

The Egbertian

NEWS FROM THE OLD EGBERTIAN ASSOCIATION

see our website at www.oldegbertians.com



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Summer 2011

Editor's Comment

Welcome to the Summer Edition of *EgbertNews*.

I feel that newsletters should be about its members for its members and so it was really good to hear from Vinod Sharma, who was a former teacher at the school and Patrick Marchant, who has written a very interesting article about his brother Raymond, who was killed during the Cyprus Conflict.

The Cyprus conflict is probably one of the lesser known conflicts that Britain was involved in during the 20th century and Patrick gives an insightful look on how his brother's death affected his family and how, many years later, his brother was honoured.

We also have an article about the day when the legendary Peter Sellers visited the College.

Thanks for reading

Jeff Thomas

The Cyprus Conflict and Raymond Marchant *by Patrick Marchant*

The origins of the Cyprus conflict lie in the striving of the Greek Cypriot majority for unification, or enosis as it was known, with Greece, which was an ambition that emerged during the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s and developed further under British Rule. Enosis was in direct conflict with the Turkish Cypriot minority wishes, who regarded Turkey as their motherland, which would have meant them becoming a much smaller minority within the Greek Nation.

The first signs of serious uprising was in 1931 when the British Government of Nicosia was burnt down and six Cypriots were killed along with 2000 arrested. Subsequent clampdowns by the British authorities and the Second World War kept Cypriot political activity in check for the next 24 years.

The barely suppressed desire for unification erupted on April 1st 1955 when bombs planted by the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA), led by Colonel George Grivas, exploded at British Army and police installations in Nicosia, Limassol, Famagusta and Lamaca. It was the start of a guerrilla campaign that lasted four years and claimed 371 British Servicemen's lives.

As far as we are aware St Egberts College only suffered one fatality during the conflict who was Raymond Marchant, who was at the College between 1950-1954, and was a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. Raymond was killed on 12th June 1956.

The Ministry of Defence decided that in July 2009, with the approval of the Queen, to award the Elizabeth Cross and Scroll to the

next of kin of those who were killed in conflicts since the Second World War.

This is only the third time that an award has been presented bearing the Monarchs name. The first was the Victoria Cross followed by the George Cross/Medal.



Raymond's brother Patrick collected the award. This is his story:

'What if' is a question I have asked myself many times over the past 54 years.

What if my brother Raymond had not played cricket that day in Cyprus, he would be with us now I hope. Would he have married? Where would he have lived? Would he have had children? Would we all get on as a family? I am sure we would but these are questions that I shall never know the answers to.

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Raymond was a good sportsman and was a prominent member of the Woodford Green Athletic Club. He would take part in most sports but his favourites were athletics, football, cricket and swimming in addition to a few cycle races. Some of you may remember him winning several events at the school sports day.

Raymond was in the Royal Engineers doing his National Service and was travelling back from a cricket match on the 12th June 1956 from Dhekelia Camp in an army lorry, when it went over an IED (electronically detonated land mine). He was killed along with two of his friends. He was just two miles from the safety of Berengaria camp, just outside Limassol and was the 13th British serviceman to lose his life during this conflict.

We were notified of Raymond's death on the 13th of June by telegram and that was it. No Army Officer came to see us or anyone. There was no letter from the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, or phone call from our MP John Biggs Davidson. It just goes to show the different attitude towards human life in those days. Today service deaths are treated with far more care and understanding.

My father was a Civil Engineer and was sent to Kenya to work in the bush. He was building a water pipeline from a place called Mzima Springs to Mombassa. He left in November 1954 and returned three days before the news of Raymond's death. What a homecoming this was - joy one minute and pain the next. I often wondered how did my Mum and Dad cope. I suppose the answer was that they just had to get on with it.



When my time came for National Service my father wrote to Biggs Davidson and asked if anything could be done for me not to be 'called up'. He got a letter back saying nothing can be done.

I was almost 21 when I got my papers spending my time at Odiham.

During my National Service with the Royal Air Force I was fortunate in visiting his grave twice. On the third occasion it was more difficult as in 1974 the Turks invaded Cyprus and took control of 37% of the island and created a United Nations Buffer Zone between the North and the South going straight through the capital Nicosia. The British Military Cemetery at Wayne's Keep is in this no mans land therefore access is severely restricted.

To visit you have to obtain permission from the United Nations Peace Keeping Force and enter from the Greek side. It is almost impossible to enter from the Turkish side. You go in with your escort from the UN in his car and only they are allowed to take photographs. It was the most harrowing experience of my life. The Turks were watching our every move.

On Thursday 6th January 2011, I along with my wife Jean and daughter Lou, went to Ingatestone Hall which is the home of Lord Petre, who is the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, for the presentation. We were met by a military delegate and introduced to our host for the day from Colchester Garrison.

After a short moment of remembrance Lord Petre welcomed us all. There were eight of us there to receive the award. We were called one at a time to receive the Cross from Lord Petre and the Scroll

from Brigadier Andrew Williams but before each presentation a short citation of the fallen was made. A photo of Raymond was on a screen behind us.

Afterwards we adjourned to have refreshments and was joined by Lord Petre and the wife of the Sherriff of Essex, who were both charming people.

So ended a very emotional day but very rewarding knowing that all servicemen and women who had given their lives for their country were not forgotten. As a friend of mine wrote 'the politicians who get us into these situations should be the first to be put in uniform and told to do their duty'. How right he is.

If anyone is planning a holiday to Cyprus in the coming year and would like to visit Raymond's grave then please contact me and I shall be pleased to give the details of who to contact.

Patrick Marchant

Footnote: There was a memorial for Raymond held by Father Jarlath in the school chapel in 1958.



Three interrelated treaties in February 1959 and the subsequent adoption of a constitution resulted in Cyprus's gaining independence in February 1959. EOKA called a ceasefire in March. However, while the Cypriot tie to Britain was broken sooner by EOKA's guerrilla action, their goal of enosis remained unfulfilled.



BBC Television Centre Tour *on Saturday 5th February 2011*

The BBC Television Centre at White City in West London is the headquarters of BBC Television. It was officially opened on 19th June 1960 and was one of the world's first purpose built buildings for the making and transmission of television programmes. The first programme it broadcast was *First Night* with David Nixon.

The building features a distinctive circular central block which is often known affectionately by staff as the "doughnut" which houses studios, offices, engineering areas and the News Centre over a 12 acre site. The building has certain historical value and in February 1998 English Heritage requested listed status for certain parts of the building such as the scenery workshop, the canteen block adjoining the Blue Peter garden and the central building.

In June 2009 the central ring of the building and Studio One was given Grade II listing but the Department for Culture, Media and Sport did not deem the other requested parts of the building worthy of a listing but the objective was achieved which was to protect the country's heritage.

The Old Egbertians celebrated the BBC Tour with our highest number of participants for any tour that we have organised. Thirty one members and guests assembled in the foyer of the Television Centre at White City at 9.30am on Saturday morning. Due to the large numbers involved we had two tour groups.



Several members came from the depths of Kent and Berkshire which was no mean feat at this hour. Ted and Gill Roche had their train cancelled from Deal but they still managed to arrive in time for the second tour at 10.15 which was a great effort.

Having passed through security with identification tags draped around our necks, we proceeded to the news room. We were accompanied by two guides on the tour who took turns in explaining how the various departments operated. In the news rooms there seemed to be many people just looking at screens. Apparently they were checking world wide news events.



Next we moved on to the area where the weather reports are presented. The presenters actually stand in front of a blank screen whilst facing another screen showing the weather map. The transmission shows the presenter superimposed on the blank screen who controls the various frames manually that the viewer sees.

Following the weather forecasting area we were shown around the TV studios. There are eight studios ranging in size from 110 square metres (1074ft²) to Studio One, which is the biggest, which is 995 square metres (10,250 ft²). The studios broadcast a variety of popular shows such as Harry Hill's TV Burp, Match of the Day, Later with Jools, and Miranda amongst others.



One thing that did strike us was that the Strictly Come Dancing Studio is small compared with what you see on TV. It is amazing what can be achieved in such a small space as the TV camera makes the studio look much larger than it actually is.

The studio had two hundred and fifty overhead lights of various sizes. The walls were draped with black curtains. The tiered seats for the audience of about two hundred people were telescopic and could be retracted towards the back of the studio. The floor was very flat and smooth so that the camera pictures showed no movement. The floor is painted and if necessary cleaned with paint remover for each new production.

We finished the tour in a small studio where a mock television quiz was arranged and two of our number read a mock up news bulletin. Teddy Roche won the quiz and looked a natural for television. A new career beckons!

Everybody met in the foyer before departing and agreed it had been a very interesting tour. It is sad that the centre will eventually be closed as part of the BBC's cost cutting measures with the various departments moving to Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow.

Hopefully TV programmes and films will continue to be made there by independent companies. We shall see.

Brian Pieri

Clubman of the Year Trophy *by Bill Crisp*

The most prestigious trophy within the football club is the Clubman of the Year Award. The trophy is presented annually to the club member, who in the opinion of the committee, has made the biggest contribution to the running of the club. While not restricted to committee members the very nature of the award criteria usually means that it is awarded to a member of the committee.

The trophy was donated to the Old Egbertian Football Club in 1966 by Mrs Knight as a memorial to her husband, John Knight, who had been killed in a road accident.

John was a popular member of the

Football Club first team during the 1950's and up to the time of his death. He normally played at wing half alongside his brother, Alan, in the 5-3-2 or 4-4-2 playing formations which were popular at the time.

Relatively slight in build, nevertheless he was a good defender but really excelled in his passing and support of the forward line. He was a pleasure to play alongside and it was a tragedy that his death came when he was in his prime. His brother, Alan, continued to play for the Club for a few more years before retiring.

All available space for names on the trophy have now been filled and the

Club is now exploring ways to increase the name space without having to purchase a new trophy. The trophy has been valued at £400 and thus it is desirable to extend its life for as long as possible.

Past winners who are on the OEA committee include Brian Pieri and Jeff Thomas. Current Chairman Peter Burke won it in 1982 after which the trophy resided on his mantelpiece for the next seven years. Past winners who are members of the OEA include Alan Geary and Bob Logan. The only female winner was Orla Creevey in 1991/92 who was the wife of one of the committee.

The full list of winners are

- 1966/67 Chris Buckley
- 1967/68 Alan Geary
- 1968/69 Bob Logan
- 1969/70 Ian Archer
- 1970/71 Bob Logan
- 1971/72 Alan Geary
- 1972/73 Brian Pieri
- 1973/74 Not awarded
- 1974/75 John Whetter
- 1975/76 Chris Buckley
- 1976/77 Alan Andrews
- 1977/78 Graham Reeves
- 1978/79 Mark Jessop
- 1979/80 Jeff Wills
- 1980/81 Bob Logan
- 1981/82 Peter Burke
- 1982/89 Not Awarded
- 1989/90 Peter Lane/Simon Reilly
- 1990/91 Paul Smith
- 1991/92 Orla Creevey



- 1992/93 Richard Barry
- 1993/94 Simon Reilly
- 1994/95 Andy Middleton
- 1995/96 Jeff Thomas
- 1996/97 Mark James
- 1997/98 Jeff Thomas
- 1998/99 Peter Lane
- 1999/00 Jeff Thomas
- 2000/01 Mark James
- 2001/02 Richard Offord
- 2002/03 Jeff Thomas
- 2003/04 Jeff Thomas
- 2004/05 Dave Cross
- 2005/06 Jeff Thomas
- 2006/07 Mark James
- 2007/08 Ramon Navarro
- 2008/09 Jeff Thomas
- 2009/10 Mark James
- 2010/11 Andy Middleton



5th Form 1946 with Bro Thomas, possibly taken Sept/Oct 1945. Back row :- Jack Steggles, Tony Butler, Robert Alan Terry, ? Vass. Middle row:- Doug? Eacott, ? McNamara, ? Goddard, unknown, unknown. Seated:- Alwyn (Wyn) Wheeler, John Knight, Michael McGovern, Bro Thomas, Peter Barry, ? O,Connor, Alan Knight. Sitting cross legged:- ?? , ?? The Knight boys were brothers.



College Prefects 1946. From left to right:- Back row :- Doug? Eacott, Alwyn (Wyn) Wheeler, Robert Alan Terry, Alan Knight. Front row :- John Knight, Michael McGovern (School Captain), Bro Thomas, Peter Barry, ? Oconnor.

My time at St Egbert's College *by Vinod Sharma*

Hi to my ex-colleagues and students from St Egberts College, Chingford, London (from Jan to June 1970).

I served as a Maths teacher at St Egbert's College between January and June 1970. The then Headmaster, Brother Edmond, told us in June of that year that the College will be closing down and will not open the following academic session. This was a great disappointment to me as I thoroughly enjoyed teaching at the College.

I was the only foreigner in the school and I was teaching Maths at

the time to years 7, 8, 9 and 11 classes. I am sure my ex-students would not forget my face (at least as a foreigner with brown skin) and would recall those final months at the school and respond to this call by contacting the Association and becoming members.

There were three other teachers at the College who I remember well; one of them, Mr D'suza who taught English, another was Mr Fitzgerald from Ireland, although I do not remember what subject he taught, and also Mr Wilson who taught History or perhaps Religious Studies.

If they read this message I would love them to become members of the OEA and bring into life some of their memories and experiences at the College. Attached is my current photograph which may help to jog old memories of my former colleagues and students during my short time at St Egberts.



The visit from Peter Sellers

On Friday 1st February 1952, Goon Show radio star Peter Sellers came to St Egberts. At the time he was 27 and a former pupil of St Aloysius College, where he was a frequent visitor and being the sister school of St Egberts many of the brothers were known to him.

After a brief meeting with the brothers he gave an impromptu performance for the whole college in the Assembly Hall. Morning assembly started at 9am and usually lasted for 10-15 minutes but on this occasion it went on for the best part of an hour with the Headmaster, Brother Columban, frequently looking at his watch wondering

when he was going to finish.

His many voices were seemingly known to the pupils including all the characters of 'Dick Barton Special Agent' which he performed his own version of an episode and everyone's favourite from the Ted Ray shows of 1949, Crystal Jolly-Bottom.

However, very few of the characters were familiar to the stone faced brothers who were lined up on the stage behind him,

He then went on to bring the hall down with perfect impressions of some of the brothers even though he had only met them for about half an hour beforehand, and we not knowing whether to laugh or not in case we raised the ire of the brothers.

He closed by thanking us for being a good audience and Brother Columban for allowing him to perform for us and he felt that we had earned the afternoon off. After an initial long silence Brother Columban conceded followed by a round of applause from the floor.

Later Peter noticed that there was



not a TV set in the Chancery and one duly arrived the following Monday.

Peter Sellers later went onto TV fame and made many films including Dr Strangelove, the Pink Panther films and probably his crowning glory: Being There. He was married four times and fathered three children. He died on the 24th July 1980 aged just 54.

Contributors: Tony Gregory, Andrew McGovern and Victor Howlett.



Membership

You may not be aware that at the AGM we changed the membership year to coincide with our financial year which ends in December. This means that effectively we have an eight month membership year to achieve our goal of 100 members. We are well on our way with 64 members to date but if you have not renewed, and there will be a reminder letter enclosed if this is the case, we would appreciate you renewing forthwith. This will be the last written reminder before our esteemed Chairman Peter Burke chases you up by telephone!

Our first overseas life member is Terry Sumner, who lives in Australia. The processing cost for overseas members has always been prohibitive on both sides so the committee proposed at the AGM that life membership would be available for overseas members for a one off payment of £60.00.

The Association relies on its membership fees as it is our only real source of income. Our costs are ever rising and the membership fees pays for publications such as this and the History of Order booklet. We would appreciate you paying forthwith.

e-newsletters

In April we started sending out monthly newsletters to those who we have email addresses for.

Hard copy newsletters are very time consuming and impractical to produce more than twice a year. However, newsletters are relatively easy to put together and really gives the committee a chance to interact with our membership on a far more frequent basis.

So far it has been very well received and we have heard from several members who live too far away to attend social events but still have something to say. This includes those who live abroad and its great to hear from those who live outside of the UK.

So far we have 62 verified email addresses which is a substantial percentage of our membership. However, I am sure that there are more of you out there with email addresses so if I don't have your email address please drop me an email to jeffcthomas@yahoo.com and I will add you onto the email list. Thanks.

Social events

The latest social event was the annual **London Walk** which took place on Saturday July 2nd.

Once again there was a good turn out in what is always a very popular event with about 20 members and partners enjoying a tour around Canary Wharf and Docklands. The tour ended with lunch in the famous Prospect of Whitby public House. Thanks once again to Malcolm Dick for leading the tour.

The last organised event to be arranged apart from the annual **Memorial Mass** and **Christmas Social**, which will both be on Sunday December 11th, will be a Tour to the Olympic Stadium, a Tour to Doctor Johnson's House or a Visit to a Livery Company. There has been strong interest in all three so the chosen tour will depend on the dates that can be arranged etc.

If you have not registered your interest in the above then please contact Brian Pieri on 020 8524 0258

Snippets

Part of what the Association does is to act as a conduit for former pupils and it was great to hear that Patrick Marchant reconnected with Tony Gregory after 48 years. Then Tony Gregory met up with former classmate Charles Eastgate, who also lives in Australia after a gap of 58 years.

The Old Egbertian Association

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