



Old Varndeanian

IN DEO FIDEMUS

OCTOBER 1998

INTERNET EDITION

You have all heard of the Internet, but some of you haven't the faintest idea what it is. And couldn't care less, did I hear you say? Take a detention! In this edition I am printing some of the many items of electronic mail received via the internet. Don't worry – it won't hurt: think of them as fast telegrams. You remember telegrams, don't you? There is also an article which might just lift the veil of mystery a bit.

OV BIO - ALF COMMONS

We start with a short bio received by email from Alf Commons in Australia. This is intended to be the first of a series about OV's (Oviographies?). Homework after this edition is to prepare your own brief bio and send it to me. As its abbreviated nature suggests, a bio is somewhat shorter than a biography. But it is more frank than a CV. [Ed]

Good Day. I am Alf Commons and attended Varndean from 1940-1943. As the years indicate I was not Varndean's greatest success story. I will not appear in the Famous Old Boys lists, yet I do have a claim to fame as the scholar (used loosely) who did 2½ hours Detention on Saturday morning for messing about on buses. The massive flash at age 10 died to a damp squib by age 14, so I was let loose on the wide world. But before that, I was one of the Few Who Took Part in the Skipton Evacuation.

This took us from Brighton early one morning in a steam train. We travelled straight through to Yorkshire. It was late that night when we were de-trained and bussed to a hospital on Ilkley Moor where we spent our first night away.

The following day we were split into three groups and went to the villages at which we were to be billeted. I went to Gargrave. Another group went to Bolton Abbey.

We were taken to the village hall and I guess some sort of raffle or auction took place to determine which lucky, unsuspecting Yorkshire lady was to get me (years later they were fighting over me!). I finished up at the home of a very kind old widowed lady who took two of us boys. She was Mrs Churchman of Church Street, Gargrave. Of course, the house was opposite the church at which I became a choirboy. I guess I was a bit too much for her because I didn't stay long and was moved to a younger family. They were farmers called Lowther.

The only master I recall was "Pommer" Whiting and him only because he gave me two of the best. We were in the middle of a PT class, so I was in my shorts. F. T. "Hefty" Williams may have been there. (It was Tim Evans who muttered "Good King Wenceslas, my foot" when Hefty played that part in a Christmas concert.)

My other memories of that time are:

A school trip to Malham, the source of the river Aire. It flowed out from the base of a white cliff and was the most delicious water I had ever tasted. I remember that I was suffering from a stomach ache and the water seemed to clear it instantly.

A football match which we were playing on the Gargrave village pitch. A Luftwaffe bomber flew over so low that we could see the rear gunner looking at us. I reckon he had kids of his own, or was hoping for a character reference after the war.

Beating the local kids into the river in March or April, so that we, the redcaps, could hold our heads high. This was known locally as "breaking the ice".

I left Varndean at 14. After working for 3 years, and deeming that it was now safe to do so, (WW2 having finished) I joined the RAF at the age of 17½, initially as a Wireless/Teleprinter/D.F. Operator and later as a Wireless Fitter. I was accepted as an M.S.E.R.T. but have now allowed this membership to lapse.

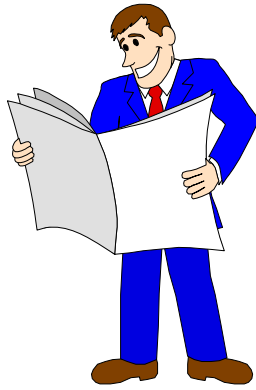
I spent nearly 12 of the next 22 years overseas in Libya, Germany, Cyprus, The Maldives (pre Club Med!), and again Germany. I attained, nay fought for, the rank of Chief Technician. An extra two or three years at Varndean would have made things much easier.

I married in 1949 (Patricia) and we are still getting along together pretty well. (Most of the time). We have a son Andrew who is a very successful (internationally) computer security expert and a daughter Susan who is a Ph.D. Plasma Physicist. Oh! What might have been but for those damn buses!

Continued on page 2



NEWS OF OLD VARNDEANIANS



David Leonard (46-54) of Woodingdean, Brighton, has joined the OVA. He has retired from teaching and is now a part-time gardener and dog-walker.

Keith Stening (54-61) Has joined the Association. Keith is married, with three children, and lives in Bridgwater, Somerset. After leaving Varndean Keith took a B.Sc. in Fuel Technology & Chemical Engineering at Sheffield University. He then worked for

Courtalds, becoming Managing Director of the Polypropylene Film Division at Bridgwater in 1990. This company was sold by Courtalds in 1992, Keith remaining in post as Managing Director. Since then, he has become a main board Director of the new parent company, British Polythene Industries. Keith chairs some trade associations, is a member of the committee which advises The Secretary of State for the Environment on Packaging Waste, and is a Governor of Bridgwater College of Further Education.

The Reverend Eric Woods, who is Vicar of Sherborne with Castleton and Lillington, and Rural Dean of Sherborne, is also to be Non-residentiary Canon of Salisbury Cathedral.

Miriam and Steve Drake (65-72) have moved to Broadwater, Worthing from Lancing.

Gary Rawlinson (66-74) has moved from Turner's Hill to Burbage, near Marlborough, Wiltshire.

» from page 1: **Alf Commons**

In 1969 I took retirement from the RAF and emigrated to Australia. I continued as a radio/electronics technician in various industries until the mid 70s when I took a chance and went into administration (Inventory/Stock control) in the Computer industry. The chance paid off and I enjoyed administrative positions in various industries until my retirement in 1992.

I am on my second Apple Macintosh, a Performa 580CD. It is definitely better than playing around on buses, though I still do that when I'm on trips to country golf courses with the Veteran Golfers.

I try to play golf twice a week and Lawn Bowls three times. It's hard, but somebody has to do it.

I live in Springwood, NSW, one of the villages that constitute the City of the Blue Mountains. The City is

entirely contained within the Blue Mountains National Park, one of Australia's top tourist attractions.

I have only recently joined the OVA and hooked myself up to the net. I look forward to hearing from some of you.

Hey that didn't hurt too much!

Alf Commons



NOVEMBER SOCIAL

Thursday 19th November 1998 7pm at Varndean College

Meet old friends !

Come to a social event. Partners welcome. Less formal than the Annual Dinner, this is an opportunity to have a drink and a chin-wag over a substantial buffet supper. This format proved a great success last year (as reported in the March 1998 newsletter). The short AGM will take place in a separate room.

There will be a brief entertainment provided by college students. A collection of £5 per head will cover the cost of supper and drinks. No need to eat before you come!

If you can come, please tell Derek Ashcroft now.

OLD VARNDEANIAN ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL DINNER

The 1998 Annual Dinner was a great success, as usual. We are indebted to Jack Beavis, who gave an excellent after-dinner talk. We caught up with our Old Varndeanian acquaintances. The raffle raised £117 for the Samaritan Fund.

Next year's Dinner has been scheduled for 23rd April. It was suggested that the seating in 1999 should be around smaller, round tables: these allow a better range of conversation than the larger, square ones. Also, we will revert to having pre-dinner drinks in the foyer.

AGM

Last year's Annual social gathering, held on the same night as the AGM, attracted many members. We are going to have another social event like this on Thursday 19th November at Varndean College at 7pm. Supper will be provided (more than just a sandwich). Ken Brown stars in the picture below, taken at last year's event.



FAMOUS NAMES

The Famous Names competition was held at the Annual Dinner, Roy Daughtree's bottle of classic Australian wine (now well matured!) at last being won. But we have lost the name of the winner. Please step forward!

The answer? People called Thomas Cook, Joe Davis, John Doe, Alan Gunn, Tom Jones, Paul Scofield, Harold Wilson and Orville Wright have attended Varndean. But we have had no William Shakespeare.

SAMARITAN FUND

Ken Brown, Terence Langley and Barrie Jerram have continued to administer the Samaritan Fund. This year it was able to help an Old Varndeanian who was in difficulty. Thanks to donations and the raffle at the Annual Dinner, the value of the fund has been maintained.

DENNIS LEGGETT

After many years on the Old Varndeanian Council, 25 as Hon. Treasurer, Dennis has decided to bow out quietly. He will, however, continue with his deliveries of copies of *Old Varndeanian*.

We are very grateful to Dennis for his support over the years. The Chairman has written to him to express the Association's thanks, and to convey our good wishes to him and to Madeleine.

FINANCES

The Hon. Treasurer reported at the Council meeting in June that our total funds were £7701. This is made up of £7036 in the deposit account, £81 in the current account and £584 in the Samaritan Fund.

OUTSTANDING SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is "outstanding" as in "unpaid", rather than "tremendously impressive"! Except where the addresses are not now known, the Hon. Treasurer has sent reminders to members who have not paid their subscriptions. Where more than one year's subscriptions are outstanding, we will no longer send copies of *Old Varndeanian*.

OLD VARNDEANIAN CONTACTS

President: Derek Ashcroft

Hon Secretary: David Williams

Membership Secretary: Keith Elliott

Hon. Treasurer: Barrie Jerram

Editor: Ron McLaren

Millennium Project: Jim Franks

Football: Norman Wright

Cricket: Guy Baigent

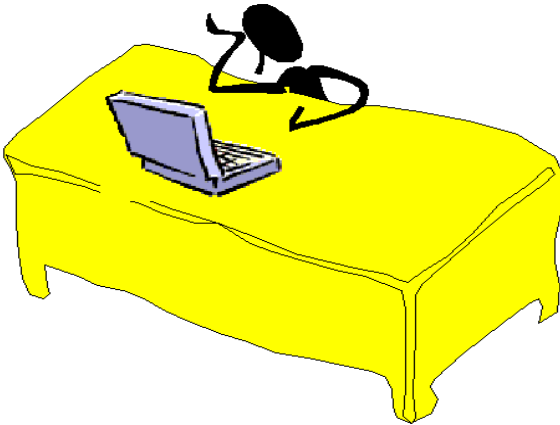
Other Council members:

John Alabone, Ken Brown, Garry Clamp, Paul Crowdy (Vice President), Alan Jenkins (College Principal), Terence Langley (Vice President), John Moore, Tony Newman, Chris Strick

OBITUARIES

Dioon Hills (71-78) So soon after reporting the email received from Dion, we have to report his death in Miami, Florida. Few details are available, but we are saddened by the tragically early age at which he died.

THESE ITEMS WERE SENT BY SUBSCRIBERS



From H.R (Bob) Henly C. Eng. FIEE MBCS...

For some 18 months the OVA has had a presence on the Internet. It comprises several pages of information that are held by my Internet supplier. The address of this web site is:

<http://www.saqnet.co.uk/users/hrhenly/ova1.html>

It disseminates information from the current issue of the newsletter to Old Vardeanians worldwide who may not (yet) be members of the OVA. It advertises the Millennium project and has already brought several responses. It contains snippets and photographs from past copies of the newsletter and the *Dolphin* as pure nostalgia. Submissions for these pages are always welcome.

The cost of Internet access for domestic use is now quite low and if you already have a computer for other purposes the marginal equipment cost is around £50-100. I should be pleased to help (with advice) anyone who wants to tread this path. PS Has anyone a tape of the School Song from which I could extract a few bars of sound for my OVA pages? ¹

The web site also offers an e-mail ² discussion list in which the contributions of a member are automatically disseminated to all on the list. I belong to several such lists connected with my interest in genealogy. My son Clive Henly (71-78) has recently set up a Vardean list for the purpose of bringing OVs together. If you have Internet access then please look at the OVA web pages for details (membership is free!). Or send an e-mail to Clive who will add you to the subscribers list.

Recent joiners include Bernie Haynes (60-65) now in Texas; Roy Daughtree; Chris Spicer (57-64); Karen Taswell (57-64 Vardean Girls); Doc David Yates (60-68) now in NZ and Des Redwood (60-67). Des has the honour of being the first to use my on-line Millennium pro-forma in anger and it worked, almost (but it does now!).

With Karen joining our ranks the number of girls we have almost justifies a "Girls Room" on the web pages. So what about it Girls? If I open one up will you help with material? E.g. memories, photos etc. A final thought. How many of

our ranks (boys and girls) graduated to the Vardeans from Balfour Rd?

From Nick Faulkner...

I was at Vardean from '67 to '73 & I'm just wondering if there's anybody from my year on this list? If so, I'd be interested to hear from you.

From Maxwell Cooter...

Nick, I was at Vardean from 68 to 75 so we nearly overlapped. I can't say that I remember you but your name does sound familiar so perhaps our paths crossed somewhere ... in detention perhaps.

To refer obliquely to Nick's posting: how good are other members of the list at keeping touch in touch with their erstwhile classmates? I regularly meet up with three people from my year and I see a few others around (usually at the Albion). Is this a high number or are other people in touch with a lot more people than that? Maxwell

From Gordon Pickett...

Married in 1975, with 3 children all boys. Eldest is now 16 and doing GCSEs.

Keen interest in all forms of motor sport. Attend gym on a reasonably regular basis in order to combat thickening waistline (losing battle).

Am in contact with Alan Neill (Vardean from 1964 - 1969), and Tim Blake (Vardean from 1969-1971). Would like to make contact with Philip Barnes (Vardean 1964-1971).

Joined SEEBOARD on leaving school as computer operator then programmer for 6 years. Joined local software house becoming Programming Manager. After a further 6 years started own Software House which was moderately successful for 11 years, before joining Infocheck as IT Director. Infocheck has now been taken over by Equifax, and I am now Service Delivery Director for the Business Solutions Group.

¹ Singing pages!

² Email is described briefly on page 7.

TO THE OV's EMAIL DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

From Michael Cook (58-64)...

At Vardean from 1958-1964. Still living in Brighton. I have had various teaching posts, and now work at Bishop Bell School, Eastbourne. Delighted to see you are on the Web. Hopefully this may bring in a few more members who live far away.

From David Freeman...

Copies of 'Old Vardeanian' sent to me may have been going astray, as I am no longer at my previous address, where the occupants may have been "binning" them. (I have only ever received the March 1998 copy since applying for life membership some years ago.) Your advice, please. What's the best way to have my address corrected on the mailing list? Is there anywhere a collection of the magazines that I might browse through, to see what I have missed? Thanks in advance.

It's a great magazine and was a lot of pleasure to read.

From John Pavay...

Just rec'd my OVA and I noticed article by Stan Tully and his reference to Burlington, close proximity to Toronto.

Does he have an e-mail address if not a phone number or snail mail address?

Thanx,

John

From Andrew Dawson (65-72)...

I attended Vardean between 1965 and 1972 and would like to contact as many of my old pals as possible.

From Stephen Owen (64 -71)...

Dear Ron, I have just received my copy of the Old Vardeanian. What a very good read!

May I tender my congratulations to Des Ashcroft on his appointment to the rank of President or, as he would say in his favourite French, Président! Seriously though, I thank him and wish him well but do not envy him this onerous task!

Like many hundreds of Old Vardeanians I am looking forward to the Millennium book and hope to espy many old acquaintances! Where are they all now? Should be fun finding out!

Ron, many thanks for your tireless efforts and those of the other contacts and members. I look forward to the next issue. Best Wishes

From David Swaysland (56-63)...

Member of OVA. Currently living in West Midlands. Took early retirement from job as Assistant Director of Social Services in Dudley last year. Appointed part time Independent Member of the Parole Board of England and Wales in September 1997. Very new to the Internet. Interested in Family History...with a name like Swaysland, mostly from Sussex and Kent it should be easy....but, still working on it. Won't be able to make the Dinner in later this

month [April 1998], sorry. Please give my best wishes to Derek on his "elevation"... does he really look as young as his photo on the March Old Vardeanian?!!"

[Of course. Ed]

From Jane Tarmu (née Noble) in the USA...

I left Vardean Girls when I was 16 so it must have been the summer of 1974. I moved to the US in 1978 so I don't think I can find any old photos. Funnily enough, when I moved here to Park City I met someone who turned out to have gone to Vardean Girls also - the world is small.

Do you have Elizabeth Owen on your mailing list? I'd love to get in touch with her. Is your list on the internet so I can see if anyone I know is there?

From John & Rita Funnell...

G'day, I'm John Funnell and I was at Vardean 1951-58. I've been living in Australia since 1974 - currently in Melbourne but originally in Adelaide. Emigrated with my wife Rita and 3 children - Tracie, Gerard and Philip. They are all married now and have provided 7 grandchildren between them.

Came to Oz as a teacher but moved into educational publishing in 1981. Set up my own educational book-selling business in 1991 and this continues.

Joined the Internet only 2 weeks ago and was amazed to find an OV website. I'm still a bit of a duffer with email - hope this gets through OK. Difficult to write more without knowing who's receiving - this is all very new! Is there anyone out there who remembers me?

Best wishes from Down Under

There are over 60 people on this email list, and another 5 or 6 join each month. Half are from overseas.. Ed

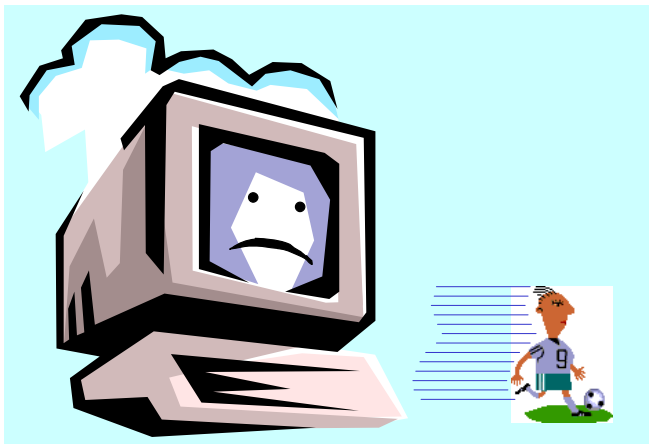


INTERNET? What are you talking about?

When I went into Information Technology (IT) in 1966 nobody knew what a computer was (nor did I). Now, everyone has heard of computers - and the Internet. Two key things underpin the Internet: enormous computing power at low price; and the technology for connecting computers together (networking).

As I write, I'm sitting in the garden using my ICL-Fujitsu computer. About the shape and size of a telephone directory, it weighs 7½ lb, and has a thing called a modem, which lets it talk to other computers when I plug it into the phone socket. It has 3,000,000,000 bytes³ of data storage on magnetic disk, where I keep my files. That is enough to hold sixty thousand average office documents. The short-term memory for data being worked on at this instant holds 64,000,000 bytes. Complete with software and carrying-case, this computer costs about £1,500.

In 1966 that amount of memory and disk storage would have cost £42 million, covered a football pitch and weighed 100 tons. But the processor would still have run a hundred times more slowly than this one.



On the networking side, computers can now be connected so that I can access files on the other side of the world as easily as if they were stored on my own computer. Most large companies have networks connecting hundreds or thousands of computers.

The Internet is an example of worldwide co-operation. Hundreds of thousands of computers are connected on a huge network. Each has an identifier, called an "IP address" (a string of 12 digits). "Internet" refers to this network. Popularly, it is misused to refer to the two main uses (applications) of the Internet - Electronic Mail (email) and the World Wide Web.

Email lets you prepare messages and documents on your computer and send them to people over the Internet. Email software uses shared electronic

directories to convert the recipients' email names into internet addresses. To address Tony Jones, we enter: Tony.Jones@company.co.uk ("Tony Jones, who works for "company", which is a company in the UK") - much more convenient than a string of digits! All large companies use email and have done for some time: I first had an electronic mailbox in 1981, when I was involved in the development of email systems.

More recently, interest in the Internet has boomed as a result of the emergence of the World Wide Web. The web was invented in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee, a Briton. It is based on a clever way of encoding information. The encoding system is called HTML ("Hypertext Mark-Up Language")⁴. Information coded in this way is organised into pages which can be viewed by a Web Browser. That's not a vegetarian spider, but a piece of software that interprets information which has been encoded in HTML.

HTML-encoded pages contains links which are often in the form of pictures or underlined text, like [this](#). The web browser sees what you cannot see - the hidden information behind the link which contains the address of another web page, somewhere in the Internet. Just select the link and the web browser will reach across the Internet, fetch the required page and show it to you. This makes a powerful tool for getting access to up to date information. Here are some of the things you can do with the World Wide Web.

Access an Internet search service and ask it if there is a web site which refers to Varndean. View the Old Varndeanian web site⁵, managed by Bob Henly, to see what is going on. Search among Universities' web sites for translations and commentary on Herodotus. Find a second-hand Golf three-door under £5,000. Search a CD database for "Pavarotti sings The Beatles", order it by entering your credit card number and have it delivered to you a few days later. See the ICI share price. Read The Times on-line. See who's Environmental Officer in your local council. Check the schedule for emptying dustbins. See hotel prices in Spain, tourist attractions in Australia. Buy tickets to Les Misérables. Research your family tree ...

If you want to try this, but don't know where to start, Bob Henly is offering advice. See his email on page 4.

Editor

This article originally quoted a number of email addresses, but they have all been removed before this edition was published on the world wide web.

³A byte is enough storage to hold one character. There are 124 characters in this footnote, including punctuation and spaces.

⁴ Sorry.

⁵ Web Site: a place where there is some information, encoded in HTML as a set of web pages.



EXAM PASSES EXCEED 90%

The college has had excellent A-Level results, breaking the 90% pass rate for the first time – it hit 100% in eighteen subjects! There were also some splendid individual achievements, with 30 students getting two As or better and eight getting three As or better. One – Rhys Bowen – scored **five A** grades!

Advanced GNVQ students exceeded the national average: 33 of the 35 gained merit or distinction.

This is a really splendid achievement by the whole team of staff and students, led by Alan Jenkins. They deserve our congratulations – and a new heating system!

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The whole antiquated heating system is being replaced (not including those windy cloisters presumably). The fascia of the Hutchins Wing extension is being changed to brick, which looks a lot better and lasts longer. A mezzanine storey is being constructed in the Hone Room. This will increase social space for the students. Those who remember the Hone Room as the refectory may be amazed at the thought of a second storey in

there. Imagine a rice pudding down your neck from 20 feet above! The room is now decorated in lemon and blue, there is a new servery, and the beams are being exposed (I hear the kids are much taller these days!).

WRITER IN RESIDENCE

During 1998, the college has had Noel Greig, a professional playwright, working with a group of students to produce a series of original one act plays.

Noel has been an actor, director, playwright and theatre-teacher since 1966. He has written and produced over 50 plays for a range of companies, including the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, the Nottingham Playhouse, the RSC and many others in the UK and overseas.

It is hoped to stage these plays at the College on 21st-23rd October.

This is part of the East Sussex/Brighton & Hove Literature Development Project, part funded by South East Arts. To assist in this project, the Old Varndeanian Association has made a donation to the College of £100.

Editor

MILLENNIUM PROJECT

GOOD PROGRESS

Over 1,000 ProFormas have now been received. The Memorial boards from the Stainer Hall having been photographed, work is going on to track down information about the people whose names are listed there. The First and Second World Wars claimed the lives of 284 Old Varndeanians and one fell in the Korean War.

Our application for a Heritage Fund award has the support of East Sussex Records Office.

HAVE YOU GOT A WHO'S WHO?

If you have one, you might like to check whether any of your Old Varndeanian friends are in there. Jim Franks would like to hear about any you find.

PAM AYRES

Jim has written to Pam Ayres at BBC Pebble Mill, asking for her help in reaching Old Varndeanians. We hope that this will further accelerate the rate at which we are tracking down former pupils.

STAFF

David Williams has gone through the back copies of The Dolphin, which has helped him compile a definitive list of members of staff.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



Send in your form! Haven't got one? Contact ...

Millennium Project
Jim Franks



STAFF v STUDENTS - THIRD LEG



The Staff v. Boys saga continues. Thanks to Adrian Heft (69-76) and his father Ron (43-49), we have a picture of the 1948/49 boys' team. Ron played in that now-famous 1949 match and has been good enough to supply the photo and identify the players.

Ron lives in Lower Bevendean. He says: "the only remarkable thing I can recall is that in those days the 1st XI usually consisted of VI formers, whereas in 1948/49 six of the team were in the Upper V."



Back row, left to right:

Charlie Smith
Ron Heft *
Dave Hazelgrove *
John Scarborough
Eric Ratcliffe
Alan Collison *

Front row:

John Williamson
Ron Packham
Bob Budd (captain)
"Dick" Whittington *
Mick Stacey *

* Upper V

FIFTY UP: OVFC CELEBRATES ITS HALF CENTURY

Fifty years have (well) passed since the OV Football Club was re-formed after the war. Ron Reeve has kindly lent the photo opposite, showing the team which represented the OVVs in their first post-war season - 1946/47.

A dinner will take place at Hove Town Hall on Friday October 23rd. Ladies most welcome. Bar 6.30, dinner 7.30. Each member of the OVA who attends will receive a 12 page booklet of club memorabilia covering the period from 1946 until now. And you might meet Alan Gunn.

Hurry to book with Ron Reeve. The price is £20 per head. The menu is hors d'oeuvres; chicken cordon bleu with Lyonnais potatoes and seasonal vegetables; traditional sherry trifle; cheese & biscuits; coffee & mints. Special diets can be catered for.

If all you want to do is play football, contact Norman Wright, Hon Sec



Who knows when the OVFC was originally founded? Write to the editor.