



Old Varndeanian

IN DEO FIDEMUS

OCTOBER 1996

THE FIVES CLUB

by Geoffrey Harris



In the long off days of 1938/39 (and even before that) Varndean Boys would strain to get into focus the dashing blouses and gym slips of those who were two or three playing fields away.

Some of us 16 year olds used to go about together cycling, or swimming in the sea. Roy Ellis had a sister, Madge, who went to the Girls' School, and she in turn had friends. I suggested that we got together to form a club. This idea was taken up and a committee formed. The first question was "what do we call ourselves?" With five on the Committee and a programme of five activities (cycling, hiking, swimming, tennis and social), it was agreed that we become "The Fives Club".

Recruitment was no problem, although it was rather hush-hush at first because mixed sex activity was not quite the thing in the eyes of Hutchins and Warmington! Ere long bicycles were seen with a red flag on the front mudguard, carrying our emblem and the word, "Fives". A membership card was printed, a constitution drawn up and an official membership form produced. You had to be nominated and seconded - the Masons had nothing on

us! The club grew to about 30, with an active programme. Imagine the comments when it was decided we would hold a camp. However, let us pay tribute to our parents, who had the faith to allow us to go ahead.

It was felt we should have our own Club Room. Imagine sixteen year olds having the cheek to be looking for premises. Would youngsters today? Probably! An old building behind London Road railway station was found. It was a garage but above was a loft with a full size billiard table. Ideal, we thought, but how much to rent? Three intrepid teenagers waited upon the landlord, Mr Elijah Bowden, a well proportioned gentleman in an armchair. We felt this was Judgement Day. Bless his heart, he agreed we could rent the room, gave us a rent book and asked for a week's rent of 7/6 in advance - 37½p today.

The war started, some of the members went into the Forces, but The Fives Club continued. Those left behind composed a newsletter every so often for the ones in the Forces.

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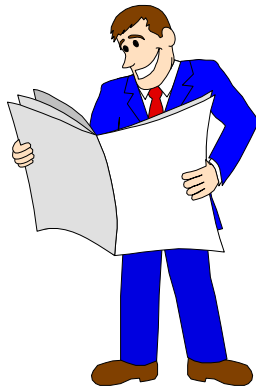
The war took its toll and the Club ceased to meet but its members kept in contact. In 1979 forty members and their partners met to celebrate the 40th anniversary of The Fives Club. Now, in 1996, the friendships continue although we do not meet as often.

Members in the picture: Rear: Cedric Palmer; middle: Dave Lawrence, Roy Ellis, Geoffrey Harris, Ray Lacey; front: Den Cheesman♣, Bill Stone, Alan Hodder.

Other OV members of The Fives: Bill Elliott, Terry Nelson, Norman Peskett, Norman Phillips, and Leon Thompson♣. (♣ Den and Leon have since died).

[I cannot identify all the ladies in the picture, but they include Reneé Caddy, Madge Ellis, Christine Tyrer, Pam Rogers and Margaret Hodder. Ron]

NEWS OF OLD VARNDEANIANS



Chuck Engmann (1960-62) has joined the OVs. Some of you will remember Chuck as a first class footballer and a high-speed sprinter. He is teaching in Coventry.

Andrew Clews (1967-73) has joined the OVs at the prompting of his OV brother, David. Andrew was had two spells at Vardean, separated by a spell in Shrewsbury (1969-71). His academic strengths were in English, Biology and General Science. Andrew is married to Karin and they both travel in from Uckfield to Sussex University, where Andrew works in the Computing Department.

Graham Trott (1970-77) has had an interesting and varied career in journalism, in recent years specialising in the Police. He is Editor of a European magazine for professionals in the security trade. He would like to hear from any contemporaries.

Alan R Jackson MBE (1938-43), is living in Southsea, Hampshire. He spent his working life in the Royal Navy and remembers Pat Hannan and Geoff Anscome (with whom he has lost touch). Like him, they were Commissioned during their service.

C Milburn has kindly sent a silver medallion of the "Brighton and Hove Juvenile Welfare Council", with his name inscribed on the reverse side. He spent his first year at York Place, going on to study French and Latin (with Mr Potter) and Technical subjects under Mr Lye. He remembers seeing Dulepsinghi and Tate at the County Ground, where school children were let in free after 3pm. A cross-country runner until the age of 33, he then took up boat-pulling (in cutters and whalers). He is now living in Gosport.

Derek Minter (1948-55) has moved back to Brighton from Harpenden.

Trevor Alan Smith (1968-76) of Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton has joined the OVs. Trevor is a Contracts Manager with SBM Ltd in Croydon. He had previously worked for many years in the Works Department of the CWS in Brighton. Trevor writes that he has kept in touch with Adrian Heft, Nick Ellmore, Les Nicholson, Mark Withington, Kevin Clarke, Rosemary Faulkner and Simon Winnard.

F. W. Capelin (Mr) (1924-31) has moved from Eastbourne to Polegate.

Ronald G Taylor (1928-35) has moved from Gerrards Cross to Chalfont St. Peter. Ron joined as a life member for £5 in 1946. He thinks he has had his money's worth and has kindly sent another donation to The Hon Sec.

Roy Daughtree (1946-53) has moved back to the UK from Australia and is living in Worcestershire.

Len Symes, a member of staff and Honorary Vice-President of the OVs, has moved from Sevenoaks to near Ilfracombe in North Devon.

D.C. Williams (?-?) has retired. We would like to thank him for all the hard work he has done for the College and for the OVs in his capacity as College Representative. He has been invited to stay on as a member of the OVs Council.

OLD VARNDEANIAN CONTACTS

President:	Keith Elliott
Hon Secretary:	Derek Ashcroft
Editor:	Ron McLaren
Millennium Project:	Jim Franks
Football:	Norman Wright
Cricket:	Guy Baigent

COUNCIL MEETING 10TH JULY

Several members of staff are retiring, including D C Williams. Thanks and best wishes were expressed for all his hard work as College representative. The election of a new representative is in hand. The piano, restored by the OVA is in good working order, C H R Strick having had a tinkle to check it out.

There is some revival of interest in the Old Girls' Association. We wish them well.

J Clapperton raised the possibility of a biography, perhaps anecdotal, of E J Hutchins. [See letter from John Clapperton on the Letters page.]

Total funds stood at £6222.92. The book "Onward and Upward" has so far yielded a surplus of £1401.43, with some stock still in hand.

Members were pleased with the success of the 1996 Gala Dinner. Paul Rawlinson, Tony Newman and Mike McKenzie (speaker) were thanked for their efforts.

The Who's Who was discussed [see article]. We intend to apply for a grant of £20,000 from the National Heritage fund.

The framed pictures of Lethbridge, Stainer and Hutchins have been recovered. The Secretary will have the latter framed and will negotiate their final location.

The AGM will be at the College on Thursday 31st October - 7.30pm.

OBITUARIES

Roy Brookes (1938-43) died at Winchester on 9th August 1966. On leaving school during the war, Roy spent some time in Brighton Borough Treasurer's department before joining the Royal Navy in 1944: he was stationed in the Far East. From 1948-1962 he served in the Metropolitan Police.

Roy turned to social work practice management. Later he obtained a State Scholarship to Warwick University

where he read Philosophy as a mature student and obtained an honours degree. In 1972 he had a year out, travelling in India. From 1976 to 1978 he taught at North East London Polytechnic. Ill health led to early retirement and he then became increasingly homebound, but until quite recently was researching for the Old Varndeanians' Who's Who.

Roy's interests were in the arts, especially music and literature which became more important as his health deteriorated.

Roy married Virginia Dawson in 1948: they had four children and five grandchildren.

Brian Hammond (1927-32) died on 19th March 1996 - he had been living in Brighton.

V E R P Neuburg died on 28th January 1996.

George Wilcox (?), a member of staff and Honorary Vice-President of the OVs died of a stroke on 5th July 1996. He was a member of the Modern languages Department at Varndean for many years.

F. H. Piercey (1901-06) died earlier this year.

E. J. Noakes (1943-48) died earlier this year.

H. A. Gearing (1915-21) has died - he had moved to Summerlands in Haywards Heath earlier this year.

Raymond O'Malley's death was reported in a four-column obituary in The Times of 8th August. He went to Cambridge, then taught English at Dartington Hall. He wrote a number of books, one of which was reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement.

IN DEO FIDEMUS LODGE

Membership is not restricted to Old Varndeanians, although they still constitute over half the current membership of about sixty. The Master is Ian Smith. Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, Don Osborne.

1996 DINNER JUDGED A SUCCESS

The 1996 Gala Dinner was held at the Brighton Thistle Hotel. Over 120 sat down to a sumptuous four course dinner after meeting for drinks in the reception bar. The Ballroom of the Thistle provides a superb setting for the event: the food and service were again of the highest standard.

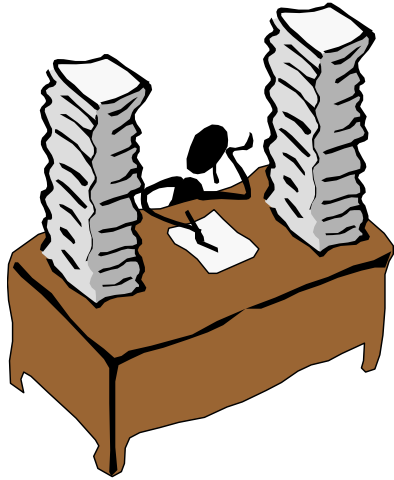
After dinner we were brilliantly entertained by our principal speaker and Old Varndeanian, Judge Michael McKenzie. Michael runs the Court of Appeal, where he is known as "Master", but on this occasion, a less formal style of address was adopted ("you can call me

Judge"). Michael recounted some of the more memorable events from his career in the courts, including some moments of great hilarity.

We were delighted also to have with us several former Varndean staff, including Len Symes, George Eley, Derek Ashcroft, Chris Bintcliffe, Jason Bristow and David Williams.

Make a resolution to come to the next dinner on 25th April 1997. If you have far to travel you can stay the night in the hotel. Details of the dinner are on page 8.

TO THE EDITOR



Thirty-one years on the Campus

Dear Mr McLaren,

It might be of interest to readers of *The Old Varndeanian* to know that I have taken early retirement this summer after teaching Latin and assorted subjects on "The Surrenden Campus" for the last 31 years (1965-1996).

I worked at Varndean from 1965 to 1980 and subsequently at Dorothy Stringer, which could hardly be nearer. The two things I remember with most pleasure from the Varndean years are the success of the Chess teams in the 1970s and that of the cricket team in 1978, when I was the manager.

There has been great interest in reading the newsletter over the years, learning off the successes of the many pupils I taught or can remember. I also have particularly happy memories of Jim Taylor-Page and Mary Allt. They were both very kind to me when I was a young teacher.

I don't intend to move away from Brighton, and I should be delighted to hear from any former pupils who might like to renew acquaintance. May I conclude by wishing you well in your new job as editor.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Watson

Memories of School Plays

Dear Mac,

What an interesting OV Newsletter!. It was particularly exciting to read about Peter Ridgewell. *

When I left the boys gave me a splendid leaving present - a proper make-up box - which is still in use and good repair. The suitcase the staff gave me is also still in use but only just surviving. Both serve to remind me of happy days at Varndean.

With all best wishes

Michael Wylie ("Bubble")

* Peter was in several school plays. Mac

Record of Achievements

Dear Ron,

In my day there used to be an honours board which recorded in gold letters those who had gone on to University and obtained a degree. I understood from Alan Jenkins, the College Principal, that this had been discontinued, but in its place there was to be an "honours book", to record a broader spectrum of achievements.

I was unable to get a degree directly after I left school, but did go to London University after I retired from the Navy in 1970, and obtained a BD (Hons) at the age of 45. I also obtained a permanent commission from the Lower Deck, passed the submarine "Perisher" for command, and the "Ship Command" examination, thus giving me the necessary sea-going qualification for a Board of Trade Master's Ticket.

My very best wishes go to you in your new task.

Sincerely,

Lt-Cdr Alfred Roake RN (Ret'd)

Since it is becoming the norm for students to go to University, there may be less value in maintaining a board or book at the college. The Who's Who, on the other hand, is intended to record all OVs' achievements, academic or otherwise, and has the advantage that it can be published. Mac

One for the Who's Who

Dear Mac,

First I would like to congratulate you for having taken on the mammoth task of Editor of the *Old Varndeanian*. Obviously it entails a great deal of work and I wish you every success.

My time at Varndean was short-lived due to the outbreak of WWII. In 1939 my parents moved to Canterbury and my schooling terminated at the age of 14. In the Autumn of 1940, following the daylight phase of The Battle of Britain (during which I was a "roof spotter" for my firm) we moved to Southampton. By day I worked in the office of an aircraft factory and at night acted as an Air Raid Messenger. During one heavy raid I was buried for 15 hours in the High Street, while my colleagues were sitting at their desks! Later we moved to Evesham where I joined the BBC and worked in a technical drawing office. Then In 1943 I joined the RAF (Aircrew). Following the war I served 30 years in the Police Force in Sussex.

Now, in my retirement, I am a UFO Report Investigator for Quest International, the largest UFO research organisation in Europe.

I regret that this is not enough for the proposed Who's Who - no military or academic distinctions, apart from having been commissioned in the Training Branch of the RAF Reserve during my police service.

Kindest regards

John Lee Clarke

Thank you for a very interesting letter, John. But please don't assume that the Who's Who is only for people with qualifications in rocket science. We want to know what all OVs have done with their lives, whether mundane or magnificent. Please fill in that proforma and send it off to Jim Franks. All other readers, please note! Mac.

First day

Dear Mr McLaren,

A superb Newsletter, if I may say. You must have spent a great deal of time and effort in producing the biggest newsletter I have seen in all my years with the OVA. A couple of comments, if I may:

Under the Obituaries my dear friend B.D.Simmons was incorrectly listed as Dr Barrie Simmons. He was plain Barrie Denis Simmons.

I remember well my first day... The huge size of the school (to a first year) and the rumours of initiations (heads down the bogs) were running through all our minds as we were walking along the corridor by room 19. Suddenly the bells started ringing! "Someone's escaped" yelled my mate Roger Welham. Under all that tension the comment amused and relieved us all. And there were no initiations.

Stephen John Owen

Butch Bio?

Dear Mac,

I am collecting material for a biography of E.J.Hutchins (1898-1972). Almost every Old Varndeanian will have something to contribute. I should be grateful to receive any information, anecdotes, newspaper cuttings, etc., anybody could send me.

I am also looking for a photocopy of words and music of The School Song (G.H.Whitcombe) and "Say not the struggle naught availeth" (G.I.Thomas).

Best wishes

John Clapperton

Please send your letters to me at the address shown at the foot of the final page of **The Old Varndeanian**. They may be shortened or otherwise edited for publication. If you send me something which you would like returned, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Mac.



FROM THE EDITOR



The months since the last edition have flashed by even faster than the summer holidays used to. Aren't you glad not to be irritated any more by those "Back to School" signs in shop windows?

I do appreciate the contributions which have been sent in. Thanks especially to Alan Hodder for his splendid article on The Fives Club, which leads this edition on the front page. I'm sorry I was unable to identify all the ladies in the picture, but after Alan sent me the photograph, it was a little difficult for him to do it from my feeble descriptions over the phone!

Lt-Cdr Alfred Roake has sent a letter (see the Letters page) and a long article about his days in the Royal Navy: I hope to publish excerpts in future editions.

In the last *Old Varndeanian* I regret that I omitted to thank Don Osborne, who has been so helpful with the typesetting in several previous editions. Thank you, Don: it was appreciated. Since I am fortunate (!) enough to have a small but powerful computer (known in the trade as a "Notebook PC"), this task can now be carried out as I prepare the articles. In fact, I'm sitting in the garden with my Notebook on the garden table, a cup of tea at my hand and the cricket commentary in my right ear as I write this. Who says men can't do more than one thing at a time? Damn! I've knocked the tea over.

You'll see we have a report from Paul Rawlinson about the Annual Dinner earlier this year. We had a very good time, with a splendid turnout. We thought you might benefit from early warning of the 1997 Dinner, so we have an advertisement for it. I expect somebody will buy you a diary for Christmas. Don't forget to book the 25th April 1997.

This time, more prominence is given to your letters. There is bound to be something you can write which others would like to read. For example, what have you been doing since leaving Varndean? If you don't feel you can manage an article, just send me a letter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Merry Christmas!

Ron

MILLENNIUM PROJECT

A HUNDRED AND FIFTY UP

Many thanks to the members who have returned completed proforma for inclusion in the Who's Who, and to those who have passed copies on to other OV's or their relatives.

If you have not yet returned a proforma, please do so as soon as possible. You don't have to type or print the information. We will be able to include any extra information which you want to add during the next couple of years, but please get that first entry to us before Christmas (and before you lose the form!).

Our Recorder, Tony Paine now has about 150 entries for the Who's Who, and they make fascinating reading. What a wide range of interests! It is good to see that there are entries from some not so Old Varndeanians. A fair number of OV's have married other OV's - not a great surprise, perhaps.

THE OV INDEX

Roy Daughtree, back in the UK from Australia, is processing the names of all OV's under their years of entry to the school. This, in particular will make the Who's Who a useful contribution to Brighton's educational history.

STAFF ENTRIES

David Williams, member of staff at Varndean College and about to retire, has agreed to collect and collate entries for members of staff. If you taught at Varndean you should contact David.

STAFF AS PUPILS SAW THEM

The Old Varndeanian has contained the occasional reference to members of staff. These might be useful additions to the information in the Who's Who. They would certainly make interesting reading in this newsletter. Surely you have some amusing or interesting memory of Butch, Jimmy, Pete and the rest! Don't delay - get in touch with the editor.

INTERNET

Thanks to Bob Henly, the Millennium Project is on the Internet (If you haven't the faintest idea what that means, see the brief explanation in the article "Life with the Microchip" elsewhere in this edition). <http://homepages.enterprise.net/hrhenly/oval.html>

HELP WITH OBITUARIES

We are going through the obituaries in back copies of *The Old Varndeanian*. In many cases we only know the person's name. If you know anything about somebody on the list below, please contact Jim Franks.

MEDIA LAUNCH

When the summer holidays are over, we will be launching our project to the media. This will help us reach OV's with whom we are not in touch. Our approaches to the media will be on a local basis, so we would like to identify OV's in various parts of the country who can act as contacts for the press, local radio and TV. We will provide you with a guide to the media. If you have some contact with the media or would simply like to help, please get in touch with Jim Franks.

THE FIRST FIFTY

More information about the following late OV's would be most welcome. Please contact Jim Franks if you can help. The list shows name, year of entry, year of death.

Allen GHG (19,88); Allt AJ (62,88); Anguige TE (16,88); Balcombe G (32,90); Ball BW (35,95); Benfold FW (15,95); Bennett RF (18,88); Birch D (69,92); Bird P (43,92); Bishop GH (31,89); Bradley JNF (25,89); Bringeman JV (15,90); Bridgland (41,88); Bullen CF (28,88); Catt GP (35,91); Day J (33,94); Down J (21,92); Drew GE (28,88); Dunk D (36,91); Ell D (36,44); Evans D (31,91); Fenton J (32,90); Franklin D (57,94); Griffiths H (21,92); Hall EM (53,88); Hampton E (18,93); Hartley N (24,87); Hole EE (18,88); Hole RS (12,88); Hopwood E (22,91); Hopwood L (35,94); Hughes B (24,92); Hunt A (16,91); Ingham F (31,90); King J (40,92); Kitchen N (27,95); Langley LW (22,91); Lant D (? ,90); Lawler E (27,95); Meldrum WK (30,88); Newman F (18,94); Perry HV (26,89); Potter MN (40,87); Robson JVB (30,91); Sharpe KH (31,91); Shaw FW (20,90); Shelley W (18,93); Smith DW (48,88); Smith JG (16,91); Smith RW (30,89).

Jim Franks

COLLEGE NEWS

Declining standards have struck one more! The College achieved its highest-ever pass rate at A Level of almost 90%, with 56% of entries achieving the top A to C grades and 20% recording A grades. Sixty-two students gained 24 points or better - that's equivalent to BBB or ABC grades - and among those were seventeen students who managed a mere three A grades or better. They were:

Rachel Birch	Keu-Wah Cheung
Andrew Dickinson	Gareth Earl
Tamara Harvey	Christopher Holt
Kylie Lovell	James O'Donnell
Rachel Playforth	Julia Robson
Rosie Sallis	Kerin Smith
Elaine Sorensen	Nicola Spencer
Rowan Tomlinson	Johanna Williams
Ed Wright	

Ten students will be going to Cambridge or Oxford, and many to universities across the country and into productive employment. Many others will be taking up a gap year - working, travelling, voluntary activities - before moving on.

The A Level grades were matched by impressive results at GCSE, at AS Level and on vocational courses - principally the relatively new General National Vocational Qualifications where 70% gained merit or distinction grades.

Many of you will say - at least out of my hearing - that all this can be explained away by falling standards. I do not believe this to be the case. A Levels now are challenging and rigorous across a wide range of subjects and using a great variety of assessment methods within a society that expects a great deal of its young people, the vast majority of whom work hard and make a very positive contribution. To talk of falling standards is a red herring. Standards thankfully have changed as our society has changed and I have no doubt that we are producing young people who can move on to make an important contribution to a whole range of walks of life. So please do not jump on to the pessimists' bandwagon. Give credit where it is due - to our students, to my colleagues and to all those who have done their bit.

The College fares well in other respects. We now have a thousand full-time students here during the day. Of these, 920 or so are aged 16 to 19, while 90 are over 21 - some appreciably so! Most of our daytime mature students are taking a one year ACCESS to Higher Education course and all have non-traditional academic backgrounds - perhaps a further illustration of the way in which previous systems did not necessarily provide as many advancement opportunities as they might have done. We also have a thousand mature part-time students

mainly on evening courses - there's still room on some of those courses if you're interested.

Against all these positives the funding regime in the further education sector of which we are a part is horrendous. Having made "efficiency gains" of 30% in the last three years, a further 30% is expected in the next three year cycle. It is at this stage that the capacity to strip off "surplus fat" disappears and colleges will start ripping out large chunks of healthy flesh. It's then that the think-tank cynics may be able to identify *real* falling standards at a rate which will put us even further behind out international competitors.

Varndean is, nevertheless, in a healthy state, although it is a very different sort of institution from the Grammar School many of you will remember. In size, in the nature of the students and their age range, in the number of courses, in the resourcing, in the way it is managed there have been many changes. I will in my next piece accept the Editor's invitation to reflect on a few of them.

PEN PORTRAIT

Eighteen year old Johanna Williams is one of the seventeen students who gained three A grades or better this summer. She went one further in being awarded the top prize by three exam boards for her Psychology A Level examination, and will receive her award at Oxford in September. What makes Jo even more distinctive is that as well as coping with the challenges of her course she managed to have a baby half way through. Jo's partner, her parents and the College were all supportive and the outcome was happy. After spending a year looking after baby Leon, Jo (and Leon) will be taking up her place to read English at Bristol University. There are all kinds of changes to the College implied in that profile! See my next article for further illumination.

Alan Jenkins. Principal, Varndean College

FAYE'S MILLENNIUM PROJECT

It is always good to see a new member of the OVs coming from Varndean College. Faye Charlotte Nutley took her A-levels at the College (1993-95), having previously attended Newman School, Hove. She was encouraged to join the OVA by her father, Michael (1959-66), whom some of you will remember.

Faye, who comes from Telscombe Cliffs, is going to Exeter University School of Education where she will take a four year B.Ed. degree course in primary Art. After graduating, she would like to start teaching five year olds in the year 2000.

OLD VARNDEANIAN SPORTS REPORTS

OV FOOTBALL CLUB



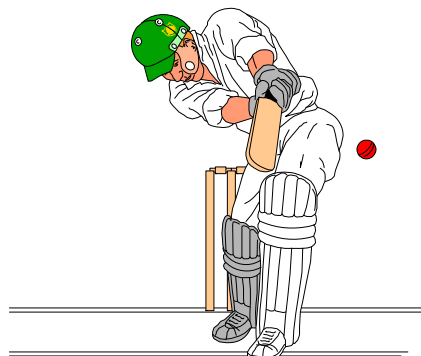
This season we intend to maintain the progress of recent years. Last season both First and Second teams achieved significant successes in Cup and League, yet still leaving a little scope for improvement in 1996/7. The First team were runners-up in the Premier Division of the Brighton League and finalists in the President's Cup. The Second team came third in Division IV, achieving promotion to Division III, and reached the final of the Gentry Bowl. The playing records were:

XI	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 st	18	11	3	4	45	20	36
2 nd	16	10	1	5	66	30	31

This season we want to convert those Cup appearances into victories and improve on our second and third placings in the leagues. Floodlit training is in progress at Portslade Community Centre (8pm). Our ground is Corals Stadium, with an excellent playing surface and very good social facilities. (OVFC members have concessions). If you want to join, please contact me.

Norman Wright, Hon Sec

OV CRICKET CLUB



We have had many close and exciting matches this season, although the balance of results is so far against us: At the time of this report, with three matches still to play, we have won two, lost four and drawn three.

We have again seen excellent form with the bat from Bruce Fryer and John Moore. John made his maiden century for the club, after around 30 years' service, in the first match of the season against Rudgwick. He then capped this by making an unbeaten second century in the match against Brighton Crescent.

The bowling has been consistent, though it has lacked penetration. Only Martin Watts managed to take more than three wickets in a match: Martin took 5-63 against Balcombe and 5-36 against Waldron.

We still play cricket in splendid surroundings, and are on the look out for new players. If you want join us please contact John Moore or myself.

Guy Baigent



GALA DINNER 1997

Four courses, coffee and confection. Order form and menu in the March edition of Old Varndeanian. £20 per head. To be sure of tickets, you can book now by sending your cheque to Derek Ashcroft.

The Brighton Thistle Hotel Friday 25th April 1997 7.15