

OLD VARNDEANIAN

Newsletter

Archive re-issue

MARCH 1995

CYRIL ARTHUR SHELLEY (1904-1995)

It is with great regret that we must report the death of Cyril Shelley (1904-1995). He died on Monday 23rd January, 1995, having suffered a stroke after admission to the Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath. He celebrated his 90th birthday last year

Cyril was an Honorary Vice-President of the Association, having served as both Secretary and President during his many years on the OVA Council. He was instrumental in expanding the membership of the OVA and, with Tony Allt, established the Old Varndeanian Newsletter. At the time of his death, he was the President of the Old Varndeanians Cricket Club and was a member of the OVA Council, where, although incapacitated through arthritis, he attended every meeting.

Cyril was a Brightonian from birth and after leaving Brighton Municipal Secondary School, as the School in York Place was then called, he entered the insurance world, where he was first employed by the Employers' Liability Insurance Company. Cyril was hardly a professional, but he became involved with the original trade union, the Guild of Insurance Officials, which, subsequently, made him an Honorary Life Member, and he was also active in the Chartered Insurance Institute, which was the body responsible for setting professional examinations. Cyril became the chief organiser of all social events. He retired in 1965 after 41 years service

Throughout his early life, Cyril was a keen sportsman, playing football and cricket. He played for innumerable teams connected with the School, the church and the scouting movement. In later life, his first love was cricket and until recently, he was always part of the crowd at county matches at Hove, if he wasn't a spectator, he was umpiring or scoring. He was an invaluable member of many clubs. His love for the game can be judged from the fact that when he first played for the Dome Mission Cricket Club he was 47 years old and he continued to play for them for many years, plus being their Secretary and Treasurer.

One of Cyril's great assets was his remarkable memory. Even in his eighties, he could remember names, addresses, years at School, professions and so on. It was my privilege to provide the car to take us out to lunch on many occasions, and it was always

incredible to mention a name and then listen to Cyril's recapitulation of the fellow's past. There were not many of you escaped his attention.

At his funeral service, the chapel was filled with his relatives, his colleagues and friends, many of whom were fellows in his lodge of the Royal Ancient Order of Buffalos, another of Cyril's commitments. Many of his scouting friends were there acknowledging the fact that he had been a scouting stalwart over many years and, in particular, a Rover Scout Leader with the 2nd Brighton Troop. Among those present were his wife Edith, his daughter Carol and her son, and his two granddaughters who had travelled from the USA. His other daughter Paula, an ex-Varndeanian, died in 1990 in the USA.

We sang two hymns, one of which contained the lines:

*Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness only light,
and where there's sadness ever joy.*

A fitting tribute to a man whose gifts will be sadly missed.



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 92nd AGM was held at the College on October 27th, 1994. The President, Donald Osborne (1944/52) was in the Chair.

The Hon. Secretary, Derek Ashcroft (ex-Staff), presented his report for the year which congratulated all those concerned with ensuring the continuing success of the Association. 1994 had produced conspicuous events, all of which had contributed to the growing strength in numbers of members, now 639. In particular, the retiring President was thanked for his work during the three years of his office and for his continued help in the production of the OVA Newsletter despite his removal to London. Many of the other projects included in the Report will be mentioned in this Newsletter

The Hon. Treasurer, Dennis Leggett (1931/37) reported that the financial position of the Association was sound with total funds standing at £4,178.79. He thanked Brian Peters (1956/62) for auditing the accounts

At this point of the Meeting, Keith Elliott (1950/56) was invested as President for the next three years. As a mark of the Association's respect for his work as President, Donald Osborne (1944/52) was elected as Hon- Vice-President Tony Newman (1936/43) becomes senior Vice-President and Derek Ashcroft (Staff) was elected as Vice-President. All the council members were re-elected and the representatives of the In Deo Fidemus lodge, the College and the OV Cricket Club were invited to continue their attendance at Council meetings. Brian Peters (1956/62) was invited to continue as Hon. Auditor.

Addendum. With Cyril Shelley's death, the Council is now depleted by one member. The Council will welcome offers to serve and/or nominations from members.

ANNUAL DINNER

As previously publicised, the Annual Dinner will be held at the Thistle Hotel, Brighton on Friday 28th April, 1995 at 8.00pm. You will find an application form with this newsletter. Guests, of both sexes, are welcome- The ticket price is £19.50. We know that this year the food will be excellent, the company in fine fettle and the entertainment might have you rolling in the aisles (we hope not)

It is proposed to hold a raffle. Tony Newman will we] come any prizes which members can provide

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ADDRESSES

The Hon. Treasurer received only 12 replies to his letters to members required to amend their bankers' orders. if you are one of the twelve, well done. If you are not, you will have to "get weaving" or you will be without your October 1995 Newsletter

There are several members whose addresses we do not have Neither do we know their years at School, but if you recognise any of the names, please give Dennis

Leggett their addresses by phoning him on. They are R.J. Creed, K.R. Elmer, G. Goldsmith. S.W. Johnson. G.M. Osbourne, A. Page, T.S. Stratford, G-F.H. Sutton. There is one chap, R.M. Stott (1949/57). Does anyone know the remainder?

HOUSE INSIGNIA

You will recall that in the last November Newsletter we invited offers for the insignia on the House Honours boards which could no longer be found a home. There was a good response and the best offer, which was a significant sum, was for all eight. This was felt to be ideal as the insignia could be kept together. Keith Bankes (1955/60) made the offer and proposes to mount them together and provide a photograph when the job is done. I am sure we are all grateful to Keith for his generosity

it is fitting that Keith should have them because his family has a firm connection with Varndean; his grandfather and father were educated at York Place and Varndean respectively, and his daughter was at Varndean Sixth Form College.

NEWS OF OLD VARNDEANIANS

Obituaries

Ralph Merrifield (1924/30) whose obituary appeared in the Daily Telegraph and the Independent, was a prominent figure in the field of archaeology and was the author of several books and treatises on the subject. He was known as "the father of London's modern archaeology", being the only person in recent years to map the remains of the Roman city. His first job, after leaving the School before it moved to Varndean, was Assistant to the curator at Brighton Museum. When he retired in 1978, he was Deputy Director of the Museum of London and was subsequently honoured by London University with a Doctorate.

George Balcombe (1932/37) died recently. He was a publican in Somerset for many years before moving to Lewes and finally, to Hove.

H. B. Griffiths (1921/25) died recently in South Africa.

Frederick Newman (1918/25) died in October aged 87. He was the uncle of Tony Newman (1936/43) and Bunny Newman (1938/45). The Newman family has always been a staunch supporter of the OVA and proud of its connection with the School. His papers contained all his School reports. He was a very keen footballer and cricketer and when lie was working in the Gold Coast from 1937 to 1967 mining gold and bauxite, he represented Ghana against Nigeria and scored an unbeaten century.

OTHER NEWS

David Nash (1953/61) who is a London vicar, officiated at a wedding ceremony in September where the bridegroom's uncle and two guests were all OV's. Ian lay (1953/58), the groom's uncle is now a circuit judge,

Roger Homan (1955/63), who lectures in politics and religious studies at Sussex University and is a member of the OVA and Phillip Homan (circa 1957) a banker, based in Tokyo, made up four Old Varndeanians at the ceremony.

Peter Bailey (1933/41) sent a number of photographs, which I hope to use, and as he lives in Edinburgh, mentioned some of the exhibitions at last year's Festival and the Glenlivet fireworks display which he was able to view from his own apartment.

Jim Ascough (1965/72) is on his travels again, from Japan to Singapore, where he now lives.

Keith Jasper (1969/75) tells us that he is now working on those frightening boxes which you may have seen on the M '1' as you pass at excessive speeds. Don't be surprised if you see your registration number on an illuminated sign at the roadside - you can thank Keith for the warning.

W.F. Benford (1915/20) is seriously ill in Hove

Peter Griffiths (1964/71) has lived in Worcestershire since graduating from Birmingham University; he is a Cost and Project Management Consultant and has worked with EuroDisney and the Channel Tunnel. He has offered to help on the Old Varndeanian project later.

Tony Stemp (1938/39) who is still working for a crust in South Africa continues to enjoy being kept in touch through the Newsletter

Rex Young (1945/52) has now retired from a business career which brought him much praise and, one assumes, not a few headaches. Rex says that he has now achieved the ambition he felt when at School - to retire. He built a business which manufactures continuous rotary extrusion machines for non-ferrous metals, 99% of the production being exported. When he quit, he was Chairman, M.D. and part-owner. He won the Queen's award for Exports

R.A. Mullenger (1958/65) has written to advise a change of address to Liss in Hampshire and to express the enjoyment he receives from reading the Newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS

David Cox (1952/59) who lives in Aberystwyth has at last penetrated the Association shield and become a member, - his application failed to emerge from the

College office- However, we hope he will not be disheartened and will send us a few details of his life since leaving School.

Barrie Jerram (1953/58) is a local government officer, commencing with Brighton Borough Council on leaving School and now with the Corporation of London.

Martin Cruttenden (1944/49) is a consultant with Price Waterhouse.

B.F. May (1946/50) taught English in Spain for ten years, before returning to the UK for some further education at Southampton University. He is now researching aviation and music for authors and broadcasters.

David Kennard (1962/69) has an enviable job working from home in Chard, Somerset, as a freelance translator in 12 European languages, and specialising in legal contracts, litigation and court judgements. One is tempted to anticipate a full timetable with the bureaucrats in Brussels doing their stuff.

THE OLD VARNDEANIANS

This is the proposed title on a potential follow-up publication to Onward and Upward, which would record the activities and achievements of as many OV's as possible.

Jim Franks (1938/44) is trying to establish a project team which will handle the paperwork to assemble all the information, initially, at least, to create a record, rather than a publication. Jim writes:

"Our working party has traced the complete Admissions Registers of pupils from 1884 to 1975. We are now in a position to put more positive requests for assistance to members. As a starter we would like to trace and record as many as possible of the people who were admitted to the School between 1934 and 1950. Were you at School during that period? Would you be prepared to help with the research? We would provide a list of names, questionnaire proforma and a 11 model" entry. Please phone me."

ONWARD AND UPWARD

As expected, sales have now slowed, but the venture was very successful. We have sold over 600 copies and the profit from the project is over £1,000. We still have 150 copies in stock, the income from which will be still more profit. So, if you know anyone who has not yet purchased this masterpiece and would benefit by doing so, pass the word to Derek Ashcroft or Dennis Leggett.

Brian Robson (1939/44) who did such a magnificent job with Tony Allt in producing the book, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, but he thinks it has nothing to do with the history of Varndean School.

Hugh Colgate (1932/39) confirms the observation of **John Clapperton** (1942/50) that **Freddie Harsant**, a member of staff, did not wear glasses and still doesn't. Apparently, he now lives near Dartmouth, overlooking the estuary of the River Dart, like a good sailor should, Hugh has a library of contacts with OV's and ex-staff over the years, many when he was in the Navy- He must have an unusually constructive memory to associate an older face with a School name

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Not only do members contemplate the location of their School friends, they find them. **Ron Common** (1959/64) and **Mick Corby** (1959/65) arranged a reunion of their contemporaries at the College in October and, apparently, had a whale of a time. They called the register and found that a few were playing truant, but 21 were present- The meeting was so successful, they have arranged to meet at the Withdean Sportsman pub on the last Monday of each month. Marvellous.

Ron and Mick provided a host of photographs and the one which has been reproduced is probably the worst, but it shows the assembled gang, replete, some more, some less hirsute than in the good old days.

In the last Newsletter we mentioned **Paul Rawlinson's** phenomenal memory in being able to recite the 1972/73 members of form IV.28. We have another form register buff, **Chris Strick** (1943/51) who can do the same for the same form, so there must be something odd about IV 28. Chris attributes the feat to the method used by their form master, "Horse" Harwood, who made his charges call their names as he "ticked" them. Chris remembers the sequence.

UPWARD RATHER THAN ONWARD

On 14th November last year, the new lift at the College was opened for handicapped students who cannot manage those dreadful stone steps leading to the upper floor. Alan Jenkins mentioned the project in College News in the last Newsletter. The Association contributed £500 to the fund and **Dennis Leggett** (1931/37) our Hon. Treasurer was there to represent the OVA

D-DAY JUNE 6TH, 1944

You will recall that in the last Newsletter, the question was raised about the fate of one Munro Meiklejohn

(1936/38) on D-Day.

Sure enough, I was right. He was killed in the airborne landings in Normandy on that day. The confirmation came from two distinct sources. The first was Bob Henley (1946/51) who, being a genealogist, knew where to establish the facts - the Commonwealth War Graves Commission- He contacted them and up came the extract from their records.

"Private Munro Meiklejohn, 14384224, serving with the 8th Battalion, Parachute Regiment, A.A.C. died on 6th June 1944, aged 19 and is buried in Grave 1 in Herouvillette New Communal Cemetery, France. He was the son of Thomas Munro and Ellen Meiklejohn of Moulscombe, Brighton. Herouvillette is a village and commune 11 km northeast of Caen, on the CaenCabourg road. The cemetery is 90m from the church, down a lane on the right of the entrance to the church."

The other source was Mrs. Jean Penney, Munro's sister, who still lives in Brighton. The Newsletter was passed to her by a friend and she wrote to confirm the above- She believes that he was at School till 1941 when he had a year at the School of Art before joining the army. I am sure that was so. Another comment was that his first form teacher was Shover Trustram.

On the subject of the airborne landings in Normandy, John Clarke (1936/39) recalls that at the time he was completing his radioflying training. Over the previous week or two, he and his instructor, based at RAF Yatesbury, had been flying under an umbrella of Dakotas towing gliders flying south and turning to return to base when they were over the New Forest. He was flying on D-Day but noticed that the Dakotas did not turn back - they kept going, heading for



France. Looking down from the single-engined Proctor, they could see the armada of ships below and above, the mass of gliders following their towplanes. Flying lower, they could make out warships, landing craft loaded with troops, tanks and equipment and the vast fleet of ships heading for the coast of France. It was D-Day.

This year, of course, is the 50th anniversary of the end of the war- No doubt, there are many stories which could be told. If you have something exciting, heroic, interesting, to tell, please send it to the Editor. The address is at the bottom of the last page of this Newsletter.

Also, Bob Henley has offered to help in establishing the fate of any OV who may have been a casualty during the Second World War- If you have such a query, please address it to the Editor.

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT, PART III

Edward Teller

Edward Teller, a Hungarian, was born in Budapest in 1908. He obtained a doctoral degree in Germany, but with the rise of Hitler he joined the large number of talented Jewish scientists and other scholars who fled to the West in the 1930's. After a brief time in England and in Denmark (at Niels Bohr's famous institute in Copenhagen), he came to the USA in 1935. A few months after nuclear fission had been discovered in late 1938, he joined another Hungarian in visiting Albert Einstein with a previously prepared letter (which Einstein signed) addressed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, advising that the USA should get involved.

in 1942, soon after Oppenheimer had been appointed to lead the theoretical approach to atomic bomb design, Teller was invited by Oppenheimer to participate in a conference at the University of California. Although the intended focus of the conference was a fission weapon, Teller was already obsessed with the possibility of a much more powerful thermonuclear device - the H Bomb - and much of the discussion was taken up with this.

When the Los Alamos laboratory was established, Teller was one of the first group of scientists to take up residence there. From the beginning, his presence was disruptive. He had probably hoped to become head of the theoretical division, but Oppenheimer wisely chose a much steadier and less flamboyant character who was ready to concentrate on the primary job of designing a fission bomb. Teller felt, as a result, that he had been badly treated, and he developed a lasting resentment towards Oppenheimer.

Nevertheless, research towards the design of a superbomb did go on and, as I mentioned in Part 1 of this memoir, my own work at Los Alamos was with the basic nuclear measurements that were required. It

was because of this connection that I saw Teller fairly frequently. He was one of the most colourful characters

at Los Alamos- he had huge bushy black eyebrows and a loud rasping voice. He walked with a pronounced limp, resulting from an accident in which one of his feet had been partially severed when he fell under the wheels of a tramcar in Germany at the age of twenty. He was an enthusiastic and talented player of classical piano music,- I believe it was a Steinway grand piano that he had in his flat on the mesa - quite a luxury in that rather primitive environment.

After the war, Teller came into his own. Like many of the former Hungarian refugees, he had an extreme antipathy to Russia and to Communism. This may have been due to the despotic Russian-inspired Communist regime in Hungary, led by Bela Kun, shortly after World War I. The intensification of the Cold War, the unexpected early achievement of a fission bomb by the Russians, and the arrest of Klaus Fuchs in 1950, with all the revelations about Soviet spying, gave Teller the support he needed from the Government and the military to go all out for a hydrogen bomb programme.

A first American test of a thermonuclear device took place at Eniwetok atoll in the Pacific on May 8th, 1951. The next year, massive funding was made available to establish a new laboratory at Livermore, California, in which Teller was the dominant figure and served as Director from 1958 to 1960. It was during this period that the Oppenheimer hearings were held. Most of the physicists who testified declared their complete faith in Oppenheimer's loyalty, but Teller went on record as saying "I would feel personally more secure if public matters would rest in other hands." It was a remark that led to his being ostracised for decades afterwards by most of his former colleagues. However, politically he had plenty of support which reached its zenith in Ronald Reagan's presidency with the preposterous "Star Wars" project.

At the time of writing, Teller is still living. I saw him, looking diminished and faded, at the 50th anniversary celebration at Los Alamos in April 1993. By then, he was 85, but he was still a respected figure in that environment and retained his mental, if not his physical vigour. At a concert in his honour, he played the piano part in a Beethoven trio. With his artistic tastes and his militaristic attitudes he was a study in contrasts, but he cannot be denied his place in 20th century history.

Tony French (1931/39)

The Editor has received many letters and comments praising this series by Tony French. It was a masterpiece in the broad canvas of OV experience and it occurs to him that there must be other similarly striking experiences out there. Why not write them and give your peers the opportunity to share them.

COLLEGE NEWS

Two sparkling productions! The first in November of Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw" saw a splendid interpretation by Gerald Sexton of Orton's savagely satirical commentary on the Establishment- The second, in December, of "Daydream Believer", a musical written by our very own Paul Skinner based on the Wizard of Oz" theme and set in the 1960's complete with contemporary music, with a cast of 1000's superbly directed by Gill Lamden delighted full houses. The icing was provided by an exciting and varied evening of dance and music shortly before Christmas. Book NOW for "The Wise Woman of Hogsden" - an early 17th century comedy not performed since before the Civil War! It's playing from May 4 - 6 as part of the Brighton Festival

It's now heads down academically with mock exams and reports and, very significantly, a major inspection of the college. This is under-taken in three phases- in September inspectors reviewed the college's effectiveness in recruitment and induction. In January a team looked at teaching and learning and in March they'll return to explore "cross college" areas such as "11 responsiveness and range of provision", "governance and management", "11 guidance", "student achievement", "resources" and "quality assurance". So far so good with very favourable feedback indicating that the college is doing a good job

We await eagerly a decision on "Big Field". The jury is out and we hope to hear from the Education Assets Board in late February/early March. So hold the front page Eric (but don't hold your breath)!

Alan Jenkins, 16th February, 1995.

OLD VARNDEANIANS CRICKET CLUB

The results in 1994 were:

Played 15, Won 5, Drawn 8, lost 2, Cancelled 2.

One of the wins was at Beeding and Bramber who scored 115 all out- We replied with 118-0

John D. Moore led the batting with 422 runs (average 84.40) followed by Bruce Fryer with 354 runs (average 35.40). John D. Moore was the most successful bowler with 22 wickets at an average of 10.91.

The Club urgently requires more players of any standard (regular or occasional). If you fancy a friendly game of Sunday Cricket in 1995, please contact the Secretary, Guy Baigent or the Chairman, John D. Moore.

The Club was saddened to learn of the death of its President, Cyril Shelley, who took on the role of scorer for many years and supported the Club with great enthusiasm.

John D. Moore (Chairman)

OLD VARNDEANIANS FOOTBALL CLUB

1994/95 has proved so far to be a very successful season for the Club after disappointments in recent years. However, the prolonged mid-winter wet weather has severely affected the fixture programme of both the Old Varndeanians first and second teams

As a result of an extended run in the Sussex intermediate Cup, and continuing success in the Vernon Wentworth and the College Cup competitions, the first team is facing a formidable backlog of matches. With about two months of the season left there remain another eleven league matches to play in addition to those in the various cups. The team's current league position reflects the unreality of the situation, since although fourth from bottom of the Premier division of the Brighton League, if maximum points are taken from all the games in hand the team would be top by two clear points.

The backlog facing the second team is certainly less serious, but there are still six league matches plus an interest in the Coronation Cup to take into account. Comfortably placed in mid-table at present, a final place in the top four looks the most likely outcome to the season.

While overall the playing strength of the Club has been considerably enhanced this season, there is always room for new players who may be interested. We offer excellent playing and social facilities at Corals Sport and Leisure Club in Hove, while the training facilities at Portslade Sports Centre are equally impressive. Anyone interested in joining the OVFC can contact me, and I will be pleased to supply any further information.

Norman Wright (Hon Sec OVFC)

IN DEO FIDEMUS LODGE

Varndean's own masonic lodge continues to flourish. in the Chair this year is H F "Bob" Cooke (1931/33). A very full programme of social events and charitable work is in progress. The secretary is Donald Osborne, who welcomes enquiries.

Chris Strick

THE PHOTOGRAPH

Since nobody offered to identify the members of the 1939 athletics team whose photograph was in the March 1994 Newsletter, Hugh Colgate (1932-39), who was the captain of the team, has done it for you. If you would like the list, drop a line to the Editor.

Again, nobody offered to identify the ladies shown in the last Newsletter- I wonder why. For photographs this time, you have had your ration.