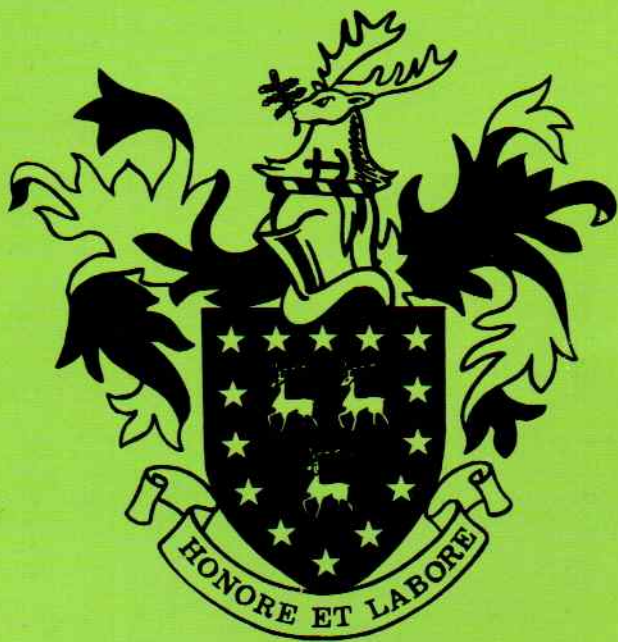


The  
**Roan Magazine**



**Susceptum perforce munus**

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Bernie Turner—Old Roan Association President. 2012—2013

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## From the Editor

Welcome to a larger edition than usual of the Old Roan Association magazine. This results from extended coverage of the Centenary Dinner, reaction to the death of Alf Knott, and a series of lengthy articles from contributors on their time at the school.

In future the magazine is likely to take a much shorter format. We welcome suggestions from members on what they require from this magazine. The standard inclusions are "News of Old Roan" and "Deaths" together with the usual reports from the secretary, treasurer and president.

I am retiring as editor after this issue. I have been involved since 1989 and will remain available to provide advice if required. It has been a pleasure and privilege to deal with so many Old Roans over these years. I have sought to keep a balance between current activities and archive material. The John Roan School now produces a high quality magazine that can be accessed online. The O.R.A. website provides updates on news together with social, sports and theatre activities.

We cannot avoid the fact that the Association is ageing and has not been successful in recruiting

younger members from the school—despite a great deal of effort over many years. We hope this may change but in the immediate future we need to provide a publication for members that reflects the reality of a declining and ageing membership.

I hope you find this fuller issue of interest. It contains material that can be quickly digested and, in the second half, several well written articles that deserve a little more concentration.

I have been helped by many people over these years and wish to offer special thanks to Tony Slaney, Steve Nelson and Richard Rickson. Mark Jeffrey from Typecast has provided patient and good humoured advice on all my publications for the O.R.A. and R.T.C. We fondly remember Alf Knott who provided advice and assistance until very recently.

David Horsburgh—May 2012

### Editor Required O.R.A. Magazine

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## Where are they now?

The Association has lost touch with the following. If anyone knows the member's current address would they please pass it on to the Secretary?

Christine <b>Blake</b> (née Sharp 1956-61)	Betty <b>Clark</b> (widow of Roy 1934-39)
Joshua <b>Fasuyi</b> (2003-10)	John <b>Fletcher</b> (1945-50)
Richard <b>Jenkyns</b> (1933-38)	Vivienne <b>Parks</b> (née Beresford 1956-61)
Peter <b>Schaper</b> (1952-58)	Brenda <b>Shield</b> (née Peirce 1956-61)
Georgina <b>Stace</b> (née Sharp 1956-61)	

From previous years the secretary still would like to have contact details for the following

Michael <b>Belcher</b> (1974-81)	Chris <b>Bunton</b> (1969-76)
Gary <b>Goy</b> (1968-75)	Pauline <b>Harley</b> (née Robson 1947-53)
Kevin <b>Lyons</b> (1976-83)	Les <b>McHegan</b> (1970-77)
Stephen <b>Sawyer</b> (1976-83)	Anthony <b>Williams</b> (1943-48)

Back in touch – from the list in the 2011 magazine or posted on the website only  
Lee **Hawkins** (1964-69) has been traced.

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The John Roan School	www.thejohnroanschool.co.uk



Membership figures as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011:

	2011	2010	
Life members	399	412	-13
Fully paid annual members	423	386	+ 37
Junior members	93	64	+ 29
Honorary member	1	1	
Associate members (staff)	18	18	
	934	881	+ 53

As you can see from the above figures the total membership has risen considerably to the highest number since 1996. The majority is from non-members' interest sparked by the centenary dinner last September, many of whom have completed standing order forms for regular annual payments. Indeed we have received about 400 payments by this method so far this year. The other growth area is with junior membership which is given to school leavers for three years. So far none of those signed up through the efforts of Trevor Talbot and others at school leavers' days at the Field have continued membership after the 3 years have expired. This was highlighted at the recent AGM and whilst older members find the magazine interesting younger members have other things on their minds. Perhaps they will return after 10, 20, 30 or more years as others often do or can the Association be made more appealing to them?

The method of advertising the annual general meeting is always subject to the timing of the magazine. As the last edition came out before the date of

the 2012 AGM meeting was known all members were individually circulated. Over 450 notices were sent by email. The remainder were sent by post with an appeal for the recipients to advise their email addresses. I am pleased to say more than 50 have let me have theirs, a greater number than the appeals through the magazine. For the information of those who received their notice by email the postal one went on to say the distribution of hard copies cost in the region of £200. With postage set to increase considerably could I again ask those who are on email to let me have their email address. I promise we will not inundate you with emails and all circular emails are sent as blind copies.

In 2011 we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association with a centenary dinner. A full report will appear elsewhere in the magazine but it was extremely well supported with over 300 joining us in the Painted Hall. The oldest present had attended Eastney Street in 1928 and connections continued up to the present day with current members of staff. As this took

place in September there was no separate reunion dinner and as the centenary dinner was mixed it was decided not to hold a dinner/dance as well in the same presidential year. However in July there was the president's day vets and ORFC 5-a-side tournaments, a cricket match and Malcolm Calder, John Roan Club bar manager, arranged a much appreciated beer festival.

David Horsburgh negotiated a £400 discount from the full cost of £1500 for a pupil to attend the London International Youth Science Forum this summer. The School has a suitable pupil who they believe will benefit from the experience, Daniel Morris, and the committee have agreed to subsidise him with a £600 grant.

It had been hoped to make progress on amending the constitution to take into account the demise of the Old Roan Club and consider accepting membership from those intimately connected with the Association but not eligible as past pupils, past and present members of staff or governors. Unfortunately there are substantial issues being pursued with the John Roan Club and it has not been thought appropriate that the Old Roan Club Management Committee should be wound up until significant progress is made. There is no pressing need to make small adjustments to the constitution, the current one of which dates from 1989, so this task is in abeyance.

Tony Slaney. March 2012

[a.slaney@btpenworld.com](mailto:a.slaney@btpenworld.com)



Bletchley Park—April 2011  
Neal Haslam, Brian Matthews, Tony Slaney, Monty Smith, Mitch, Bernie Hampton



## Treasurer's Report—2012

100 years of service to our members (not by us personally) and a reunion to surpass anything we've attempted before. We're still here and in good financial health.

Subscription income has grown, due to the interest shown and efforts made in respect of the centenary reunion. Although numbers for junior membership have risen, that heading does not appear in our accounts as subscriptions have remained at zero, and no-one has responded to take up membership despite being offered a free three-year introduction. Ties and wall shields are held in stock and should be sufficient to meet demand, their sale yielding a small surplus. HMRC confirmed, following detailed representation, that the taxation status of the Association will be recorded as 'dormant' until at least 2016 subject to conditions and criteria advised.

Our running expenses, both the headings and the amounts, follow the familiar cycle. Publication and postage costs in respect of the magazine remain high. The new item last year – *Centenary event*, and then expected to become a significant figure – represented the increase in prices given our aim to hold to the advertised ticket price. We entered into a contractual agreement to hold the Centenary Celebration at The Painted Hall in the Old Royal Naval College. This was a substantial commitment to stage the event at this prestigious venue. The central costs, charged to the Accumulated Fund, totalled

£8,665.28 – within the £10k estimated when the project was first considered.

Following the dinner, £350 was donated to the School – £250 for the music department / choir and £100 to the library; also £500.00 from the Icough Memorial Trust fund towards improvements to the War Memorial Garden (the front lawn) at Maze Hill. Incidentally, the Hope Memorial Trust also incurred significant expenditure in refurbishment of the camp at Braithwaite.

Our Balance Sheet is sound, with strong net current assets. The debtor figure owed by the John Roan Club remains unchanged since the demise of the Old Roan Club, and we have yet to receive any rental income from the licensed bar.

Subscriptions in advance run to 2016, but with the loss of older members we may become a declining organisation. After all the financial concerns 2011 was an incredible year – we can't repeat it, and most of us won't need to think about any further 'milestones'!

Neal Haslam  
March 2012

[www.thejohnroan.school.co.uk](http://www.thejohnroan.school.co.uk)

[www.johnroan.co.uk](http://www.johnroan.co.uk)

[www.roantheatrecompany.org.uk](http://www.roantheatrecompany.org.uk)

## Old Roan Club Management Report

Well we are still here, perhaps a little to our surprise, and reporting to you regarding the use of your property located on the John Roan Foundation Playing Fields. We had always felt that it would be important that some elements within the ORA committee should keep a watching eye over the buildings which are our primary asset as well as maintaining our other roles within that committee. This facility does after all only exist thanks to a considerable investment over more than 50 years of money, time and effort by numerous Old Roans.

When the John Roan Club committee made the almost certainly inevitable decision to franchise out the running of the bar rather than attempting to continue the process of running it in house we had all hoped to see a profitable business operation.

We had hoped to see a "virtuous circle" where the four main elements, the business, the ORA, the School and the JRC would all see a financial benefit from the venture. The business would take its share of the profit, the ORA would take an agreed but not necessarily commercial rent and the JRC would take the now much increased Club membership fees. The benefit to the School would have arisen when the accounts of the ORA were in such a strong position that virtually any foreseeable eventuality would be covered. The income could then have been passed on to the School and we would have expected this situation to have arisen by now. We would of course have sought your agreement to this course of action.

Regrettably and to the disappointment of everyone involved the business made a significant loss in its first year of operation. Unfortunately it seems likely that this will be repeated, hopefully at a substantially lower level, when the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 are available.

This is despite the best efforts of Malcolm Calder, the bar manager, and Steve Rogers who provides the financial and business support. Malcolm has a wide knowledge of and many years experience within the licensed trade, is always welcoming and as far as we are concerned no one could have done a better job. Steve is currently absorbing the trading losses as well as a considerable initial investment in redecoration and other internal improvements from his own resources. He has indicated his willingness to continue in his current role until the end of March 2013 and is owed a great debt of gratitude by all who benefit from the use of the facility.

Perhaps understandably the JRC committee were maybe somewhat over optimistic and enthusiastic in their trading predictions and are now consulting with Steve and Malcolm on ways to move the business into profit. The debt of approx £5k owed to the ORA as a result of initial set up costs and due for repayment in March 2011 has been deferred with its agreement.

We look forward to the completion of the virtuous circle, our final contribution in a future magazine, and well earned final stand down from this particular area of responsibility.



It was at assembly on the first day back at school after the summer holidays in 1975, with the hall smelling of new floor polish and the first years recovering from being tagged, that Doctor Taylor announced the arrival of a new teacher: "... and let us all welcome Mr Turner, our new PE and English teacher, who has chosen to join Roan School rather than become a professional footballer." It was quite an introduction and caused a real stir amongst the boys (perhaps that was the Head's intention?). What person in his right mind asked would actually *choose* teaching over football? Let's see just how good he is down at the school fields.

No doubt Bernie was mentally holding his head in his hands at this point. Just as he was embarking on his new teaching career he would have to undergo the scrutiny of more football scouts, this time in the form of 600 boys (plus a few fellow teachers) assessing his dribbling and shooting skills.

As things turned out, Bernie quickly settled in at the school. Teaching PE and English, Bernie was one of the new generation of staff who felt comfortable teaching in casual clothes rather than swishing up and down the corridor with a black cloak attached. The boys also quickly took to Bernie although they learnt that he was no soft touch – more informal than many teachers, yes, but he had high standards and expected the boys to come up to those standards.

Born in Bow in the early 'fifties, Bernie had grown up in Dagenham before moving south of the river to Abbey Wood when he was eight years old. Having attended Abbey Wood Comprehensive in the 'sixties and learnt how to look after himself, Bernie would find dealing with grammar school boys no great problem. On leaving school in 1969, Bernie first chose to try his hand at Public Relations. But after a couple of years he opted instead to train as a teacher, taking a Dip.Ed in English and Physical Education followed by a B.Ed in Human Movement Studies & Education at Avery Hill College, part of London University Institute of Education.

Sport and Physical Education was a natural subject for Bernie to choose. He played a number of different sports to a high standard including athletics (400/800 metres), cross country, basketball and even rugby – although Bernie admits that he didn't like being thrown to the ground much; he was also a competent skier. Football, of course, was Bernie's strongest sport; he played for Sittingbourne, Gillingham Reserves, Dover, Margate and Maidstone United, managing to make it to far-flung football grounds in between carrying out his studies or teaching duties.

After three years at Roan, Bernie became the Head of PE. He had had a great impact on the school's senior football team during this short time period, with the team winning the English Schools' Cup and the London

Schools' Cup two years running in 1977 and 1978. Dr Taylor, who never really 'got' sport, basked in the glory and publicity that the victories brought to the school; a special moment for him was the thrashing of Millfield School, the country's leading public school for sport.

During the years that followed at Roan, Bernie became Head of Year in 1984, Acting Senior Teacher in 1999 and Head of House in 2004. He always maintained strong links with the Old Roan Association and regularly played at the school fields with his Avery Hill football side. Bernie was a valuable conduit between the school and its former students in the ORA at a time of great organisational and political upheavals. It's fair to say that some of the Head Teachers that followed Dr Taylor didn't invest the same amount of time or energy in supporting the ORA, and so it was important to have people like Bernie still maintaining contact while working at the school.

It is quite remarkable that Bernie taught at Roan for 33 years – how the years have flown by! On leaving John Roan in December 2008, Bernie became a specialist consultant in

Behaviour and Attendance. He now works for a partnership specialising in this subject area in Basildon, Billericay and Wickford, assisting Essex Education Authority with the education of challenging and disengaged students – and he tells me that he has never been happier in his working life.

Bernie has retained his enthusiasm for life and looks far younger than his years (and far younger, it must be said, than many of his ex-students!). Bernie, like all of us I guess, appreciates the good things in life and he regularly arranges meals in London to catch up with his former pupils. It is a great credit to him that he has remained in touch with so many Old Roans – who consider him not just as a former teacher but as a good friend.

There is no doubt that, following on from his success as President of the Old Roan Golf Society in 2011-12, that Bernie will make a great President of the Old Roan Association in 2012-13.

All the best for the coming year, Bernie, you deserve the honour.

Mick Smith—April 2012

### Acknowledgements

The editor gratefully acknowledges the support that makes this publication possible—in particular the contributors—for this issue and over many years. Special thanks are due for the Centenary Dinner photographs:

**Tim Keeler Photography—020 8852 6347**  
[www.timkeelerphotography.com](http://www.timkeelerphotography.com)



## From the President

Having been a teacher at The Roan Schools for almost 34 years and being linked with The Old Roan Association in a number of ways for almost as long, it is a great honour for me to be invited to become President of The Association in 2012.

When I joined The Roan Boys Grammar School as a young, newly qualified teacher in September 1975, I never realised what an impact the "Roan Family" would have upon my life. I am extremely pleased that my ties to John Roan have never severed; indeed they are ties that bind.

As a PE Teacher at the Roan School a link soon formed with The Association and it was with great pleasure that I was able to encourage the young men (initially) of the 6<sup>th</sup> form to forge ongoing links with The Old Roan Association through the cricket and football teams which, at that time, were the mainstay of The Association. But The Association is much more than a sports club: it is part of the life long experience of once being a pupil, teacher, parent or governor at The

Roan Schools, as testament in The Association Magazine regularly indicates, with updates and news of Old Roans from decades past and far flung parts, who are remembered and remain part of the "Roan Family".

As time passes, we are all getting older. There is a great need for all of us involved with the school to reach out and encourage the present young men and women of The John Roan School to engage in the life and soul of The Association. We need to encourage them in every way to join us upon leaving school, to become part of the greater "Roan Family" and to eventually take up the mantle of those members who work tirelessly to keep The Association functioning.

It is with great pleasure that I look forward to my term as your President in 2012 and feel humbled at joining the illustrious list of people who have become Presidents of The Old Roan Association.

Bernie Turner  
March 2012



Bernie is action for the Old Roan 1st XI in April 1984 during their cup final victory

## News from the John Roan School

It is now my 5<sup>th</sup> year at John Roan and I am already beginning to feel like an Old Roan! Despite our best results ever last year we've had a bit of a bumpy year. We had a disappointing Ofsted in November which graded us as 'satisfactory', whereas we felt we had done enough to be graded 'good'. The school has put a number of initiatives in place around Teaching and Learning to ensure that we will get a 'good' next time.

Our predicted GCSE results for this year should break the 60% level for 5A\*-C including English and Maths, and the 90% level for 5A\*-C. This will be our best results ever.

Our main task over the next couple of years is to ensure we continue this upward trend in results despite the inevitable disruption caused by our decant whilst the buildings are refurbished and rebuilt. The construction of temporary accommodation at Westcombe Park is now well under way, as is the refurbishment of the Royal Hill site which will accommodate Years 10 and 11 from Christmas 2012 until the move back into the new buildings in 2014.

We are continuing the great tradition you established in your time at Roan with a huge number of musical

performances, including Handel's *Messiah* when 40 of our pupils performed in the Great Hall at Goldsmiths in March this year.

Please look at the John Roan News on our website :

<http://www.thejohnroan.greenwich.sch.uk>

where you can get an overview of all our sporting and extra curricula achievements. On that note we can't quite yet emulate the two consecutive England Cup victories in the 70s, but we are in the final of the Greenwich Cup at 6<sup>th</sup> form level.

We continue to be grateful to the John Roan Foundation and the Old Roan Association for their support of pupils and departments in the school.

I have to announce the retirement this July of another long-standing member of the senior team. Tat Taylor, who has been teaching at John Roan for 32 years, will be taking early retirement and we wish him well as he retires to 'twitch' all over the world.

Des Malone  
Headteacher  
Easter 2012



## School Leavers' Do— June 27<sup>th</sup> 2011

For the fifth consecutive year, the Old Roan Association and the John Roan Club were delighted to play host to our school leavers by offering them the facility to hold their 2011 “leavers’ do” at the Club. This was held on Monday June 27<sup>th</sup>, with the proceedings commencing at mid-day and concluding at 3.45pm, with 38 school leavers attending. It was once again a pleasure for me to organise this with Sharan Sanghara, Head of the Sixth Form, herself a former John Roan pupil!

As has become customary, the weather was excellent (it has become known as “school leavers’ weather”), so they were able to spill out onto the playing fields, where Graham Lawrance served up a complimentary barbecue, with the vegetarians amongst them, interestingly, now outnumbering the meat eaters at the rate of 2 to 1! Everyone was issued with a free drink voucher, and as always our guests seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves at this event.

Apart from one last Physics exam, which some of them had sat before heading to the Club, all their GCSE and A Level papers had now been completed, so this was an opportunity to hold an early reunion in relaxed surroundings,

and to forget for a few hours their long wait for the results in August, which we all remember so well! I was delighted to welcome them all to the Club this year, along with members of the school staff, and I’m very pleased to say that we were also joined by Jan Farmer, retired Deputy Head and former Old Roan president, and Headteacher, Des Malone. My thanks go to other Old Roans, who were able to attend and assist me in hosting this annual party, although the leavers and staff skilfully organise their own events to fill the time.

At these events the leavers are given information about the Association and the John Roan Club, and invited to regard it as their own social facility with three years free membership, after which we hope they will continue with this as former John Roan pupils. They leave the Club with an information pack and a smile on their faces -- again a thoroughly decent and likeable group of young students. No longer having to peer curiously through the windows, they are now fully aware of what goes on behind the glazing, and we hope to see them all again...

Trevor Talbot



## Our New School Buildings

We are delighted to be part of the ‘Building Schools for the Future’ programme working in partnership with Greenwich Council and the John Roan Foundation to create vibrant new buildings for our students.

The project will restore much of the Grade 2 listed Maze Hill buildings, whilst also incorporating modern design elements to help us meet our ambitions for teaching and learning. We are reintroducing the original courtyards and covering one of them to create a vibrant internal space.

A more comprehensive development will take place at the Westcombe Park site, where entirely new school buildings have already been designed.

The buildings will ensure that we can continue to serve the Greenwich community in stimulating spaces that combine our proud history and traditions with the very best 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies.

Work has started in earnest. Temporary classrooms for Westcombe Park are now in situ and are currently being linked up to essential services so that we can occupy them in July. The current building will then be demolished.

Meanwhile a site in Royal Hill is being prepared for us so that we can also decant the Maze Hill buildings from January 2013. This will allow the builders access to the Maze Hill buildings.

The project is scheduled to be completed by September 2014.

Mike Sansome—April 2012



## O.R.A. Centenary Dinner—Saturday 24th September 2011

As the final words and chords of the School Song echoed around the ceiling of the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College a very gentle breeze may have been detected at a lower level. This was in fact the collective sigh of relief from the organising committee that the decision taken in 2009 to hold a formal event in a prestigious venue to celebrate the centenary of the Old Roan Association had been vindicated. We had looked at other possibilities, including the top clubs and hotels in Central London, but soon decided that the magnificent setting located in the heart of Greenwich and so close to the Maze Hill and Devonshire Drive sites was the one for us. Now to make it really happen.

There followed two years of planning and, in the final weeks, much detailed organisation and some nervousness to bring the project to fruition. We even managed to come in under budget, probably thanks in no small part to the excellent relationships we developed with the management team at the ORNC.

On the evening as you reached the top of the stairs of this awesome venue the sight and sounds of the lower hall filled almost to capacity with nearly 320 Old Roans and their guests was truly fantastic and memorable. They had come from Australia, Canada, the Falkland Islands, the United States, many parts of Europe and, of course, from all over the British Isles to celebrate the Association and, perhaps above all, their links with the Roan Schools. There were groups who had remained

in contact since their school days and others for whom this was the first time they had seen their former classmates since leaving Roan. Old friendships had been renewed and, in some cases, arrangements had been made for future get-togethers of varying sizes.

The evening had commenced with an excellent performance by the John Roan School Choir of two songs from their repertoire. The meal was served quickly and efficiently and the attentive yet unobtrusive wine waiters ensured that nobody was kept waiting. Des Malone, headteacher of the John Roan School, our president, Tony Slaney, Graham Johnson, toastmaster and master of ceremonies, and Trevor Talbot, both stars and stalwarts of the Roan Theatre Company, battled manfully against the difficult acoustics to deliver first class speeches. Special mention was made of Peter Trafford (1928-38), a Roan Exhibitioner in 1938 and the oldest member attending and of Bill Ellis a teacher at the Maze Hill site from 1956-84 fondly remembered by many of us. The more formal part of the evening was completed by David Horsburgh on keyboards accompanied by his personal trumpeter leading us all in a rousing rendition of the School Song. There followed a period of renewing old acquaintances and reminiscing which finished all too soon despite us being allowed to run over time.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and thereby made their own individual contribution to what was a truly memorable evening in a tremendous and inspiring setting.



Back row: Mick Roberts, Malcolm Harris, Alan Clark, Paul Davis, Steve Nelson, George Coe, Don Boon, Trevor Drury, Pete Edwards  
Front row: Sue Roberts, Nancy Harris, Shirley Nelson, Barbara Boon, Maxine Davis, Linda Nelson, Gill Drury, Angela Langley, Julie Edwards



Bill Wedge & Graham Johnson



Jennifer & Christine Stephens



The School Song



## ORA Centenary Dinner—feedback

We would like to thank you for arranging such a marvellous occasion in a superb setting. Food great, company better and well done Tony on your speech, never an easy thing to do especially in front of such an audience. We are both looking forward to the next one in 100 years time or maybe the 500th school anniversary as that will be sooner. Wheelchairs and helpers already provisionally booked.

Pam and Allen Gales ('59-'66)

Many congratulations and thanks to you and to all the organizers for the splendid dinner last Saturday. It was a truly memorable event and one that evoked many good memories of the school. We are all in your debt.

Richard Aldrich ('47-'55)

Thank very much for arranging a very enjoyable evening in spectacular surroundings. We are very grateful to you and all the Committee for the hard work you put in to make the evening such a success. It was a nice touch to have commemorative pens.

Christine & Jennifer Stephens ('56-'61)

What a wonderful success the Centenary Dinner proved to be! This was a success for imaginative planning and a courageous determination to see the project through. Congratulations to all concerned and my thanks for keeping the name of John Roan alive.

Peter Trafford ('28-'38)

Many thanks to you and other helpers for the great night on Saturday. It was great fun and good to see faces from distant shores. Also well done on your speech, must have been intimidating with so many people.

Alan Clark ('57-'62)

I enjoyed it very much, although I was disappointed that more of my contemporaries were not there. I was particularly glad to see Brian & Pamela Davis again after so many years.

Martin Pink ('45-'53)

Acoustics apart, what a great evening we all had last Saturday. Thanks to you and the organising committee for making it happen, I'm sure you have received many similar emails. The venue was spectacular and the food, drink and company first class. The occasion was very special and will live long in the memory (despite not being able to belt out verses 2 and 3 of the school song as I forgot my glasses!!).

Mike Heselden ('70-'77)

I want to thank you both, together with your team, for all the hard work which I know went into making the dinner such a success. I am sorry I showed so little faith in the beginning and was a late entrant. Last night was most enjoyable, and I did meet a lot of people who I have not seen, some since school.

Peter Gibbs ('55-'60)

Thank you so much for all the work which went into organising the weekend. The venue for the dinner was amazing and the whole thing went off without a hitch. Lovely to catch up with people although the evening flew by so quickly.

Anna Kirk ('70-'77)

I thought I would let you all know that at just before 9 00pm yesterday evening Bill Ellis phoned me to say that he had just got home but felt he had to phone me to say what a wonderful time he had had at the Dinner & elsewhere. He thought the organisation & everything was fantastic & to pass on his thanks & good wishes to everyone involved.

Monty Smith ('58-'65)

Thank you for the splendid show that you put on last Saturday. I thoroughly enjoyed the visit to the school. Des Malone is an inspirational leader who is going to be sorely taxed by the changes that are intended over the next couple of years but I don't think the results are in doubt: a solid base and springboard into the future - recognising that it is the leadership and teachers who make the real difference! The dinner was a splendid occasion in a splendid location, and, from where I was sitting at least, went without a hitch - good to meet with contemporaries and others and get some small feel for what has been going on in their lives over the last half-century.

Ron Clatworthy ('52-'60)

## Dinner feedback

Thanks so much for organising such a fantastic event on Saturday. Barbara and I thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing and we are very aware of all the hard work you all put in to make it such a success.

Don Boon ('56-'62)

Many congratulations on the excellent organisation of last night's Centenary dinner. I am sure that all of the organising committee put in a considerable amount of hard work to make it such a success, and I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to them as well.

Keith Biles ('58-'66)

I would like to thank you for all the work you have done to make the weekend celebrations such a success. The Dinner at the Painted Hall was wonderful and such a memorable occasion - all the timing went like clockwork and the meal was superb. It was a lovely touch to have the school choir there to start off the proceedings. All my table were extremely complementary with the arrangements and asked me to pass on their thanks to you. Also the weather was good for all the outside activities you arranged.

David Buckley ('48-'53)

Well done to you, Monty, Neal, Mike and the rest of the organising team for a memorable evening and a fitting tribute to 100 years of the ORA on Saturday.

Andy Daniels ('77-'84)



## Dinner feedback

I thought it all went really well – the dining room is just superb. Thanks for organising it. Pity it could not have lasted another 12 hours – there were some people I did not even see from a distance let alone speak to!

Ray Westwood ('64-'71)

Congratulations to all who contributed to the success of the centenary event at The Painted Hall yesterday. It must have been a real worry organising for 300+ people with all the things that could go wrong, but the attention to detail was magnificent and more than sufficient to allay all those concerns. As someone who does not live locally, it was good to see so many old friends, many of whom I have not had any contact with since leaving school or playing cricket for the ORs – which ended in the early seventies! I think one tends to remember what they looked like then as you have no other yardstick, so it's good (maybe that is not the right word) that they now look and feel just as old as you do. Let us hope that those who are at the School now realise the benefits of the Association and step forward to provide the level of leadership needed to allow it continue its obvious success.

Ken Farrer ('55-'62)

After the dinner and the activities on Sunday I came back to the States with a very strong feeling of belonging after a 49 year absence.

Malcolm Harris ('57-'62)

Congratulations on instigating and executing a wonderful centenary dinner last night. I am very pleased for you all that it worked out so well, and I'm sure you must be feeling pleased and relieved today. The early doubts were always that the necessary numbers may not be achieved, and thankfully that was put to bed at a very early stage. Thanks for all the hard work you put in to this, chaps. I'm sure I speak for everyone in the Association in saying that we are grateful for your endeavours!

Trevor Talbot ('65-'72)

Thanks for a great evening. Well done!

Angela Langley ('64-'71)

Thanks to you, Monty and the team for a memorable evening. We had a great time.

Paul Kennedy ('68-'70)

A very big thank you for all your efforts in arranging the Old Roan Association Centenary Weekend. I attended the old school for a guided tour on Saturday morning and thoroughly enjoyed going back in time. Des seems to have picked up on the history and tradition of the school and I look forward to seeing the school again once it has been restored. The evening meal was a wonderful occasion and never long enough to catch up on 34 years with great friends and old teachers, Terry Hall giving me a detention card which made my night. It really was a very special occasion.

Phil Coleman ('72-'77)

I want to thank you and your committee so very much for organizing this evenings celebration. I did not have a chance to thank you personally and am sorry we were obliged to leave before the event came to a close. I hope you were capable of navigating back home after all your toasts and what a wonderful thing to be able to raise a glass to someone who had attended Eastney St. We agreed at our table that we were there because we are proud of our association with the Roan. This evenings celebration helped to solidify that pride even more.

Trevor Craddock ('46-'55)

I thank the committee of the ORA for organising such an excellent dinner last Saturday to celebrate the centenary of the Association, in the superb surroundings of the Painted Hall of the ORNC, Greenwich. I have been to many functions over the years and I must commend everyone involved in the planning, organising and execution of the evening for without doubt the best run celebration I have had the pleasure of attending. Congratulations to all concerned for a evening that befitted the celebration of the centenary of the ORA. My only regret is that I am unlikely to be around to attend the bi-centenary!

Iain Wells ('60-'67)

A really good night thanks - very well supported. The venue was unbelievable! Happy to support another one.

Mike Tomkins ('69-'76)

## Dinner feedback

A huge thank you and congratulations for the wonderful dinner on Saturday at the Painted Hall. It was a superb occasion and a great thrill to be a part of it. You did a grand job. It was great to see so many faces we knew – in addition to the more regular ones – and to celebrate with everyone. That was our first time in the Hall itself and it was a memorable setting for such a night.

Keith Bradbrook (1966-73) and Daryle Bradbrook (nee Hayes 1965-72)

It was an inspiration to have the dinner in the Painted Hall, and I would like to congratulate and thank most sincerely you and all your team for all your hard work. It produced a very special and highly successful evening and it was a privilege to be there. Your speech was just right and came over very well, Mr President. Now take a holiday.

Bill Wedge ('32-'38)

Thanks for organising a fantastic evening, we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. It was a shame that there wasn't enough time to speak to everyone. It was great to see so many old friends after such a long time. I doubt it will ever be done again but it would be great if we could do something special every five years. Thanks again for all your efforts.

Keith Banks ('66-'73)

The food and the wine were excellent.

Fred Cook ('58-'65)



## Dinner feedback

I'm almost better and I'm certain that it was nothing to do with the food on Saturday. I dropped Monty a line earlier to say how much Belinda, my daughter and I enjoyed the evening which I thought was a great success, it was such a pleasure to meet up with some old school friends and reminisce over past times and also catch up with what everyone had done and was doing. I wish we could all be around to celebrate the next 100 years!

Dan Calnan ('58-'65)

Rosemary and I are very grateful to you both and to the others of the organising committee for making the Centenary Dinner such a memorable and splendid event. We had a great time and it was so special to get together with so many friends not seen for far too many years. I was particularly touched and delighted to receive a detention from Terry Hall (my former Physics teacher) - something I didn't manage to achieve whilst at school (at least not from him)!

Phil Snaith ('64-'71)

Thank you and the team for organising that super evening down in Greenwich. I really enjoyed it and indeed the trip round the school with the head. We definitely came away with the idea that he knew where he wanted to take the school and that he had the capacity to follow through. He mentioned bringing back the House system, which everybody seemed to think was a good idea.

Stephen Ingle ('52-'59)

Well, what a splendid event! A most enjoyable & memorable evening. The grand-ness of the location was very appropriate, and the Painted Hall certainly looked most splendid on our entry, with candelabra shining, glass gleaming and spotless white linen; the china with its distinctive motifs, being an added bonus. I was pleased to meet up with & chat to several folk I knew from schooldays but had not seen since (although it was a pity so few girls from our year came). Christine (Hill) & I thought the excellence of the food served deserved a special mention - and served in very pleasant manner too. The opportunity to hear the school choir - in addition to two able soloists - was an added bonus; thanks are due here to the head of music, in particular. However the acoustics of the vast hall sadly did not work in their favour, & I suspect it was similar difficulties dogging the valiant fellows, including yourself, using the P.A. system. However, much of the speeches *was* audible to us, and added to the fun and interest of the evening. The Association seems in very good hands.

Pat Bagwell (née Pinson '58-'65)

A great night on Saturday. Excellent food, wonderful venue and superb company.

Colin Barnes ('59-'66)

Well done Tony - a memorable night had by all if only for the massive headaches the next morning.

Richard Thomas ('76-'83)

I am adding my thanks and congratulations to the many you must have received by now from Old Roans who were lucky enough to be present last Saturday week at the Centenary Dinner. Thank you for the well-directed and sustained effort you and the rest of your team made over the time it took to plan the event. Warmest congratulations on achieving such a worthwhile and memorable outcome for us all. I was so glad to have the chance of meeting contemporaries, some of whom I am in regular contact with (Craig Osborne, Martin Muggeridge and Joe Connolly) and others whom I have not seen since the day I left the school. My wife Margaret enjoyed herself immensely, and was very impressed by the ongoing success of our Association and by the obvious affection in which the school is held by so many ORs. I thought the music was excellent. How I enjoyed singing the School Song. I had brought along my old green-covered hymn book especially for the event and sang it from there. Problem was the print is small and the lighting was iffy; I should have tucked my pride away and read the words thoughtfully provided on the menu card!

Chris Martyn ('56-'63)

Thanks to everyone who put together this wonderful event. A colleague told me that the Painted Hall had appeared in the Cary Grant film "Indiscreet" and recommend it to anyone who wants to relive the scenario. It was an enjoyable experience also visiting the school.

Mike Hansford ('54-'58)

The Centenary was much more than the event I was expecting; meeting all my former pupils and staff. I was made aware of my affectionate feelings towards the school, I am now still part of Roan and not just a fellow who taught there a long time ago. Affection, pride and concern are all words I associate with my memories. The affection was not one-way either, I was delighted and flattered by the attention of my former pupils—wonderful! It was a wonderful occasion.

Bill Ellis (Staff '56-'84)

Gill and I enjoyed the ORA centenary dinner especially the venue. I remember singing treble in my first year in the school for founder's day there. I must congratulate you and all concerned in organising a splendid evening for us. It was a pity not to be able to circulate more - but that's life and we cannot do everything.

Tony Gasson ('48-'55)

Congratulation on organising such a memorable and enjoyable event. The visit to the old school on Sunday was equally nostalgic and the positive attitude of the senior staff inspires hope for the future of our wonderful institution.

David Hamblen ('45-'52)

Margaret and I wanted to let you know how much we enjoyed last Saturday. It was everything we hoped it would be.

Mike West ('58-'65)



## Dinner feedback

Thank you for your part in organising such a brilliant event. The whole event was an enormous success and I'm grateful to have received a ticket.

Simon Ditchfield ('70-'77)

A splendid dinner and what a fitting venue to celebrate our Centenary.

Chris Strong ('64-'71)

Just a short note to say how much we enjoyed last night. Congratulations to you and your team.

Richard (1955-61) & Amanda Lancaster

It was a great evening. I really enjoyed catching up with Terry and Val (Hall) and seeing how everyone had changed apart from ageing!

Phil Prosser ('66-'73)

I presume by now the post-mortem has been conducted and everybody has concluded that it was a fantastic success.

Alastair (Mitch) Mitchell ('65-'72)

It was a very enjoyable occasion—the venue was magnificent, the food excellent and the company most enjoyable. The references to the Girls School and our staff during the toasts and speeches were much appreciated by all those on my table.

Anne Bristow ('56-'62)

A belated message of thanks to you and all those who helped to organise the celebrations on Saturday. It was a great success and very much enjoyed!

Rob Bain ('64-'71)

Thank you for inviting us to perform. It was a privilege for students to perform in such a prestigious venue and they really enjoyed it.

Rachel McGaw (Music Department)

Major Douglas Goddard died shortly after the dinner. He had sent his apologies and a message: pass on my good wishes for what will undoubtedly be a momentous celebration. I wonder if any of my contemporaries from 1933-38 will be with you. Tragically, I know that 8 of my Poyser's Vths were killed in WW2.

### Menu

**Smoked chicken & apricot timbale  
with honey dressing**

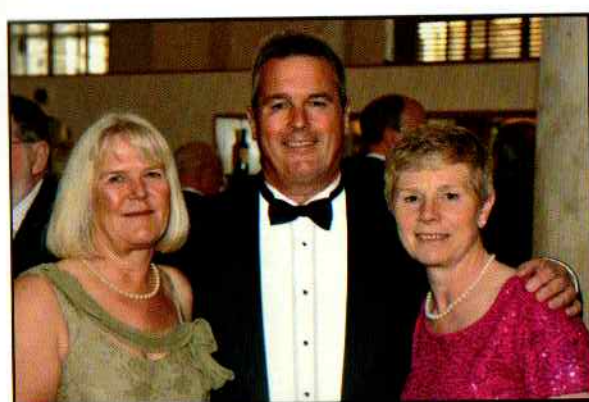
**Roast rump of lamb  
sweet potato boulangere  
wilted curly kale  
pan jus**

**Rhubarb and vanilla tart with  
nutmeg cream**

**Coffee and mints**







Linda Nelson, Steve Nelson, Shirley Nelson



Dave Bryden & Fritz Henning



Brian Davis & Peter Blackmore



Alan Burgess, Brian Davis, Martin Pink, Tony Slaney, David Hamblen



Brian Hamer & Doug Weaver



Mike Titheridge



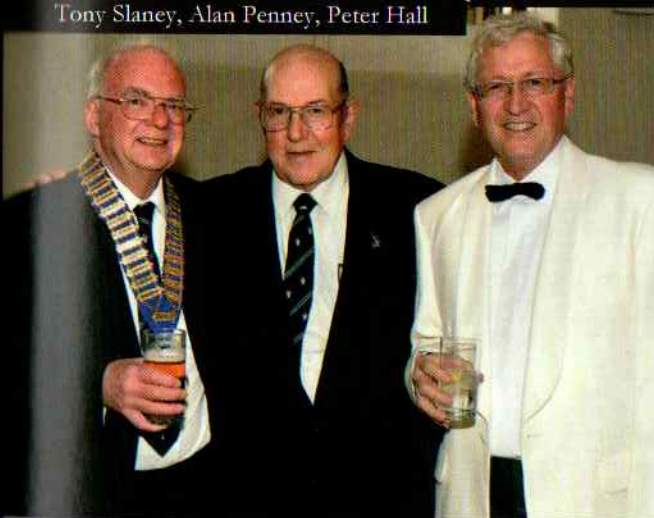
Angela Langley & Gill Drury



Keith Biles & Derek Biles  
Tony Slaney, Alan Penney, Peter Hall



Margaret Martyn, Ruth Davenport, Craig Osborne, Chris Martyn  
Damien, Trafford, Peter Trafford, Bill Ellis



Hazel Blackmore & Brian Matthews





Graham Johnson



Simon Tong



John Roan School Choir







A very big welcome to all members of the Old Roan Association and your guests at this special celebration to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association. I am deeply honoured to be elected your president for this anniversary year. It must not be forgotten that the Old Roan Girls' Association had been founded in 1894 but few records appear to be available. The two Associations merged in 1980 at the same time as the Schools.

We have representatives from all the Roan Schools open during the last century. Peter Trafford, one of just three current members to have attended Eastney Street, has come up from Wells in Somerset. He joined the preparatory department in 1928 just before the move to Maze Hill. A contemporary of Peter's is Bill Wedge. However he joined the School after the move and for his sins joined the same bank as myself, Barclays. Others who were at the School before the Second World War here tonight are Doreen Fidler, Jo Hook and Alan Weir and there are Frazer Lochtie and John Norris from the "new" John Roan School. There are several who

have travelled a long way. We have one from the Irish Republic, two from France, one each from Germany, Canada and the USA, two from Australia and one from the Falkland Islands.

We have had several apologies from members unable to be here. One from Nigel Ballantyne, a member of staff from 1963-2001 when he left to continue teaching Drama at Townley Grammar School, Bexleyheath. His excuse is that it is his daughter's wedding. He says it was great reading the list of those who are attending and he is really sorry to be missing it. We also heard from Ann Scott (head 1974-79) and from the late Madeline Barber (head 1968-74) both of whom wished us every success. Many others thought it was a great idea and wished us well.

Over 200 out of the 900 odd members are here tonight which represents a wonderful turnout considering membership is spread throughout the country and about 70 now living abroad.

### History

In the Painted Hall we are nearer the School's origins than almost any where else as the first school was built at the corner of Romney Road and King William Walk where it remained until 1808 when the land was surrendered to Greenwich Seamen's Hospital who wished to round off their estate. As some of you will remember, after St. Alfege's Church was bombed towards the end of the Second World War, Founder's Day services were conducted in the Chapel under which we met

earlier this evening. Tonight we are celebrating the centenary of the Old Roan Association which was founded on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1911 by forming a committee which included Mr Crofts, Mr Potter and Mr Parker of the staff and Mr A A Robinson who had left the School in 1892. Most of the staff's salaries at both Schools had just been increased by £10 per annum; Mr Potter's, as senior master, rose from £310 to £320. The governors' clerk and secretary who had held that post for 33 years and then aged 77 was paid £150 plus £60 per annum on his retirement. I am grateful to Linda Nelson, current chair of the John Roan Foundation Trust, for advising me that in order to provide suitable dining accommodation for the boys, provision was made by putting trestle-tables in the lavatory.

Roan had a range of fees the basic of which was two guineas per term reduced for those who passed certain exams plus some free places.

Annual membership subscription to the Association was one shilling. The first annual dinner was held in 1911, the company numbering over ninety. Both the Boys and Girls schools were charged one guinea for advertising on the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. The London General Omnibus Company ran its last horse bus in October. Barclays Bank formed its hockey section and is celebrating its centenary this evening - at Lords.

In 1912 the School acquired a ground at Kidbrook (then without an 'e') and

Association subscriptions increased to two shillings and sixpence but to include the Roan Magazine post free. By the summer of 1912 there were over 200 members. Life membership was introduced in 1913 at one guinea. Some activities had started before the First World War, but most did not continue. In the twenties several were revived. Old Roan football and tennis was not initially played at the School Field, as was cricket, but at a ground in the nearby Weigall Road.

Money was raised by both Schools and former pupils through a War Memorial Fund and the War Memorial Pavilion at the School Field was opened in 1927. In the same year the predecessor of the Roan Theatre Company was formed. The Girls' had their own Dramatic Society. In 1928 the new Maze Hill site was opened with, amongst others, a selected number of Roan Girls and representatives of the Old Boys. A Masonic Lodge for Old Roans was founded in 1929. In 1938 the secretaries of many Old Boy Associations, including ours, were summoned to the War Office to consider recruiting for the Anti-Aircraft Defence of London. A second War Memorial Fund, this time considerably funded by Old Boys, led to the establishing of the Old Roan Club with its War Memorial Room in 1956.

The John Roan Club has succeeded the Old Roan Club and is trying to ensure the long term future of the Association by renewing the close links between the Association and the



## Dinner-President

School particularly by encouraging school leavers to use the facilities at the playing field and becoming members of both the Club and Association.

## Thanks

Tonight would not have been possible without a great deal of planning. Our social secretary, Monty Smith, came up with the idea to mark the centenary by replacing the annual reunion dinner at the Club with an event being held at a prodigious venue and eventually it was decided to sound out the Old Royal Naval College. The treasurer agreed we had enough funds available from members subscriptions built up over many years to subsidise the occasion and I hope those new or rejoining members will appreciate my

sometimes bullying tactics to make sure all Old Roans here are paid up members and that they realise it is past members' subscriptions that have kept the cost down. A small working party was set up consisting of Monty, Neal, our treasurer, Mike Titheridge, Old Roan Club chairman, and myself to organise the event. We have had input from Graham Johnson, Trevor Talbot and David Horsburgh, together with Des Malone, Rachel McGaw and the School Choir. I would like to thank all of them on your behalf and particularly Monty who has born the lion's share of work.

I hope you have renewed acquaintances with friends, sometimes not seen for many years, and enjoy the rest of the evening.



Tony Slaney



Prof. David Hamblen, Tony Slaney, Derek Shea



Des Malone



Dr. Peter Trafford, Chris Strong, Tony Slaney

## Reunions – 1962 Girls



### Back row:

Jacky Lelliott, May Herbert, Linda Taylor, Pat O'Brien, Joan Looker, Mr. Billington (Maths), Margaret Allan, Joanna Carr, Gill Finch, Carole Laidler, Susan Pinkstone, Miss Clipsham (Chemistry), Miss Pigott (Physics), Miss Packer (Maths), Brenda Purkiss, Kathy Jewell, Linda Parris.

### Girls on right standing:

Gillian Coles (hands on hips), Wendy Mills, Moira Stapleton, Elizabeth Stanford, Philippa Smith, Diana Montague, Susan Durey

### Kneeling on left:

Elizabeth Hunt, Ann Goad, Jane Lashbrook

### Front:

Christine Clements, Margaret Wyton, Cathy Saltmarsh, Katie Bideaux, Margaret Johnson, Frances Boddy

In September 1962, some sixty, nervous, eleven-year-old girls in green made their way down Devonshire Drive, Greenwich for their first day at the Roan School for Girls.

Forty nine years later, twenty two of those same girls made their way to the school playing field pavilion to celebrate their 60th birthdays. There were no nerves this time, very little green, but abundant memories of that first day.

The class of '62 came from all parts of the country to chat over old times, exchange old school photos and catch up on one another's lives. This was the latest in a series of get-togethers the

girls had had over the years - this one organised by Liz Appleby (née Hunt) and Jacky Whitbread (née Lelliott). And the flag was kept flying for the teachers from that decade by Miss Sturgess who taught English to many of those at the reunion.

Apart from the usual reminiscing, there were marriages, divorces, children and grandchildren to catch up on and also a run down of who was still working and who had taken retirement. Some were still teaching, others had taken voluntary exit from the civil service and one or two were even considering pursuing a new and different career such as heir hunting!



The pavilion location led to many memories of hockey and tennis lessons at the field and the recollection of the lines of lorries and their drivers that used to park up parallel to the pitches and courts - much to the embarrassment of us girls.

1985



At 50—Reunion 2001



60th Birthday Reunion (1962-69) - 10th September 2011

Standing from left: Cathy Saltmarsh, Marilyn Judson, Linda Spring, Kathy Jewell, May Herbert, Gillian Finch, Sylvia Bentley, Jane Hackett, Elizabeth Hunt, Jacky Lelliott, Pat O'Brien, Christine Clements, Miss Sturgess, Diana Montague, Joan Looker, Brenda Purkiss  
Sitting: Kathryn Goodwin, Elizabeth Stanford, Barbara Bray, Paulette Roiz De Sa, Margaret Wyton, Margaret Johnson, Wendy Mills

## '62 Reunions

Then it was time for a late buffet lunch, a few drinks, the cutting of the cake (complete with badge) and the inevitable group pic. Hats off to Brenda's husband for admirably fulfilling the latter task and getting lumbered with a dozen or so cameras and orders to take two on each. What a gent!

As those who had travelled long distances started to drift off, all that was missing was a rendition of the school hymn - 'O Brother Man'. But then for the class of '62 there's always next time.....

Diana Cordwell (née Montague)



Roan Girls—Teachers c1967

Back row:

Mademoiselle Josic, Miss Adams, Miss Vincent, Mrs. Roberts, Miss Hall, Miss Pigott, Miss Wretts-Smith, Rev Smith, Miss Tilstone, Miss Clipsham, Mrs. Birchmore, Mrs. Jeffries

Sitting:

Mrs. Durden, Mr. Haskell, Mrs. Poore, Miss Hope, Mr. Billington, Miss Gatland, Miss Sturgess, Miss Cowie



In May 2009 the Old Roan Association voted in favour of the launch of a new body to improve facilities and services offered at the John Roan Playing Fields for members of the extended 'John Roan family'.

For many years now Old Roan football and cricket teams have accepted non Old Roans to make up their numbers. Indeed, the cricket club is now known as the Roan Lambethans C. C. We also have several other teams using the playing fields, including a ladies football team and several junior (boys and girls) football sides. Therefore the new 'John Roan Club' was formed, to which anyone using the club's facilities is entitled to join, subject to approval.

Another motivation for the creation of the new club was to create much stronger links with the school to ensure that more students, parents and teachers become members. Many do not realise that they can use the sports facilities outside of school hours and during the holidays, or that the clubhouse is available for hire for members' private parties as well as providing a safe and welcoming environment for social gatherings. Ultimately it would be great if we can encourage more students to join the teams playing sport at the club as, currently, the numbers coming from the school are very limited.

We are working closely with the JRSA (parents' association) who are already using the playing fields for some of their functions. Last year they held their summer barbeque and social

evening there and we understand that they are planning something for this summer too. We have two members of JRSA sitting on the JRC committee, as well as members of staff, including the deputy head and student representatives from years 12 & 13 (the sixth form).

The rest of the committee is made up of members representing the groups using the club as well as the elected officers. In this way we hope that we can listen to members' requirements and (hopefully, constructive) criticism and use their ideas to improve things over time.

We have recently had a new floor laid in the hall, which will shortly be redecorated as will the Memorial Bar – we plan to turn this into a 'Sports' style bar, which will, hopefully, appeal more to students and younger members generally. The bar has been updated and we have a bar manager, Malcolm Calder, who some of you will know as he is a Lambethan and has been involved with RLCC for many years. A good selection of real ales is now on offer and Malcolm has organised a few mini beer festivals over special weekends, such as last year's Royal Wedding. Bar snacks and food are now offered at weekends after matches and Sky Sports TV is available on large screens in both bars.

We endeavour to organise a varied programme of events and activities at the club. There are regular quiz nights, live music performances of all sorts

and our 'Vinyl Nights', where members bring a selection of three records (vinyl of course!) and take turns at being DJ – these have proved very popular. We have also held Comedy Nights, which have featured comedian and ex Roan pupil Brian 'Arthur' Smith. He also kindly organised an Arthur Smith XI v President's XI cricket match at the club last summer and we hope that he will repeat that this year.

The Roan Theatre Company rehearses at the club and is always looking for new members. In March it staged its award-winning production of 'Proof' there.

The Roan Foundation trustees have generously spent a lot of money upgrading the tennis courts and training areas, with new floodlighting being provided as well as the resurfacing and extension of the car parking area. We are having new external lighting installed and are currently looking into the viability of CCTV to provide additional security.

The club is now open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings and longer at weekends (times vary, depending on the season). On weekday evenings several teams use the floodlit areas for training and it is gratifying to see so many people using the playing fields and the clubhouse afterwards, providing a convivial buzz in the bar.

Membership of the John Roan Club is £15 or £10 for members of the Old Roan Association. Of course we don't

expect ORA members who live far away and cannot therefore use the club regularly to pay to join. However, the subscription fees do enable us to upgrade and improve the club, so please join us if you can. Alternatively, you can ask to be placed on our database, to receive regular emails of events at the club, in case there is something that takes your fancy.

Our aim is to make the playing fields and pavilion as attractive and appealing to members as possible and to encourage new users – we must be doing something right as we have had an application from another local cricket team to use our facilities this summer – Colfe's!





## Bill Ellis—welcome back!

Bill attended the funeral for Alf & Beryl in March 2011 and found himself surrounded afterwards by Old Roans delighted to see him. He subsequently attended the Centenary Dinner and has rejoined the ORA.

Bill now lives in Taunton in Somerset. He left Roan in 1980 and bought a smallholding in Sussex with 20 acres, sheep, calves and a tractor and stayed there until 1988. He returned to part-time teaching which led to T.E.F.L. and three years in Malaysia and Singapore working for the British Council in Kuala Lumpur. He retired again, this time to Somerset, and spends his time playing bridge, snooker and swimming. He plays the trumpet in the Taunton Concert Band and has his own jazz group—"Bill's Bunch" - which practises in the afternoon because they are retired.

Bill created the school band in the 1960s separate from the uninspired conventional music and ensembles on offer at that time. The band grew out of the school revues and developed into a full concert band that played at many public functions and involved several members of staff, including Alf, Barry Thomas and Terry Hall, and many enthusiastic students. Bill and the band are fondly remembered and this hugely popular feature of his time at Roan overshadowed his considerable contribution to the P.E. Department, school sports and the gym.



Bill stayed in contact with Alf and visited him a few weeks before he died—his mind was still sharp and we enjoyed happy memories of school life. Bill brought to Alf's funeral the photograph of the Staff football team in 1966.



**Bill Ellis with under 12 cup winners 1966**  
Keith Thomas, Geoff Dennis, Bob Grimwood



**Staff v Prefects—1966**

Back row: Bill Ellis (2nd from left) & D.B. Leaver (far right)  
Front row: B.C. Matthews, D. Cooper, J. Sewell, R. Thorp, A. Knott

## Photo-Gallery—Roan Club 1980





## Alf Knott—responses to the ORA notification

**I am sorry to let you know that Alf Knott died on 10th March 2011 aged 81**

The funeral will be at Eltham Crematorium on 28th March at 10:00 a.m. Sadly this will be a double funeral as his wife, Beryl died recently, on 23rd February.

Alf was a pupil at Roan 1943-47 leaving as captain of the School, captain of Blake House, joint-captain of athletics, football and athletic colours and was awarded the Roan Exhibition prize. He returned as a member of staff in 1954, retiring as a deputy head in 1984. Both he and Beryl took an active part in the Old Roan Dramatic Society (now the Roan Theatre Company) and he was president of the Old Roan Association 1989/90. He would be known to thousands who passed through the School.

Farewell to the coolest dude I knew in the fifties. Remember his shiny black hair and Latin looks, the way he played the piano and smoked a cigarette, wore an academic gown with style, smashed a quick fifty in the masters v boys match and then went down in the scorebook as 'retired to go to the theatre' and how he introduced us to French café songs, 'The wages of fear' and 'Rififi'. Don't be sad, just proud to have known him. I'm off to listen to some Charles Trénet.

Pete Thompson ('54-'61)

It is sad news he was a great Old Roan, the end of a generation

Viv Lawrence ('64-'67)

I hope that the 28th can in some way be a celebration of his life that touched, guided and inspired so many people.

David Sears ('72-'79)

Really, really sad news. I have memories of Alf from my very first day at Roan in '66 - a wonderful man. Sad too about Beryl. Both Alf and Beryl (plus their boys) drove me around the Lake District in their blue mini when I broke my arm at Braithwaite in '67. Those days started something and I go to the Lakes at Braithwaite a few times a year. Have a lot to remember and thank them for. Must have been fate - I walked up Maze Hill past their old house yesterday.

Keith Bradbrook ('66-'73)

I am so very sorry to hear this sad news. I must have been one of very few, if not the only one, who joined the school when Alf was School Captain (I started in 1946) and was still there as a pupil when he returned as a teacher (I left in 1955). Although he did not teach me he was certainly held in high regard in both the capacities in which I knew him.

Trevor Craddock ('46-'55)

## Alf Knott—emails

I will always associate him with the very strange morning when there were police all over the school and a hurried staff meeting after the news embargo and Alf being shot by an IRA member with a very old phone book as it turned out. The natural assumption of the police to look for a suspect at school was not so surprising and within an hour or so they had probably narrowed it down to around 50, all recent recipients of Alf's nose pinch.

Jerry Page ('71-'78)

I have always been grateful for the excellent grounding in English Alf Knott gave me. He was a fine teacher.

Nigel Turner ('59-'67)

That's so sad indeed. Alfie was such a big part of what the school was about.

John Coyle ('76-'83)

Alf was my role model - the sort of person I aspired to be (leaving aside the football and cricket!!) when I was at school and later when I started teaching. Needless to say I fell far short of my aspirations. Please pass on my condolences to Paul and Chris - they won't remember me but I was detailed to look after them on the Fells when Alf and Beryl joined us one year at Braithwaite. Both Alf and Beryl will be sadly missed.

Ray Stone ('59-'67)

I am very sad to hear this news as I always liked and admired Alfie, although I was never actually in any of his classes. I knew him first for his production of the School Revue in which I appeared, and later both him and Beryl through the ORDS.

Bob Burton ('59-'66)

I was very sad to hear the news of Alf and Beryl. As a theatre player, we had so many great moments together.

Mike Smith ('73-'80)

That's desperately sad news. I was only talking to Martin about Beryl the other day. It's often the way these things happen. He was a good bloke.

Steve Rider ('61-'68)

Thank you for letting us know of the deaths of Alf and Beryl Knott—very sad news indeed for contemporaries and old friends of the class of '47 like me. Alf and Beryl were a very gifted couple, well-suited to one another in daily life; it is fitting that they should have taken their leave of us virtually together.

Dick Cody ('40-'47)

Alf was a top man. I was at school 71-78 with Paul and was there when Alf was shot, he was my drummer as well!

Terry Chance ('71-'78)



I did not know him well but recognised his great contribution to the Roan schools and was so impressed with his courage and the way in which he coped with the attack on his home in the 1970's.

Beryl Ann Scott  
(headteacher, Roan Girls 1975-1979)

For those of us attending school between '64 and '71, he was amongst the first, or even *the* first, teacher we will always associate with our time at Roan. Truly someone we looked up to and respected.

John Hutley ('64-'71)

So sorry to hear about Alfie, to my mind he was the greatest teacher in any subject I ever met. Many of his sayings remain with me today, as fresh as when I heard them 50 years ago. A very fine man.

Colin Barnes ('59-'66)

He was an important person in my life, as he was to countless others; a man whom we'd all say that our own lives were enhanced from having known him.

Cliff Benford ('71-'77)

I remember his jazz piano for the Jazz Band and I went to his house for tea to save me coming home and returning for an evening concert - I expect '68

Stuart Horsburgh ('66-'71)

Fondly remembered for his "Amo, Amas, Amat"

Lee Tierney ('71-'77)

I have great memories of Alf dating back at the school immediately post-war when he was School Captain and I was Captain of Raleigh House. I also played football under his captaincy of the victorious 1946-47 First Eleven, an unbeaten record.

Dennis Merrett ('37-'47)

He was in the same form as me after we came back from evacuation. You can tell by the ages, he was 81 and I am 83, that he was a bright lad from an early age. I think he matriculated at about 15. Those were the days.

William Moore ('38-'44)

I was very sad to read about Alfie, so many great stories/ memories! Starting with his Monday morning football summary (which Graham Johnson did a fantastic impression of!), through my A level English lit to the school revues. Am sitting here just smiling!

Brian West ('63-'70)

Alf's first contact with the pupils was as form master of the 4th form in 1954, which I was a member of! Alf followed Uni with his national service and then straight back to the Roan School. Man and boy then! If your statement about him retiring in 1984 is correct, he retired quite young.

Terry Mullard ('52-'58)

My mother bought their flat in Burnt Ash Road, No. 51a, next door to Pick and Frank Barnes, when my father died back in 1965. The Knott family moved to that lovely white house on Maze Hill—my eye has always been drawn to it - it is unique!

Originally it was Beryl I took to - warm and gentle in her approach and someone to watch for on the tv ads! I knew someone famous!! Alfie, as he was known to us originally, was someone not to be feared, but someone to definitely respect. He had a way of being - that was only shared when he knew you well - and then he would hold you in the same respect which never faltered. It was through the amateur dramatics that I came to know him better.

I keep thinking about Paul and Chris losing both parents so close together - such a void, but in another way something very beautiful - and I think that is the bit that I would treasure.

Mary Anslow (formerly Aitchison née Chapman '62-'68)

Alf Knott was a real hero to many of us - I can still remember a great deal of his lessons (and jokes). It was nice reading the Arthur Smith book to confirm I was not alone.

I am afraid I will not be there on 28 March (I live and work in Wales) but I will be thinking about this great man.

Alan Willson ('65-'70)

I have very fond memories of Alfie Knott and he taught me some valuable lessons in life. One time in particular I went to see him to complain about a detention I received when, in my view, it was totally unwarranted. Alfie listened patiently to my protestations, and whilst begrudgingly agreeing that I may in fact have an argument, reminded me of the numbers of times I had gone unpunished for other misdemeanours and just to accept it. I can still picture the scene as if it were yesterday. Also, his drum rolls were the stuff of legend

Beryl was a lovely lady and, in my eyes, the best mum a mate could have. Her willingness to make us cheese on toast whatever the time still brings a smile to my face. I rarely get to Greenwich these days but whenever I do and I drive up/down Maze Hill I always take a look at 101 and pay my respects.

Mike Peacock ('72-'79)

I thoroughly enjoyed my one year studying English under him. He would march into the room, immaculately dressed, cross to the window, park himself on the radiator, and say, "Right...", and the lesson would be away. I still remember one glorious tale he told that sucked us all in as he lowered his voice, until, suddenly, at the end, coming out with the dénouement full voice, and making us all jump! Pure theatre!

Michael Donovan ('60-'66)



I was the last in a line of Shea's at Roan that ran from 1965 until 1982 when I left. Alf was a daily influence in all of our lives, and from the perspective of thirty odd years later, he had a great and lasting impact on us all. His contribution to the academic life of the school paled into insignificance when compared to his efforts with school plays and musicals. I still occasionally find myself singing a line or two of songs that he wrote for reviews. At age 13 these just seemed funny songs to sing along to on stage, but now I realise that the man had an extraordinary talent with words, music and humour.

Below is a verse from a sketch called "Farmers" featured in some review too far away to recall clearly. Needless to say it was sung with what only South London boys, who had only been to Kent or Braithwaite, could muster as a West Country accent:

*A rose by any other name,  
the poet says is just the same  
but it don't smell 'arf as sweet  
as when it's sticking to your feet*

I first laid eyes on the legend that was Alf when attending a performance of a school musical that one of my elder brothers was in. Alf was sat at the drum kit, with his thick black specs on, a ref's whistle in his mouth and playing the theme to "Match of the Day". That, I decided, was a wild and crazy guy, albeit scary looking. Alf would often play boogie-woogie at the school piano in the hall as the last of the dinner kids were finishing up. He

made it look so easy, I wish I had known then that his sort of talent was gold dust.

Dave Shea (Wellington, NZ '75-'82)

"At Tony Slaney's request I hit my email old scholar's list to pass on the sad news of Alf's departure. Not surprisingly the replies expressed regret and no little affection for the man himself. One reply, from my old schoolmate of 54 years, by name Martin Muggeridge, added that he thought he still owed Alf 300 lines - by way of penance for some distant misdeed. Martin works in County Kerry and can't attend the funeral but on his behalf I would like to ask Alf's family if they would be prepared to wipe this debt.

Ken Franklin ('56-'63)

I remember him with respect and affection. He was my form tutor and English teacher in my fourth year. He was a great character and made my un illustrious and somewhat underachieving time at Roan more bearable. His post match reports on a Monday morning were always energised and theatrical with his leaping bound onto the stage becoming his individual trade mark. I remember a school review mimicking AK where the very act of jumping on the stage was parodied and brought the house down. I also remember my mum cutting out the front page article/ photograph in The Telegraph of Alf sitting in bed after being shot by the IRA.

Neil Harvey ('65-'72)

## Alf and Beryl's Funeral: Eltham Crematorium. 28 March 2011

It was a warm and sunny spring morning and more than 100 Old Roans, family and colleagues crowded into the chapel. It was a humanist ceremony, the simple caskets being made of basketwork and decorated with spring flowers.

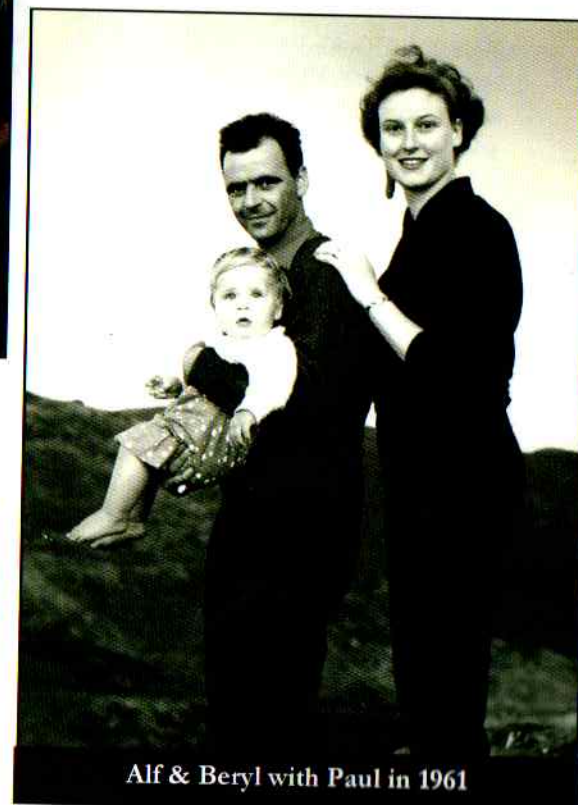
The chosen music was *Two Sleepy People* by Fats Waller and *Riverman* by Nick Drake. Alf's sons, Christopher (the actor) and Paul (the property developer) narrated tales of their Mum and Dad. After the committal we filed out, met up and chatted with colleagues and family.

Chris confirmed that despite a) being shot by the IRA b) a double heart by-pass operation and c) a stay in hospital before Christmas 2010, Alf would choose the time to die and—according to Chris - it was when he heard that Beryl had died.

"He just gave up" spoke Chris.

The funeral was a fine tribute to a fine gentleman and a real lady.

David A Bryden ('54-'61)



Alf & Beryl with Paul in 1961



## Alf & Beryl Knott – some memories from Pip Wedge

While at my age I find myself all too often hearing sad news about old friends, I had always thought of Alf and Beryl as indestructible. They were both younger than me, they had always been there, and I was surely supposed to go first. Though I left for Canada in 1965, we kept in touch, exchanged Christmas greetings regularly, and had a splendid reunion in Toronto some time in the '90s.

Beryl was my secretary from 1953 to 1957, first at Philips Records and later at Associated-Rediffusion, the first commercial television station to go on the air, in 1955. She came to my birthday party at Park West in December 1955, where she first met another guest, one Alf Knott, with whom I had been at Roan and with whom I had acted in ORDS plays. That was how it all began – but I have to confess that I thought it slightly graceless of Alfie (we called him Alfie in those days, before he achieved greater eminence by returning to Roan as a teacher) to write of such a momentous occasion as he did in the May 1989 issue of the Roan Magazine:

*"I had met her when I was in The Strange Case of Blondie White with Pip Wedge, whose secretary she was. He invited me to his birthday party in a minuscule but very swanky flat off the Edgware Road, and there she was, afloat*

*like a lily on a pond full of honking geese, who turned out to be minor show-biz celebrities of the Hughie Green, Shani Wallis calibre".*

Trying to turn the other cheek with as much grace as I could manage, this was my response in an article in the August 1989 issue, after I reminisced briefly on our time at Roan together:

*"My friendship with Alfie continued after I left Roan, went in the Navy, and later joined the Old Roan Dramatic Society. Yes, Alfie did meet Beryl at my place at a party, though I'm not sure either Hughie Green or Shani Wallis would appreciate being categorized as part of a group of honking geese. I know Hughie might sue if he saw himself described only as a 'minor celebrity'. He does tend to sue a lot."*

Others will have many more recent memories to recount of the times they were fortunate enough to spend in the company of those two lovely people, whose passing has hit me so hard. But I was very, very lucky to enjoy their friendship – and yes, their love – in what were very special early days for us all.

Sleep well, dear friends. See you in the morning.

Philip (Pip) Wedge ('39–'44)  
March 2011

## My Tribute to Alf & Beryl Knott

Trevor Talbot ('64-'71)

When we lost first Beryl, and within two weeks Alf Knott earlier this year, it came as a terrible shock to say the least. When I say "we", I refer to both myself personally and collectively with all my colleagues in the Roan Theatre Company, especially those who, like me, have been around for a good number of years.



Alf and Trevor—Roan Theatre Company "Music Hall" in 1992

I first met Alf on my very first day at the Roan School, when he arrived to join thirty of us in the school hall for our first assembly as our form master. He looked suave, sophisticated, and my first impression was of his resembling a Hollywood star! We were all to spend our first year, thankfully as I now realise, in form 1K. Throughout my time at the school Alf was an excellent English teacher and encouraged me greatly in my exploits in school drama and the various school productions which were to follow.

One afternoon, while rehearsing the musical review, "1066 and all that", I met his beloved wife, Beryl, for the first time, who was helping out with the costuming of this lavish production. I recognised her immediately from the TV adverts she often featured in at that time, and she was very complimentary about my performance as the Common Man. So I therefore took an immediate liking to her!

That was when I was 14 years of age, and much to my delight I still knew them both when I was 56 years of age through our common interest in amateur theatre and membership of the Roan Theatre Company. They went from being my form master and his wife to becoming my very good friends of many years standing, friendship which I treasured greatly. I had the pleasure of appearing on stage with them both, and of being skilfully directed by Alf.

They will also be remembered as superb hosts, both at after-show parties at their place in Maze Hill, and at endless rehearsals which we held twice a week in their large back room. They were very willing hosts, and I believe they found much enjoyment in playing host and hostess to us all.

Thanks, Alf and Beryl. Gone now, but never forgotten.



When I heard the sad news from my brother, many memories of Alf of course came flooding back. Looking back across the years to those days, my overriding thought is how much I owe him, and always will. Many others will doubtless feel the same.

To start with the obvious, Alf was a great teacher. And yet his approach to teaching was not conventional, certainly not for those days. I was in his English class for five years (1964-69), he was my form teacher as well for a couple of years, and yet I can't remember him ever setting homework of the traditional set exercise variety. Instead, he would ask you to read a few chapters or verses of a given text, which we would then review and discuss together as a class in the next lesson, him included. To me, it felt like we were all learning together. In reality of course, he was the expert guide who had travelled the same route many times before, but it was never obvious because his direction was always given with a light touch and good humour. He never insisted, and his preferred approach was always collaborative. He credited you with intelligence, which he then strongly encouraged you to apply. And for a great many of us his approach obviously worked. Decades of academic success by his classes proves it beyond any doubt. The things we learn voluntarily also tend to stick with us. In my case, the things I learned in his class have stayed with me and been hugely valuable ever since.

The same was true on a personal level. In his class, individual input was always invited, indeed demanded. Shrinking violets were never suffered gladly. Your opinions might be questioned, very often in fact they would be vigorously challenged as part of the learning process. What was never questioned, however, was your right to express them and to be heard. He always treated you with adult respect and the floor was always yours on demand. Not surprisingly, the resulting debate could often be lively and far ranging.

And again it succeeded. The intellectual stimulation we received was enormous, and the opportunity to be heard did wonders for adolescent self esteem and confidence. Even though we didn't realise it at the time, certainly I didn't, his focus on our personal as well as academic development showed great foresight and was hugely beneficial to us all.

He leaves behind a wonderful legacy. In its long history, Roan School can never have been served better by anyone. Of all the many great teachers the school has had over the years, surely none can ever have been held in higher esteem or affection by so many, a fitting tribute to his immense contribution.

Thanks for everything, Alf. How lucky we were.

Instant memories of Alf - learning to sing 'Boum' and 'Pigalle' in a French class; listening to the plot of 'The Wages of Fear' years before I ever got to see the movie and following the advice of 'notre cher maître' that French bread and bananas make a good picnic lunch on a budget in Paris. Our generation believes that we would not be where we are now without having felt a bit of a 'frisson' when we realised there was another kind of culture outside 'sarf London' and it was Alf who initiated that.

Our second year at Roan was with the same classmates; we were in the Shell form and our form master was ex. School captain Alf Knott. He also took us for French but his way of teaching was elicitive - he made us do the work by providing us with just sufficient information for us to make the next 'creative leap' of knowledge. He was also a 'man of the world' and guided us into maturity. In one French lesson he mentioned the word *plein* (full) and explained that it is never used to express 'full-up' after a meal. "What does it mean then Sir?" was the enquiry. "Pregnant" was the reply at which the faces of 30 little boys went very red!

Oh and could anyone aim a board duster with greater accuracy, to just to miss a boy's head from the front to the back of the classroom?

In the summer of 1956 we went on a school journey to France. Previously, my opportunities to speak French

were based on just one year of study, and were restricted to infrequent stops at remote French railway stations on my way to Austria, but this school trip was for two weeks, first in Paris and then the South West of the octagon, Pau, Biarritz and Hendaye. So, Pete and I, with Alf, who we now knew was NOT the school captain, leading we explored the Quartier Latin, the Left Bank of the Seine in Paris. He introduced us to French history, from the Oaths of Strasbourg between Louis the German and Charles the Bald in 842 (the first evidence of a written French language separated from its mother tongue - Latin) through the age of the troubadours. He told us about Louis XVI, 1789, Napoleon, the wars with Prussia and the two occupations, and we were introduced to the songs of the chansonniers - all in one afternoon. We saw the Tour Eiffel, the Arc de Triomphe, went inside Notre Dame and then experienced a long overnight train journey from Paris to Biarritz. The south west Atlantic coast of France in July and August is less crowded, less hot and less expensive than the Mediterranean and for 10 days or so 15 of us romped in the sea and sunbathed. We visited Lourdes where we were unimpressed with the awful commercialisation, ascended La Rhune, in the Pyrennées and crossed briefly into Franco's Spain. Back then Spain was, as Alf explained, a totalitarian state, still suffering from the legacy of their civil war of 1936-1939. It was not the holiday destination it was to become later. Access to Spain was



only possible 2,000 metres up the mountain because, frankly, there was nowhere to go up there and very little to see. So, we were able to admire the stamp in our passport and post some cards from the mailbox. Tick it off; Spain done!

On the return journey to Paris I was standing in the corridor of the train at about 03.00h in the morning - somewhere round about Tours - when Alf came up to me enquiring if I was having difficulty sleeping. No, I explained; it was just that I didn't want to miss a single minute of this French experience and that one day I would be back in France to live. I reminded him of this conversation in December at Old Roan Christmas reunions. He was since that day, a mentor and guide in the academic aspects of my life, reinforcing as he did, my love of France, the joy of learning, the benefits of travel and the importance of knowledge.

During our travels throughout the world, all of us dropped him post-cards and even wrote to him at length after his ridiculous shooting at home in Maze Hill. I told him how one of the songs from the first school review had been sold and recorded by an American pop group ("Although I'm with you now my love, soon I'm on my way...") and I solemnly handed him his share of royalties as they trickled in.

In the sixth form, Alf Knott decided to raise charity funds by writing and directing the first ever Roan School Revue at Christmas 1959. Our band,

The Malestrums, fresh from singing on a discovery TV programme, and with Pete Thompson enrolled as bass player, were one of the dozen acts. Pete had begun with a tea-chest bass but now he had acquired a genuine full sized double bass, which, from time to time, he span round through 360 degrees; this revealed on the reverse, a life-size photograph of Marilyn Monroe in a swim suit and caused intermittent gasping sensations in the audience and from the Mr. Gilbert, headmaster!

John Hester, John Bruce, and I all contributed to singing Alf's witty lyrics. Another item from Alf's repertoire was 'Supersonic Santas', where the updated Father Christmases travelled in rockets not sleds and wore helmets in place of red furry hats. A star of this rendition was Graeme Aldous who went on to present and direct TV and documentary programmes from BBC studios in the North of England, obviously 'getting the bug' for show business from the revue.

John Bruce can still recite (rather than sing) 'A wandering student I, a thing of bits and pieces, of lecture-notes and theses ...' which preceded the revue's stand-out act Alf Knott playing 10 minutes of boogie-woogie piano: the man had talent!

Although considered by our classics master Stanley Beale to be too loud, too coarse and too long, the sell-out crowd loved it and a not insubstantial sum of just under £100 was raised for charity.

After his return from Zimbabwe, a group of us who had been meeting up once a year for a Christmas lunch, invited Alf to join us. For the first few years, our choice of locale varied but in 2005 we settled on Le Café Rouge in Greenwich, across the park from Alf's Maze Hill home. He enjoyed sitting and talking about his life, philosophies and, akin to Mr Chips, took a genuine interest and no little pride in how some of us and others he remembered fondly had turned out. He often let slip tales of the common room too. (Alf told us about the bizarre habits of our old. History master when he.....actually this not for publication!!)

Later we took to collecting Alf and driving him down to lunch where by now some 15 or so were gathered, mostly those who had been taught by him when he first came to the Roan, when he was youthful, debonair and every mother's dream: "he looks like a film star" was most parents' observation. Like Sean Connery, he matured with age and the last photographs, printed in a previous magazine show his sparkling eyes, coiffeured beard and dazzling smile.



Pete Thompson's words best sum up what Alf meant to our generation:

"Farewell to the coolest dude I knew in the fifties. Remember his shiny black hair and Latin looks, the way he played the piano and smoked a cigarette, wore an academic gown with style, smashed a quick fifty in the masters v boys match and then went down in the scorebook as 'retired to go to the theatre' and how he introduced us to French café songs, 'The Wages of Fear' and 'Rififi'. Don't be sad, just proud to have known him. I'm off to listen to some Charles Trénet."

Dave Bryden, Pete Motton. Reg Hodge, John Bruce, John Hester and Pete Thomson (1954-1961)

### Alf's recommended reading—September 1991

The Horse's Mouth	Carey	Flashman Series	Macdonald-Fraser
The Power and the Glory	Greene	The King Must Die	Renault
Catch 22	Heller	Brave New World	Huxley
The Centurions	Larteguy	The Name of the Rose	Ecco
A Goat for Azazel	V. Fisher	Riotous Assembly	Sharpe
The Ginger Man	Donleavy	The Alexandria Quartet	Durrell



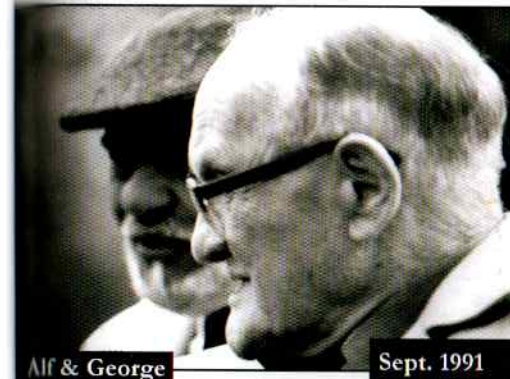


the 1950s. His colleague, Nigel Ballantyne, hopes that we can do justice to this “multi-faceted man....no one of us will come near to doing him justice”.

The Sixties saw Alf at his peak. The English Department reflected the changing times. Nigel Ballantyne arrived in the watershed year of 1963 from the confident redbrick university world of “Lucky Jim” and a new social realism. Alf championed the anti-authority and anarchic arguments of “Catch 22” and the works of Mary Renault, Joyce Carey, Graham Greene, J.P. Donleavy and George Macdonald-Fraser. George Witten – dear George – was “out of time”, a refugee from the past, the land of Trollope, Tolstoy, Hardy and Galsworthy. George had joined the staff the year after A.H. Hope died and gave his best years to the evacuation adventure and post-war rebuilding. He was a kind and generous man with old world courtesy and Alf cared for George in his last years with patience, respect and affection. Alf was uncertain about the new counter-culture that exploded in 1967 and 1968. It appeared infantile and chaotic, unfocused in its Utopianism – “they tell me what they are against – but what exactly are they for?” The rebellious culture of the previous decade in contrast seemed fuelled by literacy and craft and by this time Alf was less radical – a family man. He was unimpressed with the new literature and found Tolkien and those offering spiritual journeys in slovenly prose easy to resist.

Alf was special. He was associated with Roan nearly all his life as a student, teacher and active Old Roan. He is remembered with great affection by several generations of Roan students. Many friends and former students claim him as a great inspiration in their lives. Alf was always generous in his praise of others and spoke of it being a privilege to have known so many “really clever” boys. He enjoyed seeing great qualities in others – regarding Keith Mexter as the one Roan boy above all others who showed in all ways the great Corinthian spirit of sport. In the email tributes Pete Thompson alluded to the almost mystical impact he had on students in

Our A-Level course (66-68) reflected the times – Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Chaucer, James Joyce and John Osborne. Alf never set homework – claiming many years later that this was laziness – but it was the best preparation we had from Roan for university. We went to see the film of Olivier’s ill-judged portrayal of “Othello”. Our study of Joyce’s challenging classic “A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man” started with writing our own “streams of consciousness”. We were encouraged to create our own poetry, taking inspiration from Greenwich Park on a grim winter day. Other teachers achieved better grades but Alf took us with him in search of the essential understanding and we were fortunate.



Alf & George

Sept. 1991



Captain of the Athletics Team in 1947

What was it that made Alf so special? He seemed to know the answer – to possess a knowledge that lay just beyond the rest of us. It was as though once, in an existential land of “cool”, sound-tracked by the Beat Poets, Jacques Brel and the Modern Jazz Quartet, he came across a secret spring of wisdom and drank its tempting waters. What he learnt there he never told. Maybe he felt it was too difficult for us to understand. Perhaps he forgot. It didn’t matter – he had once been there and bore the mark.

A few years ago, in December 2006, at the end of a long reunion lunch with his former 1950s students at Café Rouge in Greenwich, Alf sang “Autumn Leaves”, in French (*“Les Feuilles Mortes”*). He started softly, the restaurant hushed and we were in a special and timeless place. In his own style and unaccompanied he sang this sad, poignant and melancholy song and when he finished the room remained quiet.

*“et la chanson que tu chantaïs,  
Toujours, toujours je l’entendrai”*

David Horsburgh. March 2012

Alf had an enormous influence on generations of Roan boys. Alf’s influence was subtle because what he transmitted was style, not subject, and a desire to be like him. I now read because Alf introduced me to drama, the novel, English poetry and the musical theatre.

Paul Angus (‘64-’71) in 2005



Harold Bride was born in 1890, lived in Bromley and attended the Roan School in 1902-03. He trained as a wireless operator with the Marconi Company. In 1912 he joined the White Star Line ocean liner *RMS Titanic* at Belfast as the Junior Wireless operator, and assistant to John Phillips.



Harold Bride aged 16

During the maiden voyage both operators sent passengers' personal messages and received iceberg warnings. On the evening of 14th April, 1912, Harold was sleeping, ready to resume a shift at midnight, when the ship hit the iceberg. Arriving in the wireless room unaware of any problem he was centrally involved, with Phillips and Captain Smith. He made the suggestion to issue the first ever SOS and acted as the relay between Phillips and the captain with updates on potential rescue ships. He was released from his duty by the captain when the wireless power was almost completely out.

Harold collected personal effects and returned to help Phillips who remained working, fighting off a stoker who tried to take his colleague's lifebelt. They reached the flooded decks and struggled to release the last remaining collapsible lifeboat. A massive wave knocked him off the deck, still clutching the side of the collapsible and he found himself in the water, under the boat. He struggled to reach the surface and was the last of the 15 men who spent agonising hours sitting on the upturned boat while many died around them. The waterlogged collapsible slowly sank until another lifeboat took them off just in time—a scene well documented in films and literature. His leg was injured and he suffered some frostbite but was able to climb the steps onto the *Carpathia* when rescue finally arrived. His colleague, John Phillips, made it to the collapsible but died. He regarded his colleague as a great hero and his death was a painful memory that stayed with him.



Harold Bride boarding the *Carpathia*

He recognised the single wireless operator, Harold Cottam, on the *Carpathia* as a friend and, despite his injuries, worked with him to send survivor lists and messages. They stayed friends after the tragedy for many years.

On arrival in New York he was given \$1,000 by the New York Times and Guglielmo Marconi for his story. He later gave testimony in the American and British inquiries, describing that iceberg warnings had been received and some had not been passed on to the bridge because passenger's messages, bringing revenue, took precedence. He described what happened on the night of the disaster and undermined the myth that the band was playing "Nearer Thy God to Thee" - he was with the band at the very end and recalled them playing "Ragtime".

He returned to a hero's reception in Beckenham, and a mention in the Roan Magazine in 1912, but in following years chose to keep a low profile despite being regarded as one of the heroes. He worked as a wireless operator in WW1 on the steamship *Mona's Isle* and on the channel ferries after the war. He married in 1920 and had 3 children.



Harold disliked discussing the *Titanic* and the celebrity of being a survivor. He moved with his family to Glasgow in 1922 in advance of events to remember the tenth anniversary and became a travelling salesman. He lived the remainder of his life in relative obscurity, dying of lung cancer in 1956. He is described as a short, stocky man with curly hair who loved a good joke. A plaque commemorates his childhood family home at 58 Ravensbourne Avenue, in Shortlands, Bromley. He was played in the 1958 film, *A Night to Remember*, by David McCallum, and by Craig Kelly in the 1997 film, *Titanic*. A biographical drama on Harold Bride, *The Last Signals*, was made in 2010.

### O.R.A. Magazine - Editor Required

We seek a new editor for the magazine. If you are interested please contact:

David Horsburgh : 020 8663 3037 or Tony Slaney: 020 8852 4075



## Roan Girls' School Reunion (1952 – 59)

Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 had been chosen for our latest Roan Reunion for girls who joined the Roan Girl's School in September 1952. Over the past 11 years we have managed to find 35+ 'Old Girls', quite a few of whom now live around the globe, and we have held 6 reunions to date.

This was quite a momentous year for us all as we are reaching the grand old age of 70! On this occasion, 16 met in Trafalgar Square for our traditional photograph; this time choosing the steps in front of the countdown clock for the Olympic Games. (Purely an aid to add a little height to those at the back of the group!) Several faces were new and we always find it hard to believe that more than 50 years had passed since some of us had met. It is strange but we seem to start conversations up as if it was only yesterday that we parted!

On to the Spaghetti House for lunch and chat and exchanging news of our lives and looking at and taking even more photographs. We were lucky on this occasion as we were given the upstairs room for our meal, so we did not interfere with other guests with our incessant chatter and laughter. Time just flew past and all too soon it was time to return to our homes.

Many thanks and goodbyes all round; a good time was had and a decision made that we should not wait more than a year before arranging another get-together. So the proposed date for our 8<sup>th</sup> reunion is the third Wednesday in May next year - May 16<sup>th</sup> 2012. Same time, same place, same restaurant.

Should you know of anybody who started at the Roan in September 1952, perhaps you would pass this information on to them; it would be so good to make the numbers in excess of 25 next time. Contact Joy Argent (née Ruston) or Beryl Chipchase (née Mason) on 01689 606074 or 01932 684833 for more information.

### 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Trafalgar Square

Back Row L - R

Janis May, Joy Ruston,  
Diane Spencer, Valerie Bonner,  
Margaret Butler, Margaret Gow,  
Maureen Maloney, Judy Squires

Front Row L - R

Margaret Paton, Beryl Mason,  
Janet Hazelden, Angela Jones,  
Gillian Graves, Evelyn Elson,  
Gwendoline Dyer, Beryl Dingle

Joy Ruston. August 2011



18<sup>th</sup> May 2011—en route to the restaurant

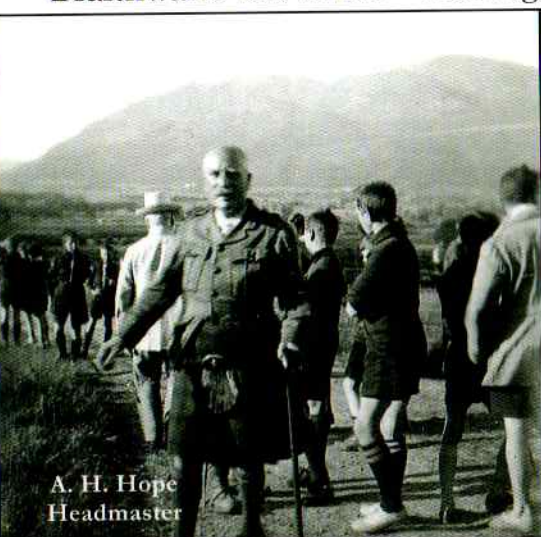
## Photo Gallery—Sports Day—5<sup>th</sup> July 1972



Top right: Bill Jordan (Groundsman)  
Above: Peter Cox, Paul Groom, Steve Armstrong  
Right: Messrs. Southgate & Hopwood with  
Rodwell & Jeffkins







A. H. Hope  
Headmaster



Braithwaite Party

## Eric Geddes (1917—2011)

Eric Geddes taught art at Roan from 1947—1972 and is fondly remembered by many former students. He was educated at Tiffins School, served with the King's Own Scottish Borderers in the Far East as an adjutant in WW2 and was one of the best students of his year at the Royal College of Art.

At Roan he achieved a long series of good exam results and, for most of us, was our introduction to a real appreciation of art with warmth and good humour.

Eric was elegant, stylish and unfailingly courteous. He designed costumes and scenery for school drama productions for many years with great patience. He had a passionate interest in tennis and captained the masters' tennis team. He held a wide knowledge of the arts supported by impeccable judgement and taste and added wisdom and wit in the staff room.

Eric lived in Richmond and had a studio built in his garden to continue his painting in his retirement. He attended the funeral of Freddy White in 2003, giving a eulogy. He remained well-regarded within the art world. George Allan ('57-'63) remembers him as a tolerant and kindly man and one of the compassionate and patient masters. Brian Smith remembers him with great affection—"he once quoted Baudelaire at me".



Eric Geddes and George Witten—  
retiring in July 1972.



Eric Geddes in the art room in 1957

## David Lynes (1952—2012)

David Lynes was at Roan from 1964-71. He died suddenly in January 2012. David lived in Whitstable where he ran his own insurance company. Trevor Puddifoot remembers David as a "stellar cross country man", attending Roan from Bermondsey and a likeable guy.



## Fred Vernau (1920—2011)

Fred Vernau, who died last October at the age of 90, was the eighth child of a boilermaker in Greenwich, and was very proud to win a place at the Roan School from 1932 to 1937. He was the only sibling to go to grammar school, and he always spoke highly of the education he received there. When he left at 17 he sat the Civil Service exam and was offered a post in the then Foreign Office as a Clerical Officer. It was there that he met his future wife Priscilla, although they put off marriage until completion of his war service from 1941 to 1946, during which he was in the RAF in India, working as a radio operator. He then rejoined the Foreign Office before transferring to Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) in 1953 as an Executive Officer.

Fred enjoyed his career with ECGD, but was happy to retire in 1980, having reached the rank of Principal. Retirement allowed him to spend more time with Priscilla, and they enjoyed many holidays in the UK and abroad. It also allowed him more time for the garden and for listening to his favourite music (from Artie Shaw to William Walton). Unfortunately cancer of the throat meant that he had to have a laryngectomy at the age of 70, but it was typical of Fred that he fully recovered, learned how to speak using his breath in a different way, and carried on. The loss of his dear wife in 2009 was a terrible blow, but his intelligence, good humour and love of music and crosswords stayed with him to the end.'



Fred at Roan and in Calcutta (1945)

## S. P. H. (Phil) Butterfill (1913-2011)

Phil was at Roan from 1924-31. He was married to Olive Gibson who attended Roan Girls from 1926-31. Their son, Andy, was at Roan from 1960-67. Alan Weir advises that Phil was Head of Science at Charlton School when he also taught at the school ('57-'91). He was mild mannered and always helpful. He retired in the mid 70s before the schools merged and retired to Hereford to be close to their two sons. Olive died in 1986.

## Madeline Barber (1925-2011)

Madeline Barber was the Headmistress of the Girls' School from 1968-74 and a vice-president of the Association. She died in Oxford in March 2011 aged 85. She is remembered as someone with wide academic experience and was very interested in Care Committee work as well as being a local magistrate. She left the Girls' School to be Headmistress of the larger Aylwin School in Southwark.

## Donald White (1917-2011)

Donald White died at his home in north Norfolk in January 2011 after an illness of a few days aged 93. He was always very proud to have been at school at Roan ('28-'36) and felt honoured to have been head boy in 1935/36 and over the years I and our children have heard a great deal about the school. He was one of the year that made the transition from the old (*Eastney Street*) to the new (*Maze Hill*) building; he remembered many of the staff & we remained great friends with his old chemistry master, Lionel Berry, who died at the age of 101 in 2002. He could still sing the school song with great gusto, and he remembered the camps in the Lake District and Channel Isles with affection. It was the first time he had ever seen a mountain and mountains & their flora remained an interest until the end. He took us to see the school on several occasions and we feel a strong loyalty to it. My son was encouraged to try amateur dramatics by Donald's description of productions at the school & by the Old Roan Association. I am glad, as he would have been, that the Association is flourishing, and send my best wishes.

Dr. Monica F. White. March 2011

## Notes from the Eastern Daily Press:

Dr. Donald White was an authority on the structure of timber and a leading botanist. He was closely involved over three decades with Blakeney Point, one of the most distinctive features of the Norfolk coast, and was chairman of its management committee until replaced

by the National Trust in the 1980s. He first visited Blakeney Point in 1936 while studying botany at University College London (UCL).

As a specialist botanist, he advised the British Museum on ferns. As an authority on timber he was often called as an expert witness in criminal trials.

Donald volunteered before the outbreak of war to join the Friends' Ambulance Unit and was one of 11 people specialising in blood transfusions—later leading to the formation of the national transfusion service. Retiring from UCL as senior lecturer in 1984 he later moved to Blakeney where he became involved with the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalist's Society. He was a keen birder and published the book "The Fauna of Blakeney Point".

He was married to Monica, a microbiologist, and they celebrated their golden wedding 3 weeks before his death.

## Robert Scourfield (1949—2011)

Robert Scourfield ('61-'68) died in December 2011 after a 7 year fight against cancer. Robert trained in Environmental Health after Roan, working first at the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea followed by nearly 30 years at Camden Council. After his first treatment, in 2006, he rode the End to End (Land's End to John O'Groats) in 15 days. Robert retired in 2010 and remained active in his great interests of skiing and cycling into his last year.

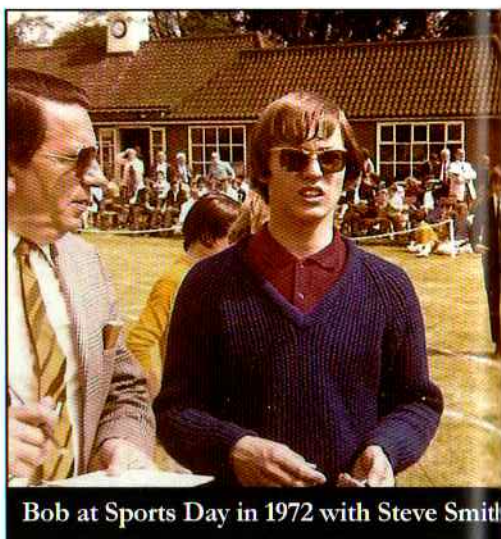


## Percy Thomas Loryman (1911-2011)

Percy Loryman died on 6th May aged 100. He attended Roan from 1922-24 together with his brother, Len (1915-19). Percy remained as bright and sharp as ever until the end. He joined the Old Roan Football Club and became its Treasurer and Secretary.

## Robert (Bob) Hoare (Staff — '52-'79) Head of Languages

Tony Elliott remembers Bob as being a typical teacher of his time—formal, gentlemanly, somewhat quiet and reserved with a wry sense of humour. He was regularly at the centre of drama in the staffroom as “Hoppy” (Arthur Hopwood) analysed Bob’s playing of the ritual lunchtime hand of bridge in a haze of smoke. Those were the days! Sadly, after ten or so years of coaching, Bob’s play of the perfect hand would still reduce his playing partner to tears, and if it was “Hoppy”, the result could be heard in the bike sheds.



Bob at Sports Day in 1972 with Steve Smith

## Ronald Arthur Layson (1935-2008)

Ron attended Roan from 1942-50. His sister, June ('40-'50) and cousins, Jack ('46-'52) and Michael ('51-'53) also attended Roan. He died peacefully in his sleep on 1st September 2008. Ron joined the school during the evacuation in Ammanford as the youngest pupil in the school. After Roan he worked as a trainee draughtsman in London and served his National Service with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Germany. He later travelled frequently as Senior Sales Engineer for a large American Company. He played football for many years, then tennis, badminton and, finally, lawn green bowls when he and his wife, Jean, retired to the Isle of Wight. He enjoyed attending tour matches in Shanklin by the Old Roan Cricket Club..

## Peter Antony White (1921-2010)

Peter White ('33-'38) died peacefully on 2nd May 2010 after a long struggle with Alzheimer’s disease. His wife of 68 years, Janet, had spent many years caring for him before his death. He was aged 89. He was a proud ex-pupil of the Roan School, speaking always with great fondness of his time at the school and always looking forward to receiving his Roan Magazines. He was a member of the Blackheath Harriers and enjoyed success in athletics and football as a pupil, gaining athletics colours. As an Old Roan he played football and enjoyed helping out at times with the Old Roan Dramatic Society. He maintained links with his Roan friends, “old boys”, playing bridge regularly with them. He had a long and successful career as a chartered mechanical engineer with the Ministry of Defence.

In retirement he took great pride in his garden and family spending many happy times with his three grand-daughters and two daughters.

## David Jenner (1948—2011)

David Jenner ('59-'65) died in June 2011 aged 63. In recent years he had been living in Cumbria and indulging his passion for steam trains by working on the Ravensglass & Eskdale Railway.

## Leslie David Edwards (1920-2011)

Leslie Edwards died at a nursing home in Swindon on 8th May aged 90. He attended Roan from 1931-36. He enjoyed receiving the magazine and continued to take an interest in the school and Association.

## Distinguished Old Roans

### Harry D. Scammell (1930—1984)

Harry was at Roan from 1946-48. He left Roan for the British Museum (Geology Dept), did his National Service with the Royal Army Education Corps in Libya and in 1963 accepted a post in the Geology Department at Yale University. His major achievement was to develop the library and map collections for the Yale Department of Geology & Geophysics in the Kline Geology Department. From 1964-1983 he was Resident Fellow of Davenport College. He remains fondly remembered by many for his vibrant personality, perfect social charm, hospitality and extraordinary generosity



Bob Hoare in 1977 with Bernie Turner



Lieutenant Commander Bill Henley, who has died aged 88, was one of the few pilots whose career spanned the age of the biplane and the jet; on one occasion he hunted down and destroyed a German U-boat.

In the early hours of December 13, 1944, Henley was flying Swordfish L (a bi-plane of near obsolete design) of 813 Naval Air Squadron from the carrier *Campania*, part of the escort for convoy RA-62 from Murmansk to Loch Ewe. Oberleutnant zur See Diether Todenhausen in U-365 had already attacked the destroyer *Cassandra* and blown off her bows, but in disclosing his presence had initiated a long search.

Henley and his observer, Lt. David Chapman, continued their hunt despite the failure of Swordfish L's radar. Under the radar control of a second aircraft, Swordfish Q, piloted by Lieutenant WJL Hutchinson, Henley carried out a textbook attack. By the light of his flares, Henley saw U-365 running on the surface and immediately dived to attack. He straddled the boat with three depth charges, one of which bounced off the casing before sinking to explode beneath the U-boat. More flares showed an oily patch of water strewn with flotsam and what Henley thought was the upturned hull of his enemy. Post-war analysis showed that U-365 was lost with all hands. Henley and Hutchinson were awarded DSCs.

Maurice William Henley was born in

London on March 25, 1923 and educated at the John Roan School, Greenwich. He started work at the National Provincial Bank, and, aged 18, enlisted in the Royal Navy as a naval airman 2nd class. He learned to fly in Canada under the Empire Training Scheme.

Post-war, Henley was seconded to the Royal Australian Navy, to help build up its air arm, and flew in an exchange appointment with the US Marine Corps at Cherry Point, North Carolina.

In the early 1950s he flew the de Havilland Sea Hornet (a development of the RAF's wartime Mosquito) in 809 Naval Air Squadron, which specialised in night operations, and he commanded 809 NAS in its last months in 1954.

In 1954-57 he commanded 893 NAS of Sea Venom fighter jets in the carrier *Eagle*. His marriage, planned for August 1956 in London, was postponed due to the Suez crisis, when his squadron was sent to the Mediterranean.

The ceremony took place instead in Gibraltar, while the carrier was under maintenance, and Henley was on honeymoon in Spain when he heard that tension over Suez had erupted. He hired a car and hurried back to Gibraltar to pick up an aircraft that had been left behind for him, and caught up with *Eagle*, which was steaming towards Egypt.

His squadron carried out strafing and rocket attacks during the invasion of Suez destroying many aircraft on the ground, and Henley was awarded a bar to his DSC.

Henley retired in 1968, when in order to continue flying he joined Loganair ("Teeny-weeny airlines" he called it), eventually becoming chief training captain for 70 pilots.

Flying between Glasgow and the Highlands and the Western Isles, he opened several new routes, including to Barra, where he pioneered a scheduled service which used the beach at low tide for a landing field. When he flew newspapers to Stornoway, he called himself "the best paid paper boy in the business".

He also helped to develop the air ambulance service in Scotland, and during his hours on standby he studied for a master's degree in Geography and Geology from the Open University.

Once he flew to Benbecula to collect a pregnant mother. Doubting whether the air ambulance's nurse was fully qualified in midwifery, Henley included among his passengers a nun from the island, who duly helped (at 7,500ft over Mull) to deliver Vanessa Margaret MacAskill.

He was chairman of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's Glasgow branch, and he supported both the Scottish and the Glasgow Chamber Orchestras. He had a lifelong interest in railway timetables.

Bill Henley, who died on June 11, 2011, married Hazel Wright in 1956; she survives him with their daughter and two sons.

© Daily Telegraph. 26.7.2011



Peter Trafford remembers Bill as "a quiet unassuming but determined character".

Bill Wedge notes that Bill was a keen member of the Roan Scout troop, the 21st Greenwich. He also had a considerable talent for languages, learning Russian and Dutch among others. He was very involved with the associations of the Arctic Convoy veterans.



## Major Douglas Goddard ('33-'37) - an appreciation

Major Goddard was a regular contributor to the magazine and remembered his years at Roan with affection. His life is fully documented in his autobiography "Master of None" published in 2009 and reviewed in our last issue. A decent and generous spirited man he lived a full and rich life and considered himself very blessed. Douglas died peacefully at home with immediate family in Wargrave on Thames on 7th December 2011. Tony Slaney & Monty Smith represented the ORA at a Memorial Service at St. Mary's Church in Wargrave on Friday 2nd March at the invitation of his family. His son, Nigel, wrote that his father was very attached to his old school and is sure he would wish him to pass on his very best wishes to the Association going forward.



### From the Henley Standard:

Major Goddard—Douggie to everyone—was a patriot, soldier, successful deputy chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Building and indefatigable fund-raiser for a host of charities and good caused.

He represented Wargrave and Remenham as an elected member on Wokingham District Council from 1978-1992, becoming vice-chairman of the council from 1986-1988 and then chairman from 1988-1990. In June 1989 he hosted the Princess Royal for the opening of the council's new offices.

Major Goddard felt forever grateful for having survived the decimating battles of the Second World War. He was mindful that many friends and comrades were left in graves across Normandy and north-west Europe. Indeed, his enthralling autobiography, "Master of None", published in October 2009, contained "the life enriched reminiscences of a 20th century survivor" which perfectly encapsulates his outlook on life.

He was born in 1920 in London but was of a Suffolk farming family. He attended the Roan School, Blackheath, but by his 18th birthday, when war with Germany appeared inevitable, he had joined the local Territorial Army 338th AA Company RE of 34th (Queen's Own Royal West Kent) Battalion.

## Douglas Goddard

In 1942 he became a regular army officer with the 43rd Wessex Division Royal Artillery and fought from the Normandy D-Day landings, advancing through northern Holland and Germany to the capture of Bremen and the eventual armistice in May 1945.

After the war Major Goddard was closely involved in the sustenance and eventual repatriation of some 30,000 displaced people from Russia, Poland and the Baltic States from the area of Belsen Bergen Nazi concentration camps.

He saw post-war service in the Middle East during the Suez Canal crisis and was an instructor of gunnery at the Royal School of Artillery and chief instructor at the Sunnybridge Ranges in Wales from 1953-1958 before retiring from the Army in 1959.

A gifted communicator and presenter, Major Goddard regularly spoke to schools and organisations about his war experiences and was a highly regarded speaker at the Joint Services Command and Staff College Advanced Course from 1998—2008.

He also gave occasional television interviews about his war experience.

His sharp intellect and keen interest in business served him well when he retired from the army. He enjoyed a long and successful spell at the Chartered Institute of Building from 1964—85, first as secretary and director

and then as deputy chief executive with special responsibility for the administrative and financial functions.

He combined his busy schedule with an array of charitable work, much of it centred around Wargrave, where he and his devoted wife, Eve, moved to in 1971.

His many commitments tended to reflect his interest in buildings and his passion for sport. He continued to serve on the parochial church council, the alms houses and heritage trusts and, until very recently, as president of the local Royal British Legion—and all this in spite of his failing health.

© Henley Standard



Douggee and Eve



## Stanley Turner (1928—35) - an appreciation

Stanley Turner was born in Portsmouth as the first world war ended. He spent his early childhood in a great naval maritime city but was to devote his life to the revolutionary changes in commercial shipping and cargo handling which saw the end of London as a major port and the development of the container ports of Tilbury and Felixstowe.

The family moved to London and Stanley attended the Roan School. The headmaster was "the Antient", Mr. Hope, and, as schoolboy humour, Stanley and friends turned up in khaki shorts and shirts instead of uniform on one occasion, a prank accepted with good humour. He achieved good matriculation results, but the family could not afford university.

He joined the Port of London Authority at the age of 18 in 1936. War service interrupted his career in 1939. Stanley joined the Royal Engineers and, following evacuation from Dunkirk, spent the remainder of the war in Burma becoming Deputy Assistant Director of Transportation involved in planning combined operations. He was involved in the successful final defeat of the Japanese in Burma at Rangoon involving amphibious landings and air support, thus recovering the Rangoon port facilities intact.

Back in the Port of London after the war, Stanley held a number of top management posts including Director of Industrial Relations and Chief Docks Manager. The challenges facing

the Port of London in the decades after the war included labour relations, involving a series of crippling strikes, and the advent of containerisation. New cargo handling methods meant the closure of the docks surrounding the Pool of London and the development of the container port at Tilbury on the Thames Estuary. Stanley was deeply involved in these new methods and became International President of the International Cargo Handling Coordination Association in 1973.

After the Beeching Report of 1963, Stanley served on a Transport User's Consultative Committee and was in later years proud to announce that he played a part in keeping some rail services in operation in spite of the closures.

Stanley became a Craft-Ownning Freeman of the Watermen's Company in 1967 and progressed to become a Junior Warden. In 1970 Stanley became Group Managing Director of the Port of Felixstowe at a time when the port was developing as a major container port. It is now the UK's busiest container port.

After a short spell as Ports and Shipping Advisor with PA Management Consultants, Stanley became General Manager of the Port of Bristol Authority in 1976. He oversaw the opening of the Royal Portbury Dock which is one of the major UK terminals for the import of motor vehicles with very extensive storage compounds for new cars.

## Stanley Turner

In retirement, Stanley became Chairman of the Bristol Royal Society for the Blind and his voice became well known on the tapes of the Avon Talking Magazine of which he was Vice-President. He was a member of the Bristol Savages and devoted several years to developments at the Mission to Seafarers in Bristol whilst serving as Chairman.

Stanley married Irene Finbow in 1941 and they had a son Nigel, who also attended Roan. Stanley was devoted to his two grandsons and granddaughter, and his three great grandsons.

He died on March 28th 2011 in Bristol Royal Infirmary after a short illness.



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## Thomas Parson ('55-'60)—request for information

Thomas J. Parsons was born on 19.8.44 and attended Roan from 1955-60. He was awarded a Special Prize for Merit in Art in 1960, continued to Camberwell School of Art and became an Art Teacher. He then emigrated with his wife and children to Australia and settled in Canberra where he built a reputation as a formidable intellect, excellent artist and first rate educator. He sadly died in 2009.

His grandson, John Hart, is writing a biography with the assistance of family, friends and students. He is interested in hearing contemporaries who may remember Thomas and can provide information on the School at that time.

If you can contribute to this research please reply direct to John Hart:

[john-hart@hotmail.com.au](mailto:john-hart@hotmail.com.au)





Old Roan Association Centenary Dinner—Saturday 24th September 2011  
The Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich





## The Roan Theatre Company—"Plaza Suite" - May 2011

The Roan Theatre Company performed "Plaza Suite" by Neil Simon at the Tyler Theatre in Eltham from May 18 – 21, 2011

I played Sam Nash and Roy Hubley in a production of *Plaza Suite* with the Alexandra Players in 1977, so it was with eager anticipation that I approached the Tyler Theatre, knowing that the Roan Theatre Company would, as always, present a very polished production. I was not to be disappointed.

The open stage allowed us to admire Dave Townsend's split set, cleverly designed to show two rooms of Suite 719 in New York's Plaza Hotel, complete with door dividing the two rooms, but not obscuring any of the action for members of the audience.

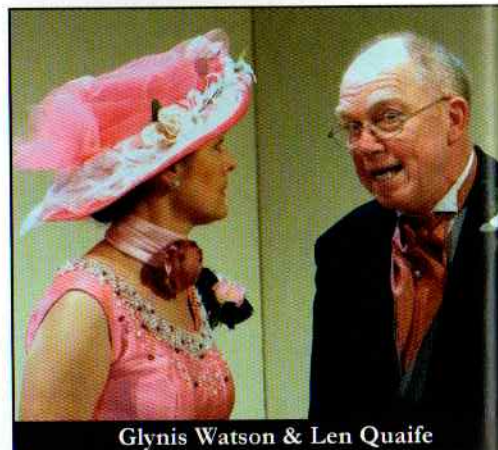
The play is composed of three acts, each involving different characters, but all set in Suite 719. The first act, *Visitor from Mamaroneck*, introduced us to not-so-blissfully wedded couple Sam and Karen Nash who were visiting their honeymoon suite in an attempt by Karen to bring the love back into their marriage. Isabel Trafford, always comfortable on the stage and never better than here, played Karen and a very hirsute Graham Johnson commanded the stage in his usual confident manner as Sam. Karen's plan backfired with confusion about whether they spent their honeymoon here 23 or 24 years ago, and whether yesterday or today was their anniversary! The act ended with Karen sadly reflecting on how much things had changed since they were young.

The second act, *Visitor from Hollywood*, involved a meeting between movie producer Jesse Kiplinger, very ably played by Stuart Mitchell-Smith, and his old flame, suburban housewife Muriel Tate. Claire Talbot, as Muriel, gave a master class in comic timing as she promised herself she would not stay too long or fall for Jesse's repeated attempts to seduce her. Gloriously funny performances which, in my view, could not have been bettered.

The final act, *Visitor from Forest Hills*, saw the excellent Glynis Watson as Norma Hubley and Leonard Quaife as her manic husband Roy making increasingly frantic attempts to persuade their daughter Mimsey to unlock the bathroom door and go downstairs to her wedding ceremony.

With the help of supporting cast members Rebecca Wolff, Robert McCaffrey and Vince Bennett, director Trevor Talbot produced an excellent evening's entertainment.

Roy Moore



Glynis Watson & Len Quaife



"Plaza Suite" photo call—May 2011

Vince Bennett, Graham Johnson, Isabel Trafford, Stuart Mitchell-Smith, Claire Talbot, Len Quaife, Rod Stanbridge, Trevor Talbot, Math Morrison, Robert McCaffrey, Glynis Watson, Andrea Gambell, Jennie Pearson



Graham Johnson & Isabel Trafford



Claire Talbot & Stuart Mitchell-Smith



Isabel Trafford, Andrea Gambell, Len Quaife, Vince Bennett, Claire Talbot, Stuart Mitchell-Smith, Graham Johnson, Glynis Watson, Trevor Talbot (Director)



## "Mother Goose" - Roan Theatre Company—December 2011

The Roan Theatre Company have not performed a pantomime since 1979, when shows took place at the Roan School in Maze Hill. In those days there were just two performances – Friday and Saturday evenings. The first ever panto was Beauty and the Beast in January 1978, and then came Rumpelstiltskin just over a year later. Graham Johnson and Trevor Talbot were in both productions along with many other stalwarts, including Alf and Beryl Knott whose joint funeral many Old Roans attended last year.

With funds still low after bad weather caused the cancellation of the 2010 winter production, the committee decided that a panto would be just the job to raise the bank balance. In reality this did not turn out to be the case as many of the regular patrons had grown used to watching plays and decided to give this a miss. A small profit was made, but less than had been hoped.

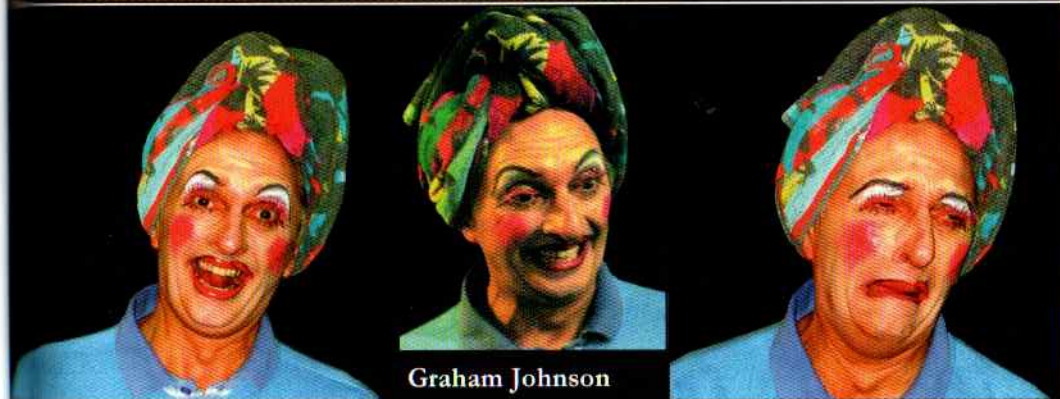
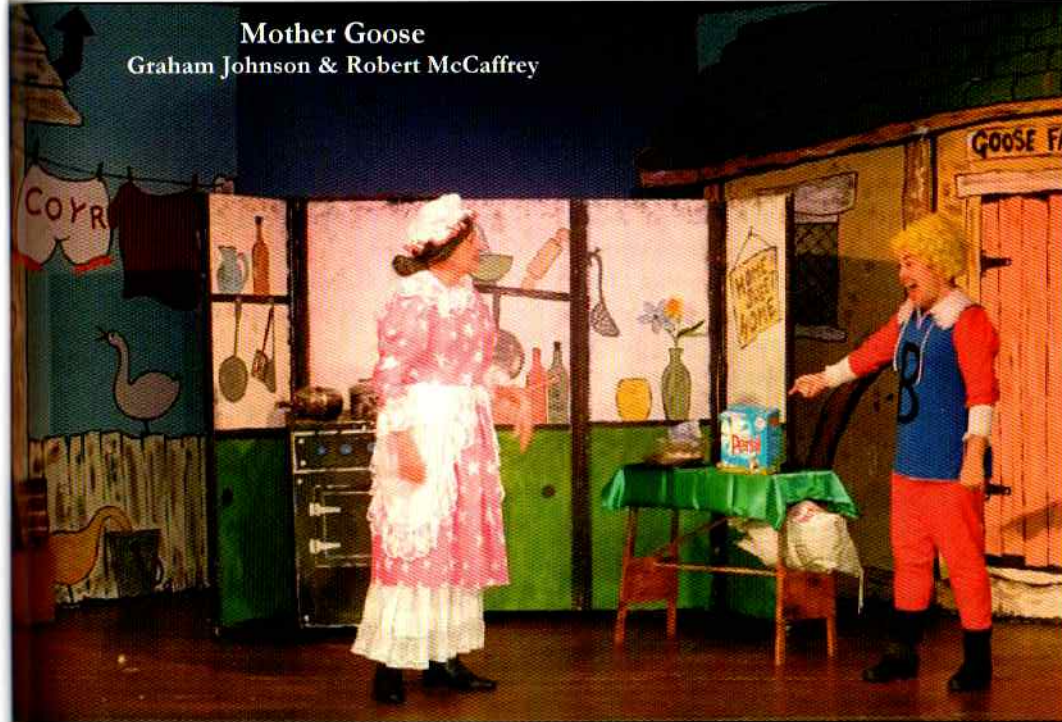
The panto chosen was "Mother Goose" by John Morley, who had written over 250 such shows before his death in 1994 and had also written for The Basil Brush Show. Graham Johnson played the title role with relish, and co-directed with Robert McCaffrey who played Silly Billy. These two, along with Stuart Mitchell-Smith as the Demon Discontent were the stars of the show and deserved a better script than Mr Morley gave them. They worked extremely hard and it was heartening that the audience gave them a good ovation at the end.

Trevor Talbot had an amusing cameo as an upper class twit and Teresa Wilkins had whatever is the next size down from a cameo as his wife. Glynis Watson had more luck as the Fairy Happiness but that good actress Rebecca Wolff was wasted in an underwritten part, as was Val Youngman as the wicked squire. Vince Bennett and Len Quaife played two village idiots, while Simon Perry drew the shortest straw, landing the part of the villager in charge of a chorus of schoolgirls. Of the newcomers to the group Sarah Lavis looked at home on the stage as the Principal Boy and Hazel Buckingham proved to be a real trouper in the thankless role of the Goose that laid the Golden Egg. There were songs, sung with varying degrees of success, but benefiting from the musical accompaniment of the hard working David Horsburgh, who also provided sound effects. Youngsters from the "Dance 2 Dawn School" added energy and enthusiasm.

It was a small first night audience when I attended and the cast had to work hard with some lame jokes, but I am told the show – and the audience – got better at each performance. My two companions chuckled happily and I must admit to laughing out loud at Len Quaife who once again showed his gift for comedy. Ten out of ten to the leading players, to Dave Townsend's inventive set, and to the special effects which worked well, but it would be a good idea to avoid Mr Morley's scripts if there is a next time.

Richard Rickson

## Mother Goose Graham Johnson & Robert McCaffrey



### The Roan Theatre Company welcomes new members

**"New blood" is always needed to sustain this theatre company. There are no "prima donnas" here and all our productions have a "all hands to the pump" attitude. Anyone keen to take part can contact us via the website:**

**[www.roantheatrecompany.org.uk](http://www.roantheatrecompany.org.uk)**



## The Roan Theatre Company - "Proof" - March 15-17, 2012

"Proof" by David Auburn is a mathematics based psychological drama set in Chicago. The play, written in 2000, won both the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Award for Drama in 2001 and was later made into a film. It was previously performed, in part, by the Roan Theatre Company in July 2005 at the Rochester One-Act Festival – coming a close second to the eventual winners. Three of the four cast members from that time performed in this production – Claire Talbot (Catherine) won best actress, Stuart Mitchell-Smith (Hal) won best actor and Trevor Talbot (Robert) won best supporting actor. They were joined by Sarah Lavis (Claire) who is new to the company, joining us last year for "Mother Goose".

The play was performed at the John Roan Club and, on the basis of this success, should provide a new option for the RTC – and the School – to perform smaller scale or more experimental theatre on tighter budgets. The main hall was turned into a very effective theatre space and the back bar divided off to create our own refreshment area and reduce noise. The stage, audience seating and lighting worked very well. The set by Dave Townsend was excellent – a veranda in the garden of a house in Chicago. This was a return to the Club by the RTC where several musical evenings have been staged over the years. It makes good use of available resources and reduces costs compared to our usual venue at the Tyler Theatre in Eltham. The space allowed for a

reasonably sized stage and comfortable seating for 60. The cast performed to full houses each night and the audience response was enthusiastic.

Graham Johnson is an experienced Director and achieved high quality performances from all four actors. The "pace" of the play was perfect. The lines were delivered with clarity and conviction and the dramatic highpoints, at the very end of the first and last scenes in Act 1, were effective. The standard and quality of acting throughout was very high and despite a lot of dialogue, often beautifully written, the prompt was not required on the first night.

The play explores the links between genius and insanity, whether either or both can be inherited and also with the fragility of life. It is carefully structured but is not totally successful as the drama loses its way a little by the end. The narrative usually involves two characters on stage at a time which proves an effective device for creating character and tension. Father and daughter, Trevor and Claire, play father and daughter on stage.

Trevor played the mathematician and father (Robert) who made ground breaking discoveries in mathematics when young, became unproductive and declined into madness. Trevor's performance was exceptional and probably his very best. His monologues in the second half were moving and beautifully delivered. Claire (Catherine), is his daughter who

appears to inherit his genius in mathematics and, at the same young age, seems to be developing a similar madness. Claire gave a lovely and nuanced performance – serious, sad, playful, possibly unhinged, determined, flirtatious – and showed what an excellent actor she is. Stuart (Hal) always provides a thoughtful and well judged performance and was very good as the young, sensitive, shy, awkward young mathematician given the job of proving whether Robert or Catherine had created a stunning new "proof". Stuart's delivery of some very complex dialogue was skilful. Sarah (Claire) played the totally different and more materialistic sister who lives in New York, is about to be married, experienced a less academic upbringing and appears relatively sane, though far less interesting. Sarah did well in this role giving a strong performance with good stage presence.

Production choices are often governed by economics and it is easy to decide on popular titles – Alan Ayckbourn, Neil Simon, pantomimes, television themes such as the much enjoyed "Dad's Army" or with large casts that pull in family and friends. It is good that the RTC chose to put on such a serious play as "Proof" with such success and illustrated not only the acting strength of its members but also the opportunities for future productions in this venue as well as our usual home at the Tyler Theatre.

Behind the scenes support was provided by Don Boon, Jenny Pearson, Len Quaife, Rod Stanbridge, Vince Bennett, Glynis Watson and Freda Goldberg.

David Horsburgh. March 2012.



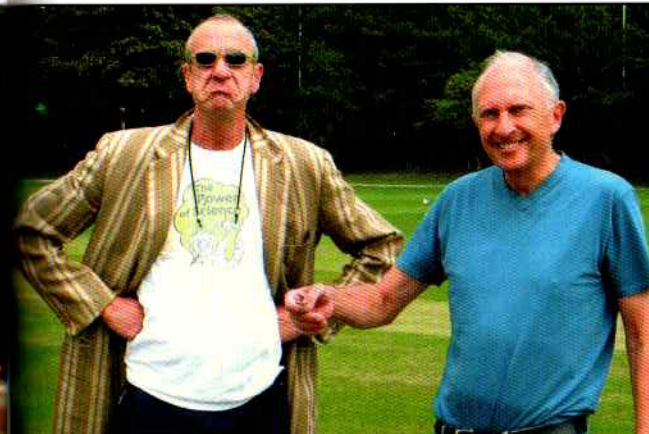
Stuart Mitchell-Smith (Hal), Claire Talbot (Catherine), Sarah Lavis (Claire), Trevor Talbot (Robert), Rod Stanbridge (lights), Jenny Pearson (stage), Graham Johnson (Director), Len Quaife (set)





Back : Will Darlow, Gary Rimmer, Brian Smith, Ralph Wilson, Steve Frost, Tim Nassim  
Front: Fred Smith, Steve Steen, Simon Humphreys, Barry Castagnola, Claire Livesy  
**Old Roan President's X1 v Brian (Arthur) Smith X1 10.7.2011**

Back: Brian Hamer, John Stanford, Graham Lawrance, Raj Prabhaker, Ian Daniels, Daniels jr  
Front: Gary Baxter, John Huntley, Graham Johnson, Matthew Podger, Les De Hoog



Brian Smith—Captain of the  
Dusty Fleming International  
Hair Stylist X1 (148-6) with  
Graham Johnson—Captain  
of an Old Roan President's  
X1 (169-8).

**Sunday July 10, 2011**

Gary Baxter, Alastair Mitchell.  
Viv Lawrence (umpire)



### Forgotten Pastimes



Roan boys playing the game  
of "Podex at the  
Braithwaite Camp in 1923.  
The game is played in a  
similar fashion to cricket  
using a baseball bat. It is  
thought to originate from  
St, Paul's School. The term  
podex has other meanings  
that are far too delicate to  
define in this publication—  
we refer any interested  
readers to check Google.



## Old Roan Golf Society

Having celebrated 25 years of the Old Roan Golf Society in 2010 we look back at the results from the 2011 events and forward to the 2012 calendar.

The picture for the society generally is a positive one - our biggest challenges are around the numbers that want to play against those that can reasonably be accommodated in a competition. The standard for the majority is high and always a great day out for all.

The Summer 2011 event was held at the end of June at Wildwood Gold and Country club, which offered us 27 holes of fantastic championship golf, in the heart of breathtaking Surrey countryside (breathtaking in terms of the walking distance between holes).

The event was sold out months in advance with 50 Old and non-Old Roans attending.

The format for the day saw play in fourballs - 27 hole individual Stableford Full Handicap alongside 27 Hole team play. Richard Thomas produced a complicated matrix of starting points (for which he later apologised) which went along the lines of those that were in Wolfe house at school start from hole 7, those from Drake start hole 3 and so on.

Somehow all got round even though there were one or two heated discussions on right of way with the non too friendly locals.

Worthy winner playing off of 15 was Rod Pepper with 53 points.

As usual the society goes from strength to strength with regular non Old Roan members and their guests also participating. While offering apologies for not mentioning them directly here I would highlight the Old Roan 'runner up' - Tim Fish, who finished with 43 points, playing off of an 8 handicap.

Tim deserves a particular mention in completing his round even though he was involved in a near fatal GBA (golf buggy accident). He was a passenger in a buggy travelling at some speed as it launched off of the 8th tee which then somersaulted and landed on top of him. Fortunately Tim and his driver were not seriously injured. Sadly the event wasn't captured on YOUTUBE.

At the risk of 'over-mention' (more later) Ray Mills also provided some light relief when he deflected a partners 'out of bounds' bound ball with his ear back on to the fairway. Hopefully he'll keep them tucked in going forward to ensure fair play for all.

The day finished with the customary meal and prize giving, superbly rounded off by Bernie Turner, our Captain for 2011. It's been great to have Bernie back playing regularly with the ORGS now and his prize giving speech was well received (subject to the anticipated heckling from Ray Mills). I have been fortunate to play a round with Bernie although when I'm at the tee people normally shout out "fore" but "get those pants off son" was a first.

My own game did see hints of improvement if only by the fact that there were three who ended up with worse scores.

The 26th Old Roan Golf Championship was again held at Princes. The newly formed committee organised this event and despite this it was again a memorable occasion attended by a number of Old Roans who after hacking their way around this famous course delighted the group with a rendition of the school song.

Tony Nuttall won the event with a score of 54 (12 Handicap) followed by the ever popular Ray Mills with 53, even more popular Tim Fish on 52 and in joint 4th the less popular Tony Sproul and Richard Thomas (51 points).

As we head into 2012 we see Les De Hoog as our new Secretary. The big fella has big shoes to fill and I'm sure that as long as someone else does everything for him, he'll do a great job.

I'm taking over from Tony Nuttall as Treasurer and accepted only after receiving assurances that the extra weight of responsibility would not affect my game.

Tony Nuttall, who is good at everything and especially golf will be our Captain through 2012. Good luck Tony and Les and of course thanks to all that have played a part in the ongoing success of the Society.

Our two major events this year are:

**Friday 15th June  
Woldingham Golf Club, Surrey**

**Friday 2nd November  
Annual Princes road trip**

Andy Daniels. March 2012



**Wildwood Golf & County Club—Summer 2011**

Ray Mills, Jim Douglas, Bryan Marsh, Pete Osbourne, Mick Lingwood, Phil Collins  
Mat Podger, Tony Sproul, Wayne Hunt, Dave Nuttall, Tony Nuttall, Richard Thomas



*Early days*

Back in the spring of 1968 Barry Thomas, a fellow student at Goldsmith's College who had recently been offered a post in the geography department of Roan School, told me of a vacancy for a physics teacher at the school. I applied for the job and set out on a visit despite already having been called to attend an interview in Woolwich later on that day.

I was met by Head of Physics, Brian Matthews, who asked me to explain a simple electrical circuit as if I was talking to a pupil; then interviewed by the (retiring) headmaster, Mr. Garstang. Now whether Brian decided to overlook my limited knowledge of first form electricity, or it was something to do with the fact that I was the only one of three applicants to turn up I don't know but I was offered and accepted the post then phoned to cancel my appointment in Woolwich.



Brian Matthews

I remember walking out of the Roan School with a feeling of elation, past its blossom trees which were in full bloom and down through Greenwich Park – later to be the scene of a variety of forth and fifth form physics lessons. Does anyone remember rushing up the hill in order to calculate their power output, or hammering a block of wood in front of the Queen's House and timing the echoes so as to measure the speed of sound?

Summer passed and the new term arrived. My abiding memory of that day is standing in the Staff Room thinking, "I'm a teacher! I can actually walk into this room without having to knock first!" A bit pathetic now I come to think of it – but I had finally achieved an ambition held since I was a third former a decade earlier. We adjourned to the library for a staff meeting where I sat behind Bill Ellis, next to Nigel (Batman) Ballantyne whose gown would billow and flap like a cloak as he strode purposefully along the Roan corridors, and near Dick (Granny) Wood who at a later staff meeting stunned us all when he expressed his concern about unlockable lavatory doors by dramatically announcing that there were no knobs in the boys' toilets and it just wasn't good enough!

One of my earliest lessons was with form 3A to whom I had to introduce the concept of momentum. "Now, I need someone intelligent to help me. What's your name?"  
"Wise, Sir."

"Well, Wise, I want you to carry someone across the room. It had better be someone light." A boy's hand shot up. "You'll do. What's your name?"  
"Lightwing, Sir."  
"Hm!"

The following week during the period before my next lesson with 3A I was using a large and powerful horseshoe magnet to demonstrate the 'catapult field effect'. Unfortunately this 4kg lump of equipment was cracked across its base and its north and south poles were liable to snap together at the slightest provocation. As the pupils left the room I turned back to my teaching notes (I still have the originals – how sad is that!) and somehow managed to jog the magnet which true to form clamped its metal jaws shut, trapping the tip of the middle finger of my right hand.

Grimacing with pain I beckoned 3A into the lab and the boys took their positions round the wide benches that ran the length of the room. "Quiet, please!" (Mistake number one – saying "please"). To be fair most of the class subsided into silence – apart that is for a small group at the back who as luck would have it contained one of the two boys whose names I could remember from the previous week.

"Lightwing!" I bellowed, and hardly had his name echoed down the laboratory than I realised that my explosive shout had caused me to completely lose my voice. The boys gazed expectantly, waiting for my next pronouncement while I stood dumbstruck, knowing that short of some divine intervention

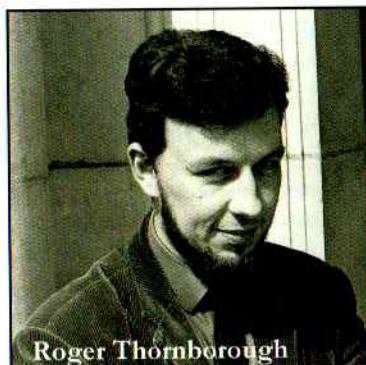
from Newton or one of the other gods of physics I stood no chance of continuing. After an uncomfortable pause I slowly paced to the back of the laboratory, all the while trying gently to cough my vocal cords back to life. Eventually I reached a cowering ginger haired boy and in a practically inaudible whisper croaked lamely, "Right, Lightwing: now look what you've done!"

The remainder of the lesson was conducted by means of chalked communications written on the blackboard beneath the legend "Sit still and keep quiet!" Only one boy – Church perhaps or Thurley – chose to talk. Because I was patrolling the gangway behind him at the time I decided to flick him hard on the ear. Unfortunately I used the rapidly blackening nail of the middle finger of my right hand.....

My first ever fifth form class contained Jim Russon (he of the very long hair and even longer football shorts), Steve Myles (who at one time wanted to become a teacher: did he make it I wonder?), and a boy called Hawkins (whose father was Head of Physics at Bexley Grammar School). As an inexperienced teacher I found Hawkins rather intimidating. Sometimes after we had discussed a physics problem in class he would go home, talk to his father, then come to the next lesson and announce with just the hint of a threat, "My Dad wants to see you on Parents' Evening." In the event his father never did come to see me, but the mere possibility of a visit did serve to keep me on my toes.



At the end of my first term at Roan I was asked if I would take on being form master of 3T to allow Roger Thornborough more time for choir rehearsals and other musical duties.



Roger Thornborough

Now in those days pupils kept their exercise books in their desks, so during the Christmas Holiday I came in to school and looked at the names on the books in order to make a plan of where each boy sat in the form room. I then spent time learning this plan – all to no avail because later in the holiday Mr. Hill, the caretaker, pushed all the desks to the sides of the room so that he could clean the floor then put them back in different positions. I don't know who was more put out on the first day of term; George Gash for being called Philip Prosser, or Philip for being called George!

Actually I got on alright with Mr. Hill, especially since he gave me two rather fine oak bookcases which were being discarded from the Head's study. Dr. Taylor had decided that because his study was much larger than the room occupied by the secretarial staff he

would do a swap. The bookcases, which were replaced by furniture more suited to a secretaries' office, now stand against a wall in my dining room.

The newly refurbished secretaries' office was occupied by Mrs. Ann Harris and Mrs. Hazel Smith whose sons, Brian (Arthur), Richard and Nick attended the school. I recall ferreting around in a nearby store cupboard and unearthing a large and rather dusty print of Greenwich that had been presented to the school some years earlier, then taking it along to show the secretaries. They were rather surprised when without thinking I carelessly announced that I had a very dirty picture that they might like to see.

### Pupils

Robert (Fuzz) Lightwing earns a second mention in this brief reminiscence of life at Roan. Picture the scene. Place, the school hall; year, 1972 and Lightwing now in the sixth form; occasion, the farewell assembly for three members of staff: Mr. Griffin, Mr. Geddes and Mr. Whitten. I know this because I have a tape recording of the event, on which Lightwing can be heard giving a eulogy for Mr. Geddes, ".....I'll miss him – he's a good bloke", and the elegantly mannered Adrian Oatley, probably wearing his trademark monocle though not perhaps his striped boating blazer, delivering in impeccable English a salute to George Witten. Mr. Witten is retiring after twenty seven years at Roan. He has

even taught the schoolboy Alfie Knott. Roan has been his life and there is a degree of pathos in his speech of reply. As for Oatley, when asked one day what career he hoped to pursue his reply was, "Something Ecclesiastical, Sir." I wonder if like Stephen Hoy he succeeded in his ambition?

In a recently discovered suitcase in my attic, along with old Stag Lists, faded photographs, minutes of form committee meetings and prize day programmes, are a set of essays from one of my first form groups. I used to ask the boys to write about themselves, their homes or what they expected of their new school so I could get to know something about them on their first day at Roan. One boy who kept pet birds wrote that when his Dad found out that he had gained a place at Roan he bought him "a new buggeryguard". (This was of course before the days of the Child Protection Act.)

When I think back to my early days of teaching the names of so many pupils come to mind. Mike Penny the clarinettist who, should he notice me on his way to orchestra practice, would broadcast the fact by playing the Laurel & Hardy 'Cuckoo Waltz' along the corridor. Gary Rimmer, who would serenade his friends with a rather risqué version of an old Ella Retford music hall song. Terry Shepherd and Phil Snaith, two of the most academically gifted science students of their generation, who missed a general studies sex education lesson to proof read some physics questions for Brian Matthews. (I hope this had no adverse long term effects?). Paul Groom who, when the lights were turned on after a ripple tank lesson, had a 'road to Damascus' moment and was so dazzled that it was an hour or more before he could see properly. John Dennis, who at the end of a sixth form dance which I had attended with my future wife, Val, said to me, "I



Form 3T—June 1969

Back row: Knight, West, Stubbings, Horn, Prosser, Mepsted, Vaughan, Toogood, Penny  
Middle row: Hoy, Trafford, Hardy, Cox, Palmer, Read, Rimmer, Savage, Garnsworthy, Chantry, Armstrong, Mitchell  
Front row: Hills, Banks, Groom, Davis, Terry Hall, Hewitt, Gash, Martin, Bradbrook



really admire you, Sir, dancing at your age." I never danced at a sixth form social event again! A boy called Lyons whose appropriately thick mane of black hair was allegedly so strong that if a member of staff were to use it to drag him from his seat he would feel no pain. My mark book for 1969-70 records of him that "...he has shown a keenness of perception which is well above average..." Obviously his keen perception did not extend to detecting follicular stress.

Some pupils it would be unfair to name. The boy new to the school whose parents confided had recently cut the whiskers off the cat and shut it in the oven. (You know who you are!). Another new boy who was so stressed by being at Roan that he would go home at lunch time and change out of his uniform for half an hour so as to forget all about school for a while. The lad who stole some mercury then tried unsuccessfully to flush it down the toilet. The boy who told his Mum and Dad that Mr. Ballantyne, who ran a "cross country cycling club", would pull out a long pole, that he had threaded through the front wheels of all the bicycles, to start each race.

One boy (I'll call him Peterson – not his real name) experienced a family tragedy which made headlines in the local paper. Dr Taylor decided to call an assembly where he would ask everyone to show sensitivity by not discussing the event in front of the boy. I was to keep Peterson out of assembly on the pretext of getting him to help me tidy

up the classroom notice board. When people started milling around in the corridor once more, I told the boy to go along to his PE lesson, picked up a set of exam papers and made my way to the staff room where I met Alfie Knott who said, "Aren't you supposed to be keeping Peterson out of the hall?"

"Assembly's over, isn't it?"

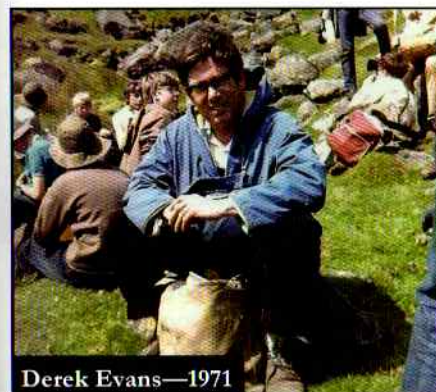
"The Head is keeping your form behind to talk to them separately."

"Oh, no! Peterson's going to go looking for them when he finds they aren't in PE." I rushed from the staff room just in time to see Peterson heading for the hall door. In desperation I threw all my carefully organised exam papers into the air and cried, "Peterson, I need your help!" The ruse worked and Peterson never did get into the hall; but maths teacher, Lionel Morey, who had entered the corridor just in time to see me apparently take leave of my senses and toss a hundred sheets of paper towards the ceiling, never quite saw me in the same light again.

### *Braithwaite*

An opportunity arose for me to go to Braithwaite to help with the junior camp so in May 1969 I set off with a coach party on what was to be the first of six annual trips to the Lake District. For most pupils Braithwaite provided a tremendous opportunity to experience communal living and the exhilaration of hill walking; some however took a little time to adjust to being away from home for the first time. One boy seemed understandably upset because

he had learned that his cat had died. A concerned Derek Evans phoned the boy's parents only to discover that the cat had never existed and was an invention to mask the boy's homesickness.



Derek Evans—1971

Derek was a genuinely kind man; dedicated to teaching and to the welfare of the boys in his charge. I got to know him a little on these camps when, having finished the last chores of the day and turned out the lights in the main hut we adults would retire to the kitchen to drink copious amounts of coffee and talk late into the night. It seemed that Derek had had some close encounters of the insect kind. On one occasion, he told us of how a bee had caused the pupils in his lesson to panic. No sooner had he told them to, "Leave it alone and it won't hurt you", than the bee landed on his face and proceeded to crawl slowly across the lenses of his spectacles.

The other bee incident, already related in part in an earlier issue of the Roan Magazine, was when Derek was leading a group of Scouts through the undergrowth

and a bee flew up his shorts and stung him in a particularly sensitive spot. Upon returning home he applied some cream to sooth his pain only to discover that he had used liniment by mistake – causing him to spend the next half an hour sitting in a bath of cold water.

Some of my free time during the 1970 camp was spent working through physics problems and writing the answers on postcards to send to Paul Baker, Chris Clare, Colin Walker, Ken Freston and others in my upper sixth physics group. My last lesson with them had been rushed and we hadn't had time to complete all the past paper questions I had planned to do. Perhaps this stressed me in some way because one morning Dr. Taylor said, "Mr. Hall, you woke me last night by talking in your sleep."

"Really?" I replied anxiously, "What did I say?"

"I couldn't quite make it out but you seemed to be teaching a lesson – and what's more you appeared to be having discipline problems!" I wasn't sure whether to feel relieved or mortified.



Mr. & Mrs. Fotheringham





Braithwaite—Whitsun 1969. Thurley, Wright, P.Wybrew, Pullen, Forward, Terry Hall, Hofsoer, ?, Diggins

In those days the boys slept on the floor of the main hut and the staff in a tiny hut at the lower end of the Hope Memorial Camp site. It was from here that sounds of Derek Evans' snores would resonate in the still air of a May night to the accompaniment of Alfie Knott's muttered complaints about country life not being a patch on living in the city.

One lad – it might have been Kevin Holt – who wasn't feeling well one night, opened the door of the staff hut to be greeted by a passable imitation of motorcycle noises from Derek Evans, the steely gaze of Dr. Taylor who was sat up in bed unable to sleep for the din, and Alfie Knott with socks covering each ear tied in place by a scarf round his head. I had almost managed to get to sleep even though the plug on my electric blanket did not fit the socket on the wall, and Nigel Ballantyne had dropped off despite his incredulity that I had even entertained the idea of bringing an electric blanket to camp.



Messrs Hall, Evans, Ballantyne, Taylor, Pinkstone—Braithwaite 1971

Brian Pinkstone, an older pupil who came to help at junior camp and who would go on to become School Captain in 1973, was able to teach a technique that was developed in earlier times by the likes of Steve Smith, Colin Stubbings and Brian Smith that would reduce the amount of time each 'fag group' needed to spend on potato peeling duty. He would hack at the surface of each potato until it was reduced to the dimensions of a rather large grape.

Brian ('Arfur' to his friends) Smith displayed an early entrepreneurial spirit by carting numerous cans of drink up to the tops of mountains and selling them at exorbitant prices. Such was Brian's charisma that when boys were offered drinks at cost by somebody else, they would prefer to bankrupt themselves and pay his inflated prices.

One year Val travelled up to Braithwaite with 'Ma' Fotheringham and her caravan. Val remembers, during one hill climb, encouraging Alan Spicer who was with the stragglers at

the back complaining bitterly that it was "like being at bloody Auschwitz!" Later on I decided that he might benefit from a pep talk so spoke to him about 'having a sense of achievement' and 'his parents being proud' – that sort of thing. It was most gratifying to hear Nigel Ballantyne announce later, "I've just heard Spicer say that he doesn't feel quite so bad now that Mr. Hall has spoken to him." I wasn't quite so gratified however when he continued, "He said this was because Mr. Hall had told him that when a map shows a mountain is 3,000 feet tall it's not really that high because we're already 1,000 feet up."!



Braithwaite 1971: Mepsted, Thomas, Thomas, Gaunt, Emeny-Smith, Sears

### Assemblies

Some famous school assemblies come to mind; one involving an uncharacteristically flustered Alfie Knott. "The sixth form are trying to do examinations and some boys have been making too much noise going to the toilet." (General merriment) "If you must go, don't use the upstairs corridors." (Increased merriment) "I seem to be digging myself deeper into a hole." (Uncontrolled laughter). It was soon after I had left Roan that I read in the newspapers that Alfie had

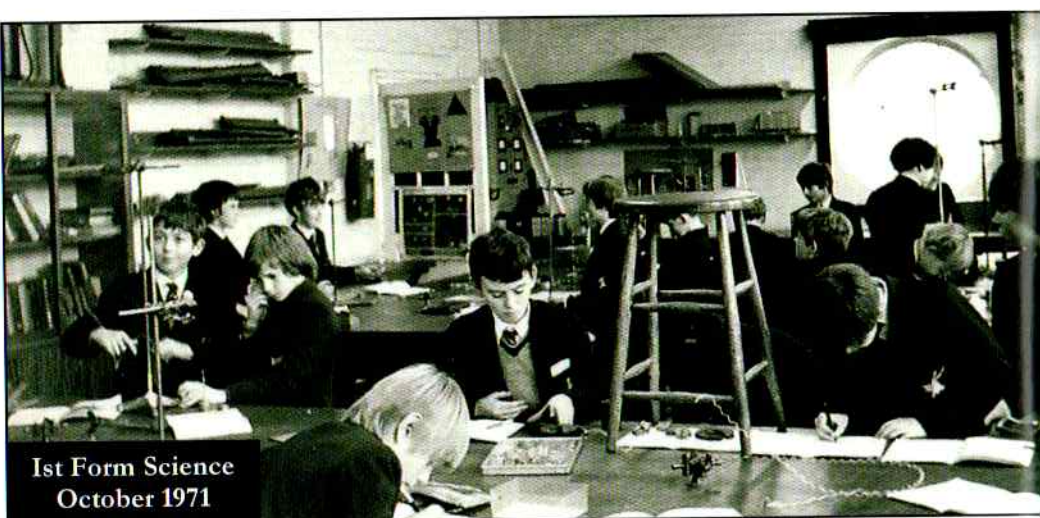
been shot and wounded by the IRA in a case of mistaken identity.

In the late 1960s teachers were expected to take turns in reading a passage from the Bible in Assembly. I vividly recall the occasion when history teacher, Freddy White, prefaced his reading by saying, "Mr. Cooper has asked me to read this today. I don't know why, or what it means, but here it is." He was never asked to read in assembly again.

Does anyone recall the incident of the collapsing chairs? It was the final assembly of term and someone – probably a school leaver – had decided to remove the screws which fastened the canvas seats to the metal frames of some of the teachers' chairs. It was deputy head Stanley Beale's misfortune to sit on one of these sabotaged chairs in full view of the assembled school. Easing his rear carefully up out of the metal frame from a place somewhere near to the floor, he swapped chairs only to repeat the whole unedifying spectacle, much to the delight of all the onlookers.

Stanley Beale was a teacher of 'the old school'; intellectually gifted, a Latin scholar, compiler of crosswords and as I recall – perhaps unfairly – a person of great reserve who seldom displayed emotion. Once he confided, "The trouble with you young teachers and your modern ways is that you make life difficult for the rest of us." And perhaps we did, but change was in the air and the coming decade would see the dismantling of the state Grammar School system.





1st Form Science  
October 1971

### Lessons

My teaching was influenced by one of my predecessors at Roan; a man I never met. When teaching about kinetic energy I was told, "Mr. Axon used to teach this by running round the lab, Sir." When explaining gravitational potential energy, "Mr. Axon used to bring his climbing ropes to school and climb up the shelves to the top of the cupboard to teach this, Sir." Well, Tom Axon, I salute you! In an attempt to live up to the standards you set I have walked the plank to illustrate the law of levers, dropped apples on pupils' heads to introduce the concept of gravity, stood in dustbins full of water to show refraction, thrown eggs across laboratories to demonstrate impulse: yes, and even climbed shelves to get to the top of cupboards!

One time at Roan I remember producing a starting pistol from my pocket and firing it at the beginning of a lesson to introduce the topic of sound. (Imagine firing a gun in a classroom nowadays!). The boys went quiet. As a matter of fact the whole world seemed to go

quiet for about twenty minutes because the pistol had gone off next to my ear, temporarily deafening me and scorching my cheek with its sparks.

One of my favourite sound demonstrations – right up there with 'howling tubes' and driving my car across the playground with its horn blaring to illustrate the Doppler effect, was the exploding can experiment. A large can with a tightly fitting lid and holes punched in its top and bottom would be filled with gas and set alight at the lid. As the gas burned, air would be drawn into the bottom of the can until it formed an explosive mixture with the gas. After a minute or so there would be a loud bang and the lid would fly off, almost embedding itself into the ceiling. I swear I could still see those long-ago dents when I looked into my old teaching room on a recent visit to the school.

My reason for mentioning this is that I need to confess to mischievously frightening an elderly school cleaning lady, who was affectionately known as

'fag ash Lil'. (I say 'elderly' though on reflection she was probably a decade younger than I am now: so just a youngster really!) Lil would wander round the laboratories in her carpet slippers at the end of afternoon lessons, pushing a small broom and smoking a Woodbine whose ash would cling doggedly to the end of her cigarette in defiance of the laws of gravity. One day she arrived before I had cleared away my apparatus so I set up the can experiment and stood back to watch the effect. When the can exploded not only did the ash fall to the floor, but so did the rest of the cigarette, the broom and – nearly – fag ash Lil herself. Sorry, Lil.

The school's central heating system, soon to be replaced I imagine as part of the multi-million pound refurbishment programme, had the advantage of a large iron pipe that ran the whole length of the front of the building. This was ideal for demonstrating how sound travels through solids. Before the lesson I would set up an accomplice near to a radiator in a room at the opposite end of the school; then, at a pre-arranged time, send him a tapped signal from a radiator in my laboratory and get the pupils to listen out for his reply. This was a great teaching aid but it had the disadvantage that several classrooms and the Head's study lay along the route of the pipe. I'm sure Dr. Taylor was not terribly amused to hear a sort of Morse code emanating from the plumbing. I don't think he ever knew that I was responsible though.

Nuffield Physics was a brilliant concept. Apparatus had been specially designed for the course which was taught through experimentation, observation, and deduction. The experiments moved the lessons forward and were not, as became the trend in the 80s and 90s, an end in themselves, often carried out with little relevance to the topic being taught and written up in a formulaic way for ease of assessment.



U6th Physical Science Lesson—17.10.72

Clockwise from top left:  
Gareth Toogood, Geoffrey Carr, Paul Mitchell,  
Gary Rimmer, Philip Hills, Philip Prosser

Two of the Nuffield experiments caused me some embarrassment at Roan however. The first followed the pouring of marbles onto the upturned pan of a top pan balance to illustrate how air molecules cause pressure. I bent down to retrieve a few marbles that had fallen to the floor and split my trousers from zip to belt. Had I undone the zip my trousers would have fallen in two. I taught the



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remainder of that lesson (as I recall it was to Bill Savage, Danny West, Gary Dowsett and their friends) with my back to the blackboard, not daring to turn round – and it isn't easy to write on the board whilst facing the wrong way! Eventually I was driven home to change, modestly cloaked in a lab coat.

My other minor disaster at Roan (not counting the time I fused half the lights in the school whilst setting up a carbon arc demonstration) involved a flame probe. For this experiment a hypodermic needle is connected to the gas supply which is adjusted to give a tiny flame. It is difficult to get the size of the flame just right so I was reluctant to turn the gas off and on again during the experiment. Instead I rested the probe on the edge of the bench when it wasn't in use, with the flame directed away from the pupils and towards myself. Unfortunately I then forgot all about it and moved too close to the bench. The boys watched in horrified fascination as the flies of my trousers first charred, then melted, then burst into flames. Again I had to don a lab coat before being driven home to change. Actually I was able to claim for a new pair of trousers on my insurance this time. Thankfully I had no need of BUPA.

My most shocking experience (apart from the time I electrocuted myself demonstrating the carbon arc – again!) was during a lesson using liquid nitrogen. I was lowering a thermistor into the Dewar flask of that freezing cold liquid to show how temperature affects

resistance when Rob, the biology technician, noticed what I was doing and, unbeknown to me, rushed off to the biology lab to anaesthetise a mouse. When he returned with the dead animal I was merrily cracking frozen rubber bands and daffodils in front of a mesmerised audience. They were even more mesmerised when Rob plunged the mouse into the liquid nitrogen, lifted it out again and used a hammer to smash it to smithereens. This put me completely off my lunch and Tony Elliott (Head of Science) kindly walked me round the playground in the fresh air to recover. That afternoon I kept coming across tiny mouse organs stuck bloodily to the walls, floor and blackboard.

### *Tutor group activities*

Most of my memorabilia of Roan, records the activities of my tutor groups. With Gary Rimmer, Philip Hills, Colin Stubbings, and their friends in 3T (later to become 4H) I went hiking in Kent, walking in Scotland, and (along with Val) camping in Deal and walking in Wales. I remember how a then rather slightly built Paul Mitchell, struggling along beneath the burden of a heavily loaded rucksack, suddenly missed his footing and slid rapidly from view beneath the bracken of a Welsh hillside. And how Peter Cox, Gordon Read et al. went swimming in a canal at Yalding in complete disregard for health and safety.

One of the major ventures of this class was the production of a form magazine, 'Class Rubbings', conceived



Form Committee. 20 July 1970. David Chantry, Alan Hewitt, Keith Banks, Gordon Read, Terry Hall, Keith Bradbrook, Stephen Armstrong, Roger Mepsted.

as a rival to Brian Smith's 'The Pirate' (see pages 45-48 of 'My Name is Daphne Fairfax'). It ran for five issues under the editorship of Keith Banks, Keith Bradbrook (twice), Gordon Read, and Mike Penny. An article by Keith Banks in the final issue landed me in hot water with Dr. Taylor. Keith had done a survey to see if there was a link between pupil ability and social background. This proved to be political dynamite back in the days of a Labour government and the South East London Mercury seized upon it, printing a two page spread entitled 'Why Johnny is a Bright Boy'. Parents were furious, the Governors demanded to see the Head and the Head demanded to see me – to point out that my sanctioning Keith's article had provided useful ammunition for the anti-Grammar School brigade. Somehow we all weathered the storm, although as I say, it *was* the final issue.

New tutor groups brought new activities. There were outings and a form choir with David Richardson, Alan Spicer, Russ Turner, Mark Peters and co from 1H in 1970. Then in 1971-2, with another 1H which included Derek Able, Cliff Benford, Kevin Jacques, Stuart Moore and Mike Smith, there were trips to the cinema, a tadpole expedition and a snow hike. I was to take on the David Richardson group once more in 1973 and they were to be my last tutor group at Roan.

During that school year when Alan Spicer, Nick Ottaway, Paul Prescott and Eddy Waller were on the 4H Form Committee there was a move afoot to start a roller skating club on the newly resurfaced school playground. The minutes of February 15<sup>th</sup> record the following:

"Mr. Hill had not been amenable to the prospect of boys skating in the



playground (to put it mildly!). He suggested we might try skating down Maze Hill and out into the main road at the bottom."

In the 1970s sitcom, 'Please Sir', Derek Guyler played the part of a caretaker called Norman, so Gordon Brooks and I used to refer to Mr. Hill as Norman. Later on we even began to call each other Norman. Terribly infantile now I come to think of it, but in view of the 'Fag ash Lil' incident and other events – that for reputation's sake I will draw a veil over – perhaps this behaviour was not atypical.

Were the years I spent at Roan one of those periodic golden ages that one reads about in the Roan Magazine? Certainly the Grammar School still held to traditions and rituals more commonly associated with its public school cousins: the house system; school uniform; 'tagging' where the labels (tags) would be gleefully ripped from the linings of the caps of new boys by riotous older pupils. There were even rumours of 'flushing' where new boys would have their heads held down the toilet while someone pulled the chain. Was this a myth designed to frighten nervous first formers? Only readers of this article will know.

In the early 70s boisterous behaviour manifested itself from time to time in such activities as 'shredding', when children moving from the junior to senior section of the school would rip their old blazers and ties to shreds and leave a trail of green rags along the pavement towards Blackheath.

In a recent email Keith Banks (Roan 1966-73) writes, "I don't recall the ripping up of blazers, my Mum would have gone berserk if I had done that. We did go from green blazers to black after the third year. Most kids were growing so fast at this stage that their green blazers looked like Norman Wisdom should be wearing them. Nobody's parents wanted to buy a new green blazer when a black one was going to be needed in twelve months time, hence the third years were always the scruffiest in the school."

Sometimes the general public would be irritated by the unruly behaviour of Roan boys. I have a cutting from the Mercury concerning rowdiness at the 75 bus stop. Perhaps though, these instances of high spirits were to be expected from a community of adolescent boys; certainly they paled into insignificance when compared to the stories we heard concerning children from other schools in the area.

It is interesting to read the lists of exam results printed in the Prize Day programmes from this era. One or two students, Terry Shepherd and Ray Westwood for example, achieved straight As at A-level but overall less than six percent of all A-level grades fell into this category. In addition only thirty boys are listed as proceeding to university in 1971 from an intake of ninety.

Considering that Grammar Schools catered for the most academically able students, these are not especially impressive statistics; although perhaps examinations have become less demanding over the years and of course the number of university places



**Terry's last Tutor Group—4H—September 1973**  
 Vincent, Reader, Powell, Taggart, Thornton, Turner, Peters, Sheppard, Lewis  
 Richardson, S.White, Spicer, O'Brian, Titlow, Snape, Walker, Stanley, McKay  
 Osbourne, Ottaway, Gaston, Walker, Lay, Hall, McDonald, D.White, Prescott, McGann

has increased enormously, so maybe Roan was a typical Grammar School of its time.

So was it a golden age? Certainly it was for me. I was teaching pupils who with few exceptions were pleasant, reliable and keen to learn; and working alongside colleagues such as Brian Matthews, Tony Elliott, Pete James, Gerry Griffin, Dave Southgate, John Bowerman, and Nigel Ballantyne – all enthusiastic and forward looking young teachers. We were in the company of such legends as Wes Westmoreland, Lionel Morey, Freddy White, Bob Hoare and 'Hoppy' Hopwood (who had been a pupil at Roan from 1923 to 1929).

These elder statesmen tempered our exuberance with their experience and

determination to preserve the school's traditional values. Overseeing us all was Dr. A. J. Taylor whose philosophy I recall was, "Remember, every boy is the most important person in the world to his parents; and there is no such thing as a bad boy, only the bad behaviour of a boy."

Shortly before I left Roan in 1974, I climbed up into the bell tower and carved my name into the lead. It gave me a certain delinquent satisfaction to think that at least in this respect I would leave my mark on the school. I mentioned this act of vandalism to the present Headteacher, Mr. Des Malone, during a guided tour round the old building in September 2011. He told me with a wry smile that only recently thieves had stripped all the lead from the school roof, almost certainly taking



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my name with it. So the mark I made on Roan, if not yet melted to oblivion, lies forgotten in some dusty corner of a London scrap yard. There is a moral here somewhere.

It is the mark which Roan made on me which has lasted. The names of pupils and colleagues from forty years ago, and the incidents and happenings of those days remain clearer to me now than many of the memories from later in my career. I will save the tales of Steve Martin in assembly; Pete Horn and the lab stool; the wrist watch in the lake; the drunken teacher; the tadpole eater; the incident of the embarrassing spoonerism; the teacher who fell into a wastepaper bin and other notable events for another time.

At the Old Roan Centenary Dinner I was delighted to renew my acquaintance with former pupils. Looking round The Painted Hall at the two hundred or so Old Roans I was struck by the extraordinary hold the school still had on those who had attended it in the past. Dr Taylor once said "A

school is not the building – a school is the pupils and teachers who work there." – and so I suppose it is. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Roan and am grateful for all the friends that I made there some four decades ago.

### Post 1974

Terry Hall left Roan in 1974 to become Head of Physics at Clarendon School (now Clarendon College) in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. In 1978 he became Head of Sixth Form at the school and continued in this role for twenty years. Before retiring completely in 2009 Terry worked as a part-time teacher of physics—at one time travelling between four different schools in the area and following four different syllabuses! Whilst at Roan Terry co-authored the series of books "Involvement in Physics" with Brian Matthews and later wrote the Nuffield based text book "Simply Physics". Terry has lived in the village of Keevil in Wiltshire with his wife, Val, for thirty years. They have four children and are grandparents.

24th September 2011



Back row: Keith Banks, Terry Thurley, Phil Prosser, Ron Edworthy  
Front row: Peter Cox, Keith Bradbrook, Terry Hall, Peter Horn, Paul Groom



Sports Day—16.7.69: Manning, Cox, Armstrong, Chantry, Clayton, Banks



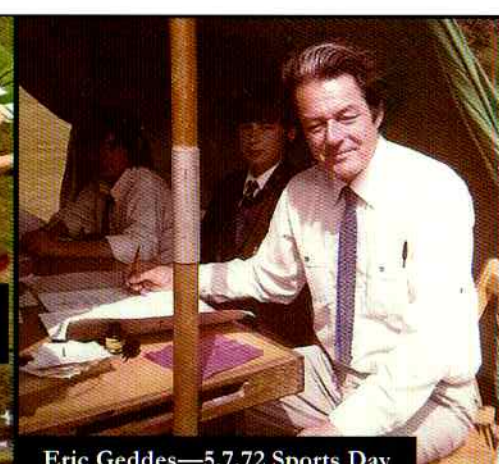
Messrs. Bonner, Ballantyne, James & Brown



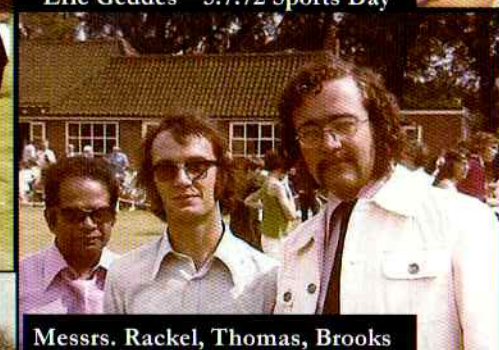
Form 1H "Snow Hike" - January 1972  
Mick Stoye, Tony Wilkinson, Bob Gillis, Terry Hall, Alan Richmond, Stuart Moore, John Confrey, Paul Crone



Dining Hall—28.10.71



Eric Geddes—5.7.72 Sports Day



Messrs. Rackel, Thomas, Brooks



Brian Smith 29.6.73



Robert (Fuzz) Lightwing



Dennis **Merrett** ('37-'47) remains in contact with "Pip" Wedge and Dick Cody. He recalls the school holding their Founder's Day Service in Royal Naval College Chapel after WW2 when St. Alfege was being repaired from bomb damage. After military service and university he globe-trotted as an oil explorationist. He is a contemporary of Alf Knott and recalls playing in the 1st XI under his captaincy during the victorious unbeaten 1946-7 football season.

Rob "Doss" **Andrew** ('64-'71) is semi-retired after a career in the chemical industry, working for Rohm & Haas, a U.S. multinational, from 1974—2003. He enjoyed his time there, living in Philadelphia for 3 years, visiting interesting places and eventually running worldwide businesses. He moved onto Yule Catto, a UK chemical company, running their European Polymer business, and in 2005 set up his own consulting company—supporting start up, science based businesses, with their planning & finance. Rob is married with three children and lives in the Orpington area. He still plays competitive tennis and social golf. He looks back with satisfaction to his time at Roan and feels it laid the foundation for the road ahead.

Dave **Shea** ('75-'82) lives in Wellington, NZ. He studied Psychology at Manchester University and took a 3 month commitment on the Operation Raleigh Project in Fiordland on the South Island which introduced him to New Zealand. He decided to stay.

Alan **Weir** ('36-'42) was delighted with the Centenary Dinner and pleased to spend time with contemporaries, Bill **Wedge** (Raleigh House Captain) and Peter **Trafford** (School Captain).

Peter **Trafford** ('28-'38) found the last magazine interesting and contributes information on Dr. Donald **White**. They were both School Captains and shared an interest in botany & zoology. Donald studied these subjects at Higher Certificate though neither was available at Roan. Peter followed his footsteps and attended evening courses at the Sir John Cass Technical Institute in the Minories. Donald was a Quaker and gave great service in the Blood Transfusion Unit of the Friends Ambulance Association in the battles in the Western Desert & North Africa.

Ron **Ettling** ('44-'49) was a contemporary of Alf Knott, playing in the same Blake House team. He advises the death of another contemporary and dear friend, Reginald Ambrose **Red** ('44-'51). Reg was his best man in 1953 and worked as an accountant for a firm of stockbrokers in Liverpool for many years. Ron's son, Thomas **Ettling**, attended Roan from 1966-68 and was in the same form as Brian Smith. Thomas is now a semi-retired doctor and lives in Cornwall.

Margaret Longhurst, widow of Peter **Longhurst** ('33-'39) thanks the secretary for the last copy of the magazine which contained a mention of Peter. Her father, Wilfred Glaisher (1900-09) knew Harry **Sewell** whose VC in the First War was detailed in the same issue.

David **Preston** ('59-'63) has given up the 9 to 5 and divides his time between South-East London and Cumbria—a result of his visit to Braithwaite. He came across Geoff **Meekums** ('45-'51) during voluntary work for the charity REMAP (Rehabilitation Engineering Movement Advisory Panels) which makes bespoke aids for the disabled.

Kevin **Brewer** ('63-'70) was pleased to see news of his school friend Ian **Dick** and asked to be put back in contact. He plans to ask Ian what happened to the dead mouse he kept in his pocket. Kevin now lives in Bromley.

Ian Lindsey **Smith** ('47-'53) has made contact from South Carolina. He left Roan after one year in the 6th to take a degree in Plastics at Borough Polytechnic. As plastics became more evident and applicable he took jobs in England, moved to Northern Ireland and ran a function for a U.S. company that was operating a European site. He was offered the opportunity to move to their main plant in South Carolina in 1974 and has lived there in the same house since. He retired in 2001 at 65.

Cynthia Suggitt (née **Cathersides** '47-'53) lives in Crowborough in East Sussex and is a keen member of the U3A. She wonders what happened to the "glory" boards at the back of the hall in the Girls' School in Devonshire Drive. Her name was there—jointly awarded the Blackmore Prize for Scripture with Josephine **Ackland** in 1952. She thanks Roan for providing a good education and, after marriage and motherhood, a way to an interesting and rewarding career.

Neil **Harvey** ('65-'72) lives in Gloucestershire and recalls Alf with respect and affection. He planned to attend the Centenary Dinner and wished to renew contact with Pete **Thomas** and Alan **Smith** (son of the woodwork teacher). His brother, Paul, attended Roan from 1964-71.

Martin **Pink** ('45-'53) was pleased to see news of in the last magazine of Ted **Brading**, Geoff **Meekums** and Brian **Maunder**, friends at Roan. He recalls that Geoff was with him in Miss Moreton's 2nd Preparatory Form in 1945 and Brian was an enthusiastic cyclist. Martin now lives in Hamburg and Provence.

Ian **Brown** ('51-'59) remembers his first experience of the school field in 1951 when, after a random selection by the masters, he found himself in Joe Broadfoot's team, winning 3-0, all scored by Joe. Joe's time at Roan was inglorious but the school were happy to promote him at Open Days after he found fame at Millwall.. He remembers how innocent they all were aged 11 and one boy, Tony **Elliott**, taught them all the "facts of life" based on information from the vicar who rounded off his confirmation class with quite astonishing revelations that went far beyond Adam & Eve. When others refused to accept the news he said "it's true and it's not rude because the Duke of Edinburgh has done it twice". He also remembers **Watson** being way out in front in Cross Country but had to give up and run out of the park as he was "taken short". Ian feels gratitude to Mr. Morey, who inspired him in mathematics, as, aged 70, he reaches 50 years of teaching mathematics to undergraduates.



## News of Old Roans

**Tony Elliott** ('51-'59, staff '63-'74) accepts his role in Ian Brown's education and hopes he put it to good use later. He says of Alf Knott—"if there was any greater proof that teachers are born not trained, he provided it. I doubt whether any teacher in recent years at Roan has had such an influence on boys" lives nor brought such natural ability to the classroom. With Bill Ellis, he created a music and entertainment scene at Roan that will stay with me long after the last chemical equation has disappeared from my few remaining brain cells". He recalls the lyrics of "Jo, Jo, the Rhinoceros Man" and says that Alf always dismissed these inspired compositions as insignificant frivolity. "As boy and teacher at the Roan as well as finding my wife at the Girls' School I couldn't have asked for more". Tony lives mainly in Nelson on the South Island, New Zealand, and was unable to time his annual return to the UK to coincide with the Centenary Dinner. Tony sends special greetings to Bill Ellis who should be pleased to hear that the Barbers Shop Quartet entertaining in Nelson has its origins in the deep past of the Roan Reviews.

**David Lewis** ('61-'68) has been retired for nearly 3 years after the travelling the world for 17 years working for his own business systems consultancy. He enjoys the Suffolk countryside where he has lived, in Saxmundham, for nearly 30 years and continues to be active in tennis, swimming, cycling, sailing and skiing. He remains in contact with Steve Nelson and looks forward to seeing him for the Charlton away game at Ipswich now they have promotion.

**Les Roberts** ('55-'62) lives in Keston. In 2008 he completed the End to End (Lands End to John O'Groats) and in 2011 the Double End to End to raise funds for the Cure Parkinson's Trust. Sadly, Les suffered an accident half way through but has rejoined the team for 2012—a non-stop assault on LeJog in August. Les has always been a competitive cyclist and athlete and excelled at Roan as a footballer and runner. He remains closely associated with Blackheath and Bromley Harriers and was their President in 2007. Les has enjoyed a lifetime of athletic pursuits, training and competing, firstly in cycle racing, where he featured prominently at regional level, and then running, where he established himself in the successful Blackheath Harriers Track and Field team of the 1980s before going on to become the World Masters 5000m Champion in 1985. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 1993 and embraced it as an opportunity to confront new challenges. Les recommends the Cure Parkinson's Trust as a dedicated, driven, lively bunch of people who deserve all the help we can give them. More information on these activities can be found on:

<http://pedalforparkinsons.co.uk>

**Alistair Rhodes** ('62-'69) lives in Mandurah in Western Australia and works in the mining industry in Perth. He married an Australian "Sheila" in 1983 and has 3 children. He remains involved with football as a coach and enjoyed the recent Ashes Series. He is in contact with Roger **Tanner** ('62-'66). Contemporaries remember Alistair as the outstanding footballer and athlete of his year.

**Ted Brading** ('46-'52) sent a photo of his 1948 Form 4b and asks if we have a better quality version of this priceless record. Ted and his wife, Dorothy, visited Ron Noakes and his wife, Kay, in Eynsford in July 2011. Ted is on the left.



**Maureen Brewer** (née **Wilson** '51-'56) recalls George Hall, the father of her best friend, Pat, when attending Sherington Road Junior School before Roan. She was amused to read that the Roan boys had little contact with the girls. That was certainly her experience although she remembers they once had a dance afternoon when the boys attended. She adds that it wasn't that we weren't interested. Maureen and her friend caught the same 53A bus each day to see certain boys but were too shy to speak to them. She was later told that a young man caught the bus every day to see her—sadly she never noticed. Maureen now lives in Wales.

**June Layson** ('40-'50) has provided an anecdote on the Ammanford evacuation. Her brother, Ron, joined the school in Wales and as the youngest pupil was selected to present flowers at a prize ceremony to the "Lady Dignitary" on the platform. At the start of the ceremony Ron raced onto the platform and promptly thrust the large bouquet of flowers into the lap of the first woman he saw and scuttled off. The surprised recipient, sitting at the end, passed the bouquet until the flowers reached its intended destination. Ron was teased for years with this incident and always countered with "I was told to give the flowers to a lady on the platform, which I did. No-one explained which one!" Ron died in 2008. June's cousins also attended Roan. Jack ('46-'52) lives in Spain and Michael ('51-'53) in Kent.

**Keith Pullen** ('68-'75) noted the article on Ammanford in the last magazine and advised that his mother, Edna Pullen (née **Jenkins**) attended Roan during the evacuation and thinks that the girl with red hair was Audrey **Bourne**. Edna has strong memories of the evacuation, staying in a lovely billet with Mr. & Mrs. Williams. There was little education possible and they returned to Greenwich in time for the V1 & V2 bombs.

**Stephen Ingle** ('52-'59) attended Roan from the Isle of Dogs—"there were a few of us, we went on the strong advice of our primary school head, who rightly reckoned it was tops. Certainly was for me". He left Roan for Sheffield University, moved to New Zealand and now lives in Dunblane in Perthshire.



Terry **Shepherd** ('64-'71) was reminded by the article on Brian Smith of his photo of a rehearsal of "1066 and all that", directed by George Witten, with Terry as a crusader returning from the Holy Land with his wife, played by Brian Smith, dressed in medieval garb still reading from his script and a very young Neal **Haslam** in the foreground dressed like Hansel.

Hugh **Brewer** ('33-'38) advised the death of his friend William **Higgins** ('32-'38). They used to cycle to school from Plumstead. He recalls with fond memories his time at Braithwaite in the 1930s.

Jim **Watson** ('47-'54) has made contact via the secretary with Rt. Rev. G.H. **Reid** OBE who he last saw in 1953. Gavin Reid is the retired Bishop of Maidstone, was awarded the OBE for his work with the Millennium development, and now lives in Beccles in Suffolk.

Kevin **Cheeseman** ('72-'77) sent a message on Alf Knott from the Highlands where he works for the stockbrokers Fyshe Horton Finney Ltd. He was a friend of Paul Knott and says that Alf and Beryl always made him feel very welcome.

Rev'd Tony **Bryer** ('62-'69) moved to North Berwick in September 2011. He is returning to a non-parochial post in Edinburgh, working with 3 churches of different denominations as their City Centre Workplace Chaplain. His task is to offer and establish chaplaincies to businesses of all kinds in the city centre, taking the church to where people are.

David **Clifton** ('59-'65) was delighted to see on the website a photo of Braithwaite in 1962 next to George **Cheesman** and with his good friend, Terry **Marshgreen** in the back row. A digital copy has been sent to David—now living in Exoudun in Central West France

Rob **Bain** ('64-'71) attended the Centenary Dinner from Grimsby and enjoyed meeting Phil **Snaith**, John **Dennis** and Fred **Spink**. He managed a full cricket season in 2011, tearing his calf muscle in the last fixture, and hopes to try one more season in 2012.

Tony **Rickson** ('57-'64) retired in May 2011 having worked in local media / newspapers for 47 years and regards himself as lucky to have had an interesting, varied and enjoyable career. He has downsized to a property outside Sittingbourne and, in advising the secretary of his new address, belatedly thanks him for a lift home in 1972 on his stag night.

Ian **Rickson** ('75-'82) enjoyed a good 2011 with "Jerusalem" in New York and London, the highly praised "Betrayal" in the West End and his controversial version of "Hamlet" with Michael Sheen at the Young Vic.

Chris **Martyn** ('56-'63) enjoyed singing the School Song at the end of the Dinner and recalls playing the organ once at St. Alphege's Church. Chris lives in Malvern and sings with the Aldwyn Voices. He enjoys the wide range of cultural activities available in his area and keeps in touch with the London theatre scene.

John **Burton** ('46-'48) lives near Heidelberg in Germany. He has rejoined the ORA and contributes an article on his time at Roan together with information on his contemporaries. Prof. Denis **Frank Owen** ('45-'47) was a close friend who broadcast frequently on BBC radio, had a distinguished career as an ecologist and zoologist and died in 1996. Harry **Scammell** ('46-'48) joined Roan at the same time and went on to become the Head of Yale University's Library in the U.S.A., dying prematurely in 1985. Keith **Hyatt** ('39-'49) also shared an interest in Natural History and went on to be a Senior Experimental Officer in Natural History at the British Museum. John left Roan for the Natural History Museum, did his National Service in the Royal Army Education Corps, joined the British Trust for Ornithology, belatedly went to Oxford to read zoology, joined the editorial staff of Encyclopaedia Britannica in London, joined the staff of the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol where he remained until retirement in 1988. He produced and took part with Denis Owen in a BBC radio programme about the wildlife of Blackheath and Greenwich Park.

Keith **Hyatt** ('39-'49) has also made contact from Carmarthenshire with details on the life of Harry Scammell and the evacuation in Ammanford. An article from September 1952 in the Blackheath Local Guide refers to four Roan boys who have, both individually and together, made a name for themselves in the sphere of natural history and as observers of birds and butterflies in London—J.F. Burton, K.H. Hyatt, D.F. Owen and H.D. Scammell.

Frank **Brooks** ('36-'41) has added the name of his brother, Ronald Brooks ('32-'37) to the photo of the 1937 Roan Athletics squad.

Mike **Plummer** ('62-'69) returned to Greenwich in March 2012 for the first time since the late 1960s. He spent most of his school lunchtimes in Greenwich Park or the "Plume of Feathers" and, on first re-acquaintance, little has changed, though Maze Hill seems much steeper now. The centre of Greenwich seems much cleaner, though with far more traffic, and the Maritime Museum has "shrunk" but with better facilities. The "Plume" still offers a good pint. Mike now lives in Milford on Sea in Hampshire.

Phil **Prosser** ('66-'73) enjoyed reuniting with Terry **Hall** (staff '68-'74) and members of his year at the Dinner and assisted with adding names to faces in the photos. He plans to stay in contact with several of his contemporaries.

Graham **Fletcher** ('52-'60) has moved closer to the centre of Kaohsiung in Taiwan. The epic complexities of the move and refurbishment took up most of 2011, and prevented his appearance at the Dinner. He ensured he lifted a glass to share the toasts at the equivalent time in Taiwan—conveniently watching the Premier League highlights.

Robert **Lockhart** ('62-'69) is Director of Studies for Computing and Mathematics at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education. He met with the editor, a contemporary at Roan, at the British Mathematical Colloquium in Canterbury in April.



## A Roan Girl's School Memories—Toni Wallace ('49-'54)

I attended the Roan Grammar School for Girls in Devonshire Drive, Greenwich from 1949 to 1954. My father was an army officer stationed at Woolwich Barracks. We had moved from one posting to another, and the Roan was my ninth school. I think I was so relieved to be able to put down roots and make friends that I was fairly happy throughout my time there. From where I lived, backing onto Shooters Hill, I had to take a bus into Woolwich and another bus out to Greenwich. The school was a very old building that had previously housed the boys. By then those fortunate boys were comfortably settled in a much newer school close to the heath.

In those days we girls were a hardy lot, unaccustomed to central heating or anything much in the way of comfort. Draughty corridors and windows that never quite shut properly, rickety old desks and well used school equipment scarcely warranted a mention. The school cloakrooms and lavatories would probably be condemned today. However, the gymnasium and the school hall boasted fine polished parquet floors, an invitation for sliding competitions that landed me in detention more than once. The dining hall was situated off the gym, where we had to queue in orderly lines, form by form, immune to the unpalatable smells wafting out to our unsophisticated noses. My best friend to this day, Diane, was a rarity for the Fifties, a vegetarian. We operated a swap system; I gave her my soggy vegetables, she gave me her meat, probably more beneficial to her than to me. School hours demanded we were on

the premises by 8.45 in time for Assembly at 9.0, with an hour and twenty minutes lunch, and finishing at 3.30. Not a long day. Unless we were going home for lunch we were expected to remain inside the school at all times, but it was almost obligatory to slink out to the nearby corner shop, known as The Red Shop, for bottles of Tizer and packets of aniseed balls to sneak into class. That little Red Shop gained a roaring trade from the Roan girls.

Much as I enjoyed my time at the Roan I would not go so far as to claim schooldays as the happiest of my life. There were a few grizzly moments at the hands of maths teachers whose names I have mercifully forgotten, and a despairing science teacher, Miss Cherry. It was her aim in life to condemn me to the chair in the corridor outside the Science Lab in the hope that I would be discovered there by the head mistress, Miss Barnsdale, in whom I always detected a faint sympathy for my predicament. Mostly, though, I found the teachers relatively easy to get on with. As long as homework was handed in on time, attention paid to the subject in class, politeness at all times and a healthy regard for rules, a 1950's Roan girl could survive well enough.

I must have achieved something from the previous schools I had attended for I ended up in the Latin class, generally considered by those of us who made it, to be elite. Today, having finally come to terms with my appalling grasp of foreign languages, it doesn't surprise me at all that I failed



**Roan Senior Cross County Team 1957-58**

Mr. Gilbert, G. Miles, T. Peake, P. Ransom, A. Hooker, D. Bird, Mr. Berry  
G. Haydon, J. Ransom, J. Cooper (Capt), D. Gill, D. Peachy

David Gill ('53-'61) sent the photo of the Roan Senior Cross County Team 1957-58.

Derek Carter ('45-'52) sends greetings from Ontario, Canada and has contacted contemporaries including David Hamblen, Brian Davis, Ian Smith and Frank Bullen, who lives in Canberra, Australia. Derek promises an article on his post-war years at Roan



Miss Marguerite **Barnsdale** was Headmistress of the Roan Girls' School from 1943-1962 and died in October 1988. She had a life-long love of Greece and left us her own memoriam for the magazine:

**"Ithaca will not give you riches,  
Ithaca has given you your lovely journey"**



both Latin and French 'O' levels. Whilst my teachers could not get me to conjugate verbs, I did leave the Roan with an appreciation of ancient Roman history that stands me in good stead when it comes to crosswords and quizzes.

As well as history, geography and art I was blessed with English teachers who recognised the literary spark in my soul and nourished it well. Miss MacIntosh a fearsome lady, was a disciplinarian who instilled in us by way of rote every single grammatical rule that she was able to cram into us. To this day it drives me mad when I see blatantly bad grammar in so-called reputable newspapers, although I am sure after all these years I am often guilty of it myself! I was lucky enough to be in Form VI under Miss Wilson who awakened and encouraged in me an abiding love of literature that I have never lost. She once told my mother I was a genius, so I knew she was on my side. She may have been overstating the case somewhat, but she brought the classics alive for me. Her passion and enthusiasm for her subject has seen me through many a dark moment.

I spent a good deal of my time in our splendid library on the first floor of the school, full of the classics and copies of Punch magazine housed in large leather bound volumes dating back to the early days of Punch. Long hours poring over antiquated jokes and cartoons filled me with delight. The library was my favourite place, where I was happy to bury my nose in a book for as long as I was allowed.

I learnt to cook at school, and enjoyed the Domestic Science classes. My apple pies are still decorated in exactly the way we were taught. At the age of twelve our first task was to make a headband embroidered with our name, and wear it during class. I frequently forgot to take mine to school, but my name, being unusual, seemed to be the only one our diminutive teacher could remember. By the time I left we were all taller than she was, so it was impossible for her to see what was on the top of our heads.

Sport was an important part of our weekly routine. I was never much good in the gym, never managed to climb a rope or get myself over the horse, but I was good at games and could hit a ball. Mostly we played rounders and netball on the school playground, but swimming, hockey and tennis took place outside the school, which required a long walk. Consequently we were a healthy bunch of girls. I can't remember anyone who was overweight other than a tendency towards normal puppy fat that rapidly disappeared. We ate well, played well, and days off sick were a rarity.

School trips were nothing like today, focussing mostly on Greenwich, whenever royalty visited the borough. I remember being herded to see a very handsome young Prince Philip when the Cutty Sark was berthed in Greenwich. We were frequently hauled out to line the streets and wave at the Queen or whoever happened to be standing in for her at the time. Particularly poignant, given the present success of the film "The King's Speech", we were all

called into Assembly to be told that King George VI had died, and were given the rest of the day off. For reasons I cannot understand we were taken to the cinema to see Anthony Steel in "Where no Vultures Fly". Since we were all in love with him at the time, this was definitely better than lessons. We were taken to see John Mills in "Scott of the Antarctic", and there was a good deal of fuss and outings when Everest was conquered. There was also a visit to the 1951 Festival of Britain, a hugely important event at the time.

Contact with the boys' school was minimal, conducted mainly from the top floor of the number 53 bus. Those of us who were going across the heath caught the bus at the bottom of Blackheath Hill that enabled us to secure the best seats, and give the boys the once over before they boarded. A good deal of flirting and innocent ribaldry went on, lots of berets and school caps were thrown around, and many enamel school badges suffered in the process. I cannot for the life of me remember the names of those long ago boys. If any of them are still around, I would like to thank them for the entertainment we all enjoyed on the top floor of the number 53 bus as it wound its way across the heath! I was an average student, rarely excelling myself, but managed to scrape five 'O' level passes, much to my relief at the time. Apart from that the only other notable achievement was compiling a crossword for the school magazine. I sang briefly for the school choir, and appeared in a very minor role in a school production of "The Mill on the

Floss", finding it inordinately difficult to pronounce the word "victuals"!

My father was posted to the Midlands when I was sixteen, and my days at the Roan came to an end. I returned only once, to collect my fifth form prize. I kept in touch with Diane, we are still friends, but her memories of the Roan are less happy than mine, although she still lives in the area. I have moved the length and breadth of England since those days, changing address many times. It is, however, always a pleasure to go back to Greenwich and fondly remember my time at school there. Nowadays my eldest son lives in Southwark, not so far from Greenwich Park, where I spent many happy hours with school friends. I hope it emerges relatively unscathed from the approaching Olympic event! Now I can walk there with my grandchildren, one of who is now at St Ursula's School. She catches the number 53 bus, going in the opposite direction to the one I took. Life goes on, full circle.

I like to think some of my friends from those years remember me. I was the only girl in the class, quite possibly the whole school, with red hair and freckles, and a boy's name!

Toni Thomson (née Wallace) lives in Brighton and continues to write for various magazines, though "I have yet to get the great novel published". Since leaving Roan Toni lived in Sutton Coldfield and Yorkshire before moving back South after her husband died. She worked for some time in the IT department of American Express and now has 11 grandchildren.



**“Oh what fun we had,  
but did it really turn out bad?”**

As the years have slipped by, I find myself increasingly reflective about the experience that I had at Roan School for Boys, Maze Hill. I think that my years at Roan School were most formative because I was surrounded by a wealth of characters, both staff and students. The purpose of this article is to try and celebrate my memories of Roan School for Boys. The names have not been changed to protect the guilty and I plan to indulge myself in anecdotal revelry.

My first day at Roan School for Boys was a big day in my life. I had baggy trousers, a shiny new briefcase and a large green blazer. My mum said that I would ‘grow into the trousers in time’ ... it took a little longer to fill the blazer. There were seven boys, if I remember correctly, who moved up from Sherrington Road Junior School. We were the first year group who did not take the 11+ entry exam as it had been abolished by the ILEA. Colin Irving, Jonathan Fordham, Dave Leonard, Alistair Mitchell (who?), Steve Swann and myself joined another 80 or so boys to create the First Form in September, 1965.

Mr. Edwards was both my form teacher and my French teacher. It was Jumbo Edwards who gave me the confidence to speak French so badly throughout my life. I have spent many years hoping to meet Monsieur Tibout,

the engineer who featured in Jumbo’s slide show. Languages were never my strong point, which is why my time with Deputy Head Mr. Beale was so tortuous. As many may remember, Sam Beale was the Latin teacher who would sweep into the class, (always one second after the bell), his gown like a cloak of satanic doom, ready to demand an instantaneous recollection of the last lesson’s vocabulary homework. As somebody has previously said in this magazine, he was not a man known for his sense of humour and it would be fair to say that Mr Beale and I were not comfortable soul mates. Whilst more learned scholars like Steve Swann were given splendid Latin nick-names like *Signus*, I was assigned the name *Mola* (the grinder or miller I think?). It was pretty unflattering and certainly put me in my place after several failed attempts to remember those homework’s. ‘How we all laughed’ at *Mola Mills!* I am just getting over this trauma in my life.

Mr. Garstang (Wally) was the Headmaster when I arrived at Roan. He was such a formidable man. But Dr A.J. Taylor was the next Headmaster to take the reins at the school. I always felt that he had a good understanding of the changing times in which we were living. I can still remember an inspirational assembly that he delivered – as a teacher myself, I duplicated that assembly many times, thanks Doc! I wonder whether any of my students will in-turn pass on his original thinking? Looking back, it is hard to understand

the politics of what was happening in those heady days. We had our annual prize-giving ceremony at the Greenwich Town Hall, the Chairman of the Governors said that one day we would not be a Grammar School anymore; I really didn’t understand at the time... food for thought indeed.

My finest hour at the school was possibly playing the drums in the staff and students jazz band as led by one Bill Ellis. Every week we would practice in the school hall. Bill played trumpet, Alfie Knott could muster an impressive honky-tonk piano and I think that Barry Thomas played the banjo. Most memorable students were Steve Swann (trombone), Trevor Talbot (clarinet) and Pete Chamberlain (trumpet). Out of school, these three friends joined me to form a jazz combo which was great fun. I seem to remember that when I was in the final phase of the sixth form and I relinquished the post of drummer, that it was Alfie Knott who took over the job. He was a very talented man; he must have been, he got me through GCE O Level English!

Talking of Trevor Talbot, we were quite good friends in those days. Trevor had an older brother who held excellent parties in his Lewisham home. Aged 15, I was quite happy to be on the guest list. Being involved in amateur dramatics myself over the last 15 years; a big regret would have to be missing Trevor in many of his ORDS roles. I have fond memories of helping Trevor patch up his 3-wheeler Bond

car (not the 007 variety) after a side-impact collision. Phil Leper the metalwork teacher helped me to weld up some brackets and somehow Trevor and I bolted the car back together... it was never the same again but that particular car, to me, remains a legend in the history of motoring.

And so, I must explain my love of the handicrafts department as led by Jack Smith. Before entering the fourth form, all boys had to pick their optional subjects. In one option column was German, Spanish and the third science, Biology. I have already explained my unfortunate relationship with languages and Biology was not my thing. My dear old mum had the answer; she wrote to the Headmaster and asked if I could do more handicrafts, normally a subject that was dropped by all after the third form at Roan School. To my amazement the school agreed to this! I was in heaven and was thus allowed to spend three hours a week, often on my own, in either the woodwork or metalwork room. This was certainly before the days of Health and Safety. All sorts of projects were undertaken by me in that time. Jack Smith was not a man known for his cup of human kindness, but, he helped me to start on a journey which moulded my life. By 1980 I had trained to become a Design and Technology teacher and by 1989, I had moved to Plymouth to take up the post of Head of Technology Faculty in a large, new Community College. Looking back, how fantastic was it that Roan School was flexible enough to cater for my interests?



Bob Beckingham and I were the only two students who went on to take Advanced Level Technical Drawing in September 1970. I guess I got to know him quite well. He was always a bit dishevelled and eccentric, but a very pleasant young man. I think it was Christmas 1971 that a whole gang of us went carol singing around Blackheath Village. This was a very informal event linking the Roan boy's and girl's sixth forms. Bob turned up with his violin that night and a musical secret was revealed. Also, Adrian 'Oaters' Oakley was resplendent in Victorian apparel that evening; a most interesting and eccentric character. As many may recall, Bob Beckinham or *Bobby Valentino*, developed a musical career, most famous for the violin parts in *Young at Heart* by the *Bluebells*.

Life in an all boys' school inevitably creates tensions and rivalries linked to high levels of male hormones. Keith Stafford and an older boy called Casaman resolved their differences in a gladiatorial battle one lunch-time in Greenwich Park. To my memory, no adults were in anyway involved with this event, or afterwards; and it was by all accounts a bloody draw. For what it was worth, I was a keen supporter of Keith Stafford. Casaman had previously had a big impact on my life, and my groin. One break-time, as a humble 2<sup>nd</sup> former, I had cheekily said to Master Casaman—'Hello curly!' Retribution was swift and unforgiving. The fact that I subsequently bore two sons is a miracle given the events of that break-time.

It's strange how our lives are inter-twined. As a very young teacher in Suffolk in 1981, I found out that Steve Rider was living just a couple of miles from my school. His career in television was just taking off. I was delighted that we were able to invite him to our sports day and that he was able to present the prizes for us. For a few years I lost contact with Martin Absalom, but now my wife Sheila and I often meet up with him in Devon. I keep in contact with Neil Harvey in Gloucester and I still see Cheryl Thorogood (now Mason) whenever she comes down to the West Country. But on the whole, I don't have much contact with the Roan fraternity in London. In 1990, Alistair Mitchell organised a reunion for our year group at the John Roan Clubhouse; well done Mitch, that was a good effort! I very much regret being unable to attend the centenary celebrations in the Painted Hall last September.

***'All I learnt at school was how to bend not break the rules'***

Alan Wilson had a sense of humour that could have competed with the Pythons. Not many pupils joined us, or left us during those years. Dave Leonard left with his family for Australia... he had an amazing capacity to spit over long distances. A boy called Phil Dew joined us in the fourth or fifth form I think. It was Alan Willson who made him most welcome. With his name, it was Alan who worked out that you could say to this poor boy,

*'How do you do, Phil?'* Or, alternatively, *'how do you feel, Dew?'* This was comic genius beyond my wildest dreams and poor old Phillip Dew was subjected to these universal greetings on countless occasions. Well done Alan, but, I still wouldn't want you round the house. Talking of comedians, there was a lad called Brian 'Arthur' Smith who was two years below us. He had quite a good sense of humour and I've been told that he might be famous one day!

Steve Swann received a mild reprimand from Chalky White after he confessed to dangling a teapot out of the Sixth Form common room window on a piece of string. It greatly amused the third form class below, but Mr Hankinson found the teaching of Geography more difficult with the pendulum antics of the teapot. Both Steve and I were completely responsible for another act of devilment. One day during assembly, when all 600 boys were in the hall, we went round and locked every classroom in the school. In the words of Reverend Young

'utter chaos' ensued which greatly amused Steve and I. Only 'John the sack' (the Assistant Caretaker) knew who had procured a master key; and he was sworn to secrecy! *'Well, me meself personally, I ain't going to tell Elfie!'* I learned much about loyalty from John the sack.

I also learned much about the quality of relationships that could develop between staff and students. Whether it was in the classroom, on the sports field, in the school band, on the stage or even on the Norfolk Broads; Roan School was a special place to me and I have always kept the school in my mind as I progressed through a career in education myself. Thanks to all my teachers, wherever you are now. Some of you were really quite inspirational... and we didn't have a National Curriculum!

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## Old Roan Association Football Club

The committee report in February advised that all three teams are high up in their respective tables and could all come top. The 1st X1 has reached a final and semi-final. Five players are still playing for an all London side. Joe Searle has been awarded a cap for regular appearances for a representative London side. Sponsorship has improved our finances. We are pleased to report that boys from the John Roan School are included in these teams.

We have space left to report that Charlton Athletic has gained promotion to the Championship as champions and, with one home game to play, have 98 points.



When I left Roan in 1969 I went to Loughborough University to study Industrial Chemistry. In the first month there I met my future husband, John, who was in his final year studying Civil Engineering. I decided I didn't like Chemistry that much and chose Biochemistry, Microbiology and Food Science for my final year, wishing that I had known these options were open to me when I was at Roan. I dropped the year in industry and graduated in July 1972 and married in the same month, spending my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday on honeymoon.

John gave up working for contractors to start with Notts County Council when we came back off honeymoon and I took a Science Technician job in the local secondary school which had just turned comprehensive. This job put me off teaching for life, although I would later become a teaching assistant when I returned to part-time work after a gap of 14 years at home.

After a year at the school I worked in Food Science at Nottingham University servicing the labs for the undergrads and carrying out research for the post-grads and Drs. Then John uprooted me to Lincoln when he moved to Lincs C.C. I worked for a paper company that specialised in heat and pressure sensitive paper coatings but as the money wasn't great I became an Executive Officer in the Civil Service. I'd put in for Min of Ag but ended up in DHSS. Yuck! I worked on sickness & invalidity benefit and pensions & death benefits (not exactly a laugh a minute).

After a couple of operations for ovarian cysts and treatment for endometriosis I finally became pregnant after 11 years of marriage and went on to have 3 children, Paul (now 27), Jane (25) and Mark (22). All cost a fortune at university. Paul is working in IT with the Probation Service and lives 3 miles away with his wife, Laura, whom he met at uni and married last year. She is from St Bees in Cumbria so we had a wonderful wedding in the Lake District. She has qualified as an Emergency Planning Officer for the council and is going to make me a granny in February. Jane is living with her boyfriend in Woodside Park near Barnet. She studied film and video at uni and is working for a post-production company off Piccadilly Circus. Mark has had a few temporary jobs since graduating in Computer Science last year but has just started work as Information Systems and Data Manager at a local comprehensive.

I returned to work as a teaching assistant in the local Junior School, having worked voluntarily there when the children were young. The job meant I could go out after the children went to school, get home before them and have the school holidays off. I also did a bit of childminding for friends before and after school. I work for 16 hours a week in years 5 and 6 and have decided not to retire before the winter but to work until next April. A retirement cruise up the Norwegian coast to North Cape has already been booked for next June so I'm definitely leaving. John retired 2 years ago. In July we celebrated 39 years of marriage!

My parents, aged 91 and 88, have moved from Northants into a bungalow just down the road from me so that they could continue to live in their own home. My father is registered blind and my Mum had a stroke last year that she made a quite good recovery from but they do take a bit of looking after, shared with my sister who also lives in Lincolnshire.

My main passion is gardening. At our local produce show this year I had 19 1sts, 14 2nds and 9 3rds (mainly for veg) winning 4 trophies. I'm also involved with the local tennis club, having been on the committee for 9 years. I have spent a lot of time researching family history, especially the Edlingtons as they came originally from Lincolnshire.

Brenda Edlington. September 2011



**Centenary Dinner  
Table 11**

Top: Jenny Frazer (née Ashmore),  
Maeve Wilkes (née Houlihan),  
Bernadette Bell, Anna Kirk,  
Cheryl Smith (née Nicks).

Left: Ursi Robson (née Arnold),  
Jane Harnden (née Sackett),  
Susan Johnson, Irene Rea (née Wells),  
Susan Anderson-Rutt (née Anderson)



**Roan 1956-64—in which despite the hate-mail and super injunctions the author, sporting legend, academic superstar, and all-round good egg, concludes his memoir of the Golden Age of Roan.....**

After my last excessively brief article I was delighted to receive a fan letter which described it as “the most entertaining thing written in English since Chaucer”. I am very grateful to the writer and would like to assure her that despite recent oversights there is no way I will be forgetting Mother’s Day next year.

Human memory is a funny thing. As the great German novelist Marcel Proust put it in his seminal 7-volume work “Human memory is a funny thing”. Why can I remember word-perfectly, endless lyrics of 1960’s pop songs, including songs I didn’t particularly like, by singers I didn’t particularly like, but cannot remember how to set the DVD recorder without referring every time to the handbook (obviously, before giving up and getting my son to do it)? (Incidentally I am available for karaoke-style medleys of the golden hits of Billy Fury, Adam Faith, Craig Douglas, Bobby Vee, Dion, Del Shannon, and yes, Val Doonican, £500 plus expenses, Weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and Old Boys Reunions a speciality).

So, for example I have vivid memories of 1975, a year when I moved house, changed jobs, celebrated my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May by watching West Ham beat Fulham (including Bobby Moore and Alan Mullery) 2-0 in a rather lacklustre Cup Final, won the New York Marathon, dumped Jane Fonda (too clingy) in favour of Catherine Deneuve, won the Booker Prize for

Fiction, and was offered the Throne of Albania. On the other hand I have no recollection of anything I did in 1985, or ’95, or even 2005. My recollection of my Roan years is similarly fairly arbitrary. It is very vivid for the first three years, vague about Remove and Fifth Forms, and vivid again for the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. This might be because the missing years correspond with puberty, or perhaps my brain’s synapses were just too fully extended combating terminal acne to have any space for memory.

I finished my third year, in Form IVA, bottom of the class overall, but also bottom in the individual subjects of Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Woodwork, and Art. I was also barely halfway in other subjects, including French, and only anywhere near the top in Latin.

That year was a strange one. By the end of it several in the class had croaky deep voices, facial hair, rumours (or boasts) of girlfriends, increasing interest in their hairstyles and appearance, and a couple had been caned for smoking. By contrast a handful (including me) still wore short trousers till near the end of the year and retained childhood interests at least for part of the year, in my case, in my fort and toy soldiers.

The Remove year promised better prospects. Firstly Art and Woodwork ceased being compulsory, so two of my most hopeless subjects went. Second there was a new optional subject to be chosen from Art, Biology, Applied

Maths, Spanish, Metalwork, and Latin for Beginners. There had been a suggestion that German for Beginners would also be offered but in the event it was not, possibly because the famous “Foxy” Fowler, the charismatic Head of German left about then for a promotion in his native Lancashire. I never had him as a teacher but he was legendarily entertaining, and a wit, raconteur and excellent impersonator of politicians of the day. I would have opted for German but in its absence I chose Spanish, a choice which shaped my life since I went on to study it at University.

Our Form Master, and French teacher, was Mr Milne, a Scot known affectionately as “Jock” (though his name was Charles) or “Scruff”. Mr Milne was well into his 50’s by then but looked very fit and was an ex-rugby player for London Scottish who allegedly had been on the fringe of selection for Scotland. He cycled in every day from Charlton in all weathers on his ancient black bike. Incidentally it wasn’t until I went to university in Manchester, the centre and southern suburbs of which are virtually flat, that I realised just how hilly our part of South-East London is. In the 1950’s, although Scruff was the only teacher I recall cycling, the bicycle was a common means of transport to work. Statistically in the late ‘50s, (according to Kynaston “Austerity Britain”) 2.3 million people travelled to work by bicycle compared with fewer than 2 million by car, 3 million walked, and over 9 million went by public transport. This was certainly true of the teachers as there were only a handful of cars in the playground in my early years at Roan. I

**Craig Osborne**

remember Mr Beale’s grey and green Triumph Herald, Eric Geddes’ Jaguar, and Basher Berry’s Morris Countryman Estate, a half-timbered affair like a small Tudor house on wheels.

If I returned home late from school after football in the park, as the bus approached the Middle Gate of the Arsenal on Plumstead High Street, at 5pm police would stop the traffic in both directions as several hundred men on bicycles, like a swarm of Ringwraiths, would swoop out of the gate in their various directions, briefly blocking the traffic. Several in my form were keen cyclists, talking animatedly of their Claude Butler lightweight bikes with 21-speed Derallieur gears, (incidentally it was a mishearing of this term that led to the name of Cream’s seminal second album, *Disraeli Gears*. I know, I should get out more). I had only a heavy basic Raleigh with 3-speed Sturmey-Archer gears. Hardly any boys cycled to school, the availability of free bus passes, and the hilly terrain making a journey encumbered by books and satchels uninviting. I cycled in sometimes from Abbeywood in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form in good weather, just for the exercise, despite the huge hills impeding access from every direction. I found the least sweaty experience was via Plumstead Common and along Ha-Ha Road from Woolwich past the Artillery barracks into the top of Charlton.

“Scruff” was a rather unkind name, but although his jacket, (with the inevitable leather elbow patches) and trousers were acceptable, Mr Milne did appear to hang onto his shirts a little too long



after collar and cuffs were, shall we say, a little frayed. If I were given to comments based on crude racial stereotypes I could say he possibly exhibited the famous Scottish carefulness with money. I deplore such casual racism however so I am not going to say it, neither am I going to describe how he gave David Plumer a "Gorbals Kiss" for mistranslating an imperfect subjunctive, nor how he sat there chomping on deep-fried Mars Bars and drinking single malt whiskey while we practised our irregular verbs.

Scruff was almost the only teacher I can recall who had a regional accent. Some teachers (Mr White, Mr Hoare) had very posh voices, but all the rest at least strove for BBC Received Pronunciation. Even though we knew "Shag" Witten to be a northerner from his occasionally curious manner of expression ("Now I want this homework doing and I want it doing well!" and "Ee 'appen life's a challenge, like, I were all in a puther when t'whippet chewed me clogs" (OK, I made that one up), his accent itself was BBC. Regional accents were rarely heard in the media, and even relatively uneducated pop stars of the day like Essex boy Cliff Richard and Liverpoolian Billy Fury achieved neutral accents when speaking. If the occasional member of the public with an accent was ever on TV, (for example in the execrable quiz show "Take your Pick") his accent was likely to be cruelly mocked. It was not until the Beatles and Stones came to fame in 1963/4 that speaking naturally, (though as a fellow Dartford boy I might query whether M. Jagger spoke naturally) gradually became acceptable.

I found Scruff an inspirational teacher though his slight Scots accent which he could not conceal even when speaking French amused us. Although he had a fairly restrained Edinburgh accent, when we impersonated him, we naturally did so in what one might call the full Rab C. Nesbitt Glaswegian mode. I had him through to A and S level. I immediately began to do much better than with Mr. Corney. For no particular reason, I also improved slightly in History, Geography, and English, even though the teachers, Messrs Binnie, Hankinson, and Witten, were the same.

In science there was no such improvement. For Chemistry we had Mr Berry, the Deputy Head and Official Wielder of the Cane. The huge advantage for me of Mr Berry was that he was anyone other than "Bounce" Martin, our terrifying Chemistry master from IVA who was very free indeed with informal corporal punishments of the smacked heads and whizzing ruler variety. Mr Berry regarded me quizzically for a month or so to reassure himself that my incomprehension was not some kind of elaborate piss-take and thereafter ignored me for the rest of the year, as I'm sorry to say, he appeared to do to all except the high-flyers. I spent the whole year in total incomprehension of what we were doing in the lab, and why, despite helpful hints and encouragement from my benchmate, Jeffrey Blythe, who was very good at Chemistry (and everything else).

For Physics we had Mr Ogborn, a new teacher who later published a very successful textbook. I enjoyed Physics

much more though I still came bottom, albeit with a mark in the 30's rather than, as with Chemistry, in the teens. For Maths we continued with Mr Hopwood and I marginally improved, coming off the very bottom to 30<sup>th</sup> or so, and passing O level a year early like the rest of the class, though with a borderline grade in my case.

As we came to the end of the year, since leaving school was only just over a year away for some, we began to have careers afternoons. Annoyingly, these were on Games days, particularly vexing in my case as I was becoming ever more brilliant at football and Real Madrid and Inter-Milan were almost certainly on the verge of showing real interest in me, though still Snozz, who was leading a Dark Conspiracy to thwart my career, did not put me in the school team. Or second team. Or third team.

Addresses about the careers options in Local Government, Civil Service, and Accountancy were followed one memorable Wednesday by talks from the Armed Services. I think it is fair to say that few of us were likely to have been interested in services careers. Many of us were very weary of our parents' and grandparents' endless descriptions of wartime and its hardships, not appreciating their understandable pride in having participated successfully in the only war in history that really was a case of Good v Evil.

Despite the continuing evidence all around us of the war in the form of the bombsites all over the area, which in some cases were not cleared until well

into the 1960's, to us the war was almost as remote as Agincourt or Trafalgar, and considerably less interesting, with our relatives' incoherent accounts of battles and bombings liberally interspersed with tales of misery, privations, dark hints about neighbours who had been active on the black market, nights in air-raid shelters, bereavements and grief. In addition we had all started our Roan careers under the threat of losing two years of our youth to National Service, and, that threat having only just been removed, we were unlikely to opt for the forces.

Thus we assembled and submitted to uninspiring talks by representatives of the Army and the RAF. The Navy man however was different. He was above all keen to lure those of a scientific bent to joining up to train as "Artificer Officers". We found this very entertaining because the speaker had the most pronounced lisp I have ever heard. By coincidence Mr Evans was on stage as the teacher in charge, and by further coincidence, those of us doing Spanish had been practising lisping early that week, heavy lisping being inherent in pronouncing words such as Zaragoza. The more times the speaker had to lisp his way through the words "Artificer Officers" the merrier grew the throng. At question time no-one asked the Army or RAF men anything, but an amazing number of questioners wanted the naval man to explain ever more about the work, training and functions of Artificer Officers. By the end as we finally saw Mr Evans narrowly fail to stifle a smirk, bedlam reigned. I do not recall any careers talks after that.



Remove A ended with me placed 27<sup>th</sup> out of 33 in class, a reassuring improvement, and Fifth Modern beckoning with a virtually unhindered choice of subjects. New possibilities were offered in the shape of Economics and Economic History, both proving popular. Those of us who had passed Maths a year early were offered Further Maths, consisting of solid geometry, trigonometry, and calculus. I actually began enjoying Maths to some extent and seeing a pattern in things I'd never grasped before. I was able to drop both Physics and Chemistry so some overall improvement in class position seemed assured. Thus we Linguists, Historians, Geographers and general Literati waved goodbye to those of our former classmates who were of the inky-fingered slide rule-wagging persuasion, and who headed off to the Science 5<sup>th</sup>, taking time out from scratching their acne to hug themselves with glee at the giant con whereby the subject of Hard Sums deems itself to be several different O Levels in the shape of Pure Maths, Further Maths, Applied Maths, Extra Maths, Lots More Maths etc.

I was slightly disappointed to find our new form master was the iconic "Shag" Witten who I had not got on with in the previous two years. I had hoped for the restoration of Alf, but in vain, and we had Shag for both English Language and English Lit. Language was a series of essays and comprehensions, and some work on grammar what I done brilliant. Literature focused on three books. The first was *"The Ship"* by C.S. Forester, a novel Shag constantly pronounced "very journalistic" a phrase

which I have no doubt featured in every candidate's O level exam answer, to the marker's annoyance. We also did an anthology of poetry. The first poem, by Thomas Hardy began:-

"Only an old man harrowing clods"

Every time we discussed this poem I expected Shag to say that that line was a description of his own job, but he never made that joke. The final book was a play, *"Twelfth Night"* by Charles Dickens. This is always known, to us thespians, as "The Scotch Play" and for a whole term we acted it out round the class with Shag himself taking the part of Falstaff, I was Mark Anthony, Kenny Franklin and Chris Martyn were the identical twins Desdemona and Ophelia, and Martin Muggeridge was Lady Bracknell. None of us who heard Muggsy delivering Lady Bracknell's famous last speech, culminating as it does with the crescendo of "You were only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!" will ever forget it. Indeed for many of us Muggsy was THE Lady Bracknell of his generation. I still did not get on with Shag but did develop a taste for literature, especially books by Jane Austen, full as they are of gunfights, car chases and explicit sex, and also *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Barchester Trollops*, and *Dead Dames don't drive Cadillacs*, by George Eliot, who I believe was the father of the man who wrote the musical *Cats*.

Annoyingly, since I liked them both, apparently for timetabling reasons, we had to choose between History and Geography, and I narrowly chose History, the period for study being England and

the British Empire 1832-1914; and Europe 1830-1914. We had Mr Binnie again who was endlessly entertaining on the unification of Italy and Germany. That year and that subject is the only time I can remember student teachers on teaching practice, because we had two in succession. The second was a pale, diffident young man whose uncertain manner was such that he might as well have had "Bully Me!" tattooed on his forehead. It was his misfortune to teach us History of the Empire, and as we embarked on Australia a raucous demand arose for the story of Ned Kelly. Sadly he gave in to this demand. This appeasement led, inevitably, to worse. Reading a few pages ahead in the textbook revealed that in New Zealand much trouble had been caused to the British settlers by a renegade Maori chief called Wild Cabbage Leaf. Ere long desk lids were being slammed in unison and a loud chant of "Wild Cabbage Leaf" echoed around the room. Mr Beale was passing down the corridor and instantly restored order and the student teacher was never seen again, as Mr Binnie subsequently seemed able to describe imperial New Zealand without close attention to the doings of the irrepressibly naughty Mr Leaf.

At the end of the year I obtained seven decidedly streaky O levels, but fortunately there was not much quality filtering and anyone who got a minimum of five O levels and wished to go into the Sixth Form was able to do so. A large number of my former classmates did not, and chose to leave Roan then. Oddly, by modern standards, this included some

boys of high ability, who had obtained much better O levels than me, because some professions and occupations, in particular Accountancy, Banking, and the Civil Service, had alternative schemes for entry at O, A, or graduate level, and the lure of getting on with real life, and earning a wage, proved very attractive to some.

I chose to take Latin, French and Spanish at A level, and also History. Mr Binnie suggested that I might try to get History in one year to leave me free really to concentrate on the languages, and I agreed. I was in fact the only one taking History and there was some pressure on accommodation that year so that Mr Binnie and I had our lessons in the large walk-in book cupboards, or in a corner of the Hall. Our syllabus was the same as for O level with the addition of American History from the War of Independence to the Civil War. I got on well with Mr Binnie. I can remember concluding an essay for him with the resounding words "It is the Tragedy of History that German Unification was achieved by the militarism of Prussia rather than the liberalism of Hanover". Under which he wrote "Rather pompous perhaps? Also, I know the book you copied this from". With a lot of help from him I did pass History in one year, very narrowly, and could concentrate on languages.

I was also the only student for Spanish with Mr Evans and thus had my own personal Spanish Assistant, an attractive and rather fiery young woman called Pilar who had entertaining arguments with Mr Evans about grammar (Mr Evans was



always right - Spaniards are the worst linguists in Europe after us, and are usually hopeless at the technicalities of their own language). Pilar and I had our Spanish conversation classes strolling round the Park (weather permitting), and although she was friendly enough, her slightly haughty Castilian manner made it clear that no teenage fantasies involving Older Women were to be fulfilled.

For Latin there were three of us and an excellent system in which we combined with the year above for some of the set books, (and of course later in Upper Sixth with the year below for the others). Mr Beale was also our form master and we had a very good relationship with him as the year went on. He encouraged us (David Plumer, Chris Martyn, and me) to interest ourselves in all things Roman, lending us books, novels like *I Claudius*, several books by Mary Renault, other books in translation such as *The Twelve Caesars*, and even showing us his holiday photos and slides of Rome, Pompeii, Capri and Carthage, (and indeed of a trip to California).

There were twelve of us doing French and although I appreciated the huge advantage of small-group, (and one-to-one) teaching it was an entertaining change to be in a bigger group. We had several trips to the French Institute in Kensington. It is odd how the behaviour of groups can change when in unfamiliar surroundings. For some reason we were always disposed to find anything at the French Institute very amusing. I remember us watching the film of the novel *Le Grand Meaulnes*. In it one character says

of another "He was an Alsatian". This tiny ambiguity rendered us hysterical, to Mr Milne's annoyance. But much more fun was had on a visit to see the performance of one of our set books, Giraudoux' "*La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*" or "there'll be no bog on Troy station" as we amusingly called it. This was to be performed by a company called Les Jeunes Comédiens de Paris. Terry Lawlor persuaded a few of our more easily led classmates that "comédiens" meant "comedians" and that M. Giraudoux' rather solemn piece was going to be played for laughs.

This proved eerily prescient because after only 10 minutes the huge blonde beehive wig worn by Helen of Troy toppled majestically to the floor. Had she had the professionalism inculcated by Mr Boon amongst the Old Roan Drama bods in his estimable productions, she would have ignored it, but foolishly she picked it up and clamped it on her head with both hands, and held it like that for the rest of the play. Ten minutes later one of the actors dried up completely during a long dialogue. Everyone looked expectantly to the wings where they expected the prompter would be, but he wasn't there. Presumably he had not expected anyone to dry up in the first twenty minutes and, being French, had popped out for a quarter of an hour to drink a bottle of red wine, smoke three Gauloises, eat some snails, and commit adultery. Unfortunately the actor with whom the forgetful actor was meant to be having the dialogue, knew the other part as well as his own, and embarked on the hysterical spectacle of prompting his colleague in full while

doing the responses too. Somewhat later an arch fell down, narrowly missing an actor. A little later still, two trumpeters arrived to announce the arrival of King Priam. They put their trumpets to their lips, but no sound came. Ten, twenty, thirty excruciating seconds passed and still the sound-effects man was dozing. They put their trumpets down and shamefacedly slunk off. Just as they left the stage the music began. They ran back to their places and as one frantically raised his instrument he struck the other in the face, causing a heavy nosebleed!

Near the end Helen exclaimed (of her lover, the Trojan Prince), "I love Paris!" The song of that title, ("I love Paris in the Springtime, I love Paris in the Fall...") from the musical *Can-Can* was newly popular in Frank Sinatra's version in 1963 and a rather chic set of girls from St Paul's School nearby, whom some of us had been eyeing lasciviously, had clearly pre-planned a bit of anarchy of their own as they began singing the song, in English. The astonished actors stopped speaking. Many others in the audience joined in. At the end of the play the actors received an endless standing ovation with whooping and stamping. Mr Milne made no comment then or subsequently. Some claimed to have seen him coughing to stifle a grin more than once.

While in Lower Sixth I recall some of us went carol singing one week at the end of term. My recollection is that it was fairly serious, collecting for charity. We did quite well with the big houses over the Heath, until we were surprised

at one elegant house to find the door opened by none other than Fanny Craddock! Nowadays there are dozens of cookery programmes on TV and most people could name half a dozen celebrity chefs. But in 1962/3 there was only Fanny Craddock. Although she was not the first, or only, TV chef she was by a huge margin the most famous. My grandmother, who had worked as a cook, watched her programmes in amazement, particularly the one where she cooked a full meal, live from the Albert Hall, before an audience of 7,000 people, while wearing a ball gown and fur stole. Most people were enthralled by her astonishingly bossy manner, and elaborate cooking. I was especially amazed by her artistically piping mashed potato around the rim of plates, rather than whacking a lump mid-plate like the Roan dinner ladies. A recent biography, incidentally, relates that she was rather less aristocratic than she appeared, and had a rather chequered life, including, by the standards of the fifties, the scandalous tally of four husbands! To our surprise she was the soul of affability, gave generously, and asked us into her huge state-of-the-art basement kitchen for a mince pie and glass of sherry, served by the equally affable Johnny, her husband. I must say that in view of the imperious way she bossed him about on TV I had never realised he was her husband, but assumed he was some slightly backward younger brother. That sherry was my first ever taste of alcohol. I formed the impression that the grapes may have been picked a little late, it had a good nose but a short finish, with top notes of vanilla, almond, yeast, and wet ferret.



At the start of the Upper Sixth I had been disappointed not to be chosen as a prefect. I could claim that this was because of my wild rebellious ways but in truth I was a timid boy and although I had received many punishments over the years they were largely for poor schoolwork rather than misbehaviour. I don't think I had ever really come to the attention of the teachers at all. However the rump of non-prefects in the Sixth Modern were an agreeable bunch and I had a pleasant year. I must however record a long-running incident of collective barminess in which the Upper Sixth Modern came as close to being caned as any boys in that year (by now largely a co-operative part of the scholarly establishment) ever did.

The statistically coldest winter of the last century was 1947. At that time my eventual classmates were largely pooing themselves and sucking their dummies, though I was already a talented violinist and a chess Grandmaster. It certainly was cold and I remember Daddy announcing that the heating was to be turned off in the servants' quarters in Osborne Towers not only to economise but also to encourage the servants to work harder to keep warm, a brilliantly pragmatic piece of man-management. However cold 1947 was, the winter of 1962-3 must have run it close. Thick snow was on the ground from November through to March, and every brief thaw was followed immediately by more snow and re-freezing. Every day endless transport difficulties meant that punishments for lateness were suspended as buses continually failed to get up the icy hills of Woolwich, Charlton, Blackheath and adjoining areas.

Our classroom was above the Old Boys Memorial Lawn at the front of the school. This was an impeccably pristine lawn on which no walking or other activity was permitted, though exceptionally, the prefects were permitted to pull on a slip-catching cradle for catching practice a couple of times a week, in the summer. When I walked past the school in September 2011 after the ORA Dinner I was disappointed to see its present state, with benches around and looking as if it's been used for a re-enactment of the Battle of the Somme, or perhaps ploughing practice. But in 1963 it had revered status. Due to snow and ice outdoor break-time was suspended. However as the Upper Sixth received our morning milk, brought to our form room in its blue crate by some Third Form tiny tot, we hit upon a jolly plan. After drinking our milk we heated the bottles on radiators until just before the first post-break lesson, and then hurled them out of the window into the snow, where they sank below the surface. This continued for several weeks. Then, one weekend in late March at last came a sudden thaw, revealing many hundreds of milk bottles on the sacred lawn. With a face of thunder Mr Beale required an explanation. In the most daring, and brilliant, reply I can recall in all my schooldays "Dix" Valentine (who took biology) said "Parthenogenesis". This brilliant quip would only have been understood by a biologist. And, of course, by Mr Beale, whose Greek was as good as his Latin. (It means "spontaneous generation"). I cannot remember what happened to Dix, or indeed whether we were, as I vaguely recall, deemed too old to punish.

I have been urged by a couple of correspondents to put in something about other years than the 1956 intake. I would gladly do so but in fact the years did not mix much and I know only a handful of anecdotes. One concerns an eccentric boy a couple of years below us who once got Chemistry cancelled for two weeks having induced hysteria in his form by claiming to have seen a ghost in the Chemistry lab one dark winter afternoon (Wish I'd thought of that!). The same boy later got cross-country cancelled by claiming to have seen a large snake in the park. Of course if he had claimed to have seen a tiger, or a tyrannosaurus, no-one would have taken him seriously. But we were close enough to dockland for a snake to be credible. London had three evening newspapers then ("Star, News, Standard!") and every few weeks there would be a story of some greengrocer who had got a case of bananas home, opening it to find a tarantula, or a snake, peering out at him.

It may be the same class or even the same boy, who achieved the wonderful coup of inventing a fictional classmate, called Firkin, and somehow adding him to the Register of Mr. Elliott, ("Gel"), the music teacher. All wrongdoing could then be blamed on this boy, as in the following utterly surreal exchange:-

Gel had his back to the class writing on the board when an object flew by, and a scream arose from the back.

Gel (whirling round) "Who did that?"  
Class (in unison) "It was Firkin sir"  
Gel "Very well Firkin, see me at the end"

Gel (at end of class) "Firkin, come out here"  
Class "He's away today sir"  
Gel "Very well, I'll see him next time".

My only other anecdote concerns two brothers whom, in deference to their sensibilities should either read this, I will call the X brothers. Though not twins they were in the same class, and although I suppose they could have been born 11 months apart, I expect that they were actually step brothers. Certainly one was small with black hair and a sallow complexion; and the other was big, pale, and blond. I'm sorry to say that we thus knew them as "Jap" and "Jerry". They may have got on well most of the time, but when they disagreed, their disputes were conducted with an amazing level of violence. Everybody knew how volatile they were and watched their playground or Park fights with incredulity. The little one had a fearsome temper which made up for the difference in size. Mr Evans was their form master when I was in the Sixth and I recall him arriving late for a lesson having been called to separate them yet again and saying ruefully to me "Los hermanos X no son siempre buenos amigos! (The X brothers are not always good friends!)

I took my A levels and stayed on to try for Oxford and Cambridge, which for state school applicants was deemed to require a third year in the Sixth. When I resumed in September 1963 I was, finally, made a Prefect and got to know those in the '57 intake who were also appointed. There were also a handful from my own year staying on, largely to



improve their grades, one of whom was the School Captain, the late Bob Curtis. I had little formal tuition though I did occasional translations for Messrs Milne, Evans and Beale and was supposed to "read around my subject". Unfortunately the distractions of the Prefects' Room proved too much for my self-discipline. Apart from having the gym to ourselves a couple of times a week for 5-a-side games, there was a sizeable number of Bridge fanatics in the Prefects Room. I was taught to play by the late J.P. Smith and briefly became a fanatic myself (though I last played 40 years ago). In the agreeable relaxed atmosphere, slumped on one of the several moth-eaten, or "distressed" sofas and armchairs, I largely vegetated and read fewer than a dozen books in the whole Autumn term.

As to the Prefects' duties, on appointment Basher told us that we were, in effect, his "storm troopers" and that he would support us in any disputes about our rulings with pupils or indeed, staff. As, to his credit, he did. Although, disappointingly, unlike the Prefects in some Public schools, we could not administer corporal punishment, we had the power to give out "Prefects' slips", consisting of invitations to do lines, e.g. "I must eschew the temptations of inappropriate and contumelious rowdiness" (200 times), or, more amusingly, 4-page essays on topics in the choice of which we prefects competed to choose extreme academic or surreal subject matter, my own favourite being "Custard- the way forward".

I expect readers will be disappointed by

lack of sporting anecdotes, so I offer two. First, having not been picked for any school teams I decided to meet the problem by picking myself. This came about because several of us used to meet to play tennis at the playing fields. There were hard courts as well as two immaculately kept grass courts. One boy from a lower year who played told us he also played for Shooters Hill Tennis Club and suggested we arranged some matches between the Club and Roan. Thus for several weeks in Spring 1963 we met up on Saturday mornings for matches. The clique who played together appointed themselves to be the team. All games were doubles and my partner was "Dusty" Miller. We developed a system based on that of Bob Hewitt and Fred Stolle, an Australian pair who at Wimbledon the year before used a unique system of signalling with fingers behind the back, indicating that the one at the net would cross court to intercept a return. Dusty and I adopted this system, sometimes getting it right, and sometimes not, with amusing results as we both rushed the net on the same side.

The second story is that of the Staff v Prefects football match in 1964. Previously this game had been School v Staff but in 1964 the school team were so good (unbeaten) that it was decided to even things up by changing the boys' team to the Prefects. In fact at least six of the School Team were Prefects too, and also the Prefects had a player who, although he had never represented the school, combined the dynamism of Billy Bonds, the distribution of Trevor Brooking, the vision of Kaka, and the goal-poaching of, er, Emile Heskey. ME!

The Football Captain that year was the late Ray Hutchins, who had just been chosen for England schoolboys. He took the bizarre decision, instead of letting me run midfield, of putting me at left back. The teacher's team was bolstered by several Old Boys including Joe Broadfoot who had played for Ipswich Town, and Johnny Sewell, who played for Crystal Palace and was coach to the school team. Also the Biology teacher, Mr Vibart, was said to be a Channel Islands international.

The match was nonetheless terribly one-sided and ended 6-1 with the teachers hardly crossing the halfway line. In particular no-one seemed to be assigned to their right-wing and as the whole school was watching I was relieved not to embarrass myself by conceding any penalties or own goals. Their right back was the gigantic bushy-bearded Mr Corney. Thirty years later a 5-side team-mate described my playing style as "magnificently static", and that description could also have been applied in 1964 to Mr Corney who stood there virtually motionless as the game flowed around him. I was so free of defensive duties that I even marauded (?) down the wing occasionally and once had the pleasure of kicking Mr Corney on one of his surprisingly spindly legs.

The various systems of the Cambridge and Oxford Colleges for entrance were of Byzantine complexity. I took the Cambridge exams at Roan and Mr Evans said I'd done reasonably well. On a freezing day in January 1964 I went up to Downing College for my interview. I was to read Modern Languages so,

naturally, my interview was to be with the History Professor. After a dismal night in a freezing semi-basement room in Downing, (the first night I had ever been away from home alone and also the furthest I had ever been from Abbey Wood) my interview was to be at 8.30 a.m. I entered the room whereupon the Professor, without any greetings, introductions, or courtesies of any kind, barked "Is there a God and does it matter?" We then spent 30 minutes with him sneerily ridiculing my half-baked offerings on this subject after which he announced that the interview was over. In those days postmarks on letters showed the time, as well as the date of posting and from the timing on the curt two-line letter of rejection I received I would guess he was writing it before I left the building. Had I had the polish and self-assurance of a public schoolboy I should have answered his opening question in Spanish! If I had had the boldness to do so he might well have given me a place, or indeed awarded me a degree then and there.

I went from there directly to Oxford and a much pleasanter, fairer, experience, though with the same outcome. I had five days in Oriel College staying in a lovely set of rooms above the High Street. I was surprised, on waking on the first morning to find an elderly man crawling under my bed. (When I say "elderly" I obviously mean someone approximately ten years younger than I am now). This person emerged, called me "Sir" and explained he was my "scout" or College servant and would be looking after me during my stay. As he duly did, building a huge fire in my



living room and keeping it going all day even though I was out at exams or interviews most of the time. He had been crawling under my bed, incidentally, looking for my shoes to polish. He told me my rooms were those of the Oxford cricket captain and thus particularly grand. It only recently occurred to me to look up who this was in *Wisden* and I was surprised to see it was the Nawab of Pataudi. There were no dead tigers or other signs of Oriental exotica in the room.

I took four very stiff, and sometimes impenetrable, exams in the Great Hall at Christ Church, under the portrait of Lord Byron, and had three reasonably polite and balanced interviews. I was disturbed to find how the system was weighted however. There were many Scholarships for entrance to individual Colleges open only to particular schools. Amazingly, none of these were for Roan! Nor for any other state school. There were also choral scholarships, violin scholarships, organ scholarships, and the more or less open favouritism shown to good rowers or rugby players, whatever their academic qualities (which largely continues). I also met several public school boys who were still in the second year sixth and were mysteriously already holding incredibly easy conditional offers (e.g. 2 "E"s at A level), presumably having exhibited such academic excellence in some other mysterious way (Telepathy?) that A levels hardly mattered. It soon became apparent that Gordonstoun boys in particular received remarkably favourable treatment, apparently in an effort by each College to curry favour with the Headmaster

there, so as to attract Prince Charles when he would choose where to go two years later for his Degree in the History of Fruit, or whatever it was.

My rejection letter was expected, but was polite and encouraging, in a vague way. I turned my attention to my other choices. I had a place at King's College London, though at QMC London had been interviewed by a very curious man, ("all blow-waves and corduroys" in Kenneth Williams' immortal phrase) who clearly didn't approve of some naïve view I'd expressed, and rejected me. I was going to King's therefore when it became clear that, although the ever-generous I.L.E.A. would cheerfully give me a full grant to study any subject at all, anywhere from Aberdeen to Penzance, that the rule was, that if you could live at home, you were expected to, on a reduced grant. My grandparents had left school at age 12 and thus only been able to give me general encouragement rather than specific academic advice since I was 11, but they sensibly pointed out, that if I went to King's I would not see much student life and would be a bit like a commuter. Whether this advice was influenced by a desire to reclaim their spare bedroom from the sulky teenager who had been there since the age of three months I can't say. So I considered other options.

Of course, had I gone to King's and lived at home I would have joined the Old Roans, become a regular in the Pavilion, and undoubtedly captained the Old Roan cricket, football, beach volleyball, and ice-hockey teams for many years.

A statistically remarkable number from my own year had chosen Manchester University, Ken Franklin (Economics); Geoffrey James (Metallurgy); Roger Hill (Physics) and Jeffrey Blythe (Maths). I don't think they had consciously got together to decide on the same destination. I had stayed in touch with Jeff, and we met up when he was home for a night of typical 1960's teenage debauchery (two games at Bexleyheath Bowling Alley and a coffee in the adjacent Wimpey Bar).

During this he persuaded me that Manchester was a great student city and that its grimy reputation (remembering I had never been farther north than Cambridge) was unfair. So I chose Manchester.

I also took the decision that I wanted to try a new language, and so had to choose to drop Spanish and start something new with French, possibly Italian, or drop French, when the obvious choice with Spanish would be Portuguese. At the time for some reason I found Spain, a poor, backward, and mysterious country in the iron grip of its fascist dictator, (though some of its coasts had begun to be opened to tourism), strangely fascinating, so I dropped French. I have often regretted this arbitrary decision, since I later largely lost interest in Spain (indeed I have only been there once in the last twenty years) but did become a rabid Francophile.

Although all that was tied up by March I decided to stay on at Roan instead of looking for a job. I was enjoying the Prefects Room and sport, but idling

around for four months instead of doing something useful, and earning money, now seems a strange decision to have made, especially as my new colleagues became more and more focused on revision for their A levels and less available for leisure activities.

And so the last day arrived, and the School song and "Lord dismiss us with thy blessing" for the last time. I knew Mr Evans had already gone, taking a scout group to camp, but I would have had the chance to go to thank Messrs Beale and Milne for all they had done for me. Unfortunately I was too shy and tongue-tied so I never approached them, nor indeed ever wrote to them, or went back to the school afterwards, something I have always regretted.

That summer I (along with Chris Showell and Ray Hill) got a job at Leeway Prams in Lee Green as a spot-welder. After only a morning's tuition I was allowed to weld pram and pushchair bodies. It soon became apparent how wise I had been to select Spanish rather than Metalwork in Remove year, as I turned out some of the ricketiest prams ever to hit the streets of England. There was little Quality Control and only rarely did I have one sent back. The days of repetitive work seemed endless and as each clock-watching dull day ground slowly away I had ample opportunity to reflect how this was the very kind of semi-skilled (or in my case unskilled) activity on which both my father and grandfather had spent most of their working lives, and how lucky I was that my education at Roan meant that for me this was just a temporary pocket-money



exercise. Health and Safety were as lacking as Quality Control, and the only things that enlivened the interminable day were industrial accidents, trivial, as when I mixed the weld too hot and set myself on fire (twice), or serious as when one of the full-time workers, a jovial giant Jamaican with the spectacular name of Duke Bollers, amputated both his thumbs in the guillotine that trimmed the steel sheets.

Eventually after several well-paid (for a schoolboy) weeks came the last day. I had a final week's holiday in Clacton with my grandparents and set off for Manchester in late September, just eight years and two weeks after I had started at Roan. All my worldly goods (including 15 required books) were packed into one large, and one small suitcase. The train journey was 6 hours. The weather was dry and very warm. "I'm into something good" by Herman's Hermits had just replaced the Four Seasons' "Rag Doll" at the top of the charts.

I had a room in Owens Park, a revolutionary place in that it was the first ever mixed-sex Hall of Residence in the U.K. Further, of the 15 students enrolling for Spanish and Portuguese no fewer than 12 were girls! After all the years of seeing girls once a year on Founder's Day across St. Alfege's it was wonderful to know that a three-year orgy, running through the Kama Sutra with a succession of nubile lovelies was guaranteed!

Sadly the reality proved to be different. Although Owens Park was mixed-sex

for eating, the girls' rooms were in a separate block, with a rigid curfew and tight security. And of my 12 lovely classmates, once one had eliminated those who were married, engaged, pregnant, trainee nuns, members of the Trotskyite League of Youth, Yorkshire women, or aspiring serial killers, (these last two categories being obviously interchangeable) none were suitable for my dreamed-of orgy.

Thus I could settle down for three years, uninterrupted by female company, to ensure that I got a place in the England squad for the 1966 World Cup; and to immerse myself in mediaeval Spanish and Portuguese literature. My success in both these objectives is too well known to need further comment here.

I have enjoyed writing these three articles. I am conscious of a host of incidents, anecdotes, and pen-portraits that could have been included, but I think they have been long enough. Some of my correspondents have corrected my misremembering (such as that out R.E. master in Third Form was the amazing "Tarzan" Taylor, not "Digger" Dawson, who we had in the Shell), or told me interesting things I did not know, such as that the said "Digger" went on to be Head at Eltham Green, and then leader of one of the teaching unions. Tarzan himself certainly merited a portrait, a small man with the air of a malevolent wizard, and one of his many eccentricities being the random nature of the punishments he inflicted. Once while he was writing on the board he decreed that someone at the back of the class had "coughed in

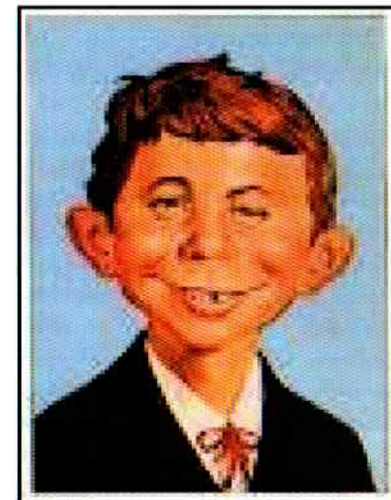
a sarcastic manner", and when we declined to hand over the evildoer, Tarzan cancelled our swimming classes for three weeks in retribution.

Every word I have written in these memoirs is true. Though sometimes it may be a poetic, rather than a literal, truth.

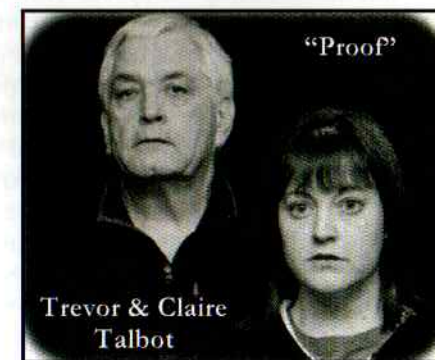
Copies of all three articles together, hand-printed on genuine mediaeval vellum and with a personal message and photo of the author, can be purchased for three hundred guineas, by sending a cheque to the Learned Editor, payable to the "C. Osborne Tax Avoidance and Holiday Fund". Terms and Conditions apply.

I attach two portraits of myself by Top Artist David Hockney, one of me in 1963 and one of me now, for my former classmates to treasure as they decline to go gently into that good night.

Craig Osborne  
1956-64



This photograph of Peter Williams will be added to the collection of photographs on the walls of the John Roan Club





After leaving the school in the summer of 1948 I joined the Old Roan Association but my membership lapsed in 1955, by which time I had moved from London to Oxford. Although, during occasional visits to Greenwich over the years I had often taken a nostalgic look at the school, it had not occurred to me to rejoin the Association until this April when my German wife, Wega, and I visited a classmate of hers from her old school in north Germany. She had married an English magistrate now living in south Wales. While chatting over past times, her husband drew my attention to David Buckley's notice in the May 2011 issue of the *Saga Magazine* concerning the Reunion of Roan Boys 1945-50, so I decided to follow it up. As since my retirement in 1988 I live most of the time in Germany, I was unfortunately unable to visit the UK this July. However, David put me in e-mail contact with the Old Roan President and Secretary, Tony Slaney, and as a result I have rejoined the Association at the age of 80.

Like many others at the time, my education was much disrupted by the years of the Second World War. My family moved to Charlton from Mottingham in 1943 and, after spells at Sherrington Road School and Charlton Central School, I was eventually admitted to the Remove Form at the Roan in April 1946, together with my friend H.D. (Harry) Scammell ('46-'48), a future Head of Yale University's Davenport Library in the U.S.A. I discovered that one of my new classmates, D.F.

(Denis) Owen ('44-'47) was keen on and very knowledgeable about butterflies and moths. My hobby and enthusiasm was for bird-watching, but as we shared a general interest in natural history as a whole we decided to undertake field excursions together. On our first trip, to Hayes Common, Kent, the following weekend, Denis aroused my latent interest in insects and I aroused his in birds and also in the reptiles and wild flowers that we encountered. Thus began a strong and enduring friendship that ended only with his death in 1996 at the untimely age of 65. By that time he had become internationally renowned as an academic zoologist, specialising in both entomology and ornithology, and having held professorships in the USA, Africa, Sweden and the UK. He was also the author of 10 books and around 250 scientific articles.

Another class-mate, G.F. (Geoffrey) Budd was also interested in butterflies and moths, and sometimes joined us in the school lunch-breaks looking for these insects on Blackheath and Greenwich Park as well as farther afield. A year below us at the Roan was K.H. (Keith) Hyatt, another keen naturalist, who often joined Denis and me on our excursions by bicycle in the Kentish countryside, as did Denis's younger brother, J.E (John) Owen, another pupil at the Roan. Keith subsequently enjoyed a notable career with the Natural History Museum in South Kensington and is a past President of the London Natural History Society and current editor of

its main journal, while John Owen had a highly successful career in the wine trade and now lives in a large house on Romney Marsh. Another budding entomologist, Alan Showler, was in the A form above us and I kept in touch with him well into the 1970s by which time he had long obtained his doctorate and was teaching at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. He still publishes his entomological observations from time to time in *The Entomologist's Record*.

I read with sadness on the Old Roan Association's website of Alf Knott's recent death. I remember him as the kindly and very likeable school captain who made us newcomers in 1946 very welcome. We knew him as Alfie and admired his academic and sporting achievements. I'm sure I remember him about 1947, in a match between Blackheath Harriers and the Roan School athletics team, running a close second in the mile to Sydney Wooderson, the famous English middle-distance runner, who in 1937 broke the then world mile record of 4 minutes 6.4 seconds and broke even that time in 1945.

Our form master was the friendly much respected Mr. S.J. (Drip) Mitchell who forever seemed to be catching his much torn gown on the desks as he moved rapidly through the gaps between them. Following our first trip together, to Hayes Common, Denis Owen and I brought some of our reptilian captures to school, startling Mr. Mitchell by producing one of the snake-like Slow-worms we'd caught and telling him it was an Adder. Not unnaturally, he responded by urging us in an agitated manner: 'To put it away, for God's sake.' Amid the

general mirth, we assured him that it was merely a harmless legless lizard. That lunch-time we released them and several Common Lizards in Greenwich Park's deer enclosure. As a result, the latter became established in the Park at least up to 1948. Drip soon got used to the livestock Denis and I brought into the classroom in the warmer months and kept in our desks: antlered Stag Beetles and pupae of various large hawkmoths and other species that were ready to emerge sometime in the day, to name some of the items.

One of the curiosities of the Roan at that time, in my view, was that we were encouraged to make pencil notes in our textbooks in the course of lessons. Consequently, there was competition among boys in the up-coming form to secure the textbooks, when these were passed on, of those boys in the previous class known to be outstanding scholars. I was not particularly successful in such competition. One of the poems we studied in English literature was Matthew Arnold's *The Scholar Gipsy*. I remember Denis and I having a public debate during one of the lessons as to whether a reference to 'purple orchises with spotted leaves' referred to the Early Purple Orchid or the Common Spotted Orchid. We eventually agreed on the former and 'Drip' told everyone to make a note to that effect in our textbook. This poem became a great favourite of both Denis and myself when we lived at Oxford some years later and roamed the very countryside described by Arnold in the poem. A reading of three stanzas from it was a feature of Denis's funeral service at Oxford on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1996.



Mr. W. (Bill) Peddie, a small Scotsman with a wry sense of humour, taught us French. He had what I believe was a Glaswegian accent which affected his spoken French. I recall a young French teacher imported to take us for French conversation appeared to experience some difficulty in understanding Mr. Peddie's rendering of his native language. At the Throckmorton harvest camp in Worcestershire in August 1946, Mr. Peddie was one of the teachers who came with us. Being a Scot, he insisted on adding large quantities of salt instead of sugar to our breakfast cauldron of porridge, despite the loud protests of us boys. "Not salt, sir," we cried, but he took no notice and salted the porridge.

For art in the mid 1940s we had an inspirational teacher in W.R. Dalzell. He had served in Italy with the RAF during the war and brought back with him a splendid collection of Italian art. Thus at each art lesson he set-up a display of examples and talked enthusiastically about them while we worked at our paintings, etc. At the time he was also a regular broadcaster on art subjects on the BBC, so it was not surprising that he was soon poached by Bedford School to become its Head of the Art Department. After I joined the BBC, I chanced to meet him again and was invited to stay with him at his Bedford home, which I did from time to time for several years. In the early post-war years it was the custom to have to choose between some subjects to study for the then School Certificate. For instance, in the Fifth form it was necessary to choose between art and biology as the lessons for these subjects

were conducted at the same time and therefore clashed. This was a real dilemma for me as I wanted to do both in the School Certificate. So with Mr. Dalzell's support, I went to see the Headmaster, H.W. (Gus) Gilbert and managed to persuade him to let me do biology as my science subject yet still sit the art exam in the School Certificate. Dalzell confirmed that he thought that I would pass the art without any formal lessons, but it was agreed that I would submit artwork done in my own time for him to check. In the final event I achieved distinctions in art and English, and credits in biology, English literature and geography. This arrangement had enabled me to drop physics and chemistry, at which I was pretty hopeless, and take geography, which I liked, instead!

Tom Holt, who was the Vice-headmaster, took us for biology, a subject that in those days was very much centred around human biology, although it did involve dissections of rabbits, frogs and dogfish. After a morning spent dissecting preserved specimens of the latter, Tom liked to joke, "Rock-salmon for lunch today, boys." Rock-salmon was, of course, the fishmonger's name for dogfish. I had hoped for a more ecological approach to the subject and did manage, after a lot of persuasion, to get Tom to lead us on a field excursion by bicycle to one of my favourite haunts, the flooded Ruxley Gravel-pits at Foots Cray. We set off after lunch on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1948. (I know the precise date because it's recorded in my natural history journals which I've kept since 1943. They now amount to many volumes and on my demise have been accepted

for preservation in the library of the Zoological Society of London, of which I am a Scientific Fellow.) Unfortunately, being a weekday, gravel extraction was in progress at Ruxley and Tom could not obtain permission for us to enter the pits, so we rode to Petts Wood instead. Here we did some pond-dipping in a flooded bomb-crater which was full of Common Frog spawn. Various water-beetles, including the predacious Great Diving Beetle, and water-boatmen and numerous freshwater shrimps kept us happily occupied for a couple of hours. In addition, I was able to point out and name the birds and some of the insects we encountered. I think Tom found the excursion quite exhausting -- he never suggested another one!

The headmaster, Mr. H.W. Gilbert, seemed to most of us boys to be a somewhat austere and remote figure and we tended to keep out of his way. We certainly tried to avoid being outside his room in the morning queue of those who had committed some relatively serious offence and would be fortunate to escape a caning. It was thus with some trepidation that I had requested the interview mentioned above to alter the subjects for my forthcoming School Certificate. Yet, on the rare occasions he himself taught us physics he proved to be kindly and friendly, and endeavoured to coax the right answers from us. His speeches on prize-giving day tended to be serious and rather earnest, but I remember he took much pride in the sporting achievements of the school and began his report of the year with an account of these. He was obviously not looking forward to the newly-elected

Labour Government's plans for state education, especially the introduction of comprehensive schools. In, I think, 1947 he invited the new Minister of Education in the Attlee government, George Tomlinson, to award the prizes and heavily criticised the plans when introducing him.

On another occasion I was impetuous enough to ask Mr. Gilbert if one day I could take over from the music master (Mr. Trotman I think was his name) the five-minute musical appreciation slot at the morning assembly in the school hall. I had been loaned by my friends at the then London headquarters of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) two sets of gramophone records of British wild birds which had been made and published by the German pioneer of wildlife sound recordings, Ludwig Koch. Koch, who later became a personal friend, was then a popular broadcaster on the BBC and had become a household name, partly because of his charming and idiosyncratic command of the English language. I managed to persuade a rather doubtful Gus and Mr. Trotman that bird song was also a form of music deserving of general appreciation and had inspired much classical music, and so they gave me permission to have a go. Thus, on 26th November 1947, the hall at morning assembly, following prayers, resounded not to the music of Mozart or Tchaikovsky, but to the lilting songs of the Nightingale and Woodlark interspersed with explanatory comments from me. My classmates were amused but I think that, on the whole, it went down well. Anyway, I



was asked to give talks in the course of that day about British birds, illustrated with the recordings, to another class as well as my own. The previous day I had been invited by Eltham Hill High School for Girls to give the same illustrated talk there. I can remember the incredulous look on Mr. Gilbert's face when I asked for the afternoon off to fulfill the invitation; but he agreed. Afterwards, I was entertained to tea by the sixth form, one of whom, Audrey Batten (née Knight-Law), then a prefect, was a close friend of mine. She and her husband still are. I think she was behind the invitation.

As a committee member of the Junior Bird Recorders' Club (JBRC), the then junior branch of the RSPB, I had become well known to the officials of the Society and had helped out on its stand at the Schoolboys Own Exhibition in January 1947, and it was there that I had first played Ludwig Koch's recordings as a method of attracting the attention of visitors to our not so conspicuous stand. While doing so, I was honoured with a brief, but hilarious chat with the comedian Tommy Handley of ITMA fame on the radio, who had a look at our stand while on an official visit. During the week of the exhibition I got to know P.A. Adolph, the inventor of the renowned Subbuteo table soccer game, then in its early days, who was demonstrating it at a nearby stand. Being an amateur ornithologist, Subbuteo was part of the scientific name of his favourite bird, the Hobby Falcon *Falco subbuteo*. On the last day of that year, as a representative of the JBRC, I was asked by the RSPB to give a talk on their behalf at a teachers' conference at

King's College, London; quite daunting for a boy still at school.

In May 1947, on a recommendation from the London Natural History Society, I was appointed at the age of 16 by the then Minister of Works (I received a letter signed by him) to become one of two Royal Parks Official Ornithological Observers for Greenwich Park. This allowed me to enter areas not open to the public such as the deer enclosure, the bird sanctuaries and the Superintendent's garden. My colleague was a London stockbroker many years my senior. Our duties were to prepare reports on the bird-life of the Park, covering the wartime years and from 1947 onwards, for annual booklets on the Royal Parks published by His Majesty's Stationery Office. We also had to attend an annual meeting in London with the other Official Observers under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril (later Lord) Hurcomb. He was also the Chairman of the British Transport Commission, so we met at his headquarters. One Saturday in 1947 Hurcomb arranged to meet me at Greenwich Park so that I could show him something of its bird-life – he was a keen amateur ornithologist. I stood waiting, as arranged, at the main Blackheath entrance, expecting him to arrive in a chauffeur-driven limousine; in fact, he descended from a No.53 bus at the nearby bus-stop! He explained to me, that as Chairman of the British Transport Commission, he was entitled to travel free on public transport and he made full use of it. He became a friend and I saw him on and off over the years until his death at the age of 92 in 1975. In 1960 we travelled together to Poland

as members of the British delegation for a congress of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). When my colleague gave up the honorary position, he was succeeded, on my recommendation, by my friend Denis Owen, and when we both left the district for Oxford, Keith Hyatt succeeded us. So, altogether, three Roan boys held the position at one time or another.

Our maths master was Mr. Carpenter, a kind and enthusiastic teacher of this subject for which I had little aptitude, partly due to the wartime disruption caused to the continuity of lessons by, first, the London Blitz, and then, second, by the V1 and V2 attacks. Until I arrived at the Roan I had not been taught either Algebra or Geometry. Mr. Carpenter tried hard to help those of us who struggled with the subject, but clearly found it quite frustrating. He was a graduate of Cambridge University and he and another master, whose name I cannot now recall, took a party of us from Drake House (my house) to visit the University and their college, Downing, on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1948, a cold day with an easterly wind. Snow fell as the coach left the school at 8.30am and when we got back at 9pm it was two inches deep. Nevertheless, the sun shone on us in Cambridge.

Of the other masters I remember, kind and quiet Mr. Binnie taught us history and Mr. Hankinson taught us geography, two subjects I enjoyed, while Mr. Berry took us for chemistry. Mr. Hankinson is mentioned in Craig Osborne's fascinating article in the March 2011 issue of *The Roan Magazine*, as is Mr. Binnie. Mr.

Hankinson and Mr. Holt also appear to be in the photograph of the harvest camp held at Ickham, Kent, in 1948 on page 31 of the same issue. I went to the one held that same year at Trunch, Norfolk, of which I have a couple of photographs. Mr. Berry was, of course, an enthusiast for the amateur theatre and produced many school productions. I still have a photograph of a scene from his production of *Treasure Island* dating from, I think, 1947 in which I appeared as one of the pirates. Mr. George Witten was another master who was much involved in theatrical productions. He did not teach English literature to my Form, but we often passed him in the corridors rehearsing out loud his lines for the next production!

Some of the school's teaching staff had not yet returned from the armed forces in those early post-war years. On one occasion, one of those who was still serving and had reached the rank of, I believe, major in the Army and was working in the Allied Administration of Germany, came to the school and gave us a moving account of the sorry plight of children there at that time and appealed to us to collect clothes, etc., to send via him. One of the former teachers who came out of retirement to help out was Mr. J.W. Kirby, who in 1929 had published *The History of the Roan Schools*. He taught Latin and looked very aged to us. He finally retired at the age of what seemed like 90. I remember him in his emotional farewell speech to the school when he finally retired, finishing with the stirring words, "*Floreat Roana!*" and nearly collapsing.



I never did well enough in my routine class work to deserve a prize, but I was good at writing essays and gained the Captain Stallard first prize in 1947 and the third prize the previous year. Captain Stallard was the owner of the plum and other fruit orchards at Throckmorton, near Pershore, in Worcestershire, where I attended the harvest camps the Roan organised there, and he offered annual prizes for the best essays by boys attending the camps. The school had a very sensible arrangement with Foyles bookshop for choosing the book prizes. A selection was sent to the school and displayed in the library prior to prize-giving day. The prize-winners had been told of their success and were thus able to select the titles they wanted appropriate to the value of the award. If you wished for a particular title or titles that wasn't there, you gave the details to the master in charge and he ordered them from Foyles. In this way the winners received books they really wanted. Thus, I was lucky enough to increase my tiny natural history library quite substantially with books that I treasure and use to this day; books that I couldn't afford to buy in my schooldays with the shilling or so pocket money I received each week.

Unlike my close friends in the Remove, Denis and Harry, I was keen on team sports, especially football. I wasn't good enough to make the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, but sometimes travelled with them as a reserve. But as the selected players always turned up I can't remember ever being lucky enough to participate in a game! So my participation was confined to house matches and class ones on the

games afternoons. I played on either wing and my only memorable bit of glory was scoring the winning goal in a house match with a header from a corner. I disliked heading the ball, having never learned to do it properly, and this header all but knocked me unconscious. I was surprised, when I came to my senses, to find myself receiving congratulations from my team-mates.

My only grouse in those days was that team selection for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI was left to the team captain (the teaching staff didn't seem to become involved) and, as far as I could see, he never looked at, and took into account, up and coming and improving players who were striving to get into the 1<sup>st</sup>. Nevertheless, as far as I remember the Roan did very well in matches against other schools. The outstanding player was Daltry who was a delight to watch. He was also very good at cricket. Some years later I heard that he suffered serious injuries to his legs as a result of a parachute jump when he was doing his National Service. I hope it wasn't true.

Like many of my schoolmates, when I wasn't playing soccer, I was often to be found watching it at the Valley, Charlton. 1945-1947 were halcyon years for Charlton Athletic. In the first post-war season the club was a real power in the land. It all but won the League South, form fading at the very end of the season to finish third. In the F.A. Cup the team reached the final only to lose 4-1 after extra time to a great Derby County side starring Horatio (Raich) Carter and Peter Doherty. The following season, 1946-47 saw the restoration of the pre-war

football leagues. In spite of an indifferent season in the First Division, Charlton were back at Wembley for the F.A. Cup final with a re-shaped team and won the trophy with a 1-0 victory over Burnley.

Those were seasons when home games were played at the Valley before crowds of 50,000, 60,000 or even more. Games which featured such great players as Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney, Raich Carter, Tommy Lawton and Frank Swift as well as Charlton's own outstanding players like Don Welsh, 'Sailor' Brown, Bert Johnson, Charlie Revell and Sam Bartram. Several of us from the Roan used to stand together in a corner between the huge West Bank and the Floyd Road end. There was an unusually high number of absentees from the school one mid-week afternoon early in 1946 when Charlton replayed a fifth round F.A. Cup-tie with Preston North End, Tom Finney and all, at the Valley and won 6-0. The school, including our classroom, was humming with discussions about the game next morning when the vice-headmaster, Tom Holt, suddenly appeared through the door and, addressing one of the previous day's absentees, asked, 'Good match was it?' 'Yes Sir,' replied the unfortunate miscreant, taken off guard and then forced to confess that he had indeed been at the match. But, fortunately for him, he got off lightly with a detention. To this day, I follow Charlton Athletics's mixed fortunes with as much interest as of old, and have watched them play whenever an opportunity occurred – the last being in April 2011 at Bristol against Bristol Rovers, a 2-2 draw.

I liked cricket but wasn't good at it. I often found myself fielding close to the boundary at the Kidbrooke Park Road sports ground. This had its compensations for a naturalist like myself. I found much to interest me in the outfield in dull moments. The unmown areas had quite a varied flora and attracted such butterflies as the Large and Essex Skippers, and the Meadow Brown, as well as, occasionally, the immigrant Humming-bird Hawk-moth. The poplar trees played host to the caterpillars of such moths as the Poplar Grey, Poplar Hawkmoth, Puss Moth and the rather rare White Satin. In those years a pair of Swallows usually nested at the ground and hunted insects over the pitches. Kestrels regularly hovered over the unmown areas searching for voles and on one occasion in November 1947 a Sparrow-hawk flew over the pitch during a football match in which I was playing and caused me to miss a pass directed to me out on the left wing. On another occasion, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1948, I was temporarily distracted by a hovering Kestrel while playing for a combined Drake-Raleigh team against Nelson House, but shortly afterwards scored our equalising goal. However, we eventually lost 2-1.

Earlier, I mentioned attending a Roan harvest camp at Throckmorton, near Pershore in Worcestershire, plum-picking. In 1948 I attended the one held from 8th-22<sup>nd</sup> July at Trunch, near North Walsham, Norfolk. This time we picked blackcurrants and other soft fruit, working alongside English-speaking German prisoners-of-war who entertained us with their wartime stories. The weather was far from good,



especially in the first week, so I did not find many opportunities for pursuing my entomological interests when we were not fruit-picking. However, July 14<sup>th</sup> started warm and sunny, so I took the day off and cycled to the Norfolk Broads around Horning and Ranworth to search for caterpillars of the British race of the Swallowtail Butterfly. I only succeeded in finding two small ones, but a Broadman at Ranworth Marsh very kindly promised to send to me at home any he found later, and actually did so; thus I was able to rear six of these magnificent butterflies.

### Postscript

The Trunch harvest camp in 1948 had taken place after the School Certificate examinations which saw the end of my time as a pupil at the Roan. I was very happy there and felt very sad to leave. In August I followed Denis Owen to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington where I became a Scientific Assistant in the Department of Entomology. After National Service in the Army from 1950-52, we both moved to Oxford to take up positions with, in my case, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at the University in Denis's case. In 1956 we were both given the opportunity to read for Zoology degrees at the University. After that Denis began a distinguished academic career which took him to positions in the USA,

Africa and Sweden before returning to the UK (Oxford Brookes University). I joined *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* London office as a scientific sub-editor for a short time until I was unexpectedly invited to join the radio and television production staff of the world-renowned BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol in 1960, where I remained until my retirement in 1988. That was indeed an enjoyable and fruitful time, working with such people as Sir Peter Scott, Sir David Attenborough and the famous wartime radio field correspondent Frank Gillard. In the 1970s I devised and produced a long-running series of radio programmes, *Sounds Natural*, that included interviews with such personalities as Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Bing Crosby, Adam Faith, Rolf Harris, Susan Hampshire, Lord Home of the Hirsle (Sir Alec Douglas-Home), Humphrey Lyttelton, Spike Milligan, Eric Morecambe, Sir Harry Secombe and Roger Whittaker. One of the programmes I produced for Radio 4 in 1983 was about the wildlife of Blackheath and Greenwich Park in which Denis Owen and I discussed what was to be found there in that year compared with our schooldays at the Roan. Like Denis I've published a good deal since 1948: about 300 scientific and popular articles and shorter communications, plus five books, as well as contributing chapters to several others. In addition, I produced several LP records and cassettes for BBC Enterprises on wildlife subjects.

## Deaths

Correction: In the July 2003 Roan Magazine we published the death of R (Ronald) A. Noakes. We have been advised the entry should have been for his brother R (Raymond) C. Noakes as shown below. Ronald is still very much alive and we apologise for the error.

- BARBER**, Madeline J. (Head 1968-74, a past president of the Old Roan Girls' Association and a vice president of the Old Roan Association) on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011 aged 86
- BARBER**, Margaret O. (née Walker 1935-39) on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2010 aged 86
- BUTTERFILL**, Sydney P.H. ("Phil" 1926-31) on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 aged 98
- CODY**, John W. (1944-50) on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011 aged 79
- DINNAGE**, Peter W. (1949-54) on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 aged 73
- EDWARDS**, Leslie D. (1931-36) on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011 aged 90
- FORD**, Frederick A. (1929-34) in 2011 aged 94/95
- FROOMS**, Douglas W. (1926-31) on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011 aged 95
- GEDDES**, Eric (staff 1947-72) on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 aged 94
- GIBSON**, Adelaide J.M. (1933-40) in March 2011 aged 88
- GODDARD**, Major Douglas G. (1933-37) on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 aged 91
- GOULD**, Edward W. (1954-61) on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011 aged 68
- GRIFFITHS**, Martin G. (1957-64) on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 aged 65
- HENLEY**, Maurice W. (1931-39) on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011 aged 88
- HIGGENS**, William T. (1932-38) on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010 aged 89
- HOARE**, Robert G. ("Reg" staff 1952-79) 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011 aged 85
- JENNER**, David (1959-65) in June 2011 aged 63
- KNOTT**, Alfred J.G. (1943-47 and staff 1954-84, a past president of the Association) on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011 aged 81
- LAYSON**, Ronald A. (1942-50) on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 aged 73
- LORYMAN**, Percy T. (1924) on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2011 aged 100
- LYNES**, David F.B. (1964-71) on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 aged 59
- NOAKES**, Raymond C. (1950-53) on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2001 aged 62
- PETTY**, Leonard P. (1929-35) on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011 aged 93
- RED**, Reginald A. (1944-51) in December 2010 aged 79
- SCOURFIELD**, Robert G.C. (1961-68) on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2011 aged 62
- SMITH**, Ian F. (1944-51) on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011 aged 77
- TURNER**, Stanley (1928-35) on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 aged 92
- VERNAU**, Frederick W. (1932-37) on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 aged 90
- WALDEN**, Peter T. (1958-65) on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2012 aged 65
- WHITE**, Donald J.B. (1928-36) on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011 aged 93
- WHITE**, Peter A. (1933-38) on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2010 aged 89

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**Tim Keeler Photography**

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## Dates for your Diary

Friday  
15th June, 2012

Old Roan Golf Society  
Summer Golf Day  
Woldingham Golf Club

Friday—Sunday  
27th-29th July, 2012

President's Weekend at the Club  
Check details on the website

Friday  
12th October 2012

O.R.A. Annual Reunion Dinner  
7.30 pm. John Roan Club

Wednesday-Saturday 2012  
28th November—1st December

Roan Theatre Company  
Check RTC website for details

Thursday  
21st March 2013

Old Roan Association A.G.M  
8.00 pm. John Roan Club