

The Egbertian

NEWS FROM THE OLD EGBERTIAN ASSOCIATION

see our website at www.oldegbertians.com



Spring 2008

Editor's Comment

Welcome to a bumper twelve page edition of *Egbertian News*.

It has been a while since the last edition. The Association's policy of late has been to produce short two page newsletters which can be produced quickly and thus frequently predominately featuring social events reports. However, this does not cater for those articles that we receive from members during the year so we keep those on file and produce them all at the same time in one magazine. Unfortunately this does take an inordinate amount of time to put the magazine together hence the delay.

This issue sees obituaries for three former masters: Gordon Spurgeon and Brothers Fergus and Edmund. They will be sorely missed.

I hope you enjoy the magazine.

A Chairman's View *by Peter Burke*

It seems an age since I last wrote 'A Chairman's View' in winter 2006.

Careful airbrushing of the photograph has hidden the extra grey hairs brought about, not by the Chairmanship I hasten to add, but by the passing of time.

Since then I am pleased to say that the social programme has provided much enjoyment to those attending. Our days out have been varied to say the least from walking tours of 'Old London' and river trips to climbing secret steps to hidden chambers in the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral, as those out of breath members with aching limbs the next day will surely testify.

As expected from my last letter to you, a divine intervention has not miraculously rebuilt the school, the sound of feet along the corridors is no longer heard and the commanding voice of Gordon Spurgeon sadly no longer resonates round the playing field due to his recent passing.

So to cheer ourselves up our new look AGM last year brought about a wave of wives and partners attending with members to remind us that the Association is alive and well and has a purpose. Please make a special effort to come along to the next AGM on 25th April, a splendid spread of refreshments awaits you and, as in last year's programme, I promise formalities will be kept to a minimum.

We continue to receive messages and information from all over the world and

it never ceases to amaze me as to how far an Old Eg can travel from a base of The Ridgeway School. Perhaps it was with the knowledge gained from Brother Fergus in his Geography lessons that spurred them on?

Our links with the Egbertian Football Club is still strong with many Association members who used to play for the club choosing to make a donation to the Football Club as well as

the Association. In part this support has a dual purpose in acknowledging the fact that our editor Jeff Thomas, who is also the Secretary of both the Association and Football Club, carries out a tremendous amount of work in arranging and providing our excellent newsletters and other publications.

Although I do not normally single out individuals in my notes I feel that I should make an exception in this case.

On an informative note, as these notes are being written, the Committee are nearing completion of a project that has traced the history of the Order back in time to the early days of the school and beyond. We will not have the finished article by the AGM but we intend to make it available sometime in the summer. We intend to put a cover on the publication to make it more durable and without wishing to claim Booker Prize status, it is the aim of the Committee to make it a permanent record of the Order for future

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generations as we all know too well that with the passage of time memories fade.

Sadly in the last year or so we have lost our last two Brothers, Brother Fergus and Brother Edmund along with Gordon Spurgeon. Their Obituaries have been kindly compiled by Peter Utting with additional input from Andrew

McGovern, Victor Mould and The De La Salle Brothers

In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow Committee Members for the time and effort they put in the careful arrangement of our social programme and for keeping the Association spirit alive. I look forward to seeing you all at

the AGM at our usual venue of Woodford Wells Tennis Club, please bring your wives, partners or old classmates to make the evening a success.

With best wishes and good health to you all and your families.

St Paul's Cathedral Tour by Patrick Flood

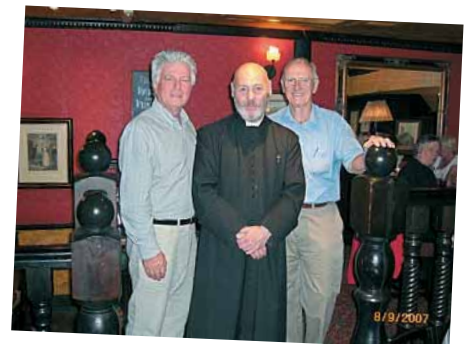
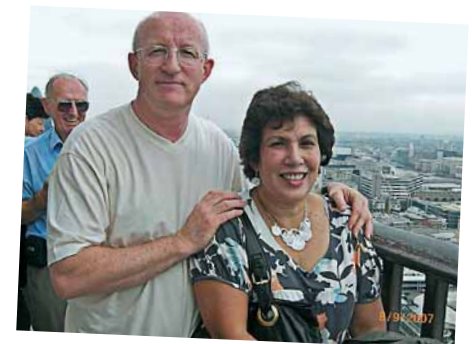
Probably one of the most insightful tours of recent years was our visit to St Paul's Cathedral which took place on Saturday 8th September.

The Association is indebted to fellow Association member Malcolm Potter for organising this tour and for arranging lunch afterwards. We meet Malcolm at the Cathedral and was introduced to Mr Tom Cameron who is the verger and who conducted the tour.

Our tour took us to parts of the Cathedral not usually accessible to the general public including the secret staircase which took us up to the library which has one of the best collections of books in the religious world. We visited the world famous Whispering Gallery followed by the Knave gallery which houses some incredible mosaic pictures which we could view close up. Our final part of the tour was to the Crypt

which has a wonderful atmosphere about it.

Lunch followed our 90 minute tour at the Ye Old London pub on Ludgate Hill which was a short walk from the Cathedral which proved to be a very good choice of venue. All in all it was an excellent tour and one that will be remembered for a long time. Thanks once again to Malcolm Potter who made it all possible.



Theatre Trip, *Kiss Me Kate* at the Kenneth More Theatre on Saturday 27th October 2007

Once again our Annual Theatre trip, which was again to the Kenneth More Theatre in Ilford, had excellent support from our members and quite rightly seems to be a permanent feature in our social calendar.

Eighteen of us met in the foyer to enjoy a cup of coffee before seeing a very good production of *Kiss Me Kate* by the Thistles Musical Theatre Company. There were many toe tapping numbers and melodies that we have become familiar with over the years with much of the music by Cole Porter.

It was agreed that this was one of the finest productions that the Association have seen over the years. After the show we all adjourned to our usual restaurant: the Dick Turpin in Newbury Park. The restaurant has been tastefully refurbished recently and the service and food was excellent as usual. All those who attended agreed that it had been a splendid event and looked forward to next years.

by Brian Pieri

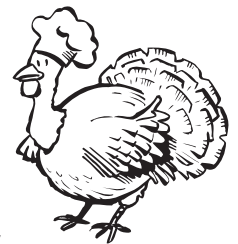
Christmas Buffet by Brian Pieri

The Christmas Buffet was once again held at the Queen Elizabeth Public House in Chingford on 9th December 2007, which is proving a popular venue having recently been refurbished.

This event has always been popular with the Associations members and although numbers were down this year everybody who attended had a thoroughly enjoyable time. Twenty nine Old Egbertians and their partners attended for an afternoon of happy memories and the refreshing of old acquaintances.

The event started at midday and as to be expected those who had travelled the furthest arrived early. Howard Watling and his wife had travelled from Burnham-on-Crouch and were just one couple who had travelled a distance which was a great effort. Several has attended the Memorial Mass that was held earlier in the day and it was pleasing that having both events on the same day seemed to have been a popular decision by the committee. Thank you all for attending.

Before long everybody was mixing and enjoying themselves. The buffet lived up to its usual reputation with many excellent snacks. Our Annual raffle was provided with prizes of wine, toiletries and chocolates. It was a great surprise when Graham Middleton's wife Jean bought along a surprise cake which was very well received and won by Buddy Jessop. Everyone agreed that it had been a great day and were already looking forward to the next one.



Egbertian Football Club by Jeff Thomas

I will probably look back on this season with mixed blessings. Our first team are looking odds on to win their division (Inter North) which will bestow upon us Senior Club status. The only other time we achieved this was about six years ago for one season before the Amateur Football Combination (our league) came into being. Our first team are very good, and you may recall won our first cup competition last season in the LOB cup. Our second team have just won promotion into Inter North - they switched team positions with our first team last season so this is real progress. Our third team will unfortunately probably be relegated while our fourth and fifth teams are comfortably mid-table. The Vets team were started up again this season after a four year break but it has been a struggle with few games played as they really do not have enough players to call upon. For the record our OEA Chairman Peter Burke has made a couple of guest appearances and has shown that you never really lose it! On another note the club has done well to reach four cup semi finals, which must be a club record, including three in the AFA cup competitions, which is very difficult for a club our size to be competitive in, and one in the LOB cup. However, all were lost narrowly but there is always next season! You can see how the club progresses during the rest of the season at www.egbertianfc.co.uk

Finally, my thanks to the OEA membership for their generous donations during this and in past seasons which has been crucial to our continued wellbeing.

Gordon Spurgeon

As you will all know by now, Gordon Spurgeon is no longer with us, having died peacefully earlier this year. Gordon felt unable to look after himself in his bungalow in Brundall, Norfolk, after a number of strokes had disabled him. He had also suffered from a skin complaint, which was difficult to cure. His final home was as a resident in a care home at Wroughton, just south of the M4, near Swindon in Wiltshire. He was moved there by his family, at his request, and his bungalow was sold. His immediate relative was his nephew Trevor, Gordon's late Brother Keith's son.

Gordon came to St. Egbert's in 1955 after the former PE teacher, one Mr. Smith departed. None of us were particularly enthusiastic about PE as taught by Gordon's predecessor, who seemed to be only interested in whether or not it was possible to touch ones toes without bending ones legs. We were encouraged to perform as 'Smithy', as we called him, required by a swift crack across the back of the legs with a long twig pulled from one of the trees surrounding the playground. I personally always went to change with a number of red marks across the back of my legs. He would also make us squat with arms on waist, and remain there for seemingly hours.

Another very painful experience.

The greater shock came when word went round in the September that there was a new 'PE bloke' in school. As usual, we changed for PE in the classroom, and took the usual ten to fifteen minutes to change, or so we thought. With most of about half changed after ten minutes, there was a sudden crashing open of the classroom door, and what one can only describe as a 'white tornado' swept around the room and frightened us to death with threats of what would happen if we kept him waiting any longer. Sufficient to say, we were stung into action and there was a flurry of people departing the room for the field inside the running track, and not the playground as we had been used to.

Gordon's first words were, "Where did you lot come from?" We were dressed in a variety of coloured shorts and shirts and vests, and our plimsoles were all shades from off white to black and

inevitably dirty. We were left in no doubt that next week, we were to be dressed in white shorts and vests, with white socks and white plimsoles. We were to look perfect. Not only that, but we were expected to take no longer than five minutes to change, ie, to be out on the grass five minutes after the bell had rung and no excuses would be accepted. I think that most of us complied, and we felt sorry for those that didn't. They received a rather loud 'telling off, to put it politely, in front of the rest of the class.



Needless to say, that within a very short space of time we found that Gordon was very fair in the way he dealt with us, was approachable and also very encouraging to those of us who were not natural gymnasts, like me! He gave us every opportunity to succeed and I can never remember him being negative. As no doubt you will all remember, Gordon was instrumental in forming a Gymn Club, and his gymnasts used to give superb displays on Sports Day. One of his stars was, of course, Gerald Smith!

I also remember that we used to do a display with logs. This came from Gordon's Army service, where he was a Physical Training Instructor attached to the Parachute Regiment. Gordon's Military Service took him to India, where I believe he was to meet the only love of his life, who sadly died. I have no other details, as Gordon preferred not to talk about this episode in his life. It hurt him to do so. It is interesting that despite being quite hard on us lot, and justifiably so, he was a very

compassionate man and very sensitive. In many ways quite nervous, and also very private, but always very grateful for anything which other people have done for him. I know that he always looked forward to coming to our Suffolk home when I brought him down to the Old Boys' Association AGMs. He would talk for hours to my own two boys and had a very soft spot for Yvonne, my wife. He was particularly interested in the way the boys developed and had them both summed up fairly accurately.

Gordon lived in Ealing with his Mother, who originally came from Norfolk and never lost her accent, and his Father who was a cameraman and worked at the Ealing Studios. He did much of the filming of the Ealing Comedy series, such as *The Lavender Hill Mob*, with Alec Guinness, and he knew most of the film stars of those far off days of the Forties and Fifties. Gordon's brother Keith featured highly in his life, and it was Keith who came to St. Egbert's with Johan Cruyff, captain of Ajax in Holland. Keith was their manager for a time, and Gordon was of course, a football fanatic. He was proud of the work he did for the Football Association, although he used to say very little about it. I know that it was a particular pleasure of his to be given complimentary tickets for many of the top class games and international games. Gordon's father died some years ago, which decided the move for him and his Mother to Brundall in Norfolk, which was a surprise for Yvonne and I, because my parents had moved to Brundall in 1968. Like Mrs. Spurgeon, my father was a Norfolk man, having been born and brought up in Cromer, although all the rest of the family lived in Acle, the next market town towards Yarmouth from Norwich. He looked after his mother until he was forced to place her in a nursing home, and he would visit her two or three times a day. He used to call her The Duchess, and he was devoted to her.

Sadly, she died about ten years ago, and this left Gordon on his own. Being Gordon, however, he became known to many in the community in Brundall, and was a regular visitor to my mother, who by this time was a widow, my father having died in 1977. Gordon would bounce around the village and would talk to anyone whom he

happened to meet. One of the most upsetting times for him was when his Brother, Keith, died. He suffered from Motor Neurone disease and for someone who was active in the football world and who, like Gordon was a natural sportsman and enthusiast, this was a horrible thing. Gordon supported Keith and his family throughout Keith's last illness and was a great support. His family always was first on his agenda.

Teaching boys was Gordon's chief role in life, not only in school, but also as an officer in the Boys' Brigade. In school, Gordon was classed by the Inner London Education Authority as an instructor, and not as a qualified teacher. This made no difference to his approach and he worked with enthusiasm at St. Egbert's and also at St. Aloysius School in Highgate. As part of my work as a Moderator for Edexcel in Art and Design at GCSE level, I have visit St. Aloysius with members of my Moderation Team on two occasions, and it was interesting to see the School badge, which is identical to St. Egbert's, except for the colour and the school name. Those of you who still have your old prefects badge from St Egbert's will note that it is a St. Aloysius badge. The school is now State run and has been on Special Measures. It has a new

headteacher who has turned the school round. There was a programme screened by Channel 4, who placed a Supply Teacher in the school with a secret camera to see how the school was performing. Not I am afraid an appropriate thing to do. Naturally, the Staff were incensed.

Gordon's work with the Boys' Brigade showed his firm Christian belief, and his endeavors to give all, from whatever background, the opportunity to both enjoy themselves and also to achieve a pride in what they had achieved. He also believed that the discipline of the Christian faith, coupled with a personal discipline, encouraged by the Brigade, gave the boys a firm foundation for their future. He was very proud of this aspect of his life and many of his boys and their families have succeeded in their lives as a direct result of their experiences, and of meeting men like Gordon.

At St. Egbert's, as many of you will remember, School trips abroad were a part of his commitment to his work, and he organised and took trips to Italy and Switzerland on a regular basis. Yvonne and I accompanied a trip to Lugano on 1968 and to Sperlonga in 1969. If any of you watched Alan Wicker's film about his war experiences, you will

have seen Sperlonga. Gordon's energy and enthusiasm on these trips were endless and the enjoyment which the boys got out of them as well as the educational value were remarkable.

Gordon was happy in the nursing home in Swindon, and he was always very grateful for all the care he received from both his family and the staff. He was eternally grateful for the fact that people cared about him, and was always amazed at the fact that there were so many whose lives he had touched who were genuinely interested in how he was getting on. I, of course knew Gordon as both one of his pupils and as a colleague, and in both roles he was exceptionally supportive and caring, and he has been a great friend of my family. He supported his own family in so many ways and saw the people he taught in both school and the Boys' Brigade and their families as part of his extended family.

Gordon Spurgeon, a man that it is impossible to ignore, and who you ignore at your peril, especially in a PE lesson.

Peter Utting

OEA Brewery Tour *by Tony Butler*

The OEA Tour of Fuller's famous Griffin Brewery in Chiswick (London) took place on Friday 23rd November, ably supervised by Andrew Carslake and his charming wife. Unfortunately and probably due to a last minute change by the Brewery of the tour date, numbers were less than expected- less than a dozen although tour party numbers are relatively small anyway so it was a practical number. However, those present enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch at the Mawson Arms pub on the Brewery site and free tasting during the tour.

The tour covered all aspects of the brewing process. It proved difficult to negotiate being within a working environment. It encompassed several flights of steps, hot working areas and vessels and open heights. However,



nobody lost their footing (some of us having got into shape on the earlier St Paul's Cathedral tour) but it was sensible to have the tastings at the end of the tour rather than before. We were joined at the tasting by some American lads from New York and Philadelphia enjoying a chance to enjoy some prize winning English beers.

Brewing has taken place on the Chiswick site for over 400 years and in 1845 the Fuller, Smith and Turner partnership was formed and has been going strong ever since. Some of us took the opportunity of purchasing beer at the Brewery shop at the end of our visit and I would recommend the following beers: Chiswick Bitter, Discovery Blonde beer, London Pride and ESB, the latter being three times the CAMRA champion Beer of Britain.

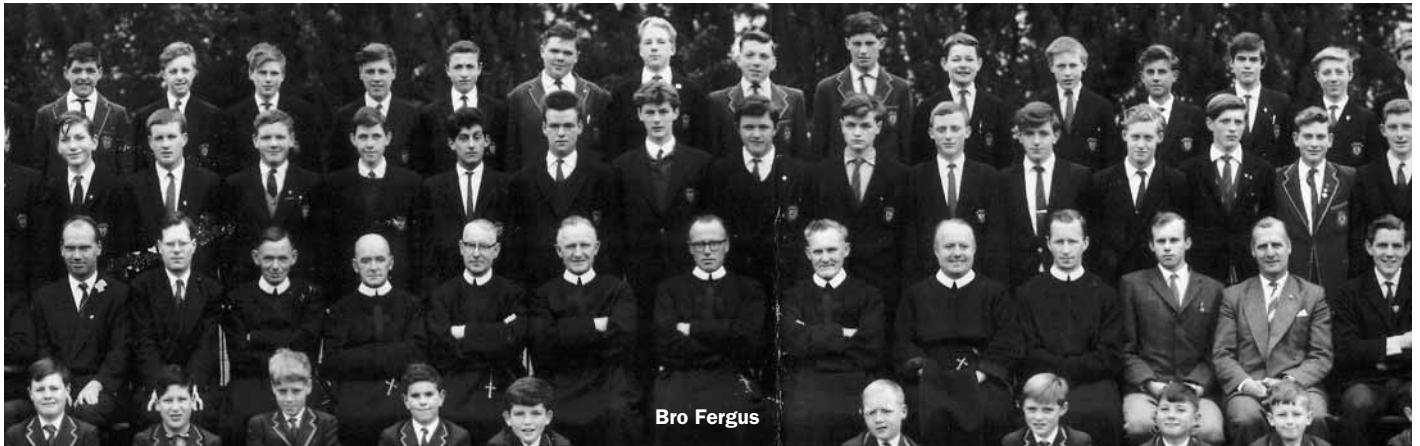
The Revd. Brother Fergus O'Neill, FDM, (1919 – 2007)

I had the privilege of knowing Brother Fergus both as a pupil and fellow member of staff, I was a pupil at St. Egbert's College from September 1953 to July 1958, and I taught at the College from September 1963 to July 1969.

I first met Brother Fergus before I left primary school, when I used to go and watch the Old Egbertian football team play on a Saturday afternoon. Brother Fergus, Brother Paschal and Brother

evacuated to, it also housed the Congregation's Novitiate. He completed his novitiate there and commenced teaching. He also told Andrew that he worked in the bakery where his bread making skills were much in demand amongst the Brethren and boarders alike, and that he was also able to utilise his football skills, where due to his 'young looks', he was able to pass off as a pupil in the school team,

most of us who were fortunate enough to be taught by him remember, and had a superb sense of humour, unlike one member of staff, who would fly into a rage if one dared so much as to smile! Andrew McGovern recalls a few years ago, when Brother Fergus, at an OEA Reunion with Gordon Spurgeon, related the time he received a phone call from the owner of a certain café in Station Road advising that two of his pupils had



Oswald played for the team, and very good footballers they were too.

Brother Fergus came from Tyrells Pass in County Westmeath, Ireland, but came over to England at the age of thirteen in order to take up professional football. However he later felt he had a vocation to the religious life and entered the Order's Novitiate in Mechelen, Belgium, in his late teens. At that time things were not looking too good for peace in Europe and war seemed inevitable, however he continued with his studies until, on May 10th 1940, Belgium was invaded and he was advised to leave as quickly as possible because he had a British passport. The Germans were already not very far from Mechelen, and so Brother Fergus took his few effects and departed for the coast and Dunkirk, where the BEF were being evacuated. He had a number of narrow escapes from the Germans, and scars on the left hand side of his face bore witness to the fact that he was wounded by flying debris from machine gun fire. At this point he was only fifty yards from the enemy! Fortunately for us all, he escaped safely to England.

He once told Andrew McGovern, he arrived on the south coast with only £3 in his pocket to get himself to Stainsby Hall in Derby, where the majority of the Brothers and Pupils from St Egbert's and St Aloysius College's had been

usually as goalkeeper. He also related how after one such match he was approached by a Derby County 'scout' and offered a trial, when he mentioned it to the Brother Gabriel the Director of the day, he was told in no uncertain terms, 'it's your decision Brother but if you go pack your bags and don't bother coming back', fortunately we have all benefited from his decision!

Brother Fergus first came to teach at St. Egbert's in 1951, and was an instant success with the pupils, both as a teacher and sportsman, he was often to be seen, sometimes along with Brother Oswald, running down Kings Head Hill in football kit with pupils en-route to Soper's football field in Sewardstone Road. He was incredibly enthusiastic about the subjects he taught, Geography (in which he had a BA degree) and History, and had an excellent relationship with all. In communicating his enthusiasm, he achieved excellent results in examinations with his pupils, and he was also an excellent Form Master. I well remember that it was like a breath of fresh air to go into Form III with Brother Fergus. It was one of the best years of my life as a pupil.

He was an exceptionally fair man when it came to having to punish anyone for misdemeanors and always expected good manners. He would often try and catch you out in class, as

arrived at the cafe on a motorbike in the middle of the morning, 'I am on my way, keep them there'. Ten minutes later he arrived in the doorway still dressed in his habit, told the boys to walk back and report to his office, whereupon he mounts the motorbike puts on the boy's crash helmet and rides it back with habit flying passing the two boys en-route.

Brother Fergus then spent some time at St. Aloysius in Highgate and returned to St. Egbert's as Headmaster and Director in 1960. When I returned as a member of Staff in 1963 Brother Fergus welcomed me to the College and to my classroom in the playground. He gave me many very useful tips about teaching, and was always very supportive and interested in what I was doing. He treated me with great courtesy and was always exceptionally professional in both the help he gave and in allowing me to make decisions regarding my subject, and I continued to develop as a teacher under Brother Fergus's strong leadership.

It was a sad day for the College, when in 1966, the Brother Provincial sent him back to St Aloysius Junior School in Highgate. Brother Fergus had great plans for the College, he recognised that with comprehensivisation happening, there would be many parents who would support their children in an

independent school, and he had already built a superbly equipped gymnasium at the south end of the school. In his last year at the College, I was invited by him to submit plans for a fully equipped Art Room, to be built on the site of the old Music Room overlooking the track and field. Sadly this was not to be, ending Brother Fergus's vision for St. Egbert's College.

He was Headmaster at St. Aloysius Junior School in 1985 when the Congregation, due to lack of vocations, decided to close the remaining communities in their English Province, and the school site was sold along with 'Cleves' the Novitiate in East Molesey. At this point in time Brother Fergus and Brother Paschal retired to Ireland, and Brother Oswald and Brother Fidelis retired to Ainsdale near Southport.

Brother Fergus returned to his home village of Tryells Pass, and this was the last place that Yvonne and I were able

to spend any time with him. We have friends in County Westmeath, and spent a holiday with them in 1999. I telephoned Brother Fergus, and we went to see him. He very graciously took us to the Castle in Tyrells Pass for dinner, and wouldn't hear of my paying anything towards a superb meal. We spoke about the past and the College, and his work with the Order, and he was interested to know about our two boys and my family and where and what they were doing. He looked no different to when he was my Form Teacher. Still upright and with very few grey hairs, and with his smile, which I think we all remember. He told me that he still had his habit and rosary, and that he would be buried in them.

He enjoyed a happy retirement, his pride and joy was his vegetable garden, which he was busy working on when Mike Fitzgerald, our Membership Secretary, called in to see him in 2003.

When he heard he had died Andrew McGovern spoke to the Parish Priest in Tyrells Pass who said he was very popular in the parish and played an active part in the church choir. He would often mention how very proud he was of his many 'pupils' that he had taught back in England, many of whom he still received Christmas cards from each year.

Brother Fergus was a truly great man, who had vision and great strength. He was totally committed to the values of the Order of Brothers to which he belonged and stuck absolutely to the vows he took of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. A superb teacher and sportsman, his life was one of service to God and those of us who were lucky enough to be taught by him and who taught with him.

May he rest in Peace

Peter Utting

The Revd. Brother Edmund (John Southworth), (1936 – 2007)

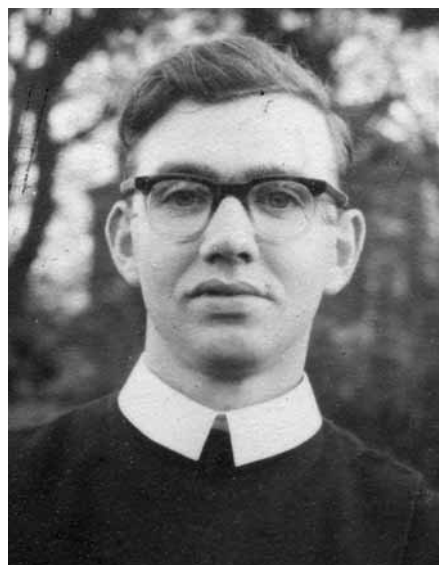
Brother Edmund came originally from Preston in Lancashire, the youngest in a family of seven children, and was one of few Brothers in the English Province who were not of Irish descent. In my time at the College as a pupil, the only other Brother who was English was Alfred, (Thomas William Boala) who hailed from Nottingham. In fact he lived in the same road as my late uncle!

Brother Edmund was appointed Headmaster of St. Egbert's College three years after his profession in September 1966 at the relatively young age of 30, he replaced Brother Fergus as Headmaster. This came as a surprise to the Lay Staff, who only found out on the first day of term.

According to the Congregation's constitution the Headmaster was also Director of the House, and was responsible for both the life of the Religious Community as well as that of the College. However for the first time the two posts were split, Brother Aloysius became the Director, with control over the College's finances and the Religious Community, and Brother Edmund was appointed as Headmaster. I was told, he was reticent about his appointment, but as with all the Brothers, under their vow of obedience, they did not have a choice and such changes took immediate effect.

Brother Edmund worked hard at

running the College, but lack of support and back up from his Superiors the Lay Staff and some Parents, made it a difficult task. He was intelligent and quiet in his manner, and very supportive in terms of ones personal



development as a teacher, and very professional in his ways. His quiet manner was seen by many as a weakness, but he was a man totally committed to his Faith and to the work which he undertook as a teacher, a task which he carried out with the highest degree of professionalism, being concerned that his pupils were making

the best progress.

I found Brother Edmund very easy to get on with, and he had the makings of an excellent Headmaster, even at his early age. He attended our wedding in June 1967, and Yvonne worked with him as his Administrative Assistant until I moved to Waltham Abbey to teach. We both found him a charming person and an example to all of a good Christian, totally committed to the idea of service.

He was Headmaster of the College until its closure in 1970, and was then sent back to St Aloysius College Highgate where he taught alongside the De La Salle Brothers with Brother Oswald and Brother Aloysius. In 1975 he left the Congregation, continued teaching at St Aloysius as a lay teacher for a year and then joined the De La Salle Brothers, where he was known as Brother John Southworth, his family name.

During his years with the De La Salle Brothers he taught at a number of their Colleges in England and from 1998 was Director of their Community at Southsea, Hants, where he died on the 12th of October 2007 at the age of 71, as a result of complications following a heart attack.

May he rest in Peace.

Peter Utting

Further recollections of the Brethren and life at Stainsby *by Ray Mitchell*

In casting my mind back to the years immediately after I left St Egbert's, (Stainsby House) I realise that the rapport that I had established with the Brotherhood at Stainsby was a relationship that I would carry with me for life. With the passing of Brother Fidelis that has come to an end and I will no longer be able to converse with one of the Brethren.

I was able to talk to Fidelis many times during his last few years and was very gratified to know that he remembered me well. His time at Stainsby was spent in a non teaching roll, at one time being laundry master and at another infirmarian. Some boarders, myself included, helped him to sort out the laundry returned by the Heanor Laundry Co into the various sets for the boys. All clothing was marked by the owners name and the serial number of the school and sorted in the laundry room (Room 11 on the plan on page 10), which was situated near to the senior refectory. (Room 4) In another role he would be seen as waiter, carrying food from the kitchens to the brother's refectory and from thence to the large stone scullery where with his habit rolled up to his elbows he would be found busy washing up. It portrays the humility of the religious orders, as a few years later he would become the

Director of Stainsby with all the responsibility that the position entailed.

But it was in his roll as nurse that I came in close contact with him. I suffered in those days from a persistent ear infection and would spend many days in the four-bed infirmary. (Room 16) Brother Fidelis would administer to me with a gentleness that I can still feel to this day. He would bring in my breakfast before which we would join together in morning prayers – as I was unable to attend chapel – Lunch and tea would follow at the appropriate time and served on a tray complete with white table napkins. During the day should his other duties allow, he would keep his charges company perhaps chatting in French as a means to continue with their education.

Around 1942/43 there was an outbreak of Chickenpox at Stainsby. At first only one or two of the boys were affected and these were accommodated in the infirmary. However as one would expect in such a close community the outbreak soon spread, and it was not long before the two dormitories on the first floor (Rooms 2 and 3) immediately opposite the director's office, were called upon to serve as overflow infirmaries. These two dormitories can be located from the plan. There would

have been perhaps 25 sufferers in these two - the original occupants being distributed around the other dormitories – and another four in the infirmary. In an earlier edition of *The Egbertian* there is a photograph of the 1st X1 with John Fido and I covered in spots.

Brother Fidelis was the mainstay of our treatment, which consisted mostly

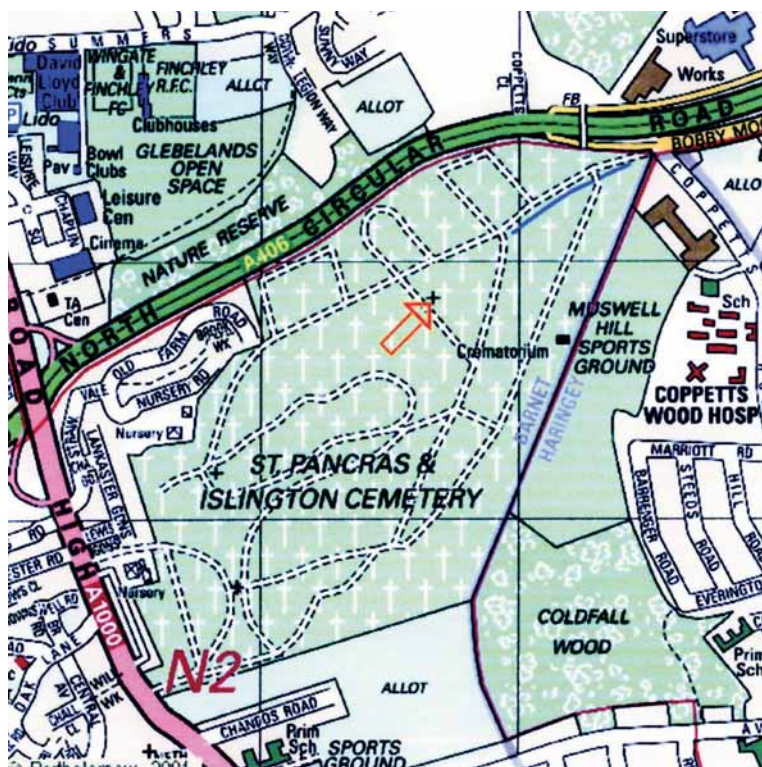


St Aloysius College tomb in St Pancras, Islington Cemetery where many brothers are buried (see location map)

of lotion on the spots and confinement to bed. We were however isolated from the rest of the school even to the extent that we did not attend Mass or daily prayers.

The pure physical effort of carrying up the back stairs from the kitchen the three meals per patient each day must have been very trying. We were even treated to supper and that was indeed a privilege. Brother Fidelis carried out the mission of treatment of the sick with extraordinary san froid and his dry humour helped us to weather the six weeks or so we were hors de combat. During our sojourn in the sick bay we did not entirely escape lessons. However much to our satisfaction these were not so tedious as they might have been in the classroom as the sick were from different years and so our edification was mostly drawn from those subjects common to all levels.

Brother Fidelis came down to Chingford around 1944 when Noel



St Pancras and Islington Cemetery

Corbett and I took our Senior Oxford at a location in Bounds Green Road, Wood Green. Late one night there came a telephone call from the College asking my parents if they were able to put up a lad from Stainsby who was seeking lodgings. The lad turned out to be Noel and he stayed with us at 1 Sunset Ave for some time before joining the army. Noel and I slept in the front bedroom of the bungalow all during the time of the V1's and V2's. We were staying the night at my sisters in Wellington Ave when the V2 fell in between The Avenue and Wellington Ave in February 1945, I can remember the choking dust and the subsequent silence while we tried desperately to regain our senses.

We joined the youth club held at St Mary and Joseph's school and played football together with the few who managed to make up a team of old boys. Later he joined up to do national service in the army despite having been in the ATC at Stainsby. Another visitor at this time was Brother Fidelis who often came to tea on a Saturday and would regale us with tales from the hospital at Whipps Cross where he had once worked as a nurse. Later as mentioned above his return to Stainsby was as Director of the then Novitiate from 1948 to 1951.

It was I think in 1950 that I paid a visit to Stainsby and the Novitiate and was greeted by Brother Fidelis. I spent a weekend in the guest room on the top floor and attended Mass in the chapel where I had assisted as altar boy some years before. Meals were taken in the refectory accompanied by one of the novitiates reading from the scriptures. It was a weekend of nostalgic memories for me, being surrounded by many aspects of past school life that were not to vanish until the House and Novitiate closed down.

After my national service a coterie of old boys would meet in the Chantry kitchen where along with Joe Stone and one or two of the brotherhood we would partake of tea. Joe was the long-term servant of the brethren having been with them since around 1935 and who I first met at Stainsby. Among the old boys who would meet at this time would have been Bill Oliver, Peter

Kidd, Pat O'Connor and Arthur Lumley. Saturday night was our time and along with Brother Felix, Brother Pascal and sometimes Bros Peter and Fidelis we would all crowd into my car and with clerical collars suitably masked with cravats, take ourselves off to one or two quiet pubs. The Queen Elizabeth was one of these as it was run by Mr & Mrs Purdin whose boys had attended St Egberts, the Warren on the Epping Road, the Kings Head at High Beech and further afield the Kings Head Chigwell. Guinness seemed to be the tippie of most of the brothers not surprising one would say as many were from Ireland. There was little traffic about in those days and certainly if the breath test had been invented the driver would not have passed. I can still hear Brother Felix exclaiming 'Holy Mother of God' when the driving became a little erratic.



St Aloysius College tomb

Returning from a Christmas night out with all of us decorated with paper hats we were stopped at the Bull and Crown by the police. I wound down the window and the constable fixing me with an icy glare said "what's going on 'ere then". Before I could reply Brother Pascal whose cravat had become dislodged said "An errand of mercy." The constable did not seem to be too impressed for he then said "What all eight of you?. Two of you will have to get out and walk" We had three in the front, three in the back and two sitting on the floor in the rear. All in a Vauxhall 10 saloon.

I returned to the scene after my demob in 1948 and resumed playing football with the Old Boys. As secretary to the football club I sat on the committee with such stalwarts as Bill Stevens, Jack Pracy, Stewart Secker to

name a few. Committee meetings were held at member's homes and the good ladies would provide the liquid refreshment. Our home matches were played on Sopers field and away matches had to be accessed by public transport. Two events stand out. We did not play in leagues in those days, the secretary contacting various clubs to arrange fixtures. I arranged a fixture with the Norsemen playing then at Lower Edmonton Sports Ground along the Cambridge Road. They were far superior to us and we lost 9-0 I believe. On another occasion having acquired a Morgan sports car I arranged to collect Stan Secker to play against the Molyneau OB. In polite parlance the two seater failed to proceed past the Northmet in Station Road and so the team played with only nine men. I don't think I was too popular. Stan had a thunderous shot with his right foot and was a very enthusiastic footballer. Alas he was to take his own life at Hoe Street Station some years later. For a time Peter Kidd's father who had been connected with a league side would give coaching lessons on Sunday mornings at Sopers field

My stint as Chairman of the Association culminated at the Annual dinner dance held at the Tavistock Restaurant Charing Cross Road on the 4th March 1950. Looking at the menu signed by most who attended I see such names as Bros Raphael, Hugh, Stephen, Felix, Aloysius, Mark, Peter and Wulstan. Mr Joe Taylor was my toastmaster and Frank Carnell MC. This menu is a great memento for me as I can remember most of those who signed and many that I played football with.

Before WW11 the Old Egbertians ran a motoring section. This was revived at the war's end and one or two outings were arranged. At that time few of us had cars and those that were available were grossly overloaded. There was also petrol rationing at the time two levels being sold at the pump i.e. red commercial and normal. On a personal note I had an advantage as my company ran a Ford eight van carrying a 'C' licence which used the commercial spirit and would be suitably loaded with two or three 'Eggs.' A few samples of trade would be

carried so as to give credence to the lie. Alas the section was short lived, there did not appear to be a great deal of enthusiasm for the venture. However, I still have the badge of the motoring section, which took the form similar to the school badge.

In a later article I will deal with the early history of Stainsby House and how it came to be in the ownership of the brotherhood, what they did with it and its demise and present state. I have many photographs of the house and the village of Smalley, which may help to jog the minds of those who were there.

There are many of the Brotherhood buried in St Pancras and Islington Cemetery alongside the A406 or North Circular Road. This is Plot 3 in RC4 and registered to St Aloysius College, Hornsey Lane. The register in the cemetery office holds a lot of information regarding the burials and is available to any who wish to call. The last burial was Fr Isidore. Pictures of the site herewith. Also a plan of Stainsby House. Not to scale and drawn from memory.

**The Command issued by the Superior General when
Brothers moved Community**

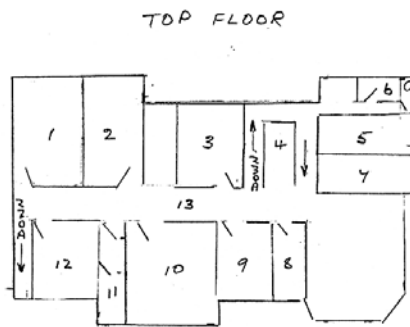
✠
J. M. J. V.
Congregation of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy.
OBEDIENCE.

We the undersigned order that Brother _____
immediately on the reception of this obedience shall proceed, under
the protection of his Holy Angel Guardian, to that community at
111, HORNSEY LANE, HIGHGATE, N.6.
to remain there for the time being _____
Leave Sunday October the 4th. 1970 at _____
Date 30th. September 1970 1970
For the Sup. Gen.

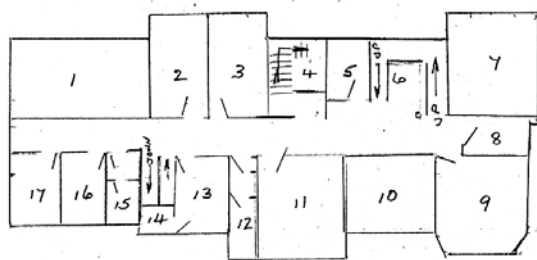
This interesting document has recently come into the Association's archives and helps us to understand why we were never told of the movement of our Brothers in advance. The wording is quite specific and under their vow of obedience the Brother in question would move to his new Community immediately, and as Brother Fidelis once told me, very often without a chance to say goodbye to everyone; here today, gone tomorrow. I understand this Command under their vow of obedience applies to most Orders of Brothers and Monks, and also Nuns, when it comes to moving Community.
Andrew McGovern - Archivist



Ray Mitchell Oct 2006



- 1. 2. 3. DORMATORIES
- 4. STAIRWELL
- 5. MUSIC ROOM
- 6. BATHROOM
- 7. BRO HERBERT ROOM
- 8. BRO RAPHAELS ROOM
- 9. 10. 12. DORMATORIES
- 11. BATHROOM.
- 13. CORRIDOR



FIRST FLOOR

- 1. BROTHERS ROOMS
- 2. 3. 7. DORMATORIES (DOOR TO 7 UNDER STAIRS)
- 4. STAIRWELL
- 5. BRO WULSTANS ROOM
- 6. FLAT SPACE
- 8. BRO FINTANS ROOM
- 9. SENIOR OXFORD FORM
- 10. JUNIOR OXFORD FORM
- 12. BATHROOM
- 13. DIRECTORS ROOM AND OFFICE LEADING TO BATHROOM 14
- 15. BATHROOM
- 16. INFIRMARY
- 17. BRO EGBERTS ROOM
(13 BRO GABRIELS ROOM)

Plan of Stainsby House

St. Egbert's College 1941-1946 by Maurice Denman Lalonde

First of all please remember this article is written strictly from memory and a rather 'old' memory at that. I was registered at St. Egbert's as Maurice Denman Lalonde. I attended the College from September 1941 until leaving at Christmas 1946, when my father changed jobs and we moved to live at Elm Park. I enjoyed my years at St. Egbert's very much, my school friends were a nice bunch of chaps and the Brothers were good teachers and fair in their evaluations at term end. I, on the other hand, was not a really bright student. My first report as I ended Prep. 3, noted that I was eleventh out of seventeen in my class, although my conduct rated by Brother Peter, was 'Very Good'. I began my schooling at the main college on The Ridgeway and cycled to school each day from my home on Epping New Road in Buckhurst Hill, usually with a fellow student John Silk.

I have a feeling that one of the buildings at Ridgeway was bombed during the war. Can any historian with more knowledge than I confirm this? The reason I say this is that my report in the summer of 1945 gives Crescent Road as an address. This building was actually a large house with wrought iron railings around the front garden. It was on one spike of these railings that Michael Tierney was badly hurt. The house faced Epping Forest and on the grass about a hundred yards away lay a huge log we called "The Jolly Roger". It was a great place for us lads to become instant pirates at break times. We also played pick up games of football on the uneven forest grass. Additional memories come rushing back as I write this. One Brother, with lots of red wavy hair, I can't remember his name, had been told to kill a chicken for their evening meal. I was in the wrong place, the side of the house, at the right time to see him raise the axe and slam it down on the poor chicken's neck, I was absolutely horrified!! I had never seen

anything killed before. I must have let out a yell, as he dropped the headless chicken and it ran all over the place. The number of happy memories far outweighed the bad. In a later term we moved back to The Ridgeway where Mr. Kilcoyne became our teacher. He was always dressed in a dark green 'battledress' perhaps a would be soldier, he sure treated us like he was a sargeant in charge of troops. Very strict especially when we didn't recite our catechism correctly each morning. Another memory, we were allowed to go to the British Resturant nearby for a cheap, rather tastless, wartime lunch during this time.

Brother Thomas, with his thick Irish brogue taught us Latin, he was terrific. If we hadn't done our Latin homework he lined us up in front of the class and gave each of us the cane on our hands. Marching down the line he whacked our palms while singing, "Half a Pound of Tuppenny Rice". Afterwards he'd send us back to our desks, with instructions to make sure the work was done by the next day. Although Brother Hugh taught me for three terms I can't remember what he looked like, however I did get fairly good marks from him, so something must have gone right. Brother Aloysius was my Form Master the last term of 1943. If I am not mistaken it was that year we were permitted to use our roller skates at break and lunch times on the paved surface of the old tennis courts. One instance I recall as if it were yesterday. Several of us were skating around, and having fun when someone decided we should make a chain and skate a big circle forming a whiplash. I happened to be the last boy on the line and must have been travelling at considerable speed. Not being able to hang on any longer, I let go and went crashing into one of the decaying brick gate posts which fell down around me. I had split my head open and was knocked out for a few seconds. Coming to, I felt



my head and blood was gushing down my face. Someone called Brother Isidore the principal and I was taken into their house to get my head bandaged up. My mother was telephoned and a neighbour drove her to St. Egbert's to get me. The local hospital put in three stitches and sent me home, I still have the scar on my forehead, but that incident didn't stop me from skating at school.

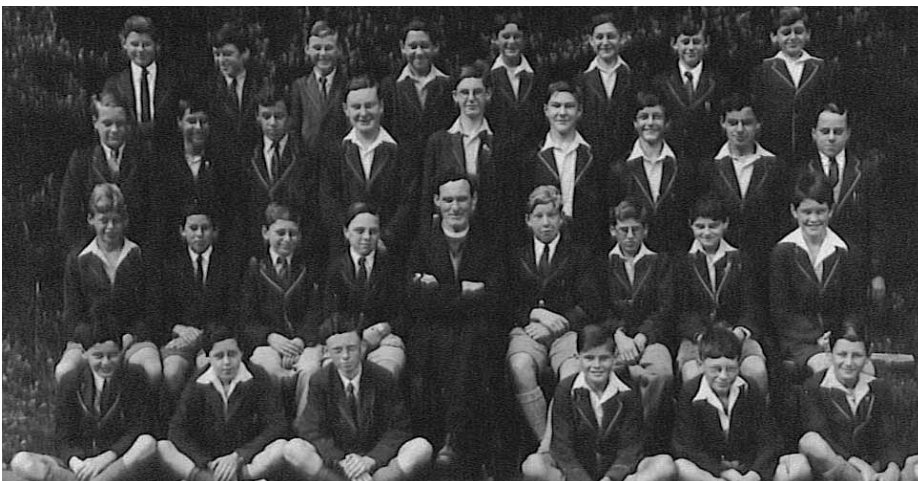
Brother Aloysius is shown in our class picture of 1943 it is posted on the website. I remember him to be another teacher well liked by the students, always fair, but strict. Obviously the Brothers had to be quite strict, after all most of us were far from being angels. Brother Celcus, who taught me in the summer of 1945 completely escapes my memory. I only know I was in his class from the school reports I have kept all these years. I see that Brother Aidan was principal during that year, sadly I cannot recall him either.

I can easily remember several school friends' names from those wonderful days over sixty years ago. Among them are: Johnny Baker, Harold Keeler, Roger Drew, Jimmy Jewell, Michael Tierney, John Silk, who's parents owned "Silks Newsagents" in Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill. A chap with the surname Anderson, I can't remember his christian name. Michael Pollock, Noel Bray, who lived in Loughton. Anthony Burgoyne, and Brian Whitting who lived on Epping High Road, Buckhurst Hill.

This article has been a labor of love. Love for those great School Days and love for a Fine School, I wish it was still in operation today. If any of you remember me, please drop me an e-mail at: dennylalonde@shaw.ca

I'd love to hear from you. Best of luck and good health to you all !!

Maurice Denman Lalonde



Membership *by Mike Fitzgerald*

The membership of the Association is our lifeblood and is crucial to our very existence.

With a finite number of potential members it is very important that our existing members rejoin even if distance maybe a barrier to them attending any social events. We hope that our regular newsletters make everyone feel part of the Association, which encourages members to join. Our member's subscriptions allows us to produce newsletters such as this which, while heavily subsidised, is a drain on our finances but we want to continue to produce them as they are well received.

It was disappointing that we had several members who did not rejoin last year which obviously has an effect on our finances. We don't believe that this was due to the cost, which has not risen since the Association was reformed, or that the membership fee does not represent good value but purely that they forget and maybe put it to one side to do it later.

If you did not rejoin last year we would very much appreciate you rejoining this year so the Association can continue it's objectives. If you are one of our regular rejoinders then thank you and please pop a cheque in the post!

Social Events *by Brian Pieri*

The Association has planned a varied list of social events this year and hopefully there is something for everyone. Firm dates are subject to their popularity so please make an effort to return the enclosed Social Questionnaire in the return envelope provided (feel free to enclose your membership at the same time!). Our social calendar goes something like this: **A night at Walthamstow Dogs** has been planned for September. We have not held this event for a couple of years and after several members have asked what happened to it we have decided to propose it again. Also in September will be a **London Walk** organised by Malcolm Dick. Malcolm organised a walk last year along the Regents Canal which was very good. A first for the Association is a trip to the **House of Commons** by Malcolm Potter who organised the St Paul's Cathedral trip

last year. Details are unknown at the time of writing but no doubt it will be exceptional. Our **Theatre Trip** in October has been a mainstay of our social calendar over the years and, subject to a suitable production, we hope to visit the Queens Theatre in Hornchurch which is considered to be better venue than the Kenneth Moore, which we have been to for the past two years. Finally the **Memorial Mass** and **Xmas Social event** will be on the same day in December.

However, the proposed events are only suggestions put forward by the committee. If you have an event that you think would appeal to the membership then please let us know. Alternatively if you want to organise an event in your area then the Association may be able to fund or part fund it as we have money put aside.

Website

Patrick Flood has been our webmaster for the past few years and is responsible for designing the website and it's upkeep. However, due to work commitments he is finding it increasing difficult to continue with it so the time has come when we need to find another volunteer.

The amount of time required is actually fairly minimal so it is really

about finding somebody who has the technical skills to maintain it and make the minimal changes that are required from time to time. Can you help or know somebody who does? If you need further details about what is involved then please contact Patrick on 01689 825750 or patrick_flood@hotmail.com. Please give this some thought as we want the website to continue.

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Published by Disc To Print

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