

Summer Times



*Summer Times is the Journal
of the
Old
Scarborians
Association*

*Members of the Association are
former pupils and members of
staff of
Scarborough High School for Boys*

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Old Scarborians Association
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TENE PROPOSITUM

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Editorial

Dear Members,

Even the least observant among you will have noticed that the format of this document is markedly different from that of Volume 48, which you received in November 2005. As we publicised at that time, David Fowler came to the end of his period of notice of resignation from his responsibilities as editor of *Summer Times* and, despite strenuous efforts, we have not been able to find a replacement. Thus, we are back where we started in 1998, when he took over from Frank Bamforth, and this publication is being produced by an Editorial Sub-Committee with David's help. It is our intention to continue to publish twice a year in order to bring to your

attention our social and sporting events and to keep you informed about the Association and its membership. If any of you can help us in this endeavour we will be pleased to hear from you, though ideally we would like to hear from someone who can take over as editor.

Meanwhile we trust that you will enjoy this publication and will be stimulated to contribute to the content.

The Editorial Sub-Committee

Letters to the Editor

Alan Green (37–44) writes. . . .

One real 'first' to report was a 13 strong Green get-together in Scarborough in May. The Royal Hotel had come down in the

world a bit from the heady days of 1943–44 when the place was packed for Saturday night dances with Army, RAF, Free French, and Poles.

We gazed at the lighthouse where in 1940–41 Boy Scouts on night duty waited for the Germans to land. Some threat to the invader that was. It was just as well they never came. There was better luck fire-watching at the Girls' High School (3 shillings to 4s 6d a night), with the occasional visitor sneaked in to help with the homework and bedtime cocoa.

So much for Scarborough of happy memory.

David Comins (59–66) writes. . . .

I stepped down as Rector of The Glasgow Academy after 11 years in July 2005.

After an extended mountaineering holiday in the Pyrenees, my wife Anne (SGHS 1961–68) and I spent three fantastic weeks in Egypt, under the guidance of Ray Bloom. I had contacted Ray on reading his piece in a recent *Summer Times* and he gave us superb advice and put us in touch with an excellent Cairo travel agent, Abdallah, of Upper Moon Travel (nilefelucca@yahoo.co.uk). In turn, Abdallah made all our arrangements within Egypt and ensured we had a terrific time. These proved ideal as we are not “package tour” types and we were able to spend time as we wished when in Egypt.

We also met up with Ray at the end of our stay and enjoyed talking about our school days which had overlapped a little. Ray says he is always pleased to hear from Old Boys visiting Egypt.

In December 2005, we move to China for a short while, teaching in a Chinese school

until my official retirement age comes around. However, we are travelling to China entirely by train from Glasgow via London, Brussels, Moscow, and Beijing, before one final (short) leg of 23 hours down to Shenzhen.

Allan Warwick (61–66) writes. . . .

I have just joined OSA and if anyone can put me in touch with any of the following I shall be grateful: John Oxley, PE Teacher; Jack Binns, History; Mr Gittings, Maths; and students from my year, Richard Billington, Trevor Fishburn, Martin Eccles, Richard Gilbert, and Alan Armitage.

Stuart Bennett (47–55) writes. . . .

The 50 Greatest Yorkshire People, edited by Bernard Ingram (from Thatcher era), has caused some controversy. Distinguishing feature: grit. Never mind them tykes! What about *The 10 Greatest Scarboroughs*? First nominations:

Born/domiciled in Scarborough (achieved in national context)

- Sir George Cayley (Scarborough MP, Father of Aeronautics, propelled his unwilling coachman into the air at Brompton Vale)
- Anne Bronte and sisters (West Riding visitors)
- Charles Laughton (from Pavillion Hotel to Hollywood)
- Sir John Wilson (blinded at High School chemistry lab, founded Royal Society for Blind)
- Eric Fenby (wrote down Delius' tunes before he forgot them)

- Fred Truman (bowled out the MCC)
- Bill Nicholson (Scarborough Reserves to Spurs FA Cup)
- Alan Ayckbourn (directed in SBHS Hall)

Contributed to Scarborough's identity as town/community

- Skarathi (landed boat, set up first sea view guesthouse)
- Mrs. Elizabeth Farrow (discovered Spa waters)
- Jaconelli (favourite Foreshore attraction)
- Sam Rockinghorse (directed in SBHS Hall)
- Cyril Downs/Ida Slarke (Westborough Methodist Chapel)

Members and friends are invited to make nominations for '10 (or more) Great Scarborough's'. (Send to: scarbs@bennetthouse.org.uk).

Officer's Reports

President

The past six months has, of course, been dominated by the illness and death of Geoff Nalton. He will be greatly missed by all members of the Association and by the citizens of Scarborough, who turned out in large numbers at his funeral. Sadly, we lost several other members this winter and you will find details later in this Newsletter.

The two meetings went well with the usual high turnout at the Palm Court for the Scarborough Dinner and reassuringly a markedly improved attendance at the London Lunch at the House of Lords, despite it being held on a Thursday and despite the

cost of £50 per head. Congratulations to Mick Bowman, Maurice Johnson and Geoff Winn who bit the bullet and revamped the whole London Lunch project. It was a splendid occasion and they have been encouraged to try the House of Commons next year. Don't miss it.

We intend to keep communicating with you, our members, on the same timetable as in the past and I hope that this will be the only Newsletter that we produce and that the next communication but one will be in the Magazine format. Will the next Editor of Summer Times come forward please!

Peter Robson

Treasurer

Not a lot to say about our financial position other than we are very solvent. At present the future of "Summer Times" looks in the balance and, as this has been our only significant expense, its demise would enable us to carry on for many years without having to make any further appeals to members. However, "Summer Times" is the very lifeblood of our organisation and I hope that there is somebody out there who will pick up the baton from David Fowler. Not only has it been a wonderful read but it is the memories that it engenders which stimulates the continuation of our organisation.

We had a great time at the House of Lords in March and afterwards in the pubs along Whitehall and Lord Imbert proved an excellent host. Please support next year's projected lunch at the House of Commons.

Chris Found

New Members

We welcome the following to the OSA:

Frank Barnish (55–61)

John Longbottom (58–65)

Peter Massheder (42–47)

Michael Pratt (64–73)

Philip Ruston (46–52)

David Shannon (49–57)

Peter Steel (59–66)

Gordon Thorburn (58–64)

Allan Warwick (61–66)

Malcolm Watson (46–49)

Chris Woodland (49–56)

D.Horsley (East Ayton)

P. Johnson (Scarborough)

D.S. Messenger (Scarborough)

G. Middleditch (Scarborough)

J.S. Nockels (Scarborough)

K.R. Poskitt (Scarborough)

B.D.Poole (Scarborough)

N.A. Robinson (Kingston Upon Thames)

R.W. Seymour (Pontefract)

P.A. Timms (Upton)

D.W. Welburn (Birmingham)

J.B. Wilkinson (Halifax)

M. Wooley

Missing members

We have had the Summer Times, which was mailed to the following people, returned to us. If anyone knows their whereabouts, please contact Mick Bowman.

T.E. Almack (last address in Scarborough)

R. Blower (Mill Hill)

D. Booth (Reading)

B.S. Cartwright (Keighley)

H.W. Cassel (Canada)

H.J. Cundall (Halesworth)

A. Dewdney (Scarborough)

J.M.H. Graves (Scarborough)

P. Harding (Watford)

D Hepworth (Grantham)

P.A. Hodgson (Scarborough)

Jottings

Alan Green sent a snippet from *New College Record 2004* about Harvey McGregor QC, MA, DCL, Honorary Fellow New College Oxford (and former Warden).

“Continuing in practice at the Bar from Hailsham Chambers, London; Visiting Professor, The University of Edinburgh, renewed 2003; ‘Warden’s Concerts’ with students from Napier University and St. Mary’s School; 17th edition of *McGregor on Damages* (substantially revised); translation of French text of a European Code of Contract published as a Special Issue of the *Edinburgh Law Review*.”

Alan adds, “The lad keeps busy earning a few bob for his old age. He’s 79 as at 2005!”

Alan Bridgewater who prepared many crosswords for Summer Times, had a stroke in 2004 and has now moved to a residential home in Pocklington. He would welcome contact from Old Boys who remember him, but apologises that, as he now has no computer and has difficulty writing, replies would be difficult. His address is Wold Haven, 36 Burnby Lane, Pocklington, YO42 2QD.

Bill Kendall was the winner of the Crossword in the November 2005 Summer Times.

Coming events

Scarborough Dinner; Palm Court Hotel on Friday 1st December 2007 at 7:00 for 8:00

London Lunch; House of Commons on Wednesday 21st March 2008 at 12:00 for 1:00

Application forms for tickets for these events will be issued with the next Summer Times but please register for an advanced copy of the form by e mail with Mick Bowman at mjwb@supanet.com (01287 634650)

Annual General Meeting Tuesday November 28th 2006 at a venue to be announced in the next Summer Times.

Boxing Day Rugby at Scarborough RFC

Golf at the North Cliff Golf Club on Thursday June 1st and Thursday July 27th 2006 The Golf Dinner will take place after play on July 27th. Please register your interest in participating with Chris Found dfound@ukf.net (01723 882343)

Obituaries

Peter Bolton (41–49)

Peter and I were at school together, but two years apart. I got to know him quite well at the end of my time there, mainly through acting. He gave a memorable performance as Polonius in the much remembered production of Hamlet at the end of 1944, when he was unusually young as a fourth-former to play such an elderly part. (He may also have played Macbeth a couple of years later). His image in those days was of early physical maturity, aided by an impressive pipe (his father was a high-quality tobacconist); but all counterbalanced by mental levity, not gravitas.

On leaving school he did his national service, doing his bit to deter the Russians (to his amusement) as a second lieutenant in the RASC in far-distant Hull. He then came up to Queen's when I was in my last year there. There he lived Oxford life to the full and was a leading college personality, with rowing, drama and much jollification. I believe he became President of the Junior Common Room after I had left. To everyone's pleasure he combined all this with getting a Second.

By then we had lost touch, but I gather that he went on to teach at grammar schools in Shrewsbury and Bath, and married with four children. He was then appointed head of Steyning Grammar School in 1979. This is a seventeenth century foundation near the Sussex coast which by the time of Peter's appointment had, or was subsequently to have, 2,000 pupils, a boarding school (now the only boarding school in the state system) and adult education and leisure centres. Clearly it was both a plum appointment and an unusual challenge.

It seems equally clear that Peter made a big success of it. To those who knew him, I recommend the school's website (<http://www.steyning.w-sussex.sch.uk>), which, fifteen years after his retirement, has an exceptionally long tribute to him, far too long to reproduce here. Personal qualities predominate in it, as they do in the quotes by former staff in the local press reports of his death: "his insights and understanding of people and situations were impressive. But we remember him most for his friendship and love of life"; and "he had time for everybody . . . it is inconceivable to think that he had any enemies . . . he was genuinely humble and selfless". The picture is of authority and affection earned by *not* being distant, and by keeping a sense of fun.

How splendid that he was able to combine this with serious purpose and achievement. When I met him recently at a couple of Old Scarborough lunches he showed that time had not eroded the levity, despite his wife's death. He was as little like a sententious Polonius as he had been off-stage in 1944. He died on 19 December 2005.

Michael Herman

Peter Bolton (41–49)

Peter died following a heart attack and subsequent complications shortly before Christmas 2005.

I remember him, when I was a fifth-former, as school captain and a leading player in the school's drama productions. It was only when I took up my first teaching appointment at Priory Boy's Grammar School in Shrewsbury, and found Peter already on the staff there, that we and our future wives and families became firm friends of some 50 years standing.

Peter graduated with a good honours degree in English from Queen's College, Oxford, where he rowed for the college, as a fine actor excelled in major parts with the university dramatic society, and was President of the Junior Common Room.

During his time at Priory School, Peter became head of English after only two years of teaching, trained up to six crews at any one time to row in interschool regattas and, with the help of a parent's committee, organised the building of a boathouse. His interest in language was exceptional. At that time it was Arabic, and this allowed him to study Egyptology, but later he taught himself Russian sufficiently well to enable him to read in the original. Out of school he took an interest in the Shrewsbury Theatre Guild, producing and appearing in plays. In the course of this, he met Barbara who became his wife. They were a marvellous couple, bringing happiness to each other and also to those around them.

One of the other delights of the Shrewsbury days was to have tea after school. Peter had a penchant for cakes, the creamier the better. This never left him. We also repaired to pubs at weekends and it was an opportunity to marvel at his powers as a storyteller, the string of anecdotes he came out with, and his ability to mimic. This might give the impression that he was not a very good listener; on the contrary he always had time for others.

From Shrewsbury Peter moved, in 1962, to the independent sector at St. Peter's, York, as Senior English Master and became also a House Master after two years. Again, he involved himself in a huge range of out-of-school activities. He was heavily involved in curriculum development and, in conjunction with York University, ran major

conferences and became a member of the National Executive Committee of the Association for Teaching English.

Peter left York to become Head of Beechen Cliff School in Bath. His ten years there were marked by gruelling discussions about becoming a comprehensive school and his considerable skills in leadership and his determination were used to the maximum.

His finest career achievement must be his appointment as head of one of the largest schools in the country, at Steyning, which included not only running a school with over 2000 pupils, but also a boarding house, a youth centre, an adult education centre and a detached school for children with special needs. The pressures were gruelling and demanding, but as head he was loved and cherished because the door was always open and he was there to listen.

Peter was genuinely humble and selfless. He was totally involved in any school where he worked, without thinking of the cost to himself. In his retirement, his services were in great demand and, among many other duties, he is well remembered as an active member of his church and for serving for fifteen years, many as chairman, on the governing body of his local primary school.

Peter regularly attended the London Lunch and kept in touch with Scarborough whenever he was able to visit relatives there.

Throughout, Peter always made time to devote to his wife, Barbara, who sadly predeceased him, his two daughters, two sons, six grandchildren and latterly his partner Caroline, to all of whom he was a great friend and inspiration.

Peter Jackson (44–51)

Geoff Nalton (32–35)

Geoff Nalton died on 25th February 2006, a few days before his 87th birthday, and with his passing, the town of Scarborough lost one of its notable sons.

If a letter were to turn up at the Post Office sorting office addressed simply as “The Old Scarborough”, it would have been delivered to Geoff at 18 Ryndle Walk. Geoff was involved with the OSA, from its inception, as a member, a rugby player, President (53 and 54), and Treasurer. He and Frank Bamforth were the OSA for its members and during the quiet period of the 80s and 90s, they kept in touch with them by phone and newsletter.

Geoff was born in Scarborough, the son of a police sergeant, and lived there the whole of his life (except for the war years when he was on military service with his beloved Green Howards). He worked for Bedwell, Hoyle, Solicitors in Queen Street and, because of this and because of his charitable nature, was a well known person in the town. Further, he knew a lot of people who didn't know him. He was a mine of information about the town and its citizens.

He was a photographer of talent and many were fortunate to receive his photos in the form of a Christmas or greeting card. He was also an amusing raconteur and very few OSA social occasions went by without a contribution from him. The educated idiots who left the town for university and career rarely escaped a good natured lashing for not reading their mail or not remembering dates.

Below is a photograph which dates from 1961/62, when the OSA leased a club room for one night a week at the Old Bar Hotel on the corner of North Street and

Newborough. With Geoff is Les Hartzig, who predeceased him by a couple of weeks and, of course, Messrs. Richardson and Marsden. Geoff was, as usual, at the centre of OSA affairs.

Geoff visited the battle fields of Northern France and Dunkirk every year to remember his lost comrades. We mourn Geoff's passing and we will not forget him. May he rest in peace.

Peter Robson



John Sothcott (32–38)

John Sothcott (32–38) has died aged 85. John began working in banking when he left school. He rose to be manager of the York County Savings Bank and finally the TSB in Scarborough. During the War, he was a member of the Green Howards and served in France, Germany and the Middle East. In 1950, John joined the TA and retired as a Major with a TD. In 1967, he became Scarborough's District Scout Commissioner and Secretary of the Scar-

borough District Scout Council. He was also a JP and a church warden of St Mark's Church, Newby. He was a keen golfer and was a member at North Cliff Scarborough. John's wife predeceased him and he is survived by a daughter who lives locally.

Peter Robson

Les Hartzig (36–41)

Les Hartzig died in February in York. He was a regular attender at the Scarborough Dinner and was one of the survivors of the Old Scarborians Soccer team which played in the local leagues. Other members of this elite group who are happily still with us are: Ted Lester, Jack Layton, Ron Gledhill and Jack Tamblin. In the photo below he is shown at the opening of the OSA Club in 1961/62

Peter Robson

Godfrey "Goff" Featherstone (50–58)

Godfrey Featherstone died in Birmingham on 17 November 2005. He had undergone a heart transplant in 1992 and he said to me in August 1993, "I'm fine. I won't last as long as you but I've got a few years left."

Godfrey was born in 1939 at Eye in Cambridgeshire, where his parents ran the village pub. When he was very young, his parents moved to Scarborough to take over the Selbourne Hotel in West Street. His father died when he was ten. His mother remarried with a friend of the family and, throughout his years at school, Godfrey lived at the Selbourne with his mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. Boyce. We were at school together in the 50's, though he was two years older than me, which is a big gap at school. He was a contemporary

of Frank Hole and Gerard McConville and various buddies of mine on the jazz scene: Frank Leppington, Rick Ford and Johnnie Goodhead. I had actually heard about him before I got to know him personally as he was already a well-known, controversial figure whose name loomed large in the “Letters to the Editor” column of the *Scarborough Evening News*. Even as a teenager, he was one of the leading rebels in the town and later joined the Committee of 100 founded by Bertrand Russell. Scarborough left-wing politics may have been a little pond but he was definitely a very big fish in it. At some stage, I connected the name with the rather impressive Bohemian character I had seen striding about the corridors of the school at Westwood. The first conversation I remember with him was when I was down to propose the motion “This House does not believe that God exists” at the Sixth Form Debating Society, and he came up to me and gave me some ideas. Later that year he came upon me reading—or, at any rate, carrying—a book by Jean-Paul Sartre, and that was the beginning of a series of conversations that continued, on and off, for over forty years.

In 1961, he formed a long lasting relationship with Rosie Lewis whom he had met when she was an art student in Scarborough. They never married, as a matter of principle, and the relationship lasted until the early 90s.

From 1958 to 1962, Godfrey read English at Durham University, where, in addition to his academic work, he continued his political activities as president of the Labour Club. By the time I went to Cambridge, the age-gap between us had more or less disappeared. We met up essentially during the university holidays back home,

though, later, while he was living in London, he did come to Cambridge for one memorable and hilarious weekend. In those summer holidays in the early 60s, a group of mostly ex-SHSB and Girls' High veterans, sometimes accompanied by spouses/partners, used to get together for walks and pub sessions. The main names that come to mind are John Hall, George Wray, Henry Bortoft, George Marsden, Pat Vickerman, and Joan Horsley. I seem to have spent hours at the end of many of the evening sessions walking round Scarborough with Godfrey after the pubs closed, talking non-stop, about politics of course, though I was never as committed as him, films, jazz, and perhaps, most of all, his other passion—the state of the English novel. On one of these occasions, Godfrey pointed out that we were being followed by the police who, he claimed, were keeping an eye on him as a dangerous revolutionary. I of course took this with a large pinch of salt so I was fascinated when I was later advised by the father of a friend (one of the gang mentioned above—he knows who!), a prominent member of “The Scarborough Establishment” (the expression he used), to steer clear of “that Communist, Featherstone.” He added, “We know about him—and he'll never get a job teaching in Scarborough”, which he didn't, incidentally. Godfrey was delighted by this anecdote, which confirmed his status as an enemy recognized by the Establishment.

After I moved to Paris, our meetings became much rarer. From 1964 to 1966, Godfrey and Rosie lived in London, where my wife and I saw them a couple of times. Godfrey worked for a time at Camden Library and on the pacifist journal, *Peace News*. He also—throughout the 60s and 70s—taught Liberal Studies and English in

various schools and colleges. Interestingly enough, in view of the previous paragraph, one of the places he taught at, while he was in London, was Hendon Police College. The mind boggles. At this period, he was writing his dissertation on the “stream of consciousness” in the English novel, starting with Sterne and moving through James Joyce to Samuel Beckett. The result was not accepted by the university authorities because it did not conform to the guidelines laid down—it was 3000 words too long. In 1966, the couple moved to Birmingham so that Godfrey could attend the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, run by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall.

I have memories of meeting up with Godfrey and Rosie during various summer holidays in the 70s in Scarborough with all our children when they were still quite young. On these occasions, I discovered a new aspect of Godfrey—the devoted father of his two daughters, whom he obviously adored: Lara born in 1973 and Imogen in 1976. The two girls went on to follow in their father's footsteps academically: Lara did history at Sussex University and Imogen took her degree in English at Manchester.

After Godfrey and Rosie moved to Birmingham, we corresponded episodically. At the beginning of the 80s, Rosie went back to work doing group work in the adult education sector and Godfrey gave up teaching to devote himself to writing and looking after his daughters. He had joined a writers' group in Birmingham out of which grew Tindal Street Press. On one of our visits, he talked to me about the group and gave me a copy of an anthology of short stories, *Going the Distance*, published by the Press, to which he had con-

tributed. Alain Mahar, Publishing Director of Tindal Street Press, talking about Godfrey's contribution to the volume, described him as “a powerful and graceful writer.”

Throughout his life Godfrey had always been a great buyer of books and, in his later years, he began going around the country with a friend, Steve, in a van buying and selling books. His considerable stock was kept in his house. On the first of our visits to Birmingham, I started pulling his leg about the incredibly shambolic state of the house, which was overflowing with books—so much so that I doubted that he could possibly find anything. Later in the conversation I asked him to keep an eye out for an out-of-print American novel I had been trying to get hold of for several years. At one point, he disappeared and when he came back he handed me, with a straight face, a copy of the book in question

In the early 80s Godfrey started to have health problems. In September 1992, his heart condition was diagnosed and, on Boxing Day 1992, he underwent a successful heart transplant. Throughout the 90's he continued to write and was active in various causes. Godfrey was too independent to be an orthodox member of any party. If one had to choose a label to define him politically, I suppose it would be ‘anarchist’. He was involved in various grass-roots actions. In 2004, he led a successful campaign to halt plans for a phone mast in the Kings Heath area of Birmingham where he lived, and he campaigned actively against the war in Iraq.

Whenever we met up, apart from talking about books, music, the state of the world, etc., we used inevitably to reminisce about Scarborough and our schooldays. Godfrey

was the epitome of the rebel ‘anti-Old Boy’. He was unsentimental about the High School and scathing about most members of staff, with two exceptions that I can remember: Frank Binder—my own hero—and Bill Potts, whom he referred to as one of the only sane masters at school! The fact that I received and liked reading *Summer Times* provoked his sarcasm, but I think he would have appreciated the irony of his obituary appearing here.

Of the friends of my generation, Godfrey was one of the most intelligent and certainly the most erudite. He was also one of the funniest people I have ever known. I can still see him catching my eye and the serious expression he would put on when he heard somebody being pompous or using a cliché. I can still hear his explosive, infectious laugh. On one occasion, a few years after the transplant, in 1996 I think, while we were on holiday in the UK, he came down to stay overnight in London with us and he talked about his health with the same black humour and irony that had always been a bond between us. I should add that, like many English schoolboys in the 50s, we had been strongly influenced by the Goon Show, in particular by Spike Milligan, and I can't remember a conversation without one or both of us making Milliganesque noises.

Godfrey was a remarkable man—even if he never wrote the “great English novel” or became the successor of Aneurin Bevan in the Labour Party, as some people expected. Alain Mahar of Tindal Street Press wrote to me about Godfrey's funeral in Birmingham, which I was unable to attend:

“It was really a celebratory occasion when people were able to express the qualities of Godfrey's warmth and encouragement,

determination and principle that they had benefitted from over the years. After Imo and Lara said a few touching words about their loving dad, Rosie enlightened us late-comers to the important places and relationships in Godfrey's earlier life—in Scarborough especially. She read your letter out and it spoke warmly and with humour of the man, his intellect, courage and ambition. When Phil Braithwaite spoke of his later campaigning and I explained his importance amongst a group of writers, we were adding detail to a character portrait we already recognized.”

Clearly, at various stages in his life, Godfrey made a great impression on people. I would be very pleased if any of his contemporaries had anything to add about this extraordinary character.

Mike O'Neil (52–60)

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