The Old Standians' Association

Thank you for the honour you have done me in inviting me to propose this toast. I was given a great deal of notice of the occasion and have had the opportunity of consulting a number of people and drawing on a number of sources for what I have to say. Before I go on I must record my thanks to those who have helped me specifically: notably Mrs. Vera Haydock of the Stand Girls' Association, Mrs. Muriel Shepherd, former Head of Stand Girls' Grammar School (who sends greetings and good wishes); and my ex-colleague and former headmaster of Stand, David Hudson, whom I am particularly pleased to see with us tonight. Above all I should like to thank Tony Wilding and his committee for their work in making this occasion possible, with a special acknowledgement to the former for producing, on time for this occasion, his informative and interesting history of the Association. He has left us all in his debt. The result of these preparations has left me with a great deal of material to which I cannot possibly do justice, and my problem has been not so much what to say as what to leave out. Mindful of the circumstance that in after dinner speaking one minute of the speaker's time seems like two to the audience, I shall try to condense what I have to say within a reasonable compass; but in case I should be tempted to stray from the time-table I have brought along my grandfather's eighty-three-year-old watch as an ancestral reminder that time is at a premium.

On this momentous occasion I suggest that we begin by taking an imaginative leap back to the founding meeting of the Association, the evening of 5th December, 1906. Weather conditions were wild, perhaps symbolically so in view of the times ahead, and the 20 individuals who attended showed a hardiness appropriate to the task they were facing. George Longman had been appointed in 1900 as headmaster of Stand (then numbering only 24 boys) at a time of great financial difficulty for the school, but, as events were to show, was possessed of an energy and force of personality which was more than equal to the task before him. He also had in John Ragdale ,his Chairman of Governors, an ally and facilitator capable of managing the difficult political process needed to secure a solution.

For help was at hand. In terms of prestige and reputation, Stand, with a history of 218 years behind it at the time of Longman's appointment, had a great deal to offer, but lacked the sort of financial endowments which bolstered the country's leading public schools. Enter the Fairy Godmother! In 1902 a new Education Act had allowed county and borough councils to set up local education authorities, empowered to provide fee-paying secondary schools for the education of both sexes. A second act in 1905 allowed the new authorities to provide free places to exceptionally able children. The two acts had been designed in response to public concerns over Britain's failure to keep pace with the industrial systems of its commercial rivals in Europe and America, especially in science, engineering, and business practice. However, the civil servants in charge of implementing them chose to interpret them as an extension of the liberal education offered by England's prestigious public schools, which saw little virtue in the sciences, and focused on the teaching of the classics. As a result the secondary schools set up by the new local authorities were designed on the pattern of the public schools and attempted to replicate all those features which were believed to have brought about their success and prestige: house systems (even where there were no boarding houses), team games to act as a safety valve for adolescent energy, and a

variety of other activities designed to build up a moral and institutional framework – school mottos (invariably in Latin), school songs, and clubs and associations for former pupils.

In Stand's case the school pressed all the right buttons for inclusion in the state system, and the Lancashire Education must have been pleased to consider an approach from an institution with two centuries of tradition behind it, which, though not a member of the Headmasters' Conference, was nevertheless a public school in the early and strict sense of the term. Other nations are often puzzled by the description 'public schools' given to British schools which are in fact private, but the term as originally used signified that they were schools open to members of the public prepared to pay to send their children there. Two centuries ago the Rev. Mr. Pope's advertisement 'to acquaint the Public that Stand School in Lancashire, was opened on Monday, January 9th, 1769' was expressed in similar terms to those of the great Dr. Thomas Arnold when offering the facilities of Rugby School in the first part of the following century.

As a non-conformist academy Stand could not hope to join the Headmaster's Conference when it was set up in 1869, and the school had to wait until its final years under the headship of David Hudson before being invited to become one of only two non-fee-paying schools in the Conference. However, its situation had allowed it a greater flexibility where the curriculum was concerned, and as early as the 1860's a school inspection had disclosed that most of the scholars were the sons of Manchester businessmen 'who desired a commercial education only'. Those who want to establish an even earlier connection with the world of business practice may wish to advance the claims of Robert Clive, who, on his return to Market Drayton after a brief period at Stand, set up a protection racket amongst the town's shopkeepers – conduct which had it taken place in our own enlightened times would have earned him either an ASBO or the Queen's Award for the young business entrepreneur of the year, according to which 'eye-catching initiative' was in vogue at the time

It may be a measure of Lancashire's readiness to accept Stand into its secondary school ranks that John Ragdale succeeded in his insistence that the name 'Stand Grammar School' be retained. The authority assumed financial responsibility for Stand in October, 2006 – two months before the inaugural meeting of this Association. At the first annual meeting in February, 1907, Longman announced that the old building was to be closed at the end of the current term, and the school re-opened as a co-educational establishment in new and larger premises. In this he was more than a little optimistic and showed a lack of grasp of the political process. The new building was not ready until 1913, by which time Stand's numbers had more than tripled to 81 - a tribute to his forcefulness and energy in situations where he had virtually a free hand.

A man of wide experience (he had had experience of six schools before coming to Stand), Longman was not averse to following examples of best practice elsewhere. The constitution of the new association was based on those of two public schools: Emanuel (where he had taught) and Manchester Grammar. Its announcement of its stated aim as being 'the furtherance of the interests and prosperity of the School and its past and present members' aptly summarises the new association's aims and brings it into line with the aspirations of the leading public schools: to create institutions which would grow traditions and act as an extended family, lasting throughout life , to those connected with them. Reciprocal loyalty between school and pupil was to be the keystone of such organisations.

This was reinforced in the choice of motto. Punning inscriptions were not uncommon, though one wonders if Longman (like the Bard of Avon) had 'small Latin and less Greek' (my Classics colleague at Lichfield raised an eyebrow when, shortly after my appointment at Stand, he saw the school's motto on some correspondence). Nevertheless, notions of service and duty were being reinforced and it was apt to Longman's purpose.

Again, the school song, composed by Longman, and set to music by the music master, W.E. Taylor, owed something to other models, perhaps most conspicuously to the poem, 'Vitai Lampada' composed by Sir Henry Newbolt in 1898 and a public school favourite. Newbolt's poem stresses the virtues of following the code of 'playing the game' by the rules, and, in the process fulfilling Britain's imperial role:

'The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke
……..
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! Play up! And play the game!"'

Longman's composition has a dash of everything: the appeal to nostalgia, duty and service, playing the game as it should be played, and, at the end, a dash of religion – thoroughly in keeping with the moral tone of the end of the Victorian era - a time when the Empire, though past its zenith, was still a formidable force, and Britons were conscious of their obligation to carry 'the white man's burden':

'The old school is with me as I sing.
Have you learnt your lesson, yet my boys,
That helping another is quite the best thing?
Have you found that 'tis pleasing yourself that cloys?
Play up! Play up! for all you are worth,
But always play according to rule.'

School songs constitute a special kind of poetic *genre* which fails to achieve the heights of literary competition (one I came across contains the phrase 'in a spirit of mutual helpfulness'). Longman's verses, though its sentiments were thoroughly appropriate for their time and place, were never likely, in modern parlance, to 'make the charts', and the song did not survive his retirement. Notably, though written at a time when he must have been expecting an imminent move to new premises to set up a co-educational school, there is no reference in it to girls. Again, though at the time no one would have thought it particularly amiss to include a slighting reference to the Empire's subject peoples in the last verse, made today it would have got him into trouble with the Race Relations Board. Then there was 'Forty Years On', sung at the inaugural meeting and afterwards. Composed by a former music master of Manchester Grammar School who had emigrated to Harrow, where it became the school song, it was popular amongst the Mancunians, and has stood the test of time. It became a natural choice when Longman's song was phased out, and resisted attempts in later years to delete it from the Speech Day programme (the main activist, I have to say, was a Charterhouse man).

The need for another element in Longman's regime would have been to him self-evident. His discipline, described as 'formidable', was entirely in keeping with that of the schools he had worked in before coming to Stand. In 1858 *The Times* referred to the 'unsolved problem' of taming uncivilized boys, and concluded that where the schools succeeded, 'Parents may well abstain from looking too closely into the process and content themselves with the result.' Problems there were. Longman was perhaps too young to remember the riot which took place at Eton in the 1860s, where, after blowing the door of the Headmaster's study off with gunpowder, a group of the ringleaders took refuge on an island in the river, the Riot Act was read, and troops called in to restore order. Eton's only way of dealing with the boys at night was to lock them in the Long Dormitory and let them out the next morning. Wellington's famous remark about the battle of Waterloo being won on the playing fields of Eton, referred not so much to the discipline instilled by team games as to the regular bare knuckle fights which took place in the school grounds, with substantial wagers being laid on the outcome. Indeed the attitude of many school staffs to their charges could well be summed up by another remark of Wellington's (allegedly about the Iniskillen Fusiliers), 'I do not know what these men will do to the enemy, but by God they terrify me.' Even the great Dr. Arnold admitted that his aim was 'to form Christian men; for Christian boys I can scarcely hope to make…. I suspect that a low standard of morals must in many respects be tolerated amongst them'.

The main weapon in the teacher's armoury was the rod (in Dr. Johnson's phrase 'the terror of all'), which was in general use throughout the system. Longman does not appear to have spared it amongst his pupils. David Hudson and I have often recalled the visit to the school of an Old Standian of some eighty or more years of age in the summer of 1971, during my absence at a heads' meeting. David took him on a tour of the school, and on entering the hall the visitor asked if we still had public floggings. David replied to the effect that there wasn't much call for it nowadays, which seems rather to have disappointed him. Indeed, I think we may have spoiled his day. From his age I would guess that he could have been one of Longman's pupils.

Concerning the status of girls at Stand, there are many unanswered questions. Co-education had been fundamental to the agreement entered into by Longman and his governors when the school took on local authority status. Their arrival was delayed by seven years, during which the new building was in the process of construction. During this period Longman had time to develop to his satisfaction the features he had introduced - to great acclaim, (Hewitson's account speaks of 'excellent work …being done under the headmastership of Mr. George Longman' and of the 'wonderful' progress of the school in its new premises. At the opening ceremony John Ragdale described the school as an 'intellectual power station'); but there is no hint of preparations for introducing a female element into the school population, though obviously plans had been made to appoint women staff.

One could easily argue that Longman was not 'in touch with his feminine side' – as may well have been the case, but the problem of co-education at this level was a new one. Women's education had advanced enormously in the preceding half-century but exclusively in girls' schools. The main argument for co-education was a financial one. New authorities could afford one school but not two, though once numbers rose to a sufficient level the case could be made for two single-sex schools.

In Stand's case this target must have seemed easily achievable given the new school's rapid expansion – from more than 200 to 393 (beyond the planned capacity of 380) in the first two years. In the meantime boys and girls were treated in some respects like separate communities within the same institution. I have been unable to verify the story that girls and boys were taught in separate classrooms, but communication between the sexes was certainly discouraged. My former chairman, Wilson Orrell used to speak of having been caned for speaking to a girl - his sister to whom he had been told by his mother to give a message.

So far as Association activities were concerned there was little opportunity to consider the inclusion of the girls. Within a year of the opening of the new building the 1914-18 War broke out and Old Standians of Longman's time and earlier were swept up in the conflict. Ironically Longman's staff appointments had included a Staff Sergeant and a Drill Sergeant, no doubt intended to improve order and discipline. Recollection of their training may have been of help to newly enlisted Standians, but would have not have prepared them for what they were about to face on the battlefield – in the era of modern artillery, machine guns, and barbed wire. Increasingly, as the devastating effects of modern warfare were realised, and the scale of losses mounted, people's preoccupations were elsewhere and social and other activities began to dwindle. Longman himself retired in 1917 at the height of the conflict. Possibly he may have felt thwarted in his ambitions for the school, but the legacy of his creation was secure.

Longman had taken over the School in a time of financial crisis. His successor, George ('Paddy') Locke, came at a time when the outcome of the war was still uncertain, and the way ahead ill-defined. Locke, who shared his predecessor's enthusiasm, for the Association, made its re-establishment a high priority, and it was re-convened in 1921 under the presidency of George Taylor, himself an Old Standian and a former Foundation Governor, with W. Gardner and F. Hepworth as joint secretaries under a new system by which one of the secretaries (on this occasion Hepworth) represented the school staff.
One of Locke's early tasks was the establishment of a memorial to the 31 Old Standians who had died in the war. Seen as a proportion of the numbers attending school between 1900 and the end of the war, and reckoned along with the large numbers who had been wounded, it shows a rate of loss comparable with communities such as Accrington, where the decimation of the so-called 'Accrington Comrades' had sent a whole town into mourning.

Under Locke's programme of reconstruction, which kept pace with the larger re-generation of post-war British society, the Association began to grow again and flourish. Initiatives generated by Longman were revived: the Annual Dinner, the School Magazine, 'The Standian', in which the Association now had its own page, the Cricket Club, the Football Club. At some time during these early years a parallel Old Girls' Association was formed, leading to the holding of additional joint events such as the annual tennis match, annual dinner, and other social activities, including dances. As a result of the strengthening of links between School and Association, membership grew from 100 to 400 during Locke's twenty-year tenure.

It is commonly said that a good headteacher is a good picker. The Locke era featured a number of staff appointments, men and women who were not only good

teachers, but chose to involve themselves fully in the extra-curricular life of the school – to an extent that many of their pupils developed life-time interests which affected their whole careers: Frank Hepworth, Staff representative for over 20 years, W.E. Taylor composer of the school song, J. Benham, the two 'HSCs', Clarke and Cotterill, the former with his unique method of reinforcing key points by knocking the heads of pupils against the wall, but on another level benefactor and supporter of the football club and the Association, the latter deputy and for a time acting head on Locke's retirement, Eric Hanson, producer of school plays for 34 of his 44 years at Stand. On the distaff side many women staff made a major contribution to the school, most notably Miss Craze, appointed Senior Mistress in 1919 who in 1937 transferred with ten of her colleagues to the newly built Girls' Grammar School.

In spite of the difficulties of the inter-war years the School began to flourish under Locke's stewardship. It is from his time that one finds Stand producing students notable at national level in a variety of spheres: Sir Joseph Latham, Sir Robert Southern, Professor Geoffrey Bullough, Al Read; and attracting a growing reputation for producing engineers, bankers, and members of the professions. Throughout this time Locke took an active interest in the Association, and worked personally with its officers to ensure that leavers were encouraged to maintain contact with the School.

Speaking to Locke's former pupils I have had the impression of immense energy, accompanied by a fair degree of temper, though those who experienced, and survived it invariably laughed about it. (As on the occasion when the late Sam Allen described Locke's caning of a whole class for a misdemeanour involving setting fire to a dustbin.) I was lucky enough to make Locke's acquaintance soon after my arrival at Stand when I received a letter from him advising me that he would not be coming to Speech Day that year, and mentioning in passing that no one had told him the School had a new headmaster. It all seemed very much in character and I wrote back in conciliatory tones, saying that I thought it not unreasonable that at the age of ninety one could have the odd day off.

Yet Locke could be said to have had a secret sorrow. On his appointment as headmaster he was advised, as Holt's memorandum puts it, 'that he would not have to act as a headmistress for very long' as the intention was to open a girls' school in response to the increasing size of the local population. However, as we know, disruption and delay were the hallmarks of educational development in the Twentieth Century, and, though he worked tirelessly to bring about the founding of the Girls' Grammar School, it did not open until 1937 – the year of his retirement. As Tony Wilding puts it, he was, like Moses, fated to view the promised land but not to enter.

Though the evidence is limited, one has the impression that for Locke the girls represented an area where in some matters he had to hand control to his female colleagues, and as a result was slightly uneasy. One of my correspondents from this era relates that her chief recollection of him was when he shouted at her for running in the hall, and the incident seems to typify his attitude to the girls. (Indeed, it reminds me of the humorist James Thurber's story of the man who was so uneasy about the behaviour of women pedestrians that if he saw one while driving he would lower the car window and shout, 'Watch it, stupid!') Where the girls were concerned his view was, as the World War I recruiting song put it, 'We don't want to lose you but we think you ought to go.'

Nevertheless these trials did not prevent him from running what seems to have been a happy and flourishing school.

In his twenty years as Headmaster Locke had guided Stand through the aftermath of the 1914-18 War and established it firmly within the Twentieth Century. His achievement is best summed up by his pupil, Joseph Latham:

> '[He was] not only the maker of modern Stand, but [he] fittingly bridged the gap between the old type of headmaster and the new, for there could be no greater contrast between George Longman on the one hand and Dennis Norwood and Sam Medlar on the other.'

By the time the second World War broke out in 1939 there were two Stand Grammar Schools in Whitefield. At the Boys' Grammar School Dennis Norwood faced a task similar to his predecessor's in taking over from George Longman, but he arrived to find an institution better equipped for uncertain times. Years ago I heard Harold Cotterill, in his direct way, speak with good-humoured tolerance of Norwood's management of school business; but the record tells a different story. During the war years school numbers doubled - a situation with which he had to cope in times of shortage and disruption, for this was a conflict in which the civilian population was heavily involved through air raids in civil defence and related activities. Where the Association was concerned Norwood shared his predecessors' belief in its value, and managed, in spite of shortages and other pressures of the time, to maintain many of its social activities. His most notable contribution to the Association's history was the establishment of *Notes and News,* still with us today, which kept readers informed of the activities of Old Standians serving with the Armed Forces, and in return provided them with news of the School. In common with many other schools Stand formed a school flight for the local A.T.C. squadron, with Norwood in command, assisted by Bill Evans. One of Norwood's final acts before leaving was to set up a Friends Association to foster relationships between parents and relatives of pupils. When he handed over the School to his successor in 1945 he left him an institution with its traditions and administration in good order.

Meanwhile at Stand Girls' Grammar School the first headmistress, Miss Grace Lobjoit, was in the process of establishing the new institution, with a staff of thirteen colleagues, of whom eleven had come from the mixed school, including Miss Craze, who had been Senior Mistress there since 1919. Coming to her appointment at Stand from a prestigious London School, Miss Lobjoit typified the generation of headmistresses who fostered the movement (begun in the late Victorian era) to emancipate young women, and allow them to develop careers in all walks of life. A number of her former pupils and colleagues have written to me about her, supplying anecdotes and observations which provide a portrait of a remarkable individual. She had a degree of personal presence which ensured discipline at all times. (One correspondent described her as having 'an effusive temperament under her autocratic exterior', another wrote, more simply, 'think Margaret Rutherford'.) At all times she insisted on courtesy – to herself and others, yet was sufficiently self-contained to play her cello at school concerts and tell stories to the junior girls in 'listen with mother' fashion. She undertook the part of Lady Bracknell in the school production of 'The Importance of being Ernest' - to general approval. On another level she was unfailingly kind to any girl or colleague who was in any kind of difficulty. In matters of

curriculum and custom she was innovative. By the time she came to retire the school had golf and fencing amongst its recreational activities. During the war she organised a fire-watching schedule after an incendiary bomb fell on the school building. She was active in organising both an Old Students' Association and a Friends Association.

Such individuality came at a price. For instance, there were the dogs. One of her earlier students has described her riding to school on a bicycle, with her labrador lolloping behind her. At a later date the single animal was replaced by two 'gryphon dogs' (I assume the name has something to do with their ugly appearance). These creatures occupied twin baskets in her study, and numerous former pupils have testified to having been bitten on the ankles during interviews with her. More seriously these unprovoked attacks occurred shortly before her retirement when candidates for her post went to her room to be briefed by her. Her successor, Muriel Shepherd, tells me that on this occasion the dogs burst into the room while coffee was being served and proceeded to force their attentions on the candidates - to their general consternation, one of the dogs being sufficiently forward as to jump on Mrs. Shepherd's lap. When, following her appointment, Mrs Shepherd went to see Miss Lobjoit she exclaimed, 'There! When he jumped into your lap I knew it would be you. You see he liked you!'

Additionally Miss Lobjoit seems to have suffered from what the special needs experts call 'crossed laterality' and had problems in distinguishing left from right. Though apparently not affecting her driving, her disability got her into trouble when she took the dogs for exercise during a heads' conference at Preston, and ended up in the grounds of County Hall facing a fire door. Her early interest in homeopathic medicine led to the practice of staff concealing any ailment lest they be summoned to her presence and dosed with some concoction of unknown antecedents. Nevertheless, all connected with her have spoken of the school as being a happy place during her twenty-five years in charge. Perhaps in the end the now overworked word 'charismatic' is the most appropriate one with which to describe her.

As a footnote to the cello playing, I was intrigued, on watching a performance of Haydn's Toy Symphony by the Girls' School orchestra, to see Mrs. Shepherd, who was sitting with the players, produce a musical instrument known as a 'bird warbler' and make a brief contribution to the performance. Clearly the green shoots of tradition had survived the years. Her predecessor's spirit would have approved.

Miss Lobjoit's years at Stand Girls overlapped those of Dennis Norwood at the boys' school and those of his successor, Sam Medlar, a former staff member of Manchester Grammar School who had also seen war service. The war had taken its toll of Old Standians with 65 dead out of 605 who saw service, many with conspicuous gallantry. Inevitably there had been some loss of contact during the conflict and a scheme was put into operation (possibly in Norwood's time, or by Harold Cotterill, who was staff secretary to the Association) by which correspondents were appointed to make contact with specific year groups within the entire period from 1913 onwards. As a result, within two years membership of the Association rose to 662 - what must have been a record for the time. Another event of some significance was the appointment of Wilson Orrell, the Association Secretary, to the governing body of the school, an important step in the progress of the Association. A campaign began to provide a suitable memorial to the War dead - resulting

in the provision of a second Roll of Honour, unveiled in 1948, and a more long-term project to provide a memorial playing field, which, after years of difficulty and delay, was formally handed over in 1972.

Medlar's years of headship coincided with the post-war period, an era which has begun to attract the attention of contemporary historians. One of Margaret Thatcher's civil servants has said of that time, 'We had won the war and we voted ourselves a nice peace.' That was not how it felt for many who lived through the period. It was still a time of shortages, when returning ex-service men and women were anxious to take up the careers the war had interrupted. Medlar's energies were devoted to helping the School pick up its rhythm again and look to a new future. In keeping with his Manchester Grammar background he was concerned to develop Stand's academic side, but he also fostered his personal interest in scouting and other forms of physical activity. It was probably during his time that boxing was introduced into the spectrum of recreational activities, under the supervision of John Whitworth, who, being mainly concerned with scripture teaching, must have seemed the most unlikely of sponsors. Additions to the staff during this period featured a number of returning ex-service men, including such redoubtable characters as John Ashurst, notable for his forthrightness, and his readiness to emphasize his point of view with a clip round the ear. (Shortly after leaving Stand I encountered Ashurst at a heads' conference when he spoke of his exchange of jobs in reaction to proposals to turn his present school into a sixth-form college. I omitted to mention that I was in the process of setting-up such a college, for fear of attracting one of his trademark 'sidewinders'.) There were some public school appointees to the staff during this period, including John Hunter, who made his career at Stand, and Adrian Frith – a Wykehamist of great charm and style. This was the era of Brien Crossfield, Phil Burch, Ifor Jones, Joe Ogden, and Fred Hill – a fugitive from Bury Grammar where he led the staff strike which gave the school temporary notoriety in the national press. And I must not forget the temporary appointment to a P.E. post of a young ex-serviceman, who was subsequently confirmed in the post and decided to stay. Whatever happened to him? For me the key appointment of Medlar's time was that of Les Lumley who came to Stand as head of Physics after a period of war work on science projects. Speaking at the School's Tercentenary celebration in 1988, Medlar's successor, Austin Williamson, rated Les as the best schoolmaster he had ever worked with – a verdict I would echo from my own experience. He was the complete professional: hard-working, loyal, an able teacher, and an equally skilful manager. He followed Cotterill as deputy head and Staff Secretary to the Association, for which he worked tirelessly. For a brief period, prior to my own arrival, he was Acting Head of Stand. I found him a reassuring and supportive presence, and a good companion. In retirement in his native Northumbria he maintained contact with a number of Old Standians, some of whom visited him in his remote fastness in Wooler.

During the Fifties important changes took place in the structure and management of the teaching profession which affected its attitudes and standards profoundly. A new salary structure created a medley of differentials, and, by the law of unintended consequences, brought about a degree of staff mobility which was completely new to the system. As a result the pattern of career lifetimes spanning one or at most two schools gave way to a kind of recruiting auction which caused staff to change posts frequently, especially in large conurbations where moving jobs did not entail moving homes. As a consequence individual commitment to institutions began to weaken, and, as the numbers of long-stay

staff dwindled through retirement, schools became increasingly dependent on other forms of support to retain their sense of identity and tradition. In these circumstances associations of former pupils became of increasing importance in asserting the traditions and standards of the schools with which they claimed connection. Additionally, as moves towards secondary reorganisation, came under discussion, it was the associations which became, as it were, the guardians of their schools - asserting and defending their traditions and values. Wilson Orrell's appointment to the Stand School governors was an important step in this process of supporting the School. The first attempt to effect a change in status for Stand came during Cotterill's term as Acting Head, following the departure of Medlar to Hele's School, Exeter. A suggestion was made that a technical grammar school might be formed by the merger of Stand with Radcliffe Technical School. As Staff Secretary Cotterill was well placed to ensure that the Association and the Governors were made aware of shortcomings in this plan, and it failed to progress.

Austin Williamson, headmaster from 1955 to 1965, followed the pattern set by Medlar. He took an immense interest in the school's academic achievements, being particularly proud on the occasion when it sent 45 students to university in a single year. During his time appointments of former students to the staff took place (possibly urged on by Cotterill): Emile Schlesinger, Keith Reavey, Brian Smethurst – against the growing trend by which young men and women no longer went back to teach in their native place after qualifying. Williamson was an enthusiastic supporter of the School's institutions. He eventually left to complete an educational journey which had led him the length of the country – from Edinburgh Academy, via Scarborough and Stand, to Hove, the town of his birth. He left many friends here.

My own experience of Stand was of an immense friendliness and readiness to induct me into the extended family of the School and its former staff and students. Within a few months I met a number of the 'founding fathers' of the twentieth century school: H.S. Clarke, H.S. Cotterill, proposing the toast of the Association at the annual dinner and describing his arrival in 'rural Whitefield' on the day of his appointment, and, most memorably, Eric Hanson, himself a pupil of my old school at Hyde under the same headmaster, who told me of Al Read's acting debut (in a comic role) in a school production of 'Twelfth Night', the playwright Henry Livings, and Philip Lowrie, then a notable TV actor, with whom he was still in touch. I have spoken previously of the great pleasure with which I looked forward to meetings of the Old Standians' Committee – more like a clubland chat than a business meeting. Business was quickly dispatched, to give place to wide-ranging conversation on a variety of topics, mostly, it has to be said, centring on banking (accounts won and lost, stories of computer disasters), but also involving sport (John Burrows on golf, and Keith Dewhurst on the adventures of the football club), and with some reminiscence on times past by old hands such as Arthur Driver. There was also considerable interest in day to day events in the school, and helpful advice and support concerning actual and potential problems. Of all the committees I was involved with it was the one in which I took most pleasure, with the Friends Association (Dennis Norwood's creation) a close runner up.

During my early years at Stand it was an immense help to have as Chairman of Governors the Old Standian nominee, Wilson Orrell. He took his appointment very seriously and was very ready to find time to listen when problems arose. Most of all he

was ready to defend the School within a governing body which was increasingly preoccupied, and intrusively inclined, where the politics of education and school management were concerned. In the end the politicians prevailed. He was voted out of the chairmanship, and soon after left the governing body, to be replaced by Harvey Brooks, who made an equally forthright contribution to meetings, though not in the influential position of Chairman.

All Stand's Twentieth Century heads have had their particular burdens to bear. This is the nature of headship. Longman, Locke, and Norwood experienced wartime conditions, financial problems, shortage of accommodation, the problems of post-war revival. For Austin Williamson and myself, in addition to the eternal problem of scarce resources, there was the phenomenon of the Sixties. In memory the Sixties are seen as a decade of turbulence, marked by challenges to the established social order – in particular an assault on the twin pillars of Authority and Duty. The media, growing in power and influence, had noted the increasing affluence of employed teenagers and their potential as a source of advertising revenue, and suddenly discovered an overwhelming concern and sympathy for their interests. In schools and colleges, regulations became a battleground where a series of minor infringements could be used to provoke a disciplinary reaction sufficient for an accusation of unreasonable behaviour to be made, and reported to the local or national media, which would respond by pleading the cause of oppressed youth.

When this sort of thing happened the Association would invariably come out on the side of the School. At Stand a classic case occurred when, after a series of skirmishes with staff over haircuts, a 'sit in' was held on the school field at lunch time. (I have recently noted that it still rates a mention on the Standian web-site, but more of that later.) Once the existence of the event was discovered it lasted all of ten minutes, during which I explained, with what I hoped was sufficient clarity, the position of those present so far as school regulations were concerned. Returning to the school building, I was pleased to see on surveying the field from an upper window that it was entirely clear and that the 'sitters-in' had gone back into school in time for afternoon registration. Minutes later, as David Hudson and I were discussing matters in my study, we were confronted by two members of the press, a reporter and a photographer, demanding details of the 'demonstration'. A diplomatic exchange took place during which it was suggested that our visitors might have been mistaken or misled. But these were experienced newshounds, who went away only as far as the main gate to await the end of afternoon school. Here they secured interviews with two or three boys and took photographs. One of these showed a fairly harmless youth – in no sense an activist but Byronic in appearance – in the act of brushing away a lock of his abundantly waving hair from his forehead, in the process revealing a large signet ring on his middle finger. When the picture appeared the father, an Old Standian, was furious – not with the school, but with his son and the newspaper. Another paper which contrived an interview with a more rebelliously inclined pupil, found itself attacked by furious parents. Though such reactions were not always the case, where the Association or Old Boys of the School were concerned there was invariably support for the School – often to a degree where members would have been prepared to go a mile farther than we would.

Years after leaving Stand I received an unexpected example of the Association's readiness to help members of its larger community. In the 1970s our college in Hereford was having difficulty in pioneering a paper in 'A' Level Computer Studies with one of the

major examination boards. Recalling that an Old Standian, Jack Howland, had been awarded the C.B.E. for services to the computing industry, I contacted Phil Burch at Stand, and was put in touch with Jack, who was able to advise us on the problem and helped us to a successful conclusion. After studying Tony Wilding's history I believe Jack may have been a relative of the J. Howland who was elected Headmaster's representative at the inaugural meeting of 5th December, 1906.

When it came to support services what may be called the Association's finest hour came in the years when the School's future came into question. Beginning with a successful campaign to preserve the name 'Stand' in any proposed reorganisation, it fought for over a decade to preserve the connection with the old school in a process which took it from existence as a Sixth Form College to being an annexe of a Tertiary College, then to absorption in that college, and, the final degradation, to being the prey of asset strippers who removed all trace of it. In these final years the girls returned to Stand, so that the wheel had come full circle, and in a sense the school's status post-1916 had been restored.

I have said that each of Stand's headmasters during the past century had his particular burden to bear. In my view none was heavier than that borne by my successor, David Hudson. One headmaster for whom I worked held the view that the problems of a declining school were worse than those of an expanding one. In a five-year spell from 1979 David managed to look after the dwindling remnant of the old school, while simultaneously setting up a new co-educational sixth-form college, and implementing a large building programme. While thus engaged he contrived to establish the College as a centre of excellence in computing, and take it to a ranking in *The Times'* ranking list of top contenders for Oxbridge awards. It was a remarkable achievement, in keeping with the highest professional and managerial standards, for which he deserves the greatest credit.

At the end of the day what shall we say of those served by the Stand Grammar Schools? Not unnaturally we like to claim influence on the careers of those who have been notably successful in particular areas of life, and in many ways we can demonstrate a direct impact: in academic achievement, in entertainment, in sport, in business. Yet, scanning the list of successful Standians, one wonders how many, looking back on their achievements would be prepared to acknowledge a debt to the School. Successful people often believe their successes to have been mainly their own work. In many cases I would dispute this. To give an example, I am not sure that John Spencer would have felt his success as a snooker player owed much to his years at Stand. Yet the impulse which led him to develop a professional organisation for the game at which he excelled is fully in the tradition of Standian notions of service, and the courage with which he met debilitating illness in his later years is typical of that shown by Standians in times of difficulty and distress. John Heilpern, critic, and author of the official biography of John Osborne, had little good to say of the school when he proposed to write a memoir of his schooldays, yet he admitted to being inspired by the teaching of his English teacher, Joe Ogden. Likewise Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, leading figures in the rock group Ten CC would understandably be disinclined to acknowledge a debt to Stand in their career development. Yet, like the things we were made to learn by heart at school, the effect of past experiences may germinate in us in different ways and flower years later.

For some the connection is never lost. If I had to pick out a single Old Standian as my man of the century it would be Joseph Latham. Throughout his career as a leading industrialist he continually managed to find time for the Association: as its President, Trustee, founder of a London branch – active supporter of the football club. I was privileged to meet him when he was Guest of Honour at Speech Day, days before the industrial group he served was due to be taken over. No one would have sensed from his calm and easy manner that he was about to face the destruction of much that he had worked for. He was a man for all seasons. Yet he was not without a touch of devilment. In my work with the Friends Association I regularly met an Old Standian called Eric Bland, who hearing me speak of Latham on one occasion said, 'Oh, I remember him all right. When you played him in house matches he used to come up and kick you behind the knee'. No one is perfect. I can only wish he had delivered the financial equivalent of a kick behind the knee to Arnold Weinstock before the latter brought about the destruction of AEI, and unemployment to a number of Old Standians.

What, then, of the future? The present time, so near to Remembrance Day, provides us with many examples of associations of old comrades, formed in the aftermath of war, whose ranks are now so reduced that they no longer take part in the annual ceremony. There have been suggestions that, lacking a school and a school building, and following the loss of identity that marked the final merger of Stand College with the Bury centre, the Association must face the prospect of closure within a few years. I suggest that we approach such a possibility cautiously. All of us here have known Stand in some way or other. For good or ill, it is a part of our lives, and there are many others, whether members or not, for whom their connection with the school has significance. In recent years, through the medium of the two websites the Association now operates, past contacts have been renewed and our extended family has become more global. (I have had e-mails from afar afield as Australia.) Some of our contributors, rather like Henry V's Agincourt veterans remember 'with advantages' (I am told that if we find some of the material distasteful we should be grateful for not seeing what has been held back) but the overall effect is to re-inforce memories of the past. I think many present tonight would agree with me that as we become older we increasingly value and are grateful for those things that link us to the past, for without those memories we cannot fully make sense of our lives. As the poet Wordsworth, whom I never particularly liked at school, puts it:

> 'O joy! that in our embers
> Is something that doth live,
> That nature yet remembers
> What was so fugitive!'

Access to information in the present day gives us an unrivalled opportunity to explore Stand Grammar School's history and discover new dimensions in past events – boldly to go (forgive me if I do not split the infinitive) where no Standian has gone before. This can be our task if we are prepared to take it on.

In the meantime, let us take pride and comfort in the fact that in one way or another we have been part of two institutions that in their time have served their members and their community well, and have done the state some service. In that spirit I now ask you to rise and drink with me to 'The Old Standians Association'