

The Egbertian

NEWS FROM THE OLD EGBERTIAN ASSOCIATION

see our website at www.oldegbertians.com



INAUGURATED 1928

Summer 2013

Editor's Comment

Welcome to the Summer Edition of EgbertNews.

My apologies for the receiving this newsletter so late this

Summer, but it has been

difficult gathering articles for this issue. With this in mind if you have a story to tell about your College days or what you did after you left school then do let me know. The newsletter relies on its membership to contribute articles so if you have anything at all I would love to hear from you.

In this issue we have college recollections from Mike Fitzgerald, which continues the series of articles from your committee, as well as a piece from Peter Pleydell.

Finally, if your membership is outstanding then please pay it by return.

We rely on membership fees to keep the organisation going so your help in doing this would be appreciated.

Enjoy what is left of the Summer.

My College Memories

by Mike Fitzgerald - continuing a series of nostalgic articles from members of your committee, carrying on from last month's instalment by Andrew McGovern.

As I walked down the lane into St Egbert's College in 1963 little did I know that I would be writing an article for the Old Egbertian newsletter 50 year later!

I remember my first day very clearly and as I started mid-term at the College. I was invited to the office of Headmaster Br Fergus where he explained to me how he expected me to behave at the school. I also think he mentioned that a certain amount of homework would be expected from me!

My days at the school were mainly happy ones as sport was a major part of daily life. This was always my favourite pastime and I soon settled in and started playing for the school football team. In fact Br Fergus allowed me to give up Maths as I said I wanted to train for the Catholic schools annual sports meeting. The best term for me was the Summer term as I really enjoyed athletics. Running on the cinder track however needed special skills as the 220 yards consisted of four bends which caused their own problems. The brothers who taught at the school were a special breed of teacher and did their best to teach us. I remember several of the Brothers quite well including Br Aloysius who taught

French.

One of his sayings that I still use today

is "where there is a will there is a relative!" Another interesting teacher was Br Morris who taught us religious instruction. He was a nice guy but unfortunately he suffered from his nerves and teaching us was not really conducive to his health. I must admit that I do sometimes regret giving him a hard time in his class. About 15 years ago I was in Rome with my son on a school choir trip and one hot day I was in a bar when I looked up and saw Brother Morris sitting there having a lemonade. I introduced myself to him and we got talking about our time at St Egbert's.

During a rugby trip in Ireland I and some friends were driving across the middle of Ireland when I remembered that Brother Fergus lived somewhere near a place called Tyrell's Pass. I stopped at a local post office to ask if anybody knew him and I was directed to a small cottage down a small lane. We found Brother Fergus who made us very welcome and opened up a litre of Sherry and we spend a great day as he spoke



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at length of his time at the college. I really enjoyed our time with him and it was so good that we invited him and several other teachers to a dinner in North West Essex some time later which he attended. I left St Egbert's in 1966 and went to work as an apprentice goldsmith in Hatton Garden. This was an interesting time for me and I really thought that this was the way I would earn my living. However although the job was interesting it didn't pay the bills so I left and started working for The Royal London Insurance Group. I stayed there for over 30 years and ended up as UK mortgage manager. I retired at 50 years of age which seemed a good idea at the time.

However my retirement only lasted a month or so and then I started up a small mortgage broking business which today has 10 firms and is well respected in the industry. I remember my days at St Egberts with great fondness and I am grateful for the way I was taught. I met some very nice people and its nice to see that The Brothers of the order are still very busy around the world and I'm still in touch with their main base in Belgium. It was of course a sad day when the college closed down and I remember the evening when I drove down St Egbert's way thinking that the school was still there and seeing a large housing development. However it is some comfort that the Old Egbertian

Association has reformed and I have enjoyed many events meeting up with former pupils of the college. The camaraderie of the old boys is very strong and last year I did a hike across a part of Spain to raise money for Motor Neurones disease and it was great to see the support that I received from them. This year I am embarking on a 500 mile hike along The Camino of N Spain to raise money for the same cause and I know I will take the best wishes of the Old Boys with me. Finally, I hope that The Old Egbertian Association will go on for many years to come and that more former pupil will join us

Mike Fitzgerald
Committee member

The London Walk by *Brian Pieri*

This year's London Walk was on Saturday 15th June and took us to Hampstead, which some of you will know has the reputation of being the intellectual, liberal, artistic, musical and literary part of London and is often referred to as Hampstead Village. It has some of the most expensive housing in London and apparently has more millionaires than any other area of the UK.

Our group met at Hampstead Underground station which is the deepest underground station on the network and was built in 1907.

The first stop of our tour was in Church Row which has a multitude of elegant Georgian Townhouses and was where Lord Alfred Douglas, who was the close friend of Oscar Wilde and was the reason he spent time in Reading Jail, resided as did HG Wells- the

author of War of the Worlds and the Time Machine.

Church Row leads to the Parish Church of St John-at-Hampstead which is an elegant 18th Century Church where we viewed the graves of the romantic painter John Constable, the writer and comedian Peter Cook, Kay Kendall who was an actress and film star of the 1950's, John Harrison who invented the marine chronometer



Church Row



St John's Church



Kenwood House

and Hugh Gaitskell- the Labour Party Leader from 1955-1963.

Leaving the Church we climbed up Holly Walk and Vernon Hill to a house where Robert Louis Stevenson stayed. It struck me at this point what a very attractive area Hampstead is as it has a mixture of buildings from the 18th Century to more contemporary buildings which all compliment each other.

Although Hampstead was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 the history of Hampstead is generally traced to the 17th century. The area expanded rapidly following the opening of the North London Railway in the 1860s which gave easy access to the city. The population explosion saw a rapid

increase in house building which we see today.

On our way to Hampstead Heath we passed Fenton House, which is a National Trust building bequeathed to the nation in 1952 and was a former 17th century merchant house. It houses the internationally famous Benton Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments as well as fine porcelain, paintings, 17th century needlework pictures and Georgian furniture.

When on the "Heath" as it is known, it is easy to forget what a vast area it covers - some 790 acres comprising several distinct areas, three swimming pools including one for men and one for woman, over 25 ponds and offers

numerous walks and other activities. Kenwood House was in the distance which is a popular venue for open air concerts. Parliament Hill is one of the most popular parts of the Heath and its elevated position offers excellent views of London's skyline including The Gherkin, Tower 42, BT Tower, The Shard, St Paul's Cathedral and The London Eye.

Following our visit to the Heath we made our way to Golders Hill Park, which is formal park adjoining the West Heath and unlike the main area is fenced in and closed at night. It occupies the site of a large house that was bombed during the War. It is a gem of a park with verdant open spaces, tennis courts, a flower garden, a butterfly house, a duck pond and a separate water garden that leads to a separate Deer area which is near a recently renovated small zoo.

Our final port of call was in the Old Bull and Bush public house where we enjoyed excellent fish and chips. The Old Bull and Bush is one of several pubs of note in the area including the Spaniard's Inn, where Dick Turpin took refuge, Jack Straws Castle, which is sadly now a housing development, The Flask, and The Old White Bear.

All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable day and our thanks go to our guide Malcolm Dick whose expert knowledge was invaluable.



View from Hampstead Heath

Trip to Lugano (1966) by Peter Pleydell



The author aged 12...



and more recently

It was April 1966, and anxious parents said 'Goodbye' to their sons outside the school, as the coach set off for what was to be, for many, their first experience of air travel and setting foot upon foreign soil. I think it fair to say that for all, even those who had been abroad before, it was to be an adventure.

We made our way towards one of the London airports - which one I am not sure. 'We' being what seemed to be a large number of boys, accompanied by Mr Spurgeon, a friend of his, and Brother Paschal. I say I do not know to which airport we were travelling - Heathrow and Gatwick being equidistant from Brentford. Why is this relevant? Simply because I recall passing Brentford Football Club. Mr Spurgeon, who apparently once played for that team, called out "Brentford Football Club, lads". This was met with boos and hisses, as we all supported other London clubs who were in the First Division.

So it was that I, a second year boy, found myself one of the youngest in a party of predominantly older pupils, clutching a British Visitor's



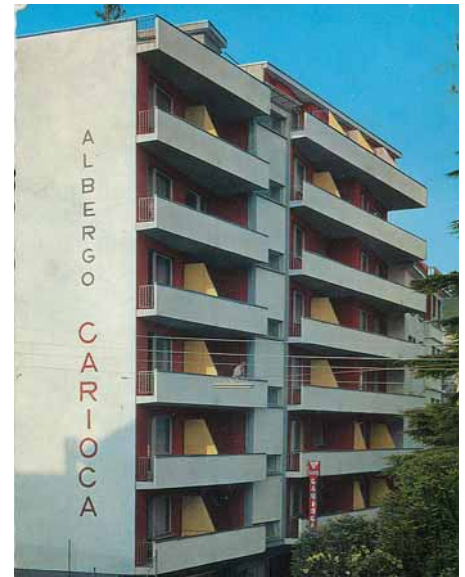
Passport, and having paid in the maximum money allowed (£12) to Mr Spurgeon to collect as Swiss francs during the 10 day trip. (I must confess that I did smuggle another 10/- out in my pocket, and that I successfully changed this for local currency in Lugano - having kept the receipt until a couple of years ago).

Much of what follows must, of necessity, be fragmented, coming from fond memories of so long ago.

I do not recall landing, but we did so in Milan, and were met by a coach which took us the 60 or so kilometres to our hotel in Lugano, Switzerland. I do not recall whether it was at this point, or later in the adventure, that we met Maria.

Maria was to be our guide for much of the time. This meant that she accompanied the party on the coach, and told us what we should be looking at. I have only a vague mental picture of her, but I know she was very young - in her early 20s I suppose, with a dark complexion and brown, Italian eyes; and that we all fell in love with her. This feeling was enhanced when she sang 'Arvederci Roma' unaccompanied through the microphone of the coach on one of our excursions.

We arrived at our hotel, called the Carioca - which we were told meant 'old and withered' in Italian. In fact, the hotel was very modern looking, with a number of floors and - treat of treats - a lift. On one occasion, several of us who were dormed on one of the top floors (we were 3 or 4 to a room) waited for a long time for the lift to come to take us down to breakfast. Eventually, we realised it was not coming. After resorting to the stairs, and on reaching the bottom, we found a lady who worked for the hotel holding the call button, an empty lift with opened doors in front of her. As we passed, she kept



repeating, with her 'foreign' accent "It is because you are not permitted to use it." So that was us told. It was definitely a case of don't use the lift - when anyone's looking!

On one of the days, we visited a mountain. We were told that there were two ways to get to the top - cable car or walk. We were to walk at least one way - up or down. As I had never been on a cable car, also being rather lazy, I decided to ride to the summit and walk down. When we got to the summit, it was so misty that we could see nothing of the view. However, all was not lost, as we were able to visit on an alternative day for free. I recall nothing of the view, but recall being impressed.

Some more snippets:

- Going into a shop and using my best German (learned from Mr Linderman) to buy a newspaper printed in Gothic script, and a toy soldier (pictured). I did not realise that we were in a predominantly Italian speaking area, but they humoured me in my attempt at German.
- Visiting Milan, being unimpressed by a guided walk around a cemetery, rather more impressed by Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, but being thrilled at being allowed to walk upon the hallowed turf of Inter Milan. (Despite what I wrote on my

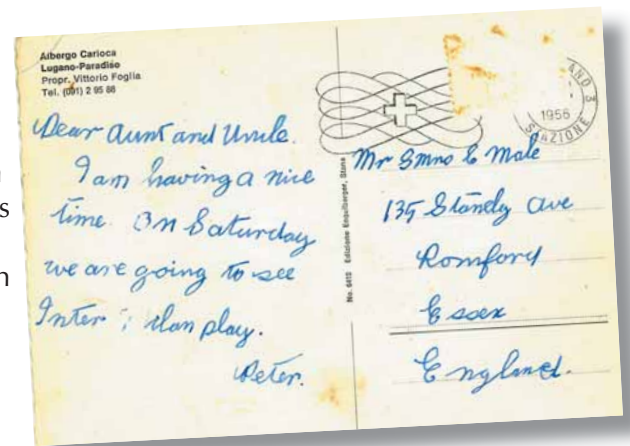
postcard, I do not recall seeing the team play, just us walking onto an empty pitch).

- Seeing wall lizards for the first time, and one of my friends catching one by the end of its tail. The lizard escaped leaving half of the wriggling tail behind.
- Making Brother Paschal laugh with a little cylinder which, when turned upright, made a mooing sound. I asked him what I should write on the list of purchases which we were all told to make for arrival at UK customs. He suggested I call it a 'novelty'.
- The juke box in the hotel, which always seemed to be playing

'Rock and Roll Music' or 'I'll Follow the Sun' by the Beatles.

- Pretending to drink from one of those wine bottles with a straw jacket, which was empty and on the table to hold a candle. A group of local young men thought this funny, and one of them handed me a glass of beer, which I dutifully took next door to Mr Spurgeon and explained what had happened.

Yes, it was a long time ago, so it's easy to say, but to my knowledge the sun shone brightly every day of



our holiday, and we were young, full of adventure, and happy.

It would be great to hear from anyone else who remembers this trip, or who has any photographs.

The Funeral of Malcolm Potter *Eulogy by Nina Villa*

A former Commanding Officer once said to me that if I stay in the military long enough, I will be asked to read the eulogy of someone under my command and it'll be one of the hardest things I'll ever have to do. Today is that day and it is with great sadness but enormous privilege that I stand before you today, at Malcolm's request, to remember the life of our departed friend. Losing a husband, friend, colleague is never easy, but when their life is taken away prematurely is that much more difficult. I hope that these words will help alleviate some of the grief you are all feeling today.

It's fair to say that Malcolm and I didn't exactly hit it off when we first met. It was at a civic service at St Joseph's Church about five years ago. I think he viewed the new, cocky young Town Clerk with a hint of suspicion. I thought he was a typically abrasive ex-soldier who clearly didn't like women very much. Little did I know that we actually had a huge amount in common, coming from the same part of London, both avid Arsenal fans and both high church Anglo

Catholics. However, it was primarily our military backgrounds that I think cemented the friendship, as military service often does. It was Malcolm's military mind that led him to plan this funeral down to the very last tee, even specifying what he wanted in the sandwiches at the wake, before charging me with the sad task of delivering it for him. He was also very specific about some of the things he wanted me to tell you in this eulogy, so here goes:

Malcolm Andrew Potter was born on 10th March 1947 and lived at 40 Mattison Road, Muswell Hill before moving to Palmers Green in 1950. He attended the local school in Hazelwood Lane, joined 168 North London Scouts and sung choir of St John the Evangelist church. He states that he completely failed the 11+ and therefore had to go Winchmore Hill Secondary Modern before moving to St Egbert's RC School in Chingford. He spoke to me at length about the thoroughly happy childhood and that he and his sister Ingrid enjoyed.



In 1962 aged 15, Malcolm went to work at an advertising agency dealing with royal diamonds in London. After this he held several jobs including van driver before settling in a company called Crane Ltd making engineering valves.

As a Royal Navy Officer, I then despair at Malcolm's next career choice as he joined the Merchant Navy! He took a training job with P and O at the Royal Thames Yacht Club in London and qualified as a steward before going to sea on Royal Mail ships. He went on various cruises around the world before he became a little homesick and decided to come shoreside and took up a job in catering with a company called

Thorns on the Great Cambridge Road.

He then took his first steps in to management in the 1970's with a computing company called Elliot International with whom he enjoyed postings to South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland before returning to work in London as a Salesman for several years before the company was taken over and he was made redundant.

If I was disappointed at Malcolm's choice of uniform when he joined the Merchant Navy, I was distraught at his next career choice as he decided to go from blue to green and join the Territorial Army! He served in the Royal Signals, breaking his leg in a parachute jump, which I said was self inflicted as I can see no legitimate reason for jumping out of a perfectly serviceable aircraft. He then spent nearly 10 years with the Hon. Artillery Company before he became a drummer and learned to play the flute, simply because he fancied the uniform!

Amongst his other pastimes, Malcolm played football for Doveridge, was a dedicated churchman and part of the serving team at St Paul's Cathedral. He was also a liveryman of the Fan Makers Company. He served for a time as a Parish Clerk in London and St

Mary's Aldermary Beadle. He was also a bellringer and it was learning to ring at St Mary's Church in Ware where he first met his future wife, Josie in the early 80's. 28 years after they first met, Malcolm and Josie were married in Hertford Castle last October and I and my officer team were delighted to have been part of organising their beautiful wedding day.

That brings me to the end of what Malcolm told me to say, so I will now be a little cheeky and finish on a few reflections of my own on the relatively short time that I knew him. Malcolm and Josie have served numerous Mayor's and Town Clerk's in Hertford over a period of almost 20 years, Malcolm as our Sword Bearer and Josie as our seamstress for the wigs, gowns and hats that make up Hertford's historic regalia. Malcolm was dedicated to his civic role, demanding high standards, volunteering regularly to educate others about the sword and other regalia at open days and events. He was a hugely respected member of the ceremonial team and was instrumental in assisting with the introduction of the Silent Ceremony to Hertford, which has now become an established part of the Mayor Making celebrations. Malcolm was determined,

sometimes stubborn, knowing exactly what he wanted but overridingly he was a generous, caring man with a keen, sometimes naughty, sense of humour and always a twinkle in his eye.

I am pleased to see so many of Malcolm's friends and relatives here today. I know that many of you travelled a long way to be here and Malcolm would be incredibly appreciative. He wanted to go out with all the military pomp and circumstance possible and I hope we have achieved that for him today. I will remember Malcolm as one of my Sergeants at Mace and as a friend with pride, and as we are in the midst of celebrating the new life that our saviour's death and resurrection brings us at Easter, I will remember him in faith. There is a standing joke that military people have to ask permission from their commanding officer before they are allowed to die. Last time I saw Malcolm, although he didn't say the words, his eyes were clearly asking for that permission. Well, permission granted my friend. You served us all well, and it was my honour and privilege to serve with you. Your duty is done – Rest in Peace.

*Nina Villa
Hertford Town Clerk*

Football Thoughts *by Jeff Thomas, EFC Secretary*

Regular readers of my occasional newsletter articles and AGM end of season reports will have detected that the football club has been on a downward spiral in recent years. From the heady heights of ten years ago, when we were playing Senior football with six main teams (and one Vets), when we won our first cup, which followed several seasons of promotions including four teams in one season, we have seen a succession of quality players leave

which has seen our first team drop through the divisions like a stone and the club reduce to four teams (and a Vets). Our first team now play in Division three and those good old days seem a long time ago.

During this time the club has seen a succession of relegations and the club in terms of playing ability is at its lowest ebb in the 20 years that I have been on the committee.

As a committee member I have

to confess that it is far easier to serve a club which is on the up, successful, and whose first team play to a good standard, rather than a club that seems destined for the knackers yard with seemingly a very limited future, and I have to say that the last few years have



been a bit of a chore. This season was a slight improvement as we only suffered two relegations and our first and second team performed well but the prospect of promotion for either seems a long time hence, as we simply do not have the players to achieve it.

You may recall from my recent end of season report that we decided to drop our fourth team and introduce a second Vets team for next season. This will help realign our finances but reducing teams is not the way forward, as when you are on the slippery slope of dropping teams it is very hard to get off. The normal assumption is that it improves your team/player ratio but in reality many players from the "dropped team" become disaffected and leave, so the nett benefit to the club is minimal but you have one team less. We have seen many local clubs go down this misguided route, including Old Highburians who went from four teams to folding in six years. Our situation was different in that we have the players but not a suitable captain and in recent seasons the fourth team has become something of a liability.

There has been a steady decline in 11 a side football participation in recent years which has been replaced by 5 a side football which has not helped our player recruitment. We have always recognised that we need a steady stream of young players in the club for its long-term future, and in the past we have tried to create links with local schools and youth football clubs. However, despite our strenuous efforts it has not been a great success.

The problem with a school link up is that local professional clubs, such as Arsenal, send in their own coaches, and any boy with a modicum of talent is usually offered a trial. Even if they don't

make it they are left with an unjustified elevated status of their own ability, which prevents them from considering joining a "parks" club such as us. I have had boys who would barely get into our third team tell me that unless we can offer links to professional clubs then they won't join us as they want to become a professional football player.

The most obvious link for us would be with youth football clubs as we can offer young players leaving youth football the opportunity to continue playing football. However, very often their existing manager, who is the obvious conduit, is so worn out by watching his son on the touchline for several seasons that he wants nothing more to do with youth football, and has very little inclination to get involved and effectively promote our club to his charges.

Also, sixteen-year-old boys are at that age when woman, drink and rock & roll come into their lives with a passion which sees football slip down their priority list. The drop out rate in this age group is huge and, for every ten interested players, one might last the course. Even when they do join us the physical demands of adult football greatly exceeds their expectations and generally only the very best can cope. If they are that good then it normally deems them too good for our club due to our relatively low playing standard. Even if they do stay and are not enticed away most club captains don't see the bigger picture, as it takes at least six months for youth players to adapt during which time captains, who want instant success, want players who are the finished product.

Our usual method of attracting new players in recent seasons has been putting an advert in the local paper. This always generates a lot of enquiries - usually 30 to 40, but

the quality of those responding is always poor, and generally if we see three new players of a reasonable standard who are willing to pay their match and membership fees, then we consider ourselves lucky. Generally most good players who we would want are usually playing for another club already. Sometimes we pick up the occasional good player who has moved into the area but individuals usually do not make a big difference.

However, this close season we were approached by a disaffected captain from Old Parmitarians who wanted to bring himself and some of his teammates over to our club. We have not had an influx of new players en masse for a long time so we have cultivated this relationship over the summer, and we are introducing them as our first team this season. Previously they were Old Parns second team and playing in Senior Division Two, which is a very good standard.

Introducing a new team so high up in the league is always something of a risk as they are a largely an unknown quantity, but we have undertaken due diligence as best we can, and are confident that we have made the right decision, but time will tell. It also allows us to maintain four league teams and introduces some quality players at the top end of the club.

Probably the most important aspect of all this is that it will give the club the fillip that it badly needs, as getting fresh players of a good standard is the lift that we need, which can hopefully start up our climb up the leagues.

Thanks for reading.

Membership

We are getting towards the end of the year and membership numbers are lower than we would like at this stage with 71 paid members, 4 Honorary members and three life members.

If your membership fee is due, and there will be a letter reminding you within this newsletter, then we would appreciate you paying your membership forthwith.

The Association relies on its membership fees (and donations) as it is our only significant source of income. Our costs are ever rising and the membership fees pays for publications such as this, the History of the Order booklet and the website.

Membership is still only £10.00 per annum. Please make cheques payable to the Old Egbertian Association and they should be sent to Hector Watts, OEA Treasurer, 38 Fullwell Avenue, Ilford Essex IG6 2HF. If you wish to make a donation to either the Association or the Football Club you are welcome to do so at the same time, but please make it clear who the donation is for.

Finally, it has not escaped our notice that some of those who continually receive our newsletters seemingly have no intention of joining the Association. We have come to this conclusion as despite receiving many requests and reminders the membership fee is not forthcoming. Obviously whether you wish to join the Association is entirely up to the individual concerned, but we would appreciate knowing if you don't intend to join so we can remove you from our mailing list with all the financial savings that this will make. Please email jeffcthomas@yahoo.com if this is the case.

Social events

The trip to the **Cutty Sark** is scheduled for Friday September 27th followed by a meal at the 16 Second West Brasserie at the National Maritime Museum. The **Museum of London** is planned for October or November. The annual **Memorial Mass** will take place on Sunday 8th December at 10.30am. The **Christmas Social** will be on the same day from noon at the Queen Elizabeth Pub in Chingford (usual venue). There has been strong interest in the visit to the **Chatham Dockyard** to see the "Call the Midwives" TV set and this trip will take place next year.

Those who have intimated on their social form that they wish to partake in these events will be contacted in due course. However, it is not too late to get on board by contacting Brian Pieri on 020 8524 0258.

Snippets

Do you have an email address? If you do and you would like to be added onto our email mailing list, then do drop me an email (jeffcthomas@yahoo.com).

It was suggested at the AGM that we include email addresses on the contact sheet as it was felt that unlike telephone numbers, email addresses are less intrusive and that members would benefit by having this information.

I am giving you notice that if we have it, we will publish your email address on the next contact sheet unless you tell us otherwise. If you do not want to have your email address available to other members on the contact sheet then please let me know on jeffcthomas@yahoo.com

Is anybody out there working for a company that might want to sponsor a football kit? If so I would love to hear from you. Our first team is in need of a new kit which will cost about £600.00 with your company logo on the front. Kit and equipment costs are our second largest expense after pitch hire and new kit is something that we tend to neglect when we don't have the money.

The Old Egbertian Association

Editor
Jeff Thomas
21 Oakwood Hill
Loughton
Essex IG10 3EW
Tel: 020 8508 1376
jeffcthomas@yahoo.com

Committee

President
Gerry Abbott
Tel: 020 8529 3864

Chairman
Peter Burke
Tel: 01580 752858

Secretary
Jeff Thomas
Tel: 020 8508 1376

Membership Secretary
Hector J. Watts
Tel: 020 8550 8231

Treasurer
Hector J. Watts
Tel: 020 8550 8231

Social Secretary
Brian Pieri
Tel: 020 8524 0258

Committee members
Andrew McGovern
Tel: 01284 850915

Bill Crisp
Tel: 01277 2271918

Ron Fellowes
Tel: 020 8508 4724

Mike Fitzgerald
Tel: 01277 823309

Mike Tiernan
Tel: 020 8529 8130

Football Club Secretary
Jeff Thomas
Tel: 020 8508 1376

Published by Disc To Print
25 Liddell Road
West Hampstead
London NW6 2EW
Tel 020 7625 5225