

Susceptum Perfice Munus

OLD ROAN

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M.J.Walpole



Mike Titheridge – Old Roan Association President 1994-5



(Top) The Roan Theatre Company Music Hall – March 1994.
 Back Row: Audrey Smithard, Trevor Talbot, Joan Stanbridge, Len Quaife, Teresa Wilkins, Mandy Brown.
 Centre Row: Glynis Watkins, Beryl Knott, Barbara Roe, Jean Wilkins, Debbie Vyse.
 Kneeling: David Horsburgh, Graham Johnson, Ivor Hughes, Alfie Knott.
 (Bottom) Teresa Wilkins and Trevor Talbot in "California Suite"



From the President

As I sit here putting pen to paper, my mind goes back to the days after I left the School and, a little apprehensively, had joined the Old Roan Association and become a third team footballer. Who would have thought that, one day, that shy lad would become President? Not many people, I would hazard a guess. I am sure that tireless, ageless back-room-boy Vic Brooker, who at the time was the third team captain, must have had limitless patience as, despite my lack of skill, he still appeared to encourage my efforts and was very instrumental in maintaining my continued interest. Thanks Vic!

About that time (1958?) the Football Club attempted to emulate the Cricket Club and have a "supper" which I duly attended. Seated at the far end, away from the top table, I was enjoying the evening and listened intently to the speech given by the then oldest surviving ex-player. Imagine my shock when someone had the bright idea of hearing from the youngest member. After much deliberation it turned out to be me. Not being a great drinker then (as now!!) I was virtually stone cold sober, but somehow managed to mumble what I hoped were acceptable words. Everybody appeared to appreciate my effort (perhaps due to the brevity) but ever since I have had the odd memory jog at Old Roan functions.

Now, because of the honour afforded me, I can look forward to my second speech; but, hopefully, I will be better prepared.

On a more serious note, my hope is that the Association will continue to flourish despite the growing pressures of outside attractions on the younger members who represent our future. The Club sections continue to offer excellent opportunities for activities ranging from sport to drama. Now that the Old Roan Clubhouse has been refurbished we hope that any Association Members who have not been down for a while will come along and avail themselves of the facilities. I am sure that they will be both pleased with the decor and ambience and also happy that we are perpetuating the dreams and aspirations of Frank Barnes and his hard-working and far-sighted colleagues.

Finally, I look forward to seeing past and present friends at the Association Reunion Dinner and Hilary and I hope to have the pleasure of your company, together with your partners, at the Dinner Dance next March. Having had such great support over the years from my table-tennis, footballing and cricketing colleagues I trust that they will endeavour to attend, which will not only be very much appreciated by me personally, but also enable Old Roans to renew acquaintances and friendships with friends from the past.

Annual Reunion Dinner – October 14th, 1994
 O.R.A. Dinner Dance – March 18th, 1995

Mike Titheridge
 May 1994

Secretary's Report

The Annual General Meeting was held on 24th March 1994. As usual it was pleasant to see a few familiar faces of those who seldom visit the Club on normal opening nights, though it would have been better to see more regular attenders as well. Mike Titheridge was elected as President for 1994/5 in succession to Mike Callaghan. Mike Callaghan is well known for his dedication to the Association and Club, and Mike Titheridge is both taking on the Presidency and remaining as Chairman of the Old Roan Club. Stan Berry, having served some forty years on the committee, decided to stand down at the meeting. His comments during the meetings will, no doubt, be missed. One of our last direct links with the Old Roan Girls' Association, Kay Wilkins, has been unable to play an active part in the committee for some years and is no longer a member of that body. Kay was Secretary of the Girls' Association during the exceptionally busy period of the merger, was the first female President of the Old Roan Association (1982-83) and actively supported its working until business pressures forced a curtailment.

A gap has occurred for a social secretary as Mike Walpole declined to continue, but remains a committee member. He has, however, pledged his support in assisting at the planned functions, the first of which is the annual reunion dinner to be held on 14th October 1994. Make a note of it now. A dinner and dance was held towards the end of March this year and due to considerable efforts by the outgoing President a good number attended, although marginally affected by Charlton playing a northern side in the quarter-finals of the F.A.Cup. The other side went on to win the Cup. The style of the event has altered over recent years and the format of the 1995's is yet to be decided at the time of writing.

Membership has slightly increased after three years of slow decline, much of the increase is due to the affiliation of Old Roan Netball, but also fewer non-renewals of membership and a lack of decline in life members. As at 31st December the comparative figures were:-

	1993	1992
Life members	584	590
Ist instalment life member	1	
Fully paid ordinary members	346	326
Junior members	32	29
Honorary members	2	2
Associate members	30	34
Honorary members (Old Roan Club)	2	2
Fully paid Affiliated Club members	47	20
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1044	1003

A reunion of the Girls who joined in 1974 was held last year and another for the same year is planned for 8th October 1994. Anyone not advised last year and wishing to make contact should do so through Mandy Alexander (Phone 081-317 9623 or 081-316 7394 for details). Any other years wishing to organise a reunion are always welcome to make themselves known to the Secretary.

News concerning the Club and Field may be covered elsewhere, but here are a few major items. The Roan Foundation Trust, who had owned the main field facing the pavilion, completed the purchase of the rest of the playing fields. Plans are under way to install floodlights and an all-weather surface. The Club went through a large refurbishment programme towards the end of 1993 and held an opening ceremony on 22nd January this year. Thanks are due to the Club Management Committee and especially Neal Haslam who co-ordinated the works, keeping a regular eye on building progress, and Mike Titheridge and Monty Smith. Just about the same time a new Presidents' Board was erected with Mike Callaghan's name being the first entered.

Old Roans stayed at the Hope Memorial Camp for a weekend last autumn, the first time in the new building. Things have changed! Hot showers without going outside the main building, bunk beds with mattresses, hot and cold running water in some rooms, efficient heating throughout and an open fire in the common room.

Hand-painted wall shields of the full school crest, measuring about 7" x 6", which could be hung on a wall, are available at £20 plus postage and Old Roan ties are priced at £5. These items may be purchased from the Secretary.

Westcombe Park Branch of Barclays Bank merged with that of Woolwich during 1993. The vast majority of Banker's Orders for subscriptions were received correctly, but if you receive a reminder and your bank account had been debited it means that, between the banks, something has gone wrong. In at least two members' cases (out of over 300) this appears to have happened. Please check, as I have no way of knowing.

The correct details are: Barclays Bank Plc.
Woolwich Branch
Sort Code 20-98-57
Account: Old Roan Association
Account Number: 90678112.

Those who do not receive a reminder should take no action.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts of the Association are essentially quite simple, and the format in which they are presented at the AGM seems to have remained unchanged for many years.

On the income side, the two main sources are members' subscriptions and interest received, both from funds on deposit and also from investments. Subscription income continues to be remarkably steady; investment interest is constantly coming from fixed interest gilt stock. UK interest rates are still being driven lower and, as a result, interest received into our revenue account was markedly down in 1993 to a mere £157.

There are also two main items of expenditure. Publication of the "Old Roan Chronicle" is now established as our sole, quality, annual magazine and the cost was contained at a level

similar to the previous year's. It is unlikely that the "Newsletter" will be resurrected, partly due to cost but also the lack of contributions sent to the Editor.

The other item, perhaps not clearly identifiable from the format of presentation, are the costs associated with our only two social events - the Dinners. It is very sad and unfortunate that the then President, Linda Nelson, was forced to cancel the 1993 Dinner & Dance as lack of support rendered the event not viable. It had been left that I would seek to recoup as much as possible of the monies already committed, over £530, and I am pleased to say that an almost full recovery was achieved, leaving a final loss of around £25.

The Reunion Dinner in October followed this unsatisfactory pattern, with excess of expenditure over income of some £180. The continuance of these Association functions must be brought into question. It seems that members have little or no regard for the amount of work involved for the Social Secretary, nor the financial implications, and both previous incumbents of the post have been frustrated by the attitude encountered when bookings are sought in order that the necessary arrangements can be made. (It will be no surprise that the position is vacant following the AGM)

Financially, the present position is unsustainable and wholly unacceptable. The venue is not the issue - many have been tried in recent years. However, the attempts to "move on" and "modernise" the Dinner & Dance have failed and in the process the target market - members of the Association - has been lost. Personally I believe that if the shortcomings of its organisation are not acknowledged, the Dinner & Dance may be consigned to history.

Excepting the foregoing, the accounts show that the affairs of the Association continue on a reasonably even keel. The audited accounts were presented at the AGM and were adopted. Copies will be provided to anyone not present on request.

Neal S. Haslam
May 1994

Old Roan Club Report

1993 was a very successful year. We exceeded our target turnover for the second year running and we were also able to reflect upon the satisfactory completion of the Club refurbishment programme - achieved without loss of trading.

As a committee, we feel pleased to have been able to achieve our goals and think that we have constructively aided the future success of the Club, and also the Association.

Thanks to all the members of the Club Management Committee and particularly to Neal Haslam for taking on board not only the task of arranging and co-ordinating the financial details of the project, but also the responsibility of attending the weekly site meetings to ensure that work was being accomplished to plan and specification, as well as acting as the liaison between all the interested parties.

Naturally, with such a large project to fund, our resources have been stretched to say the

least. Liquidity at one point was down (metaphorically speaking) to our last pint. Thankfully, due to good support from the Club members and frequent use of the facilities for a variety of functions, we are beginning to be able to breathe a little more easily once again.

Net bar turnover for the year was £45,296 on which we made a gross profit of £7,139 (15.7%). We are aiming for a net turnover figure of £50,000 in 1994, and with careful monitoring of the Club's operations hope to increase our profit margin to around 20%.

Our arrangement with the School as regards our financial contribution has been operating well, despite various difficulties as we both become used to the new climate in which we find ourselves; and we look forward to a continued, mutually beneficial working relationship with them.

As was said last year, we are of necessity in the "small business" category and need to act accordingly in our operational decision making. To this end, we need your continued support and would urge all members to attend as often as possible and to support the Club in whatever way they can to ensure its continued existence and success.

Mike Titheridge (Club Chairman)
May 1994

News from the John Roan School

Theatre outings have proved very popular and during the first half of 1993 included visits to "Pygmalion", "The Madness of George the Third", "An Inspector Calls", "Cyrano De Bergerac" and "Sweeney Todd". The average cost to students was £6 plus train fare. "The trips have been organised by Ms. Ryan and Mr. Upton. Ms. Stallard, our drama teacher, always says: 'I always like to be within spitting distance of the actors'. From the number of plays we have seen from the back of the stalls we deduce that either Ms. Ryan and Mr. Upton do not agree or that Mr. Upton has been banned because his ties scare the actors." (Report by Megan Toogood, Shazzah Siddiqui and Leah Bate)

During May 1993 Mrs. Karlsen and Mr. Gibby took a party of Year 7 and 8 pupils to Hamburg on an exchange to give pupils a taste of German family life. All the pupils lived as part of a German family for the week sampling German food and hospitality, German television and improving their fluency in the language. They spent their mornings in German Schools participating in lessons and were fascinated by the contrasts between the style of lessons in Germany with those in England. After the strain of morning lessons their hosts had planned an exciting variety of activities for the afternoons with FUN being the essential ingredient in every outing. Seaside, shopping precincts, leisure parks, zoos and, a trip to Hansa Park, all featured on their hectic schedule. Hansa Park was "brilliant"; this was the unanimous verdict of the pupils. Mr. Gibby is now an expert on the roller coaster and made a wonderful sight with his pony tail flying in the wind as he sped along the bends and curves. The pupils made many new friends during the trip and received their German partners for a week in Greenwich at the end of 1993. Ms. Virk and Ms. van Helfteren are organising the next visit to Hamburg in October 1994. Mr. Anderson is arranging links with a school in the South of France.

In these times of budget difficulty the school is grateful for the support that it receives from The John Roan Foundation Trust. Although the Trust is not allowed to pay for items that must be provided by the education authority, it is allowed to help with the extra needs that the school has. In the past years it has provided finance to rebuild our residential centre at Braithwaite and to add a multi-purpose classroom, purchase our playing fields from the council, lease a new computer network and buy a new mini bus. In addition the Trust has supported school journeys and activities and helped a large number of individual pupils.

After much lobbying from pupils, parents and teachers there are traffic calming measures now in place around the school. The new mini-roundabout at the junction of Vanbrugh Hill Fields and Westcombe Park Road has done much to slow vehicles at a dangerous junction and make it a safer place for pupils to cross. In addition, the council has improved the ramps and given the school an additional one opposite the corner of Maze Hill where class groups are escorted between the sites. We are now seeking a further roundabout at the junction of Westcombe Park Road and Coleraine Road to slow traffic approaching from the Standard and provide for safer crossing. This would also create a slower zone outside the Westcombe building.

The school are pleased to report the highest level examination entry ever achieved by Year 11 students. Every student is entered for an average of 8.75G.C.S.E. subjects with the vast majority taking the full complement of nine subjects. This compares well with the average of seven subject entries achieved three years ago. The recent OFSTED inspection received a good press in local newspapers. These reports noted a number of positive aspects of the school's work and commented on the improvements that have been achieved in the recent past. The recommendations from the inspection team have been put into a development plan and the school looks forward to even more improvements in the coming years.

A group of six lower Sixth Formers are taking part in the City University Young Engineers Challenge to gain a wider knowledge of research taking place by engineers worldwide. The brief given to them is to design and build the most efficient, aesthetically pleasing, cost effective wind turbine over three months considering different designs available, and working closely with local engineers. During the final period the group will travel to City University where their wind turbine will be assessed by a panel of professionals. During their visit they will be able to discuss life as a student with professors and undergraduates. The Sixth Formers involved in the project are: Leah Bate, Laura Turner, Julie Brown, Suerena Bhuee, Judy White and Nicola Veness.

A combined orchestra and choir will be visiting Napa Valley, California over the Autumn half term break. Rehearsals are already a regular after-school feature and pupils are busy organising activities and seeking sponsorship. A total of £5000 has to be raised in seven months for the tour.

Graham Southard ('71-'78) - An Appreciation

On the 27th May 1993, an RAF Hercules aircraft from RAF Lyneham crashed near Beinn a'Ghlo, Tayside, in Scotland. All nine crew were killed. One crew member was Flight Lieutenant Graham Southard, at Roan from 1971 to 1978. He was 33 and married with two daughters.

Like most of us, Graham's roots were in South East London. Despite moving away when he left school, never to return there to live, he retained much of his South London manner. Although the RAF had changed him, they had succeeded only to a degree. He would answer the front door as an RAF officer, but within a few minutes the same old friend showed through.



Graham had always wanted to be a pilot in the RAF. He had always been determined at Roan, despite the long and difficult selection process he knew was involved. The story goes that Gordon Brooks - the then careers master - rather doubted Graham's chances of succeeding in joining the RAF because of the tough selection process and always strong competition - both good reasons - and he told him so. He added an invitation that if Graham did apply, and was successful, he was welcome to return to school and "stick two fingers" up at him. After taking a degree in Aeronautical Engineering at the university of Manchester, following on from Roan, Graham applied to join the RAF and was successful. His first duty was to return to Roan and accept Gordon's invitation, with pleasure. That was Graham.

But determination to succeed was only one of Graham's many qualities. He had a good sense of humour. His antics in the class and in the "stage crew" (supporting school-plays and other productions backstage), and his stories of inter-Hercules games on the long flights to the Falklands are all proof of that.

Professionally, Graham was a very capable pilot. My wife and I were staying with Graham and his wife on one occasion, and we all went out for a drink together. Some of Graham's colleagues joined us. When Graham was at the bar, one of them confided that Graham was the top choice of co-pilot among the first officers to fly with them. Graham clearly had a very successful career ahead of him.

I know that Graham would not want me to focus overly on the feelings that all those who knew him are left with by the accident. But I think he would forgive me if I did just say that the sadness and injustice of his loss are both difficult pills to swallow. And he is missed; a great deal by the RAF, very much so by his friends, but most of all by his family - his wife Trisha, daughters Lindsay and Charlotte, parents Barbara and Ted, sister Kathy and brother Malcolm.

Chris Hinkin ('71-'78)
November 1993

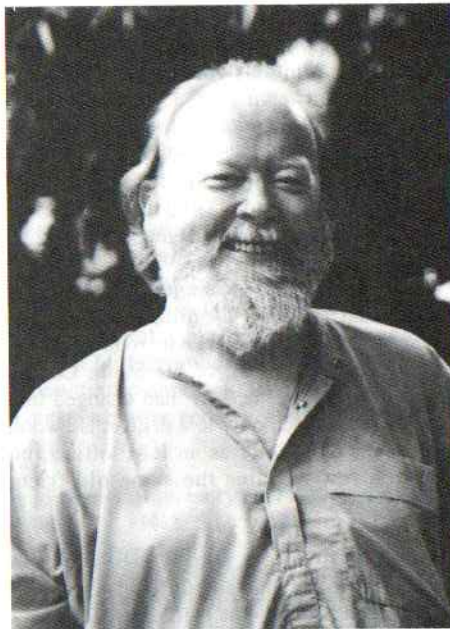
Professor John Lavers ('46-'53) – An Appreciation

The following article is taken from the "West Africa" magazine for the week of 19-25 July 1993. It is written by A.R.Mohammed and B.M.Barkindo – former colleagues of Professor Lavers in Nigeria.

The death of Professor John Ellis Lavers came as a rude shock to hundreds of his students, ex-students, colleagues and friends as well as to all those who care deeply for Africa and its history. It is still rather difficult to think of the Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, without John Lavers. Not only was he the oldest surviving member of staff (his appointment dated back to 1966, when Bayero University was simply Abdullahi Bayero College) but all the members of the Department, with one exception, were his former students – some of them having been trained by him from year one of the BA, through the MA and on right up to PhD.

It is even more difficult to accept the fact that we, whether as colleagues, students or scholars visiting Kano, can no longer turn up at House AB 14 on the Old Campus to consult John on the sources for an academic project in hand, or to solicit his usual incisive critique (always laced with much wit and humour) on some work recently completed. John was always there, day or night, ready to receive anyone and offer help: his well of information often seemed inexhaustible. In consequence it was not just historians who sought him out, but archaeologists, anthropologists, geographers, experts on fine arts, museum curators, linguists, dramatists, journalists and many others. He refused, though, to talk politics: that was not his concern.

John was an Englishman, born and bred in south London where he had all his education. From the Roan School in Greenwich he went on to do his BSc in Anthropology at University College London (1959-62) and then completed his MSc there too in 1964 with a dissertation on "The Organisation and Distribution of Trade in the Central Sudan in the Pre-colonial Period". In those days African history as such was not taught, but his appetite for it was whetted by his close friend and later brother-in-law Alhaji Liman Ciroma, the Ciroma of Fika and a former Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria. It was natural therefore for John, when he got a Horniman scholarship to spend a year in Nigeria, that it was to Fika Emirate (in what was then Bornu Province) he went to do the field work for his PhD thesis.



Professor John E. Lavers
Died 16 May 1993. Aged 56.

After a few months of field work, John realised that the history of Africa that he had been taught was so distorted, and the sources that had been considered impeccable authorities were, in fact, so inaccurate, that there was nothing else for it but to embark on a full-scale re-examination and re-interpretation of African history – and that this was to be his life's work, more important than hurrying home and writing an imperfect PhD. He set about collecting, with extraordinary determination and persistence, every scrap of documentation as it related to his special interest – Borno and the other states of the Chad basin in particular.

Yet he was omnivorous, with a sharp eye for any titbit of information anywhere. Not only did he leave, at his death, one of the richest Africana collections in Nigeria, but he was uniquely generous in the way he shared his finds with every genuine scholar who sought him out. His enthusiasm for his unending data-quest and his unselfishness in guiding others in how to make use of all he knew combined to make House AB 14 a Mecca for students of all things Nigerian. His passion, however, was not just with research: he realised, as did a few others, that one of the most effective ways of correcting the distortions in African History was to stay in Africa and teach the emerging African elites. With the backing of the late Professor Abdullahi Smith, John was employed as a lecturer in History at Ahmadu Bello University and posted to its Ahmadu Bayero College campus in 1966. John never looked back. He eventually became internationally recognised as the leading historian of the states around Lake Chad, with Borno as the pivotal political system of the region.

John died in Kano on Sunday May 16 1993, and was buried according to Muslim rites at the Gorondutse burial ground. The funeral ceremony was attended by his students and ex-students, by members of his family, close friends and colleagues and by a delegation from the British High Commission and the British Council. He left behind two families in Nigeria: his academic "family" at the Department of History, Bayero University, and his personal family, his wife Hajiya Hadiza, his sons Adam and Sulaiman and his daughter Aisha. The death of Professor John Lavers is like the end of an era. May Allah in his bountiful mercy reward him for his good deeds.

We are grateful to Mrs. Norma Rednall, a family friend, for forwarding this information to the Editor and providing the photograph. Our correspondence resulted in Mrs. Rednall and Mrs. Irene Lavers, John's mother, visiting the Club in March to attend the Music Hall Evening.

Where are they now?

Copies of the last magazine were returned "gone away". If anyone knows a current address would they please let the secretary know:

Roger Bonner (Staff '70-'76)
Julie Carter
Ann Cunningham (nee Lawrence '69-'76)
James Humphrey ('67-'74)
Alan Richmond ('71-'78)
Gordon Tait ('63-'70)

Micky Bullen ('63-'70)
Fred Cook ('58-'65)
Paul Griffin ('67-'74)
Mark Lucas ('73-'80)
Brian Strong ('48-'53)

The Refurbishment of the Old Roan Club

“Old Roans now have a vastly expanded Club Room which it is hoped will attract more of them to use the new facilities”, said edition No.141 of the Roan Magazine in November 1969. The short article was reporting on Doug Humphreys opening the extension to the War Memorial Room, now known as the lounge.

This was a significant undertaking, not only in terms of time and money, but also in the personal interest, effort and tenacity of stalwart Old Roans - Frank Barnes, Val Lovell, Brian Thomas and John Williams, to name but a few - who had been instrumental in seeing the project through to its successful conclusion. Delays and setbacks with builders (and finance) had meant that some three years had elapsed between initial thoughts and plans to the opening night on Friday 15th August 1969.

The contribution which Frank Barnes made to the development of the Club is immeasurable. Indeed, the sound planning and business objectives which were pursued then laid the foundation for what we were able to achieve last year. By any comparison, 1993 was a year which the Management Committee of the Club can be proud of.

Suggestions for the title of this article included “Ice, gas, electricity, bank interest....and more.” For the information of the wider membership of the Association who are not regular visitors to the Club, perhaps we should explain a little further.

Providing a constant supply of ice-cubes has always been a problem at the bar, and our ice machine really was past its “sell by” date. Our cellar refrigeration engineers had advised us that legislation was in train to discontinue the manufacture of ozone-depleting CFC gases within a two year period and our equipment would become redundant. Whilst not quite at the stage of being condemned, our power and lighting cables would soon need rewiring. Our funds on deposit were earning less interest and the Management Committee had to decide what should, and could, be achieved with the available resources.

We were also aware that the more competitive business environment had forced breweries to again enter the market with interest-free barrelage loans. If we could negotiate a suitable facility, draw on our own reserves, engage the services of licenced trade professionals, pray for a fair wind....we might just be able to....do everything?

This was ambitious by any stretch of the imagination. We had already started replacing the tables and chairs in both rooms and outline plans had been agreed to install UPVC windows and doors to the lounge. A small group met to discuss the feasibility of the ideas, as well as to determine the essential from the desirable. A lot really did hinge on the availability of outside finance together with the terms and conditions imposed by the lender - even if it was a major brewer. Some £10-£15,000 would need to be raised if we were to be able to consider putting all our ideas into action.

Over to the Treasurer! A number of brewers were contacted with outline proposals in order to sound out the viability of our thoughts, including our main supplier, Whitbread, with whom we already had a small loan. Other brewers were, of course, looking at a new account relationship and were therefore erring towards the lower end of our anticipated needs, whilst on first discussions Whitbread seemed prepared to discuss the higher figure.

A business plan was prepared. Audited accounts were examined, cash-flow forecasts

drawn up, estimates obtained and professional advice sought. A number of other issues began to be included in the “master plan”. Whilst going to the time, trouble and expense of replacing the cellar refrigeration we could, for a proportionately small amount more, extend the cellar and nearly double our storage capacity.

If we were replacing the windows in the War Memorial Room, perhaps in the longer term it would be better if the picture window was opened up and large doors installed - the batsmen could then at least stride back into the Club when they were “out” rather than disappear in a side door. The old door, previously used for access to the score box, would be unnecessary and a window in its place more appropriate.

We now had to take a long-term view. Refurbishment on this scale could only be done once. Improving the facilities should lead to the Club being a more attractive venue and increased turnover/profit should enable us to meet our growing commitments to contribute towards the costs of maintaining the playing fields. Practical consideration also had to be addressed: a glass-washing machine would be needed to cope with demand; a hand-wash basin to meet changes in legislation; possibly another bottle cooler. More money!

Negotiations with Whitbread went well, and we were complimented on the manner in which we presented our proposals. Design schemes had been agreed in principle, plans prepared, colour charts and samples discussed. Nine months work had gone on “behind the scenes” and it was now time to sit and wait. Our borrowing requirement had grown to £20,000 and there was an acute awareness of over committing ourselves. Having got this far we had to make sure we did not run out of money. There had to be a safety-net for any unforeseen circumstances.

In mid-October, a facility was agreed and signed with Whitbread for a 10-year barrelage loan for £20,000 and plans could become reality. The task before the Management Committee now was to be able to co-ordinate the work of a number of contractors over a fairly short period. The aim was to have all the major elements completed by Mid-December to allow us to prepare for Christmas - always a busy time.

Site meetings, Committee discussions, amendments to points of detail on the plans, additions to specifications, contract stage payments - everything was moving at a rapid pace. With the exception of finishing touches and matters delayed owing to the weather etc., the programme of works was completed on time. The Association General Committee met on 13th December in our new surroundings and everyone was pleased with the final result.

The new year saw a host of housekeeping matters being attended to, and arrangements were made to hold an “official” opening evening on Saturday 22nd January. A buffet was laid on by our President’s wife, Elizabeth, and Mike congratulated all those concerned for their tremendous efforts. The members of the Club Management Committee were thanked for all that had been achieved. As a record for posterity, they are: Mike Titheridge (Chairman), Dave Wright (Secretary), Neal Haslam (Treasurer), Dave Andrews, Monty Smith and Steve Nelson. In appreciation of the leading role that they played, and to mark the occasion, the President presented a bouquet and a gift to Hilary and Neal Haslam on behalf of the members. Now we have facilities to be proud of. Please visit the Club, use it and enjoy it (and please help us to look after it, we can’t afford to do it again!).

Neal Haslam
May 1994

Mike Titheridge Old Roan Association President (1994-95)

Michael William Titheridge ('51-'56), known to regulars at the clubhouse as "Mike T". Indeed, so well known that it's difficult to remember Old Roan without him. He could be said to be part of the furniture - but growing old gracefully rather than requiring refurbishment! Now he is our President. Congratulations, Mike.

Mike is a devoted family man. He has always lived locally and, along with his wonderful wife, Hilary, has brought up two fine (not to be argued with) rugby-playing sons.

Little information is available on Mike's school days but it can be presumed he was a model pupil - on the grounds that it took Roan seven years to educate many of us but Mike was ready for the big, wide world in only five!

After leaving school Mike initially had a somewhat varied career, with numerous jobs and often moving on rapidly. Within just 33 years (!) however, he had decided to settle down and become a prison officer. Many would say that only a masochist would take on the pre-entry fitness training required but, with a fine body, built on the Kidbrooke playing fields and lubricated in the clubhouse bar, Mike had no difficulty in gaining entry at the age of 49 - only days before reaching the maximum permitted age. Today he remains, as might be described in modern parlance, still involved in "customer care at the Bellmarsh college of criminology".

From the time he left school, Mike represented Old Roan at sport, initially at table tennis and football, but he was soon also playing cricket. He was a founder member of the Cricket Sunday 3rd XI, formed in the early 60's. Although he claims to have scored at least one 50 in every season, extensive research into the record books cannot verify this, at least not after 1965. He was, however, a useful middle-order batsman and safe close catcher. He had a reputation for losing his wicket by attacking the bowling too soon; but, once in his stride, runs came quickly, with a penchant for the extra cover drive.

In the early 70s, owing to other demands on his time, Mike decided his cricketing days were over - except, of course, for attending the annual cricket supper. It was at one such evening that he demonstrated a clear ability to remain calm in difficult situations. Hilary had kindly agreed to collect him after the usual celebrations and, dutifully, arrived on time to take him home. Relaxed as ever, having told Hilary that he would only be a few minutes more, Mike returned to the festivities. Inexplicably delayed over the last pint(s), Mike eventually emerged just in time to see the tail-lights of his car disappearing rapidly down Kidbrooke Park Road. Lesser men would have panicked but not Mike. He calmly returned to the bar to assess the situation over a (final?) drink. History does not relate how Mike survived that weekend. Maybe he won the support of those rugby-playing sons. Either way, we thank you, Hilary - Old Roan still needed him.

It is probably at football that Mike has contributed most to Old Roan. He wasn't a first team "star", but played for over 30 years in the middle and lower elevens. More important, however, was the spirit, hard work and friendliness he brought to the Old Roan game. As captain, Mike didn't always select the best available players, believing in providing wider opportunities for all, whether they were older, youngsters (often from the school), or just

enthusiasts. The Association is that much stronger for such opportunities and the encouragement that Mike provided over the years.

Football has also shown other sides of Mike's character. Few members knew how much he believed in discipline until he organised annual weekend visits to Norfolk. Matches were played on Sunday mornings but all players were required to report to the hotel bar at 5 pm the previous evening (it being coincidental that this was opening time)! Apart from a break for steak and chips, a liquid diet was strictly enforced until after 3 am. Players failing to stomach a full English breakfast first thing next morning risked not being selected for the team. The formula worked! As far as can be remembered, most games were won and every trip was a great success.

As years passed by and footballing limbs aged, Mike's enterprise showed itself again in the formation of a veterans' team. Through hard work and enthusiasm he provided a means for many Old Roans, who would otherwise have hung up their boots, to continue playing into their forties - and in Mike's case well beyond! As before, Mike didn't necessarily pick the best players. He used his understanding of the opposition to select teams that would ensure a close match. Even if success on the field sometimes eluded them, socially, after the game, they were unbeatable.



Mike Titheridge captaining a particularly distinguished group of Vets in 1982. Back Row: Ted Hadrill, Terry Chance, Terry Barry, Brian Matthews, Brian Hamer, Jim Bird, Dave Bryden. Front Row: Ray Hatter, Simon Perry, Keith Berry, Paul Watts, Mike Titheridge.

Eventually, even Mike has (more or less) retired from sport but his support and commitment to the Association have not wavered. He has already been Chairman of the Club Committee for several years and, under his watchful eye, the Clubhouse has recently been refurbished, making it an even better place for us all to enjoy. Such active and forward-thinking members are vital to the future success of the Association.

Mike, you have been the source of much pleasure for others but this year is your year. Have fun and ensure Hilary does too.

Brian Matthews
May 1994

A Dinner Dance . . . or not?

The following article has been written in the hope that it may generate some comments and suggestions from a wider audience among the members of the Association.

In his report in last year's "Chronicle" the Secretary gave an explanation of the difference between the Association and the Club. The social events of the two organisations are also separate and distinct. Members who visit the Club will know that throughout the year a whole range of evenings are organised by different sections to cater for a variety of tastes - discos, quiz nights, cricket supper, pantomime, karaoke evening, music hall etc..

The Association, however, only hosts two functions each year - the Reunion Dinner and the Dinner & Dance - for which a Social Secretary is elected at the AGM to administer all the arrangements. The former is held in October at the Pavilion whilst the latter occurs towards the end of the President's year and has been an occasion when members can join with their guests for a somewhat grander evening. Indeed, a number of banquet function suites have been the venue.

I say "has been an occasion" because times, and circumstances, change and in recent years attempts have been made to move on and modernise the event although the right formula has yet to be found. The traditional Dinner & Dance, and all that this phrase entails, may be consigned to history. The members who want such an occasion have been disappointed to find that the nature of the event they attended was not that which they booked for. Some who have been faithful supporters year after year have vowed never to attend again - no matter what it is described as. It could be likened to advertising a disco, and then selling tickets insisting that dress be "black tie" etc. with music provided by a symphonia string quartet!

A dinner jacket and tie are not always a pre-requisite these days, but for this type of function it is reasonable to expect a certain standard to be maintained. After all, a lady in her ball-gown would not expect to be led on to the dance floor by a partner in jeans and T-shirt.

Dinner & Dances in the past have indicated that a "blueprint" might be:

- Members and their guests are welcomed upon arrival
- The President and his/her consort are greeted into the dining hall
- Grace is received in silence and due respect
- Smoking is not permitted until after the Loyal toast
- The Loyal toast itself is received with due respect
- The President, and any other speakers, are afforded due courtesy

The foregoing are simply good manners, and anyone not according to that view perhaps should not be in attendance anyway.

Such have been the frustrations in trying to organise these events (even the Reunion Dinner has lost its "sold-out" status) that both previous incumbents of the position of Social Secretary have stood aside - this year's AGM concluded with the office remaining vacant. Members seem reluctant to commit themselves by returning the booking form, and payment, by the due date. Others believe it is acceptable to book, or even to cancel, merely days beforehand.

As Treasurer I have a responsibility to the members of the Association as regards the management of our finances. Given the losses incurred in recent years, the present position is unsustainable and wholly unacceptable.

It is sad and unfortunate that Linda Nelson was forced to cancel the 1993 Dinner & Dance as lack of support rendered the event not viable. Mike Callaghan's excellent idea of holding this year's at the School also had to be cancelled at the last minute, although the evening did go ahead on a smaller scale at the Pavilion.

Has the "market" for an Old Roan Association Dinner & Dance been lost, never to be rekindled? Should the General Committee forget the whole idea of organising such functions? If only 20 people want this type of formal annual event should it be accordingly arranged at a small suitable venue? Should it be a biennial event to mark the years of the outgoing and incoming Presidents?

There is a demand. The Old Roan Vets recently held their Dinner & Dance at the Bickley Manor Hotel. The John Roan School Lodge have secured The Boathouse Suite in Danson Park as the venue for their annual Ladies Festival. (Perhaps members should contact the organisers of those events for further details.)

Well, it's now over to you. What do you think?

Even if you live too far away ever to attend, we would welcome your views on the way forward. Please send any comments, however brief, to the Secretary, President or myself. (Addresses inside front cover.)

P.S. Any eager volunteers for Social Secretary?

Neal S. Haslam
May 1994

Thirty Years at Roan - Tony Edwards

Mr. Tony Edwards retired in 1993 and reflects on his years at Roan.

Given that the school is a little over three hundred years old I have been its servant for almost one tenth of that time. A sobering thought! And what changes I have seen!

I joined the staff in November, 1963, after a year in the South of France as a language assistant at a large technical school. The building at Westcombe Park was not then in existence and it was at the Boys' Grammar School at Maze Hill that I embarked on my full time teaching career. In those days we had very little to do with our sister school at Devonshire Drive. An annual Founder's Day service saw us under the same roof but we entered from opposite sides and made our exit in the same way.

The school at Maze Hill was smaller in those days. The Science and C.D.T. block was not there nor were there the two corridors joining the stage end of the assembly hall to the rest of the building. There was no H.E. block and no unit. Those areas were small gardens, one of which as I recall, had a sundial.

Many of the teachers, in those early days, wore gowns (very useful for cleaning the boards) and in the staff-room we had an open fire with a plentiful supply of coal in a bucket. All the boys wore black or green blazers with the school badge. There were about six hundred pupils, all on one site, so there were only about thirty or so teachers.

The school was divided into four houses, to which pupils belonged for sporting and various other competitions. True to the maritime tradition of Greenwich three of these were called Nelson, Drake and Rodney. The fourth Wolfe, after James Wolfe who is buried in St. Alphege's.

"Roan" as the school was familiarly called in my early days, then as now, had a good reputation for many things, particularly football. During the seventies under Mr. Turner's expert coaching, we became England Schoolboy Champions three times and two of these were in successive years. A proud moment in our history!

The amalgamation of Roan Boys', Roan Girls' and Charlton saw the merging of three schools that had, between them, provided a sound education for many generations of young people in Greenwich and the surrounding area. Present pupils have a fine reputation to live up to, and when one considers all the exciting and varied activities that so many are involved in, it is evident that they live up to it well. Certainly I shall have many wonderful memories to look back on in the years to come.

It is appropriate here that I should use some words from the Old Roan song (in Latin, of course): "Floreat Roana" - may Roan continue to flourish!

The John Roan Lodge - No.5085

Our Worshipful Master, W.Bro. John Long, is enjoying his second year in the Master's Chair, after an intervening period of thirteen years, during which he has occupied other offices in the Lodge. He looks forward to installing his successor, W.Bro. Alan Hills, in October.

We have welcomed a new member into the Lodge and hope that we shall have the opportunity of initiating others in the near future. As does any organisation, Freemasonry must have constant injections of new blood in order to survive. Over twelve thousand new members received certificates of membership from Grand Lodge in 1993. That the Order has survived for some three hundred years surely points to its worthwhile influence. Its principles are founded on all that is admirable in life.

During our present masonic year, the Lodge has contributed to several non-masonic charities as well as our specifically masonic ones.

Aside from its serious aspects, Freemasonry has its lighter moments. The Province of West Kent, to which our Lodge belongs, organises an annual Snooker Championship. Our own W.Bro. Geoff Thomas was in last year's final, being defeated by a resident of the Masonic Residential Home in Chislehurst. Recently, we entered an inter-Lodge quiz, fielding a team of eight contestants. Thirty-one Lodges competed and we achieved second place.

Our own social events have proved popular. W.Bro. Neal Haslam's Ladies' Festival at the Boat House, in Danson Park, Bexleyheath, was well attended and greatly enjoyed. We shall be holding this year's Festival at the same venue, on Friday, September 23rd and, in 1995, also at the Boat House, on Saturday, September 23rd. W.Bro. Neal has been zealous in organising our social occasions and we owe him our thanks for his enthusiasm and ability.

We have an associated John Roan Chapter, of which Neal is the present First Principal. If you wish to know more about Freemasonry or are interested in joining the Lodge, or Chapter (if you are already a Master Mason), please contact John Long, Neal Haslam on 0322 664409 or 081 304 3053 respectively, or myself at the address below:

Bernard Madden, Lodge Secretary, 150, Plum Lane, Plumstead, SE18 3HF (081 854 5127).

Fifty Years Ago - The 1944 Education Act

The 1944 (Butler) Education Act considerably changed the nature of the school. It made secondary education free and fees were abolished at the Roan Schools. The preparatory forms were also abolished. Entrance now began at the age of 11, and most of the entrants were required to pass the 11+ common entrance examination. Even before 1944 the school had ceased to be entirely independent. The income from the Roan Foundation being by now insufficient to cover costs, large grants were paid to us by the London County Council. Still, as a "assisted" school we continued to enjoy a considerable degree of independence.

Developments at the Kidbrooke Park Road Playing Fields

Following the purchase of the land making up the playing fields by the Roan Foundation Trust, it is our intention to develop the facilities available at the site through a joint management strategy between the Old Roan Club and the School. We hope the Roan Foundation Trust will also wish to join with us in this development.

The first project, which has been under discussion for some time, will be the installation of flood lights for the tennis areas, the levelling of the grass courts for mainly football training and then their replacement with an all weather surface suitable for football, hockey, netball and volleyball.

The estimated cost at present prices is £100,000.

Planning permission for the floodlighting is being sought with the guidance of Fritz Henning, and local residents have been invited to a meeting at the club with the aim of responding to any concerns they may have and hopefully avoiding objections.

We hope to have the lighting installed in time for the start of the 1994/5 football season.

Applications for funding are under way; but, as in most cases, I am sure we will have to raise a significant amount from our own resources over the next few years.

Graham Lawrence has already raised several hundred pounds from the sponsorship of his London Marathon Run and we have eight guaranteed entries for next year!

If you would like to find out more about the plans, make a donation to the "Development Fund", or run in the 1995 London Marathon to raise funds, please contact Trevor Bell at the School.

Trevor Bell
May 1994

Olde Tyme Music Hall

The Roan Theatre Company performed their renowned olde tyme music hall at three venues earlier this year. Each performance had its own particular charm, and the diapason closed at the pavilion where a full house passed a memorable evening during which the audience enjoyed not only a feast for the eyes and ears but also some excellent "Bangers and Mash". We had the great pleasure of welcoming two guest stars, Audrey Smithard and Miles Chambers, whose professionalism gilded the lily in a bouquet of talented performers: Glynis Watson, Teresa Wilkins, Mandy Brown, Joan Stanbridge (Rod managed the lighting), Graham Johnson, Trevor Talbot and his niece, Debbie, Ivor Hughes, Beryl whom age cannot seem to wither and Alf Knott who "Never bloomed", anyway. Knott. Len Quaife made his debut as our M.C. and the Musical Director, his usual polished, demanding-of-excellence self was David Horsburgh. When everyone is a star, how does one distinguish Trevor Talbot? He was a super nova, and led a fine rendering of "Mammy", white gloves and all, that brought the evening and encores to a grand climax. What a pity that it will be, probably, the last of such evenings at the pavilion!

The Roan Theatre Company: "California Suite"

I have enjoyed being a member of the audience at the Roan Theatre Company's last six productions, and in my view their latest, "California Suite", was their best to date. As a fan of Neil Simon's works I was delighted that they followed up their very successful production of "The Odd Couple" with this play, which I think is one of Simon's funniest. A most professional and well-designed set was complemented by ten (correction thirteen) commendable performances and some excellent production work. Mr. Simon holds our attention throughout this play with the quality and humour of his text and also with the variety of the story being told in four individual playlets, all of which take place in the California Suite of the Beverley Hills Hotel.

In "Visitor from New York", a real-life situation unfolds with Hannah and "Billy" reviewing their failed marriage, with venom-tongued yet humorous remarks from Hannah; notably, "I was nervous on our wedding night - unfortunately it was after we had sex!", and discussing the future of their daughter, Jennie. The Director and the players clearly laboured long in their study of these two characters, which were portrayed vividly by Mandy Brown and Graham Johnson. Hannah is a complex character and, I would suspect, difficult to play, but Mandy Brown coped admirably, reminding me of Katherine Hepburn in one of her more fiery parts during her younger Hollywood days. Hannah is a sharp and tough lady, but towards the end we see her guard slip a little and her vulnerability is exposed. Graham looked right in the role of Bill, with a suitably deep Californian suntan. The fundamental differences in the two characters' personalities is evident from the very start, and although Bill makes light of Hannah's jibes, which are dished out without mercy, he is eventually forced to make a stand against her. The tension between them is then very evident. This is a very static play, with most of it consisting of the two characters seated in discussion, and so the pace depends on the delivery of the lines. Suffice it to say that I was at no time bored with this, and as a "fly on the wall" I was interested to listen in on Hannah's and Bill's recounting of their former married life together. This first scene successfully gained the complete attention of the audience and laid a firm foundation for the evening in store.

I found "Visitor from Philadelphia" a very funny play, which was produced and performed to develop every grain of humour in the Simon text. Marvin Michaels, as played by Trevor Talbot, showed the panic, desperation and deviousness of a man who is doing all that is possible to keep his wife in the lounge of their hotel suite while the hooker he has just spent the night with sleeps off a "six margaritas and a bottle of vodka" size hangover in the bedroom. With vivid facial expressions, Trevor journeyed hilariously from one set of excuses to another in his vain attempt to preserve his otherwise flawless loyalty to his beloved Millie in their fifteen year marriage. The underlying devotion of the Jewish-American couple was always evident, and I felt sympathy for Millie, played with warmth and just the right accent by Theresa Wilkins, as the reality of Marvin's misbehaviour finally dawned on her. Along with the rest of the audience I wanted her to forgive him and for their relationship to be restored, and this I am pleased to say she eventually did. The scene was nearly stolen by Caroline Stanbridge as "Bunny", who performed well with the difficult task of remaining motionless and silent throughout, especially when she was manoeuvred around the room by Marvin. One's eyes were frequently glancing at her in the bed, wondering whether she would be making an inopportune appearance before Millie.

After seasonal mince pies and coffee had been enjoyed during the interval, we were given a break from the convincing American accents with the third playlet, "Visitors from

London". Glynis Watson and Peter Laurie were very credible as the British actress preparing to attend the Oscars ceremony, at which she is a nominee, and her antique dealer, gay husband. They worked together well, and Glynis Watson acted the part of the actress perfectly with over-dramatic expressions and an over-the-top theatrical style, which was in stark and delightful contrast to the laid-back, take life as it comes, mild-mannered character of Sidney, played in a most natural and professional way by Peter Laurie. The dialogue between these two showed Neil Simon at his best, and the memory of the scene where Diana is completely blotto on the return from the Oscars ceremony will stay with me for a long time after the final curtain call was taken. This playlet was also a glamorous and "good-looking" production, with Sidney so debonair in his tuxedo and Diana's jewellery sparkling brightly.

And so we came, regretfully, to the last scene. Two sayings to be found in theatrical circles come to mind, and they are "Leave 'em laughing" and "Leave 'em wanting more", and both of these were handsomely achieved by "Visitors from Chicago". This was hilarious from the start and as the farcical situation developed became nothing short of a belly-laugh. I felt so much better for watching this play - a good laugh is a good tonic! It was very well cast, with each of the larger-than-life characters being visually funny in addition to delivering some of the funniest lines of the evening. From the moment Joan Stanbridge hobbled through the door wearing her baggy shorts and with her sweat-band half covering her eyes, being supported by the king-size Trevor Talbot as husband Mort, I knew we were in for a treat - and I was not disappointed. Both Joan Stanbridge and Jacqui Nelson as the two wives, Beth and Gert, performed very well and did full justice to some very humorous one-liners and punchlines in their text, being rewarded with spontaneous laughter everytime. I have since learned that Jacqui Nelson was making her stage debut with the Roan Theatre Company, which surprises me, as she seemed relaxed and confident in her part, which you would usually expect of a more experienced actor. Jacqui shows much promise and I hope we shall be seeing more of her in future R.T.C. productions. Graham Johnson and Trevor Talbot were simply ideal as Stu and Mort, the two friends who, having spent three weeks on holiday in each other's company, are now at each other's throats - quite literally in the closing two minutes of the play. I previously enjoyed their performances so much in "The Odd Couple", and they seemed even better in "Visitors from Chicago". These two are obviously very experienced actors, who work together extremely well, as clearly they have done on many previous occasions. They seem to know each other's style so well and therefore have the ability to play their lines and movements to each other in what appears a naturally and effortless manner. I have rarely seen better comedy performances in West-End productions than those we enjoyed from Messrs. Johnson and Talbot in the Roan School hall, and given the comic differences in their physical stature (with memories of Abbott and Costello, Laurel and Hardy etc.), I think they should form a double-act as soon as possible. And if at any time someone forms a fan club for them, I should like to be the first to join.

Throughout the whole of the evening I detected just one or two technical faults, and I believe the R.T.C. suffers from the difficulty encountered by most amateur companies who are unfortunately without their own theatre or hall, this being that they lack sufficient time for technical rehearsals, to ensure that the off-stage mechanics of the production run as smoothly as the performances on the night. As a mere suggestion for future productions, I would say sacrifice one of your final rehearsals from the point of view of your actors and allocate it purely to your technicians - you should allow them at least one full rehearsal, which is for their benefit alone. However, on the whole all lighting and sound cues were taken up promptly and effectively, and any minor mishaps certainly did not mar the event in any way.

*Graham Johnson,
Trevor Talbot,
Joan Stanbridge and
Jacqui Nelson in
"Visitors from
Chicago"*



Early on in this report I corrected my account of the total number of performers in this production from ten to thirteen. The three I initially overlooked were the silent part of "Bunny" in "Philadelphia", and also the two maids who appeared between scenes to strike unwanted props and place new ones in position. This I thought was a clever means of changing scenes without leaving the audience sitting silently in the dark, hence maintaining the overall pace of the evening. The maids even had names and conversed a little while on stage. I think this could have been expanded on, and maybe some dialogue could have been written for them whereby we could have eavesdropped on some gossip between them about events in their lives. This could have told a complete story to be followed by the audience in serialised form between each scene.

The above are just suggestions, brought about, perhaps, by an over-active imagination. Certainly everything we saw at this production defied criticism, and the Director, Carol Lee, must be heartily congratulated for a highly creative and well co-ordinated production. Congratulations also to all other members of the Company who remained behind-the-scenes carrying out essential production duties, as well as to the eleven brilliant performers who portrayed the thirteen parts so professionally. Thank you, Roan Theatre Company, for another thoroughly enjoyable evening. Here's to the next one!

Jean Image

Memories and Photographs - Vera Evelyn Walton ('19-'25)

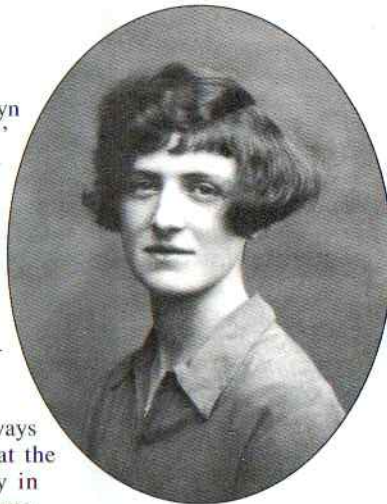
Before my marriage my name was Vera Evelyn Walton and I attended The Roan Girls' School in Devonshire Drive, as did my sister, Irene Gladys Walton. My brother, Frank Percy Walton was a pupil at the Boys' School in Eastney Street. My sister did not marry and retained the name Walton. She gained employment at the Head Office of the Prudential Insurance Company in London until the "Benefits Section" was taken over by the government and then moved with her department to become a civil servant until retirement.

My brother had a very varied career. He was always interested in Science and obtained his degree at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in Kensington. He then worked for Boroughs Wellcome, Elizabeth Arden, a firm in India that extracted dye from trees for fishing nets, and British Petroleum. He died, aged almost 90, a few years ago. He was a member of the Old Roan Association.

I am now aged 86 and the only one left of my family. I still have a photograph of the front of the school taken in 1921 and one of my form, taken in grounds under the tree which stood in the "swings garden", with Miss Massingham, form mistress, in the middle. I am sitting next to her on her right.



Roan School for Girls, Greenwich, in 1921



Vera Walton in June 1927

I joined the Roan School in 1919 and left in 1925. We lived in Catford at that time and I needed to get a train or bus that passed through Catford, Ladywell, Lewisham, and then up the hill on the tram to school, where, because the road was narrow, it was necessary for transport to stop half-way to let the returning tram to Lewisham pass by. In those days, Catford was the end of the new built-up area, and I can remember Bellingham and Downham being built.

I played hockey at the Roan but we had no area large enough for a pitch and we had to go to Eltham one day a week. We had tennis and netball at school. I can see in my "minds eye" the gymnasium on the ground floor next to the dining room and kitchen. If you had the school cooked lunch you went in the dining room for the first sitting. If you had a packed lunch you went in second and picked up your lunch on a plate from a shelf on which you left it when you arrived at school. There was a break in studies mid-morning and hot milk was served.



Miss Massingham's Class in 1921

Like my sister, Irene, I went to "The Prudential Insurance Company" head office in Holborn when I left school until 1937 when I married and moved to North Cheshire. In those days wives did not work after they married but when the second war started in 1939 I worked for a time in the offices of a large factory in Trafford Park, Manchester, where Rolls Royce Aero Engines were made. Quite an experience after my London life.

Vera Perkins
Poole, Dorset.

Roan History Trail

My interest in the early buildings of Roan Schools began when I was writing an account of my years at the Roan School for Girls in Devonshire Drive during the 1930s. It was then I discovered that the first school for the girls opened in 1814 as the Greenwich National School of Education and Industry for Girls.

The first schoolmistress was Mrs. Priscilla Darrell, and the emphasis seemed not so much on education as on industry, which was "the making of stockings and shirts for the boys". (RGJ, no.68, January 1930) Over the years, this decidedly sexist bias modified, and the educational side had developed so that by 1870, under the charge of schoolmistress Miss Page, "reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history and grammar" were apparently being taught. Intrigued by this bit of history, I wrote about it and the subsequent development of the Roan and other girls' grammar schools in a postscript to my book, *A Green Girl*, published in 1983.



The 1814 school for girls, St. Alfege's Churchyard

It was only later that I found out that this historic ancestor to the girls' grammar school was still standing, and later still that I discovered it even merits a small mention in Pevsner's *The Buildings of England* as the "former school building of 1814, very modest, stands at the end of St. Alfege's churchyard".

Although I have lived in North London for many years, I still visit my old school district regularly and I must have driven past the front of St. Alfege's hundreds of times. Yet somehow I never got round to exploring behind the church until January this year. I was introducing Sam, my semi-French grandson, to the wonders of Greenwich; we had visited the old Royal Observatory and seen the Cutty Sark and were waiting in Creek Road to rendezvous with other members of the family.

It was then I noticed that a small alleyway led towards the back of St. Alfege's, and exploring it discovered what I thought must be the old school. It was in such a poor condition that later I wrote to English Heritage, protesting indignantly that something worthy of mention in Pevsner surely did not deserve such neglect.

Two weeks later a bulky envelope arrived - with a covering letter saying that what I had discovered was not the school but the old Coroner's Court and Mortuary. My mistake was a bit mortifying, but I was glad I had written because, as well as putting me right, English Heritage kindly sent me part of the Ordnance Survey plan for Greenwich. On it was marked clearly not only the position of the 1814



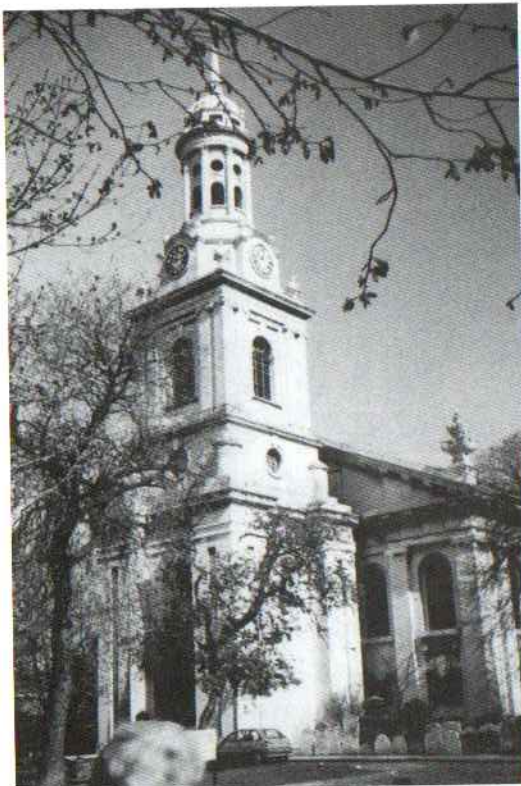
Roan Boys School of 1808 in Roan Street

girls' school, but also that of the 1808 school for boys. The envelope also included other information about the building history of all the later Roan Schools.

It was a bright sunny day when I finally found my way to St. Alfege's churchyard. I was bowled over. In the mid-1930s, I had walked with other girls in a crocodile from Devonshire Drive along Greenwich South Street to attend the annual Foundation Day service at St. Alfege's. How was it that I had never discovered this beautiful green and tranquil place behind the church's imposing, but rather forbidding, frontage? I think the answer might be that it was because we were ushered inside as hastily as possible - we found it hard to get even the merest glimpse of the boys.

The headmistress at Devonshire Drive in my time at Roan was Miss Mary Higgs. She had been at the school from 1919, and I have been told since was thought to have had feminist leanings. It was she who, from 1929, made sure that the girls joined the boys for the Foundation Day service - but were the girls still regarded as rather less than equals? It certainly seemed like a kind of purdah to be hustled upstairs to the gallery pews where the wooden front to the balcony was so high it was impossible to see anything down below.

Whether or not it was the memory of this annually disappointing experience that had put me off for so long from finding out what lay behind St. Alfege's, it was delightful to discover it at last, and especially to see the school that had proved the first step in Greenwich on the road to full equality in education for girls. As I read the stone plaque built into the wall, I gave a little vote of thanks (in place of a prayer) to the Reverend George Matthew who had had the wit and the wisdom to notice that John Roan's original bequest had covered not "boys" but "children". And he deserved, of course, another vote of thanks (or a prayer) for having fought the battle in Chancery to get this accepted, so opening the way to founding the first school for girls - even though one with such limited aims.



View of St. Alfege's from the school

street called the Grey Coat Boy (no doubt the colour of Roan uniform originally, and of the materials the girls in the churchyard were set to sew).

I could not have ended my trail without a visit to my old school in Devonshire Drive. It, like a very similar building for the boys in Eastney Street (now Feathers Place), was opened in the late 1870s as a single-sex grammar school. Following the development of state education, the Roan Governors had decided to concentrate on secondary education. For what happened thereafter I draw on English Heritage's succinct description (my only contribution being the italics!)

"In due course the School for Girls proved too small for its pupils, of whom there were approximately 300 in about 1900. So the extensions were built to the right of and behind the front, comprising a gymnasium, new classrooms and science rooms. In the inter-war period, lengthy negotiations took place with the London County Council, the Roan Governors wishing to move both the boys' and the girls' schools to new sites. *In the event only the boys were favoured, gaining a new school in Maze Hill. The girls were obliged to remain in Devonshire Drive* where a further extension was added, this time to the left of the front in 1936-37."

Looking across at the long, low building with the small house at one end (perhaps the home of Mrs Priscilla Darrell and later Miss Page?) I could see that the three small-paned but large windows in what was the schoolroom (it is now a community hall) were designed to give plenty of light to the young girls sewing away inside. The windows reminded me of the kind found in old weavers' cottages where maximum light was likewise required. At least, I thought, when the girls looked up from their sewing of shirts or knitting of socks they had the harmonious view of the church and its soaring tower. Shining white in the Spring sunlight, it looked just as imposing as the front of the church but without its oppressive gloominess.

Hot on the trail at last, it was easy to find the boys' school opened in Roan Street in 1808 that must have replaced an earlier school. I leave to others to delve into this earlier history, but Roan Street was not the site of the first school built in 1677 under John Roan's bequest. There is, however, a pub at the end of the

It was during my time at Roan Girls' that the 1930s extension went up. I remember it well. Like the school itself, my memories are, it seems, now part of history. The Roan School for Girls in Devonshire Drive closed in 1984, and the girls at last (in one way of looking at it) caught up with the boys at John Roan School in Maze Hill. Ten years later, the "Victorian edifice" in Devonshire Drive is in a very poor condition. Only the determined efforts of some members of the local community, backed by English Heritage, saved it from destruction. It is now a listed building and a scheme to convert it into flats has been agreed.

There cannot be many districts that have within their boundaries such solid surviving evidence of how developments over the centuries have changed the face of schools and schooling. It is a history trail anyone can follow that is both interesting and pleasurable. It is a trail that I hope I shall be able to share next time round with my semi-French grandson.

Phyllis Willmott
(nee Noble, RGS 1933-38)

Phyllis Willmott trained as a hospital social worker. Later she went on to carry out research at the Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green. She is the author of various books on social welfare subjects, including *Consumer's Guide to the British Social Services* (Penguin 1967) which became a best seller going into four editions and four reprints. In 1979 the first of her three autobiographical works, *Growing Up in a London Village: Family Life Between the Wars* was published followed in 1983 by *A Green Girl* and in 1987 by *Coming of Age in Wartime*. Her latest book is *A Singular Woman: The Life of Geraldine Aves*. She is currently chairman of the Education Grants Committee of the Family Welfare Association and is married to the sociologist Peter Willmot.



Roan Girls' School of 1877, Devonshire Drive – as it is today



Old Roan Association Annual Dinner at the London Tavern in December 1932

The Old Roan Football Club. 1993-94

1st.XI

London Spartan League Division 1:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts.
	30	16	7	7	61	39	55

The 1st team continued their improvement in the London Spartan Division One. After a number of seasons as the "bottom of the league soft touches" the Roan have acquired a new-found reputation in the last couple of years as a well-organised and hard-to-beat team. Comparisons with Arsenal and Steve Davis are welcome. With our subtle blend of youth, experience and pensioners we have found ourselves battling it out with the big boys and finished third in the division.

The previous season encouraged the management (anyone mug enough to do the job!) that better times were only just around the corner; and it was felt by all concerned that, if we could attract four or five new players to the current squad, we would be able to mount a strong challenge for honours and finally pension off Ray (Uncle Tom) Mills to the 2nd XI. Unfortunately, we lost players from the old squad and the new talent we did acquire only left us with a "break-even situation".

In the first half of the season the team was competitive without being totally convincing, and a string of draws and a long injury list left us short of our target of trying to be in contention at the top of the league. Some very bad performances in the cup competitions meant that any thoughts of cup glory were quickly doused, leaving us with only one option - to improve our mid-table position in the league. To compound the situation, John Lang, the 1st team manager, was unable to continue running the team through illness just as the side started to turn the corner after some disappointing results. At this stage in the season finding a replacement was not going to be an easy task so I was asked to take over.

At the start of the second half of the season, I decided to form an unelected team committee to try to improve our position (this being known as the "bootroom"). We quickly analysed that we weren't using enough cliches and nicknames and speedily rectified the problem by insisting that everybody had a nickname and ensured that at least two or three cliches were used prior to each match. You know them all - "Take each game as it comes", "It's a game of two halves" etc. and a new one to football, "The world is our oyster", which, strangely enough, had the team rolling on the floor with laughter. Did I really say that?

With our cliches and nicknames in place, the morale and unity of the side were improved and almost overnight we started a winning run which moved us up to our present position. Unfortunately, defeats in a couple of important games prevented us from actually winning the league.

Player of the Year: Paul Witchalls

I would like to thank all the players for their commitment and camaraderie throughout the season: Mick (mickelob) Linwood, Simon (sumo) Riley, Paul (peak practice) Witchalls, Vinny (sparks) Mulholland, Dave (dizzy) Armstrong, Liam (headlights) Mulholland, Ray (uncle Tom) Mills, Andre (king donk) Lewis, Mat (nice pants) Podger, Erwin (stinging

nettles) West, Tony (pager) Nuttal, Miles (in bits) Clerck, Mark (musky) Muscat, Ian (sick note) Daniels, Andy (flapper) Daniels, Iain (Jock) Cameron, Robin (big boy) Faithorn, Sam (magoo) Morgan and any other players who played during the season.

Also, a big thanks to John Lang for all his efforts prior to my taking over and to all the team managers - N.Green (2nds), J.Douglas (3rds), L.De'Hoog (4ths), R.Thomas (5ths) and G.Briscoe (Vets). Special thanks to members of the bootroom - Brian (the sponge) Riley, Ray Mills and Pop (Alf) Moulton for all their help.

Ray Mills has finally decided to call it a day in first team football and concentrate on helping the lower teams win a few trophies. If true, he will be sorely missed by one and all (he's the best skipper I've ever worked with!). Who's going to sing our song after another winning performance to the tune "Singing in the Rain" with the immortal words "We're singing and dancing at the Roan tonight"? Good luck Ray!

Pete (Ossie) Osborne
1st.Team Manager

3rd.XI

The 3rd.XI made an auspicious start to the season that lasted up to Christmas. Sadly, in the new year, the results started to go the wrong way for us. Incidentally, our run of poor results coincided with my return to the team. People can draw their own conclusions from this.

I'd like to mention a few of the people for their contributions this season. First of all my skipper, "Gibbo", for his inspirational presence on and off the pitch. Also, I'd like to thank Ashley Colyer and the old war-horse, Corbs, for without their goals this season we could well have been relegated.

It would be nice to see as many old faces back again next season, not necessarily for their footballing artistry, but to keep our tradition as the most sociable team in the club.

Jim Douglas
3rd.XI Manager

5th.XI

Five years of football management have flashed past and the fifth team, which has been a constant source of entertainment on Saturday afternoons, has continued in its strong vein throughout the 93-94 season.

Highlights would have to be the 5-1 thrashing we gave run-away league winners Wickham Park in the quarter-finals of the cup. This led to a great build-up to the semi-finals which ultimately was the low light of the season - we lost 5-0 and all of us had to drown our sorrows late into the night.

Through the season the team was more of an "Old Roan All-Stars" rather than a breeding ground for fresh young talent with old favourites - Fraser Lochtie, Guy Hawney and Rob Elston - ever present. Finally, I must mention my "player of the year", Tony Osborne, who showed more enthusiasm and commitment than most people half his age and size.

We finished a creditable fourth in the lower regions of the Bromley and District League, winning more than we lost. Good luck to the lads next year!

Richard Thomas
Manager 5th.X1

Old Roan Veterans

P	W	D	L	A	F	A
24	9	3	11	1	61	61

A full and enjoyable season that was disrupted by 8 cancelled matches during three spells of bad weather. The last match of the season was abandoned after "Spot" Hughes broke his ankle against Blackheath Wanderers on the Quaggy pitch.

The nucleus of the team has aged and we have - thanks to Keith Mexter - a competitive schedule of fixtures. To compete with these teams we require younger players and the signs are very encouraging. During the season we welcomed Ray Mills and Len Sales as regular players and an immediate improvement was seen. The greatest pleasure of the season was seeing the return of Rod Pepper following his broken leg last year - his experience and commitment are invaluable. Equally welcome, when available, is Bob Grimwood who played both in defence and attack. Keith Mexter enjoyed an outstanding season playing in virtually every position and excelled in central defence. A good goalkeeper is crucial to any team and in John Stanford we enjoy the services of one of the very best the club has seen. Our centre-forward, Steve Hunt, has improved his game since joining us two years ago, led the line well and scores regularly.

Everyone gave full support to the season and other regulars included Paul Davis, John Hardy, Jim Hardy, David Horsburgh, "Spot" Hughes, Keith Hedges and "Mitch". Mike Baxter added his usual pace in the first half of the season, "Ossie" Osborne joined us for the last few games and we were pleased to include John Leach and Bernie Turner for a couple of matches when their own teams lacked fixtures. Roger Dale started the season but retired - he says finally! - before Christmas and refereed a few games. Thanks are also due to Brian Hamer for refereeing on a regular basis. Graham Briscoe provided glimpses of his unhurried and elegant defensive style, but chose to spend most of the season on the line as team manager. Thanks and gratitude are also due to the ever-present and reliable Vic Brooker for his support and assistance.

The final memory of the season concerns the arrangements for the match with Avery Hill at Pickhurst Rise in Hayes in February. The team members who did not know the location of the ground were asked to meet at the "George" in Hayes. They duly did, and found, logically, that nobody knew where the ground was. A few questions were asked of a passing farmer in a tractor in a field at the side of Hayes Lane and they finally turned up, just in time for kick-off. Combined age of the team - in excess of 400 years. Total intelligence

Greenwich Park Reminiscences

The proximity of Greenwich Park to the Boys' School on Maze Hill has ensured that thousands of Roan boys have been able to enjoy the ambiance of this natural oasis, set in the heart of busy suburbia. Perhaps the following will stir a few recollection for many of them.

My love affair with Greenwich Park began, I recall, in about 1930, when my parents and I would visit there on occasion for a pleasant half-day's outing. Travelling on a red, solid-tyre General bus (or was it a Thomas Tillings, or a Timpson 289A?) from Plumstead was already an adventure, but the Park was another world. The beautiful flower gardens with their colourful flower beds, exotic cedar trees, springy green grass (so much better than the coarse clumpy stuff on Plumstead Common), and tree-ringed pond with its many varieties of water fowl, were indeed eye-openers to a mere eight-year-old. Add to those the Spanish chestnut trees with their massive trunks, and the (to me) amazing view from near the Royal Observatory - why, there's the dome of St.Paul's, and even Tower Bridge showing up - must be at least 20 miles away ... Yes, I can recall being highly impressed.

Of course, the Great Mystery was the Observatory. What went on behind those walls and fences? It was impossible to see inside, so it always appeared to be deserted except for the uniformed man in the guard house. The great dome bespoke of huge telescopes, but we would never be able to see them, let alone see through them - the main gates displayed the ultimate turn-down, "NO ADMITTANCE" . At least we could see the weather vanes and anemometer, and the big red time ball on the mast; also some ancient, black-painted "standard lengths" and a barometer on the wall. These were all eclipsed in interest by the huge clock on the other wall, banging out the seconds of Greenwich Mean Time on that most enigmatic 24-hour dial, with its "SHEPHERD PATENTEE" in big letters shouting the maker's name at us. An insignificant notice by the footpath on the north side read "To the Greenwich Meridian", which itself was marked by an equally insignificant strip of concrete in the pathway. Even so, it was mandatory to stand astride the line, to be bisected into eastern and western halves!

Little did I know then that my opportunities to visit my favourite park would soon increase dramatically. On about 7 September 1933, my Roan School education began, starting in what was then Form 3A, Mr.L.E.Lee form master. Free time after school dinners allowed us to explore all parts of the park, and to follow the many profound seasonal changes that occurred there.

The least inviting season was winter. I have impressions of dull, overcast skies, leafless trees, and frequent frigid temperatures requiring scarves and gloves. Quite often, the blades of grass still retained their overnight dusting of frost, and frozen puddles invited attempts to slide on them. The flower gardens remained rather unimpressive until, as if by magic, whole carpets of yellow, purple and white crocuses made their appearance, followed by daffodils, narcissi, grape hyacinths and other harbingers of Spring.

Springtime certainly brought its own touch of magic to the park. The late winter bulbs gave way to beds of beautiful tulips, accentuated by other flowering plants. The grass began to perk up again, and the trees sported sprays of buds, which rapidly transformed into the cleanest, shiniest and greenest leaves imaginable. The generally more amenable weather was conducive to playing "touchy" and other games among the coombs and swales in the eastern

part of the park, as a change of pace from playing "canny" amid the clumps of gorse in the closest of those old gravel pits on Blackheath.

Summer. This is when the park really looked at its best - trees in full leaf, flower beds replete with disgustingly healthy blooming plants (as compared with the rather sorry looking specimens in our back garden), and flowering shrubs and bushes strategically placed to set off the flower beds and the duck lake. The lawns, of course, were perfectly manicured, almost to bowling green quality, with "Keep off the grass" notices placed on the narrower borders. Occasionally one could spot one or two deer browsing in their enclosures to the south of the flower gardens. The low-slung, horizontal branches of the cedar trees beckoned us for some judicial climbing, but we always had to keep an eye out for those brown-uniformed "Parkies", and a hastily uttered "Parkie" or "Dig's Eye" would precipitate a hurried descent and escape on the side of the tree away from the enemy!

The Spanish chestnuts were in full flower during this season, the unprepossessing tassels giving off a quite strong, rather nauseating odour, while the horse chestnuts were decked with their showy flower cones. Another harbinger of summer could be found just outside the upper Maze Hill entrance to the Park - old Antonio with his ice cream barrow - a welcome sight on a hot day.

My strongest memories of Greenwich Park, however, are of autumn days there. By then the chestnuts were ripening, and it was always a mad scramble to see who could find the most. The prickly cases would usually fall off before the nuts were fully ripe, which entailed rolling the cases under our shoe soles to free one or two mostly undersized, pallid nuts. Of course, the largest and best nuts were those still growing on the trees, but hurling hefty stones, or any type of missile to dislodge them was strictly verboten both by Park rules and school edicts. Nevertheless, if the coast appeared to be clear, a few surreptitious launchings of these items would occur, usually to no effect whatever. I was stupid enough on one occasion to throw some object at an inviting cluster of horse chestnuts in the hope of retrieving the beautiful "conkers", but without making the mandatory reconnaissance. My action was seen by a prefect, one H.A.D'Avray to be exact, whom some may remember as being a rather bow-legged but almost unbeatable sprinter, who issued a prefect's slip. The dreaded day and hour arrived when I had to visit Mr.Potter in his office, and wait for an expected caning. The Head dismissed me with a quite mild warning "not to do it again". I definitely did not!

As the chestnut season phased out, the "autumn feel" that I remember so well descended upon the Park. Let's go in by way of the upper Maze Hill gate. It is a pretty typical November day; the sky is overcast, the air is dead calm, and cold enough for sweaters and coats. An all-pervading mist is condensing on everything that it envelops. Turning right and keeping outside the flower garden railings, we find a mixture of brown, wet, rotting chestnut leaves, prickly cases, and immature, flat nuts carpeting the ground everywhere that the trees are growing, and emitting what I can only describe as a wonderful, "characteristic" aroma. We idly kick wads of wet leaves over, hoping to uncover the odd missed chestnut or conker. As we turn into the gate at the north point of the flower gardens, the scene changes somewhat to one of tidy, damp solitude. The blades of grass are bedecked with myriads of tiny dewdrops, although there is no sunshine to make them sparkle, and numerous worm casts dot the lawns with little, brown, curly cones. The flower beds now look pretty forlorn, their showy displays of the summer having given way to a few late autumn daisies and asters, or just bare soil.

But this picture is incomplete; pervading this dull, damp, misty solitude is an all-encompassing, muted but insistent noise. Although it is not really obtrusive, it inextricably weaves its way into one's overall sensation of an autumn day in the Park. It is in fact the much attenuated roar of the London traffic, which becomes audible only under those atmospheric conditions that produce the mist in the first place. I find it impossible to visualise this scene without "hearing" the roar.

With the advent of WW2 and working for a living, opportunities to visit the Park vanished, and my prospects for ever finding out just what went on behind those forbidding walls enclosing the Observatory dimmed to about zero. Little did I know then that, within 9 years, not only would I be back in the Park five days per week for another five years, but what's more, I would be on the other side of that ominous "NO ADMITTANCE" sign on the Observatory gate! The Great Mystery was finally solved! My family and I left England for the U.S.A. in 1958 to take up an astronomical position there, but my recollections of Greenwich Park will never fade, and I make a point of revisiting it every time we return to England.

Ewen A.Whitaker ('33-'40)
Tucson, Arizona.

School Expenses in 1931

ROAN SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Parents are asked to provide their boys with the School uniform consisting of:-

CAP price 2/- CAP BADGE 1/- HOUSE BUTTON 6d.

BLAZER (with pocket badge in two qualities)

1. Melton Cloth from 10/- to 17/9.
 2. All Wool from 18/- to 27/6. according to size
- Spare buttons for Blazer 1d each

PULLOVER for winter wear in two qualities

1. 6/6 all sizes
2. 8/11 all sizes

GREY FLANNEL SHORTS OR TROUSERS

- Shorts in four qualities
1. 3/11 all sizes
 2. from 4/3 to 5/9
 3. from 5/3 to 6/9 (according to size)
 4. All Wool from 6/- to 7/6

STOCKINGS 2/6 and upward per pair

SCHOOL TIE Silk 2/6 Knitted 1/-

Permits are issued for the purchase of these from

MESSRS DUBOIS, LEWIS GROVE, LEWISHAM

Caps complete can also be obtained at the School.

Boys must also be provided with vest, shorts, and white shoes for gymnasium.

Roan Girls remember Cling Film and Bunyan



Top row from left to right: Madelaine Clarke, Caroline Brick, Tracy Taylor, Wendy Cornish (formerly Down), Christina Hansford, Debbie Navaro (formerly Wollaston), Mandy Alexander, Ruth Syed, Karen Warren, Karen Moore, Philippa Nichols (formerly Head), Alethia Grannum (formerly Karen Peynado). Bottom row from left to right: Yvonne Castle, Debbie Genet, Claire Williams (formerly Watts), Julie French, Cheryl Martin, Debbi Gooch, Elaine Bebb, Jacqui Lanston.

It was 2 October 1993. A cold wet night. Christina Hansford and I had arranged to meet in "The Woodman" on Lee High Road. It was an evening that we had been dreading for months. However, Philippa Nichols, respectable married mother of three (who used to be Phil Head, not so respectable Roan girl) had been harassing us and many others, demanding our presence at 8pm prompt at the assigned place.

We walked in the door of the pub and ordered our drinks. A fizzy non-alcoholic-thing for Christina and a pint of the strongest ale for me. We needed all the courage we had as we were about to meet people that we hadn't seen for over 11 years. Yes, horror of horrors, it was reunion night for the girls who joined 1R and 1S of Roan Girls in 1975!

We ordered a cab and told the driver, "Old Roan Pavilion and don't spare the petrol." He said he knew the place. It was well known for hockey, country-dancing and mud. When we arrived, we paid him off, splashed through the puddles, and pushed open the door.

We were expecting women who talked of nothing else but babies, BMWs and semi-detached houses in Bromley. How wrong we were - we all had a great time. There were more ex-1R pupils than ex-1S pupils mainly because of those Philippa is still in contact with and who got in touch with her. We found out who is married, divorced, working, enjoying a life of leisure and generally living life to the full. We also had a few drinks and lots of laughs (or was that a lot of drinks and a few laughs?).

Many of the laughs came from old Roan stories. Who could forget the April Fool's Day when someone covered the teachers' toilet in cling film? Our awful attempts to "parlez-vous Francez" (yes! I did fail my "O" Level French), and Mr. Grey, the singing Geography teacher. And not forgetting those great Miss Roan competitions and Mrs. Scott reading "Pilgrim's Progress" in assembly, every day for seven years!

As we stepped into the dark, misty voices cried out "See you all again next year". Mandy Alexander and Madeleine Clark will be in charge and be hunting down those missing ex-1S pupils now.

This is your roving reporter Yvonne (school swot and reformed punk-rocker) Castle signing off till next year. Leave me a message on 081-463 0043 if you know of any escapees who can be invited to the 1994 bash.

The Rise and Rise of Brian "Arthur" Smith

The GUARDIAN

Tuesday August 17, 1993

It doesn't sound promising. In fact it sounds distinctly naff. A man who buries himself in the garden then talks through a plastic pipe. But Sod is written by Arthur Smith, who since his Evening with Gary Lineker is on a roll. "Just tell me why," she (his wife) begs. "I need some space," he replies. The local police don't mind until they discover he's not doing it for a good cause - "We'll tolerate anything as long as it's for charity". The charity of an ailing marriage and empty life of course, don't count.

But Smith is at his best with suburban women - the drunken pathos of the girls' night out, expedient snogs with the man next door and the cloying loneliness of a desperate marriage...

Bound no doubt for the West End...

Thursday August 19, 1993

Sod is the play I have written with Nigel Cole. It is a multi-layered experience but, at base, a passionate cry of confusion from a godless society. As an actor, I am qualified to understand the dangerous and exhausting journeys made by the wonderful actors in Sod. Pain is easy, acting is hard.

Resolution 1: During the course of this article I will attempt to get into Private Eye in both "Luvvies" and "Pseuds Corner".

I am sharing a posh but soulless flat (Edinburgh Festival) with Dave the Playwright, Audrey Cook the brilliant director....and King Lear. We put notes on the wall with the names of boring drunks to avoid. After two days Audrey adds my name.

The Evacuation of the Roan School - Memory Bites

Contributions by: Lionel Berry ('23-'63)
E.A.Howse ('35-'42)
A.Dale ('36-'40)
H.J.D.Bishop ('38-'45)

The initial evacuation of Roan students out of London was to Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate on the Kent-Sussex border on September 2, 1939. This proved to be a very temporary move due to the shortage of accommodation and a further move was made three weeks later taking the Seniors to Bexhill and the Juniors to Rye. On the fall of France in June 1940 a third move was made to Ammanford and Llandeibie in South Wales where, "amid the incredible good will of the people and the fearful difficulty of school accommodation, three years were spent." (K.S.Binnie: *The Story of the Roan Schools 1643 - 1956*).

The boy that joined Mr.Binnie's 3rd in September 1935 soon discovered how unfair life could be when he lined up with other 3rd formers (now year 7) to be given six strokes of the cane without any chance to explain their minor role in the flooding of the basements in Vanbrugh Park. That period before the war seemed more hazardous then than the war itself, as a boy who found a packet of .22 revolver ammunition proceeded to discharge one of the cartridges by stamping on it in the playground; "the bullet that whizzed across the playground" was only just faster than the writer who also "departed at great speed".

... "On September 2nd 1939 I was evacuated with the school to Ticehurst on the Kent-Sussex border. The story as to how this small village was expecting to be sent a few pregnant women and small children and had to cope with several hundred 11 to 18 year old boys instead has been recorded elsewhere."



The Science VI at Bexhill High School in June 1940.

Back Row: W.E.Ashworth, E.A.Whitaker, P.E.Andrews, R.K.Norris, A.G.W.Pemberton, White, C.A.Stickland, P.A.Reed, C.T.Daltry.

Front Row: Kempton, Burnett, W.R.P.Loosemore, ? Tugwell (Sen) K.F.Bishop, M.D.Moore, R.Hall



Roan staff and members of the Modern VI at Bexhill High School in June 1940. George Witten, W.E.Ashworth, B.J.Ducker, K.S.Binnie, Arter, T.H.Barrett, J.W.Kirby, K.Wheeler, C.H.Milne, E.D.Lusted

"For three weeks it was fun. No school. All we did was explore the village and countryside. I even tried hop-picking for a couple of hours. Then Ewen (Whitaker) was off to Bexhill with the seniors and I to Rye with the juniors."

"It was then decided I should move to Rye to rejoin the Roan which by then was based at the Rye Grammar School. There must have been tensions and problems galore behind the scenes but this pupil for one was unaware of them. Further difficulties arose with the onset of a bitterly cold winter. Snowball fights were daily events and the more daring (or, perhaps, foolhardy!) spirits ventured on to the frozen lakes and streams in the area"

"Number 45 was a 250-year-old cottage. To have a bath, one filled up the enormous copper, lit the fire and waited; we did not bath very often."

... "Seton (Mitchell) found a Great War hand grenade and we played "Catches" with it, while I tried to catch crabs in the pool. Each time I dropped it, it fell on the concrete and the pin loosened a bit more. Finally, I dropped it again and it rolled into the water, down into the mud and was lost; and it never did go bang."

"For those of you who are unfamiliar with the streets of Rye I have to tell you that Conduit Hill offers not only cobblestones but also a fairly steep incline and pedestrians - a potent mix of hazards and definitely not for the faint-hearted on roller-skates. For the intrepid roller-skater, Conduit Hill offered a challenge that was difficult to resist. A mixture of sheer luck (much) and skill (a modicum!) enabled me to survive several attempts (including patches of ice on one occasion!) to reach the bottom of the hill, at which point Tower Street, with its unpredictable amount of traffic, runs across."

"Two middle-aged ladies, Misses Ponsonby and Lloyd, were in charge of things at Ockman House.....they reminded me of the female equivalents of Laurel & Hardy.."

"Near the level-crossing which we had to cross to and from school each day lived a rather pretty girl of about my age whom I fell for and worshipped from afar - I don't think we ever

actually met, and, I'm not sure if I even knew her name, but these mere details failed to deflect my ardour for her"

"Every Sunday I was off to church regularly; only because 'she' was there. She was twelve, and I was twelve. I never forgot her; I still have her photograph."

"Within a few days of our arrival in Bexhill, school lessons began on more or less a full time basis. We in the fifth forms had to work reasonably hard as we were due to take our General Schools Examination in June. One day in the spring of 1940, a German aircraft which had been attacking shipping in the English Channel flew across Hastings and, presumably thinking this large building (in which a class-mate, Basil Dibben's, parents had taken a flat where I was having tea) was important, sprayed it with machine-gun fire, luckily without casualties."

"Upon my return from Rye, I joined up with other Roan pupils who had remained behind in London and had found a 'home' at Colfe's, for the time being at any rate."

"But new adventures were soon to come. To Wales, to a foreign land. A bit scary...It became a very long train; all the boys in the front and all the girls in the rear. When the train rounded a bend all the boys who could manage it leant out of the window to wave to all the girls - who were doing likewise."

"For a month no-one in authority seemed to know where I was and I did nothing to help! I was being taken fishing, shown quarries and collieries, picking blueberries in the Black Mountains and I was even struggling to pick up the language. I was very much enjoying it all."

"Lessons restarted within a few days of our arrival in Wales. I was placed with Mr. & Mrs. Phillips who had a son, Karl, who was the same age as me. Mr. Phillips was a very ardent socialist and Karl was a member of the Young Communist League. We had great arguments about the Russian attack on Finland, but this all changed after Hitler invaded Russia. I was nearly persuaded to join the Y.C.L.; luckily I didn't as it would have adversely affected my later career in the Ministry of Defence."

"He had two sons who were also colliers and they used to come home from work covered in coal dust and have a bath in front of the fire in the kitchen.....The family conversed in Welsh most of the time and only spoke English when I was involved in the conversation. During my short stay with the family I learnt to eat, and like, large raw onions and fried laver bread (seaweed)."



The first cycle ride from Ammanford to London. The photograph was taken in Swindon in 1941. From left to right: Tom Widdrington, Eric Dibblin, Alan Widdrington, E.A. Howse and Basil Dibben (killed in an air crash while serving in the Canadian air force after the war).

"Now I could go fishing in earnest. Trout, salmon trout, and eels were abundant in the rivers Amman and Lochur. I caught 58 trout all told, and ate the lot. Mr. Binnie knew when catches were good - my history homework suffered. To be beside the river at dusk, hearing the owls, the bats, the water-rats, the occasional trout leaping, all to the background sound of the gurgling of the river - my idea of Heaven. The war seemed a very long way off, in another world."

"In the spring of 1941, Squadron 996 (Roan Blackheath) of the Air Training Corps was formed. Tommy Holt was a Flying Officer (acting) but the squadron was commanded by a wartime newcomer to the staff, whose name I cannot remember (Rathbone), who had been an Observer in the R.F.C. in the first world war. At that time the A.T.C. uniform was not a common sight in rural Wales and the local police received a number of calls from worried locals that German parachutists had landed and were cycling to Carmarthen."

"After our Saturday parades in Ammanford we often used to have a scratch game of soccer in the local park using four piles of our uniform jackets as goal posts. On one such occasion, unbeknown to us, a dog wandered round the pitch cocking his leg at each pile in turn. The jackets were too thick to wash completely so a number of us had rather smelly uniforms for a while."

"We were all very impressed by the generous hospitality of the Welsh in Ammanford, although they had hardly appreciated the extent of the war. I recall remarking on their lack of blackout. But they were very worried about the danger of a gas attack, and, in fact, when they heard that I was a chemist, I was enlisted to lecture a large proportion of the population in the Miner's Hall on the subject."



Players in Shakespeare's Henry IV Part 1. Performed at Trinity College, Carmarthen on May 15, 1941. "The outstanding individual performance was that of G. Percival as Falstaff".

"It was while one of our group taking Geography was fire-watching that he 'came across' the questions that Mrs. Jeffery had prepared for an end of term examination. Needless to say, he passed on the information to the rest of the group, but I don't think any of us did any better in the exam...."

"The Aristotelian Society arranged a number of interesting trips. One was to the tin plate works in Pantyffynnon; a second was to the working colliery in Llandebie. We had to walk or crawl through passages, sometimes only about 3 ft. high, in darkness except for our miners' lamps. There was a miner fitting charges in the coal face. We all retreated to a safe distance and were advised to cover our ears and keep our eyes and mouth shut. The explosion when the charges were fired was not all that great, but the area we were in was filled with a dense cloud of dust that seemed to take ages to settle even enough to see."

"We all became expert cyclists, in fact, it was not unusual for some of the seniors to visit their homes in Greenwich and cycle all the way back in one night."

Lenny Bow and I quite often used to visit the many local chapels where the services were normally conducted in Welsh.....we enjoyed the atmosphere and the singing of the choirs."

"One of our proudest achievements was to win the Eisteddfod, organised for evacuated schools, with an abbreviated extract from Henry IV Part 1, with A.M.MacGregor as Prince Hal. We were asked to abbreviate still further to 3 minutes for 'Children's Hour'. George Witten and I and others provided background inebriated noises by banging tankards and muttering 'rhubarb' etc. When the broadcast appeared, we all gathered eagerly to hear it. But the record got stuck, so that all we heard, apart, of course, from the excellent tankard noises, was 'Shall we be merry, shall we be merry, shall we be merry...'. "

"In late 1943 we all came back to be greeted by sirens, guns, bombs, V1s & V2s".

"Terry White, Ted Emms, Lenny Bow and I were given our State Bursaries; Gussy Jobbins and Eric Dibblin both managed through scholarships and grants from the L.C.C. to stay at Kings. My time at Kings and later life as a government scientist working on Radar and then Nuclear weapons is full of interest, but that is another story."

"In conclusion: it was all a great experience and I recall it with affection and also with gratitude, since it taught me so much; including confidence at an early age which stood me in good stead in later years in the Royal Marines, Merchant Navy, tea and rubber planting, and the Ministry of Defence, for which I am forever grateful."

The war was not over when the boys returned to Maze Hill, in time to experience the flying bombs and rockets. It was after this return that the school was bombed, not so badly, however, as to prevent its functioning again shortly afterwards. In Devonshire Drive there were 490 girls in the Emergency School and 80 in Wales when nearby St.Paul's Church was destroyed by a V1 at a time when many girls were taking public examinations. Candidates had to dive beneath desks for shelter several times in the course of each paper, and the mistress in charge totted up the number of "incidents" for the information of the University.

Full versions of the articles by E.A.Howse, H.J.D.Bishop and A.Dale are available on request from the Editor.

The School Band - Early Days

The Bandleader's Tale

A few weeks ago I sat and watched "The Glenn Miller Story" for the umpteenth time; not a great story but superb music such as "String of Pearls", "Tuxedo Junction" and "In the Mood", causing the usual lump in my throat at memories of the school band years.

It all started with Alfie Knott's first revue in 1959 when we formed a pit orchestra consisting of trumpets, clarinets, euphoniums and a piano accordion! Afterwards, someone suggested continuing to practise regularly and that is how it all began.

Because of the unusual assortment of instruments, our arrangements had to be home-made, but with players of the calibre of Phil Chamberlain, Graham Talbot and Geoff Swann we were able to produce a good sound. The next few years saw a complete transformation as we built up a full saxophone section, this was possible because of the interest and generosity of the I.L.E.A., the governors and headmasters, and the Parents' Association. With a "big band" line up plus a woodwind section, professional arrangements could now be tackled thus further enhancing the band's sound. It was now at its peak and remained so, due to such talented, long-serving members as Paul Winslow, Michael Shaw, Gary Hutchings, Paul Chance, Geoffrey Daniels, Stuart Horsburgh and the two pretty girls from our sister school, Jane Watts and Diane Mason. The teaching staff too were always cooperative and appreciative, Barry Thomas, John Bowerman, Roger Bonner, Roger Thorp and Alfie, in particular, learnt to play, thus giving the band more stability and continuity.

Because of our success we were often asked to play at various functions; those which remain in my mind were the annual Greenwich Schools' Music Festival, the bandstand at the South Bank, a G.L.C. lunchtime concert, carols in the Royal Festival Hall and the playing at the opening of the National Theatre by the Queen.

I was very proud to have been part of the band's achievements but it was not a one-man show, we received help and encouragement from so many people who took pleasure in the band's existence. Most credit though must go to all the boys who put in hours of practice, attended lessons and long rehearsals with enthusiasm, this in addition to normal school work, homework and examinations.

The final rehearsal before I left was obviously going to be a dull affair, but it wasn't. A group of players who had already left school came back and played my favourite tune in the crush hall during the break in the music, then the present band joined in the surprise. I was astonished, happy, embarrassed, proud and sad all at the same time - I could have cried all night.

Bill Ellis

The Pianist's Tale

Bill Ellis and I started at The Roan in the same year, 1956. I was a new boy, placed in Bobby Hoare's Third A, and Bill of course was the new P.E. master who impressed us no end in our lessons not only by his gymnastic ability but also by his gleaming white outfit.

The band started about four years later (1959-60). I cannot remember which side of Christmas it was, but I do recall turning up at the Pavilion on freezing cold Saturday mornings to practice. Our end-in-view was a Revue ("Blackboard Jingle") to be put on in the

School Hall one evening. Bill and Alf Knott were the moving spirits behind the show, aided and abetted by a number of fifth and sixth formers with acting and other talents (of these I remember only Graham Aldous who went on eventually to the Rose Bruford Academy).

My part in all this was as one of the two pianists drawn from the ranks of Remove A. The other was John Robson, who was later to graduate from Guys Hospital School for Dentistry. On the night of the show we were ousted from our piano stool at various times by Alf, who played a composition of his own called "Knotty Problem", and by George Witten, who amazed us all by his ability to play by ear in any key you named. John and I were restricted to playing from the "dots" numbers like "Lipstick on your collar told a tale on you-hoo" which were more or less popular at the time. Bill was on trumpet, and we must have had some additional instruments including drums, guitar (Dave Bryden) and I think John Robson played the violin for one or two numbers. Bill invited us to bring along to the rehearsals any music we thought would go down well, with or without vocals, in the Revue. My contribution was something called "Tia Juana" which I had appropriated from one of my Dad's albums of jazz music (he was a semi-pro dance-band musician). We were expected to do our own arranging of the score, and I must have sat up late writing out the parts for our strange combo.

However strange or heterogeneous our band was, it provided all the music for the Revue and - most importantly - it was the very first gig that Bill Ellis's band had, and that revue was the reason for its genesis. A good time was had by all, and I remember my Dad coming to the show as pleased as punch that his son looked as though he might be following in his own footsteps at the jazz piano. Unfortunately I was to disappoint him, for although I reached a reasonable standard on the instrument (grade VII, I think!), my musical interests were to turn eventually to singing, and singing on the classical side.

Christopher Martyn

The Clarinettist's Tale

My recollections are of the second phase in the mid-sixties and the Revue, "Stag Party", masterminded by Alfie Knott, in 1967. These memories are strangely similar to those of Christopher Martyn's though our Saturday morning rehearsals were at the school. The magazine for July 1967 notes that the "orchestra, directed by Mr. Ellis, consisted of Mr. Silcox, Bryant,



Bill's "Orchestra" for the 1967 Revue. Pinder is the one looking like a musician

Pinder, Butterfill, Horsburgh, Broom, with C.I. Campbell as pianist and accompanist." I remember the anxiety, for a young clarinettist, of playing "across the break" during the "Lonely Goat Herd" from "Sound of Music". Pinder was a talented performer with a liking for Charlie Parker and he took on the assumed characteristics ("coolness") of the time including the laconic manner, hunched shoulders and slight lilt to the side as he played.

The Roan School in Maze Hill in the sixties was not renowned for musical excellence. The curriculum lessons were taken by Mr. E.G. Elliott. I remember an enthusiastic peripatetic (S.D. Knight from the Royal Academy of Music) taking us for a weekly lesson in musical appreciation in the main hall, trying to instil an interest in opera and symphonic music. He tried hard and was often encouraged by the occasional student such as Jeffrey Moine who had a genuine love of music. I recall clearly his introduction to opera to a class of 12/13 year-olds, keenly outlining "Gianni Schicchi", "Pagliacci", and "Fidelio" in successive weeks. I hope he felt that some of his time at Roan was well spent but, sadly, I fear he may not. There was an elderly violin teacher who gave lessons after school on Thursdays. Then there was Bernard Izen, of the L.S.O., Philharmonia, B.B.C. and Covent Garden Orchestras. This multi-skilled instrumental peripatetic arrived in September 1961, produced several fine woodwind ensembles but failed to reach any recognisable standard with the orchestra. By 1968 the school orchestra had lost its only secure booking of the year - the Prize Giving Ceremony at Greenwich Town Hall.

The official record shows that E.G. Elliott organised a school choir in the early 1960's that performed a joint "Messiah" with the Girls School in 1961, took part in the Ernest Read Carol Concerts, joined other London school choirs to perform with David Willcocks in 1962 and performed the "Messiah" again (C.A. Martyn was a fine tenor) at St. Alfege's in 1963. Elliott was clearly a devoted musician and a decent man but his energies and abilities were in sharp decline by 1963. The early 1960's also record the activities of a keen "Jazz Club" organised by Alfie Knott. It was not until R.F. Thornburgh arrived at the school in 1967 that matters improved. This effective absence of officially organised music at the school allowed other initiatives, including the band, to flourish. These were changing times and in July 1969 a local rock band involving Roan boys claimed they played in Hyde Park in the warm-up for the "Rolling Stones".

The really good years for the band started after my short and anonymous membership. By the time my brother, Stuart, was involved the standard was high and it attracted students and staff with genuine talent. It is a considerable pleasure to note the development of music at Roan and to see that the current music department are planning a tour to Southern California in October.

Surprisingly there remains a reel-to-reel tape recording of that 1967 Revue and this short contribution allows an excuse to add a photograph that has been languishing in the pending section for years - the four members of the January Sales" sketch.

David Horsburgh



"The January Sales" with Richard Hitchin, Bob Burton, Graham Johnson and Steve Rider.

Indoor Cricket - A taste of Ruddy Poetry - 25th February 1994

I was wavering.

"Give me a good reason to venture out on a cold miserable winter night in February. Go on - give me one".

"See all your old mates down at the Old Roan Cricket Supper," she said.

"Saw them last Sunday".

"Callaghan's President and will say a few words".

"Good reason to stay home"

"Arfur Smith's the guest speaker".

"He owes me £10 jug money from 1973 - fill up the car mother, I'm on my way....."

And thus it was, in the company of hundreds, I found myself propping up the bar that dark night, gazing at the faces of yesteryear. Will Easterling, a cricketer (cricketer?) from the 1970's and organiser of Langenfeld soccer trips before emigrating (in haste?) to Canada and only recently returned, looking for kennels to buy. "Spot" Hughes, one time joke bowler and now a captain and father too, subsequently to break a leg in his last ever football match. The veteran Simon Perry was there, ruminating on his trip to Cuba and Trinidad and lamenting the demise of Legal Aid which may prevent such holidays in the future. Monty Smith, Steve Nelson and Mark Squires - all well, and worthies from my cricketing days.

I ordered a drink from Joe Broadfoot and had it bought by yet another one-time skipper, Les De Hoog, who had just committed himself to entering the owner-occupier market, needing room to store his vast collection of cricket equipment. Another man-on-the-move was Paul "Chainsaw" Davis, now a Partner in Stocker & Roberts and building his own pad down in Sussex. Perhaps the cricketing connection here must be that his living-room is slightly larger than the Old Roan square because I met no-one able to remember Paul in whites. White snow-perhaps for Gary Baxter, telling all and sundry about his skiing - "I could have made the Olympic team, you know". Spend more time practising and less time backpacking in Oz, Gary, and you too could be Eddie the Eagle!

Terry Barry? No longer playing for Old Roan but for Sanderstead in Surrey. Yes! TRB, with his son, Robert, was supposed to be at the cricket supper. Having become used to TRB and late arrivals I have to report that at midnight he had still not arrived. No sudden arrival amidst screeching brakes and throaty roars - "Got the date wrong", he later admitted.

Much drinking now taking place, rough embraces, hands being shaken and shoulders smacked, at which point we left the girls alone to prepare the supper and turned to discussions with Graham Townsend, erstwhile opening bat, raconteur and good egg, on finance. I prefer eggs to finance and left, to speak to Doug Weaver, who hasn't bowled a ball since 1989 but could still probably walk into the 2nd XI. Having seen them play in May I think he ought too! He and wife, Ann, are still well and remember Callaghan's organised trips to Rye, and the Isle of Wight tours, as do John Stanford and other athletes.

Then I saw a real cricketer - David Campbell - who, some 20 years ago, as a 3rd XI player, and a wee small lad, succumbed to his first ales at a ground out near Warlingham in Surrey and had to be driven home to a family unconvinced by the story that the fish paste sandwiches were off. Clary Best's name cropped up amongst some of the other senior cricketers I talked to including Don Boon, Rod Stanbridge, Dan Calnan and other worthies; but by now the meal was over and the first speeches, I use the word loosely, began.

The President stood up, fell down, was pulled up again and made his way to a convenient spot where he could be a sitting target for the bread rolls, whereupon he stood up again and moved to where his muffled tones could hardly be heard. I couldn't hear them anyway; but I believe, no I'm sure, he welcomed all the guests and spoke about cricket, and the law, as befits an employee therein: 21 days custodial for a dodgy umpiring decision seems perfectly fair to me plus 7 days for dropping a catch off my bowling. Good on you, Mike!

Up stepped "Paddy" Powell in a very smart suit who was able to offer many observations about Old Roan cricket from a visitor's point of view. Much of what he said was in the style of his excellent commentaries on 0891 121146 although expurgated versions were circulated later. Colin was still looking the athlete that his football skills demand but he admitted that, because of the company he was with, to play the following day might be a little tricky....

Looking somewhat older than in cricketing days, rather more shorn, and having lost the National Health specs, up shambled Brian "Arthur" Smith O.R. whose name change, he explained, was for Equity reasons. Glossing over the dreadful "Just a Minute" quiz programme showing on T.V. at the time he described his rise and rise since completing "An Evening with Gary Lineker" and its subsequent West End success, and confirmed that he had played a part in its recent television adaptation. Since the 1970's, chronicled by Mike Callaghan in July 1992, Brian's cricket talents have not been well used, but his lugubrious voice and fertile brain has and this was demonstrated in 30 minutes of anecdotal reminiscences, the contents of which may find their way into an autobiographical tome one day.

No-one could, or did, follow Brian. I even let him off the kitty money. With due thanks to all who helped the tables we adjourned to the bar for more yarn swapping and discussion. Compared to many others, the cricket content this year was reduced, even though a really excellent bat was raffled. For sheer entertainment, however, it was a great evening, so steel yourself for next year and don't listen to those who try to put you off....!

Dave Bryden
June 1994

Paul Davis ('58-'64) reports that he turned out, in whites, for Simon Perry last summer some thirty years since last playing cricket at school. He took two wickets in his first over, one in his second, conceded some runs in his third and was then rested. He did not bat in the two games he played. In the absence of any cricket reports for this issue these exploits of P.D. now represent the historical record of the Old Roan 1993 season.

News of Old Roans

Glen PULLEN ('44-'49) wrote to our Past President in October with apologies for his absence at the Reunion Dinner (conference in France) and news of his retirement as a headmaster in December 1992. He is now fairly heavily committed to politics, painting, sailing and general hedonism all subsumed under the title of "research". This is achieved from his home in Flitwick in Bedfordshire and a house in Wales. He is planning to visit the U.S.A. at the time of the World Cup to stay with various friends and his son, Graham, who is now director of the Presbyterian Church Publications Art Department in Louisville and is very involved in local soccer. He promises to visit the Club and asks to be remembered to his friends.

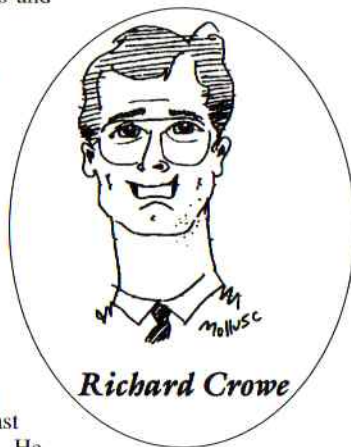
James ROUNCEFIELD (former Staff) has been appointed as the new headteacher at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School. He is currently headteacher of Chatham Grammar School for Boys. Married with two children, James Rouncefield lives in Wilmington and lists his interests as mountaineering, hill walking, running, squash and computing. Following his teaching at Roan he moved to Sydenham School for Girls, was seconded as an advisory teacher for geography and environmental education, became deputy head teacher at the Bennett Memorial Diocesan Girls' School, Tunbridge Wells, and then in 1989, headteacher of Chatham Grammar School. He promises a commitment to traditional values, selective education and academic excellence for pupils.

News from the Revd. Tony BRYER ('62-'68) of the birth of his daughter in March. Tony is the parish priest at St. Paul's in Clifton, Bristol and advises that he recently met an Old Roan, Reg Chapman, by chance when arranging for the marriage of Reg's daughter at the church. Reg Chapman is Professor of Physiology at the University of Bristol and was at Roan in the late '40s and early '50s.

We have news of Philip SNAITH ('64-'71) from Beijing. His first 9 months have been very enjoyable and the job with Shell China Co. Ltd is challenging. Rosemary is working at the British Council Language Centre and advises on the comparative safety of travelling by bicycle in Beijing, despite the high level of air pollution, compared with Shanghai. They are both having lessons in Mandarin.

Richard CROWE ('69-'76) writes from Welling with news of births in 1993 to his family and that of his brother, Nicholas ('75-'81). He works in advertising and enjoyed the retrospective article on 1973 in the last issue of the magazine which brought back memories. He sends best wishes to Alf Knott and claims that his present ankle pains are due to punishment received in his second year.

Mrs. Dora Stewart advises the death of her husband, George Stanley STEWART ('17-'22) last November. She says that he often spoke of his happy years at the Roan School.



More news of Roan Exhibitioners. Cheryl SWANN (nee Thorogood '65-'72) was awarded the Roan Exhibition in 1972 and moved on to Queen Elizabeth College, London University, where in 1975 she gained a First-Class Honours degree in Food Science and Chemistry. She married Stephen SWANN ('65-'72) and in early 1976 took up a career in the scientific civil service, starting off as an information officer on the safety of food additives, progressing upwards into their safety evaluation. For several years Cheryl worked for a government committee (the Committee on Toxicity) as part of the scientific secretariat under the chairmanship of Professor Paul TURNER, also an Old Roan (then at St. Bartholomews, Professor of Pharmacology). After a spell on the anti-smoking programme her civil service career ended as scientific secretary to the COT, when she left in 1984 to become a mother. Two years later she took up a part-time post as a liaison officer helping to run a small Trust investigating aspects of smoking on health where she is still employed.

Andy PAGE ('68-'75) advises his change of address from Tonbridge to Ampthill in Bedfordshire following a change of job. His brother, Jeremy PAGE ('71-'78) now lives in Fleet in Hampshire and his brother-in-law, Chris HINKIN ('71-'78) is now in Sevenoaks. Andy also sent details of the sad death of Graham SOUTHARD ('71-'78) in a tragic air crash whilst piloting a Hercules aircraft in Scotland. The article on Graham SOUTHARD, written by his friend Chris HINKIN, can be found elsewhere in this issue. Jeremy PAGE has renewed his membership of the Association after ten years and sends best wishes to the Roan Theatre Company and in particular to Alf, Beryl, Graham and Richard.

George Melotte wrote an appreciative letter to the Secretary following receipt of the Chronicle in 1993 with the photograph of his father, Philibert Jacques MELOTTE (1890-'95) in a Roan Football Team taken in 1893. P.J. MELOTTE is well remembered by Ewen A. WHITAKER ('33-'40). His name is indelibly etched in the annals of astronomy as the discoverer of Jupiter's 8th satellite way back in 1908. The satellite has recently been named Pasiphae. He was still working at Abinger when Ewen started at the Royal Observatory in 1949 and well remembers him visiting his department in the early 1950's. Ewen worked for several weeks in what used to be P.J. MELOTTE's office; and when the Observatory's move to Herstmonceux Castle was completed in 1956, he rescued some 20 or more journals of the British Astronomical Association with his initials on them that were going to be discarded. They continue to form an invaluable part of his astronomical library. Ewen questions whether our identification of P.J. MELOTTE is correct and advises that the goalkeeper looks very much more like a younger version of the PJM that he knew.

In response to the reminiscences by Lionel BERRY ('23-'63) last year L.E. TRAFFORD ('27-'37) recalls that Icarus was introduced as a trophy by the O.R.D.S. to the School for the annual House one-act play competitions in 1936 or 1937. School House won it on the first two occasions, first with a play which he produced called "The Crimson Coconut", and the next year with one produced by his brother, P.A. TRAFFORD ('28-'38). The statue of Icarus looked very fine on the bookcase in their dining room!

News from Dora PENDERGAST (ex Roan Governor) of her family. Garry PENDERGAST ('63-'70) now lives in Sussex and is Headmaster of the John Selden Middle School in Worthing. Garry will be remembered by many as a proficient cross country runner and continues with cross country in training for the London Marathon which he has run for the last three years raising funds for his school, the local Hospice and the St. John's Ambulance Association. Alison COPPITTERS (nee Pendergast '72-'79) had a daughter, Annabel, in February 1993.

Stephen SMITH ('66-'71) telephoned news of the death of his father, Sydney SMITH ('29-'35) in October 1993. Stephen now lives in Lewisham.

Arthur Donald HEWLETT ('14-'21) is now well into his tenth decade and remains busy. He visited Crete during April 1993 and took a flat for a week in a Cretan house in Megala Chorfia which remains unspoilt. On moonlit nights he enjoyed the walk home from the taverna. Visits included the Samara Gorge and some rough walking to local antiquities. He returned via Santorini and visits to the Minoan site at Akrotiri and the vast flooded volcanic crater. He continues as Treasurer of the Dover Quaker Meeting but retired in October 1993 after 21 years from the Quaker Peace Studies Trust, of which he was a founder member, which helped to establish and continues to support the flourishing and influential Department of Peace Studies at Bradford University. He regrets that not many of his contemporaries from Roan in the twenties survive and hopes that those younger members are in good health and spirits.

Steve HAMMOND ('67-'74) writes from "The Hammond Organisation" with news of his move from South London to the fresh air of the Shropshire countryside. He now lives in Shrewsbury. No doubt Steve will forgive the predictable editorial lapse into Housman: "What are those blue remembered hills...?That is the land of lost content".

The Ven Keith POUND ('43-'51) is now the chaplain of HM Prison Grendon and Spring Hill in Buckinghamshire and moved in May 1993 from South London to Aylesbury.

Hettie SMITH ('28-'35) has moved from her Georgian house in Bath where she has lived for 36 years to a more convenient address in the same city. She hopes that this will give her more time to see her friends. She enjoyed seeing the photograph of Miss Knight's form of 1931 in the last issue.

Walter Harold Jennings JEFFRIES ('07-) reached his 100th birthday in 1993. He was pleased to receive good wishes from Christopher Deane and the John Roan School. He retains an interest in the world around him, taking pleasure from Radio 4 and in particular Alistair Cooke and also gains much enjoyment from his "Talking Books". He also enjoys cooking and gardening and until recently continued to play the piano but now listens to Chopin on cassette. His ambition is to travel through the Channel Tunnel. Mr. Ridger was the Headmaster during his time at Roan and Walter cycled from his home in Eltham to school. During an interesting working life he worked as a tea taster in Mincing Lane and served in the Queen's Westminster Rifles in the 1914-18 War. He has lived in Bosham since he retired and very much enjoyed sailing his 13' boat until well into his eighties. This information was provided by his niece, Audrey Hamilton, who advises that another uncle, Eric OWEN, attended the school from about 1914.

John REGIS ('84-'85) received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to athletics. On August 20 he ran the "race of his life" in Frankfurt to finish second in the World Athletics Championship, behind Namibia's Frankie Fredericks, in a new U.K. record time of 19.94 seconds. David HILLIER ('81-'86) had an unsettled season with Arsenal and missed their victory in the European Cup-Winners Cup through injury, but played an important part in their progress to the final and had an outstanding game in Italy in the quarter-finals. Gary MICKELWHITE ('72-'77) now captains Gillingham in the third division. Brian "Arthur" SMITH ('66-'72) was a very popular guest at the Cricket Club Supper in February and continues his very successful career on television and radio. Brian received critical

praise for his new play, "Sod", at the Edinburgh Festival last year. The play deals with Frank, who has given up on life and, buried under six feet of earth in the garden, speaks to the world through a plastic pipe. Brian plays the part of Frank. The outstanding success of "An Evening with Gary Lineker", written by Brian Smith and Chris England, has resulted in an adaptation of the play for television. It was filmed in Spain, shown prior to the World Cup Finals, and featured a cameo appearance by Brian as a Spanish taxi-driver. Steve RIDER ('62-'68) is now one of the most familiar faces on television and makes a very difficult job appear effortless. His handling of the Ayrton Senna tragedy illustrated his clear thinking under pressure and showed what a complete professional he has become.

Elsie ATKINS (nee Edwards '28-'35) has now moved from South London to Swalecliffe in Kent. She enjoyed seeing the photograph taken in 1931 in the last issue and hopes to contact some of her former class mates. The magazine was passed on by her daughter-in-law, Pat ATKINS (nee Smith '56-'63) and apart from bringing back many memories the photograph caused her grand-daughters some amusement.

Responses to the last issue include the information that the three autobiographical books by Phyllis WILMOTT (nee Noble '32-'38) are now in largeprint editions. Apologies to Ken BARTLETT ('32-'38) for calling him Keith in the caption for the Thirties Reunion photograph last June. The 1937 Exhibitioner, W.R.L. TURP, became a weapons specialist and has appeared in the press as Major Robert Turp. He was something of a celebrity at school as he made several broadcasts as a young singer. Many members commented on their pleasure on seeing Lionel BERRY ('23-'63) looking so well and fit in the photographs. Those that visit Lionel in Surrey comment on the high quality of his cooking and advise that he walks for up to two hours each day.

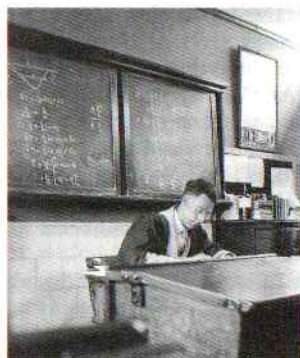
Kenneth BROOKS ('34-'39) was amazed when his "Chronicle" fell open at Mills' Remove and he saw himself sitting behind Mills. On his left was BUCKLE and on his right was BELL, not A.S. BERRY as stated. Stan Berry is at the end of the middle row with HARRIS on his left and then HOLLAND. He has clear memories of that class and those days including the "kipper incident" in Parker's desk. Less than 4 years after the photograph was taken their circumstances had dramatically changed with Kenneth Brooks involved in the War as an infantry man and others in the R.A.F. Frank SMITH, in the front row, was killed on a bombing raid over Frankfurt and his name appears on the War Memorial.

The same photograph moved Ron SEAL ('34-'39 and former O.R.A. Secretary) to write his first letter to the Editor. He advises that his lifelong friend, Stan BERRY, was wrongly annotated and that the middle row should read: Berry, Harris, Holland, Bell, Brooks, Buckle, Walter, Bradgate, Keating and Walpole. He agrees with Lionel Berry that boys were not always the perfect angels they appeared. In addition to the "kipper incident", Ron recalls one of Joe Amesbury's music lessons when a cord was led around the room and tied to a stack of chairs in the corner. At a suitable moment during the lesson the cord was pulled, the stack collapsed, and the entire form leapt to their feet to help pick the chairs up, surrounding Joe Amesbury in the process!

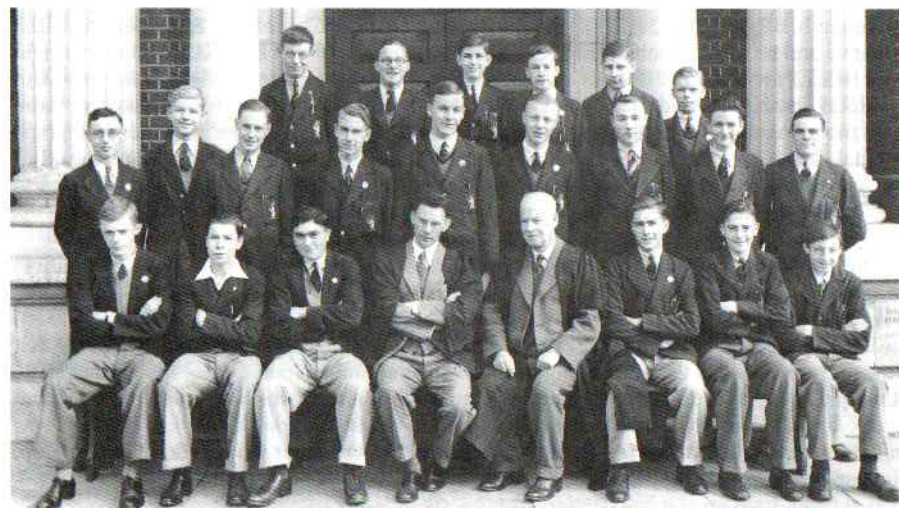
A.S. (Stan) BERRY ('33-'39) retired from the committee at the last A.G.M. after more than forty years service to the Association. He also claims to have made his last appearance as Father Christmas at the Children's Party. Stan has given considerable support and commitment to the Old Roan Club and Association. We send Stan and Margery our thanks and best wishes.

P.J. BARNWELL ('23-'31) advises the death on 5th October 1993 of Harold LUSBY ('22-'29), a contemporary at school, remembered as a camper and for his prowess in games. D.R.R. FAIR, a Roan Exhibitioner in 1935, was mentioned in "Who's Who" in 1976 when he was aged 60. A.J.D. RONALD, a celebrated school captain and Roan Exhibitioner in 1917, retired as a brigadier from the royal artillery and was in the 1970 list, when aged 70. He was awarded the C.B.E. The death of C.H.L. GALLIFORD ('17-'23) on 2nd August 1993 was reported in the "Telegraph". He went to Bristol in 1923 on a Teacher's Scholarship with L.P. JAMES, N.C. OGBURN and H.A. PORTER and recorded their activities in subsequent Roan magazines. J.H.T. TURNER followed in 1924, G.S. CRANE in 1925 and R.C. WALTER in 1926. We are indebted to P.J. Barnwell for further updates on Roan Exhibitors. The first exhibitor, R. BIRD, qualified in 1888 as a medico and is in "Who Was Who" 1866-1918 as a Lt. Col. The 1883 man, J.H. HUMPHREYS, is not mentioned in the London lists.

A.E. SALTER (1873-1945) was the exhibitor in 1888 and returned on several occasions as a distinguished old boy to present prizes at the school in the 1920's. J.E. USHERWOOD, exhibitor in 1893, died in 1964. A.J.B. GREEN of 1899 was on the Perse staff before going to Guildford as headmaster, and died in 1956. D.A. SMITH, 1907, and G.W. BOSUSTOW, 1909, both got fourth-class degrees in history at Oxford. Old Roans rarely



Mr.C.T.Daltry in the Science Vith Classroom in 1937



The Science V1. 1937-38. Back row: P.G. Chamberlain, B.Green, E.A. Whitaker K.L.G. Goldsmith, T.G. Coombes, C.H.J. Beaven. Middle row: L.R. Chapman, D.E. Moorcock G.P. Hushwaite, P.A.Woodrow. P.A. Trafford, R.Wilcox, A.Malpas, R.K. Norris, N.J. Davies. Front row: C.W. Spore, W.A.L. Smith, E.T. Francis, Mr. C.T. Daltry, Mr. W.J. Potter, J.W. Liddle, H.Bell, C.A.Stickland

gained firsts at Oxford or Cambridge. A. HYDE, who did not get the Exhibition in 1937, and G.H. ISAACSON gained firsts at Cambridge and, in the pre-war years, H.A. STRUTT and GREEN at Oxford.

Colin WALTER ('31-'36) writes from Ferring in West Sussex of an enjoyable lunch with Lionel BERRY and Horace ABBOTT ('34-'39) with his wife, Barbara. As stage managers for the O.R.D.S., in a search to rearrange the circuits of the house lights, Colin and Horace found themselves exploring the roof void over the hall, library and offices at the Maze Hill school. Colin recalls that the only thing they found, in the clock tower, was a pair of trophies, possibly connected with the earlier school cadet corps. He is busy with his position of Secretary of his local Probus Club and asks if many other Old Roans are members of Probus Clubs? Colin has provided some fascinating information from the 1930's including the School Rules and Regulations, reports and details of termly fees. Some of this information is listed elsewhere in the "Chronicle".

Ewen A. WHITAKER ('33-'40) has provided a variety of interesting material from his home in Tucson, Arizona. The photograph of the Science V1 with W.J. Potter is reproduced here together with a photograph of students and staff taken immediately prior to the evacuation from Bexhill to Ammanford in the "Evacuation" article. He offers further information on Philibert Jacques MELOTTE whom he remembers from his work at the Royal Observatory. Ewen has been in correspondence with Lionel BERRY, with his letter of 1 July, 1993 proving so compulsive that it has now been forwarded to Bill WEDGE, Alan WEIR, Doug PEDDIE, Brian THOMAS, Peter TRAFFORD and Tony SLANEY. Despite finding the job of his dreams and moving with the Royal Observatory from Greenwich to Herstmonceux Castle in 1956 his work did not offer the opportunity to study the moon. He was offered a position at Yerkes Observatory (University of Chicago) to study and photograph the moon with large telescopes. He moved to the U.S.A. with his wife and 3 young children in 1958 for a supposed three-year job. The Space Race started at that point, NASA was formed and moon research was a priority. He found himself at the forefront of all the NASA moon missions and recalls those times as a very exciting decade to say the least. In 1960, his small group of about 6 people moved to Tucson (University of Arizona) where his Chief, Dr. Gerard Kuiper, a dynamic Dutch astronomer who already had many discoveries to his credit set up the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory. This now numbers over 200 staff and is the largest facility in the U.S. devoted to planetary science. The last issue reminded him of sharing digs with Humphrey BISHOP in Ticehurst and an episode felling wild dead-trees in a copse a little past Three-Legged Cross. He recalls E.A. Howse and wonders whether he is related to Cmdr. Derek Howse who used to be in charge of the Royal Greenwich Observatory Museum?

Bernie TURNER (current staff) thanks Mike CALLAGHAN for inviting him as guest-speaker to his first O.R.A. Annual Dinner in October. He was pleased to see so many people he had lost touch with since giving up playing football for Old Roan. Bernie runs the "Avery Hill Vets" side which plays regularly against the Old Roan Vets and Graham Lawrence's team.

Mike HANSFORD ('54-'58) wrote to the Secretary from West Didsbury, Manchester, to sort out his subscription arrangements and to advise the death of his father, Stanley A. HANSFORD ('29-'33) who represented the school at football and cricket ("An excellent bowler who keeps a good length, and good in the field" July 1933) and won the Open Cricket Ball Throwing competition on Sports Day. Mike has lived in Manchester for nearly five years as Reinsurance Manager of the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance

Federation (ICMIF) travelling round the world advising co-operative insurers on their reinsurance requirements. This job has taken him to 32 countries.

John GRAFTON made a rare appearance at the Club in February in the company of Bob GRIMWOOD ('60-'65) and his address in South Wales has been passed to the Secretary for recruitment to the Association.

Alan WEIR ('36-'42) has typed out the transcripts of his father's diaries in the First War during 1916-17 and plans a visit to the Loos / Arras area with his wife, Jean, this August. George WEIR ('03-'09) served in the 20th London with Ted TRAFFORD and other Old Roans. He was injured on several occasions and was awarded the D.C.M. for his bravery at Mametz Wood during the Battle of the Somme. The diaries give a good description of the general misery, tragedies and occasional good times on the Western Front ("January 25, 1916. Spent time playing football and going to Picture Palace. Saw Chas. Chaplin for the first time"). By the time he had moved on to Ypres in January 1917 he felt he had earned the right to improve his living conditions ("Champagne suppers are alright") which led to a few brushes with authority; but he received his Commission in 1917 and returned to France as a Second Lieutenant in the 11th battalion (Finsbury Rifles) where he remained to the end of the war. He died in 1967.

Trevor PUDDIFOOT ('64-'71) has now moved the Supply Company a short distance from Charlton to Greenwich though the address seems fairly convenient for the Valley. Many Old Roans enjoyed the unexpected bonus of the Charlton cup run and on the great day of the quarter-final tie against Manchester United in March they made their way by coach, car and train to as part of the crowd of 10,000 supporting the team. Paul DAVIS ('58-'64), elder statesman of the Football Club, played in a charity football match in late June for Old Pastonians against the Arsenal Ex-Professionals and Celebrity XI. He spent his time on the field marking Peter Marinello. Do you remember Peter Marinello? Paul will!

Chris MARTYN ('56-'63) writes from Leicester with a contribution on the early days of the school band. After leaving Roan he gained his BA (Hons) degree at Queen Mary College, London and later added an MPhil. at Leicester University. He spent several years teaching at Independent schools in Cheshire and Liverpool and is now an Assistant Vice-Principal at Gateway Sixth Form College in Leicester. Most of his spare time is devoted to singing and he has a good reputation in the Midlands as an oratorio soloist.

Roger DALE ('61-'68) fulfilled a long-standing ambition in April to travel across the U.S.A. by train. His journey took him from New York to Los Angeles by way of Washington D.C., New Orleans, Dallas and the Grand Canyon.

Frank HOLLAND ('33-'39) lives in Bexley and asks for any news of his close friend in the 1930's, Ronald W. LOOSEMORE. They lost contact shortly after the war. If anyone knows of the whereabouts of R.W. Loosemore please contact the Editor.

Wilfrid HEWLETT ('23-'31) was at Roan during the time of the move from Eastney Street to Maze Hill. He recalls that boys were not allowed to go directly down Eastney Street to Trafalgar Road but had to walk via Park Vista and Row. He agrees with J.W. Kirby that the choice of the school site was a poor decision and effectively kept the school hidden away for 60 years in a slum. He is pleased to read of Lionel Berry and remembers benefit-

ting from his excellent teaching of chemistry in the Science VI which led to his First at Imperial College. He also notes the strength of the staff in those days, English with Titley, French with Shaer and Kirby, Latin with W.J. Potter and Geography with Allen. The only exception was a "dreadful blind spot for History with the Antient." "Looking back over 60 years I feel much gratitude for the time I spent at Roan, which not only helped me to make a living but also illumines life."

We hear from Mrs.M.I.Harrison the sad news of the death of her mother, Mrs.Margaret BRASS (nee Tomsett '23-'30), in Edinburgh on 5th October 1992. A few months earlier she had celebrated her 80th birthday with her husband, David, children, Marion, Jimmy and Annette and their families. After leaving Roan in 1928 she worked as a secretary at the Borough Polytechnic till her marriage in 1940. At Roan she was Senior Prefect and Games Captain of the School. A large part of her life was committed to working for various voluntary services including Girl Guides, Youth Clubs, Womens' Royal Voluntary Service and the Church and she remains much missed by her friends and relatives.

News from D.E. PHIPPS-JONES ('24-'31) of his move in May to a new address in Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire. After leaving Roan in 1931 "Jonah" went to University College, London where he met his future wife, Marie, and married in 1939. They sailed immediately with CMS to the Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. They returned in 1948 and he taught at the Alfred Sutton School in Reading until 1954 when they moved to Barnet. In 1962 he was ordained into the ministry of the Congregational Church at Hatfield (J.W. STOW was rector) and returned to Wheathampstead in 1983. He now suffers from Parkinson's Disease. "I owe a lot to Roan, through scouting with Mr. Hope and messrs. Binnie and Mills, and was able to do a bit in Freetown in that field, ending up as DC! The Antient would have been surprised I think!

Gordon STACEY ('23-'28) wrote to the Secretary last August from the Transvaal in South Africa. He worked for 24 years with South Africa Airways and, in retirement, lives with his wife, Sally, and eldest son, Peter, on a smallholding with a number of animals. He also recalls with affection the teachers in the photograph taken in 1937 and featured in the last "Chronicle". He notes the absence of "Jacko" Jackson - "...tending his bees - no doubt." He is surprised to see that Mr. Parker had lost those two sharp ends of his moustache. He left school in 1928 to become an RAF apprentice and passed his RAF entrance examination at his first attempt with the benefit of some tuition from "Tubby" Allen on Saturday mornings. In September 1992, together with his brother, Geoff STACEY ('23-'28), he attended an RAF ex-apprentices reunion in Halton. Geoff sadly died in March 1993.

Humphrey BISHOP ('38-'45) contributed to the article on the evacuation and advises that both he and his brother, R.E.D. BISHOP ('36-'43) completed seven years at Roan, were both Life Members of the Association and both appeared in the London Gazette, he for the Imperial Service Medal and his brother for a C.B.E.

A final word to Lionel BERRY who has assisted the Editor with his amazing memory. He remembers Keith POUND as an excellent "Badger" in "Toad of Toad Hall" and advises that Colin WALTER and Horace ABBOTT learnt their stage manager skills from H.H.Pye. Horace Abbott, in particular, was noted for his mischievous humour which included stunts such as swinging across the back of the stage on a rope during serious moments of the dress rehearsal. Lionel points out that during the evacuation he organised the ATC with Tommy HOLT and was known as "Pilot Officer" Berry.

John Gray: Poet, Dandy and Priest - and Old Roan

".....we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

The model for the character of Oscar Wilde's "Dorian Gray" was a former student of the Roan School.

John Gray (1866-34) was a complex figure who, during his lifetime, sought to obliterate first one, then another stage of his past. He destroyed or edited letters, poems, documents, and his relatives piously followed his seeming wishes, blocking research and even refusing verse to anthologists. He is mainly remembered by those with an interest in the 1890's, or certain aspects of Catholicism, and for his curious poem called "The Flying Fish".

Gray needed to re-invent himself. He was born in Bethnal Green the oldest of nine children, in a stormy home. A bright little boy, he won at 12 a scholarship to the Roan School, Greenwich. But a year later he was removed by his irascible father to be an apprentice metal-turner at the Woolwich Arsenal. Oddly, he enjoyed this work, "whirring lathe and rank machine oil's smell" would always have an appeal, but still the path was upwards. He studied at night, and at 16, through exams, became a Post Office clerk. He acquired a working knowledge of Latin, French and German. He wrote poems. By his early twenties he was a minor but respectable middle-class civil servant.

Being young, gifted, poor, and with exceptional good looks, he attracted the interest of a bohemian circle in Chelsea where he was introduced to modern art and French writers. He had two pieces published in the first issue of "Dial" and was now in the literary scene. Wilde met him in 1890 and promptly admitted the beautiful youth into his circle where he met Beardsley, Yeats and others. When "The Picture of Dorian Gray" appeared it was widely assumed that the exquisite young poet was the model and Gray used the name himself. He went further and entered into the ready-made Dorian image.

"How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of JuneIf it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that - for that - I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" The Picture of Dorian Gray. Oscar Wilde.

By the end of 1892 he was in debt, in a state of nervous exhaustion, and aware of the dangers of the Wilde connection. These doubts and dreads were fused in a story, never published in his lifetime: "The Person in Question". Here, the narrator, clearly Gray, sees a double of himself, but twice his age - heavy, coarse, with a straggling beard. At every dinner, first night or function that he attends, the Other is also there. When at last he fails to appear, the narrator, frightened, goes in frantic search, and finds the double taking a seat on a giant switchback railway. He also takes a seat, but a distant one. There is a sickening smell of perfume. He turns his head. Horror! The Other is just behind...

Remorse for "sin" was to haunt Gray all through his life. Gray was to be rescued from Wilde, from "Dorian", from his debts and impossible double life, by a patron, who came as a lover and stayed as his closest friend. Andre Raffalovich, himself a poet and novelist, was a wealthy, witty young man, Russian born but brought up in Paris and he brought Gray into

his household. He was now in a spiritual phase, writing religious and mystical verse. He gave up his job as librarian in the Foreign Office, and entered the Scots College at Rome to become a priest.

Following his first posting in 1901 in a poor and rough district of Edinburgh and a breakdown through overwork he planned a new church in which he would be parish priest. The project was funded by Raffalovich, built by Lorimer, designed by Gray and St. Peter's Church in Edinburgh remained his base until his death.

It was the most satisfying role that he could ever have devised but there are signs of continuing torment under the calm exterior. In 1932, he wrote a disturbing, dreamlike tale called "Park". Dr. Mungo Park, a 59-year-old priest, is walking in the Cotswolds when he thinks that he has died. He finds himself the captive of a strange primitive society, ruled by black Catholic priests. Below ground is a race of "rodent-like white men" who present "an intolerable paradox; mechanical genius.....with moral degeneration the most complete". Is he himself "black within"? "I shall never be back in time," Park laments.

"John Gray: Poet, Dandy and Priest" by Jerusha Hall McCormack (Brandeis University Press). We acknowledge the article by Naomi Lewis in the London Review of Books. 6.8.92



A "fin de siècle" photograph of Roan boys in Greenwich Park.



*Mike Titheridge -
footballer*



Old Roan Vets in April 1994. Standing: Vic Brooker, Alan Jakes, John Stanford, Peter Osborne, Rod Pepper, Len Sales (and Daniel), Steve Hunt, Bob Grimwood. Kneeling: "Spot" Hughes, Keith Mexter, Graham Briscoe, John Hardy, Ray Mills, Jim Hardy, Alastair Mitchell

Births

BRYER to Sheila, wife of Tony ('62-'68), a daughter, Katherine Clare Olivia, on 14th March 1994, a sister for Michael

COPPITERS to Alison (nee Pendergast '72-'79), a daughter, Annabel Bethany, on February 12th 1993

CROWE to Debbie, wife of Nicholas ('75-'81), a son, James Aron, on 30th May 1993

CROWE to Susan, wife of Richard ('69-'76), a son, Alex Robert Peter, on 5th July 1993

HORSBURGH to Rachel, wife of Stuart ('66-'70), a daughter, Eleanor Ruth, on 28th September 1993, a sister for Laura and Rebecca

HUGHES to Lesley, wife of Lawrence ('65-'72), a daughter, Lucy Emily, on 13th January 1994

SALES to Diane, wife of Len ('72-'77), a son, Benjamin, on 22nd September 1993, a brother for Daniel Thomas

Marriages

HUGHES-HATTON on 21st August 1993 at St. Andrews Church, Catford, Lawrence (Spot) Hughes ('65-'72) to Lesley Hatton

Deaths

BENNETT R.F. ('35-'40) on 4th September 1992

BRASS Mrs M (nee Tomsett '23-'30) on 5th October 1992

BRUCE L.J. OBE, FRICS ('20-'25) on 13th August 1993

CORDEREY I.S. (- '48/50) in 1993

GULLIFORD C.H.L. ('17-'23) on 2nd August 1993

KELSEY Mrs M (nee Chambers '35-'42) in May 1993

LUSBY H. ('22-'29) on 5th October 1993

MASON L.J. ('22-'27) on 24th February 1994

PULLEN A ('43-'48) in November 1993

SOUTHARD G. ('71-'78) on 27th May 1993

SMITH S. ('29-'35) on 19th October 1993

STEWART G.S. ('17-'22) on 22nd November 1993

Did you know?

The last person in Britain who could say that her parent was born in the 18th century (father, born 1799) died as recently as 1970, in Kent.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Year of '74 (Girls' School) Reunion – Saturday 8th October, 1994

Reunion Dinner at the Club – Friday 14th October, 1994

Childrens' Party at the Club – Sunday 8th January, 1995

Dinner Dance at the Boathouse, Danson Park – 18th March, 1995

AGM at the Club – Thursday 23th March, 1995