

However, Goff's outstanding contribution to the Bowls Club was undoubtedly the fact that in addition to the 2 years he acted as Captain of the Club, for an incredible 26 years he was the Club's Secretary – an unbelievable record! It's worth mentioning that having been installed in 1986, the very next year was the Great Storm of 1987 when the Bowls Club lost all its buildings including its changing rooms so he really did have a baptism if not of fire, certainly of wind and rain.

We used to look forward to his various missives whether they were simply minutes or grand announcements but nearly always prefaced with some witty or appropriate quotation from his wide literary reading which left us lesser mortals floundering. His service to the Club was recognised in 2013 by Kent County Bowling Association when he was awarded a Certificate of Merit and in the same year by the Club, when he was made a Life Vice President.

And so to Goff's Thespian career. In 1979 the Rugby Club was approached by the NatWest Theatre Club to see if any of the players could be persuaded to forgo Eskimo Nell and join the Sailors' Chorus in their next production, South Pacific. So it was that a number of us, including Goff's great chum, Roy Follet, hit the stage at The Greenwood Theatre at London Bridge, belting out **"There is Nothing Like a Dame"**. A bit scary that one as The Greenwood is primarily a lecture theatre with very steeped seating and you play to a frighteningly close wall of faces. However, Roy was so enthused with the experience that he persuaded Goff to join the next show which was "Call me Madam" at the Westminster Theatre, yes, our West End debut! The only fly in the ointment was that the Westminster was a temperance theatre but saved by having a pub next door. And so followed a fun-filled cavalcade of musical shows such as Guys and Dolls, My Fair Lady and all at different theatres including the lovely old Cripplegate Theatre at Golden Lane, The Chaucer Theatre in the City at the Sedgwick Centre with appropriately, the pantomime, Dick Whittington and our return to the West End - **just**- to the Kings College Theatre at the very bottom of The Strand with Robert and Elizabeth and our blue roan cocker spaniel, Alice, stealing the show.



Memories of Goff on stage include the first line I think he was ever given which was in the Hernando's Hideaway scene in The Pajama Game which was very dimly lit and quiet until Goff's voice could be heard searchingly, "Poopsie, Poopsie" Well he must have taken this dramatic moment because I have never forgotten it. Also, the scene in Oh What a Lovely War when he and Roy in kilts played the part of Irish soldiers successfully capturing a ridge only to be wiped out by their own side. Not a dry eye in the House!

Fiddler on the Roof saw us all outplayed by Roy as the Rabbi but this was Goff's big moment when he was given the role of the Russian Constable who is charged with evicting Tevye and all the families from the Village The part demanded Goff's personality to be strong and menacing even ruthless, far from his own amiable self. Nevertheless, he was determined to give a good performance so he sought a bit of professional coaching and enlisted the assistance of Karl Howman of television's Brush Strokes fame where he played the part of Jacko. Goff and Eve had got to know Karl and his wife Clare through an introduction as a customer of another Bank Manager, their old rugby friend from Westminster Bank days, Jack Belton. I remember Karl telling me at a Theatre Club dinner how he was trying to get Goff to overcome his better self and at least appear a little forceful. Eve recounts him wandering around the house endlessly muttering, YOU HAVE 3 DAYS!

Goff got a chance to expand his speaking roles when he played either Mr Cummings or Mr Gowing (We can't quite remember which) in the classic "Diary of a Nobody". His favourite however, (and what boy doesn't love playing cowboys) was Oklahoma, music from which I believe we will hear later.

Finally, if you were wondering where Goff acquired his skill in writing the histories of the Rugby and Bowls Clubs. He had previously researched the history of the Theatre Club and based on the Westminster Bank Theatre Club had traced it back to at least 1876 making it the oldest known amateur company in the country. The date was used to produce a selection of Theatre Club memorabilia and today I am wearing a pair of cuff links which were inspired by Goff's researches.

Goff - What a man of so many talents! I was and remain proud to call him my friend.