

## OV SAMPLE

This sample contains selected pages from several editions of *Old Varndeanian*.

*Old Varndeanian* normally has SIXTEEN pages, and is published twice a year in BLACK & WHITE



*Old*

# VARNDEANIAN



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**The Newsletter of the Old Varndeanian Association**

# The Sampler

## Hello

I'm Ron McLaren, Editor of this rag. I was at Vardean from 1954 to 1961.

This sampler contains articles collected from Editions of *Old Vardeanian* published over the last few years. I hope it will give you an idea of what is going on in the OVA, and that you will be encouraged to join.

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Membership costs: Annual £5.00; Life £30.00

## Reporters

We could do with some Reporters. Not that we are taking on paid labour – don't get any funny ideas here. It's just that I would like to accord some status to those who make a contribution to the newsletter. Here's the clever part: you don't actually have to write an article! You can be a reporter if you just persuade someone else to write an article or letter for the rag, I mean mag.

Think about it. Surely some of your pals need something to occupy their minds? Be a reporter – crack the whip. And spend more time in the pub – that's what reporters do.



## Letters

There have been a few more letters in this Edition – just as I was thinking that you had all broken your wrists (or some other transparently pathetic excuse).

Letters are good, and I urge you to send them in, preferably with a picture. We don't mind if you think they are a bit inane. After all, anything that you have

been storing up for half a century or so has bound to have lost some of the sparkle it had when it first happened. But to our other dear readers it will be as fresh as a daisy. Trust me.

Of course, if you have something really gripping, even outrageous, that would be even better. Anything short of actual blackmail, in fact.

## Girls, Girls, Girls

Janet Starling had a get-together with other girls from Vardean Grammar School for Girls at the OV Reunion in Patcham last Spring. They enjoyed the evening, so I urge all girls: get in touch with your friends and encourage them to make contact with the OVA. Visit the web site ([www.oldvardeanians.org.uk](http://www.oldvardeanians.org.uk)), join the Association, come to the next reunion, attend that Annual Dinner (late April 2006), write articles for the newsletter ... the possibilities are infinite.

[An account of the Reunion appears in the October 2005 Edition. ]

## Changes

In the regular October Edition of *Old Vardeanian* the layout has changed, giving a little more space for articles, and doing away with unnecessary headings.

Why change the badge? A better question would be "why have you been using the VGS (Boys) badge all these years instead of the OVA badge?" The answer to that is that the only image I had of the OVA badge was a photocopy of a photocopy of a photograph of a sketch of an image that had been

scratched on the wall of a cave near Harrison's Rocks in Palaeolithic times. The trouble with cave painting, as you know, is that the colours tends to fade after the first million years or so. It's a pity they didn't make the badge out of something more durable.

However, I have now applied myself to the task of producing a computer generated image. It seems to work quite well. Continuing with the boys' badge would have been inappropriate.

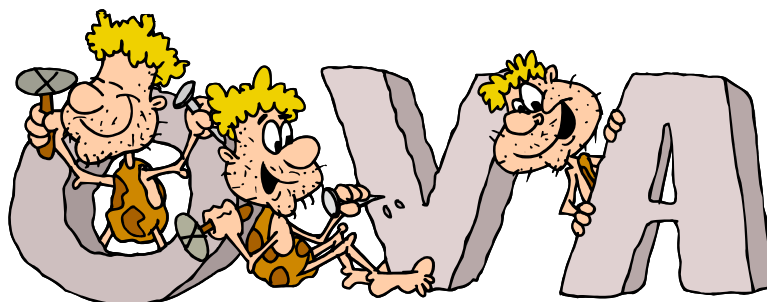
## Contributors

Many thanks to the people who have produced the content for the October 2005 Edition. I have just had a phone call from Jack Beavis, who was using his mobile phone while standing on a beach at the very southern tip of Sri Lanka, looking at the Indian Ocean!

Impressive? He was just trying to make me feel jealous, and he succeeded – my mobile phone doesn't even work in Seaford! Jack has been despatched to those parts to make sure that the right progress is being made with health-related matters after the tsunami. The real work goes on for years after the disaster ceases to be a newspaper story. *Old Vardeanian* will keep that flame burning by featuring Jack's report in the next Edition.

The local fishermen now have a boat called *Dolphin*. I suppose Jack must have built it out of old cricket bats. Watch this space.

**Ron McLaren**



# Roy Daughtree

## Aussie in Pom's clothing



I left Vardean clutching my "A" Levels and my Soccer Referee's Certificate - all were very useful after "Butch", Ted Potter and others. Don't get me wrong, I had - and still have - a huge respect for the staff at The School.

My next step in life was Vardean to Catterick Camp, Yorkshire, where I endured the first six months' National Service. The Royal Corps of Signals never taught me to be a marksman with the .303 rifle but I learned to type, Pitman style. I then had six months at the War Office in London and the remaining twelve months in Gloucester, achieving the exalted rank of lance-corporal!

After "demob" I worked at G.C.H.Q. in Cheltenham for a couple of years - I'm still not allowed to say what I did (Official Secrets Act and all that). The job was very interesting but the pay in the Civil Service was lousy. As my fiancée and I were trying to save up to marry, I returned to Brighton and became a Trainee Manager and, subsequently, a

Relief Manager for a supermarket chain which no longer exists - not my fault!

Sheilah and I married in 1958 and I pottered on for the next six years, during which time our son, Malcolm, and our daughter, Jane-Ann, were born. I then had the bright idea that we should emigrate to Australia.

We arrived in Brisbane on Friday, August 13th 1965. It was the middle of winter, we were in shorts and tee shirts and the people meeting us were in overcoats, gloves and scarves!

I became a supermarket manager and then a representative for a major oil company. We wanted to see more of Australia at someone else's expense. We were sent to Longreach, the birthplace of QANTAS, which is 450 miles west of the Queensland coast, very hot and very dry.

Ultimately, we returned to Brisbane and I started a degree course in accountancy, having gained acceptance with my 21 year old "A" levels in French, Latin and Greek. Eventually, I became Financial Controller for different organisations - one developed CAD computer software and another blew plastic soft-drink bottles for Coca-Cola, amongst other firms.

During this time we became Australian citizens. Don't even mention the Rugby

Union: it's taken you pommies something like 37 years to win a major sporting trophy! How's yer cricket, youse guys? Soccer- England 1, Australia 3 in 2003: that would make your hair Kerl!

In 1996 we came back to England and settled firstly in Upton-upon-Severn and then in Malvern. I gained a job, at 61, as an accountant working for a firm in the weapons industry and retired in 2000.

My major interest over the past ten years has been family history - I am currently chairman of the Malvern Family History Group and have been able to trace my ancestors back to the 5th century - trust me, I used to be an accountant!

I have also been closely associated with the OVA Millennium Project - I have all 14,500 of you on disc (hate the American spelling).

A fairly insignificant life but not too bad from a long line of Ag. Labs.

### Roy Daughtree (1946-53)

Pictures: ↖ Roy at Castle Combe

↓ First XI 1951 (?). Back L-R: Noel Jones, ?, Peter John Leach, ?, Williams, Bobbie Kuhler, Brian Flack, Derek Minter, Ray Smith, Myself, Len Symes.

Front, L-R; Dave Vallins, A.V. Grimstone, R.M. (Lanky) Lyne, Terry Wickham, Brian Hardham.



Old Vardeanian Sample

# Welcome to Varndean

## Mo Brown remembers her first day



Well, no-one actually said "Welcome" to me on my first day at Varndean Grammar School for Girls, as the imposing building on top of the hill was then called.

It was September 1962. For most of my fourteen years I had lived in the Lewisham area, south-east London. That's where all my friends were. I really did not want to move away from them. How would I make new friends? Everyone else would be in their own little cliques and I would be on my own. Full of self-pity I went into the Head teacher's office. Miss Clark was not a person who smiled easily, so I did not feel any better about being there. After my parents had filled in all the necessary forms, she announced that I would be in 4 alpha.

It was about ten past nine by the time all the formalities were done. The secretary took me to the classroom. I was loaded down with coat, bag and PE kit. Everything was crisp and new, also a little on the large size! It was all a dead giveaway. I was definitely the new girl. The secretary told me that she used to be a pupil at the school, and I looked at

her in awe. Fancy coming back to work at her old school!

In the classroom there was one empty desk. All the other girls had arrived in time to pick places a suitable distance from the front, leaving one for me, all on its own, right next to the teacher's desk. I had never sat in such a vulnerable place, and I did not know whether I could cope with the pressure of being constantly under the teacher's nose. The teacher knew I had moved from London and decided that therefore I must be sophisticated [wrong!] so she picked a couple of the most worldly wise girls to look after me for the day.

They did their best but as we ploughed through the day's tasks it became obvious that there would not be lasting friendships there. During the lunch break they took the most sensible action. They introduced me to a couple of girls who they said were "More your type."

This was correct! Rosemary, Jennifer, Pam, and their circle of friends were indeed more my type. By the end of the day I felt a little more confident about my new school, especially as these new friends had performed three kind acts for me.

First of all they introduced me to Valerie, who lived just down the road from our new house in Woodingdean. Now I could stop worrying about which buses I had to catch to get home!

Second, they managed to shuffle back all the desks and chairs in my row, so now I found myself level with the second row, instead of in that dreaded lonely front place.

And third, they rearranged my school beret so that it was clipped right on the back of my head, like everyone else's, instead of sitting on the middle of my head in a rather conspicuous manner!

At least by the second day I would blend in a little better!

**Maureen Brown [née Day]**

Above: Maureen at Black Rock in the dress she loathed, bought for her by her great-aunt. A friend said she should have a photo taken in it, so she would never forget it. She hasn't! Below: Jennifer Brown, Valerie Burwood, Maureen, Rosemary Bishop, Pamela Payne, Beverley Harris in Maureen's garden, Crescent Drive North, Woodingdean, 1964.

☪ ☪ ☪



**Old Varndeanian Sample**

# Gap-Tooth'd West of Alice

By Brian French



In February 1943 I tripped over my toboggan, after a happy day on the Sussex Downs, and knocked a front tooth up into my head. It completely disappeared and my mother took me to the School Clinic in Sussex Street, for treatment. Following an X-ray it was decided to remove the tooth and then replace it, hoping that as the jaw bone grew the tooth would be secured in the correct position. It was a new technique not tried before and I had to attend the Clinic daily until Friday 26 March 1943.

Three days later on the Monday at 11.08 a.m. a Focke-Wulf 190 bombed the Municipal Market and the Clinic, which received a direct hit. The Chief Clerk and three children were killed. In the photograph of the bomb damage that I still have all that remains of the surgery in which I received my treatment is the dentist's chair and a filing cabinet containing my records. Had I been there at my usual time . . .

Fifty years later I was acting as relief for my wife's cousin who supervised on behalf of the Aboriginal Regional Authority based in Alice Springs, a small community in what is probably the most remote spot in Australia.

To get there necessitates flying in a small Cessna from Ayers Rock about 650 kms due west to a rough landing strip at Patjarr north east of Lake Newell (usually a glistening white salt pan).

As recently as thirty years ago some of the desert Aborigines had never seen a white man, having lived until then a Stone Age existence with neither metal nor pottery. They were, and many still are, hunter-gatherers but regrettably they are a dying race and within a few years "do gooders" will have destroyed their culture and traditional way of life.

My job was to maintain a diesel pump, which pumped water from an artesian well into a large tank, run a small provision store, and organise sustenance payments to them on behalf of the Australian Government. A major task was to drive them to remote parts of their traditional hunting grounds where they would remain until the barrels of water they had taken with them were exhausted. Unfortunately their traditional water holes are no longer available in normal weather conditions through depredations by feral camels. Finding them without a map was a problem as after a week my tracks were obliterated

and I had to drive by memory and with the aid of a compass through scrub, sand dunes and vast open spaces lacking landmarks. In order to generate new growth to attract grazing animals the Aborigines burn the spinifex (tough spiky tussocks of grass). As the smoke could be seen from up to 25 km I was able to locate them in places considerable distances from where they had been dropped.

One has to judge these people by their values not one's own, an extremely difficult task for persons used to different standards and customs. They are proud of their traditional history and highly protective of their sacred sites and initiation secrets. A result of this is that they make good money by telling anthropologists "fairy" stories that in due course appear in academic books. I was determined not to ask questions but to be my usual eccentric self as the only person in Australia driving around remote areas of the Gibson Desert in a "ute" with a dingo (wild dog) in the back.

After spending time with them in their isolated tribal hunting areas they started to show me things and would talk of deceased members of their families, which was something I had read was contrary to their spirituality. They showed me family caves, ancient water holes and other cultural artefacts. Naturally I was flattered but rather taken aback by what appeared to be actions contrary to established custom.

Long after returning to the civilised (?) part of Oz I remembered that in their initiation ceremonies a front tooth is knocked out. Could it be that they had accepted me as one of them!

**Brian French © BAF 2000**

*[Brian might have had a difficult time explaining to them some of our rites of passage, as for example the use of a Focke-Wulf 190 aircraft to eliminate front teeth. Ed]*

**Old Varndeanian Sample**

# Corporal W.P. Trustram

Letter to Charles Tilley, 14 Rugby Road, Brighton



The letter and photo were provided by H.F. Cooke, who has moved to Wokingham, Berkshire. The letter was written in 1917 on the notepaper of the YMCA, with the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces. The photo is of a cricket team in 1915, including A (Arthur?) Tilley, presumably related to Charles Tilley.

am sure that "the smell is better than the bite".

Although more than three thousand miles from the old school I found in this camp no less than five of my old boys who at various times had been in my form at school, while about six months ago I went to another camp not far from here and saw nine others of the old boys, among them being the two brothers Tate, Peter & Harry. They were surprised to see me.

Fortunately we have a very good supply of water just where we are & every morning for the last six months at 6 am I have had an open air shower bath. It has been getting a bit fresh just lately. I have also had a swim in the blue Mediterranean Sea.

We don't get much variety in our food and for tea we always get bread and jam except on Sundays – when they don't forget – and then we have the added luxury of butter.

We have a good football team & they actually wanted me to play but I promised to referee instead. So you still play, in what position? Goal or out in the field? I wonder what you would think of our football pitch – as hard as the road, and not a blade of grass to be seen – very much like the Level at Brighton.

When up the line a short while ago I saw many acres of cotton growing. I have visited banana plantations and all round our camp are date palms, the fruit of which is now ripe. Tomatoes grow in the fields, while from this district large quantities of eggs & onions are exported to England. Maize or Indian corn grows to a height of six or eight feet.

I have had quite a lot to do with the Arabs and Sudanese. The majority of these people have never been to school & can neither read nor write. They wear the scantiest of clothing and rarely have anything on their feet. One of the Arabs

My Dear Tilley,

Many thanks for your letter dated October 23<sup>rd</sup> that I received by yesterday's mail.

So you have not forgotten me; I often think of the old days at school and compare my work of those times with my surroundings of today & wish that I were once more back among the boys, books, marks & games.

Mrs Trustram, in her last letter, mentioned that you had called for my address. I wondered whether I should someday be hearing from you, but I never expected that it would come along so soon after I had mentioned it.

I was pleased to hear all about your work at Allen West. You are doing the right thing, too, by continuing your studies in the evening at the Technical College. Learn all you can, for it will stand you in good stead in your later life: I can quite understand that it makes a long day for you, but you are young and full of energy; with a good home & good food it will do you no harm, so put your back into it; make a good show. Work like a TROJAN.

Perhaps a little news from this part of the world may interest you. It is now ten

months since I landed. So far I have enjoyed good health. The great heat in the middle of the summer I found rather distressing. The average daily noon temperature for the month of August was 101°, September 104°, October 101°. The highest I have seen registered was 117°. Of course, we are clothed very different from what you are in England.

Throughout the day our apparel consists of helmet – this must always be worn, if seen without a man is liable to punishment – a shortsleeved thin undervest, khaki drill knickers, puttees and boots. Even then one perspires freely. We sleep in large tents, there are twenty four men in ours. We are supplied with two blankets and ground-sheet. There are plenty of livestock about – flies in millions, mosquitoes at night are very troublesome & fleas & other brutes are found in abundance. Unfortunately they all seem to have taken an especial liking for me much to my disgust I can assure you.

In order to keep these visitors under, every two or three days I sprinkle my blankets with a mixture of cresol, turps & paraffin & when I turn in at night it is very much like getting into an oil barrel but I

**Old Vardeanian Sample**

# Brighton Tigers Burning Bright

**Jack Waller relives the joys of a youth misspent at SS Brighton**

cut his foot rather badly the other day & I bound it up. On questioning him I learned that he had a wife & six children and his wages were six piastres a day. This is equal to 1/3d, as a piastre is 2½d. Fancy having to feed, clothe & find rent for 8 persons on 1/3d a day!! Some of the places in which these people live are nothing short of hovels where an Englishman would be ashamed to put his pigs. No furniture – they all squat on the floor – no knife & fork – they use their fingers – no windows, there is a hole in the wall for ventilation & no beds for they sleep in their clothes.

Many of the children are not washed from one week's end to another. I have often heard the phrase – "as dirty as an Arab" but never fully realised what it meant till I came to Egypt. Now I have seen all that there is to be seen & what I want now is to see the end of the war and return once more to dear old Brighton.

Any of the old boys whom you may run across, please give them my kind regards. I was surprised to meet out here a man who used to be in the employ of Brighton Corporation Tramways Department and can remember quite well driving us up to the Playing Field from York Place when we went up for games.

Please give my kind regards to your mother whom I hope is quite well.

For you I wish the best of good health and success in your work. I trust you will enjoy yourself as well as possible, under the circumstances, in the coming Xmas.

Trusting that the New Year will bring with it peace & enable me once more to return home.

I remain, Yours very sincerely

W.P.Trustram (Cpl) 013346

20-11-1917  
38 (S) Coy A.O.C, Tent 25  
Base-Alexandria, Egypt



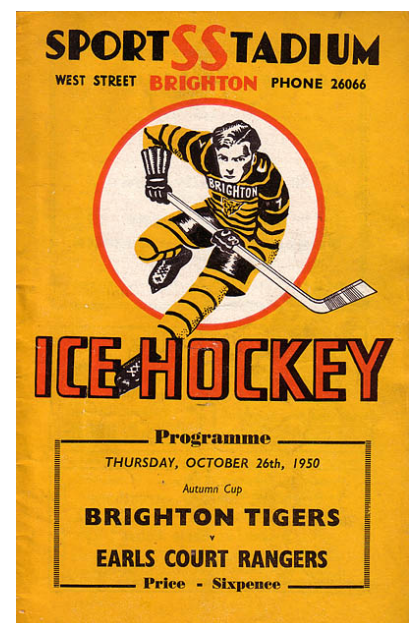
When I first met Jim Franks it could never be thought that this calm, cultured, slight, reflective man had ever put on skates in the 'forties as part of a local ice hockey team, to take on many in the opposing sides who were rock-hard Canadians.

As General Montgomery said of the Canadian soldiers – many of whom were billeted in Brighton and district during the 2WW and for many it was their last dwelling place – "fine infantry, and they fight like hockey players". Jim writes that he was "...an SS Brighton junkie/groupie during the war when the Canadians dominated it Wearing my hockey boots I practised with Hammond and the Sussex Juniors and bounced off more outside and well-padded Canadians than we had hot dinners at that time. Great fun if bruising."

The topic of the Tigers, and the sports stadium – swimming pool-ice rink at the bottom of West Street recently caused a flurry of e-mails to the Varndean-List. (The V-List accepts postings on Town and School nostalgia.) Saturday morning found many temporarily homeless Varndeanians from both schools lined up outside the SS Brighton. John Pavey has early memories of skating there during the war including the torture involved in wearing the rink's skates-for-hire. He wrote that the Brighton Tigers – and the associated British ice hockey league –

were formed in the 'twenties. David Swaysland, quoted from an article by Howard Bass in the Encyclopedia of Sport published by Sampson, Low in 1959, "...it does not refer to young Franks I'm afraid. It lists the Tigers post-war stalwarts as Gib Hutchison, Bobby Lee, Les Anning, Fred Denny and Red Kurz."

The editor will give me six of Hutchins' best if I go on, so I'll leave much unsaid as for example about memories of the ice shows staged there. An OV, who should never have passed the eleven-plus exam, wrote that he thought the "SS" stood for "Steamship". Other contributors to the topic were Messrs. Brooke, Commons, Evans, Foster, Hoskins, and Jeater Brothers. I'll end with David's Swaysland's melancholy postscript "... somewhere in my old B&W photo collection I have a sad photo of the demolition of the building, taken from West Street. The east wall is missing, and you can just make out the words 'SS Brighton' on the remaining west wall. Progress they call it!"



**Old Varndeanian Sample**

## Speech Day 1949



Hello Ron,

I enclose a photo of us 'girls' collecting our school certs at Speech Day 1949. I am on the front row 5th from right or left. I wish I could remember everyone's names but I do remember some from my class because our class mistress pointed out one day, that the register read "(Irene) **Martin**, (Eileen) **Northeast**, (Betty) **Over**, (Zena) **Paris**" in that order. The next name was **Paterson**!

The smaller photo is of the 'Y' class, about 1948. I am in the middle row, 5th from right as you look at it. The girls in the front row are Julie, June Web (Webby), June Hargreaves, and Lizzie.

Unfortunately I shall not be able to join you once again for the re-union dinner as I am again on stage. We are doing 'Hello Dolly' that week. I would love to hear from any of my 'Y' classmates.

Sincerely,

Eileen Franchi (née Northeast)



### The Rev Canon Robert F S Eke

Dear Ron,

Having received your latest number, I am encouraged to send a personal update. I retired back to Brighton in 1989. Jean, my wife, and I attended the Annual Dinner that year. Unfortunately I suffered a left-handed stroke early the next year, and this left me wheel chair bound, so my activities are somewhat restricted. But wonderful Jean, who is considerably younger than I, and who looked after me entirely by herself for many years, but now fortunately has help on a regular basis, takes me in the car to Church, Theatre, shopping, and much else.

I was ordained Priest in Carlisle Cathedral, on December 21st. 1941, so I shall be celebrating my Diamond Jubilee later this year. I should like to record a big debt of gratitude to Vardean, for it was from there that I won a scholarship to King's College in 1926. EJH gave me the greatest possible encouragement, and he quite often got together with Father Allen, the then Vicar of the Good Shepherd, Dyke Road, to discuss my future. Incidentally, I knew I had a vocation even when I was at primary school. I wrote an essay to this effect. I have never regretted it, nor wished I had been doing anything else. I put this in writing, hoping it may encourage any other present pupils at Vardean, which

has, I know, produced several other clergy over the years.

Just one reminiscence – I had the privilege of seeing the great Paul Scofield as Juliet in the School production in the early 1920s.

With very best wishes to yourself, the School, and the Association.

Yours ever,

Robert Eke

### Varndean memories... the first day.

Hello Ron

Recently Clive Henly contacted me through the OVA website after I registered the fact that I had visited it. As a consequence he invited me to become a member, and "my cheque is in the post" as they say. I informed him of my intention to join, and his email in reply encourages me to write to you, as you are collecting contributions to the magazine, and the ladies seem to be reluctant writers. Is this because our own association folded I wonder?

Anyway it's allegedly hard to shut me up – any excuse to write some chatter – so I hope the following brief article is acceptable for the magazine. I will be able to contribute further memories in future, if you wish.

Maureen Brown [nee Day]

<Mojoybro@aol.com>

*Thank you, Maureen. The article is on page 7. The first of many from various alumni of "the top of the hill", we hope.*



**Old Varndeanian Sample**