



THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

**A HISTORY OF
THE OLD FULLERIANS' ASSOCIATION
1894 - 1994**

by

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Dedicated in affection and gratitude
to the memory of the late Geof Paddison

CONTENTS

Preface.....	2
Part 1 - The Beginning.....	4
Part 2 - The Early Years.....	18
Part 3 - Taking Shape.....	26
Part 4 - The Middle Years.....	35
Part 5 - The Second World War.....	54
Part 6 - Ventures New.....	59
Part 7 - Achievement and Criticism.....	69
Part 8 - To the Present Day.....	89

PREFACE

In writing this account of the history of the Association I must express my grateful thanks to my colleagues on the General Committee for their encouragement and support, in particular to Peter Holden, who accomplished the Herculean task of transferring the entire text to his word-processor, and John Cook, who went to a great deal of trouble to see the original printed version through the press.

Our then President, Neil Hart, was to have been the author, and as a professional historian he would undoubtedly have made a much better job of it than I have managed to do in the somewhat limited time at my disposal, but on assuming the responsibilities of headship in the summer of 1993 he had perforce and with reluctance to relinquish his commitment, whereupon it devolved upon me **faute de mieux**.

Though I shall do so later, I must also acknowledge here the extensive research and preparatory work for this project undertaken by the late Geof Paddison, whom I was privileged to know as a friend and colleague on the General Committee for fifteen years. He it was who assiduously compiled several scrapbooks of extracts from the Association's minute books, the **Fullerian** and elsewhere, all carefully photocopied, cut out and arranged in chronological order. These scrapbooks remain an indispensable supplement to the archival material on which they drew and will always bear witness to his interest in, love of and devotion to the Association. It is therefore my pleasure to dedicate this account to his memory.

There are of course many gaps and imperfections. The last two decades have been much truncated for reasons given in the text. There are and have been many devoted and indefatigable workers in the Association's cause, both on the General Committee and in connexion with its affiliated clubs, as well as many members of the school staff, who have not been mentioned, while others are named several times. I hope that nobody will take offence on account of any omission and, on behalf of the Association, I thank them all.

I am grateful to the General Committee for agreeing to the initial expense of printing and publishing. (Another reason for my highly abbreviated account of the last two decades is the fact that I soon realized that I was going to exceed by far the original word count mooted of between five and ten thousand words!) It has been of much interest to me to renew acquaintance with records of events, achievements and controversies long ago or of more recent times. I do not pretend that this account is anything of a literary masterpiece; it is deliberately for the most part a linking narrative, with the substance of the text to be found in the extracts quoted verbatim from minutes, newspaper reports and so on, as I believe that the flavour of the times comes through thus in a way that could not possibly have been achieved had I merely paraphrased what had been written. On the whole I have retained inconsistencies of spelling and punctuation, with apostrophes coming and going **ad lib.** and Social Conveners vying with Social Convenors for dominance by way of example.

Any errors and omissions are entirely my responsibility. With all the above qualifications, I hope that you, the reader, find enough of interest within to make reading this account worth your while.

Peter Waters

PART 1 - THE BEGINNING

Those wishing to trace the history of the Watford Grammar Schools in detail from their foundation by Dame Elizabeth Fuller as a Charity (Free) School in 1704 are referred to the 250th anniversary history by W. G. Hughes and M. Sweeney published in 1954. We read how it became clear in the 1860s and 1870s that the income from the original endowments was failing to meet the expenditure involved both in keeping the building in good repair and in meeting the latest educational requirements. This led to the approval in August 1881 of a scheme whereby the funds of the Free School and some from Richard Platt's charity at Aldenham were pooled to pave the way for the establishment of the Watford Endowed Schools which were finally opened in Derby Road in April 1884 by the Earl of Clarendon. A measure of continuity was achieved by the existing Trustees of the old Free School becoming the first "*Co-optative Governors*" of its successors.

In April 1894, Mr W. R. ('Billy') Carter who had started as the first Head Master of the Watford Boys' Endowed School ten years earlier, wrote to all old boys of the school. He began by telling them that the Sports Day the previous year had proved so successful that it was intended to repeat the experiment the following month, a week before a "*Past v. Present Cricket Match*" at the West Herts ground, both of which they were invited to take part in. He also wrote "*Several old boys have expressed a wish to see a society started amongst Old Boys of the school for the study of Natural History. In my opinion such a society would be very interesting and useful ... Accordingly a preliminary meeting to consider the matter will be held at the school on the evening of May 9th, at 8 o'clock, which I hope you will be able to attend. If any combination amongst Old Boys for other purposes than that which I have mentioned is deemed desirable, the same meeting will be a very favourable opportunity for considering it.*"

At that meeting were present Mr Carter, two assistant masters (Messrs J. W. Eason and W. E. Gardner) and nine old boys (Messrs H. J. Dow, F. M. Goadby, F. P. Hamilton, H. S. Hamilton, N. Heaton, E. H. Jackson, W. Myers, W. H. Robertson, and S. H. Spencer). We read in the record of the proceedings that "*The idea of an Old Boys' Natural History Society did not receive much support*" but that "*there was a very general desire [according to Mr H. S. Hamilton] to see some sort of Union between Old Endowed School Boys and accordingly he proposed that there be formed a 'Watford Endowed School Old Boys' Association'. Mr Noel Heaton seconded this and it was unanimously agreed to.*" Mr Eason, who recorded the proceedings, was elected the Secretary "*pro tem.*" of the committee "*then appointed for the purpose of considering in what special directions the Association could be developed*", which consisted of the three members of staff and eleven old boys (Messrs H. J. Dow, F. Downer jun., F. M. Goadby, H. S. Hamilton, N. Heaton, A. H Horton, J. E. Myers, W. H. Robertson, S. H. Spencer, H. W. Stone and H. G. Wardale, the absentees at the time presumably having registered their willingness to serve beforehand).

It will be noted at the outset that the Association was intended to cater for old boys of the Endowed School only. Although there must have been hundreds of old boys of the Free School still in the neighbourhood, there was no apparent sense of continuity of foundation in the minds of those responsible for establishing the Association, and the opportunity to bridge the gap was not taken.

The newly formed committee wasted no time and the "*First Meeting of the General Committee*" was held at the schools on Friday 18th May. Again Mr Carter took the chair and Mr Eason the minutes, recorded in what became the first of a series of books bound in stiff dark olive-green and embossed with the crests of the school and the title of the Association. The first book covers the period May 1894 to January 1903.

At this meeting it was agreed that the Association "*be formally started by an inaugural dinner*", and the first in a long line of sub-committees was appointed to make the necessary arrangements. Mr Gardener suggested the formation of a gymnastic club, "*but it was generally thought it would be advisable to defer its consideration for the present*". Mr Heaton "*thought a debating society very necessary*" and "*the idea of forming a dramatic society was warmly taken up, but the chief topic of conversation was the formation of an Old Boys' Football Club. It was considered quite possible for the club to be formed without injuring the West Herts Club and Ground ... [and] it was agreed to make exhaustive enquiries about the following possibly available spots at once: Mr Tebb's Field, Callow Land, Mr Dyson's Field, Mrs Bishop's Field, Mr Horton's Field, Mr Harford's Meadow, The Old Gravel Pits in Vicarage Road.*" A week later on Friday 25th May, the general committee held its second meeting with Mr Gardner in the chair "*in the unavoidable absence of the Head Master*", and while Mr Dyson's Field was reported to be "*too far away*" and Mrs Bishop's "*could not be secured*", Mr Horton "*was able to confirm that his father would be glad to let the Old Boys have his field - at any rate for the next football season.*" This was just as well, for "*no definite information was forthcoming about the other fields*".

As a result, after considering "*the object of securing if possible, a permanent sports ground*", it was proposed "*that a football club be formed in connection with the Watford Endowed Schools Old Boys Association*" which was "*unanimously and enthusiastically carried.*" Mr Myers having been appointed secretary (again "*pro tem.*") of the Association Football Club, it was agreed "*that a Football Club sub-committee be formed pro tem. to assist the Secy. in regard to all football matters.*" Mr Myers was being kept busy; he then "*reported what had been done by the dinner sub-committee and then read the following letter relative thereto.*" This letter, a copy of which is preserved in the minute book and is dated May 28th 1894 in anticipation of its approval by the General Committee for dissemination, reviews the meetings already held that month to establish the Association and states that "*there appears to be no doubt that in the autumn of this year the Association will be formed, and that some branches of it will begin active work during the winter of 1894-5.*"

Meanwhile it has been decided to hold a supper to commemorate the first ten years of the School's existence, and also to enable the committee to discover to what extent it may rely on the co-operation of the Old Boys of the School. We therefore invite you to attend the supper, which will be held at the Rose and Crown Hotel, on Friday June 8th at 8 o'clock (morning dress). Tickets are 4s. each ... ". It was agreed "that the letter be printed and forwarded to all ex-boys [sic]". Mr Eason concluded the meeting by reading a letter "from Mr Isgate an Old Boy who warmly welcomed the Association and wished it great success."

The evening before the supper, the general committee met again to consider the final arrangements for the supper, and the progress in the formation of a football club. A letter was read from Mr H. A. Hutchings "*suggesting the name of 'Old Fullerians' for the Association Football Club*" and another from Mr H. M. Turner "*offering the gravel pits to the club on the following conditions: (a) The club to level such land as might be required but not to interfere with the Union boys' ground, (b) The yearly rent for the first year to be nil, (c) After the first year the land to be held on a yearly tenancy at such a rental as the Board of Guardians should decide.*" Mr Myers then reported "*that he had written to the Apsley, Colne Valley, Church Institute, Rickmansworth, Stanmore, St Albans (Second XI), St George's School (Harpenden), Aldenham School (without masters), Berkhamsted [sic] School, University Hospital [sic] and King's College Hospital Football Clubs to try to arrange matches with them.*" Finally "*the arrangements for the inaugural supper were discussed and the toast list and musical programme settled.*"

The inaugural supper took place the next day, Friday 8th June, and a copy of the report in the local press in the minute book is headed by Mr Myers' inscription "*The Inaugural Supper of the Watford Endowed School Old Boys' Association*" (he remembered the apostrophe that time!) and his comment "*The following excellent account of the above appeared in the **Watford Observer** of June 15th 1894:."*

The account itself rehearses the proceedings in quite unbelievable detail to those of us accustomed to the more cursory reports of present-day Annual Dinners, with extensive verbatim extracts from some of the speeches, as well as reported speech. *"At the Rose and Crown Hotel on Friday evening the 8th inst., about 50 old boys of the Watford Endowed Schools sat down to a supper, thus forming the inaugural meeting of an association of old boys who will in future be banded together for the purpose of recreation and social and intellectual enjoyment."* Mr Carter, *"supported by the Vicar, the Rev. R Lee James [who said grace]"*, took the chair; several governors and masters were present and no less than thirty old boys listed individually, in addition to the less deserving *"others"*. The Chairman, after reading out letters of regret for absence, *"then proposed a toast of the Queen, which was loyally received, and a verse of the National Anthem sung."* The first speech fell to the Vicar, who began with a sentiment seemingly all too often forgotten by those who have spoken at Association dinners since: *"We have had warning that our speeches must be short, and therefore we must try and compress them within the narrowest limits if we are to have any harmony afterwards. A great deal of harmony has prevailed already, and I trust that it may not be broken."* He went on, *"The toast that has been committed to my charge is the School. (Cheers and cries of 'Good Old School.')*". Such interpolations as *"(Cheers)"*, *"(Laughter)"* and *"(Hear, hear)"* were common in these and other reports of the time!

To give more than the briefest flavour of this report is impossible in the space allowed, but the Vicar was warm in his praise of Mr Carter, expressing himself *"exceedingly proud of ... the Endowed School [which] has always maintained such a thoroughly high tone of morality [and] has distinguished itself in more ways than one ... I must sincerely congratulate Mr Carter on the ten years that have passed, for under his able management, everything has been done that the Governors could have wished to be done. (A voice, "And more". Cheers.)."*

In looking to the future, the Vicar set forth principles still holding good a hundred years later as well as perceiving inevitable developments: "*I hope and trust that this will be the beginning of a great success and that you will each feel as you leave the school that your existence with the school has by no means terminated. (Cheers.) There are several things which might bind you to the school. The periodical magazine [founded in 1892 and the ancestor of the Fullerian] is most deserving of your hearty support, and I am glad to see that the old boys have sent back, and will probably continue to send back, things from the outer world to the great benefit of those in the school ... There are many things connected with the school the recollection of which will be revived when you meet around the social board, and the songs you sing will be remembered as being connected with the school and the toasts that have been drunk, and you will feel an inevitable interest in this growing institution, for it must grow; the population of Watford is growing to such an extent that the Endowed Schools will have to be enlarged (cheers), and you will have many of the happiest recollections in your old age when you come back to Watford and look in the schoolroom where you passed some of the most important months and years of your life, and you will also see around that room, no doubt, portraits of those who have guided you in the way of life. (Cheers)."*

Speeches on Association occasions have always included an element of humour and entertainment as well as more sober recollection and edification, and in proposing prosperity to the School, the Vicar wished to remind his audience "*as old boys that you will be very hard run by the old girls (Cheers and loud laughter.) not run after. (renewed laughter.) Some wicked person has put in that word 'after'. (Continued laughter.) I meant in the race of life.*"

The Chairman in reviewing the ten years of his headship and singling out several of those presenting affectionate memory of their schooldays, such as "*Fred Downer, with his legs dangling down from the form, and his brother Harold*", expressed his indebtedness to his staff as well as his appreciation of the boys in his care. "*There can never possibly be a time when Watford will be without its secondary school*", he said. "*The school does not consist of the boys and masters*

there; it consists of all who have been connected with it; they are one body ... I welcome this meeting, not only on account of its pleasurable nature in itself, but because it is, I believe, the forerunner of a very long series of pleasurable meetings, when we shall be happy together, and call up recollections of the past, and enjoy ourselves at least once a year. (Cheers)."

Dr Brett, one of the Governors, recounted that the School began with 67 boys; *"we now have more than twice that number, and there are already 320 ex-boys. Families come to reside at Watford because of the educational advantages. I do not mention these facts in a boasting spirit, but to show that there is room for an ex-boys' club, that you have numbers, and much to be proud of in your school. It is the largest and I think the best endowed school in the county. I wish you all success, and may most of you live to see the jubilee fifty years hence, to be held in the future Watford municipal buildings in Corporation-square. (Cheers)."*

Other speakers included Mr H. S. Hamilton, Dr Berry and Mr Gardner, *"the oldest master present"*, who all echoed the sentiments already expressed. A feature of the evening was that the speeches were interspersed with solo songs such as *"Simon the Cellarer"* (sung by Mr Gardner) and *"Tommy Atkins"* (sung by Mr Herbert Dow) and even a mandolin solo. Mr Myers reported on progress in the formation of the football club, *"which was a very important thing for a school of the standing of the Watford Endowed School to have attached to it, and he thought it would be a very flourishing club. (Cheers)."* *"Mr Farrington Graves,"* we are told, *"with his accustomed ability, presided at the piano, and the proceedings concluded with singing 'Auld Lang Syne'."*

A fortnight later, on Friday 22nd June, a General Meeting of the Association was held at the Schools *"and there was a very fair attendance"*. This was for the purpose of deciding the *"rules for the management of the Association"* and those unanimously agreed were set out in a *"List of Officers, Set of Rules & Programme"* issued to all old boys in July, a copy of which, reproduced below complete with

subsequent manuscript alterations to some of the rules, is preserved in the minute book. It will be seen that the Association is described as having been inaugurated on the **15th** June 1894, but as there is no record of any business between the inaugural supper on the 8th June and the General Meeting on the 22nd June, one can only suppose this to be an unintentional slip resulting from the prominence given in the minute book to the report of the supper having appeared in the **Watford Observer** of the 15th June.

The rules, 15 in number, are the ancestors of those double that number (including subdivisions) printed in the current Association calendar, and some have changed relatively little over the years. One may regret that the Objects of the Association (then the third rule, now the fifth) have lost a certain informality in changing from the original "*To keep up a friendly intercourse among the Old Boys and Masters of the School*" to the present wording. The composition of the General Committee provides for a slightly larger group than in practice currently obtains; "*two (or more) Vice Presidents,*" were allowed for separately, whereas none is now a member solely in that capacity, and two Secretaries "*(one an Old Boy and one a Master)*" instead of the present one. The only other officer specified, however, was a Treasurer, and there were as yet no representatives of affiliated clubs as such. The quorum was only five whereas now it is seven, and the annual subscription was set at two shillings and sixpence, with one guinea securing life membership. The annual subscription was doubled with effect from April 1993 to ten pounds, or eighty times the original rate, but I hope that members still feel that they receive good value for money! (Whether they would join now for life at an equivalently increased subscription of £84 is another matter, but this option was abolished as uneconomic in 1979 when the rate stood at twenty guineas. The Secretary is now one of a slowly diminishing band who numbered just under 180 at the last count!)

With regard to the election of members, I cannot remember any unsuccessful application in my twenty years to date on the Committee, but the original rule will be seen to contain the sinister proviso, long since abolished, in the event of a ballot, "*one black ball in five to*

exclude". It would be interesting to speculate just how dastardly or notorious a candidate would have to be nowadays to be refused membership.

One office omitted from the original rules was that of Chairman. This is because for the first 18 years of the Association's existence the President took the Chair at meetings of the General Committee and Annual General Meetings, while the social gatherings throughout the year for the purpose of entertainment or debate and open to all members were presided over by "*Chairmen of Meetings*" on a fairly **ad hoc** basis without specified length of service. The programme for 1894-95, agreed at a meeting of the General Committee on the 6th July "*for the coming winter season*", opened with a debate on Thursday 20th September 1894 at the Schools at 8 p.m. on the theme of "*The Good Old Times*", proposed by the President, versus "*The Present Day*", proposed by Mr Myers. Dr Brett, one of the first four Vice-Presidents as well as a Governor, took the chair "*and commenced the proceedings* [written up by Mr Eason, now acting as one of the two Secretaries, the other being Mr Hamilton] *by a characteristic speech in which he advised the budding debaters not to indulge in bitter sarcasm or personalities but mix freedom of speech with kindness of expression*", a tolerance not over-evident in the spheres of either central or local government! The arguments on both sides were set out, with Mr W. E. Dangerfield and Mr Gardner supporting the President, and Messrs Hamilton, F. Downer and Eason favouring the cause of Mr Myers. The vote resulted in 22 being for "*The Present Day*" and 10 for "*The Good Old Times*".

At the following Committee meeting on the 15th November, Mr Myers was voted to the Chair in the absence of the Head Master. The remainder of the business was summarised as follows: "*Mr H. S. Hamilton brought forward the subject of the attendance of representatives of the Press at the Association's meetings and it was unanimously agreed to admit reporters should any wish to come. E. J. Slinn Esq., the Association's Treasurer was present, and afterwards transacted some financial business with the committee.*" That was all - a far cry from the rather lengthier minutes perpetrated by

the present Secretary. Edward Slinn, who was to become Chairman of the Governors, held the Treasurership (as a somewhat absentee incumbent where Committee meetings were concerned) for a record 36 years until his death at the age of 91 in 1930, although in later years his tenure was almost purely nominal, an Assistant Treasurer fulfilling his duties in practice.

In between, on the 18th October, an Ordinary Meeting chaired by the President had been held, in which seven speakers had entertained with talks on "*Holiday Haunts*" and "*Yarns*". The subjects (and speakers) were "*A trip on a steam carrying trawler [sic]*" (Mr Gardner), "*Life in a Volunteer Camp*" (Mr Downer), "*Reminiscences of the Jura Mountains*" (Mr W. Sutton), "*Lowestoft and its lighthouses*" (Mr E. H. Jackson), "*A Yarn on an Endowed School Incident*" (Mr Hamilton), "*A top-hat adventure at Leeds*" (Mr Dangerfield) and "*Scenes among Norwegian Fiords*" (the President). "*There was only a moderate attendance*", Mr Eason recorded, "*but a highly instructive and pleasant evening was spent.*"

The proceedings of further meetings were recorded in the same way. Dr Arthur Stradling's lecture on the 15th November (all these evenings being Thursdays, by the way) followed the Committee meeting alluded to above, and no doubt accounted for the brevity of its minutes. "*Friends were invited to be present at this meeting and a large audience confronted the doctor on his rising to deliver his address. The subject was not announced beforehand but it proved to be "Seals and Whales: their history, habits and uses". The doctor spoke for about an hour and a quarter without a single note, yet his lecture abounded in dates, figures and dimensions, was embellished by reference to personal experiences and remarkable zoological events, and was rendered exceedingly interesting by the showers of brilliants [sic!] so deftly interwoven with the scientific lore.*" It sounds as if Dr Stradling well deserved his "*very cordial vote of thanks ... carried with acclaim.*"

In the following debate on the 13th December, "*Strikes, are they justifiable?*" Mr Hamilton took "*the positive side*" and Mr Goadby the "*negative*". Mr Goadby denounced strikes for "*their barbarity, uselessness and social immorality*" and rehearsed the "*advantages of permanent boards of Conciliation and Arbitration*". Mr Eason aimed at compromise with a motion that "*strikes are only justifiable after every conceivable means of settling a dispute has been tried.*" This however received little support and the proposition that strikes are **not** justifiable was carried by 12 votes to 5.

The Governors were happy to play their part in encouraging the infant Association to flourish, and at the Committee meeting on the 26th January 1895, Mr Carter "*announced that the Governors had given permission to the Association to have free use of any room in the school buildings that might be necessary for meetings, concerts etc., subject to the discretion of the Head Master, and that, although they could not consent to the establishment of an indoor gymnasium, yet the assembly room and the school stage could be used for amateur theatricals provided that a special insurance against fire was effected on such occasions*", which naturally drew "*a very hearty vote of thanks to the governors for their kindness in the matter.*"

The dramatic evening for the 12th January having been abandoned for undisclosed reasons, it was decided to hold two meetings in February. The first, on the 9th February, was Mr Carter's lecture on the Oberammergau Passion Play, "*with illustrations by the oxy-hydrogen lantern*", and the second "*a grand concert in aid of the Old Fullerians Football Club*". "*Mr Carter and Mr Hamilton again brought the Reading Circle under the notice of the Committee and set forth the advantages it offered*", with the result that the circle met at the Schools on the 13th February, the book for the occasion being **Merrie England**, "*a socialistic work by 'Nunquam'* (Robert Blatchford), *Editor of the Clarion*", copies of which were obtainable from Mr Hamilton for a penny. All members of the Association were invited "*to join and take an active part in the Circle*".

Admission to Mr Carter's lecture, of which "*a faithful account of the proceedings*" appeared in the **Watford Observer** and was preserved in the minute book, cost one shilling, while admission to the "*grand concert*" cost two shillings. The programme for the latter is also preserved and records the ten items in each half, an assortment of songs, recitations, musical sketches, a mandolin solo and a banjo duet (by the Downer brothers). Three women were among the recitalists and the items themselves typify the tastes of a bygone age, with "*Kathleen Mavourneen*" (in a setting by Crouch) being the only title familiar to-day, and with gems such as "*Marry-a man-ia*", "*The Deathless Army*", "*Fiddle and I*" and "*The Promise of Life*" lacking the spark of immortality. The concert "*was in every way a great success*", though how much it raised is unrecorded, the net balance from the concert mentioned in the minutes of the Committee meeting on the 2nd April having a tantalising blank after the pound sign!

The meeting on Saturday 16th March featured a debate on the House of Lords substituted without explanation for that originally planned on "*Gambling, should it be suppressed by the State?*". The new proposition, still very much the subject of debate to-day, was "*That in the opinion of this meeting, the House of Lords, being an anachronism and an anomaly, which endeavours to exercise functions which it is incapable of exercising beneficially, should be abolished.*" Mr S. J. Swainson, a master at the School, moved the proposition, "*in particular condemning the hereditary principle*" while favouring "*a second chamber consisting of men of real worth and representing learning, industry and commerce*", and was "*vigorously seconded*" by Mr Hamilton. However Mr Curwen came to the rescue of the Establishment with an amendment "*That ... the House of Lords **does** exercise its functions beneficially and deserves our approbation and support*", and the reader who supports our noble peers will be relieved to find that "*eight members supported the amendment whilst the proposition only found favour with six.*"

The Association's first winter programme concluded with the *"Annual Dinner of the Association held on Foundation Day, April 20th, 1895"* and the accompanying report in the **Watford Observer** the following week was adjudged to form *"an excellent record of the proceedings"*, which this time took place at the Masonic Hall, although *"the company partook of an excellent dinner provided by Mr Read of the Rose and Crown [the inaugural venue the previous year]."* Mr Carter was again in the Chair supported by the Vicar and several masters, with 38 old boys individually listed as also present. The Vicar, followed by the President, recounted with satisfaction developments in the first year of the Association. It would be good to think that the Vicar's optimism would be as true to-day when he said of the old boys (now referred to several times in the course of the report as *"Old Fullerians"*) that they *"had a great deal of power in their hands as a body of old scholars, because what they did was keenly observed by the scholars in the school, and if it was seen that many of them discharged eminently well the duties in the station of life to which God had called them, the present scholars would naturally and instinctively try and follow in their path"*. Mr Carter had no doubt *"that the school consisted of those who were in the school and those who had gone - a sort of church militant and church triumphant. He knew that there were very many of them who pointed out such and such as an old boy of the school ... They had heard a great deal about the Old Fullerians (cheers), and they naturally looked forward to the time when they would be able to join the Old Fullerians, and he hoped that they would take much more interest in their games than they would otherwise do. Whenever he met an old boy, one of the inquiries he had to answer was 'How is the school going on?' Perhaps they might ask him that now. He should say without going into details, 'All is well, the school is progressing no doubt.' (Cheers.) ... When the Old Boys Association was formed a year ago he never anticipated that it would grow to such an extent."*

Mr J. Pringle, in proposing the Association, "*said that it had been a tremendously successful first year ... the only part of the Association that had not succeeded so well as the others was the reading circle. Referring to the Football Club he spoke of the recent successful trip to Guernsey. (Cheers.)*" After the reply by Mr Hamilton, Mr Gardner enlarged on the feats of the Football Club, which had played 28 games in its first season with 15 wins, 11 defeats and two draws, and had undertaken a "*perilous, and to some, troublesome journey [to Guernsey]*", where they had "*showed the good old Guernsey folk how to play football by winning their three matches and scoring 17 goals against two. (Cheers.) [inevitably]*". As part of the incidental musical entertainment punctuating the speeches, Mr Gardner "*gave a fine rendering of the song 'The Charmed Cup', and later on sang a football song illustrative of the Old Fullerians' trip to Guernsey to the tune of 'Fine Old English Gentleman' ... Mr Sharpe sang 'Jolly Football Boys', and other songs were contributed by Messrs F. and H. Downer. The remaining toast was that of the Chairman, proposed by Mr Smales, one of the original boys who entered the school very early on the first morning it was opened.*" With all this, the newspaper was still able to report that "*the proceedings terminated shortly before midnight!*"

At the Committee meeting on the 12th July, the programme of meetings for the following year "*was discussed at considerable length, and various suggestions were considered.*" A fresh source of assistance valued ever since was recorded when "*Mr Hamilton was instructed to pay 10/- to the School Caretaker for his services on various occasions.*"

The second A.G.M. was held at the Schools on Saturday 28th September 1895, when Mr Eason's resignation as one of the first joint Secretaries of the Association was announced with great regret. It was agreed that he be made "*an honorary life member as a mark of esteem for the manner in which he had performed his duties*". He was succeeded as joint secretary by Mr Gardner.

PART 2 - THE EARLY YEARS

So the Association was well and truly launched on its successful way. The annual round of meetings and dinners may be followed in the School magazine as well as the Association's minute books. Paper chases, smoking concerts and dramatic entertainments came and went, but in late 1895, the Football Club illustrated the wheel of fortune by a report in the magazine which stated with regret that they had been "*singularly unfortunate this year ... So far they have gained no success.*" The third annual dinner was held in May 1896 in the Schools, the first time this occasion had taken place on the premises.

At the A.G.M. in 1896, "*Mr Carter suggested that they should elect a President every year, and not have a permanent President, as they had up to the present ... Mr Hamilton, however, in reply, said that this was not to be thought of, and this being the unanimous feeling of the meeting, Mr Carter was again elected President.*"

In May 1897 Mr G. P. Neale, one of the Governors, referred at a soiree to "*the disgraceful condition of Mrs Fuller's tomb at Bushey, and expressed an opinion that if the Old Boys took the matter up they would be liberally supported.*" For the first and not the last time, tribute was paid to the satisfaction given by the catering of the School caretaker, Mr Dukes, one form of assistance not required of his present successor. That autumn at the A.G.M. Mr Gardner resigned as co-Secretary, his place being taken by Mr Edwyn Trow, who himself resigned two years later. Mr Hamilton, the other original co-Secretary, resigned from office in October 1900, and the Committee placed on record "*their high appreciation of his valued services which have extended over many years and which have so greatly tended to the welfare and success of the Association.*"

At the A.G.M. in 1902 Mr Heaton "*proposed that the name of the Association be changed to the 'Old Fullerians' Association' ... and after discussion the motion was passed unanimously.*" The following month the Secretary was instructed at a Committee meeting "*to interview the Secretary of the Old Girls' Association [then newly formed] with a view to a slight co-operation between the two Associations*", and eleven days later the next meeting "*decided to invite the Old Girls' Association to a*

social evening." This was held on the 29th November and was deemed to have been very successful. Perhaps with the recent revival of what became known as the Old Grammarians' Association, such joint events might also bear revival on an occasional basis.

In 1903, two historic changes of nomenclature succeeded that of the Association's: the Schools became known as the Watford Grammar Schools and the Boys' School magazine became **The Fullerian**.

The soirees became a popular and regular feature of Association life. One wonders what lay behind the minute in January 1903 that *"It came to the notice of the Committee that three ladies, whose presence was deemed objectionable, were desirous to attend the Soiree. Letters were written forbidding their presence."*

Reference has already been made to the fact that Mr Slinn's Treasurership was less than a full-time commitment, and at the A.G.M. on the 4th November 1899 *"Mr E. H. Jackson was appointed to the new office of Honorary Collector"*, which as the title implies, carried responsibility for collecting subscriptions and other moneys due, The year's accounts on this occasion showed a balance of £1/13/8d, and in May 1900 it was reported that *"there was a deficit of £3/16/- on account of the Dinner. The caterer's bill was £8, and only £4/4/- had been collected. The cause of this was that many members had retained tickets for the Dinner and then not been present to fill the places provided for them."* Our affairs are managed more successfully in this respect these days! At any rate the various *"monetary liabilities"* of the Association meant that its *"total indebtedness"* amounted to £6/16/8d, whereupon *"Mr Carter kindly offered to lend the money to discharge these debts"*, a saving generosity the President displayed on several occasions in the course of his twenty years' tenure of office.

On the 20th July 1901 a smoking concert was organized by the Association at the Schools. The **Watford Observer** reported that *"The attendance was particularly good and representative. The object of the meeting, a very pleasant one, was to make a presentation to the President of the Association, the Head Master of the School, Mr W. R. Carter, on the occasion of his approaching marriage. The present was a combined gift of the old boys, present boys and masters,*

and consisted of a handsome silver tea and coffee service, a silver mounted polished oak tray and a silver revolving breakfast dish."

At the committee meeting on the 8th October 1902, *"Mr F. Downer suggested that efforts should be made to obtain a Club Room in the town for the use of Members. Mr Carter undertook to sound the Vicar with a view to obtaining the Old Free School for that purpose."* At the A.G.M. on the 25th of that month, *"Mr W. E. Fleming proposed that a sub-committee be formed to consider the formation of a Club, having rooms in the town, in conjunction with the Association. Mr Carter reported having interviewed the Vicar, who was willing to lend rooms in the old Free School."* However, the following month Mr Carter *"proposed that owing to the very poor response to the circular issued by the sub-committee, the scheme for the formation of a Club be abandoned"* and it was agreed that *"the opening of the Club be postponed until 60 members had promised to join ... The Secretary received 36 names during the evening."* Sadly however, it had to be reported at the following A.G.M. in October 1903, that *"The negotiations for obtaining a room in the town to serve as a Club in connection with the Association fell through owing to lack of support, sufficient promises not being forthcoming to make it self-supporting. The Association is indebted to the Vicar for the kindly interest he took in the scheme and his willingness to provide rooms at the old Free School."* What an opportunity missed! However, it had already been resolved in that year that *"the Association shall be registered as a Club, in accordance with the new Licensing Laws"*, and this was duly effected. At the same A.G.M. the Secretaries were able to report with relief that *"an excess of £1/11/7½d in receipts ... has enabled the Association to finish paying off the loan contracted in 1899 from Mr Carter!"*

In 1904 it was reported that on the 21st November 1903, *"the Old Girls' Association had invited the members to a soiree. The majority of the members appeared to be somewhat shy and failed to turn up, but the evening was a very great success!"* That October *"Letters of congratulation were sent to Mr Carter and Mr Gardner on the birth of a son and a daughter respectively."* The Secretaries were also *"pleased to report that the Association was duly registered in accordance with the Licensing Laws and that no further difficulty will*

arise as to the provision of refreshments at the different functions", the new laws having "prevented a Smoking Concert being held" earlier that month . That November, in discussing the Annual Dinner, "it was decided that, as the price Mr Buck asked (5/-) was too high, the Dinner should be held at the Malden [Hotel]", but Mr Buck, who had already catered for the Association in his restaurant in the High Street previously on various occasions, was to be the host for many Annual Dinners in the years to come . (In fact the following month "The Secretary stated that he had issued notices cancelling the Annual dinner, his action being confirmed by the Committee", so clearly no satisfactory solution was forthcoming at the time.)

Dramatic Entertainments, Whist Evenings, Smoking Concerts and the like came and went as well as football and cricket matches on a "Past versus Present" basis. In March 1905 "the President ... proposed a vote of congratulations to the Vicar of Watford on the completion of his [Golden] Jubilee in that capacity ..., the motion being passed with acclamation."

Having regard to the cancellation of the Annual Dinner the year before and the limited depth of many members' pockets, Mr Carter proposed in November 1905 "that the Annual Dinner should be held this year in the School, and further that it should be turned into a supper, the cost of which was not to exceed 3/-. This was unanimously agreed to." However, other members disagreed, and it was finally decided to organize another dinner after all with the proviso "that unless 40 accept the invitation ... it should be abandoned". The Secretary eventually reported in February 1906 "that he could only be certain of 33 members and friends attending the dinner, and that under the circumstances the loss on the evening would be too heavy", and it was therefore decided "that the previous resolution be adhered to." There was considerable concern around this time as to the best way the Association's affairs could be run without incurring a prohibitive deficit, and in October 1906 "It was decided to run two Debates, two Whist Drives in addition to the Dance and Dinner ... [and] to send a circular to each member asking if they [sic] would be willing to support either a Dinner or Dance, or both." I am ignorant of the exact process involved in the following minute: "Mr Ginger kindly promised to **heklograph** notices of the various meeting." Any answers?

In October 1906 it was proposed that Mr C. S. Spencer, who currently held the office of Honorary Collector established seven years earlier, *"be asked to take over the whole of the finances of the Association and that a post of Assistant Hon. Treasurer be created to enable him to do so."* The motion was passed, and in December it was unanimously resolved that this be placed on the agenda for the following A.G.M., the duties of the Honorary Collector at present to be extended to cover the receipt and payment of all accounts as well as the receipt of subscriptions, and that he be *"required to furnish a short statement shewing the Association's financial position at each Ordinary Committee meeting and that it be his duty to prepare a Balance Sheet for the General Committee Meeting and that such Balance sheet be incorporated in the Notice convening the Annual Meeting"*; moreover, *"That in accordance with Rule XV and subject to the approval of the Treasurer, the title of 'Hon. Collector' be changed to that of 'Assistant Hon. Treasurer' ..."*. This was not carried without difficulty, for Mr T. S. Pinn, one of the co-Secretaries, *"asked the Committee to reconsider its decision as to electing an Assistant Treasurer and raised the following objections: (1) That it was contrary to all Rules of the Association, (2) That the motion was put before the previous Committee meeting without due notice, and in consequence was not properly discussed, and (3) That although he did not consider that the Committee wished to pass a vote of non-confidence in himself, he felt such a proposal would resolve itself into this in the eyes of all members outside the Committee. A very long discussion took place ..."*. In the end however, *"Mr Taylor proposed that a vote of confidence in Mr T. S. Pinn be recorded in the minutes and expressed the hope that the change in financial management of the Association would not be considered as reflecting on the way in which Mr Pinn has carried out the duties in the past, and that it would not cause him to sever his connection with the Association ... the motion was passed unanimously. Mr Pinn in thanking the Committee undertook to continue his duties for the present session."* Honour was satisfied!

In November 1909 the Secretary in his report to the A.G.M., *"touched lightly upon all the various functions, and concluded by comparing the size of the Association with the number of boys who had passed through the School, and as the proportion was not satisfactory, asked for suggestions toward popularising the Association"*, as many have done since. It was perhaps in the light of his comments that the programme for the following session was the subject of a *"rather desultory discussion"*. Mr Carter did revive the spirits of those present by *"thanking the Association for their share in the presentation which was made to him the previous week"* on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his Headship, and *"A very excellent Smoking Concert followed the meeting"*, so we may presume that all went home reasonably contented.

Membership of the General Committee was perhaps not taken as seriously as it should be at this time, for in February 1910 the Chairman *"drew attention to the fact that several of the members of the Committee only attended at very irregular intervals and he therefore proposed that the Secretary should be asked to make enquiries as to the cause of their non-attendance"*, a task that the present Secretary has thankfully never had to perform! At the same meeting a vote of condolence to Mrs Dukes was carried on the death of her husband, who for so many years had been the School caretaker and to whom it has already been mentioned the Association had been grateful for his catering at several of their functions.

A novel entertainment was reported in the **Watford Observer** of the 28th January 1911. *"A mimic-trial - Splashit v. Splashit, a claim to title and estates - took place at the Watford Grammar School on Saturday, under the auspices of the Old Fullarians' Association ... the jury, which was composed of ladies as well as gentlemen, was perhaps a caricature of a more advanced age than the present. Mock trials are usually very amusing, and this was no exception, though perhaps towards the end it could not escape the reproach of tediousness."* A whole column of details of the proceedings ends with the statement that *"The jury ... were unable to agree upon a verdict."*

At the Committee meeting on the 9th October 1911 "*The Secretary suggested that as the School would soon be entering the new building [in the Rickmansworth Road] it would be a good opportunity to make some suitable gift to commemorate the occasion.*" However, it was agreed "*that the matter stand over for the present*", and the new buildings were officially opened, again with Lord Clarendon presiding, on the 20th March 1912, without any decision on the matter. That January Mr Adkins, one of the co-Secretaries, had "*promised to see Mr W. R. Carter with a view to obtaining the use of [a] portion of the New School Building*" for the Association Annual Dance, although the following month this was announced as abandoned on Mr Carter's permission not having been obtained. It was also agreed (in February) that a proposed Bohemian Concert "*be abandoned owing to the difficulty of arranging a Concert in the recently opened School*", the buildings having already been in use prior to the official opening in March. This was not a good time for social occasions; at the January Committee meeting, "*The Committee considered the advisability of abandoning this fixture [the Annual Dinner] as the response to the circulars had been so poor and the sale of tickets so small.*" The previous year the Secretary had been "*instructed to write [to] Mr Buck regretting that they were unable to agree to his terms*" and the Dinner, according to the local press, had been "*held on Saturday evening [18th February 1911], at the Florence, Rupert-street, [London] W.C., the first occasion on which the function had been held out of Watford. Special railway facilities were afforded to those who made the journey from Watford, and a considerable number of Old Fullerians and friends came from other parts, with the result that a company of something over sixty sat down to an excellent repast under the presidency of Mr W. R. Carter.*" Those attending from Watford were charged 4/- "*to include Railway fare*". In 1912, the venue was again the Florence, but it was unanimously agreed in advance "*that the speeches and musical portion of the programme be abandoned and that at 9 o'clock the party adjourn to some place of public entertainment*", though which one is not recorded. Nevertheless, the Dinner was back in Watford again the following year, at the New School for the first time.ddd

PART 3 - TAKING SHAPE

The first A.G.M. to be held at the new School took place on Saturday 2nd November 1912, and a significant change in the Association's constitution was brought about on that occasion when *"Mr Carter proposed that a Chairman who shall be a member of the Association be elected for one year only at the Annual General Meeting, his duties being to take the chair at all meetings."* This was carried unanimously and thus the present system of Annual Chairmen replaced that of the miscellany of Chairmen of Meetings for the Association's first 18 years under Mr Carter as President-Chairman, Mr Carter retaining office thenceforth as President only. The first Annual Chairman elected at the meeting was Mr H. J. Dow, *"whose excellent offices were testified to by the retiring Secretaries"*; he had joined the Committee in 1906 and had taken the Chair at meetings that year and each year since. Mr Carter, the **Watford Observer** of the 9th November reported, said *"that the new office [of Annual Chairman] would in no way affect his position as President. The experiment had been tried in other associations, and most successfully."* At this meeting, two new joint Secretaries were elected, Mr W. T. Spencer of the Old Fullerians (later to become Chairman in 1914), and Mr J. H. Crisp, a well-remembered master.

A lengthy report of the Annual Dinner *"at the Pavilion of the new School"* on the 1st February 1913 deemed it *"to be one of the most successful evenings of the whole series. In accordance with the new rule, Mr H. J. Dow, as chairman for the year, presided, and the company ... numbered over 70 ... the catering, which for the first time was undertaken by the School authorities, was done to the entire satisfaction of the company, and after the dinner the evening was devoted to speeches and music."* Mr Frederick Wilson, who was to succeed Mr Dow as the second Annual Chairman, who acted as Clerk to the Governors of the School from 1913 to 1945 and whose nephew Frank is, as I write, in the current Association calendar as its oldest Vice-President (and may he long remain so), proposed the toast of *"The School, Governors and Masters"* and said *"that though one could not but be struck by the beautiful surroundings of the School and the marvellous apparatus that seemed to have been placed wherever necessary, this*

would not modify for any one of them their delightful memories of the old School in Derby-road. (Hear, hear.) They rejoiced in the progress of the School and the fact that its prosperity was likely to continue. (Hear, hear.) ... Mr Carter, responding, said that he looked upon this as a kind of house-warming. Here they were in their new home, and he was proud that so many old boys had come to greet them. This had been for the School an *annus mirabilis* ... There was no break in the continuity of the School; it was the same Watford Grammar School." He then quoted two extracts "from a poem of which they might have heard" as follows:

*"From East to West - from town to Park we've come,
From crowded class-rooms and from noisy streets,
We've moved to noble halls and quiet fields,
More fit for studious hours or pleasure's toils.
We loved the Derby-road and Bushey fields,
But Cassiobury has charms unknown to these.
Though happy are our memories of the past,
A brighter future spreads before our eyes.
(Applause.)"*

and

*"Thus Fullerians flourish,
Lord how delightful 'tis to see
Fullerians thrive where'er they be,
But O! 'tis sweeter far to know,
They love their School where'er they go. (Applause.)"*

Later , in responding to the toast of "*The President*", Mr Carter said that "*Cassiobury agreed with him very well. It had given him a new lease of life, and he was afraid that the trouble in the end would be to get rid of him. (Loud laughter.)*" Sadly, his lease of life was to prove all too short. The A.G.M. in October 1913 when the office of Vice-Chairman (as Chairman-designate for the following year) was established with Mr Spencer as its first holder, was the last one

Mr Carter was to preside over. His health was drunk at the Annual Dinner at the School on the 31st January 1914, but as the history of the School relates, *"In April the Headmaster, W. R. Carter, died after a short illness, the seriousness of which had not at first been appreciated"*. At its meeting on the 3rd April the Committee of the Association, having ordered a wreath for the funeral, *"Resolved that the Secretaries ... be requested to convey to Mrs Carter, the deep and heartfelt sympathy of all Old Fullerians with her in her great sorrow. And that this Association do place on record the sense of the great and irreparable loss which the Old Fullerians have sustained by the death of their esteemed President whose gracious influence during school life, and unfailing help and kindness subsequently, will ever be most gratefully remembered"*. At the following committee meeting on the 19th May, proposals were considered *"as to a suitable Memorial to Mr Carter, viz, (1) A 'William Robert Carter' Scholarship confined to Watford Grammar School Boys, (2) A School Swimming Bath. After much discussion it was decided that if possible, a Swimming Bath be erected and for this purpose a provisional committee was elected ... to consider the desirability of erecting a Bath, or of making any other proposal, and also to issue an appeal for funds."* As it was, the Committee was not to record *"that the Swimming-Bath had been filled for the first time"* until December 1931.

Another grievous loss was sustained that year when in October *"the Secretaries were authorised to send a wreath in the name of the Association, and Messrs Crisp, Fletcher and Spencer were asked to represent the Association at the Funeral Service at the Parish Church, to the late Lord Clarendon, Chairman of the Governors."*

The new Head Master, Harold Nicholson, made his first appearance as President of the Association at its A.G.M. on the 31st October 1914, when he was formally elected to office. Relations between the Association and his predecessor had always been cordial and affectionate, but the difficulties to be encountered with a 'new broom' soon became apparent as can be seen in the minutes of the Committee meeting on the 5th March 1915 under the heading *"Incident at Bohemian Concert"*. It was reported that *"at the Bohemian Concert*

[held on the 20th February for the benefit of the local war relief fund] *one of the items of the programme was objected to by Mr Nicholson who insisted that on no account should an encore be permitted and then stood up and held up his hands to stop the continued applause of the audience ... an informal meeting of the Committee was held immediately on the conclusion of the concert, when it was agreed that the item was, in their opinion, in no way objectionable and that Mr Nicholson should be asked for an explanation. Mr Nicholson met the Committee but refused any explanation or expression of regret for the public nature of the protest ... most of the members of the Committee had since received a letter from Mr Nicholson in which he stated that he felt that 'he could not have acted otherwise' and which contained no withdrawal from the position he had taken up ... private efforts to influence Mr Nicholson had failed to induce him to modify his attitude in any way."*

Doubtless making odious comparisons with the late President, the Committee *"agreed that a letter should be sent to the Governors setting forth the facts and asking them to appoint two or three of their number to meet Mr Nicholson and representatives of the Committee with a view to healing the breach which had occurred."* A letter was sent to the Chairman of the Governors on the 8th March bringing to his notice *"an unfortunate deadlock which has arisen between the Headmaster and the Association"* and rehearsing at length the whole sorry episode: *"One of the Artistes sang a light comedy song with a Chorus, which was obviously appreciated by the audience. The Headmaster however, apparently considered the item objectionable ... the protest was made in a manner which constituted it a distinct public affront to [the Committee]"*, and predictably, *"We would point out that similar Concerts have been held for many years past under the presidency of the late W. R. Carter, and in the presence of various Governors, and that on no occasion has any objection been raised against the style of entertainment ... the Committee ... venture to appeal to the Governors ... with a view to restoring the friendly relationship which up till now has always existed between the Head of the School and the Old Boys."* Eleven days later the Committee noted that *"at the request of one of the Governors, [the Chairman] had met Mr Nicholson*

who had asked him to convey to the Committee an expression of his regret for the form which his protest took at the Bohemian Concert. The Committee accepted this as a satisfactory termination of the incident." It was not however, an auspicious start for the new President. One may regret that the words of the contentious item have not been preserved! The concert, after all the fuss, made a profit of £6/7/4d, gratefully acknowledged in receipt by the War Relief Fund Treasurer.

This was not the only time that acrimony between the President and the Association was to be recorded, but happily nothing of the kind has obtained for many years now!

The Great War soon put such a trivial incident into perspective however, and at the A.G.M. in November 1915, the Secretaries' report was glad to state that "*the number of members [170] was a record ... This splendid position is partly due to the efforts of Mr Nicholson in persuading boys just leaving to join us.*" It was noted that "*On May 9th 1915 the Old Fullerians Association attained its majority for the 1st meeting to form an association was called for May 9th 1894 ... a fact practically unthought of until last night when the Joint Secretaries in pursuit of their arduous duties turned up the old Minute Book and made the above discovery.*" The grievous effect of the war was attested too: "*Lieutenant T. S. Pinn, who for many years was secretary of the Association and took a keen interest in all the doings of the Association, died a short time ago after being seriously wounded while gallantly leading his men.*" "*At the present time*", the report continued, "*nearly 50 members of the Association are serving and of the old boys of the school over 300 are with the colours, a magnificent record.*" In conclusion it was announced as a firm evidence of the restoration of harmonious relations, that "*Mr Nicholson offers a hearty invitation to all Old Fullerians to attend the School lectures and musical evenings*" in the coming season. It may also be noted with interest that on this occasion several Rules of the Association were altered in some degree, such as Rule 3 covering the "*friendly intercourse among the Old Boys and Masters*" being extended to include the Governors, and on the proposal of the President it was agreed "*that Old Fullerians serving in His Majesties Forces be elected Hon. Members for the ensuing year.*"

At the end of the formal business "*the President gave a short address on the subject 'Some Ideals of School Life'* ", although unfortunately the résumé of this, described as "*appended*", is no longer so.

The social programme of the Association continued throughout the war, with Whist, Card and Bridge Evenings, Bohemian Concerts, Magazine Nights and the like seemingly suffering little curtailment, and Mr Nicholson continued to make amends for the unfortunate start to his Presidency by providing prizes on several occasions. In December 1915 it was decided that "*owing to the large proportion of [the Committee's] members who are on active service*" gaps in the ranks should be filled by co-option, a solution resorted to whenever necessary thereafter. The only notable exclusion from the social programme for the duration of the war was the Annual Dinner, it having been resolved back in December 1914 "*that owing to the present unsettled state of the country the Annual Dinner be abandoned for this year*", although the same meeting approved a suggestion "*that those Members on military service might be invited to a dinner by the Association at the conclusion of the war*"; the approval, however, was qualified by the statement "*that no definite decision was taken.*"

At the A.G.M. in October 1916, it was recorded under the heading "*Social Club*", that "*the formation of a social circle was then discussed at some length ... [and] it was agreed to arrange meetings on one night a week in the School Pavilion.*" At the same time "*A proposal that the Association should adopt some form of badge was discussed and it was left for the members of the Social Club to make a definite suggestion for consideration by the Committee*", and I cannot refrain from recording the concluding minute of this meeting that "*A collection on behalf of the Daily News Xmas Pudding Fund realised £1/12/- and on the suggestion of Mr Dow this was made up to £3/3/- from the funds of the Association*"!

In 1917 Mr Dow, now Assistant Treasurer of the Association, stated that the financial position of the Association meant that "*economy was necessary*", and uncertainty of attendances at meetings resulted in a triumvirate of Secretaries when "*Messrs Hayward and*

Dunkerly were appointed to act as joint Hon. Secs. with Mr Freak". That October it was agreed that the annual subscription "*shall include the subscription to the Fullerian.*" At the A.G.M. on the 27th October Mr C. A. Solomons, who had recently been congratulated on his appointment as a Governor of the School, became the first Annual Chairman to be re-elected for a second successive term, but died shortly afterwards, leaving his Vice-Chairman, Mr J. Ginger, to enter the list of Annual Chairmen thus for 1917 and 1918. Only one Annual Chairman since has held the office in two successive years, R. C. (Dick) Hughes in 1961 and 1962.

At the first Committee meeting after the end of the war, "*The President outlined certain tentative proposals for a School War Memorial which ... comprised (1) a Permanent Memorial in the School itself (2) a Book of Remembrance setting forth the record of the services of all Old Boys (3) a Scholarship Scheme*", and an "*executive committee composed of Governors, Staff and Old Boys*" was established to take action. Alternative suggestions to the scholarship scheme subsequently put forward at a special committee meeting were "*the endowment of a ward in the proposed new hospital and the erection of a swimming bath at the School*", progress with the latter proposal for one in memory of Mr Carter having been halted on account of the war. As a result social occasions of various kinds were held for the purpose of contributing the proceeds to a School War memorial Fund. In May 1919 it was stated that a sum "*approaching £100*" had been collected for the W. R. Carter Memorial Fund and it was agreed that the money be invested to provide an annual prize and that "*a permanent memorial be placed in the School in addition to the suggested prize*", which eventually took the form of the late President's portrait still hanging in the hall, the first of those subsequently commissioned by the Association of its past Presidents.

On the 13th December 1919, the first Annual Dinner for five years was held at Buck's restaurant, it having been decided that this "*should not be held at the Grammar School owing to the lack of accommodation if held in the Pavilion, and to the difficulty of keeping the dinner hot if held in the Hall.*" The **Watford Observer** reported that the toast "*Those who fell*" was followed by all standing in silence,

after which an "enjoyable evening" incorporating a "splendid musical programme" followed. Looking into the future, the President thought "that Watford would be one of the great schools of England". Mr Dennis Herbert M.P., replying on behalf of the Governors ("he thought the word should be spelt 'Guvnor' on the ground of age, repute and respect"), "referred to the value of Old Boys' Associations, and said that gathering was the largest they had ever had." The education all present had received "should be a very great help in keeping up the reputation of the School and the *esprit de corps* which had so much to do with the success of the School." Mr Wilson, in proposing the toast of the President, "said that Mr Nicholson came to Watford five years ago with high academic qualifications and during his leadership the Grammar School had made considerable progress. He would be quite certain that Mr Nicholson would be the first to admit that the foundation was laid by Mr Carter, whose memories they still cherished (hear, hear) and whose presence they still missed on occasions such as that. (Loud applause.) It was a source of gratification to the Old Boys that Mr Nicholson, assisted as he had been by a most excellent and loyal staff, had built uncommonly well on the foundation laid for him. The Watford Grammar School had grown almost beyond knowledge, and its possibilities in the future were very great, indeed he was quite certain that they could look with confidence to Mr Nicholson making it one of the really great secondary schools in the country. He referred to the pride of the Old Boys at the success the School had achieved. Since Mr Nicholson had been in Watford he had learnt a great many things, and one was that the Old Boys of Watford Grammar School were very proud of the School and its traditions. (Applause.) Mr Nicholson, in responding, said that the School was going to do everything possible to help the Association. They had done it loyally during the past few years, and they intended to see that every single boy that left the School was invited to join the Old Boys' Association. (Hear, hear.) They would do everything they could to see that the Association grew in numbers term by term and year by year. (Applause.)"

With such boundless optimism and sense of unity, the stage was clearly set for the redoubled progress of both School and Association in tandem after the hiatus of the war. That same month it was reported in committee that "*Mr Nicholson said that **The Fullertian** could include a one-page photograph from the Old Fullertians' Association every year, and it was agreed that a photograph of the Chairman should appear annually in the Winter Term number*", not a prominence accorded more recent holders of this office! For many years now, news of Old Fullertians had been included in the magazine, a practice that ceased not all that long ago when such items were sent out with separate Chairman's Newsletters instead, as prevails to-day.

At the 1920 A.G.M., the President "*suggested that it would be better for the Association if all generations of boys leaving the School could be represented as far as possible on the Committee ... to avoid losing the services of Old Boys who had served in the past*" and this was carried. Ever since then it has always been the aim of the Committee to reflect different generations in its composition, and the present (1993) Committee, covering a range of years at the School from 1929 to 1983, faithfully reflects this to the undoubted benefit of the whole. With regard to the School's already established musical traditions, the President went on to report the suggestion by a master "*that as there were a number of boys leaving the School who had been in the School Orchestra ... it would be a good idea if an Old Boys' Orchestra could be formed*", a proposal approved by those present, who "*considered it best to leave it to those interested to form same.*" The current Watford Ensemble may well be said to embody this idea in good measure.

At the same A.G.M. a proposal was made that an Old Boys' Club be formed and a sub-committee set up "*to go into the matter thoroughly and to make a report at the next Annual General Meeting.*"

Accordingly, the A.G.M. on the 8th October 1921 was informed firstly *"that a small amateur orchestra, composed entirely of Old Fullerians, had been formed and would be at the disposal of the Association for any of its meetings"*, and a grant of four guineas was agreed towards its initial expenses. Secondly, however, the sub-committee which had considered the formation of an *"Old Fullerians' Club"*, reluctantly reported that they were *"unanimously of the opinion that, under present circumstances, the financial difficulties were insuperable"*, although Mr Nicholson stated *"that in a year or two a room in the School Pavilion might be available and that the matter might then be reconsidered."* Another item on the same agenda, *"Association Colours"*, led to a decision *"that the colours should be green and black, as the school colours, but that no action should be taken as regards obtaining stocks as such colours were already on sale in the town."*

In 1922 Mr Nicholson was appointed Head Master of Taunton School. At his final committee meeting on the 15th May that year he *"mentioned the anomaly of having a President of the Association who, according to the rules, never presided at any of the functions of the Association. He did not desire debate at the meeting but suggested that the coming change of President gave an opportunity for some rearrangement of the functions of the President and Chairman respectively."* His Presidency ended on a note of cordiality with *"a hearty vote of thanks"* to him *"for his unfailing support of the Association during his eight years of office"* which *"was carried with acclamation."*

PART 4 - THE MIDDLE YEARS

So Edward Reynolds, formerly Head Master of Northampton Grammar School, came on the scene as the Association's third President, and was welcomed to his first meeting of the General Committee on the 6th October 1922. On this occasion "*the recent death of Mr H. J. Dow, an old and active member of the Association and its first Annual Chairman*", was reported with a "*resolution of sympathy with Mrs Dow.*" At this meeting, Mr Nicholson's reservations concerning the role of President were discussed, but after "*an expression of opinion from the new President, it was agreed to take no action in the matter.*" At the A.G.M. only three weeks later, it was recorded that "*The Chairman extended, on behalf of the Association, a hearty welcome to the new President. ... who was bringing experience and enthusiasm to his office. Mr Reynolds responded in a humorous speech and expressed his pride in the School and his feeling of honour to be President of a live Association.*" After a tribute by the Chairman to Mr Nicholson, the latter was unanimously elected an honorary life member and a Vice-President of the Association. It was also agreed that "*a copy of these Rules [of the Association] shall be given to every new member on election*", and it was suggested that "*a copy of the Rules should be hung in the School.*"

Social events continued to flourish, including Christmas parties, although various suggestions that "*Fancy Dress Evenings*" be held, normally met with scant favour. There had been occasional suggestions that a Gymnastic Club be formed ever since the earliest days, but none had been launched with lasting success. In November 1922 it was mooted "*that it might be possible to form a Badminton Club to play in the School Hall, but the President stated that the Hall was not available.*" The Association Orchestra completed its first year successfully and at the same meeting "*was authorised to purchase any new music or other material required at a cost not exceeding £5 for the Session.*" It having been decided that Committee meetings be held alternatively on Mondays and Thursdays, a change was agreed on this occasion to the effect that they "*be held as far as possible on Friday evenings.*"

During a discussion in February 1923 it was agreed "*that a date in January is suitable for the [Annual] Dinner; that the Dinner was on the whole successful and that in future no great alteration in the arrangements need be made.*" One suggestion approved but no longer in force was that "*a book should be circulated at all future dinners for signature by those present*" - another practice worthy of revival? Despite the general desire to swell the numbers of members, "*a suggestion that an advertisement be put in the local papers asking Old Boys to join the Association was not agreed upon.*"

Mr Reynolds was keen to see the School elected to the Headmasters' Conference, and in pursuance of his ambition took a decision which resulted in it being reported at the A.G.M. in October 1923 that "*The absence from the suggested programme [for the coming session] of the usual Past v. Present Football match was commented upon. It was explained that this was due to the fact that the School had changed to the Rugby game.*" Changing the subject quickly, the President suggested "*that the School should be the hosts of the Association on the occasion of the annual Cricket Match*" and this "*was accepted with thanks.*" That December "*a letter from Mr Reynolds with regard to the notice specifying morning dress for the Xmas party was read. After discussion it was agreed that the decision of the sub-committee be adhered to and that Mr Freak [the O.F. co-Secretary] explain to Mr Reynolds the reasons of the Committee for coming to this decision.*" The 'new broom' was not to be allowed to lower standards so easily!

Around this time we read in the minutes for the first time of various members of the Committee being specified as "*Conveners*" of different types of gatherings; in November 1923 three different Convenors were appointed for Social Evenings, Card Evenings and the Annual Dance respectively, each being responsible for convening a sub-committee charged with organising a particular function and for looking after the accounts of ticket sales and expenditure. This was to lead eventually to the designation of a single "*Social Convener*" (frequently mis-spelt 'Convenor') to supervise the overall Association social

programme, and this office, after lapsing for several years, was ultimately revived with a slight change in nomenclature as the post of Social Secretary we know to-day and which has been so ably filled over the years by Pete Ausden.

In February 1924 Mr Freak reported with regret "*the reasons which led [the Dinner Sub-Committee] to abandon the [Annual] Dinner. A general discussion followed as to the causes of the failure and as to the general spirit of the Association, and it was decided that a sub-committee be appointed to consider the future of the Association and to make suggestions to be submitted to a special general meeting.*" This sub-committee met on the 15th April and concluded that it "*was generally felt that there was a feeling of lethargy and slackness in the Association, of which two clear indicators had been given by the failure to hold an Annual Dinner and by the bad attendance at the Bohemian Concert ... the question arose whether the bad attendance at such functions ... was not due to the fact that the arrangements made by the older members of the Committee did not altogether appeal to the younger generations of the Association*", a division perhaps symptomatic of the social upheaval brought about by the Great War. A familiar ring lay in the assertion that "*the work of the Association was to some extent being carried on more by the older members than by the younger ...*". In the end alternative proposals were advanced, the first to the effect that no radical alterations to the present management of the Association should be made until this could be debated at the next A.G.M., and the second that the Committee should resign **en bloc** and that "*every effort should be made to give the younger members the opportunity of taking the chief responsibility in the affairs of the Association*", with all the past Chairmen becoming **ex-officio** Vice-Presidents of the Association and lending their support from without to the new generation of Committee members. "*Two dangers seemed to be threatening the Association: (1) That it might die a slow death of inanition and (2) That it might resolve itself simply into an Association for providing cheap entertainments and amusements for its members.*"

The upshot of all this was that "*The Dinner Sub-Committee was severely criticised for its action in cancelling the Annual Dinner. The*

style of Dinner which had been arranged and its high cost were also adversely commented upon." However, while it was resolved that "*all sub-committees should carry out the instructions of the main committee or otherwise report to the main committee before acting contrary to such instructions*" and that every effort would be made to give younger members the opportunity to take a greater part in the management of the Association, no great upheaval resulted.

Another link with the School's roots was recorded in November 1924 when it was agreed that "*an endeavour be made to raise a sum of not less than £50 to be used for the restoration of the Free School.*"

Association colours were next discussed in April 1925, when "*it was agreed that association ties - green, black and white in colour - be adopted, and arrangements made with Mr Taylor to have them on sale in the town. Proper blazers - blue in colour - were also agreed to ... The question of suitable badges was left undecided.*" To the minutes of this same meeting was appended a cutting from the **Fullerian** stating "*We understand that a Petition to the Grand Lodge of England has been granted and that a Lodge to be called 'Fullerian Lodge, No 4698' will be consecrated on the 19th May 1925. Mr Ernest Taylor, who has rendered invaluable service to the Old Boys' Association in connection with Bohemian Concerts and other functions, is to be the first Worshipful Master. The formation of this Lodge should have the effect of bringing old boys and masters of the School into closer contact and of rekindling many friendships made at the School. We wish it all possible success*", and of course the Lodge is still active almost seventy years later.

In October 1925 "*it was decided to delete the customary item of the Bohemian Concert from the programme for the coming session. In view of their experiences the Committee did not feel justified in facing the possibility of another failure. In its stead it was suggested that a concert of old boys' talent in conjunction with the Old Girls' association might very possibly be arranged.*" Tastes were changing. At the A.G.M. that month the Secretary, W. R. Bales (to become Chairman in 1930), in his report "*stated with regret that there was still a certain*

*amount of slackness and disinterestedness [sic] among the members and deplored the fact that there were so many in arrears with their subscriptions. This entailed the Association a considerable loss of money as the **Fullerian** magazines had to be paid for and sent out to these delinquents."* Similar regrets are normally voiced in more measured language these days, although sterling work in recent years by Treasurers and Registrars has happily maintained arrears of subscriptions at a tolerable level!

The question of colours was debated again at this meeting when *"the motion that the association adopt as its blazer, one similar to that of the school with the exception of the thin stripe being red instead of white, was carried unanimously. The correct badge, a sample of which was shown, was also agreed to. It was further decided ... that the blazer with the badge should only be sold to those who were members of the association and whose subscriptions were up to date ..."* In the concluding vote of thanks, the Governors and particularly the Head Master were thanked for the *"very valuable privilege"* enjoyed by the Association in being able to hold its functions on the school premises, sentiments echoed annually to the present day. In his reply, Mr Reynolds *"appreciated that the association was fast becoming something more than a self-centred society."* The retiring Chairman (L. S. Walker) suggested *"an old boys' prize to the school [which] was welcomed and referred to the next committee meeting"*, when *"a suggestion ... that a replica of the sports championship cup could be given, to be retained each year by the winner ... was carried unanimously. Mr Reynolds expressed his agreement and intimated that the school still had in mind the building of a suitable swimming bath. This project was recommended to consideration and support when arrangements were more advanced."* Purchase of the *"O.F.A. Presentation Cup"* followed when the Chairman was authorised in May 1926 *"to spend ... a sum of £5 at Messrs Yalsley on a silver cup ... to be given to the champion at the school sports."*

In September 1926 *"Mr Reynolds consented to ask the new school secretary if he would undertake the printing duties of the association"*, and thus Mr W. T. J. Jones, to whom both the School and

the Association were so indebted for so long, came on to the scene. That same meeting concluded with *"an informal talk concerning the proposed formation of a Rugby Club by various old boys ..."*, and at the A.G.M. the following month, the Secretary felt able to report that the Association *"was at last beginning to hold the important position in the activities of Watford to which it was entitled"*, and which we all no doubt hope that it still is! We also read that same month for the first time, that a member of the Committee *"kindly consented to represent the association to lay a wreath on the school war-memorial on the Armistice Day celebrations"*, and this is still done every year, normally by the Chairman. The proposal to form a Rugby Club was the subject of a *"lengthy discussion"* of the *"newly-formed W.G.S. Old Boys' Rugby Club and its connection with the O.F.A."*, when *"after a detailed explanation by Mr Reynolds the following motion was passed unanimously: that this committee consider the time is not yet ripe for dealing with the question of the formation of a Rugby Club, but we hold ourselves to reconsider it at some future date. In the meantime we view with sympathy the activities of the newly-formed club and wish them every success in their venture"*, the Secretary being instructed to write to the Club accordingly. The new code had yet to displace the old in official Association affections!

At the Annual Dinner at Buck's restaurant in January 1927 the toast to the School and the Governors was proposed by L. P. Bonnet, for so long remembered in more recent times as the last *"survivor of the Derby Road trek"* to attend these occasions. In his response, Mr A. Bromet said how the Governors and School *"were immensely assisted by the friendship and association of Old Boys"*, and Mr H. Coates, in proposing *"The Association"*, said that the *"main function of an Old School Association was to support the school through thick and thin, to make it their hobby to help whenever they possibly could. (Applause.)"* All seemed to bespeak cordial relations between the parties concerned.

The more the surprise to read in February 1927, under the heading *"School Charges and Attendant Business"* a lengthy minute covering almost ten pages dealing with a rift between Mr Reynolds and

the Committee. After a lengthy summary of the existing arrangements whereby "owing to the possibility last year of the school being surcharged by the County authorities, accounts for the gas, light and coke used by the Association at the school had been rendered currently after each function and finally paid in one total amount at the end of the session", the Chairman [W. Aish] reported that "a letter from Mr Reynolds was received ... complaining of short payment and alteration of the schools bills without authority." He had replied explaining the Association's position, but had subsequently received another letter from Mr Reynolds saying, "I am not prepared to have the accounts for the Old Fullerian entertainments ... altered in any way ... these accounts must be trusted and honoured and paid with reasonable promptitude. If necessary any explanation asked for in a proper and polite way will be given, but I will not tolerate the rudeness which I have received with regard to this last account and on other occasions. I am not going to discuss the matter any further with any committee, and unless I receive the amount in two days' time I shall ask Mr Bales to cancel the meeting at my house on Monday next", and it was recorded that "the dinner sub-committee was consequently cancelled."

Battle lines were drawn, and "various members then spoke regretting the tone of the headmaster's letters". It was stated that "the discussion arose not through any objections to paying the bills, but rather through a definite charge made against the Officers of the association."

Mr Reynolds "was called upon to reply" and said that "the school had always overspent its allowance [!], but it was not until 1926 that they [sic] had been definitely surcharged." In defending his position, he lamented "that he had always extended a friendly hand to the association and had always worked hard in its interests throughout his 4 years of presidency, but the only return he had ever received had been rudeness ... he could not understand the inexplicable rudeness of Mr Hill [the Assistant Treasurer] ... Mr Aish had abused his position as Chairman, insulted and very nearly killed the Association. If they wanted to work together in the future there must be a definite change of feeling", whereupon one of the Committee "drew attention to the

unpleasant position of the members of the staff and Messrs Wood, Crisp, Sankey and Chapman accordingly withdrew."

The Committee promptly and unanimously then passed "*an unqualified vote of confidence in Mr Hill*" but instructed him to pay "*the bills in full, at once*". On considering its next step the Committee resolved "*that owing to the constant misunderstandings which arose between it and the Headmaster, and recognising the impossibility of working with him for the welfare of the Association, it approves the appointment of a deputation of 4 members to place the views of the committee before the Governors of the school with a view to readjusting the relations between the school and the Association.*" So once again, as with Mr Nicholson, the Governors were to be involved to settle a dispute between the Association and its President.

Luckily, at the meeting in May 1927, we read that the Governors had stated that while they "*must uphold the Headmaster in his position as Headmaster ... at the same time they were resolved that the O.F.A. must continue to exist and, they hoped, prosper and that they could not consider the possibility of its severance from the school. They therefore asked the Headmaster and the Association to forget the past and endeavour to work together in harmony for their mutual benefit*", and that both parties accept the Governors' wise counsels. The Committee resolved to express "*its sincere appreciation of the action of the Governors in receiving its deputation and is unanimously resolved loyally to proceed on the lines indicated by the Governors and in all good faith to go ahead and do everything in its power to further the best interests of the School and the Association*", while Mr Reynolds "*stated his willingness*" to accept the Governors' recommendations in the same spirit. Thus a crisis threatening the very existence of the Association was averted. At the meeting that September "*Mr Bonnet then stated that having regard to the phenomenal year gone by, the thanks of the Association and the committee were due to its officers ... for the eminently successful way in which they had conducted affairs.*" We can guess how Leslie Bonnet would have defined "phenomenal" in this context!

At this latter meeting it was also resolved "*that the Rugby Club be amalgamated with the Old Fullers' Association*" and that "*the O.F.A. Chairman, old boy secretary and hon. asst. treasurer should be the Association's representatives on the O.F.R.C committee ... By this means it was hoped that a united and harmonious arrangement would be reached and that the new club would be able to manage its own domestic affairs without interference and that the results would be of benefit to the Association, the Rugby Club and the school.*"

This general resolution was carried at the A.G.M. in October 1927 when it was also stated "*that the Rugby Club has its own President*".

At this A.G.M. changing times were reflected in the report of the Secretary, Mr Bales, when he "*doubted whether through the changed modern conditions that the time-honoured Annual Bohemian Concert had not lost some of its attraction and importance and ... that it was a question for serious consideration ... as to whether it should be included again in the new [social] programme.*" Mr Hill, the Assistant Treasurer who had crossed swords so vividly with Mr Reynolds earlier that year, was able to state "*that for the first time in the history of the Association they had got a substantial balance in hand and therefore he considered it an excellent opportunity to put matters on a more business-like footing, by creating a reserve fund. There was no reason why this fund should not be added to each year, and the Association could then feel that it was not so vitally dependent on immediate revenue*", a proposition which was carried unanimously, with the new fund's assets to be "*invested in Government stock with accumulative dividends.*"

In discussion at the end of the meeting it was sadly agreed that in view of "*changed conditions and increasing competition in the town and from the wireless*" the Bohemian Concert, which in "*recent years ... had not been a success*", should "*be abandoned, and something different held in its place, this to be left to the Committee.*" This spelt the end of an era in the annals of the Association.

At this A.G.M. also, Mr H. Sankey, the current joint Secretary appointed from the masters at the School, did not stand for re-election, and despite representations to Mr Reynolds, none of his colleagues could be found to work in tandem with Mr Bales, the O.F. Secretary. It was to be five years before another master was to be persuaded to do so. Although it was not always clear how the joint Secretaries divided their responsibilities, it would seem that to a large extent, the master holding the office was a precursor of the "*Master (elected by his colleagues)*" who currently under Rule 12 of the Association, functions as a valued member of the General Committee as the School representative and a link between the President and School authorities on one hand and the Committee on the other.

Later that month the Committee recorded with shame that "*it was realised that the old boys' notes in the [Fullerian] magazine had for some time been very poor and that the last term's notes were frankly disgraceful. It was felt that an effort should be made to make these notes more intimate and up-to-date, and Mr C. W. Gribble [who was to become Chairman in 1932] consenting, he was unanimously elected to fill the role of magazine contributor.*" One hopes that as a result, news of old boys, for so long reported in print by the late Mr Herbert Lister and currently the responsibility of John Cook, is still conveyed to the satisfaction of the membership.

At the Annual Dinner at Buck's restaurant on the 23rd March 1928 the **Watford Observer** was able to report, "*This function was more than a success; it was a triumph ... Good fellowship was the driving force behind and in this function. Here was a gathering of men of nearly all ages slipping back to the days of glorious fellowship in the class-room and on the playing fields. In spirit, they were schoolboys again; they were taking part in a grown-up schoolboys' party. The gay abandon of care-free youth pulsed through the speeches of the Old Fullerian spokesmen; they pulled each other's legs mercilessly, and often subtly, and the harder the tugging the more the listeners - and the victims, too - enjoyed the gentle sport. Good pals are privileged to say most disrespectful things to one another: the breezier the salutation the more unorthodox the 'compliment', the greater the degree of affection*

thereby implied. Because goodwill and sportsmanship prevails among the Old Fullarians as a common possession, their speakers can be very free in their mode of reference to one another on after-dinner occasions", and copious examples of "gems of playful wit" followed. Though the **Watford Observer** would never report present-day Annual Dinners in the same vein, or indeed at anything like the same length (a pity!), the same spirit may be said to inform them, to the benefit and enjoyment of all concerned.

In March 1929 the Committee's attention "was drawn to the abuse of O.F.A. ties", and at the A.G.M. the following May, the Secretary "remarked on the widespread popularity of the Association colours, but drew attention with regret to the unfortunate abuse of the privilege of wearing them and appealed to all members to help as far as possible in seeing that only those entitled to wear them did so", a vigilance perhaps not required so earnestly to-day. He also reported that the number of issues of the **Fullerian** posted to members had been reduced from three to one annually to save too great an element of the revenue from subscriptions being expended on this item; the one issue to be sent henceforth would be made up into an old boys' edition, and a compound annual subscription of 4/- including the magazine would be levied.

Mr Jones, the School secretary, had more and more work to perform for the School, and after a letter from him pointing this out had been read at the A.G.M., it was decided to increase his honorarium to £8.

It was on this occasion that reference was made to "the old original minutes book [of the Association] dating back to 1894 ... many of its records were now but memories ... shewing how the finances of the Association had improved since those days ... it was unanimously agreed to have this book and its successor suitably preserved in proper binding [and] that the [**Fullerian**] might well reproduce in the old boys' notes ... certain interesting extracts." It should be added that in September 1929 "a letter was read from Mr Reynolds expressing his willingness to have the first Minute Book bound at his own expense ...

The offer was accepted with unanimous approval and thanks", and that "Messrs C. E. Taylor [Chairman back in 1921] and W. E. Hill [then the current Chairman, having resigned from the hot seat of Assistant Treasurer the year before] then announced their desire to undertake the expense of the binding of the second and third Minute Books", which led to a unanimous vote of thanks to all three "for their generosity in the matter." There are always some loath to see traditional functions lost without a struggle, and at this meeting the "advisability of holding a Bohemian Concert was discussed, but the general opinion was that the time was not propitious for this event to be revived." Three separate sub-committees (Socials, Annual Dance and Annual Dinner) were elected on this occasion, and the prospect of a fourth in a lost cause was obviously too much to contemplate.

At the Annual Dinner on the 7th March 1930, Mr Hill ("*known and loved by all old boys as 'Joe' "*", reported the **Watford Observer**) said that "*To sit in the chair at such a function must be the peak of an Old Boy's ambition. Everything had been made congenial to him through the wonderful spirit which pervaded everything connected with the Association*", sentiments to be echoed by all of us privileged to have passed through the chair of the Association over the years. Mr Reynolds was pleased to report that "*The Old Fullerians' Association were getting somewhere near the first half of their first thousand, and the School had passed the 650 mark for the first time, in spite of a stiff exam! ... 'There seems to be a great demand for boys who are educated at the School', he said ... as the school grew, so must the building. Last year, the classrooms had increased; now they were to have a new science building.*" Another speaker, referring to the School, said "*This centre of culture and education through the centuries has gone to make Watford what it is to-day, and has been the means of spreading out through the world a message that has come from this centre.*" Would that such tributes could still be read in to-day's local press!

In his speech 'Joe' Hill had also expressed his pleasure that in two months' time he would be succeeded as Chairman by Leslie Bonnet, but three weeks before the A.G.M. the latter sadly "*reported*

that contrary to precedent he [the current Vice-Chairman] would be unable to succeed Mr Hill as Chairman [and] regretted that domestic reasons would make it impossible", and so it came about that Bill Bales succeeded to the Chair instead at the A.G.M. on the 29th May, which featured "a comprehensive explanation of the Bath-Scheme ... it should be built at the top of the field roughly approximating with the position of the old Rifle Range. The Bath would be 100' x 36', its depth varying from 3' 6" to 8'," and thus a long cherished project referred to earlier several times neared realisation at an estimated cost of £1,200, building to be commenced once £800 had been collected. Full details of the specification for the bath are recorded in the minutes including "Lean-to shed one side and end, £100", "Chloronome apparatus, £100" and "Water Chute, £10".

At the December Committee meeting that year, another era was recorded to have ended when *"the Chairman referred to the recent passing away of Mr E. J. Slinn who had held the Office of Hon. Treasurer to the Association since its inception in 1894. He had been the Grand Old Man of the Association for a number of years and as such had received the esteem and respect of all."* Extracts from the **Watford Observer** are preserved in the minute book under the headings *"A Pioneer in Watford's Development - Long Record of Public Service"*. Mr Slinn, who was within two months of his 92nd birthday, had been elected a Governor of the then Watford Endowed Schools in January 1890 and Chairman of Governors in October 1914 on the death of Lord Clarendon, which position he had held at the time of his death. His last public function in connexion with Dame Fuller's foundation had been only that July, when he had laid the foundation stone of the additions to the Girls' School. A letter from his daughter expresses her *"most sincere thanks for the very beautiful flowers you all so kindly sent in remembrance of my dear Father"*, and his name is still commemorated in the annual Biology Prize awarded to a member of the Upper Sixth. However, it is true to say that the post of Treasurer of the Association had been for the most part of his tenure of 36 years a mere sinecure, and it was no surprise that it was agreed that at the following A.G.M. *"the post of Asst. Hon. Treasurer should lapse"*; Basil Spratling, the last holder of this post, became Chairman on this

occasion, and was succeeded after interim tenure of the Treasurership by Mr J. F. Hales, although the former in his turn succeeded Bill Bales as Treasurer of the Swimming-Bath Fund. The A.G.M. on the 28th May 1931 in fact proved insufficiently quorate to enable the rule relating to the Assistant Treasurership to be amended - there were only "*about 15 members*" present (one would have thought a precise total possible in the circumstances!), and so this was not formally brought about until the 1932 A.G.M.

Hints of further dissatisfaction between President and Committee resurface in the minutes of the meeting of the 24th September 1931, when Mr Reynolds reported that the swimming bath, while being "*in an advanced state of completion*", would incur an ultimate expenditure "*in the neighbourhood of £2,000. Contributions to date were £1,100.*" Changing sheds (still **in situ** virtually unchanged) and the almost quadrupled cost of the "Chloronome" at £375 had contributed to this, and "*Mr Aish expressed surprise that the Old Fullerians' Association had not been approached before the estimates were accepted, especially in view of the fact that they so heavily exceeded the original estimate of £1,200. He voiced what was unfortunately felt, that the Association had been overlooked at a critical time and there was reason for the Committee to be hurt by this attitude.*" Fortunately Mr Reynolds did not abruptly leave the room, as he had done four years before, but "*replied that he had acted as he thought best at the moment and that there had been no intention whatever of slighting the Association. If that impression had been created he was very sorry. As regards the increased expenditure he considered that when the Boys and the Old Boys saw the Bath, they would agree that it was an excellent effort. The Chairman thanked Mr Reynolds for his remarks, but expressed himself as being perturbed by the financial situation.*"

Golfers will be interested that in December 1931, the Watford Amenities Preservation Society wrote "*asking whether the Association was in favour of the proposed acquisition of the West Herts Golf Course by the Borough Council.*" It was unanimously agreed "*that the Secretary should write expressing the willingness of the Association to*

support this project, strictly on the understanding that no financial onus was entailed."

Social events continued their merry round, though occasionally not all went smoothly; in March 1932 a Mr Sainsbury was reported to have written to complain "*(i) that there should have been a parade at the Fancy Dress Dance, (ii) that the lighting of the Hall on that occasion was inadequate, and (iii) that the tempo of the Band was too slow*", which points were "*noted*" without further recorded comment, and the Annual Dinner made a loss of £6/1/- "*in view of the fact that the attendance had been badly affected by influenza*". At the same meeting the Secretary reported correspondence with a member who "*had thought it better that he should resign from the Association owing to the unfortunate circumstances which had arisen from certain proceedings*", but a no doubt commendable reticence prevents us at this distance of time from learning the precise nature of such "*proceedings*"!

At the A.G.M. in May 1932, Rule 6 was further amended to allow for the election in future of "*one or two Secretaries*" of the Association. It had been five years since a master (Mr Sankey) had held a joint Secretaryship on behalf of his colleagues, but on this occasion Mr S. F. Whiteley agreed to fill the vacancy at Mr Reynolds' suggestion. The meeting also heard Mr Reynolds say "*that any member who had paid his guinea sub. could use the Bath this season.*" This was all the more necessary as that July it was complained "*that some members of the Association were using the Swimming Bath who were not entitled to do so. In order to stop this abuse [8 members of the Committee] volunteered to pay periodical visits to the Bath with the object of asking users for their Membership Cards.*" At that meeting it was also reported "*that Mr Reynolds was confined to his bed with Ptomaine poisoning*", however that might have come about, and the Chairman sent him a letter of sympathy.

In September 1932, Mr R. Wood "*stated that he had heard that some Old Boys using the Swimming Bath had formed an Old Boys Swimming Club and asked whether the Committee were aware of the*

fact. ... it was decided that nothing should be done until the Committee had been officially approached."

A pleasant gesture not made to-day came in November when *"the Chairman suggested that a Xmas Card from the Association should be sent to all Overseas members. After discussion the Secretaries were instructed to attend to this matter and to include all Old Boys residing outside the London area."*

Another practice maintained to this day was initiated in October 1933 when it was agreed *"that the Association could do more to increase its membership by getting in touch with boys leaving the School and acquainting them of the objects and desirability of joining the Association ... [and] that the Secretary should obtain the names of the boys."*

At the A.G.M. that year, Mr Reynolds *"spoke of the difficulty of holding dances in the School Hall owing to the oily nature of the preparation which was put down on the floor. As a means of getting over the difficulty he strongly urged the Association to purchase a portable Dance Floor"*, and this was done after much deliberation, the Committee noting in January 1934 *"that the floor had been used at the Xmas party and had proved satisfactory for dancing."* Not everything had been satisfactory on that occasion, for *"Owing to the bad behaviour of Messrs N. Handley and B. Thompson at the Xmas Party, the Secretary was asked to write to these members pointing out the offence [unspecified, alas!] and informing them that they would not be allowed tickets for the next Social."* The Dance Floor by the way, was made by the National Flooring Company and cost £139, a good year's wages for a worker at that time!

In May 1934, the 41st A.G.M. saw Mr B. T. W. Seeley elected as *"Chairman for the coming season"* and we are delighted that Dick Seeley is still with us, 60 years later, at the time of writing, as the senior Vice-President of the Association. It was in his year of office that *"Mr Spratling informed the Committee that Mr Rous was leaving the School to take up duties elsewhere and in view of the fact that he had*

given wholehearted support to the Association he would like a presentation made from the Committee." Each member of the Committee duly subscribed half-a-crown and in November that year the Chairman reported that he had presented the future Sir Stanley Rous with a tea service.

In January 1935, a suggestion was made for the first time and not the last time, when the Secretary reported "*that Messrs James Walker were anxious to make Old Fullerian Cuff Links, these links to have the School crest on one side and the Fullerian colours on the other*", and after discussion "*it was agreed that Messrs Walker should be given permission to sell these links.*"

By now, Mr Reynolds had secured his goal of achieving membership of the Headmasters' Conference on behalf of the School, and he proudly reported at the 1935 A.G.M. that "*the School had again sent a team to the Public School Sports in the spring and one boy had achieved the creditable position of 3rd in the 100 yards.*" He thanked the Association "*for what had now become an annual subscription of three guineas to the Sports Prize Fund.*" Dick Seeley proposed that the Association subscribe to the Jubilee Trust for King George V and ten guineas was voted accordingly; at the end of the meeting "*a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Seeley, the retiring Chairman, was carried unanimously*" on his having been described as "*one of the most energetic Chairmen the Association had ever had.*"

The Watford Amenities Preservation Society [this time recorded as the "*Watford Amenities Association*"] resurfaced that year in the minutes when they wrote "*asking for support in the scheme [of the Watford Borough Council] for the preservation of Whippendell Woods*", and the A.G.M. gladly gave its "*cordial support*". That July, "*Mr Bales recommended that more news of developments in the School should be given in the Old Fullerian number of the School magazine.* Mr Voss [H. E. Voss, to become Chairman in 1937] *suggested that a separate Old Boys magazine might eventually be run*", thus anticipating another future practice.

The Association ties have varied over the years; in October 1935 an offer was reported "*from Messrs J. P. Taylor to supply the Association with ties of a registered design ... It was proposed to incorporate the School Crest in the design at present in use.*" It was subsequently agreed in February 1936 "*that the new design should be registered for 5 years*" at a cost of 10/-, and the following month it was further agreed "*that the sheaves should be included in the design.*"

In May 1936 it was unanimously agreed "*that a letter should be sent to Mr Nicholson, who was retiring from Taunton School owing to ill health, expressing the hope of the O.F.A. for a speedy recovery.*"

At the A.G.M. in May 1937 it was resolved to amend Rule 6 yet again by providing that the Committee number "*not less than 10 and not more than 16 ... and one master elected by the staff*", this being carried by 16 votes to 10. Thus was yet another current practice begun. The first master to represent his colleagues thus was Mr F. R. Price.

That year, suggestions for the formation of a Debating Society (echoing the earlier custom of the Association) and a Cycling Club came before the Committee. Also it was agreed "*that the Association should in the future keep Dame Fuller's tomb in repair*" and that the Secretary "*approach unofficially the Old Girls' Association with the view that they may from time to time place flowers thereon*", but it must be admitted that the Foundress' tomb has not been "*kept in repair*" by the Association, the most recent attention paid to it having been that of a couple of pupils at the Girls' School who in 1990 cleaned it thoroughly on their own initiative and were thanked for their pains by the writer as the then Chairman of the O.F.A., perhaps with a sense of shame that the Association had been shown up thus!

On the 19th January 1938, it is recorded in purple ink that a Committee meeting was held at the School, with the names of those present, but that "*in the absence of the Secretary, no minutes were taken of this meeting.*" So posterity is none the wiser!

In April 1938 *"it was decided to collaborate with the Governors, Staff and School in presenting a portrait to Mr Reynolds on his retirement and that ... the Association could probably raise £30 ... Mr Seeley kindly consented to act as Hon. Treasurer to the fund."*

The 1938 A.G.M. saw it resolved that membership of the Association was a prerequisite for membership of any affiliated club, but it was also agreed that *"instead of paying separate subscriptions to their Club and to the Association, members of the Old Fullerians' Rugby Club and Swimming Club [now formally established] pay one composite subscription"*, in the case of the former for full playing members 25/-, 4/- of which was to be paid over to the Association, and in the case of the latter 6/6 for full members, 4/- again being payable to the Association. Amongst the new members elected to the Committee on this occasion was Mr [later Sir] Frederick Pedler, subsequently to pass through the Chair in 1942 and 1946 and to become Chairman of the Governors of the School, a stalwart supporter of both School and Association sadly no longer with us.

PART 5 - THE SECOND WORLD WAR

That September Mr Percy Bolton became the new President of the Association and was welcomed by the Chairman, Mr J. B. (Jim) Scott, who "*hoped his associations with the Old Boys would be one of many happy contacts. The Headmaster suitably replied.*" The Chairman then "*explained a scheme he would like to see carried out with a view to enlarging and amplifying the scope of the Association*", and a sub-committee was appointed to consider the suggestions made, with the rider that it "*should meet a deputation of past Chairmen to enable fuller views to be obtained, the Chairman to write personally to past Chairmen.*" The first decision arising from the sub-committee's recommendations was to establish a Careers Advisory Panel "*in order to help members in planning their careers*", the Secretary of the Panel being the Mr F. J. Pedler recently recruited to the Committee. It was agreed in February 1939 that a copy of the sub-committee's recommendations, which with some small amendments was accepted as a basis for action, be inserted in the minute book, but if it was it seems regrettably to have fallen out of it since. However, the extracts quoted for amendment give a fair flavour of the tenor of the whole. One amendment accepted and raised more recently was: "*It is desirable that a record should be kept in the School of Presidents and past Chairmen of the Association, if practicable in the form of scrolls attached to the notice board.*" Perhaps one or two of the several vacant wall panels in the hall might yet be given over for the purpose with gilt lettering matching that elsewhere on the various honours boards?

That April "*Mr Pedler gave a survey of the progress of [the Careers Advisory Panel]. He had now 50 names covering 46 professions, and the Committee congratulated him on the excellent results.*" At the A.G.M. the following month the Secretary, speaking of the Panel, "*expressed the hope that many more members would allow their names to be added, this being a very real way in which the Association could help the School ... he felt that the past year would go down in the history of the Association as an outstanding one because of this movement, and expressed the opinion that the membership would in time attain the realm of thousands.*" The optimism in this remark was perhaps reflected in the recommendations put forward at the end of the meeting "*that anyone with*

any definite schemes for the bringing into being of an O.F. Club House should submit them to the Committee for consideration." Financial and Membership sub-committees were formed that year to discuss ways and means of expanding the work of the Association; but events were taking a sinister turn in the outside world and that September, in the words of the history of the school by W. G. Hughes and M. Sweeney, *"the red fool fury of war again was let loose."* Consequently in October 1939 *"the question of future activity of the Association was discussed in the light of War Conditions and it was unanimously decided that nothing could be done at present."* Mr Scott had drafted a brochure for the Association in furtherance of his aims, but in March 1940 it was regretfully decided that while *"Mr Scott had done an admirable piece of work ... the matter, owing to the time, was left ..."*. Another possibility considered at the same meeting was the establishment of *"a Fund for assisting necessitous cases of boys leaving school."* The following month a revised version of the draft brochure prepared by Mr P. A. Horton (who became Chairman that May) was considered (*"a copy is attached hereto"*, but again sadly no longer), but it was agreed *"that in the present circumstances the expense was not warranted ... [though] this should be one of the first things to be done when times again became normal."*

The work of the Association continued throughout the war, even if it was soon acknowledged that the latter *"had, of course, seriously curtailed activities."* In July 1940 it was recorded that *"as the School Hall had now been 'blacked out', it was decided to start the session with the Autumn Social, followed by the Xmas Party"*, and that the Annual Dinner be continued. However, that November *"it was agreed that the Christmas Party be cancelled but that every effort should be made to hold the Annual Dinner as usual. Mr Bolton pointed out the undesirability of holding Dances at School under present conditions in view of the fact that there are large windows in the Hall, and the responsibility of the School Authorities in the event of there being any casualties on the premises. Also the black-out of the Hall is not too good and the lights would have to be considerably dimmed at night."* In February 1941 the Dinner Sub-Committee reported *"that the A.B.C. Restaurant were approached but they were unable to cater owing to the war-time conditions. The Odeon*

Restaurant was then approached but this was found impracticable for our requirements. The Sub-Committee then decided to accept Messrs Buck's quotation of from 6/6 to 7/- per head ..." and it was reported that May that "there were 50 dinners served and it was generally agreed that those present had a very enjoyable and successful evening", the loss of £8/8/4 being "a similar amount to that incurred in previous years."

At the A.G.M. in May 1941, a joint Secretaryship was revived *"in order that Mr Stallworthy could hand over immediately upon being called up for military service"*, his partner being a master at the School, Mr A. H. Cooper who by virtue of his profession, was exempt from military service. Other members agreed to continue their duties until they should be called up. A suggestion was considered that *"informal evenings should be held periodically in order that members should get to know one another [but] it was felt impracticable for this to be done under war conditions although in the past some very successful smoking evenings had been held."* It should also be noted that in addition to Mr Price's representing the School staff, A. N. Scott who had just left the School, was elected at this meeting for the purpose of representing immediate past leavers.

In the minutes of the Committee meeting on the 30th January 1942, it is recorded that amongst those attending was Mr A. J. Southern *"deputising for the Rugby Club representative"* (the late W. G. (Bill) Judge). Tony Southern (not the first of his line to be a member of the Committee) has of course been a substantive member of the Committee for over 30 years now, and in addition to holding the offices of both Secretary and Registrar of the Association, has passed through the Chair twice, in 1974 and 1989. He is currently the oldest member of the Committee and we look forward to many years' active service from him yet. Amongst his many family connexions with the School, it may be mentioned that his grandfather was Clerk of the Works to the Governors in the building of the present school premises in the Rickmansworth Road.)

At the A.G.M. in May 1942, it was recorded that the Association numbered 473 members, with 199 serving, and that social activities for the season had been limited to the Annual Dinner, *"a very*

successful function, 83 being present as against 50 in 1941." At the Dinner, Cannon Thorpe, one of the Governors, had suggested that an Association Annual service be held, and it was reported at the A.G.M. *"that Canon Thorpe approved of the suggestion that the Service be a joint function with the Girls' O.F.A. [sic]"*, whereupon it was unanimously resolved *"That this meeting welcomes the suggestion of an Annual Service ... in conjunction with the Girls' O.F.A."*. Sadly the lack of support in more recent years led to this service being abandoned, those O.F.s sufficiently interested (usually some of the Committee and a few others) now attending the School's Founder's Day Service each May in St Mary's, when places for them are normally reserved in the sanctuary. The first O.F.A. service was held on 31st July 1942.

At this A.G.M., the Rugby Club reported that it had been *"found possible to run one team throughout the season 1941/42. matches played 17, won 7"*, while the Swimming Club reported *"that membership had increased during the season by 17, from 44 to 61, a record gain since the club started in 1933."*

In January 1943 *"Mr F. R. Price having been appointed Headmaster of the Secondary School, Weston-Super-Mare, the Secretary was instructed to write to Mr Price conveying the Association's congratulations on his appointment and also their thanks for his valuable services ... the question of a successor [to] be determined by consultation with Mr Bolton."* At the A.G.M. on the 28th May 1943, Mr Price's successor, *"elected by Staff"*, was confirmed as Mr F. H. Thompson. Tommy Thompson, still happily taking an active interest in the affairs of the Association, and who was a member of the School staff for an exceptional 43 years from 1931 to 1974, was to represent his colleagues on the Committee for 31 years until his retirement. Great is the indebtedness of the Association to 'Tommy' for all his services and kindness in so many ways in this capacity as in others, and I hope that to record this here without further elaboration will not be criticized as grossly inadequate, although were the charge to be made I should feel obliged to admit it.

It was also reported on this occasion that *"the Trophy presented by the Association to the School A.T.C., as agreed a year ago, had taken the form of a Sextant ... with a plate engraved on the box"*; receipt *"had*

been acknowledged by a letter of thanks from the Officer-in Charge, Mr Imeson, and ... the instrument was in regular and valuable use."
Where is it now?

Arrangements were also made *"for July leavers to be addressed by the Chairman"*, and this practice continues to the present day, now being followed in the evening by a reception down at the New Field in the Rous Pavilion to which one hopes those invited are drawn by more than the customary offer of an initial drink *"on the house"*.

At the A.G.M. in May 1944, it was reported that *"The Association sustained a great loss during the year by the death of Mr E. Reynolds, who was President for many years and a Vice President since his retirement in 1938. His signal services to the Association during his life-time did not mark the limit of his keen interest in the activities of the Old Fullerians, as he left a legacy of £200 to the funds of the Association."*

That October *"The Hon. Sec. reported that the question of the formation of a Dramatic Society (O.F.A or O.F.) had been mentioned to him by Mr Moore ... and it was agreed that Mr Bolton should discuss the matter with Mr Moore and report to the Committee."* There was also consideration of the *"further question of an O.F.A. Orchestra"* (the previous venture having lapsed), and *"in both cases the need for a Club House was stressed."*

The war thankfully ended in May 1945 as far as Europe was concerned, and the stage was set for the Association to resume its normal activities (and some new ones). That month's A.G.M. saw the unanimous approval in principle of the formation of the O.F.A. Dramatic Society (subsequently to win many praises as the Fullerian Players, but now unfortunately no longer in existence, for the time being at least), and the Secretary reported *"that Mr A. J. Southern had undertaken the task of getting a team together"* for the annual cricket match against the School. Its first fifty years behind it, the Association had now begun its second fifty, again not without trials and tribulations but for the most part marked by a pattern of success and camaraderie that has continued ever since.

PART 6 - VENTURES NEW

Much of the minutes of committee meetings in 1945 is devoted to the drafting and approval of the constitution of the Fullerian Players, who were eventually reported to have held their inaugural meeting on the 17th November that year, when a Provisional Committee of the Players was appointed, the Association representative on it being the then current Chairman Mr F. G. Helsby.

At the Committee meeting on the 18th January 1946, *"Mr Bolton reported that a committee representing the O.F.A., Old Boys, the Fullerian Masonic Lodge, parents and others interested was in process of formation to consider the question of an Old Fullerian War Memorial"*, the proposals of this committee subsequently being stated to *"include (a) a Book of Remembrance, (b) The erection of four Fives Courts on the School Grounds near the Swimming Baths. Cost of (b) estimated at £2,200"*, and as we know, the realization of these plans is still very much in evidence to-day. Another affiliated club came into being in May 1946 when Committee members considered *"the suggestion for an Old Fullerian Tennis Club, to be composed of members of the O.F.A. and O.G.A. The Committee approved the formation of such a club"*, and another bout of Drafting the rules of a constitution followed. At the A.G.M. that month, *"Mr J. G. Moore gave an account of the successful initiation of the [Dramatic] Society [the Fullerian Players], and of the great success of its first production."* Rule 6 of the Association constitution was amended for the umpteenth time in several ways, including allowing for the representation on the Committee of affiliated clubs by one or (in the case of the Rugby and Swimming Clubs) more persons, and the settlement of the quorum on its present level of seven. The school-leavers' representative on the Committee, it may be mentioned, was the personal nominee of the President.

The School Secretary, Mr Jones, who had been toiling on the Association's behalf for almost twenty years by then, managed to secure an increase in his annual *"remuneration for clerical assistance ... to £10/10/- subject to annual revision. The Chairman [expressed] the appreciation of the Committee for the excellent service he had always given to the Association."* At this same meeting, *"the Chairman read a letter from Mrs Reynolds [the widow of the late President] stating her interest in the*

association, and asking if she could become a member. It was pointed out that under Rule 2 [now Rule 4(a)] *Honorary members could be elected at the discretion of the Committee*", and Mrs Reynolds was duly elected by 8 votes to 3 with 2 abstentions. Subsequently she was elected a Vice-President, the only woman to date to be so honoured.

In the minutes of the Committee meeting of the 7th November 1946, we read that "*Messrs Hughes and Southern* [not A.J., but brother P.] *were invited to the meeting to put their views on the formation of a cricket club. Mr Pedler advised the meeting that with Hughes and Southern he had visited the Headmaster and put various proposals before him, to which he agreed, the chief being the use of a short pitch or home matches during the summer months. Mr Bolton the advised that no changing accommodation could be provided at the School owing to lack of space and that there would be difficulty over catering, but he was prepared to give the Club any facility he was able.*" Dick Hughes, later to become Chairman of the Association in 1962 and 1963 and still a Vice-President of the Cricket Club, was asked to form a committee for the infant club, and thus was initiated what is perhaps by common consent the most active section affiliated to the Association to-day, and certainly one of its most distinguished (though as a Vice President of the Club himself, the writer must plead a pardonable bias!). This meeting marked a milestone for the Association in more ways than one, for later on it is recorded "*The following members were elected: P. G. Ausden, J. S. Ausden ...*", and the contribution of the Associations best known twins to its affairs in more recent decades will be amply attested - but at this juncture they were raw 16-year-old school-leavers!

Possibly with the requirements of the new Cricket Club in mind, Mr Bolton proposed in February 1947, "*that the association should ... endeavour to accrue a credit balance for the ultimate purchase of grounds and club house ... [and] that the [annual] subscription be increased to 10/-.*" This was carried, as was a following proposal to raise the life membership rate to six guineas, and both were ratified at the subsequent A.G.M. At the same meeting, the Committee agreed "*that £100 be donated towards the School memorial fund.*" The April meeting saw "*Mr L. F. Horton, the Secretary of the newly formed Cricket Club ...*

introduced as a member of the Committee." However, it was stated later on that the Club had pointed out in a letter from Mr Horton that as matters stood, they were entitled to be allowed one representative only on the Committee, whereas the Rugby Club were entitled to three and the Swimming Club two, and it was agreed to set up yet another sub-committee to look into how the representation of affiliated clubs might be regularized and made consistent, with the entirely proper outcome to-day that each club is allowed one and no more.

Under a heading "*Old Fullerians want 2,000 members*", the report in the **Watford Observer** of the Annual Dinner at Buck's on the 28th March 1947, reported Mr Bolton "*not wholly satisfied, however, with the growth of the Association. He felt that in view of the strength of the School they should have some 1,000 or 2,000 members. There had been a movement to start an Old Boys' Cricket Club. He hoped this spirit would spread throughout the Society [sic]. He would like to see them with their own clubrooms and grounds, and running their activities in full force, as some neighbouring schools had done.*" Were Mr Bolton to be alive to-day he would have good grounds to repeat his complaint about the number of Old Fullerians who were members of the Association, especially in view of the fact that at the time of writing there are more boys at the school than O.F.A. members. We still want 2,000 members - and more - and should be able to recruit them.

A later paragraph in the same report records Mr Bolton as an innovator on the games field at the School in the same way as his predecessor, Mr Reynolds, though perhaps more cautiously: "*It was hoped to introduce hockey in the Lent term. He reassured the rugby die-hards that it would not displace football.*"

That May it was reported at the A.G.M. that the Rugby Club had attained its majority with its 21st annual report, and that the Cricket Club, officially inaugurated at a meeting on the 4th March 1947, now had 24 playing members and 12 non-playing members, with two Vice-Presidents, and that 19 fixtures had been arranged to date. One match had been "*lost owing to absence of five regular members for Whitsun holiday*", a problem which the Club has unfortunately had to cope with on occasion ever since,

though thanks to John Cook's devoted labours as Team Secretary (and much else) over the years, such mishaps have been very few and far between.

In December 1947, the suggestion was revived *"of the O.F.A. running its own magazine. It was pointed out by Mr Thompson that the O.F. magazine was the complement to the School magazine and vice versa, and in its present form, the School magazine brought to the knowledge of all boys at the school the existence of the association."* Now, of course, the Association has its own newsletter **and** its own section in the **Fullerian**.

It may be recorded in passing that for 1947/8, Mr H. G. Tuley functioned as both Chairman and Treasurer, his succession to the former office in May 1947 having been necessitated at short notice by the illness of the Chairman-designate Mr H. Flint, who himself had acted as Chairman for the latter part of the previous Association year owing to the absence in Africa of Mr F. J. Pedler during his second term in the Chair. However, the custom is that the Chairman holds no other office concurrently.

In March 1948, Mr Tuley issued a report on behalf of a sub-committee established to investigate the purchase or rental of a sports ground for the Association. It had *"carefully considered the practicability of purchasing land available between Bucknalls Lane and North Orbital Road for ... £500 per acre"*, but had learnt that £150 per acre was a more reasonable rate and that land might eventually be available for £40 per acre, with the result that it had been concluded that *"the proposed purchase of the Bucknalls Lane ground ... was beyond our resources and was not suitable as a location for a central club house."* It was a case of back to the drawing board and looking elsewhere. Annual costs were estimated at £100 exclusive of a loan and incidental charges of another £100 or so, but while it was proposed that *"the annual costs should be borne by the Rugby and Cricket Clubs ... the Rugby Club could probably do so but the Cricket Club is not strong enough financially to shoulder these costs."* At the same time *"Mr Horton was asked to see the member of the Cassiobury Wanderers, which is a football team composed mostly*

of Old Fullerians, regarding the formation of an Old Fullerian Association Football Club", another revival of interest which in its latest incarnation has pursued a continuous if occasionally tenuous existence since 1982.

it was also agreed that month to have the third volume of the Association's minutes properly bound at the Association's expense "*and to keep the minutes together in the possession of the Secretary*", although which one is unclear as the system of joint Secretaries, revived as a wartime measure, was still in practice in the persons of Messrs F. C. Whiteley and H. E. Voss. In addition, Mr Thompson reported the suggestion of the Cricket Club that the Association be approached "*with a view to holding a dance supported by each of the subsidiary [i.e. affiliated] clubs, in the Town Hall ... he suggested that it was time the Association started looking round for sources of income to accrue for ultimate use of purchasing a sports ground. The Committee approved of the suggestion ...*" and it was referred back to the Sports Ground Sub-Committee, who subsequently met at the Town Hall with a representative of the Old Grammarians' Association. Thus were set in motion the events leading to the series of Fullerian balls that were for so long a brilliant feature of the Association scene.

At the A.G.M. on the 20th May 1948, both Secretaries, Messrs Voss and Whiteley, did not stand for re-election, and Mr Philip Horton was elected Secretary in their place, with Mr D. J. Rarp as Assistant Secretary, a post which has come and gone in the past along with that of Assistant Treasurer, which on this occasion was left "*vacant until a suitable member could be found to serve in that capacity.*" The various affiliated clubs reported mixed fortunes (the Swimming Club representative stated that "*he could not report much organised activity, largely due to the fact that the Water Polo goals had become useless*", though "*the Club had provided new wood*" and "*there had been a considerable amount of enjoyment during the season*"). The Cricket Club "*now had 54 members, of whom 27 were playing members*", though absences "*in the Forces or at Universities*" had meant "*that not only was it impossible to raise a second XI, but there were even occasions when a full team could not be mustered.*" Moreover, later in the meeting,

"Mr Stimpson raised a point on behalf of certain members of the Association, not present, who were in the habit of playing for the Old Boys in the Annual Match versus the School. These members, not being members of the Old Fullerians' Cricket Club, now found that they were debarred from playing as since the formation of that Club, the Old Boys' team was selected entirely from its members." A response was asked of the Club Secretary, and at the next Committee meeting Mr Bolton pointed out that *"so far as this match is concerned the School asks the Cricket Club to play, and wider membership of the team does not, therefore, arise. The School would, however, be quite ready to consider arranging a second fixture, Past v. Present, in addition to the existing match, provided that a year's notice was given and the fixture was guaranteed"*, and the Committee *"welcomed this suggestion"*. It has often been the case that non-members of the Association and even non-O.F.s have played for the Club over the years, never mind those not members of the Club, and although this has from time to time been the cause of some heartsearching on the General Committee, the plain fact is that without their services, the Club would have had to call off many matches (and risk losing subsequent fixtures) for lack of a full side.

That generous character and long-time supporter of the Association, R. F. (Reg) Moore, was reported to have *"sent a donation of £25 ... to inaugurate a Sports Ground Fund"*, and it was agreed to accede to the donor's wishes.

Over the years, the rules of the Association have been revised many times, some more than others, but in 1948 a comprehensive revision was undertaken by a Revision of Rules Sub-Committee and the result approved formally at the A.G.M. in June 1949. The rules then broadly assumed the appearance they have to-day, though with exceptions here and there, and the old provision for joint Honorary Secretaries finally disappeared from print, the sole Secretary and Treasurer being empowered (under what was then Rule 7) to have an assistant each.

Another innovation of office occurred in November 1948 when *"it was agreed that it would be useful to appoint an Officer whose duty it would be to see that news about the Association appears in the press, and*

to ensure that every opportunity is taken to spread information about the Association. Mr (P. D.) Tyers kindly undertook to act in this capacity until he succeeds the Chairman at the next Annual General meeting."

In January 1949 *"it was reported that the congratulations of the Association had been conveyed to Mr Stanley Rous, upon whom the honour of Knighthood was to be conferred."* The Social Sub-Committee was busy with plans for functions, having already organized a *"most successful"* Christmas Party in the School hall with *"attendance in the neighbourhood of 290 persons ... it was possible to accommodate 300 persons, provided Buffet Catering was adopted, and a careful watch kept on the doors to prevent additional people joining the Party free of charge later in the evening."* The Fullerian Ball was well in hand, with no less than 442 tickets sold or reserved, and an Old Boys' Day was scheduled for the 2nd July, the first of many memorable such events now, alas! no longer in the Association calendar, although the School Summer Fairs may be commended as a reasonable substitute.

At this meeting *"Mr Bolton explained that he felt it desirable to have the names candidates for membership submitted to him prior to election, so that he was given an opportunity to acquaint the Committee with any facts which they should know regarding any particular candidate."* It was agreed to allow the President to vet candidates thus, but such scrutiny has not survived into a more tolerant (or easy-going) age.

The following month, attention was drawn to one point of interest regarding the minutes, when Mr Seeley reminded the Chairman and Hon. Secretary that it was *"a rule that all Minutes should be signed by the Chairman and Hon. Secretary"*, this arising from the fact that the Treasurer had written the minutes in the absence of the Secretary. It certainly had been the practice for minutes hitherto to be countersigned thus, but it was agreed that *"there was no rule making it essential for Minutes to be signed by any Member other than the Chairman, though it was agreed that certified extracts from the Minutes were usually given over the signatures of the Chairman and Secretary."*

The Annual Dinner on the 24th February 1949 at the Town Hall drew some 200 diners. Ron Groves was in the Chair, and among the guest speakers were the Rt. Hon. George Tomlinson M.P., Minister of Education (Labour it may be noted), and the newly created Sir Stanley Rous who declared "*The ties in this fellowship of Old Fullarians must never be broken.*" For his part, Mr Tomlinson declared "*For a school which had its origins in a churchyard, it [W.G.S.] is a very lively corpse!*"

In April 1949 "*the desirability of re-designing the Fullerian Tie was fully discussed*", attesting to a continuing periodic restlessness amongst the executive in this matter, and various possibilities were canvassed. In the end, it was decided at the following A.G.M. "*to retain the existing Fullerian Tie (with stripes and crests) as a Fullerian Sports Tie, and to arrange for supplies of a second tie in black with the crests, for those members who desired a more formal design*", and these are the patterns still obtaining to-day along with the recently resurrected pre-war pattern of stripes only in the Association colours. On this occasion "*Mr J. H. Blight drew attention to the fact that at some stage the Chilcot shield has been incorrectly reproduced, with the result that the Arms used at present are heraldically unsound. The Meeting was grateful to Mr Blight for his researches in this connection, and agreed that the arms should be corrected in future*", so any member with pre-1949 ties bearing the Chilcot shield may be interested to compare the incorrect and correct versions!

At this A.G.M. the agenda stated that "*the special attention of members is directed to the Notice of the Old Boys' Day which accompanies this Agenda. This is an entirely new function which the Committee feels will be greatly appreciated by our members*", and as hinted earlier, this certainly was the case. At the July Committee meeting "*one or two minor points of criticism were made but the Committee unanimously agreed that the Old Boys' Day was a great success and should be repeated each year. Tributes were paid to Mr Jarvis [C. H. R. Jarvis, to become Chairman in 1952] who, as the Social Convener, was responsible for the high standard of the organisation.*" At this meeting, another stalwart joined the ranks when "*the Committee welcomed Mr R. M. Godman who had agreed to*

act as Assistant Secretary to the Association", and it is still a pleasure to see Marcus at some of our functions.

In January 1950, the acquisition of a sports ground was discussed afresh when the Committee considered "*land at Langleybury and ... the terms offered by the County Council to grant the Association a lease for twenty-one years*", but resolved that "*the Association regrets that for financial reasons it is unable to take advantage of the Herts County Council's proposition and must reconcile itself to the land being used for agricultural purposes but would like to reconsider the matter at a future date when the land is not required urgently for agricultural purposes.*" Mr Jarvis "*promised to make an extensive investigation of the possibility of purchasing a large house with approximately six acres of ground adjacent ...*" and in a subsequent report proclaimed, after looking at three properties, "*The scheme is feasible, but THERE MUST BE HARD WORK AND MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT ON THE PART OF MEMBERS [his capitals].*" However, finance was again a problem, and at the A.G.M. on June 1950, the following resolution was carried unanimously: "*That all members of the Association be circulated with a view to ascertaining what amount they would pay in multiples of £5 by way of an investment in a private Limited Company to be formed in connection with the running of an Old Boys' Club and Sports Ground and that their cash should be sent with their replies and would they be willing to become members of the Club provisionally at 3 guineas per annum.*"

The second Old Boys' Day on the 8th July 1950, was as successful as its predecessor. The programme of events began with a cricket match featuring two School elevens against two Club elevens in simultaneous and adjacent games starting at 2.30 p.m., while the School played O.F.s at tennis on the School courts at the same time. From 3.30 to 5.30 p.m. buffet teas were served in the Hall, with photographs taken by Messrs Westwood and Nodes at 4.30 p.m. At 6 p.m. there was a match in the School baths between the School and the Swimming Club, followed by a dance in the Hall to the music of the Valetos Orchestra (M.C. S.E. [Stan] Worley), and ending at midnight with the National Anthem. Basil Stump, the social Convener, was congratulated on its success, even though a loss of "about £10" was incurred and "the queuing for tea and

arrangements for Tennis players' teas were criticized", as was the catering generally.

That September, the President's impending retirement was reported, when the Chairman was instructed "*to thank Mr Bolton for his generosity to the Association*", and in November he reported that Mr Gwynne Jones had already started on the portrait of Mr Bolton."

PART 7 - ACHIEVEMENT AND CRITICISM

In 1951, the possibility of attracting more younger members was discussed again, and Mr N. S. (Norman) Davies, to become Chairman in 1954, "*outlined a suggestion for forming a 'Younger Members' Section' "*, which he developed under the heading "*Young Fullerians' Club*" that February and March. However, it was agreed "*that Mr Davies should organize some function for the new leavers and younger members as part of the Association's programme without forming a club ... "* At the same time, proposals for a separate Association magazine were proceeded with, Stan Worley being appointed Editor and Press Officer, and Basil Stump Liaison Officer. It was thought that, with or without advertising, the first four issues could be guaranteed, although originally more ambitious plans had to be modified for the usual reasons of finance.

In April 1951, "*Mr Jarvis explained that he had obtained quotations for a Chairman's Jewel as he had intended to propose that the Association acquire one. He had had a design prepared and the estimate he had obtained was of £67.10.0d for the Jewel prepared in silver and gilt, such price was subject to purchase tax at 100% in addition. In view of this, Mr Jarvis did not intend to take the matter any further*", but his initiative was not forgotten and some thirty years later was successfully revived when the present insignia were commissioned and purchased, a handsome ornament on all Association occasions since.

A reception was organized for the new President, Mr H. A. Rée, who attended his first A.G.M., the Association's 58th, on Friday 22nd June 1951, when his predecessor's name was added to the list of Vice-Presidents. That July he informed the Committee "*that in the course of redecorating the School Hall, it had been agreed that the [1914-18] War Memorial should be resited*", seeking the Committee's views as to where, and the following month "*the Committee viewed the School Hall and agreed that the best site would be in the vestibule immediately behind the Book of Remembrance*", which is where it remains to-day.

In the meantime, Stan Worley had resigned as Press Officer and "*it was agreed to accept the resignation and also to drop the appointment*", but the magazine went ahead, and that November "*the*

*Chairman in referring to the publication of the first issue of **Contact** expressed his view that it was a fine magazine reflecting great credit on Messrs Worley and Stump", and it was agreed that **Contact** be published henceforth at quarterly intervals. At the same meeting, the formation of an Athletics Club "was discussed at some length" and encouraged, this resulting from a number of boys having expressed their interest in such a venture at the recent leavers' party. The Chairman also "reported on the of the War Memorial Committee when it was proposed that hard courts should be substituted for fives courts to form the War Memorial, and that there was a great prospect of the formation of a Tennis Club."*

February 1952 saw another piece of the modern jigsaw puzzle anticipated when *"the Chairman reported at length on the preliminary steps leading to the possibility of a pavilion being provided at the new field [sic]. A suggestion being that the Association provide the hut and services and the county council would not charge any rent but enter into an Agreement with the Association whereby the School would have the use of the pavilion on week days. Mr Rée pointed out that the County Council were insistent that there must be no trouble over the question of a Building Licence and that the majority of the work would have to be done by the Association and boys. After considerable discussion a Sub-Committee was formed ... "* It was stated **inter alia** that the Swimming Club *"would certainly provide assistance towards the erection of the pavilion."* The Pavilion Sub-Committee met for the first time at the School on the 15th February 1952, and the necessary wheels began to be set in motion, the expenses involved being classified under three headings, *"Installation of Services", "Erection of Hut", and "Fitting and equipping the Hut"*. The need for a Clerk of Works and the various applications to be made were minuted, and the Appeal and Works Sub-Committees came into existence. Mr D. P. Landon eventually volunteered to become the Clerk of Works. The pavilion was generally modelled on one erected not long before for the Old Reendonians' Association. Fund-raising plans were soon developed and effected, and it was agreed to purchase the School *"Hut"* for £150 and re-erect it at the New Field. Notepaper for the *"Pavilion Appeal Fund"* was ordered and *"it was agreed that flags should be sold on Old Boys'*

Day for the Fund ... ". In September 1952, E. J. (Jack) Battell, the Chairman of the Pavilion Committee, was able to report, "*After years of seemingly hopeless theorising, the Old Fullerians' Pavilion has become a reality at last. When you have a moment to spare, have a look on the New Field and see for yourself how magnificently our volunteer squads have been working. Every week-end these enthusiasts have been on duty under the able direction of Dudley Landon, our Clerk of the Works ... the appeal ... was launched in July and at the moment over £100 has been subscribed.*"

At the Committee meeting on the 13th November 1952 a note of tragedy was recorded when "*those present stood in silent memory for Old Boys who lost their lives in the Harrow train disaster.*" 112 people in all had died when three trains had collided at Harrow and Wealdstone station.

That same meeting, the affiliation of the Athletics Club was accepted on approval of its rules, and the Committee agreed "*that the club be offered £1 to start their finances.*" The Rugby Club "*was playing good hard games and ... there was no despondency.*" Meanwhile the Pavilion Sub-Committee was able to report "*that the foundations were in and rough concrete floor laid, the wall sections were all erected and almost all the roof sections had been fixed*", and the plans for the second stage "*were thoroughly considered and ... approved.*" The fund-raising appeal had brought in just over £110 while expenses to date amounted to £77/7/-. The Editorial staff were praised for the second issue of **Contact**, the third issue of which was scheduled for January 1953.

The following month, however, "*Mr East stated that the [Pavilion] Appeal was not making progress, the total to date being £165. He felt that the direct appeal was 'played out' and it would be necessary to get some new ideas ...* ". Bad weather was reported to have slowed up the work on the pavilion itself but nevertheless it continued. Drainage disposal was an added problem in that the local authority objected to the original plan to have the sewage flow into a cesspool, preferring it to be conducted into the main sewer. No wonder

that "it was felt that care was needed in dealing with a somewhat delicate situation." In January 1953, Jack Battell "tendered his resignation from the Chairmanship of the two Pavilion Sub-Committees. The reasons for this step were well known and understood ... " and the two sub-committees were dissolved and a new one formed instead.

At the same time, Basil Stump resigned his editorship of **Contact** and by March 1953, no successor had been found, though the Committee agreed "that there should be at least two issues per annum", half the frequency originally planned. A "small Standing Social Committee" was formed "to consider the possibility of holding regular dances on the School premises, particularly for younger members and boys still at school."

In June 1953 the Secretary, Stan Worley, was able in his report to the A.G.M. to say that "*pride of place should perhaps be given to the New Pavilion ... the results of much hard work and devoted labour are on the New Field for all to see ... There have been delays, frustrations, irritations, criticism ... but ... the future holds still more promise of concerted effort and rapid progress*", and referred to "*the uneasy problem of formulating Constitution and Rules for the administration of the Club when the Pavilion is in use later in the year.*" However, the news of **Contact** was "*not so encouraging*", with the editorship still vacant after three issues, and "*a fortnight ago it was resolved with very great reluctance that the publication of the magazine is to be suspended for a year ... this decision, unavoidable as it undoubtedly is ... causes me personally great sorrow.*" Moreover, "*Very serious, too, is the obvious decline in support for the Annual Ball ... we can no longer hope to stem the steady decline in interest for this particular function.*" In addition there had been an "*extremely disappointing attendance at the Annual Service*", and the Social Convener, Alan Williams, was praised for his work in the face of "*more than his fair share of apathy.*" However, there was solace in that "*in Mr Rée we have a President who is not only intensely interested in our Association, but is prepared on every possible occasion to consult us and help us*", and by way of peroration Stan ended by declaring "*I am more than ever certain that*

*our Association **can** have a great future, and **will** go from strength to strength if we who are its members will play our several parts. The future is indeed with us!"* Such stirring sentiments - and reservations - hold just as true forty years on.

Shortly afterwards, on the 4th July, the War Memorial plaque at the new tennis courts was unveiled by Mr Bolton, "*a most gracious gesture ... and one which is greatly appreciated*".

Later that month it was reported that "*the Careers Panel had been called upon to find positions for a number of boys, and had met with considerable success ... Mr Jarvis would welcome an assistant for interviewing candidates.*" Allan Williams resigned as Social Convener and was replaced by Peter Walker (to become Chairman in 1955). Stan Worley would not let his creation of **Contact** die without a struggle and "*the Committee adopted a suggestion from Mr Worley that **Contact** be revived in a revised form, presented as a duplicated 'newsletter'.*"

That September it was unanimously resolved "*that the Association's Funds at present invested in the Post Office Savings Bank be withdrawn, and re-invested forthwith in the Planet Building Society*", and the Committee agreed a sale to "*the Headmistress of St Albans Grammar School for girls, who was interested in acquiring the removable dance floor.*" The next month saw the new pavilion reported "*ready for use by November 21st*" and, draft rules for the new Sports Club having been approved, "*the Chairman was authorised to convene the Inaugural Meeting of the Club for the 1st December 1953.*" He was also "*authorised to write to the Town Clerk expressing support for the opposition to the plan to make a new road through Whippendell Woods.*"

1954 saw the 250th anniversary of Dame Fuller's foundation, and "*the Committee received the welcome news that the Governors had offered the use of the Town Hall for the evening of May 12th for a function to be run jointly by the Old Boys' and the Old Girls' Associations, and the offer was gratefully accepted.*" Needless to say, a sub-committee was set up to make all the necessary arrangements.

Some 30 members were reported to have attended the inaugural meeting of the Sports Club, which was voted an initial loan of £25 by the General Committee to cover running expenses.

Another sub-committee quietly labouring behind the scenes at this time was the Heraldry Sub-Committee considering the supply and sale of articles in O.F.A. colours and crests, and it was agreed in February 1954 to invite various local firms to tender for the supply of articles including "*knitted woollen scarves, silk squares, long gabardine scarves, ties (in two patterns and in two qualities) and the adopted composite badge (in silk and in gold wire)*", and after much deliberation it was eventually agreed the following June that "*both as regards price and quality, those [tenders] submitted by P. Spivey were the most advantageous in the opinion of the Heraldry Sub-Committee*", and Mr Spivey's quotations were accepted "*it being further agreed that he should be asked to sell only on production of a current membership card*", and the Heraldry Sub-Committee was then dissolved.

That March, the pavilion was reported to be in use, with the bar having been installed, and membership of the Sports Club was said to be approximately 100. An official opening was planned for September. It should be added that at the same meeting the current membership of the Association was reported to be 711.

At the A.G.M. in June 1954, Stan Worley recalled "*with some pride the historic nature of the period under review*" and looked back on the events of the 12th May, "*a memorable occasion indeed in the life of the Schools and of the town, and those of us who were privileged to represent the Old Fullerians of this and other generations will not readily forget the experience ... the Association, in collaboration with the Old Grammarians' Association, celebrated the 250th anniversary with a Dinner and Dance in the Town Hall. Very much careful thought and planning had been done for this function, and it was generally considered to have been one of the most successful events ever organised by the Association. We were given every possible encouragement and help by the Governors, by the Headmaster and Headmistress, and by a host of other friends; and all who were present*

would agree that our Dinner-Dance - the first function of its kind we have had in recent years - formed a fitting climax to a great day."

Yet this was not all, for he continued: "*It was a happy coincidence that the year in which the School celebrated this historic anniversary was also the Diamond Jubilee Year of our Association*" and illustrated various ways in which the Committee had been "*very conscious of the importance of this milestone in our history throughout the year ...*", not the least of which had been the completion of the new pavilion and the inauguration of the Sports Club to administer it. In concluding his report, Stan stated that he had been very happy during his eighteen months as Secretary, but was now to hand over, and D. S. Nash was duly elected in his stead. Stan however, is another of those great workers of the past who at the time of writing is still a staunch supporter of the Association, and it is always a pleasure to see him at our Annual Dinners and on other occasions.

Marcus Godman had been the Chairman for 1953/4, and this memorable year was concluded under another equally dedicated Chairman who with Marcus and Stan, still follows our affairs with great interest, albeit from the remote fastness of Yorkshire, Norman Davies. 1953 had also seen the first attendances in Committee of two stalwarts of the Association who are members of the Committee to-day, John Cook and Peter Holden, as representatives of the Cricket and Athletics clubs respectively.

Of the two present posts on the Committee yet to come into existence, one was anticipated in August 1954 when, in a discussion on membership, "*The President suggested that a Registrar who would keep tabs on new members should be set up.*"

The new pavilion was officially opened on the 18th September, with a rugby match and the opening ceremony performed by the well-known conductor of light music, the late Eric Robinson, O.F. That month the Committee met for the first time at the new pavilion, and now meets at its successor throughout the year, though luckily without the problems recorded under "*Other Business*" in the minutes of that

first meeting when *"The Secretary was instructed to inquire of all members who had not attended the meeting whether the reason was the remoteness of the Pavilion. It was felt that transport might be arranged for those who found it difficult to get there!"*

The Association did not forget its School's roots that November, when it was reported that *"£7,000 was required to preserve the Old Free School. £4,000 was already promised"*, and it was agreed to send a donation and to organize a dinner-dance *"to be associated with the above appeal"* the following spring.

The fifth minute book of the Association ends with the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 24th May 1955, when it was resolved that Peter Walker would become Chairman during the A.G.M. on the 15th June. It was also decided then to hold a dinner at the Green Man Hotel on the 8th July in honour of Mr E. A. ('Dreamy') Merrett, who was retiring that summer after 34 years on the staff, latterly as Second Master.

However, the sixth minute book, covering the years 1955 to 1973, shortly before the writer became Secretary of the Association, disappeared many years ago, and so it is not possible to continue the history of the Association through this medium; subsequent typed minutes have been kept more prosaically in ring-binders. The main source of records for this period is the **Fullerian** magazine's articles and reports on the Association and its affiliated clubs, an anthology of which in the form of several scrapbooks since the foundation of the Association was compiled by the late Geof Paddison. It is this that I have drawn on, although inevitably there is some loss of the personal detail that has been so much a feature of the Association minutes over the years. Fortunately the **Fullerian** magazines of this period do survive and contain fairly comprehensive coverage of the Association's affairs and those of its affiliated clubs, and if the fascinating minutiae of committee minutes are largely absent (including those which diplomacy might suggest were better left unpublished!) the loss of the Association's minute book comes as a less severe blow than it would have done otherwise. We are also well within living memory where

active participants in matters of Association business are concerned, and while circumstances do not permit me to undertake wide research among those active at this period, I have no doubt that many are still around to fill the inevitable gaps in what I am able to set down from the material at my disposal.

The 1955 **Fullerian** issued that Michaelmas takes over from where the last extant minute book of the Association leaves off, with a full-page photograph of 'Dreamy' Merrett on its fly-leaf and, in the Association section at the back, a report in the Chairman's notes by Peter Walker of the dinner in Mr Merrett's honour, when he was presented with a "*fire-side chair purchased with the donations received from members.*" We also read that "*Appreciations of Mr Merrett's great work for the School were given by the Headmaster (Mr H. A. Rée), Mr P. Bolton (a past headmaster) [the 'a' seems a little strange!], Mr R. E. Groves (a former member of New House) and Mr D. Peak (Head Boy 1953-54).*" In his letter of thanks, also published, Mr Merrett said how he would think of all the O.F.s who had contributed "*when I am able to relax in the handsome chair which you presented to me.*" The various reports from affiliated clubs were generally encouraging: the Cricket Club stated that it had been "*a season of keen exciting cricket played in glorious weather*" and that "*The future holds much promise. We are about to lay a concrete practice wicket on the New Field, and next season will see the purchase of a new net, which those familiar with the cost of cricket equipment will realise is another major project ... In a word the Club, your Club is very much alive.*"

The Association Sports Club was similarly able to report a year "*of consolidation and steady development and it is now true to say that the Club is firmly established. The Athletics, Cricket and Rugby Clubs have made full use of the Sports Club facilities for their training, matches and entertainment of their visitors. The Old Fullerians' Association has made use of the Club-room for its Committee Meetings. Perhaps more use could be made by the clubs in holding socials and other gatherings, although it is pleasing to note how keenly and willingly the Sports Club is being run by members of the affiliated*

sections. Foremost in the minds of all members is the debt incurred by the transfer of funds from the Life Membership Reserve to meet the cost of the pavilion. The Sports Club Committee have made some contribution towards the liquidation of the debt, and have also repaid the sum of £25 lent to the Club by the Association in 1953."

However, the Swimming Club hinted at a spectre that has haunted the Association and its clubs over the century to a greater or lesser degree when it reported that "*all Old Fullerians are asked to consider seriously the present position of this old-established Club. The Swimming Club is not the only affiliated section of the Old Fullerians' Association struggling at this present time to keep its head above water (if we may forgive this irresistible metaphor) for one reason only - lack of adequate membership ... The Swimming Club must not sink!*". It is sadly true that the activity of all clubs, not to mention the Association itself, has been maintained as a rule by a small but devoted band in each case, but I suppose that in the nature of things this will ever be so.

This note was sounded in the **Fullerian** of 1956 when the Chairman, Les Horwood, noted of the Annual dinner the previous November: "*Unhappily the only record that we can claim here is that the attendance of 90 was the lowest since the war. However, the dinner in every other way maintained the traditions of the past*", and it is worth adding that all those who remember Harry Rée will find it entirely characteristic that it should be said of his speech that he "*did not on this occasion permit the Press to print any of his usual statements with which he regularly offends the good citizens of the Borough.*" Perhaps this was because the Mayor present was "*Alderman E. C. Amey, himself an O.F.*", and indeed few O.F.s have made a more distinguished contribution to the Borough's affairs than the late Ted Amey, O.B.E.

The various social occasions that year were generally reckoned to have been a success, however, the Christmas Party being "*a great personal triumph for our Social Convenor, Eric Wright, who put in an enormous amount of very hard work*", although two sentences sufficed to summarize the dance held on the 11th February: "*The coldest winter*

for many years, and in the middle of it all the O.F.A. held a dance. The few who came drank more per head than at any other function and claimed that they enjoyed themselves." That March at "a dinner ... no suitable name was found for the occasion ... posthumously named Easter Dinner", Mr Ken Wiles (Biology master 1932-74) "explained how it was that the O.F.A. sprang from the Amoeba. The health of the Association can never before have been proposed in quite the same way, but certainly all who were present would like to hear it done again." Alas, as I write (in October 1993), 'Willy' Wiles is in hospital after a stroke on top of a period of declining health - may he be well on the way to recovery by the time this is published.

The A.G.M. report stated how on the 1st June 1956 *"For the first time the A.G.M. was held in our own Pavilion ... in this more cosy and friendly atmosphere"*, and just over a month later, on the 6th July, *"the Headmaster showed us how the old order was changing. The old West Herts Golf Club Pavilion on the School field was about to be demolished, and a new building was to stand on its site [the Gymnasium]. The Art Room was changed to a library, the old Library to form a room for VI Classical, the Workshop to a Junior Physics Lab., the old Junior Physics Lab. to a General Science Lab. - the School is visibly 'not what it was'".*

Statistics published in the Treasurer's report are of interest: *"Total membership has varied little during the last ten years. It is now 20% higher than in 1947 although 10% lower than in the peak year of 1953-54 when paid-up membership reached a total of 749, compared with 687 during 1955-56. Out of this total of 687, 257 members live outside an area of five miles from the School, and 33 of these reside abroad. Life membership has risen by leaps and bounds during recent years, and has now reached a record figure of 223, or nearly one-third of the total membership. In 1938 there were only 36 life members."* Among the deaths recorded that year was that of N. Heaton (School 1885-91), one of the pioneer members present at the committee meeting that had led to the inauguration of the Association 62 years before.

Characteristic of the Association at this time were the "Personal Notes" compiled and printed at the end of its section of the **Fullerian**. A sample from 1956 will give their flavour:

"EMERY, B. D. (Brian). Has graduated from Cambridge to the O.F. Committee. Claims to be working in his spare time.

FRENCH (Harry). This well-known figure still spends 10% of his time claiming to have paid his O.F. subscription. During the other 90% he can be found in any bar with Geof. PADDISON who certainly is not paid up.

KNIGHT, R. F. (Ron). Now graduated at Charing Cross. His standard phrase is, of course, "take your clothes off" and not "mind the doors".

MOLLER, A. D. (Horace). Now back from Kenya, complete with a shrunken head. His own?

PLUMMER (Mike). 2590992, R.A.F. Ceylon. Runs a racing yacht, a powerful car and a pretty fast tea-planter's daughter ...

WOOD, R. J. (Roger). The atmosphere of the Sir John Cass College has caused the growth of a terrible crop of fungus, now almost indistinguishable from a Cypriot Archbishop."

As Stan Worley, Chairman in 1957, wrote the following year, *"To Mr L. F. Horton a special tribute: through the years, quietly and efficiently, he undertakes the monumental task of collecting and editing the material for this supplement ... His is a splendid contribution, and I want to record my deep appreciation - and yours - of his invaluable help."*

1956 saw the Association skating on thin financial ice when *"a profit of only £1"* was produced for the year. A new club, the Tennis Club, was recorded as *"now officially constituted and affiliated to the Association"* in 1957 under the chairmanship of Les Horwood, but

sadly this has not survived to the present day, although the opportunity for revival is always present.

At the 65th A.G.M. on the 6th June 1958 a new office was created with Alan Bolton the first holder. *"It has become apparent"* the **Fullerian** report stated, *"over the last few years that our Treasurers have been seriously overworked. To alleviate this position it was decided to amend the rules to provide for the new office of Registrar and to make the holder of this office an ex-officio member of the General Committee."*

The membership of the Sports Club was reported to have been 96 at the close of 1957, and improvements to amenities such as the installation of an extra changing room and the telephone had been carried out. *"The possibilities of installing electric lighting in place of gas are being looked into, and the future project of rebuilding the Pavilion, probably section by section, has already been seriously thought about."* This was pursued and a Pavilion Rebuilding Sub-Committee formed early in the summer of 1959, given the statement that year that *"Signs of 'senile decay' are already apparent in the present Pavilion, and measures have been taken in the last year or so to arrest its 'middle-age' spread by bracing the bulge in the Clubroom wall ... The Sub-Committee has already been working industriously on planning a new pavilion ... The thorny problem of raising funds has yet to be tackled, but O.F.A. members can assist in the meantime by selling special pencils in aid of the rebuilding fund ... "* That year Alan Bolton resigned as Registrar and was succeeded by Mike James, who doubled as the Sports Club Secretary. The O.F.A. Secretary, John Lilley, was able to report *"that as a result of last year's membership drive the register at one time exceeded 1,000 members. The number had since fallen below this [at the time of writing there were 611 paid-up members] ... "*, and as usual a contributory factor in the decline had been the striking off the register of 106 members for non-payment of subscriptions.

In the **Fullerian** for the winter of 1959 the Chairman, Derek Gravestock, wrote: *"since the war four new sections have been formed,*

and provided members can be found to run them on a self-supporting basis there is room for others - why not an O.F. Golf Society, and O.F. Sailing Club, and an O.F. Tiddleywinks Society if you like? It is a rare thing for an O.F. section to fail through lack of support, although I believe that before the war there was a short-lived cycling club - is there is an idea there for someone?" Well, certainly there was in the first of his suggestions. He also wrote that *"when called upon [by the School] we try to give practical help. The Careers Advisory Panel, which owed so much to the late Charles Jarvis [and, he might have added, to Fred Pedler before that], served a very useful purpose for some years. At the present time the Fuller Memorial Library Appeal is run by Frank Whitely for the O.F.A."*

In 1960 the 67th A.G.M. that June heard Don Bailey read a *"report drawn up by the majority of the members of the Pavilion Re-building Sub-Committee recommending the re-building of the Pavilion to give larger and improved facilities in a substantial permanent building, the cost of which was estimated at approximately £3,500"*, but it was agreed to defer a decision until a specially convened meeting that October in the light of a dissenting minority report submitted by Basil Stump *"suggesting that insufficient enquiry had been made into the possibility of obtaining a separate ground for the Association's activities and the cost of such a venture, and suggesting that such investigations should be instituted forthwith ... "*

The Editorial Commentary remarked that those in arrears of subscriptions *"will certainly appreciate the extreme courtesy with which the Registrar approaches the delicate task of touching them for their overdue subs. 'Please pay up quickly' is all he says. The technique was cruder in the old days. In the Fullerian for Winter 1927 the Treasurer had this to say: 'Bis dat qui cito dat'. A polite reminder is one thing - swearing at them in Latin quite another."*

In 1961 the Treasurer stated that the increase in ordinary subscriptions *"will enable the O.F.A. to provide a better service to all members in the shape of the new monthly newsletter aptly named **Progress** "*, and for a couple of years this cyclostyled successor to

Contact was edited by Jon Chaplin and then Peter Moller, although as soon as January 1962 the gloomy Editor was led to comment, "*I am beginning to doubt whether members read **Progress***", while Stan Worley, about to resign as Secretary, devoted his notes to bemoaning **inter alia** attendances at A.G.M.s over the years, which had varied "*only within the limits 'disappointingly low' and 'downright appalling'*. *One is astonished, in view of the great importance of much of the business before any of these meetings, that so many are prepared to leave so much of the responsibility to so few.*" Ah well, Stan, nothing changes, but these days your successors on the General Committee persuade themselves that low attendances are not "*such a monumental exhibition of apathy*", to use your phrase, but a tacit expression of confidence on the part of the general membership in the General Committee's handling of the Association's affairs. "**Please help by your attendance at the A.G.M.**", Stan lamented, "*to prove that I am completely, hopelessly wrong in my despair.*"

In that same issue, the opening item was devoted to the Association's fifth President in mixed vein, recording "*news of our President which will make every Old Fullerman, and especially those who know Harry Rée as Headmaster and friend, at the same time proud and sad. We are sad at the news of the death of Mrs Rée on Christmas Eve, and I know that every single member of the Association will join with us in offering our heartfelt sympathy to Mr Rée and his family in their grievous loss. We are proud to hear of Mr Rée's great personal success in the announcement of his appointment as Professor of Education at the University of York. Prospects for studies in the field of education with Professor Rée and Lord James [of Rusholme] as Vice-Chancellor of the new University are indeed exciting.*"

At the A.G.M. on the 16th February 1962, Peter Riggs was elected Chairman, but soon had to resign some months later owing to removal from the district for business reasons. His place was taken by Richard (Dick) Hughes, his Vice-Chairman, who found himself advanced to the Chair much sooner than expected at an E.G.M. on the 5th June, Les Horwood succeeding to the Vice-Chairmanship. "*It is to be hoped*", the Editor of the Association section in the **Fullerman**

remarked that winter, *"that the new Chairman's hard-hitting salvos have made some impact on the consciences of those to whom they were directed. An association that thrives on the overtime of a willing few has little to be proud of. Its vaunted achievements are little more than window dressing unless they are secured by co-operative and representative effort."* Dick Hughes himself wrote: *"It is almost certain that we will have to reach a decision as to whether we are to purchase our own sports ground, and on this decision will, I feel, rest the future of the Association ... I have purposely not mentioned the question of the new pavilion as this must be treated as an entirely separate project. The proposed ground [adjacent to the New Field, and owned by the Watford Borough Council] is so well placed as to enable us to continue to make use of our existing Pavilion, thereby giving us time seriously to consider the possibility of building a new pavilion at a later date."*

And so matters continued into 1963, when at the 70th A.G.M. on the 15th February *"Mr L. K. Turner was given a warm welcome as the Association's new President ... an intensive Membership drive was announced, from which it was hoped to increase the Association's strength from 900 to a minimum of 1,250"*, and it was reported *"that the Fuller Memorial Library has benefited by £1,000 from the Association's efforts during the five years since its foundation."* That winter the Treasurer stated: *"Funds for the purchase of our new Sports Ground and the building of a new Pavilion are, of course, kept quite separate and now amount to some £1,800."* The climax over the Sports Ground proposals came at an Extraordinary General Meeting held at the School on the 24th April 1964, when 81 members attended. *"At the end of a long-ranging discussion, during which a number of questions were asked, it was finally proposed that the meeting supported the recommendations of the General Committee and authorised it to proceed with the acquisition of leases on the land comprising the proposed Sports Ground. The proposal was carried by a large majority."* At this time an appeal was launched to raise £10,000 to enable the Association to acquire the leases and build a new Club House, each member of the Association being asked to contribute £10. By the winter of 1964 it was reported that only about 170 out of 900 members had so far given anything. *"One of the main objections to the*

Scheme", it was said, "has been the argument that 'I don't belong to any of the Sporting Sections of the Association, so why should I contribute?'. This is a perfectly valid argument but these Members have overlooked the fact that the bulk of the money being raised is to be used to build our own Association Headquarters which is for the benefit of all our Members."

At this time **Contact** was resurrected in succession to **Progress** under the Chairmanship of Basil Stump (who, for the benefit of future historians, subsequently added an 'e' to his surname), and contributors still on the General Committee to-day included Tony Southern in the first of his three incarnations as Secretary, and Pete Ausden, who had joined the Committee in 1963 and the following year became Vice-Chairman under Basil Stump. Pete's articles full of personal news of O.F.s, such as "Flash ... " and "O.F. The Record", well displayed that personal style of his which has become so familiar to all members of the Association over the last thirty years. In the summer of 1964, **Contact** featured an article "*News of the Groves Brothers*", these being Ron, Phil, Alan, Martyn and Cliff - when did such a quintet otherwise appear in the Association's publications? The cover of the new **Contact**, it may be added, was designed by David Worley, "*one of the younger members who left school only recently*" and the son of Stan Worley, who again assumed the burdensome responsibility of the Editorship in fresh hope of success.

The June/July number of **Contact** was also remarkable for including a "*Letter from an Angry Young Man*" (very 1960s!) which engendered a good deal of acrimony and debate but which in retrospect may be seen as having served a useful purpose in requiring those concerned with the Association to re-examine its aims and achievements. The writer was George Walker, Head Boy of the School in 1960 and then up at Exeter College, Oxford. He proposed "*to examine the entire purpose and aims of the Old Fullerman [sic] Association*", complained that the Association held all its major functions during university terms, thus ignoring the increasing number of O.F.s in higher education who would otherwise willingly participate, and declared his unawareness of how the Association helped the

School. He ended *"If ... the affiliated sports clubs are lacking support, it is because of a lack of interest due to the fact that it is precisely those people who would play sport who are leaving the district and losing contact with the Association. Nor will this interest be created by fatuous appeals to our pride, loyalty or other vague emotions. Times are changing, and the Old Fullerian Association is failing to change with them. It cannot continue and there is no justification for its continuance in its present state if it is to expect the support of anything but a minute, and ever-decreasing, fraction of its potential membership."*

This was strong stuff for the Association Establishment to take, and sure enough the following **Contact** in October 1964 drew a furious rejoinder to Walker's *"sneering remarks"* from Dick Hughes, then Deputy Chairman (a recently created office to designate the immediate past Chairman). *"His remarks" thundered Dick "are contradictory, irrational and, in certain instances, downright insulting ... these should be treated with the contempt they deserve."* Point by point he refuted the arguments critical of the Association. *"As to the future of the Association", he concluded, "I can assure Mr Walker that where necessary we are moving with the times as has been shown by our endeavour to obtain our own Club House and Sports Ground ... actions speak louder than words."*

The Secretary, Tony Southern also weighed in, but prefaced his letter with an acknowledgement that George Walker had given *"a genuine expression of his considered views, and as such it deserves a reasoned reply."* *"We do try wherever possible" he wrote "to arrange our events to suit the majority of our members most of the time: we cannot hope to please everybody all of the time ... over the years the Association has been hampered in its activities ... by sneers and hoots of derision from old boys who take a similar line to Mr Walker's over all our efforts to encourage greater interest and to achieve the aims we have set ourselves ... Members cannot cry out for more activity, more amenities, and refuse to help provide the money which alone can produce them."*

But Walker's remarks drew some support in the **Contact** of February 1965. "*Personally I support Walker and Cole [John Cole, who had already expressed agreement with his contemporary's views], since when I left the School for Cambridge in 1940 I asked myself much the same questions as they are now raising*", wrote W. Tipler, who considered the Deputy Chairman's response "*quite disgraceful - a perfect example of how to drive young men out of the Association ... he should have prepared a careful reply to Walker's letter, which in many ways reflects the opinions of numerous school-leavers ... The Association is primarily selfish - striving to build up social and sporting facilities for a minority of members ...*".

Trying to reduce the heat of battle, David Hopkins in the same issue reminded the Editor "*that there are two points of view, and that these are not necessarily (a) yours and (b) the wrong one ... I would agree very largely with the views of George Walker: there appears to be a tendency for the Association, viewed from afar, to become too inward-looking. It is fortunate that we have a nucleus of enthusiastic members who keep things in being, for many of us must, for reasons of distance or commitments, remain inactive. What is vital is that enthusiasm should **not** give way to narrow fanaticism.*"

So controversy raged, in print and committee, though the loss of the relevant minute book sadly deprives us of the chance to read how the ruffling of the General Committee's feathers was chronicled, there are still those serving at the time who well remember the heat George Walker's letter managed to produce. I have revived perhaps bitter memories thirty years on because I feel the principles involved hold good for the Association at any time, and not only were feelings on both sides expressed in complete sincerity but such criticism can be productive if it saves those under attack from any danger of complacency. One hopes that the Association, with the benefit of experience, has managed since to strike a reasonable balance in this respect to accommodate both elements of opinion; nevertheless I would not be so foolish as to presume that another George Walker will not arise one day to ginger up the Association and its Establishment again.

George, by the way, subsequently returned to the School to teach for a short time before going on to become a respected headmaster.

On the 26th February 1965, the 72nd A.G.M. saw the election of Pete Ausden as Chairman for the first of his three terms in that office, the third of which happily coincides with the centenary of the Association which this account of its history also marks. With the "*Walker Debate*" still ringing in his ears, the Editor of **Contact** the following October wrote, "*During the last few years it has become increasingly obvious that the whole concept of our Association will have to undergo fundamental changes if it is to offer boys leaving school, and young men University, the sense of belonging to something tangible, and understand their interests. Somehow we seem to have stagnated, at least as far as they are concerned, in the 'Old School Tie' era. The O.F.A. is only as alive and interesting as its members and our general committee is giving the whole matter a good long look. I'm sure that finding a happy compromise is vital to our whole future and I'm hopeful that we can move more in concert with the present day.*" The message had got home.

PART 8 - TO THE PRESENT DAY

During 1965 the General Committee had much else to concern itself with besides George Walker and the effects of his diatribe. Let Pete Ausden's letter in **Contact** of October 1965 speak for itself:

"1965 has been no ordinary year for the Association. Important, and I feel very necessary, decisions have had to be taken. In April the Association withdrew from the Sports Ground Development Project, and although this was a great disappointment to us all, it would have been folly to go ahead with such an ambitious scheme when we had only received support from approximately 20 per cent of the members. The Rugby Club decided to go 'open' and take on the Borough portion of the lease. We wish them every success. As an 'open club' they are no longer an affiliated section of the Association, but the majority of their members are also keen Association members, we look forward to keeping close 'ties' with them ...

Following the withdrawal from the Ground Scheme came the wonderful offer to erect a pavilion on the school's New Field jointly with the school. The committee decided to go ahead with this plan, and we hope to have our own Association Headquarters in the next few years. In order to raise funds for this venture we plan to hold a Summer Fair at the school next July with the Friends of the School, who will be raising money for other improvements at the school including the heating of the swimming pool ...

Difficult decisions have had to be taken during 1965, and the committee have had to give up a lot of time to get matters settled ... during this trying time. The future of the Association looks good ... "

So disappointment and hope were mingled in this significant year, and Pete's summary plays down the passions that were aroused by the Rugby Club's decision to disaffiliate from the Association by going

open, a route as yet unfollowed by any other section, and by the Association's withdrawal from the Sports Ground Development Project, primarily on account of the sadly familiar cause: insufficient support from the general membership.

1965 was a significant year in other ways. The October **Contact** that year also carried tributes on their retirements to two stalwarts of the School staff who in their different ways had served and supported the Association for over seventy years between them, the Second Master, Herbert Lister ('Fanny' to the boys, 'Jim' to the O.F.s) and Mr W. H. J. Jones, the School Secretary, who for forty years personified the School administration single-handed and laboured in his crowded but always fascinating alcove off the main hall. What would he have said if he could have seen the space (and the number of staff) accorded the School administration since, with his successor, Arthur Pring, enjoying the grander title of Bursar to which old 'Jonesy' never aspired? As we all know, Herbert Lister did not retire from the School completely, looking after the Fuller Memorial Library for the next six years, and the Association owes him a greater debt for his regular compilation of news of old boys for publication to within a year of his death in 1992, a task undertaken since by John Cook.

That year the 139th issue of the **Fullerian** was produced as the "*first of a new-style **Fullerian** ... a truly joint magazine with the School ... designed to further my main aim to bring the school and the O.F.A. closer together*", as Jim Wolf (subsequently Chairman of the Association in 1967) wrote in his introduction. This was to be a termly magazine as distinct from an annual issue in the summer of a more literary nature reflecting the best of the School's considerable output of creative writing. The following year its title changed to **Fullerian News** to make the distinction clearer.

You will already have read that back in 1959 the then Chairman, Derek Gravestock, had asked in the winter **Fullerian** "*why not an O.F. Golf Society?*". Six years later **Contact** was able to record that "*The first meeting of the [Old Fullerians' Golfing] Society took place on Wednesday the 2nd June at the West Herts Golf Club ... Some twenty-*

five Old Boys produced their golf clubs ... The day itself was divided into two sections, with a singles competition in the morning and a pairs competition in the afternoon. The Peter Spivey Cup for the singles competition was won by Colin Ensor ... In the afternoon Reg Smee and Jim Moncrieff returned the winning card ... The prizes were presented in the evening by Peter Ausden and members then retired to the bar to commiserate over their missed putts. It is our intention to hold two meetings a year ... I hope that everyone interested in golf will join the Society and make a success of this new venture." It is good to be able to record that the Golfing Society has flourished ever since and that its Spring and Autumn Meetings command regular support.

Let the last word on the momentous year of 1965 be left to 'Tommy' Thompson, the School representative on the General Committee from 1943 until his retirement in 1974. The Editor prefaced an article by 'Tommy' on "*The School and the O.F.A.*" in the **Contact** for October 1965 with the remarks: "*Tommy Thompson is the School's representative on our general committee and puts in a tremendous amount of time and energy for us*", an assessment with which nobody who knew his work for the Association over those 31 years would disagree. 'Tommy' concluded by writing, "*Unfortunately there has been a tendency to identify the Association very closely with the Sports Ground Project and to assume that failure to carry out the scheme meant failure for the Association in general. Since so much time and effort has been spent in this direction such an attitude is understandable although far from justifiable. For the Association is still able at present to cater for members in the district who enjoy outdoor activities, its social functions will continue, even extend ... the Association can also try perhaps to broaden its own outlook. As members are now much more likely to be living away from the district, there is a far greater need for news of the Association and School affairs to be regularly circulated so that there can be an effective link with all who had been associated with the School, wherever they may be, and a real channel through which Old Boys who wish to do so may help the School. The Association can, in fact, continue to fulfil what is stated to be its primary aim.*"

In looking to the future, 'Tommy' highlighted one basic change in the membership of the Association since its foundation 71 years before which reflected the changes in society generally over the intervening decades. He pointed out that 'Billy' Carter had suggested *"that most boys at the School would expect to live, and work on leaving School, in Watford and the surrounding districts ... To be responsible for the training of a generation of future inhabitants of this town must be a serious and difficult thing ... my greatest ambition is to make the School a great and important institution **in the town.**"*

The 1960s saw a number of prominent stalwarts of the Association join (or rejoin) the General Committee and for the most part remain in unbroken service to this day. One of those whose acquaintance with the General Committee predated this decade was John Cook. In 1966 he succeeded Pete Ausden for the first of **his** three terms of office as Chairman, and in the **Fullerian News** that spring he paid tribute to his predecessor *"who, in what was in many ways a difficult year, upheld these traditions [of service to the Association] and may certainly look back with pride on what was generally acknowledged to be one of our most successful Annual Dinners."* *"Mention must also be made"*, John continued, *"of Tony Southern and Peter Beech for their untiring efforts on our behalf. I am very pleased that they are continuing to serve as Secretary and Treasurer again this year."*

Naturally the proposed pavilion at the New Field was the Association's prime concern over the next few years. *"Together the School and the Old Boys"*, 'Tommy' Thompson wrote in the same issue, *"could possibly provide the kind of building which would be of a great advantage to both: not, of course, a luxury pavilion, but one with sufficient well-equipped changing rooms for School and O.F. needs, tea room, O.F.A. Club room, and with possibly some accommodation for the groundsman who would be able to look after the premises. The New Field pavilion is part of an imaginative plan to give the boys at the School greatly improved facilities, a plan in which Old Fullerians can share, and which it is hoped will have everyone's goodwill and support."* It was to raise money for this amongst other projects that the

Summer Fair and Open Day on the 23rd July that year was held, a venture organized by the Association in conjunction with the School and the Friends. The previous year, by arrangement with the School, Old Boys' Day had been combined with Parents' Day and the whole administered by the School.

In his Registrar's Report to the A.G.M. that year, Peter Beech (who at this point had added this post to his Treasurership, whence it had previously sprung) recalled that 1964 had been a record year for membership, when a figure of 1,003 had been attained. 1965 had seen the figure drop to 955, and it had not helped that some members of the now open Fullerians' R.F.C. had not renewed their membership of the Association. However, 19 members had elected to pay the new compound subscription of £2 to cover the first five years of membership. *"This ... is quite encouraging"*, wrote Peter, *"being the first year when boys going to university or taking full-time further education for three years or more have had the opportunity of taking advantage of the reduced rate of subscription. It has been increasingly difficult over the past few years to encourage such members to join the Association and I am sure that we have succeeded in part in overcoming this difficulty by means of this concession."* He regretted that *"Of the 154 1964 School Leavers who under the Rules enjoyed Honorary Membership during 1964 ... 103 did not renew their subscriptions. A further 80 members were struck off for non-payment of their subscriptions."* However, there was some consolation in that *"Over 260 of our members now pay their subscriptions by Banker's Order, which is a very satisfactory feature."* Little by little the Association was taking on its present-day features; the effects of George Walker's call for regeneration were still being felt!

In his farewell letter as Chairman, John Cook in the **Fullerian News** of the winter of 1966 commented: *"One of the most pleasing features of the past twelve months had been the spirit of co-operation and goodwill that has existed between the Friends of the School and ourselves. This was borne out at the Summer Fair in July. A most enjoyable and profitable function was attended by quite the largest gathering on the School field in recent years. The proceeds from the*

fair will be used to help finance the building of the Pavilion on the New Field ... it is hoped that work will start early in 1967."

Fund-raising for the pavilion continued apace under the Chairmanships of Jim Wolf (1967/8) and Peter Warby (1968/9), and the latter was able to report in the **Fullerian** at the end of 1968: "*At long last the new pavilion is a reality. The mind boggles when thinking of the vast amount of planning and fund raising effort that has gone into this project.*" The "School Notes" at the start of this issue likewise recorded that "*This marks not only the achievement of an old ambition, but also the inauguration of a new partnership between the School, the Friends, and the Old Fullerian [sic] Association, whose joint Development Committee has taken total responsibility for the enterprise. The Summer Fair on July 13th was ample witness to the support they enjoy.*" And the Development Committee, whose Secretary for its first 23 years was the dedicated 'Tommy' Thompson, producing admirably comprehensive yet concise minutes in his inimitable copperplate, continues this day under the chairmanship of the Headmaster, with three representatives each of the School staff, the Friends and the Association, which last is represented by its three senior officers, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

That issue also reported: "*The second Fullerian Ball was held on March 15th at the Town Hall where over four hundred dined and danced. The occasion was so successful that it will again be repeated on Friday, 21st March.*" The Fullerian Balls, now sadly no longer on account of rising costs and diminishing support, were for long a brilliant feature of the Association scene, and just the kind of function that with luck may yet be revived successfully (even if in the School rather than the Town Hall) once the economic position of this country has come right again.

1969 dawned and with it the realization of the plans for the new pavilion. This was amply recorded in the Association's **Rules and Calendar of Events** for that year, a slim but very convenient handbook issued to all members of the Association. This annual publication, initiated the previous year under the editorship of John Cook, has been

seen through the press by him from the start to the present day, and all members must surely be grateful to him for this achievement alone in addition to his many others.

"On Tuesday evening, 14th January", we read, "before a representative gathering of Old Fullerians, Friends of the School and Masters, the keys of the completed New Fullerian Pavilion were formally handed over to the Headmaster. It was perhaps appropriate that both the chief guest of the evening, Alec Merrifield, Mayor of Watford, and also John Wilson, a Director of Messrs Northover, the builders of the Pavilion, are Old Fullerians. On Wednesday, 15th January, the Chief Education Officer of Hertfordshire, together with Governors, representatives of the County, Old Fullerian [sic] Association, Friends and the School saw Sir Stanley Rous perform the official opening ceremony, and fix a plaque in the Social Room to commemorate the occasion."

"With a magnificent social room", wrote the new Chairman for 1969, John Ausden (Pete's twin brother, who had joined the General Committee in 1965 and still continues to serve the Association in so many ways), "this is the opportunity that our members have been waiting for so long, a chance to meet one another socially in pleasant surroundings. The Old Fullerians' Sports Club have a wonderfully well equipped new bar and the kitchen facilities are excellent. You will find a photograph of the new pavilion on page 19 of this calendar ... I sincerely hope that the completion of our new headquarters will now encourage many more to join this year."

A summary of the efforts of those involved was provided by Peter Beech in his report to the A.G.M. on the 28th February that year, the first held in the new pavilion (now generally known as the Rous Pavilion and the venue for A.G.M.s for nearly twenty years until the Fuller Memorial Library was chosen instead). *"Throughout the years, the various Chairmen of the Association were concerned with all the negotiations and appeals, as were many committee members and officers of affiliated clubs. A list of those who made significant contributions ... is as follows: P. G. Ausden (Chairman 1965 - at a time*

of difficult negotiations with the Rugby Club, which were satisfactorily resolved), J. S. Ausden (Summer Fair Organiser), J. W. Cook (Chairman 1966 and work on fund-raising committee), B. D. Emery (Chairman 1961), D. A. Gravestock (Chairman 1959 and Secretary of the O.F.A. for several years), L. Horniblow (Treasurer of the Sports Club), R. C. Hughes (Chairman 1962/63 and Appeal Chairman), M. James (Secretary of the Sports Club), B. Lanham (Fund Raising Committee and Secretary of the O.F.A.), G. Paddison (Summer Fair Organiser), P. Warby (Chairman 1968), J. C. G. Wolf (Chairman 1967). Tribute must also be paid to Mr Thompson for his work over the whole 15 years, for his assistance and advice and to both him and the Headmaster, Mr Turner, who have borne the major brunt of the negotiations and fund-raising of the past two or three years in the final stages of bringing the School project, with the facilities incorporated, to reality."

In addition Peter had previously paid tribute to the prime movers in the previous abortive venture ended by the decision of the Rugby Club to go open coupled with the lack of support from the general membership: *"The burden of this work fell on Stan Worley, secretary of the working committee, and it was he, above all, who probably did more work and produced more reports than anyone else in attempting to get this project off the ground. At the same time John Hancock was making valiant efforts as Chairman of the Fund Raising Committee."*

The Editor of the Calendar was not prepared to let it go at that, and in a postscript reminded readers that *"Members, particularly those who have served over the years on various Committees with Peter Beech, will know that he as much as anyone else has contributed to the success of the project. His unfailing good humour and willingness to undertake countless tasks on behalf of the Association should not, I feel, go unmentioned."*

John Cook, who at this time was also acting as Secretary of the Sports Club (the chairmanship of which was held by the Chairman of the Association **ex officio**), recorded that *"The transference of the club licence to the new pavilion has now been completed and it is proposed*

that the clubhouse will be open each Friday evening for the benefit of members from Friday, 18th April ... It is hoped that the affiliated sections will take the opportunity to use the pavilion for their various functions."

With the opening of the Rous Pavilion the Association can at last be said to have entered its present phase. The General Committee held its meetings there from then on, at first on the second Monday of each month and then on the first Monday as now, except for August when there was no meeting unless, as has happened once or twice in recent years, a particularly excessive amount of business required otherwise. Subsequently the Committee has met at the School from October to March inclusive on account of the cold weather, but the installation of a new alarm system in the school in 1993 has meant that the Committee has now reverted to meeting in the pavilion all the year round.

The Sports Club continued to be responsible for the affairs of the pavilion until 1979, when at the A.G.M. that year it was decided that the facilities and responsibility for the bar should be passed over to the Cricket Club subject to the approval of the licensing authorities, which was duly granted. The facilities remain available to all affiliated sections and Association members subject to conditions of use, though it may perhaps be stated with sadness that, other distractions prevailing, there are no longer regular weekday evening sessions. However, with plans for an extended and improved pavilion a quarter-of-a-century later in the air, who knows but that such regular patronage may return to the New Field?

The 1970s saw a period of consolidation for the Association, with the General Committee building on the firm foundations laid by earlier workers in its cause. One of those most responsible for keeping the Association going was the late Geof Paddison. Geof's senior school career had been passed at the Royal Masonic School in Bushey and he had in fact been a pupil at the Grammar School only from 1926 to 1928, yet nobody could have been a more loyal or dedicated O.F.A. man (it will be noticed that by way of an amusing idiosyncrasy Geof normally

spelt the abbreviated form of his Christian name with a single 'f'). He joined the General Committee in 1964 and for a number of years served as the Swimming Club representative before becoming Chairman for the first time in 1970. He then devoted ten years, from 1971 to 1981, to service as Registrar, and by his tireless and meticulous work over this period did much to keep membership figures up. One venture which he was responsible for initiating first appeared in the Association calendar for 1972: "*Association Hike: This is a new event and will take place on Sunday, May 21st. Arrangements are in the capable hands of Geof Paddison*", and for years Geof led what have become known as the Association's Spring and Autumn Rambles up hill and down dale, near and far. The only events in the Association social calendar to cost it absolutely nothing, these continue to this day even if by and large attendances have declined from Geof's heyday, when the many participating bipeds were often reported subsequently to have been accompanied by several quadrupeds, intentionally or otherwise.

Geof later served a second term as Chairman in 1983, but tragically after 25 years on the General Committee was struck down by cancer. Compelled to retire from the Committee in 1989, he was presented, by his colleagues, with an inscribed copy of **The Book of Watford** at a moving ceremony that May in the Rous Pavilion. Uncomplaining to the last, Geof died just under six months later. One of his major tasks after resigning office had been the compiling of several scrapbooks and other archival material for the writing of the Association's centenary history, and it was a real grief to all concerned that he should not live to see this project realized. It may be invidious to single out an individual member of the Committee for especial praise, but I am sure that all who knew him would not object to my doing so in Geof's case. He typified all the virtues which the Association stood for and his devotion to it was second to none, while his work was always carried out in an unassuming manner. He was a great 'behind-the-scenes' man, and the Committee parties held each autumn in the pavilion never seem the same without his organizational and culinary abilities unslackeningly deployed in advance each time to ensure their unfailing success.

In 1974 'Tommy' Thompson retired after 43 years on the School staff and 31 as the School representative on the General Committee. His place was taken by Neil Hart, who had joined the School in 1959 to teach History, and equally untiring service to the Association followed until Neil was appointed Acting Head Master 19 years later and had to step down, his place being taken by David Evans, Head of Biology and a member of the School staff since 1973. Neil has always had the best interests of the Association at heart and it was appropriate in view of his academic discipline that he should have volunteered to write this history until his new responsibilities in 1993 compelled him to relinquish this task, undoubtedly to the loss of the Association. Our thanks to Neil, as to 'Tommy' before him, have been expressed on many occasions, the role of negotiator between School and Association often requiring tact and delicacy as well as flexibility and persuasiveness, and I hope that it will not seem inadequate merely to repeat them here.

1974 also saw a member of the Association write to the then Chairman, Tony Southern, to ask why it was taking so long for a portrait of Harry Rée, who had left the School twelve years before, to appear alongside those of his predecessors. It would seem that on this letter being read out at a meeting of the Committee a troublemaker was suspected, one who could be dealt with in the time-honoured fashion of inviting him to join the Committee rather than criticize it from without. Thus the writer came to join the Committee, and in the following year, 1975, found his energies harnessed as Secretary in succession to Nigel Brewer, in which post he has remained ever since apart from passing through the Chair in 1979 and 1990. This gives me the opportunity to express my appreciation of the exceptional camaraderie I have enjoyed over twenty years so far and look forward to doing for many more years yet. Sooner or later all the present members of the Committee will look to others to take up the torch in the Association's cause, and I can unhesitatingly recommend to all those reading this who have yet to come forward, whether old or young, to do so. We all owe our great School so much, and what better way for any O.F. to repay this debt, at least in part, than through the Association?

A glance at the Association calendar for 1975 shows that there were no less than seven affiliated sections at the time. Not all have survived the passage of time, namely the Athletics Club, Badminton Club and Fullerian Players, while the subsequent demise of the Sports Club has already been related. All have met a demand in their time, however, and have contributed towards the vitality of a healthy and active Association, though it must be said that for years it was a standing joke that the faithful Peter Holden, who for some years now has functioned most worthily as Registrar, was the only member of the Athletics Club as its representative on the Committee before the Club's eventual formal dissolution at the 1991 A.G.M. after an existence of almost forty years.

The youngest known Chairman of the Association held office in 1975. Alan Selwood, who took office at the age of just 25, displayed a maturity of character that carried him through successfully. His energy and drive, not to mention his sense of humour, are much missed on committee.

The 1975 calendar lists the following amongst the members of the General Committee: John Ausden, Pete Ausden, John Cook, Peter Holden, Brian Lanham, David Price, Tony Southern and Peter Waters. Eight names, and what do they have in common? They are still on the Committee. This breadth and depth of experience is most important for any such body of volunteers, but equally so is the fact that the new blood recruited since makes for an excellent blend of corporate vitality. The Association enters its centenary year nearly twenty years later with a range of almost half-a-century in age in the members of its General Committee, which makes for lively debate and a refreshing variety of opinion, yet the camaraderie I have previously referred to ensured that in the end we always 'jell', even if en route some of us may have agreed in civilized fashion to differ.

Staying in 1975 a little longer, we look at events offered for the year. These began with the Annual Service in St Mary's Parish Church, Watford, and indeed the note says "*Attendances in recent years have been most encouraging and it is hoped that this trend will be*

maintained." The Golfing Society's Spring and Autumn Meetings feature and in addition a Long Driving Competition at the New Field. The Fullerian Ball, "*one of the highlights of the Association year*", is announced for the 6th June in the Town Hall with music to be provided by the Debonaires, that well-known ensemble who for so long obliged the Association, latterly at the winter Dinner-Dance at Moor Park mansion, and who only finally ceased to do so in 1992 after having seemed 'immortal' for many years.

Innovation has always been the intent of the Association whenever possible. "*A new venture for the Association, a River Trip upstream from Windsor on Sunday June 6th*", was offered this year. "*The boat will leave Windsor at 2 p.m., returning at 7 p.m. Numbers will be limited to 100 ...*". With a bar on board and fish and chips to devour en route, these occasions were always enjoyable, the prime mover being John Cook, and it is sad that they have not featured in recent years. Time for a revival?

The Spring and Autumn Rambles were typically enterprising in Paddisonian fashion. The former, "*a Chiltern Thames-side walk of nearly seven miles*", started at Hambledon village between Marlow and Henley-on-Thames, while the latter, starting from Naphill Common in Buckinghamshire, took in "*Sir Francis Dashwood's fantastic Church and Mausoleum at West Wycombe and the Manor House and Green at Bradenham*". It is a pity that on the whole that modern rambles are confined more closely to the Watford area, but again this is by no means **de rigueur**.

There was more to come. "*This outstandingly successful event in the Fullerian year is again in the capable hands of Nigel Brewer. The date - Friday, October 31st. The venue - Durrants, Croxley Green.*" The event? - the Hallowe'en Dinner -Dance, since metamorphosed with ever greater success in the extremely capable hands of Pete Ausden into the Winter Dinner-Dance in November at Moor Park.

And then there came the Christmas Party. "*This function was re-introduced last year and proved to be an outstanding event. It will again be held at Durrants ...*". Christmas Parties, while always enjoyable have come and gone with the years, and at present are in abeyance, perhaps because of the other distractions (and expenses) of Christmas, or perhaps because as usual, in spite of everything, the bulk of the support comes from the members of the General Committee and their families and friends, and there is just so often that one can expect the same pocket to be dipped into in the course of a year and no more ...

The final event advertised, "*the highlight of the Association year*", was the Annual Dinner. For nearly thirty years now this function has been organized by Pete Ausden, to whom the Association owes so much and who is fittingly its Chairman in its centenary year. It was at the proposal of the writer in 1979 that the office of Social Convener was revived under the more modern appellation of Social Secretary for bestowal on Pete in recognition of the fact that he had already long exercised its functions in all but name, and he has continued to do so ever since with unflinching success.

At the end of the 1970s it was at last recognized that inflation dictated that the life membership subscription of twenty guineas was hopelessly uneconomic and this category of membership was accordingly abolished at the 1979 A.G.M. Life members are therefore a diminishing breed, but their hold on life is tenacious: in 1978 there were 219 of them and fifteen years later there are still 175, so one can be sure that they will persist well into the next millennium! The Life Membership Reserve, however, established many years ago to provide for their associated expenditure, will continue to go towards this.

In the 1980s the present format of Association activities became established. I do not propose to trawl through these recent times in detail, partly because they are familiar to the majority of readers and partly because their records lack the fascination of remoter times past, not to mention the prime concern that I have had in charting as best I could the formative years of the Association and how it has arrived at its present state. It is of some concern to us that while the roll of boys

at the School has risen, that of our members has not risen in similar proportion and we must constantly strive to remedy this. As always, however, if we do not obtain the requisite support from our existing members we cannot feel readily encouraged to engage in speculative ventures for the benefit of the unconverted. With the co-operation of the School authorities we now have a large notice board in the Sixth Form Common Room as well as the older pair at the western end of the ground floor corridor in the main building, and Association details as well as Cricket Club material are on display for all to see in the Rous Pavilion. In 1993 we produced a smart brochure with information about the Association and its activities which incorporates an application form and banker's order form, and any reader wishing to recruit another O.F. to the Association should obtain one from me. (N.B. May I take the opportunity here to mount another hobby-horse of mine and scotch the old canard, often heard down the years, that only members of the Association may be described as Old Fullerians? **All** boys educated at the School become Old Fullerians on leaving; sadly they do not all, or even mostly, elect to join the Association as substantive members, even with the lure of a special compound subscription for the ensuing three years at one year's rate. So there is no room for complacency, and we must always look to attract many more leavers than we do at present.)

The Association is rightly seen as a living part of the School community and not a largely irrelevant and external appendage to it. Our presence is well established but could be consolidated further. At the School Summer Fair the Association barbecue run by our irrepressible Social Secretary and his helpers is now an indispensable part of the scene, and a stand with details of the Association is pitched nearby to reinforce the message that we are part of the here and now. The presence of individual O.F.s, especially members of the General Committee, at various School functions also testifies to our continuing activity and interest in the School's affairs. Sadly the annual Association services in St Mary's Church have ceased for lack of support, the last one having been held in May 1985, but each year now a faithful few, mostly from the Committee, attend the Founder's Day Service at the same venue instead, and this also applies to the excellent

Services of Nine Lessons and Carols held at St Michael's in Mildred Avenue each Christmas. But oh! the numbers of O.F.s in each case are pitifully small, and we always hope far more will attend to assist in this corporate flying of the flag.

We could not achieve anything without the help and support of the School authorities and it would be remiss of me not to mention our longest-serving President to date, Keith Turner, who finally drew in sail in August 1991 after being at the helm for 28½ years, the fifth longest tenure of any Head Master in the School's annals. Our thanks and gratitude to him were perhaps best expressed in the portrait commissioned of him and executed by Margaret Foreman, R.B.A., who had previously done the same for Harry Rée eleven years before. Another tireless worker for the Association from the School staff already mentioned in this account, Herbert ('Jim') Lister, died on New Year's Day 1992 at the age of 87, and the packed congregation of O.F.s and others at his memorial service in St Mary's was testament to the great appreciation by them of his services to the Association as well as their affection for him as man and mentor.

I have alluded before to the continuity of the present Committee, half of whom will have served on it for twenty years or more by the centenary year of 1994. In 1991 John Cook became the first O.F. to serve as Chairman for three terms; in 1992 David Price, another devoted Association man, followed him in the Chair for his hat-trick; and now in 1994 we have the third to achieve this distinction, Pete Ausden. (I suppose that the question is who will be the first to serve for a fourth term?) But as I have said before, new blood is always welcome on the Committee and indeed will be imperative as the years pass.

This account of the Association will, I hope, not have been without interest for all its imperfections. The rapid foreshortening of the last two decades of its history for the reasons given will not, I trust, delude readers into thinking that its vitality is in any way impaired. As I write, we are on the threshold of our centenary year, which promises to be full of events and a year to remember for decades yet. Ten years hence, in 2004, our great School celebrates its tercentenary, and I have

no doubt that the Association will be called upon to play its full part in the proceedings and will rise unfailingly to the occasion.

So, with the School motto, "*Sperate parati*", always in our minds, let us look to the prosperity of both School and Association in partnership over the next hundred years, and to the success of the men of to-morrow, some as yet unborn, in building on the foundations we and our predecessors have laid. We all have been educated at a great School; let us demonstrate, now and for posterity, that we realize that we all belong to a great Association too.

PETER WATERS