



# The Old Boys Network: A Headmaster's Diaries 1972-1986

*John Rae*

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## **The Old Boys Network: A Headmaster's Diaries 1972-1986** John Rae

John Rae was one of the most charismatic and controversial figures in British education. His reputation as a great reformer was forged during his 16 years as headmaster of Westminster School, in the 1970s and early 1980s. And his candid account of that turbulent period – recorded at the time in handwritten diaries – seems as fresh and relevant today as it was back then. The diaries, which he finished editing just before he died aged 75 in 2006, chart his struggle to keep out illegal drugs and the impact of family breakdown on pupils. Devious, rank-pulling parents are humorously dispatched. Dirty tricks by other schools are exposed – although Rae was not above wheeler-dealing himself to preserve Westminster’s ranking in the educational elite. Outspoken and humane, Rae believed in the right of parents to educate their children privately, but he was also a sharp critic of the public school establishment. “Say what you believe and head up high” was his life-long personal code – the spirit of which is captured in this often shocking and unputdownable book.

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