are here to learn of all the things our Founder gave
Ourselves we give our best today, our school to save
Here's to old John Roan, sing him loud sing him low
He it was who placed us on the road that we shall go.*

*Here in Greenwich once walked England's famous names
Kings and Queens and Shakespeare among those we have known
A Royal park to lift our lives and we enjoy the games
Doctors, Teachers, Scientists our great school all have shown
That working hard and striving is key to happiness
We carry pride around the world from Greenwich to Loch Ness
Then to old John Roan, sing him loud sing him fair
He it was who helped us, sing him ever for his care*

*Here's to those who yet will follow, those babies to be born
New eager generations who will have new ways to learn
We will look forever forward, always striving to be best
Our thoughts we share, new skills to learn our minds will always yearn
Our Greenwich school is shining bright atop the Blackheath sky
John Roan boys, John Roan girls stand tall set fair to fly
Here's to old John Roan, sing him loud sing him clear
Sing him round the continents, sing him thro' the year.*

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com

GOLF'S REAL GREEN JACKET

Forget The Masters, Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Augusta National and all the rest... golf's true 'green jacket' winners are those that end up top of the Old Roan Golf Society leaderboard.

The Society's victors of the latest golf day competitions were Len Sales (Summer) and Richard Thomas (Winter), who both proudly sported the iconic Roan School green blazer when picking up their trophies from Society Captain, Graham Johnson.

Thanks once again to the organiser extraordinaire that is Tony Nuttall for sorting out everything for the Society's competitions and maintaining all the results.

2022 Captain: Graham Johnson

Summer: The Warren, Eltham
Individual 1st: 43 pts, Len Sales (handicap 28)
Individual 2nd: 39 pts, David Nuttall (16)
Individual 3rd: 36 pts, Mark

Matthews (6)
Nearest the pin 10th: Lucien Howlett (12)
Team 1st: 91 pts, Martin Pace (28), Garry Watson (19), Alex Hatzidakis (24), Len Sales (28)
Team 2nd: 85 pts, Bryan Marsh (18), Guy Wilkins (21), Robin Brown (25), Keith Bradbrook (24)

Winter: Addington Palace
Individual 1st: 40 pts, Richard Thomas (16)
Individual 2nd: 35 pts, Guy Wilkins (21)
Individual 3rd: 34 pts, David Nuttall (15)
Nearest the pin 7th: Tony Nuttall (11)
Nearest the pin 15th: Robin Faithorn (15)
Team 1st: 88 pts, Richard Thomas (16), Andy Daniels (28), Peter Osborne (20), Rod Pepper (15)
Team 2nd: 83 pts, Patrick Gregg (20), Robin Brown (26), Guy Wilkins (21), Trevor Drury (12)

The Captain for 2023/24 is Guy Wilkins.



Summer Winner - Len Sales



Winter Winner - Richard Thomas

RARE ROAN FOOTBALL PHOTO FIND

Discovered by a friend of Dan Calnan's in a sale of old postcards - the Roan School's 1912-13 First Eleven football team, all with their caps on and ready to take on challengers!

The names of the players can be just seen written on the edges of the card and the Editor's best guess of the line-up is: Back Row: Bennett, Davenport, Berry, Bulley, Gilbert, Tilly, Mr Titley. Seated and front: Mr Crofts, Tuckfield, Wall, Smith, Simpson.



REUNITED! THE BOYS OF '63-'70

The draw of Bexley's Beer festival this May brought a group of 1963-70 Roan boys together for a long-overdue reunion - a few pints going down well along with their memories of schooldays and a great deal of what has happened since.

Here are the boys reunited on their most enjoyable day: Left to Right: Dave Ferguson, John Whitmore, John Girdwood, Chris Clare, Paul Baker and Bryan Marsh.



REUNIONS FOR THE '65 ROAN GIRLS & BOYS

Roan schooldays seemed like yesterday when groups of girls and boys from the classes of 1965-72 got back together again for reunions in Greenwich. It's now over half a century since they all left their schools in Maze Hill and Devonshire Drive, but the years slipped by as they chatted about old times while touring familiar sights and old haunts.

THE BOYS OF '65

After a two-year delay due to Covid restrictions, a group of nine '65 boys finally met up for a long-awaited reunion in Greenwich - Bobby Valentino, Martin Mills, Steve Gillman, Laurence 'Spot' Hughes, Alastair 'Mitch' Mitchell, Adrian Carlton-Oatley, Alan Willson, Neil Harvey and Trevor Talbot completing a 'Beating the Bounds'-type tour.

There was a visit to the Maze Hill school, stops at local hostelrys from The Railway in Blackheath Village to the Richard 1st in Greenwich via, of course, the Plume of Feathers at the bottom of Maze Hill and the day was finished off with dinner at the Old Brewery in the Old Royal Naval College. A thoroughly enjoyable, sociable event with lots of laughter.



The gang at the Naval College: (l-r) Alan, Neil, Adrian, Trevor, Mitch (seated), Steve, Martin and Spot



L-R: Some of the gang at the Maze Hill school, including Bobby Valentino (left)

John Roan School Premises Manager Ron Gleeson gave the boys a thorough tour of their old school building. Some had been back there in recent years, but for those who have moved further afield, such as Plymouth and

Ireland, it was their first time back at the school for half a century!

Nostalgia levels ran very high, and it was agreed the school, now the John Roan's School new Sixth Form College base, was being well cared for. Many improvements have been made over the years and the facilities available to the students seemed excellent yet much of the original charm was clearly evident. Memories of their old teachers were ever present!

The '65 crew has enjoyed such reunions on three previous occasions in various locations, but not for some time. It was good to get together again.

THE GIRLS OF '65

Ten girls from the class of '65-72 met up on 15 April in Greenwich to (belatedly) mark the milestone of 50 years since leaving Roan School at Devonshire Drive - Veronica Davies (Hills), Lynn Haywood (Robins), Daryle Bradbrook (Hayes), Hilary Laurence (Riley), Judy Lyons (Howell), Jean Marsh (Learmouth), Cheryl Mason (Thorogood), Frances Morris (Rowan), Sandie Slater (Winch) and Annette Talbot (Chuter). Veronica's sister, Valerie Cordina (Hills) - 1970-77 - joined in too.

Starting the day at General Wolfe's statue in Greenwich Park, there was no need for roses in lapels - they all instantly recognised each other! The past 50 years slipped away as

they settled comfortably into the easy friendships they formed all those years ago.

After a walk to Cutty Sark sharing memories of school days and catching up on family news, they stopped for coffee (and more chat!), popped back through the Maritime Museum to General Wolfe



At General Wolfe's statue



Tea at The Clarendon - (Back - l-r) Valerie Cordina, Cheryl Mason, Lynn Hayward, Annette Talbot, Francis Morris, Judy Lyons. (Seated - l-r) Sandie Slater, Hilary Lawrance, Veronica Davies, Daryle Bradbrook, Jean Marsh

for a photo-call and headed across the Heath to The Clarendon Hotel for a celebratory tea.

There they raised a glass to old friends, especially those who were unable to join this time - Gill Croxon (Shaw), Jane Livermore

(Bell) and Evelyn Richardson (McDermott). Hopefully, more school friends can be 'rediscovered' for their next get together. A '65 table is planned for the Old Roan Annual Reunion Dinner later this year and a day in 2024 pencilled in to celebrate 70th birthdays.

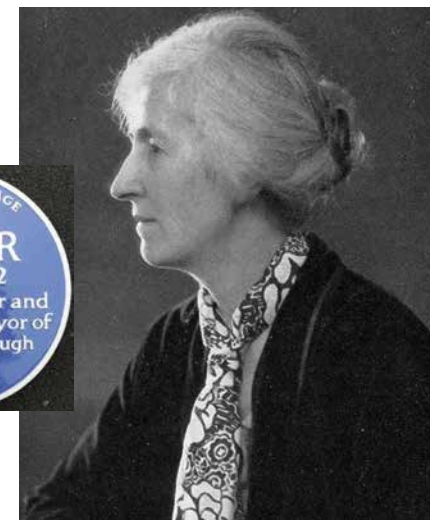
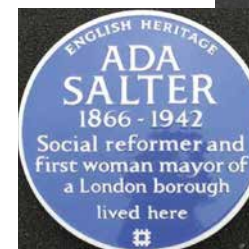


The girls of '65 at Cutty Sark

Old Roan Magazine 2023

BLUE PLAQUE FOR ADA SALTER

In 2005, when Steve Nelson edited the Magazine, he included an article by John Dennis on the winner of the Roan Exhibition in 1888, Alfred Salter. He was a truly great man who became a doctor administering to the poor of Southwark and also MP for West Bermondsey. There is a statue dedicated to him and his family on the side of the Thames next to the Angel pub.



Ada Salter

His wife Ada was elected Mayor of Bermondsey in 1922 - the first female Labour Mayor in the country. She is credited, along with Alfred, with greening Bermondsey, planting thousands of roadside trees throughout the borough to aid the health of its mainly poor residents.

Alfred has many memorials including roads and a school as well as the statues, which were



Statues in Bermondsey for Ada and Alfred Salter - photo by Steve Nelson

funded with financial help from the John Roan Foundation Trustees and Tony Slaney's estate.

But Ada herself has now been celebrated with a Blue Plaque, which has recently been opened on her home in Southwark.

English Heritage's Blue Plaque website with Ada's citation includes: 'The plaque at number 149 can be seen from within Southwark Park. In the summer of 1911, when thousands of women walked out of jam, biscuit and box factories during the 'Bermondsey uprising', some 15,000 attended a demonstration in the park. Ada Salter organised strike relief - a daily meal for 50,000 strikers and families - which allowed them to stay out and win substantial gains.'

Please send submissions to oldroankgb@gmail.com

ROAN THOUGHTS FROM NEW ZEALAND

Many will remember Tony Elliott - 1951-1959 as a pupil and 1963-1974 as a teacher - who has contacted the Magazine from New Zealand where he now lives in retirement with his wife Judy, also an Old Roan. Here he shares his fond memories of his Roan years.

The Editor wrote of the Roan School Family in the last magazine. From the moment I first sat at a Roan desk in 1951, meeting and marrying a Roan girl and finally saying goodbye as a teacher in 1974, I can claim it was certainly my family.

I was a Charlton lad, always living a stone's throw from my team's ground, the Valley, and knew little about Roan and even less about the examination pass that got me there. Bill Brooks, a master at the school, was courting the girl next door otherwise I would probably not have even known the school's name. When my time came to move up from junior school, I was puzzled. Why did other lads in my street, the ones with whom I played test match cricket with against street walls, swung from broken gas pipes in bombed buildings and fired catapults, choose to go to different schools? Perhaps the importance of joining Roan was better recognised by my parents - they bought me my first big bike when I was accepted. Would I have done well at the other schools my friends joined, who knows? What is certain, the rewarding and challenging life I have led would not have been possible without Roan, as boy and teacher.

Coming into my mid-eighties, I'm beginning feel a bit like the last

one standing, unless Mike Watson is still around. We are probably the only two left who were Roan boys, taught by the Gilbert then Garstang staff, and met them all again as teaching colleagues. They are no longer with us and the younger new teachers arriving in the sixties such as myself, are also getting thinner on the ground.

The Pye and Lock woodwork room, workbench sits proudly downstairs in my apartment block underground locker, awaiting action, which sadly is becoming less and less frequent. The matching cupboards, duplicated at each end, allowed two students per bench and a class of thirty to cram into the craft room. Not surprisingly, I don't remember making anything larger than a matchbox holder in woodwork's one period a week.



Tony and Judy



1957-58 Roan School Vice-Captain Tony Elliott (seated, 2nd right)

The totally inadequate Roan craft and science accommodation had to be replaced or updated in the sixties, a new block being built on cycle shed space. The old chemistry labs were ripped out and the vintage bench tops, scarred by Bunsen burners, bored student scratching or spilt concentrated acids, were added to the scrap heap. Mr Lock would have been proud of me, spotting and retrieving the useful one and a half inch thick, pre-war, tropical teak bench top. After the removal of scars of generations of Roan boys doing their worst, I hope I got all the cyanide and tiny balls of mercury out, and the wood served my basic carpentry needs for years. The workbench now sits twelve thousand miles from most of you, in Nelson, New Zealand.

Most of my schoolboy memories I look back on with pleasure; playing Sir Lucius O'Trigger in George Witten's school production of *The Rivals* and passing O Level French, with the help of a postal course and Ian Brown when I found it was required for university entry. The single-handed

miraculous catch at a school second eleven away match (we still lost) and playing tag in the Maritime Museum during the school lunch hour. Meeting the fifth-year Roan girl who had sneaked into the Sixth Form dance and with whom I would spend the rest of my life, has to be special.

Some were memorable for the wrong reason; being caned by Mr Berry for forging my mother's signature on a detention card. The conversation under the redoubtable Mr Gilbert's drilling stare going something like this:

Mr Gilbert 'Who — signed — this — card?'
Me. 'What Sir, Who Sir, Me Sir.'

On stage, forgetting the speech written by Mr Witten, thanking the Governors on Speech Day, is burned on my memory.

I worked for a year in a paper-making company after university, got really fed up, walked into a newsagent and spotted an advert for

a Science teacher at Roan. I rang the school, Mr Garstang invited me down for an interview the next day. I got the job in the afternoon and in three days our lives had changed for ever.

Without exception, the reception I received by my old teachers when I returned in 1963 was cordial and supportive. The Staff Room was reminiscent of an officers' mess with armchairs drawn up around a blazing coal fire. For several staff, that's exactly what they were used to during their war service. Some worked harder than others - Lionel Morey I pick out as doing the work of two, always carrying around a large suitcase with piles of marked books, Head of the Maths Department and yet running the school Scout Troop in his spare time. The school's bias towards Maths and Science reflected the interests and aspirations of the school's intake, but not least the successful platform the Maths Department made through Lionel and his staff's efforts. Some memories are not quite so wholesome. I, like many other school boys, didn't make the life of my namesake, Mr Elliott the music master easy. He should have been offered early retirement on health grounds instead of being made to stagger on. Other older teachers such as Freddie White, Bill Ellis and Peter Russel became good friends.

My first term at the school was a challenge but I enjoyed every moment of it. We moved into a flat in the old Headmaster's House next to the school field and my first timetable included two afternoons of sport on the field. I was form master of 3A. I remember most of the boys clearly as we progressed up the school together. I was put in charge of the

first-year soccer team that more or less picked itself. I enjoyed refereeing their matches on a Saturday. And yes! They formed most of the group that won the English Schools Cup in '71, benefitting from the coaching of John Sewell, certainly not from me. My weekend often consisted of School sport on Saturday morning and playing for the Old Roan Fifth, or was it Sixth Team in the afternoon?

Without any teacher training, most of my first lessons were a poor reincarnation of a Lionel Berry, Henry Hall or Bob Hattersley's science lessons of my youth. A moment of truth arrived when I read through the University of London, School Chemistry Exam Syllabus and realised it was identical to the pre-war version. Working on the basis that something scientific must have been discovered or invented in the intervening twenty-five years, the V2 rocket and the atom bomb for a start, I became keen to update material and, if possible, the way it was taught. So began the adventure into Nuffield Science Courses that lasted more or less the rest of my science teaching career. I became a university's school chemistry examiner but eventually gave that up when I realised the bricklayer building my garden wall was earning more than me and didn't start at five in the morning before moving to his main job. But for a period, it did help me with the advice I gave to students preparing for exams and paid for family holidays.

I hope the Roan sailing and canoeing holidays we organised left some boys with the desire to venture out on water. The Broads holidays gave me plenty of material to give a popular talk on 'The many ways to

fall off a boat?' I think I listed nine, each exemplified by an incident on a school Broads holiday. The Staff Boat always followed up the fleet, to fish thrashing bodies out of the water. Only once did we duck our responsibility. Turning a bend in the river at Reedham on a busy bank holiday, one of our boys' thirty-foot yacht seemed to be tangled with and dragged by the Reedham Chain Ferry and a second had put its bowsprit through the cabin window of a motor cruiser. The Staff Boat went into reverse, moored up back round the bend and we went to the pub.

I really appreciated the support of other teachers such as Gordon Brooks, Barry Thomas and Roger Thorp on the school holidays I organised. They had that natural gift, relaxed with both teachers and boys, and on occasions it was needed.

The school started to change in the late sixties and seventies under Dr Taylor. When I joined as a boy, its structure was a bit like an early Everest expedition - a large party of individuals organised to get two to the top. The top for Roan was Oxbridge, state scholarships and university entry. In a good year in the fifties, Roan would send four or five to Cambridge and a dozen or so to university. This from a yearly



Tony Elliott (r) with Alfie Knott (l) and Nigel Ballantyne

intake of ninety. It explained the school strategy of streaming from the second year. Obviously, the eleven plus was not trusted or seen as a sufficiently successful sifting process. I suppose I criticise the system, but with hindsight, it was part of the educational and social fabric of the time. Looking back, I feel now for the 'bottom stream', designated with a certain irony, Alpha. Some must have left Roan with a distinct sense of failure. Mr Hankinson, a gem of a man, was given the job, form master of the lower ranks, to hold things together.

The Taylor years saw massive change; numbers in the sixth form surged and every year a larger proportion of the year's ninety went on to further education. Perhaps several influences were at play. The width of secondary school education was increasing to match that of further education and commercial demand. The job market was changing; the professions, medicine, the law, teaching, engineering etc were still there but new avenues opened such as the media, electronics, computing, the arts, paramedical etc. Most important was the developing and expanding role of the school in a changing society. Finally, the elephant in the room had to be confronted, selection at eleven.

The Staff Room was changing as well, gone was the roaring coal fire and free teaching periods devoted to the Times crossword. Stanley Beale was no longer to be seen composing for The Listener. The lunch break bridge group survived but there was less time for a dressing down by Arthur Hopwood for any partner

who had played a hand badly, usually Bob Hoare. A Science staff lunch table had evolved to which newcomers tended to gravitate, becoming a social centre and the focus for friendships that filled life at that time. Friday afternoon might witness a rush for the gate to get to nine holes of golf, although games were played to interesting rules. Any ball not carefully watched might be found trodden into the turf. Alan Skuse, who claimed Economics as a science, disturbed the order of things, calling boys by their Christian names and finally, graduate gowns in the classroom saw their last, except for Nigel Ballantyne who regarded it as his trademark for many years more.

There were earthquake moments such as shock news on arrival at school one day - Alfie Knott had been shot. Should we lock the doors and watch out for a berserk sixth former? No, it was the IRA which not only couldn't find its intended victim, but couldn't even get the address right in Maze Hill. Perhaps the most dramatic change was in Music and Drama. I will never ever forget the moment at the annual prize giving in a packed Town Hall when the newly-formed Big Band of boys and staff assembled on the stage to a strange hush. It struck up Glen Miller's String of Pearls and received an ecstatic reception. It marked a seed change, things would never be the same again.

By the early '70s it was obvious my cloistered life at Roan was not the perfect preparation for the changes advancing in education. Influenced by a Goldsmiths Company financed sabbatical, travelling to the Gold



The Elliotts

Fields of South Africa to write a short educational book on gold, I felt the need to move on. I stayed in schools for another eleven years before looking for a new challenge in commercial and industrial training. My small company, Eastek 2000, arrived on the scene as new technologies and online learning appeared. I attribute the National Training Award we won in with the University of Manchester in 1997 to many of the vital teaching lessons I learnt at the Roan, student and teacher.

My wife, a valued and much-loved teacher all her life, and I have been retired for twenty years here in New Zealand - we followed our daughter and four grandsons out here. It's a fabulous country. With a group of close friends, we have four-wheel driven its mountains and river valleys, climbed its peaks, sailed its sounds and fiords and cycled its trails. We know how lucky we have been to have had the opportunity to enjoy ourselves whilst watching our grandsons grow up. However, both Judy and I know who it was:

'...that placed us on the road that we should go.'

TREVOR TELLS IT STRAIGHT

Trevor Lord (1964-69) and Roan never quite clicked. But his wild days turned to successful years and, eventually, a surprise family in the USA.

I was delighted to see mention of a number of my contemporaries in the 2022 Magazine including the past and present President. Trevor Puddifoot was, like me, a Charlton fanatic and I sometimes went to his house within 200 yards of The Valley prior to kick off. I knew President Chris Strong mainly through his brother Mickey who was in my year. I was a frequent visitor to Prince Henry Road where they lived. We would hang out in Hornfair Park and here I have a confession to make. I was really smitten with a girl who lived close to the Strong family and was part of the group. Unfortunately, any romance here was unlikely to blossom (and didn't) as I was dating her best friend and her boyfriend was far more handsome than me!

Other luminaries from my time at Roan, John Hutley, Jimmy Russon, John Dennis and Rob Andrew also feature in the Magazine. My best friends at Roan were probably Robert (Woosy) Broom and John Stanford. John's house in Charlton Heights backed on to The Valley and before the South Stand was built we would use a ladder and scale the wall dropping into the gents' toilets! Free entry but it resulted in a few twisted ankles.

I was also interested in the recollections of Roan by Denis Priest as, like me, he was frequently

in trouble with teachers and the authorities. In reality, I was never a good candidate for Roan. I scraped through the eleven plus and my Junior School reports were repetitive. 'Lacks concentration, pays little attention, must make an effort'. I sensed that my entry interview with the Headmaster was not going too well until my mother dropped in to the conversation that she was of course a Head Girl at Roan in the 1920s. Roan were persuaded to accept me.

Unfortunately, my behaviour at Roan mirrored that at Junior School as did the comments on my reports. My best friends from Junior School all went to Crown Woods or Eltham Green and evenings were often spent hanging out with them particularly at the snooker hall above what was Burtons and is now McDonalds in Eltham High Street. Girls and sport were far more important to me then than Latin homework.

By the time I reached the fifth form, I had probably spent as much time in detention as I had in lessons. I still have my school reports and in my final year at Roan I managed to rack up 28 detentions and a suspension! Not surprisingly the school wrote to my parents saying I would not be welcome in the 6th Form even in the unlikely event of me getting sufficient O levels. Even more surprisingly was the fact I

gained 5 O levels including Maths and English.

I left Roan aged 16 but my first-choice career in the Police Force was immediately quashed as I failed the medical - I had broken my arm badly on two occasions and it was deemed not strong enough for crowd control. I drifted into banking by accident being recruited as purely clerical material. This led to a fantastic few years when I was earning money and working in the West End - a great combination for a boy with sport, girls and having a good time as his main hobbies! I was a little out of control.

I recall that in a previous Roan Magazine, I was described as the bravest goalkeeper to ever represent the school. I would describe my goalkeeping method as always disregarding danger, foolhardy and often madcap. I seemed to be taking these traits in to my 20s. And then I met a girl who saw past all the brash and bravado and after a decade on the lash I finally married aged 28. Suddenly, I had responsibilities especially when my wife fell pregnant and finally I knuckled down. I passed all the professional exams in six years and staying with the same employer for 43 years I reached Senior Management despite still challenging authority when I thought they were wrong.

Although my school reports from Roan were pretty awful there was one teacher who seemed to have faith in me. My maths teacher

was Mr Morey - I nicknamed him Gypo as he looked as if he had been dragged through a hedge and wore the same frayed suit endlessly which was always covered in chalk. His remarks in my final year read: 'Trevor is clearly intelligent and has an inner determination and strength of character which he tries to keep hidden with a couldn't care a less attitude. In Maths, he has shown he does care and if we can find a way to channel his personal attributes positively I am convinced he will go far in life'. It took a girl in my late 20s to find that way but essentially Gypo Morey was spot on.

And now? I retired 9 years ago and keep busy doing voluntary work here in Paddock Wood where I now live. I am lucky enough to have two fantastic sons who both played semi-pro football. My younger son, a centre half, showed all the kamikaze attributes of my goalkeeping during his 20-year career which he finally gave up aged 37 bruised and battered! I have six grandchildren one of which has just signed a schoolboy contract with Brighton despite attending the final trial in his Charlton kit! A serious illness last year has slowed me up a bit but before then my passion was travel and I have been fortunate enough to be able to visit numerous fascinating countries.

As a post script to my schooldays, it wasn't widely known at school that I was adopted. I had two amazing and mainly mild-

mannered parents who, I regret, I gave many sleepless nights to before I finally came good. When my father died aged 96, I decide to try and track down my blood-parents and the year's searching and the outcome would fill an episode of Long Lost Families. I discovered my parents were both American. My mother had an affair (one of many) with a trainee policeman in Mississippi while her husband had been based in the UK for six months with the American Air Force, where he was a flight sergeant. My mother joined him four months later with her two children by him and told



Trevor Lord

him she was pregnant - and it clearly wasn't his!

At birth, I was immediately placed for adoption. I have since learnt that my mother was a real rebel, leaving home at 18, dating a black man despite threats from the Klu Klux Klan, marrying 3 times and having six children with four different men. She frequently argued with authority and was headstrong. My blood-father, who never knew of my existence, eventually became a police chief in Mississippi. Suddenly, everything fell into place. A police officer, highly motivated later in life and dedicated to the job and a mother who defied convention and attempts to restrain her - the perfect combination to produce the teenager I became at Roan. I now have a large second family in the States who I have often visited. My half brothers and sisters say I remind them of their Mom in looks and attitude - she died years before I tracked my family down.

Finally, while I think that Roan and I managed to fail each other, it is pleasing to see so many of my contemporaries go on to have highly successful careers and fulfilling lives while retaining happy memories of the school. Roan has produced numerous high fliers and academics and was clearly an excellent seat of learning. Unfortunately, when it came to me and Roan we were both probably in the wrong place at the wrong time - but it all worked out fine in the end! Best wishes to all who knew me.

HOW DID WE COME TO BE HERE?

David Porter (1964-71) has lived in lots of different places since leaving Roan. Here, he shares his experiences and his fond memories of school.

NORTH CAROLINA

We are frequently asked this question. It's difficult to know where to start. We respond that we're from Florida or Spain or North Yorkshire, where my wife was born. So, the journey unfolds. I find myself in Southport, North Carolina, USA, three and a half years into the latest change in location, lifestyle and language. The accent here is pure 'southern' despite being further north than our previous home. First phrase to understand is 'Hi Y'all'.

FLORIDA

Seven years living on Florida's Spacecoast opposite the Space Centre became too hot, too often, and for too many hours of the day. The tenants from our rental house had moved on and chef-wife had found a new position in the Cape Fear, North Carolina. The language has been plain ol' American with residents moving in with accents from all around the country mixing it with true Floridians, many of retirement age. Spelling has been the hardest challenge, recalling Alfie Knott's surprise tests in IIB. It became necessary to leave out the letter u frequently and relearn how to say 'aluminum'. As legal permanent residents, it was an interesting time, playing with a flight training organization hoping to invest in their business. The owner, from Yorkshire, played us along so instead we rented property to helicopter students and returned to Spain.

SPAIN

In Andalucia, Spain where we had lived on and off for nearly eight years previously living with the Spanish and ex-pats also had its interesting side. Attempting to learn the language with a local accent was fun, mixing with the alcohol fueled Brits abroad community less so. Putting my new nine-year old step-son into a local school was perhaps beastly but he didn't sink, he learnt the language, faced up to the gypsies, made friends and progressed well. An international high-school suited him even better and his grades were good, though fees were high. His fluency helped me add some language skills too, something I fell short of at O level. I have to say driving through France regularly to and from the UK reminded me that Jumbo Edwards and Mr Hoare had at last left a positive impression on me. So now I have school-boy French and amateur Spanish.

NORFOLK

Spain was my destination resulting from a cheesy chat-up line used in a gentleman's outfitters. As a result, sales assistant Joss became my life companion, who with her son, we eloped leaving her mother and ex-husband behind for a new start. Treating a step-son with friendship and

respect has paid dividends. His US citizenship from my wife's first husband, a USAF serviceman based at Lakenheath, enabled him to petition for US residency on reaching the age of 21. Helping him through university at Reading was to ensure our future move across the pond. Thanks Jack! He is now one of my best friends and has elevated me to the official 'Dad' position. Remembering fondly Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas in their passing, it was in Swaffham, Norfolk, near Fakenham where I'd been recuperating where I met Joss, now wife of 20 years.



Dave Porter

PRESENT

It's New Year's Eve and it's Joss' birthday and she's home soon from preparing a New Year's Eve buffet for hundreds at a private and prestigious golf club on Bald Head Island. Here they call an opulent member's club a 'non-profit', or 'charity'! You can believe it makes for a very luxurious and comfortable environment providing one of the top 100 golf courses on the east coast. Also, it is a good earner for the staff. How the other half live!

DREAMS

Since moving here, I have been helping out at the local flight school taking bookings and flying scenic tours making use of my FAA Commercial pilot certificate. It is where, I have discovered, that I really belong. I am now encouraged to complete my flight instructor rating that injury prevented thirty odd years ago in Phoenix, AZ - so the need to study again is looming. Obligated to spend many years in early retirement due injury from car accidents and becoming a house-husband, the road back to passing a flight medical exam has been long and arduous. I'm relieved and grateful to be here and able to realize my boyhood dreams. The lesson learnt is that whatever is thrown at you, never give up, and don't lose sight of your dreams. Being in a happy place right now is down to a number of influences and support received along the way and allows me to be appreciative and think of school days and the friends and experiences long ago.

ROAN MEMORIES

It is never more fitting a time to remember the unfortunate who have passed before us, David Lines (cross country), Paul Petty (team of 71, OR fifths), Phil Williams and of course Tony Slaney, Barry Thomas, Gordon Brooks and others.

IIB is for Ballantyne. Remembering P is for Palmer, Parker, Patterson, Pearce,

Plunkett, Powell, Puddiefoot and Puxley. Then there were Latin lessons in Shell with Miss Jenkins and music with GEL Elliot. In the third year, I progressed more in Latin with Bill Ellis, excelling at calculus with Mr Morey and partaking in weekly class detention with Jumbo Edwards after French. Oh, and witnessing fireworks set off in the classroom... oops!

The winter skiing trip to Champéry with Paul Patterson, Stuart Plunkett and Richard Roberts was particularly memorable for the four of us being split up for having too much fun, keeping 'Hank' Hankinson awake into the early hours next door.

The school cruise in 1967 has a very deep and joyful memory for me. Iceland, Faroe Islands, Norway, such fabulous scenery, good company, Phil Pearce, Fred Riggy, John Parker, Peter (Wally) Wild. We were out-numbered by girls and met many, some from the later beleaguered Belfast. I often wonder how they all fared in The Troubles. Proudly, we won the dormitory prize!

Who can forget the triumph of Roan School's football success? Travelling to Walton and Hersham's ground watching on as school Captain Tony Burgess put himself into action to dissolve a smouldering disagreement with opposing fans behind the stand.

I recovered from the embarrassment of carrying a violin to school, hearing GEL sing falsetto in music and in the choir, then relieved that Bill Ellis was able to put a band together to replace the discordant orchestra at prizegiving. Appreciating underground music with ex-president Trevor Puddifoot, we shared the delicacies of Jethro Tull and beautiful melodies of Cream and King Crimson. Then I experimented on an electronic keyboard with Nigel Staley and Alan Smith playing A Whiter Shade of Pale. It was a great time for popular music, sparring with President Chris Strong over Hard Rock versus Tamla Motown on a Monday morning.



Dave's first solo flight

Academically poor except for an A grade at O level Geography (thanks to Snoz Westmarland), I failed

also to make a mark in sport. I did run in the school cross-country team with David Lines and received some house points for Wolfe, encouraged to the finish line by Bain R. Being conscientious, I rejected the opportunity for a fag break behind a tree after the first corner in the school's major running event. But it was as an Old Roan I made an effort with little more success. Playing with the fifth eleven with the likes of David Horsburgh, Chris Hatter (I once met his brother Ray playing darts against Ultramar!), and of course the dependable centre-back Phil Snaith (Shell) and Laurance (Spot) Hughes - still friends on Facebook. I believe I was there to make up the numbers! Not good enough to join Fred Spink in the Vets, I was given the task of taking out the school-boy team (sixths?), causing much argument and dissent and washing their kit.

I did find achievement outside the Old Roans playing cricket. A founder member of the local Kidbrooke Cricket Club, I became Fixture Secretary, Captain and Secretary all in varying amounts from 1976 to 1990. I believe we played against an Old Roan Eleven once but I missed that match. Some success was to be had captaining two office cricket teams, first Rendell, Palmer and Tritton, guiding them to an engineering league competition final and secondly Conoco (UK) Ltd. Well, someone had to do it!

OIL INDUSTRY ON THE CV

As an MOD trained Cartographer, I attained a position with Conoco in the 80s meeting up with the David's Hoy (also Conoco) and Hawkins. Taken to Heathrow airport in the first year with David Hoy by his father in his Austin A40 stirred up a boyhood dream that was never to leave me. Meeting the CAA's Phil Pearce again many years later helped me to realizing that goal. I have to thank Phil for his friendship over the years for his encouragement when making my career change to aviation, a huge and daunting step, I owe him a beer or two! Or a flight in a four-seater! Frequenting the British Oak in Blackheath in the 90s, we met up again and shared our bridge skills once more, this time with Mrs Pearce making up a four.

POST SCRIPT: NEWS OF OLD ROAN GIRLS

Maybe of interest to the girls' school is belated news of my Aunt and Mother who both attended the school. Muriel Wilton (1923 approx) married to the Reverend Kenneth Smart, who died in November 2008, and Audrey Phyllis Wilton (1931 approx) married to Robert John Porter MBE 1947, who died in April 2003. Reading last year's Magazine, I noticed a possible likeness to my Aunt in the 1926 trip to Calais photo.

POST POST SCRIPT

The Wilton family lived once on Maze Hill possibly during the war years and it's likely that their house was, or if not, nearby where Alfie Knott was shot. It is a small world despite one's travels.

Best wishes to all and a complementary local tour to any OR visitors to North Carolina.

PITCH BATTLES, BRIGITTE BARDOT... AND DAVE

Fred Head (1950-58) on his Roan days and memories of Dave Brown, his contemporary at school, who died in 2020 and whose life was celebrated in the last edition of the Magazine.

I was very pleased to receive the latest copy of the Old Roan Magazine but at the same time saddened to read the news that Dave Brown had recently passed away. The fitting tributes from John Bull and Inigo Kilborn served as something of a welcome consolation. Dave began at Roan in 1950 in the same class as I did, form 3a. I never got to know him well but always appreciated his cheerful, humorous and helpful disposition.

Looking through the Magazine over the years, I have often had the impression that the 1950-1958 intake was something of a 'lost generation' and those of us from Shooters Hill all the more so. I knew half a dozen Roan boys living in the same street or in the near vicinity and they seem not to have become members of ORA. Perhaps, like me, when at school they were mostly short of cash and parents were often not really in a position to help out, which may well have limited our aspirations in sport and amateur dramatics and the like. Or, perhaps, we were otherwise engaged with our local

activities and friendships, I don't know. That's not to say that there weren't other less impressive but enjoyable activities at Roan, such as chess, debating, the Cercle Français, the library and the choir amongst others, but they involved less daring-do to report back on.

When in the Remove, we had pitch battles in class with the air full of missiles, the only protection being the raised desk top. At that time someone devised an ingenious method for suspending a rival's gym things outside an upstairs window so that they would immediately fall to the ground one storey below if the luckless victim attempted to open the window. New pupils beginning school would regularly be pushed over the wall so they could not get back to the main entrance in time and so were 'late'.

Teachers arriving at school on a snowy day would disappear beneath an avalanche of snow balls when they turned to enter the school. My Norwegian friend in the Remove specialised in stabbing at the desk between his splayed fingers with his ugly-looking penknife at ever faster speeds. A Norwegian version of the Highland Fling perhaps? He never got hurt, but I did not care to take up the challenge in what resembled a kind of Russian roulette for the

uninitiated. More and somewhat wilder events could be experienced at the playing fields. Youthful ingenuity knew few bounds.

The Magazine has been a life line for me since I left England in 1965 and I return only occasionally in the summer with the family. It keeps me up to date in a number of ways and provides a certain amount of pleasurable nostalgia. When at school, I particularly appreciated Mr Winter as a teacher, with his common-sense approach to life and the teaching of German and his amusing tales of his experiences with life on the Continent. We were impressed that he always insisted on wearing an overcoat in the classroom when the weather became cold, perhaps as a form of silent protest, and he often brought along his ornate (Tyrolean?) walking stick to complete the picture. Mr Winter's influence surely partly explains why after university I eventually moved to teach in Germany, then on to Geneva and finally to Basle, both in Switzerland, where I have lived ever since. As the local Swiss so charmingly put it, I came to Switzerland 'aus Liebe', for the sake of love! And I must say that's still true enough, now after more than 50 years.

England and Switzerland and 'our' village have changed almost out of all recognition over the last 50 years, but now, to my great surprise, we have war again in Europe, in the Ukraine. Needless to say, that brings back unpleasant



Fred Head

memories of my curious childhood, of being confronted with the effects of war in London and having a 'doodle bug' come down in neighbour's garden when I was at infants school and then Gran being taken away to hospital. There followed evacuation to the Midlands together with Mum, whilst Dad was in the army in the Middle East throughout. Such was life and not only for me. As Marlene Dietrich, Joan Baez and others expressed it so well back in the sixties (Sag mir, wo die Blumen sind ... 'Where have all the flowers gone'). It seems some people will never learn and will never want to learn.

Memories of Dave Brown
I really became aware of Dave Brown in the Sixth form. He was a

'bright spark' and a very pleasant, helpful, humorous person. I think his positive influence on the class, along with that of his chums was subtle but pervasive.

I was frequently ill, perhaps due to the foggy London weather, and I very much appreciated that Dave was quite happy to lend me his carefully written up notes, especially for science. Otherwise it was almost impossible to catch up. At a later stage, his striking yellow pullover and the Globetrotter case he was prone to throw about in ire or high spirits added a certain panache. In class, he had the amusing and unique habit of balancing his glasses on his nose in order to see the blackboard better through the lenses held at an angle. He was repeatedly warned that this was not at all good for the eyes, but the admonition fell on deaf ears.

In the Sixth form, Dave, presumably with friends, organised a coach excursion to the sea at Littlestone and I was happy to string along. Dave turned up with one an old-fashioned motor-car horn, shaped like a convoluted trumpet so he happily 'parp-parped' at other road users and pedestrians along the way. Stan Beale, our Form master, was sent a number of the saucier and sauciest seaside postcards to commemorate our innovative trip. It was said he received a number of multi-volume encyclopaedias 'on approval' too. Being an attentive reader of Frank Richard's amusing

stories about Billy Bunter, John Merry and the fearsome Quelch at Greyfriars school, I felt very much that this was life as it should be lived at school since in a way fiction had now become fact. (Sadly, all very politically incorrect, nowadays).

Dave and his friends almost certainly had a hand in decorating our rather bleak Prefects' room. Someone found a life-size picture (from Tit Bits?) of the delectable, young Brigitte Bardot and it graced one wall for a number of months but had, alas, to be taken down only when it was in an advanced state of decay.

Dave was helpful too when I gained a Modern Language Scholarship to go to France the year after he had done so himself. He took me under his wing a little and explained what to expect on what was to be my first stay abroad, what the initial cours de vacance was exactly and so on. By yet another chance (I have given up counting), whilst in Paris I encountered Dave and some of his merry band in the rue Soufflot, which leads to the Panthéon from the Boulevard St. Michel. I think they were returning from a visit to the Panthéon, but to my lasting regret we just said hello and went our separate ways.

By chance again, my wife, who is a French-speaking academic, is not infrequently in Paris (mostly with me, I am glad to say) and her preferred hotel is situated

practically next to the rue Soufflot. Walking down that road, I often cast my thoughts nostalgically back and am still very sorry that on that particular occasion long past we didn't all just stop for a chat and a drink.

Although I knew Dave only rather superficially, I very much feel for his wife, Tess, and hope these few lines will serve to help bring back a memory or two of a beloved one. Perhaps the antique motor horn still exists somewhere!

FINALLY... RETIRED AT 80!

David Bryden (1954-1961) & his big announcement!

I have this summer stopped working at last, ceased to be a fee-earning member of society, nor a self-employed author and academic. At the age of 80, I've finally and irrevocably retired!

Of course, many may know this as 'old news' because I first retired aged 60 after several years teaching English at Croydon College, Schiller University and then with City & Guilds in London, after which Barbara and I moved to Wambercourt in France – but I continued to teach at universities in Moscow, Siberia, Shanghai and finally in Paris. This meant my visits to the Old Roan Club – my home from home since 1962 – were now infrequent.

Nevertheless, in 2005, I considered that a 17-hour day travelling to France's capital on two trains and three Metro lines was too exhausting. So I relinquished the position and accepted instead a lectureship of two days a week in Business Communication in Greenwich and the University of Westminster. This involved an easy weekly Eurostar commute and accommodation in my daughter's flat in Bromley and I recall with pleasure nights out with my Old Roan chums, Reg Hodge, John Bruce, and Mike Callaghan.

But in 2009, after hundreds of trips beneath and over the



Apron-clad David and his wife Barbara at the BBQ

English Channel, I decided to finally retire and concentrate on my large French garden.

Not to be however! I was approached to serve as a principal of a new Business College in the City of London – just a few days each month with most communications online from Wambercourt – so, again, my full-time retirement was put on hold. But in 2012, I decided I really had finished with travelling on the Eurostar, although sometimes I had driven over to Dover where my daughter and family had now settled and spent time with them. Yes, I told them, I have now retired for good!

After I had become a member of the Wambercourt village committee, I got to hear that a local Higher Education College not 15km from me needed an English language teacher to partly teach and fully assess their post graduate students. At 70, I took the job which was for one day a week and so again retirement was delayed. Fellow teachers will know that the hours in the classroom represent just a small part of the profession as there are curricula to absorb, lessons to plan and deliver and for results to be assessed and submitted. I was happy with this element of my teaching, having been a late, enthusiastic entrant to academia, beginning my teaching career in 1987 at the age of 45 after 22 years as a Building Surveyor.

Then in 2019 came COVID and many colleges closed their doors – we had temporary restarts but little future confidence and when in September 2022 I was asked if I wanted to return, I said non!

Having just entered my ninth decade in September, I hosted a large barbecue party in my garden for 30 French and English local chums, to explain that I have another project on the go. I am erecting a 6 x 3 metre polytunnel in which I hope to grow sufficient food to minimise my need for trips to Hesdin's Thursday fruit and vegetable market and to be partly self-sufficient.

So Old Roan chums, that is it! Retirement after a happy and fulfilled working life during which I have been lucky enough to have travelled throughout the British Isles and across the globe (as a surveyor first and later as an academic advisor) and for the last 20 years to have enjoyed living in my favourite country in a small French village. And now with French citizenship, I can travel freely throughout the EU.

Au revoir!

PS The headmistress of our Wambercourt village school has just asked if I had the time to assist her children with their lessons in spoken English. I...?

A SKETCH OF DAVID'S SCHOOL DAYS

David Leeming (1960-67) shares his Roan memories.

Reading the article 'Memories and Mines' by Dr Iain Wells (1960-67) in the May 2022 Magazine spurred me on to write something about my time at Roan – also between 1960 and 1967.

I too had Ben Fenton as Form Master during my time in Third Alpha. Subsequently, in Shell G and beyond, it was first Harry Green then Stewart Corney, Lionel Hankinson, Kenneth Binnie, Wood and Hoare. Throughout my whole time at the school Wally Garstang was the Headmaster.

I have kept all my school reports and the first one, for the term

ending December 1960, shows that I was then 11-years and eight months old (two months less than the average age for the form). Unlike Iain, I did not excel in Sciences. In fact, the first report stated that in all subjects but this one my work was good or satisfactory. I did subsequently show improvements in Science and later (aged 13 and 14) managed to come top of class for two terms at Chemistry under the rather strange teacher Albert Clarke. But it all went downhill under 'Bounce' Martin.

I was much better at English Literature, History and Geography



Dave Leeming with his wife, Judith, and sons James (R) and Thomas

and went on to succeed at A-levels in these subjects. The report for the Nineteenth Annual Distribution of Prizes and Certificates, held on 31 October 1967 at the Town Hall, Greenwich, records that I received a 'Special Prize for English'.

By then I had left school to join the Civil Service where I worked for 47 years in a variety of interesting jobs including the introduction of the Zoo Licencing Act and as a Planning Inspector for the Planning Inspectorate, based in Bristol, before retiring in 2014.

Other than being picked last for teams at sport lessons, my memories of schooldays are mostly pleasant ones. It was an honour to have had great teachers such as Ken Binnie and George Witten in my and their final years at Roan. A particular mention goes to Witten who took such an important role in school life generally. I remember his oversight of rehearsals for school plays and my role, despite being a rather reserved boy, as a 'behind the scenes' prompter. George would get deeply involved with the play rehearsals to the extent that he forgot he was smoking a cigarette, which became a wet 'dog-end' in his mouth at times.

I well remember Ray Stone's great acting in preparations for Macbeth. Perhaps no surprise then that Ray went on to study Drama after leaving school. Other particular memories include 'Gel' Elliott, the music teacher. Also, Geddes, who taught



Eric Geddes' sketch of David

Art and who drew a small sketch of me, which I still have. Not forgetting too 'Snoz' Westmarland, who taught Geography in my early days at school and who used to throw chalk at those not paying attention!

Of those of my contemporaries at school, in addition to Iain Wells, I particularly remember Graham Johnson, Bob Knoyle, John Povey, Ray Hatter and R G Agarwal. I was pleased to meet Johnson and Agarwal at a cricket event at the club grounds some years ago. It was also a great pleasure to attend the Centenary gala dinner at the Naval College in 2011. I recall, too, a modest attempt at 'beating the bounds' - or at least having a drink in the Rose and Crown and a walk around Greenwich nearby! If you have a chance to read it, there is a wonderful article on the history of this event in George Witten's article in the June 1977 edition of the Old Roan Chronicle!

ROAN AND THE NAMING OF ALICE SPRINGS

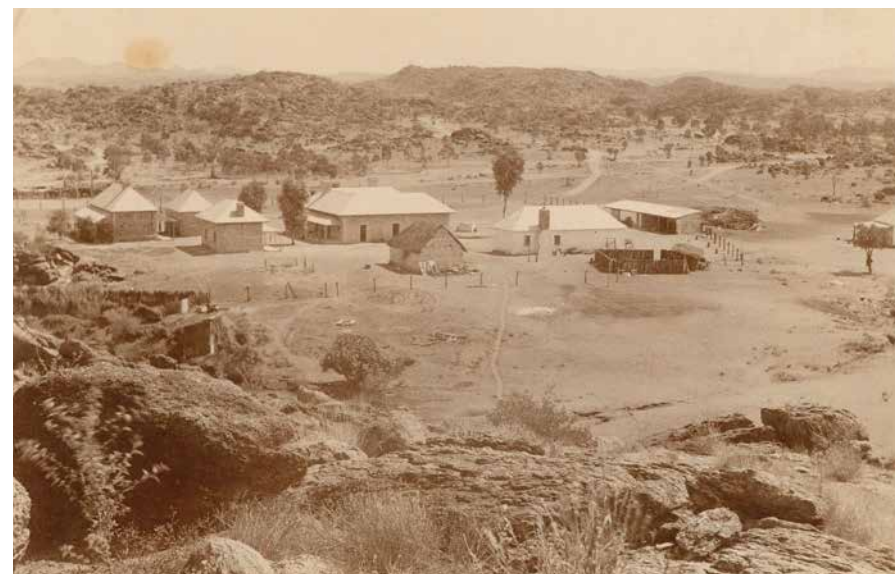
Steve Nelson (1961-67) tells the amazing story of Old Roan Charles Todd, his incredible feat to span the telegraph across Australia in the 1800s and his wife Alice...

I was talking to Bob Litten, an Old Roan, in Trevor Puddifoot's splendid River Ale House, (where I do a couple of bar sessions a week) when it was mentioned that Alice Springs was named after the wife of an Old Roan. His name was Charles Todd and his life is an amazing story.

Born in 1826 and living in 78 Ashburnham Grove, Charles attended what was then the relatively new school in Roan

Street and was found to be brilliant at Maths. He was poached by Sir George Airey (possibly a Roan Governor?) to work in the Royal Observatory as a human computer. By 1852, he was put in charge of the lowering of the red time ball at the Observatory and also for duplicates in Deal and in The Strand. This necessitated the use of the telegraph system recently invented by Samuel Morse.

In 1855, his work at the Observatory enabled him to land the post of Australian Government Astronomer and Superintendent of Telegraphs for Southern Australia at a princely sum of £400 pa. He



Alice Springs telegraph station

was advised that finding a wife would be a good thing to do and this is where Alice came in.

Alice Todd (née Bell) was born in Cambridge in 1837 and had first met Charles when she was twelve when he had called to see her mother. According to family stories, Alice had hidden in the room and when her mother advised Todd to get married, he said that nobody would want him. She then leapt out of hiding and proclaimed she would marry him, causing some amusement. She must have made an impression, however, because the next day a copy of *The Pilgrims Progress* arrived in the post inscribed to the young Miss Bell from her friend Charles Todd.

Having secured his new job, Todd revisited the Bell family and during conversations Alice reiterated her willingness to marry him and the match was made. After the wedding, the couple sailed for Australia - Alice taking her maid and a piano.

Todd's first job was to set up his new observatory although he also became a weather forecaster. But, more importantly, he also used his skills to build a telegraph from Adelaide to Port Augusta and then to Melbourne and finally on to Sydney - all for internal Morse mail.

Australia at that time was five months away from news of the Motherland, the telegraph then stopping at India. The telegraph

was a huge deal in the mid 19th century, the *Times* reporting in 1858 that 'since Columbus, the laying of the telegraph from UK to the USA was the greatest achievement of man'. Australia was desperate to be linked to the rest of the Empire.

The sub-continent had been crossed for the first time only in 1862 by Robert O'Hara Burke, John McDouall Stuart and William Wills, but all died on the return journey. The maps they left were unreliable as Stuart became virtually blind on the expedition.

In 1870, Todd, now Postmaster General for Southern Australia, was given the go-ahead to build the telegraph link from Adelaide to Darwin, a distance of 1700 miles as the crow flies. An awful lot more as telegraph poles go.

Charles signed up 400 men and commissioned 40,000 telegraph poles, 100 camels and numerous horses, tons of No 8 gauge galvanised wire from Johnson & Nephew in Manchester, plus British relays and batteries and insulators from Germany. A farmer in Booyoolie Station, Australia also invented canned Bully Beef to keep the workers sustained.

Anthony Trollope wrote at the time, 'The work had to be done through a country unknown, without water, into which every article needed by men had to be carried over deserts, across unbridged rivers, amidst hostile

tribes, in one of the hottest regions of the world.'

Todd's planning was meticulous from the social and religious behaviour of his workers through to their wellbeing. Convinced that health would be his greatest challenge to complete his gargantuan task, he worked out a weekly ration for each man comprising:

1lb Flour, 1lb Biscuits, 8lb Meat, 2lb Sugar, Quarter lb Tea, Half lb Peas or Oatmeal, Half lb Rice or Pearl Barley, 1 Gill of Vinegar, Half Gill of lime Juice, 2 oz Salt, Half oz Mustard and Half oz Pepper.

The instructions for raising the poles was arduous with twenty poles required each mile to be secured in at least a four-foot foundation.

The route was split into three sections - North, Central and South. Top and bottom went according to plan but the middle section proved a huge obstacle and not just because of the supply line. A natural barrier, the McDonnells range of mountains proved a real problem to find a way that was suitable to run the line through. The first team sent out to explore returned having battled with armies of ants, poisonous snakes, intense heat and drought, without any solution.

A second team was sent out and a narrow gap was found that led to an open area through the range.



Charles Todd and his wife, Alice

However, there was no water to sustain the working party. Then one of Todd's men found a dry river bed which he followed until he found pool after pool of clear water. This he named after Mrs Todd - Alice Springs. Today, there is a very popular visitor's centre based at the original repeater station. These were built along the line to receive messages and re-send them as the power would not carry them the whole way from Adelaide to Darwin.

Having found this well-hidden route through the McDonnells, the telegraph continued its way to Darwin but not without problems of drought, flooding and intense heat. They had breakdowns that were solved by setting up a 'Pony Express' service to join repeater stations. Charles also had an assistant imposed upon him who was forever reporting to the project's financiers with negative news giving Todd many additional problems.



Adelaide-Darwin Telegraph Line

However, on the 9 August 1872 the last pole was planted and on Thursday 22nd the line was completed and the first messages sent between Adelaide and Darwin.

Yet the internal system was just part of the story - the aim was to link Australia to the rest of the British Empire and the world. This was achieved by a submarine cable from Java, already connected, to Darwin. Unfortunately, although the cable was laid prior to the finish of the cross-Australia line, it broke and took months of searching to find the problem and repair it. Therefore, it wasn't until 21 October 1872 that the first messages were sent - among the first batch being congratulations from the Mayor of London to

his counterpart in Adelaide. The message took seven hours to reach its destination - before it would have taken at least five months by ship - but Australia was now part of the world community.

Charles and Alice Todd became the darlings of their adopted country, their life becoming one social whirl, and Charles' reputation made for life. He ended up as Sir Charles Todd KCMG; MA; FRS; FRAS; FRMS; FSTE. What these initials actually mean I leave you to find out, but they sound pretty impressive.

Charles outlived Alice by a few years and he finally died of gangrene in 1910. He was buried next to Alice in North Road Cemetery, Adelaide.

Photos - Wikipedia

FOOTNOTE

This synopsis is taken from The Singing Line by Alice Thompson, the great, great granddaughter of Alice Todd. The book is a good read and is interlaced with the latter-day Alice's adventures in modern Australia following the telegraph route, a far from easy task even now.

The Singing Line is published by Vintage, part of Random House, ISBN 0-099-27282-2. I'm not sure whether it is still in print although there is a Kindle version available. Old copies can be obtained from the excellent Abe Books (abebooks.co.uk).

THE QUEEN, PRINCESS MARGARET & PEA-SOUPERS

A second instalment of Doug Castle's (1953-60) Roan days

It is almost 70 years since I became a pupil at Roan in 1953. Each year Roan accepted three pupils from Kent so I, from Bexleyheath, joined along with David Jones from Welling and Ted Joyce from Sidcup. The school year in Kent was from 1 January to 31 December but London was from 1 September to 31 August. As our birthdays were at the end of the year the three of us were 15 months younger than the oldest pupils in the class.

There was a strict policy on school uniform. Blazer, cap and badges, scarf, pullover, first year tie, long socks and house football shirt had to be purchased from the sole supplier in Greenwich. Grey shirts, and grey short trousers (for our first two years), winter coat, satchel, PE kit, football boots and everyday shoes were bought elsewhere. This cost almost three weeks of my father's annual salary; about £800 gross for a 42hr week middle management role - a tough ask.

Although the last of WW2 rationing was ending, there was still post-war austerity and poverty. The John Roan Charity funded the uniform, sports clothing, and dinners for three poor pupils

from the Borough of Greenwich each year. Administration being notoriously slow meant that they did not have their uniforms until a month or more into the first term so they were easily identified as being recipients of the charity. A few masters unthinkingly asked why they were not in uniform - discomforting!

Each classroom had 36-38 single desks of varying height and we were seated in alphabetical order from the door to the far corner. Desk lids bore the carvings of past pupils, with several holes for the hasp to take the lock which we had to provide.

During our first term Rob Hoare, our IIIA form-master, walked us down to Greenwich Baths for swimming. He stood on the side resplendent in three-piece suit and gown whilst we either swam in the deep-end or non-swimmers splashed each other in the shallow end.

In May 1954, the first-year pupils were taken down to the riverside by the Naval College to see the Royal Yacht Britannia sailing upriver as the Queen and Duke returned from their tour of the



Doug's school scarf, first year tie (left and the tie (right) for the rest of his days including dinner and laboratory stains!)

Commonwealth. We had to wave, raise our caps and give three cheers 'Hip Hip - Hoorarr', not 'Hooray'. No-one seemed to wave back!

There was a buzz around the school in 1954 when we heard that Alf Knott would be returning in the Autumn to teach English. Pupils in third-year 6th remembered him as school captain in their first year. He didn't just return, he landed full of youthful exuberance, all action and enthusiasm! A young teacher amongst mostly older men, many of whom had taught him. House and school plays, and

the Debating Society, had a new dimension. Standards were raised.

Roan was 100% white for both staff and pupils until 1955 when A K Agarwal from Lewisham became the first non-white pupil, a truly ethnic minority of one. He was a pleasant, quiet, chap and accepted without any prejudice.

Rush-hour travel by bus was not easy. Mornings were reasonable but attending after-school activities meant that you travelled home in the busier evening rush-hour. As the bus stopped the conductor, standing on the open platform at the rear, would put out an arm to stop schoolchildren boarding letting adults 'jump the queue.' Conductors would also peer out as the bus neared the stop and seeing only schoolchildren waiting would press the bell three times, the signal to the driver that the bus was full and not to stop, despite empty seats being evident. We could wait for several buses before being allowed on one.

Worst of all was the infamous London smog in the early 1950s. When you stretched out an arm in front of you, you could not see your hand. Dirt particles were visible floating in the yellow green fog, the 'pea-souper,' which tasted, and reeked, of smoke from domestic and factory chimneys, also of oil from the shipping on the Thames. Buses still ran, but very slowly, as the conductor walked in the gutter in front of the cab holding a flare.

I went camping with the School Scouts and other pupils became regulars at Braithwaite Whitsun or Summer camps as they tried to achieve the Braithwaite Badge. We returned from the 1956 summer School Scout camp to learn that Geoffrey Hayden, aged 15, had drowned at Heidelberg on a school trip with Mr Winter. Geoff, a friend, was the only child of late-in-life parents, neighbours of my family in Bexleyheath.

We had exams at the end of the Christmas and Summer terms and 30-45 minute 'exams' during a lesson at other times. The best pupil was awarded the form prize for the year. Every year, the same boy who was tipped for Cambridge won but he would fail his A Levels along with nearly all of us. On the last day of each term we had to go into school to copy out our reports, attend final assembly and go home. That took a couple of hours. No photocopiers in those days!

Exams are stressful enough at the best of times and in the summer of 1958 a bus strike for 5 or 6 weeks coincided with our GCE exams. I was fortunate to have an uncle able to drive me to school as he went on to New Cross but getting home was a different matter. Some days, I walked the five miles over Shooter's Hill to Crook Log, Bexleyheath.

One of my classmates lived in Bermondsey opposite the flat

where Antony Armstrong-Jones was living. It was about this time in 1958 that he came to school each day with the latest on Princess Margaret's illicit night-time visits and her chauffeur having to wait outside until she departed anytime from midnight to daybreak. For a couple of weeks we were ahead of the national news on her latest romance!

One day in that July, we saw ambulances, fire engines and police cars, with bells clanging, racing down the hill. Only later, on the way home, we spotted newspaper billboards announcing a train crash at Maze Hill station.

On our afternoon for sport, we had an early dinner and travelled by bus to the Kidbrooke playing field, via Lee Green. There was never any tuition for football or cricket, we just self-officiated the games and played until the whistle heralded the end. Cross country runs through Greenwich Park were the worst. Who can forget running up, and then down, reservoir hill on the far side of the Observatory?

Sports day was held every July at the playing field. Somehow, measuring the discus event, Ken Marks managed to be struck on the head by the same person two years running. Ken was the only school scout ever to gain the Queen's Scout Badge.

Other memories include walking through the park to St Alfege's

Church for the annual Founder's Day service. Being asked twice each year if we could deliver the Roan Magazine to Old Roans in our home area; doing so saved the cost of postage for several hundred copies. An ice-cream van outside the gate also sold honeycomb blocks for 3d (1.25p) – delicious! Excitement when we heard that Joe Broadfoot was joining Millwall FC to start his professional career. As prefects, we had a room between 5th Mod and the secretary's office and when 'off-duty' we played Bridge and Tiddlywinks. Ron Clatworthy was school captain.

Those of us studying Zoology in Biology 6th dissected rabbits, dogfish, earthworms and frogs to display the blood, alimentary and nervous systems etc, then had to draw and label our work to prepare for the A level practical exam. We asked why we had not studied the central nervous system of the frog and were informed that it had never come up since A Levels started in 1948. It did, we failed, two years wasted. I did not bother to revise for the written papers nor for the Physics exam either.

Roan did not offer any advice on careers or the entry process to higher education. Anyone interested contacted their preferred Universities or Colleges for a prospectus and application form and we applied direct to the establishment as UCCA and UCAS

did not exist. We also made our own application to the appropriate County Education Authority for a scholarship to fund the course.

Did I enjoy being at Roan? I still regard it as endured rather than enjoyed. I was glad to leave, with five GCE 'O' levels, to work on a farm and then study at the Royal Agricultural College. However, being at Roan must have given me the grounding to be a successful university student a few years later.



One of Doug's reports; one of the yearly form lists of pupils with ages and House, a calendar for the year, staff list etc.; his two school hymnbooks and desk padlock

OBITUARIES

GORDON BROOKS AND BARRY THOMAS

The incredibly sad deaths, within a week of each other, of Gordon Brooks and Barry Thomas – both legendary Roan boys school teachers and Old Roans – has been noted earlier in this issue (page 7). Here are full tributes to them both.

GORDON BROOKS

Gordon Harry Brooks was born in Wolvercote Oxford in January 1943 to Dad and Mum, Arthur and Nellie (known as Moth). The younger of twin boys by 10 minutes, it was said Gordon was held back to allow his brother to buy the drinks later in life! After Gordon's birth, the Midwife commented; 'This one is going to want to know everything.'

Both boys didn't meet their father until they were three when he returned from the war. Gordon always defended his brother, once beating up some bullies and, it was said, one of the fathers too. Always supportive, Gordon fought for what was right, and was fiercely loyal to those he loved.

Young life was Idyllic, with Gordon's home backing onto Port Meadow where Lewis Carroll penned Alice in Wonderland. A very bright and academic student – passing his 11 plus and going to Oxford High School for Boys - Gordon was the first in his family to go to university at Aberystwyth, to study Geography, Economics and International Politics.



Gordon and his wife, Fiona



A very young Gordon

At university, Gordon spent a lot of time on the entertainment committee, running a comedy club - writing and producing - and once playing Winston Churchill. He stayed in Wales to get his post graduate teaching certificate before moving to London at 23 with his first wife, Norrine, to start teaching at Bexleyheath.

In a year, he moved to Roan to teach Economics where, from the later-60s, he went on to become Head of 6th Form and then Deputy Head. As many Old Roans will know, at Roan Gordon was held in huge esteem, not least for his humour. His appearance didn't go unnoticed either - he was nicknamed Pedro as with his curly hair and moustache he could pass for a Mexican bandit.

Gordon was one of the younger, trendy teachers - someone new and very effective. At the beginning of

A Level Economics periods, Gordon would often start with a funny story then say: 'OK Boys - get your Nobbs out'. Jack Nobbs being the author of their text book.

At Roan, Gordon played a full role in sport and drama. He supported Bernie Turner in 1977/78 as 'manager' of the English school trophy winning team, where his skills were a 'little light touch'.

Gordon had a love of entertainment, immersing himself in productions and appearing in *Oh What a Lovely War*. He hosted staff events and parties at the Old Roan Club, and was proud to be President in 1981-82. For the farewell to Headmaster Dr Taylor he brought on a full steel band!

When a new Drama and English teacher, Fiona Weston, joined Roan in September 1978, Gordon opened the staff room door for her and she said he made 'her knees tremble'. It took two years for them to go on a date and one day he came into a classroom to see 'Who's been a naughty boy?' written on the blackboard. They were married in October 1981 and their daughter, Emma, born a month later! And even on his wedding day at Woolwich Town Hall, he caught some pupils wagging off school.

Gordon and Fiona, with Emma and son, Jamie (born in 1985), moved to a house in Little Walsingham, North Norfolk which is still the family home today. Gordon loved his wild garden with chickens, ducks and turkeys,

threw himself into village life as a school governor, deputy chair of the parish council and got involved with charities. He worked on the renovation of an art house and The Bull village pub was his watering hole where he made many friends.

For three years Gordon took a break from teaching and tried his hand as a children's author and illustrator. He was lured back and worked with the special needs care of young man with muscular dystrophy and they formed a close bond. Then the family professional seniority tables were turned when Fiona welcomed him to Fakenham High School where he spent some 15 years as a very well-loved teacher.

At his funeral, former Roan schoolboy Ray Richardson (1976-82) - a pupil during Gordon's time and a firm friend since - spoke of Gordon's important part in his life. Ray remembers Gordon running the football team - 5th year 1st Team - including friends Dean Micklewhite and Barry Cronin and him giving the boys 'leeway' after a Friday night out.

Ray wanted to study Fine Art and after a careers talk which tried to get him to be a brick-layer, Gordon said he hoped Ray told them where to stick the advice. Gordon linked with art teacher Howard Thomas to help Ray apply to St Martin's School of Art where he carried on to Goldsmiths to get a BA in Fine Art. Today, Ray is an acclaimed professional artist with an exceptional reputation. Gordon



Gordon, the great entertainer

was big fan of his work and had some on his walls at home.

Gordon and Fiona's daughter, Emma, welcomed people to the funeral from all over the world watching on the live link. She said it was impossible to sum up what her Dad meant to her in a few minutes. He was such an important figure in her life.

The last words at Gordon funeral came from Fiona herself who read W B Yeats' famous poem *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. She said to Gordon, a voracious reader, poetry was one of his greatest loves and as the years went by he found more and more solace in it.

With grateful thanks to Gordon's funeral service link for much of the information above.

Some of the very many tributes to Gordon from Old Roans who shared their schooldays with him:

KEITH ETHERIDGE
My life changed after studying A level Economics under Gordon's



Gordon Brooks

guidance. I'd never even thought of going to university until then. Thank you for being in my life and influencing it for the better.

JOHN DENNIS

The twinkle in his eyes and that little laugh every few words. A hero, legend at the Roan and the most wonderful teacher you could ever wish to have.

BERNIE TURNER

Gordon was a stalwart of the Roan Boys Grammar School when I joined as a teacher in 1975 and was so respected by all the boys. He was someone I looked up to because he had a unique relationship with everyone he taught as well as being someone I could go to for sage advice whenever I needed it. Even though he was not in the best of health, it was so pleasing to see that he still maintained his wit and humour when I visited him in Norfolk last August.

GUY WILKINS

Such a genuinely lovely man who had such a positive impact on so many lives over such a long period of time.

GARY MICKLEWHITE

Very sad news. He was loved by all at Roan.

MICK SMITH

Gordon was a very, very special teacher and person, and I was very lucky to have known him as a teacher and as a friend.

BARRY THOMAS

Barry Dale Thomas, was born in 1945, the only child of Bruce, a joiner, and Vi, a Blackpool boarding house landlady. Barry passed his 11 Plus and chose to go to Baines Grammar School in Poulton-le-Fylde, a village a few miles outside Blackpool as football was played there rather than rugby and he was showing a lot of promise.

Barry played for Blackpool Town youth team - Blackpool FC at that time was in the old First Division and he was watched by scouts from more prestigious teams such as Manchester United although nerves always got the better of him. He decided that a career in



Barry Thomas



A very young Barry

football wasn't for him and stayed on for the 6th Form and then went to Goldsmiths College to study for a BA in Geography with Geology, coming out with the best degree in his year group.

Following a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Barry started work in 1968 as a Geography teacher at Roan. Alongside his teaching, he took on football at the school and, as has now gone down in Roan legend, in his second year entered the first team in the English Schools competition which under his guidance the school won in 1971.

Barry was at this time actively involved socially at the Roan Club and also took a part time MA in Education in which achieved a distinction. When Mr Hankinson,

the Head of Department at Roan, retired Barry took on the role and, although very happy at the school, he thought he might stagnate. So, in 1975, he took on a more senior management post at the newly opened Woodside School in Newham.

A few years later, he was appointed Deputy Head at another Newham school, Trinity School for Boys. Within his first term the Head teacher died and he was appointed Acting Head and within a short time the governors substantiated this post. This was a challenging multiracial school and after a few years the borough decided to reorganise its secondary schools and it was likely that Trinity School would be closed.

Barry and family with son Daniel born in 1975 and daughter Sarah born in 1978 decided to move out of London and he was appointed Head Teacher at North Walsham High School beginning in the summer term of 1984. He also invested both time and money with



Barry Thomas, the Old Roan

Old Roans Trevor Puddifoot and Geoff Sawyer to start a business office supply and stationery company, using school holidays to put in in time with the operations. He left teaching in 1990 to set up a Norfolk branch of the company but unfortunately, recession loomed and the company failed and he returned to teaching at Fakenham High School in the early 1990's.

Barry remarried and he and his wife, Judy, later bought a house near Saumur in Western France. They spent months there each year, renovated the house and very much enjoyed the local life with Barry doing some gardening work. When not in France they were at home in Colkirk, near Fakenham. He would see familiar Old Roans occasionally and was especially remembered in a toast at the Old Roan Annual Dinner in 2022 by then President

Trevor Puddifoot, part of the 1971 cup-winning Roan team.

Trevor, a friend and ex-business partner, spoke at Barry's funeral just outside Norwich. He said how respected Barry was at Roan, what an influence he had been to so many and how proud he was to have been part of the 1971 cup team.

Trevor told the Magazine: 'Barry will always remain a special person in my heart.

'Our A level Geography lessons at Roan were legendary. We used to fill the first 15 minutes of each double-period with a review of our English Schools cup escapades coupled with gossip about someone's love life. Eventually Geography came up.

'I was also in business with him and stayed with his family in Norfolk



Barry (front, 2nd left) in an Old Roan vets team

and in France at different times. He used to stay with us when he came down on the business front.

'We actually formed an unofficial Aldborough branch of the Charlton supporters club. The two of us and one of his local friends held our first (and only) meeting in the phone box outside the Black Boys pub by the village green. We even took our pints in with us!

'The coldest I have ever been in my life was playing in a football match for the same Black Boys pub team against another local pub on one of our visits. I borrowed some boots and had no undershirt. The pitch was exposed, the wind was howling, the rain was bucketing down and it was freezing cold. There were no showers afterwards and we went straight to a local pub. I can still remember giving Barry his pint and he was shivering to the point that he couldn't hold his glass still.'

KEITH HEDGES (1960-67)

The sudden death of Keith Hedges in February this year - an extremely well-known and much-loved Old Roan - was another great shock. Family and friends at his funeral spoke of Keith's unique character, his great kindness and his easy ability to make friends.

ROGER HEDGES (1958-65) - Keith's older brother:

'We grew up in Charlton at 41 Little Heath. Keith was born there. It was a happy home. Keith and I

always shared a bedroom and were fortunate enough to have no less than three local parks. Charlton Park, where we played football and cricket: Maryon Wilson Park, where we climbed trees, played in the stream and generally ran around and Maryon Park where there was a playground.

'We probably spent most of our time playing football in Charlton Park. This is where Keith developed his cultured left foot - a skill he put to good use in later years when playing for Blackheath Celtic and Old Roan.

'Dad was a Charlton fan and we lived around a mile away from The Valley, so we really had no choice as to which team to support. We first went in the late 1950s and Keith was still going until the end.

'We both went to Roan, which has become somewhat of a family tradition. Our Dad, Harry, had gone there (c 1919). At Roan, Keith easily made friendships, notably John Styles, Nick Payne and Alan Diwell who were close friends of his all his life.

'We both obtained A levels. Keith wanted to study to become an Actuary and so joined Sun Life where he ended up working until he retired.

'The 60s and 70s were a golden age for new music. Anyone who met Keith would soon realise he had a deep love of music, which developed and became more varied

as he matured. In later life, he even learnt to play the guitar.

'When he left school, Keith joined the Old Roan Club, as I had previously. The main club activities for Keith were playing football and drinking beer. There were always drinks after the match on a Saturday in the clubhouse at Kidbrooke and also on Thursday nights which was the main club night. This is where Keith developed his love of beer, especially real ale, which he was still enjoying until the last. He was a proud Old Roan and made many ongoing friendships.

'Keith has always been both an interesting person and one interested in others. He made friends easily with his caring attitude. He loved family and enjoyed get-

togethers and was always keen to enquire on family members.

'It was a real privilege to have had Keith as a brother and he will be sorely missed. A great hole has certainly been created in all our lives.'

JOHN STYLES - Keith's friend for over 60 years:
'We started at the Roan School at the same time. We were put in the same class and the same house, studied the same subjects, and that was the way it stayed for the rest of our time at Roan, all the way through, including the 6th Form.

'We had lots in common but the biggest bond as young teenagers was music. The artist that really bound us together more than any other was Del Shannon - we bought

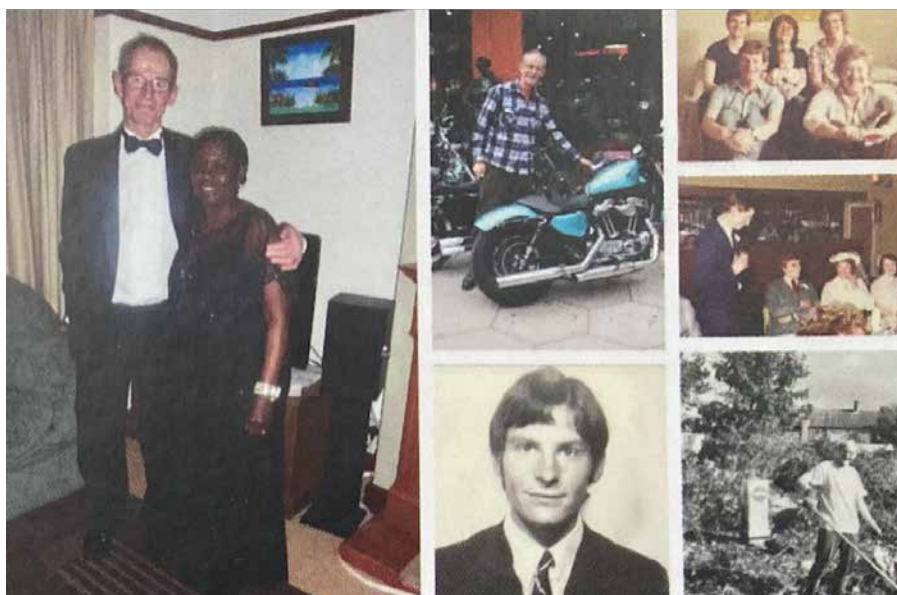


Photo memories including one of Keith at Roan



Keith (back row, 2nd left) as an OR vet

all his singles and LPs between us and wore them out playing them over and over.'

John spoke of the last time he saw Keith - at The Valley. There was a young man there who they'd known since a boy for 20 years but hadn't seen for a long while. 'Keith clambered over the rows of seats, gave him an enormous bear hug and then proceeded to congratulate him on his engagement. That moment is typical of the man - he had all the time in world and more for everybody.

'Keith and I, together with our dear school friend Nick Payne, and with regular guest appearances by lots of others, have been meeting for a few beers on a Friday night ever since we left school. For the last 30 years or so, it's been the Crown in Lee.

'I've spoken to several Sunlifers and all of them said that he made the office a sunnier place to be, and

the working day that much more enjoyable, just by being there and being Keith.

John spoke of Keith's spirit and magic. 'His dress sense - the jelly shoes, the stars and stripes trousers, the donkey jacket and that platted excuse for a beard. He was the best man at my wedding - he was my best friend for over 60 years.

'The empty chair at the Crown, and the empty seat in Row Y at the Valley are going to be regular reminders that we don't have him anymore. He was a one-off... UNIQUE.'

EMMA, Keith's daughter:
'Keith - or Keit to the Jamaicans - Keefus, Keefio, Hedge, Hedgeman, Uncle Keith, Grandad, Daddio - Dad was known by many names to many people.

'In 1976, when he was working at

Sun Life, Dad met a young Olivetti machine operator named Angela who also worked there. Dad wooed Mum over drinks after work in the pub, by taking her out to parties and through his football prowess when she used to watch him play for Blackheath Celtic.

'Dad was an outgoing, beer, football and music loving Englishman and Mum was a somewhat reserved, almost T-total, Church-going Jamaican woman. But together they made a formidable team. They got married in 1985 and remained husband and wife for almost 40 years. Together, they raised four children - my older sister, Collette, my younger sister and brother, Lucy and Joseph, and me.

'Growing up, there weren't a lot of families that looked like ours. But I am so proud of our little rainbow family and everything we have achieved together. When Mum and Dad first got together, it was a time when interracial relationships weren't quite as accepted as they are now. I can't imagine what it was like having to put up with the stares and the comments of people who weren't used to seeing two people together who looked so different. But Dad didn't care what people thought - he would just say 'who cares?' Because that's who dad was - he didn't care about convention. He prided himself on being an individual and not being the same as everyone else.

'He was such a great Dad. He didn't spoil us with money, because we

didn't have a lot of that growing up, but what he did spoil us with was time, attention and love. He'd take us to watch him play football at the Roan Club and Kid for a Quid days at Charlton.

'Anyone who knows us will be familiar with the phrase 'Keep it Keith', a phrase that embodies all the qualities we love about our Dad. It's keeping it kind, keeping it cool, keeping it laid back, open minded, warm and friendly, just like Dad.

'Dad's sudden passing has left a huge hole in all of our lives, but we know his light will continue to shine brightly, not only through us, his children, but through his grandchildren too - Holli-Anne, Shayni, Aaliyah, Cain, Lyla and the youngest, at just one year old, Xavier Keith, my son. When I was thinking of a name for my little boy, I wanted to make sure he was named after someone great and I don't know any man greater than my Dad - I was so proud to give him my dad's name.'

MONTY SMITH remembers Keith as 'a larger than life character who always had time for everyone - a pretty unique guy and a thoroughly decent, all-round bloke. Monty said: 'A first eleven footballer, one of those who also graced all six elevens at one time or another, he also skippered The Hedgehogs quiz team and lead the same group on all the legendary Hare and Hounds paper chases/pub crawls. It is hard to believe he will no longer be with us and he will be greatly missed.'

CHRIS RODWELL (1965-72)

The news of Chris Rodwell's death in Autumn last year came as a very sad blow indeed to Old Roans. Chris was known to many and his impressive sporting achievements for the school and Old Roan are well remembered. Here, themselves OR sporting legends, Chris' brother-in-law, Jimmy Russon, and friend Fred Spink, pay their tribute.

Chris was the oldest of five children born to Stan and Jean Rodwell. Stan was a fireman and Jean a part time cleaner. The family epitomised the philosophy of the Roan School where opportunity was given to those with potential rather than an ability to pay. All five siblings were educated at the girl's or boy's schools, perhaps a record! Although Chris was to spend most of his adult life abroad, family ties remained strong through regular holidays and festive visits. His memorial ceremony in Denmark



Chris at the club in 1980

was attended by all his brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews.

Although solid academically, Chris excelled at sport and represented the school at cross country, athletics (breaking the school 400m record), football and cricket. On joining Old Roan, he had an



Chris (standing, 3rd right) in the Old Roan football First Team 1975-76



Chris (front, 2nd right) in Old Roan's cricket 1st XI, 1981, with Fred Spink (mid row, centre)

illustrious sporting career and would be considered the best all round sportsman of his generation. He was a pivotal centre forward and top scorer in Cyril Davies's 1975-76 league-winning team.

When some of our star players left to join Blackheath Wanderers in 1980, Chris became First XI cricket captain leading them to its first league win with a team full of 'has beens' and 'never will be's'. On many occasions, if the conditions were right, he would open the bowling with the new ball and his ability to genuinely swing the ball would often get the ORs off to a good start. With his sound technique, he was the obvious choice to open the innings and thus became the only player to do both regularly.

For all his achievements, however, it is Chris the person who will be remembered more than anything. He was without doubt one of the most popular of Old Roans - always modest and friendly and he had the knack of always seeing the best in people. He would forget slights and was a loyal and generous friend. Chris led by example and seemed to have an inexhaustible patience with those who could not play to his ability. Revelling in the social life of the club, Chris' fresh face and good looks led him to the casting couch of our own 'Tim Rice' - Mike Callaghan - who had him starring in his first big production, *Sleeping Beauty*, with Chris naturally playing the lead role. Although he needed eight pints to get up courage to say one line!

Chris was a fixture for many years on the Old Roan Braithwaite trips. His passion for the Lake District and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the fells was kindled by the school trip taken by Taffy Evans and Winker Watson in 1967. He also went on many Old Roan cricket tours to Kent and the Isle of White as well as football tours to the Continent.

After a successful and lucrative career in London's money market in the early '80s, Chris decided he needed a change and moved to Luxembourg and was never to return to England for more than a couple of weeks at a time. He left football and cricket but pursued his other sporting passion, golf, achieving a single figure handicap after taking early retirement. He lived a happy family life with his Danish wife, Bodil, and two children Nicky and Steffi. For the last five years they have lived in Denmark in order to afford the best care available to ameliorate the effects of early on-set Alzheimer's.

Chris will be much missed by all his friends and family.

Monty Smith is planning to team up with Fred Spink and hopefully others at a beer festival to celebrate Chris' life in style!

DENIS PRIEST (1945-51)

The last issue carried a riotous account by Denis of his Roan days - his time at the school was eventful to say the least. Denis wrote then

that his health was failing and, subsequently, news came from his wife Eve Pool that Denis had died last Autumn. Here is a tribute to him she wrote.

In remembering Denis, the first thing that comes to mind is his kindness. A brilliant wit and natural raconteur, it is Denis' many acts of generosity that define him.

Born in London in 1932, Denis had an early setback in his life when he suffered a traumatic childhood injury that left him unable to fully straighten his right leg. Despite this, he never let his misfortune define him. In his chosen career, he was always as much at home in the field among his beloved plants and fungi as he was in the lecture theatre.

Denis graduated with a D.I.C. - Diploma of Imperial College of Science and Technology (Royal College of Science) - and a Ph.D. in Botany-Plant Pathology, both from London University, winning many awards and scholarships including the prestigious George Mitchell Gold Medal in Science. He was the University Scholar in Science (Botany) 1957-1960, the only student ever to have gained this award in a written subject. For two years Denis was also a Research Fellow at St Johns College Cambridge University, concurrently running a bridge club at Mayfair in London.

He married his first love Rita Durrant in London and shortly after



Denis Priest

they migrated to Australia in 1961 for Denis to take up a position as Senior Lecturer in Botany at the University of Queensland and later also Examiner-in-Chief, Queensland Schools (Biology/Botany). In his early career, Denis was an inspirational and entertaining teacher. Students taught by him would often fondly recall his memorable lectures and support many years after.

During this period, Denis was also active in another of his great passions, contract bridge. A highly competitive player, he was active in the Queensland Bridge Association for many years. He was one of the originals behind the Gold Coast Bridge Congress in the 1960s and 70s, being part of the winning team's event in the inaugural 1962 Congress at the Chevron Hotel. He had a weekly bridge column in the Courier Mail and the Sunday Mail for over 30 years and he combined his love of bridge and storytelling

with publication of the award-winning books 'Problems in Play' in 1962, followed by its equally engaging sequel in 1984.

Over time, Denis' love of gardens took on a larger role in his life. Having created the Alumni Teaching Garden (1976-1985) and been appointed as Foundation Curator at the University of Queensland, he left UQ to embark on a new career of landscape garden design. A Capability Brown for South-East Queensland, his imprint is indelibly to be found in and around the Gold Coast today at numerous integrated resort developments and residential estates including Seaworld-Nara Resort, Royal Pines Golf Course, Hope Island International Resort Golf Course, Palm Meadows Golf Course, Coomera Island and Oyster Cove residential estates. His Gold Coast Botanic Garden is a gift for everyone to enjoy.

Denis met the love of his life Eve in 1988. There was an immediate heady mix of mutual attraction, hard work at all hours, lavish home entertaining and exciting trips twice a year for twenty years to UK, Europe and USA where they married at the Little White Chapel in Las Vegas in 1992. Their Tamborine cottage and rainforest garden was sold in 2004 and they built their hilltop home outside Beaudesert in 2005 where Denis created a beautiful bird and butterfly-attracting perennial garden principally of conifers to compliment their two-storey Italianate home.

Denis was possessed of a beautiful mind. He passed away peacefully on 2 September 2021 at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife Eve, his children Cheryl and Russil and his brother Ronnie.

DEREK CARTER (1945-52)

Derek's daughter Helen reported her father's death in Canada on the Old Roan Facebook page. A tribute in Ottawa Valley News was mostly written by himself!

As in life so in death, Derek played true to the fine theatrical actor he was in life. Derek passed peacefully away in his home in his favourite chair as he was napping on Wednesday, 20 April, 2022. He was in his 88th year. He wrote his own obituary - the following is in his own words:

Derek was born and raised in London, England. He first came to Canada in 1952 as an RAF Student Navigator under the NATO Training Plan. He returned to Canada in 1957 to work at the Full-Scale Test Establishment of Orenda Engines Ltd., in Nobel, Ontario. After the cancellation of the 'Arrow' aircraft program in 1959, he moved to the Flight Research Laboratory (now 'Section') of the National Research Council in Ottawa. There, he headed the Computation and Analysis Group, retiring from the Section in 1990.

Throughout the 1960s, Derek was an active member of the Ottawa arts scene performing with,



Derek Carter

among others, Lakeside Theatre Productions, Orpheus, Ottawa Little Theatre and CBC Radio, and winning recognition at the Dominion Drama Festival as the best actor in the region. He was also an active sportsman playing badminton, squash, soccer, and tennis, as well as skiing.

After retirement, he took up curling and golf, and also participated in the Ontario Senior Games reaching the Provincial Finals in swimming. Also, after his retirement and for much of the 1990s, Derek served on the Executive of the Kemptville Royal Canadian Legion, Br.#212.

After 40 years in the Ottawa and Kemptville area, he moved to Meaford, Ontario, with his long-time companion, Sue. Derek is survived by Sue, daughter Helen (Phil) Crowther and grandsons Aron of England, Jason of South Africa and by daughter Jane and grandchildren Joe and Frances.

JOHN MARSHALL (1949-57)

John's partner Nettie Pollard has let us know of his sad death last year. She writes:

John Marshall died of Covid on 21st February, 2022. Born on 26 November 1937, he attended Roan and went on to get an MA in Maths in 1964, from Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

His great love was astronomy and then the history of London buses.

After failing to get a job at Jodrell Bank, he obtained a position as a manager in Operations at London Transport. He remained at London Transport /Transport for London until retirement. Since then he was active in two Healthwatch committees and was for 23 years a volunteer at the London Transport Museum Depot at Acton.

John took me to look at Roan from the outside many times. and he spoke to Roan about our visiting. Unfortunately, Covid meant these plans had to be postponed and he died before we could visit. He had many fond memories of his time at Roan, passing seven O levels and four A levels (three



John Marshall at Cambridge

with distinction). In order to take a degree at Cambridge, it was required to have a qualification in Latin. John stayed on an extra term to study and take the exam and was apparently told he had passed with 97%.

In the 6th form, in 1956, he was awarded four prizes. The Examination Prize, the Roan Exhibition prize, the Jennings prize and the Parker prize. With some of the money he was awarded, he bought a book on chess which he still proudly owned and which sparked a lifelong interest in chess. He played violin in the school orchestra, not because he was good at it but because it meant he could stay indoors in the warmth rather than playing rough games on the field!

His interest in London buses led to him and five friends taking a red London double-decker over to France and Germany and driving around like Cliff Richard and the Shadows in Summer Holiday.

He part-owned an RTW red London bus and a unique green RFW coach now in the London Bus Museum at Brooklands, Weybridge. Our regular car for trips to the supermarket, clubs and outings was a red Ford Cortina Mark One London Transport radio-controlled inspector's car. This too is unique and also in the London Bus Museum.

John left a truly vast amount of bus memorabilia which is being



John's RFW14 bus in Ongar

split between the Bus Archive, the London Transport Museum and the Acton depot. John was an authority on London buses and loved sharing his knowledge.

Many people have dreams, but John fulfilled his dreams.

PHILIP WILLSON (1962-69)

From Philip's brother, Alan (1965-72):

I am very sorry to tell you that Philip died in February 2022, just after his 71st birthday. A very crowded service at Emmanuel Church in Sidcup was attended by family, friends and many of his fellow bus, railway and Triumph car devotees including several Roan contemporaries.

Throughout his life, Phil honed and indulged his electronics, engineering and construction skills at Roan, at The Open University and in his career at Queen Mary (now) University in Mile End. His loving family sacrificed the spare bedroom, the garage and family holiday itineraries to indulge him, while his expertise on all things

mechanical was sought and freely given to a vast population of enthusiasts.

His wife Jennifer, daughter Jane and son Robert, plus five adoring grandchildren, succeed him and are keeping Phil's Herald and model railway going as well as his love and devotion for his family.

JOHN H COLLINS (1938-45)

John's brother Peter (APW Collins - 1943-50) informed us of his passing:

John, who died in December 2020, was a member of Drake House. His time at the school was interrupted by a period of a year's evacuation to Plymouth, arriving just prior to the Blitz there, returning in 1943. He was a strong, no nonsense right back in the football First XI and graduated in 1948, reading Mathematics and Physics, after which he spent three years as a Lieutenant in the Instructor Branch of the Royal Navy.

John chose a career in teaching, spending a long time at Bexley Grammar School as Deputy Headmaster. He was held in awe and highly respected by his pupils - an inspiring teacher. Second only to his family was his devotion to Charlton Athletic whom he supported for over eighty years, through thick and thin! Highlights for John were the Cup Finals and the day when he was Pride of the Valley. He won loyalty and affection from those who knew him.

DAVID NORTON (1950-58)

Born in 1939 in Shooters Hill, David was the youngest child to Marie and Geoffrey Norton. Brother Denys was nineteen years his senior, and he had an older sister, Phyllis. Passing his 11 Plus, David went to Roan, achieved a State Scholarship to study at Imperial College and graduated with a Physics degree.

David enjoyed Formula One, cricket and listening to jazz and later in life took up golf and the clarinet. He met Gladys at a sixth form dance in 1958 and they married two years later as he was finishing the last year of his degree. Gladys became pregnant with son Paul six weeks after they were married and the arrival of a second son, David, completed the family. David and Gladys enjoyed ballroom and Latin dancing achieving several medals.

David's first job was at Elliot Brothers Automation in Borehamwood working on microwaves - not the ovens! At Honeywell Computers, he undertook two substantial projects - the Harrier Jump Jet and a reservation system for Braniff Airlines. David worked for some time in America before going to Plessey and his last job concerned granting licences for the telecommunications world.

In 2005, David bought a villa in Spain enjoying over sixteen years of happy holidays there. Later, he became a mature student and also studied A level Law.



David after graduating from Imperial College

Keen on voluntary work and great at DIY, David, who died on 1 September last year, was a quiet, unassuming, reliable, humble family man. Thoughtful and kind to everyone, he was a loving grandpa to Elliot and Lucy and great-grandpa to Freddie.

With thanks to Gladys Norton

JOSIE JAMES (née Jackson)

The Old Roan Facebook page was sadly informed of the death of Josie James (née Jackson) on 12 June last year. Her daughter, Sandra Gardner, who also went to Roan, sent a photo taken at Roan Girls in 1952. It has 'Form 4F Spring Term 1952' on the back and the teacher is named as Miss Warman.

SHEILA THORNCROFT (1947-54)

From Sheila's son Magnus Thorncroft:

Mum, born in 1935 and an ex-pupil

of Roan School, sadly died in October 2020, leaving behind three children, ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She enjoyed opera, loved her lunches with the 'Girls' and always had fond memories of her time at Roan which she continued to support. The family and I would be very grateful for her passing to be mentioned in the Magazine.

JANET NICHOLS, née Hogger (1961-68)

Trevor Cruddock (1946-55) informs us of very recent sad news: 'It is with a heavy heart that I write to let you know of the death on 1 April, 2023 of my cousin Janet Nichols (née Hogger) who attended Roan School for Girls from 1961 to 1968. She went on to read Maths at the University of Nottingham and followed a career as a teacher at Timbercroft School in Plumstead. She will be sorely missed by her family as well as the 27th Scout Group based at Wesley Hall, Plumstead. She is survived by her husband, Paul, two daughters and sister Ann. Incidentally, both Paul and Ann were also Roan pupils.

'In addition to her very significant contributions to the Scouting movement and to the Wesley Hall community, Janet will also be remembered for her highly creative skills with knitting needles, crochet needle as well as needle and thread.'

MAUREEN GAMSON, née Saker (1956-62)

Jean Nicholls, née Saker (1954-60), who featured in the last Magazine with her sister Maureen and mother, Hilda, née Stocken, who attended Roan Girls in the 1920s, has informed us of Maureen's death.

Maureen did her nurses' training at Kings College Hospital, was moved to Derbyshire to be near her son and was living in a dementia nursing home.

'OLD ROAN' MUMS EILEEN & PAT

Two mums in families of multiple Old Roans have passed away and the Magazine pays its respects to them.

EILEEN DANIELS died on 29 January 2022, wife of Colin Daniels (1945-49 - died 2003), and mother to Ian (1974-81), Andy (1977-84) and Rich (1977-84).

And many Old Roans will remember Steve (1961-67) and Linda Nelson's (1963-69) mother, **PATRICIA** (Pat, with husband Charles) from her many appearances at the Club over the last 30 or 40 years. Many will also have enjoyed her hospitality at their bungalow in the middle of a bluebell wood on top of the North Downs outside Charing Village. Pat sadly died on 11 March last year at the age of 94. She just faded away very peacefully, without any pain, having led a full and enjoyable life. Charles had died about eight years previously aged 89.

NEWS OF OLD ROANS

KEVIN TODD (1960-68)

Living in America for years now with his wife, Ellen, and not heard from in a while, Kevin reveals he may potentially head back to these shores for a visit. Writing to Monty Smith, he said: 'Thanks for sending us a copy of the Magazine which still has a few friends that I remember well and those I unfortunately do not. On page 6, you look in great shape holding a glass of something which I cannot begin to guess what it could be. We have very few family members left and someday soon we hope to plan a visit to England so we will keep in touch.'

DAVID LEWIS (1961-68... HE THINKS!)

David informs us he has moved within Suffolk – only 12 miles away – and says: 'I don't get to see many of my peers but I did get together with Steve Nelson, Graham Townsend and Keith Weaver a few years ago for a reunion in Whitstable. My wife, Elaine, and I called in on Keith and his wife Patricia at their home in Fordyce, Scotland in 2019 on our way back from a visit to the North coast of Scotland. This was the first time Elaine and Keith had seen each other in 50 years when we met while I was touring Europe with Keith in his MGB – some reunion. Keep up the great work on the magazine.'

SPENCER SALEK

Spencer was very sad to hear of the passing of Chris Dean and Val Pollock. 'Val taught me Classical Studies and this had a

very big influence on the start of my education at Roan. I fondly remember her classes and I really enjoyed the subject – as did others who harked from backgrounds that you'd not expect to connect with classics – a testimony to her skill and passion no doubt. In later years I realised how important that experience was. Please pass on my condolences to Chris and to Val's families.'

IAN POULTER (1958-66)

Ian responded to Chris Strong's anecdote in the last Magazine when Ian drove our Past President to the hospital in his red MG when Chris had an accident in Greenwich Park while jumping over a trench. Sent to Mr Garstang's office, the Head said Chris should go to get his head checked out and Ian got the chauffeur's job.

'I assume I was considered reliable though I can't understand why. I did indeed have an MG TA which, living in Eltham, I sometimes drove to school as a 6th Former and maybe I had a couple of free periods! I still have an MG though not the original one which I sold on.'

STEVE BAKER (1972-79)

Steve sent in this (mostly) all-smiling photo from a South East London newspaper cutting of him and others in and around his school year picking up awards at the Roan boys' Annual Prize-giving in 1979. In the photo are: (l-r, back row): Chris Lay, Andrew Peakin, Ian Ribbands, Peter Bush, Roger Lade and John Biggs: (front)



David Sears, Steve, Mick McGuinness and Mike Smith.

Steve is hoping that seeing this cutting again in the Magazine might be the spark to creating a larger group from his year for a get-together. He is interested in organising a reunion down at the Roan Club, or elsewhere, depending on the response to the photo. Anyone interested, wanting to get in touch or to know more, contact Steve at smbaker04@gmail.com and/or 07865 497613.

DAVID HORSBURGH (1962-69)

Informs us that there is a local Wensleydale cheese called... Old Roan. Google tells us Old Roan is '... delicately milky and buttery... with a clean fresh flavour.' How many Old Roans we know fit that bill?

RICHARD RICKSON (1949-54)

Richard followed up on the various

memories of the famous 7-6 Charlton win against Huddersfield in 1957 covered in the last Magazine. 'I used to attend every Charlton home game with my friend and classmate, the late Ivor Hughes. We used to stand behind the goal at the open-end which was the one where most of the goals went in. I can still remember the look on the face of Huddersfield goalkeeper Sandy Kennon as he picked the ball out of the net again and again. 'I lived in Catford and used to go home on the 75 bus and earlier in the season Johnny Summers, the hero of that 7-6 game, got on the bus too. Another memory of those days at The Valley was that at the top of the hill behind the goal was a gents toilet made up of four sheets of corrugated metal with a tin trough at the foot of each wall. At games when there was a big crowd the troughs would overflow so it was wise not to stand near the back of the open-end terrace.'

FACEBOOK NEWS OF OLD ROANS

The Old Roan Association's Facebook page proves a great way for Old Roans to keep in touch, rediscover old school friends and share their Roan experiences. Just search for Old Roan Association and join in the conversation.

Roan Girls School – Devonshire Drive

Karen Mountier posted this sketch she did of the Roan Girls School building in Devonshire Drive on the Old Roan Facebook page. It sparked off a range of memories and plaudits of both Karen's drawing and the old school.

Gill Garret: 'Lovely drawing of a special building. I was there from 1960-67 when I was Gillian Closs.'

Elizabeth Black: 'I loved it there – 1975-80. I was Liz Peacock then.'

Tracey Hutchings: 'As 6th formers we used the front, had a little book to sign in and out.'

Jan Hill: 'Nice drawing. I was at Roan from 1958-63 – Janet Price then.'

Alix Barker: 'I loved that building. I did go and have a look at it when it was a building site during the conversion to flats but I still wish it was as it had been.'

More posts were from:

Jane Ransome, Janice Perkin, Jane Tillet, Ann Spray, Julie Higgs, Janet Buchanan, Belinda Browne, Donna Stevens, Sue Collier, Ann Foreman, Alison Chumley-Towner and Susan Anderson Rutt.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Inside the Girls School at Devonshire Drive

As companions to Karen Mountier's Facebook posting with her sketch of the Girls School at Devonshire Drive (opposite), here are two archive photos of inside the building.



The School Hall



The School Library

Back Cover: Braithwaite - the old and the new

