

The Egbertian

NEWS FROM THE OLD EGBERTIAN ASSOCIATION

see our website at www.oldegbertians.com



INAUGURATED 1928

Winter 2015

Editor's Comment

Welcome to the Winter Edition of *EgbertNews*.

Many thanks for all those who have made contributions to

this newsletter, namely: Mike Fitzgerald; Patrick Marchant; David Bridgman; Bob Nettman, Peter Burke, John Willis and Ted Roche.

Unfortunately my stock of articles is now exhausted. I need to keep receiving articles to keep the newsletter going so if you can make a contribution that might interest the membership then please let me know.

Our membership year finishes at the end of December. Enclosed you will find an application form to renew for next year. We rely on membership fees to keep the Association financially sound so your prompt renewal would be much appreciated.

Thanks for reading.

Maurice Suckling Revisited

Pride of place on this edition's front cover is a follow up article by Mike Fitzgerald on Maurice Suckling, who is our oldest member and attended the College when it first opened in 1928.

On a very wet August day Peter Burke, Bill Crisp and I visited Maurice Suckling, who is our oldest member being 97 years young.

first entered those hallowed portals and I was surprised to know that at the top of the driveway there was a garage



Maurice lives in Groombridge in rural Kent which is a very beautiful part of the country. One of the reasons for visiting Maurice was that I had a very old photograph of St Egberts, which was taken in its first year of opening in 1928, which was the year that Maurice first started at the College. You can see the photograph in question on page 3.

Maurice greeted us like old friends and immediately the conversation was flowing. I wanted to know what St Egberts was like in 1928 when Maurice

which I suppose is where the Town Hall now stands.

We gave a copy of the photo to Maurice and he was very pleased to have a reminder of his first years at St Egberts. He immediately recognised several people in the photo and he had plenty to say about them! His memory is amazing and the stories that he told us about his life were both interesting and informative. St Egberts College was both a day and boarding school and life in North Chingford

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must have been a much quieter place in 1928 compared to now.

Maurice was in the Navy during the War and spent time on convoy duty which must have been very dangerous. He told us of his travels and the people he met and it was a real pleasure to listen to him. When he left the Navy he worked in the power industry for many years until his retirement.

The afternoon went very well and we were treated with tea and cakes and many stories by our host.

Another story was about his travels to Ireland and the town of Killybegs in Donegal, where he and his wife

Katy used to stay. I also used to go to Killybegs where I have relatives and it was great to talk to him about Ireland. He has also spent a lot of time in County Cork which is a beautiful part of Ireland.

The afternoon seemed to go very quickly and we were enthralled and amused by Maurice's storytelling and we could have listened to him all day. Unfortunately it was time to leave as Peter and his wife Vicky had invited us to dinner and so we said our goodbyes to Maurice and made our exit.

When we got back to Peter and Vicky's house a few glasses of wine and a wonderful meal helped to make this a very memorable day.

All Aboard the Cutty Sark; The World's Sole Surviving Tea Clipper *by Peter Burke*

Our OEA social calendar started with a trip to Greenwich for a visit to the Cutty Sark on Friday 10th April.

The Cutty Sark was once the most famous of the great Tea clippers, the name 'clipper' referring to the fast sailing ships of the nineteenth century.

Steam propulsion saw the gradual demise of sail and the Cutty Sark enjoyed a few years in the tea trade before turning to the trade in wool from Australia, where she held the record crossing time in Britain for ten years. She continued as a cargo ship until 1922 when she was purchased by retired sea

twice in recent years - in 2007 when she required a £35 million refit, and more recently in 2012 when minor damage was sustained.

After an informative tour around the ship, where we learnt that Port (four letters) meant left (also four letters) and port (red) gave the colour of the left hand light, the



She was built by Scott & Linton on the Clyde in Scotland and launched on 22nd November 1869 at a cost of £16,150. At a speed of up to 17 knots she soon established a reputation as one of the fastest ships afloat - this was very important commercially as the first tea cargo to arrive to market fetched the highest price.

captain Wilfred Dowman who used her as a training ship. In 1954 she was transferred to permanent dry dock at Greenwich for public display and listed by National Historic Ships as part of the National Historic Fleet, which is the nautical equivalent of a Grade 1 Listed Building.

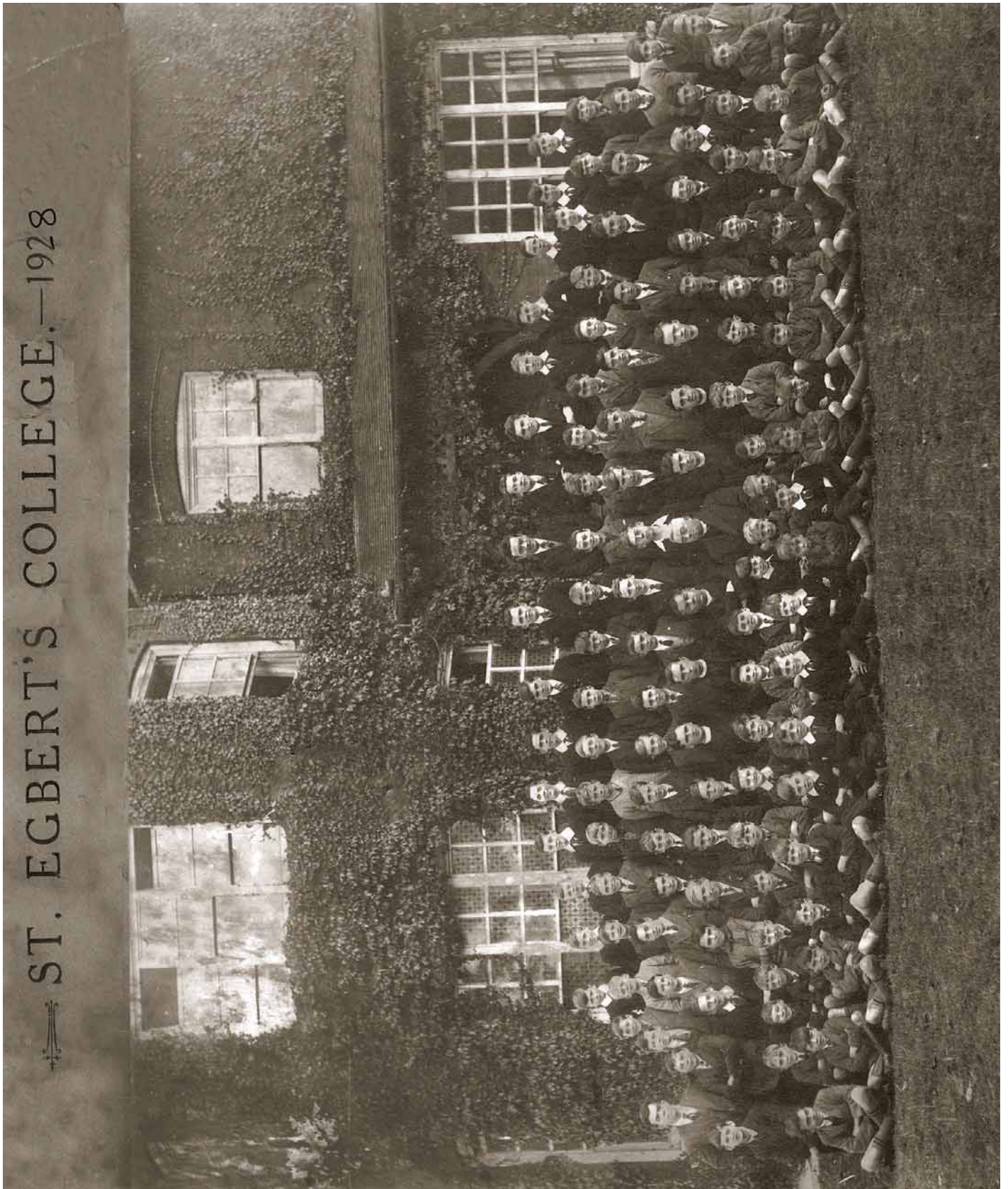
The ship has been damaged by fire

Egbertian landlubbers moved on to The Gypsy Moth Inn for lunch.

With the weather being hot and sunny, we were able to enjoy lunch outside in the pub gardens.

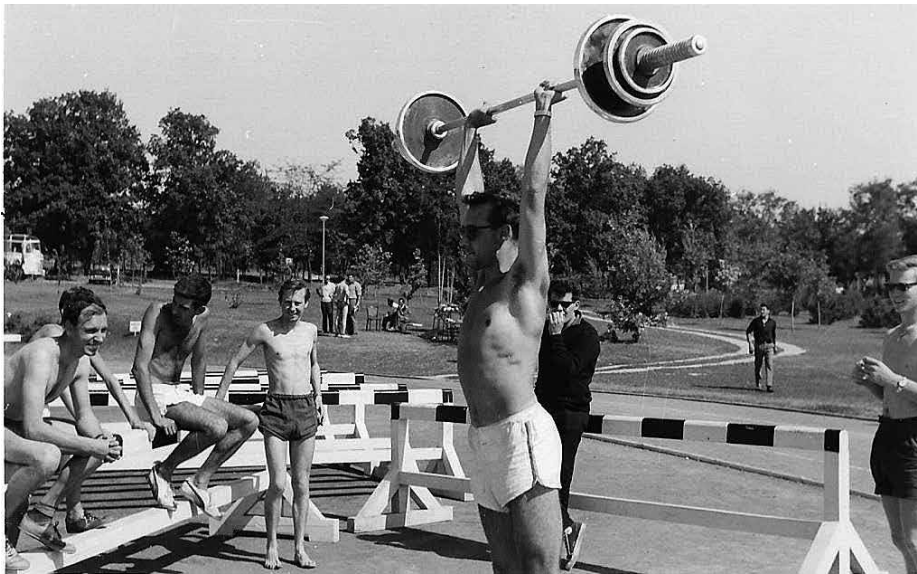
Many thanks to Brian Pieri for organising and arranging this very enjoyable visit which was a great opportunity, once again, to meet up with old friends.

The first school photograph - 1928



My Life in Sport *by Patrick Marchant*

When I was at school I was always interested in sport. However, as you will all remember, the College played Cricket in the summer and Football in the winter. I hated both and had no interest in either sport which still applies today - if there is a big football match on TV I will not watch it and the same applies to cricket.



Lifting weights in the 1962 European Athletic Championship in Belgrade

My big passion was athletics. If I could avoid participating in football or cricket then I was very happy to do so, as it meant that I could go for a run. In school sports I would do as many events as I could but my favourite was the 880 yards at which I won the School Championship a couple of times. I also came back and won the Old Boys 880 yards beating Bill Bates several times. I still hold the track record at this distance even though the College is no longer there in two mins 13 secs.

In May 1953 I joined Woodford Green Athletic Club of which I am still a member having become a Life Member in 1979. I was President for two years from 1996 to 1998. Brother Raymond joined before me and was coached by Ron Bowden who is now well into

his 80's and still coaching.

I made many good friends at the Club and I am pleased to say that I am still in contact with most of them. We had a good group to train with on most nights of the week on the track at Ashton Playing Fields. In those days it was a cinder track, and my one regret is that I never raced on an all

weather track which became commonplace after I retired from track running. However I did end up with times of 1 min 59.6 for 880 yards, 3 mins 13.3 for 3/4 mile and 4 min 30.0 for the mile.

I did my National Service at Odiham in Berkshire and it was fortunate that a good friend of mine, Peter Driver, lived in nearby Fleet, so I was able to join him for a training run on many summer evenings. Peter was a far better runner than I, having won the Empire Games (now the Commonwealth Games) six miles event in 1954 in Vancouver so he had to slow up a bit for me to keep up with him.

In my early 30's I started to get a pain in my right knee which resulted in me having to stop

running. An operation soon followed which in those days was significant as this was before the days of keyhole surgery. I still remember the Surgeon coming round to see me after the operation saying 'sorry old chap but I had to take out your knee cap'. I thought then that my sporting career was over as it took ten months for me to bend my leg.

However, I made a good recovery and as soon as I could I was out running again but one summer evening I was in Epping Forest and slipped on some wet mud crashing to the ground with my knee giving way. When the swelling had gone down one of the tendons in the knee was flipping over the knee. My running days were over so I thought but as I was working in South Woodford I decided to walk to work. A friend heard about this and asked if I wanted to do a 30 mile walk in a few weeks time. I agreed, as I am game for anything.

The walk was an event put on by the Long Distance Walkers Association called Tanners Marathon. I finished it in 8½ hours



Myself aged about 12 or 13



Finishing the cycle ride from Belgium to Spain

which wasn't bad for a beginner. In all I did ten Tanners and my fastest time was just under 7 hours. I got 'hooked' on these events and started to take this form of exercise seriously. In the end I progressed up to 100 miles and did three of these events. The first in 1977 which was called 'The Downman' along the South Downs Way and I finished 41st in 30 hours 51 minutes. At the end I said to my long-suffering wife Jean 'never never again'. However when the entry forms arrived for the next one, which was The Cleveland 100, I sent off the entry form. It was a very hot weekend but I finished 47th in 38 hours 17 mins. The last one was on Dartmoor with me finishing 45th in 32 hours 18 mins.

Over a ten-year period I did events ranging from 25 miles to 100 miles - all of them non-stop.

One other event that I did enjoy very much was the Roding's Rally in Epping Forest which was held at night in November and consisted of teams of up to four.

A Map, compass and twelve



Myself leading the school 880 yards Championship

cryptic clues and three grid references was all that you were given and then you had to go and find the checkpoints - some of which were unlit. Of course this was all before GPS. To win it once was an achievement but to win it three times was unheard of, which is what my team did.

In 1978 I decided to give up working in the City of London and opened a Sports Shop in South Chingford called Knights Sports, which I had for 20 years. I concentrated on Running shoes and all the equipment that went with it. When the lease can up for renewal I left Chingford and opened up in the City of London, near to St Paul's Cathedral. London City Runner is still there to this day with our daughter Lou in charge.

One day the Head of Evening Classes at Chingford High School approached me and asked if I would do an evening class on Running. Well, I could walk 100 miles but I could not run a mile, so I had to do something about it and I started jogging a bit. Fortunately the class never took off at that time but the following year about 12 eager joggers turned up for the course. By then I was fit enough to join them for the evening run.

Of course this led me to do more and more running. I had always

wanted to compete in the London Marathon so I entered the 1986 race. My big downfall was not putting in the long runs beforehand but I finished in 3 hrs 53mins 22 secs and it was good to know that there were more runners behind me than in front. The following year I did it in 4 hrs 10mins 56 secs.

Unfortunately when out training one evening, the cartilage in my right knee tore resulting in the end to my running, but not to the end of sport as I took up cycling. Riding to and from Chingford and in the summer with my map in my back pocket I rode extensively into the country lanes of Essex.



Myself and Dame Mary Peters

This led to the competitive spirit in me taking over and I started taking part in long distance bike events, eventually doing 100 miles in less than six hours on a mountain bike.

I thought all this exercise would keep me in good health for my latter years but it resulted in me having both hips replaced and a replacement Aortic Heart Valve. However a year to the day that I came out of St Barts Hospital with the new valve, I started an epic journey with three friends which was to cycle from the Belgium border to the Spanish border in the straightest line possible. Some 850 miles and twelve days later we saw the Mediterranean Sea. Not bad for four old pensioners!

Being involved in running and the sports industry has led me to meeting some of the world's top athletics. The first one I met of note was Emil Zatopek from Czechoslovakia as it was then called, who held four Olympic Gold Medals and many World Records. Then there was Steve Ovett, Steve Backley, Chris Brasher, Derek Ibbotson, Ron Hill, Mary Peters and boxer Nigel Benn to name but a few.

The most famous athlete that I have met is Haile Gebrselassie, who won Olympic Gold in 1996 in Atlanta and 2000 in Sydney and is a five time World Champion, and has recently been voted the best 10,000 metre runner of all time.

I was invited to a Dinner in Birmingham where he was the main guest and it was a great pleasure to be sitting two seats from him. It was a fantastic event

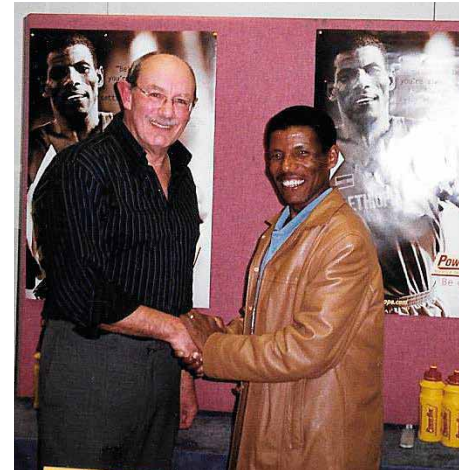
that no amount of money could buy. He came over as you see him on the TV. - a charming man who is always smiling.

Another memorable meeting that I have had is with Mary Peters, Olympic Pentathlon Champion, at my athletic clubs Dinner and Dance whilst I was President.

I feel very privileged to have led the life that I have had sharing it with my wife Jean. The places we have been to, the things we have done and the people we have met, I could write a book about.

In between all this running, walking and biking, Jean and myself found time to enjoy back packing holidays camping wild in the French Alps. This involved carrying everything we needed in a rucksack on our backs.

Another trip involved starting with The Tour de Mont Blanc and



Myself and Haile Gebrselassie

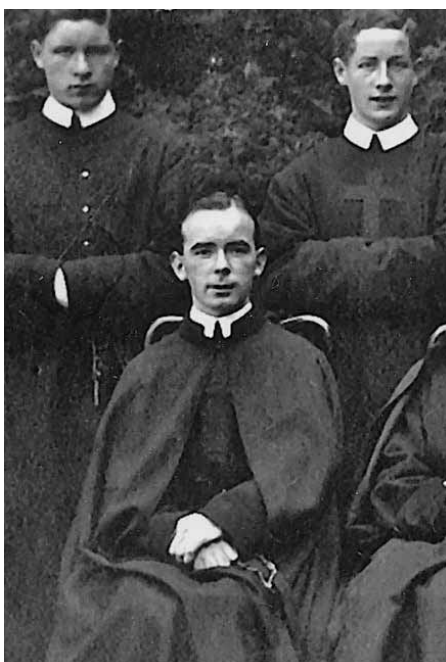
ending with walking the GR5 from Lake Geneva to Nice which we did over two holidays.

In between we hiked the Grand Canyon down to the River Colorado and back up again on the Bright Angel Trail - all in a day. Mad, yes, but it was fantastic.

Also on a boys own holiday I walked up to Everest Base Camp. But that is another story...

Brother Felix's dog *by Bob Nettmann*

Bess, Brother Felix's dog never seemingly left his side and was even with him in the classroom. She managed to get pregnant once a year, giving birth to a litter of pups.



With great excitement we children would dote on the pups and Brother Felix did not have any problem finding good homes for them with the children's parents.

I remember Brother Felix lecturing to the class that to keep a dog from running away - which dogs frequently do - you need to take a piece of raw meat, put it under your armpit for 15 minutes then let the dog eat it. He claimed that the dog would never run away after that treat.

Thinking back all those years, I can imagine the children's parents thinking twice about giving a piece of precious meat to their new puppy. Meat in those days was a rationed item, expensive and hard to get from your local butcher. Meat came off ration in 1952.

Happy memories of simple observations on life, at least for us boys.



As for the parents, they had many complications surviving postwar England without appeasing a son on a mission for a piece of raw meat.

How much?

With the current cost of private education costing anything from £15,576 per annum for Bancroft' School in Woodford Green to £35,721 for Eton College, it is interesting to see how much fee paying education was in 1957. I am sure many readers parents would have received this covering letter and invoice

SILverthorn 2544

ST. EGBERT'S COLLEGE,
CHINGFORD, E.4.

14/9/1957

Master 174 Vicarage

To the Principal of St. Egbert's College E.10

For Term beginning	16/9/1957		
To School Fee			122
Books and Stationery			
.....			
.....			

PAID 4/9/57

ST. EGBERT'S COLLEGE CHINGFORD

All Fees payable in advance
Cheques to be made payable to St. Egbert's College, Chingford. £

ST. EGBERT'S COLLEGE,
THE RIDGEWAY,
CHINGFORD, E.4.

Telephone : SILverthorn 2544

St. Egbert's College is conducted by the Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy. Boys are received from the age of seven. The school is divided into a Preparatory and Senior Section. The syllabus comprises Scripture, English, Latin, French, Mathematics, History, Art, Geography, Science, Music and P.T. and will lead to the General Certificate of Education. Athletic Sports are held annually. The school hours are from 9 to 3.30. There are three terms each year and the fees are 12 guineas per term inclusive. Essex County Exam. at 11 yrs. and 13 yrs. Buses No. 38, 102, 121, 145, 205 and Green Line 718 near the school. Interviews at 4 p.m. Monday to Friday or by appointment. Further particulars from the Headmaster.

Newsletter articles

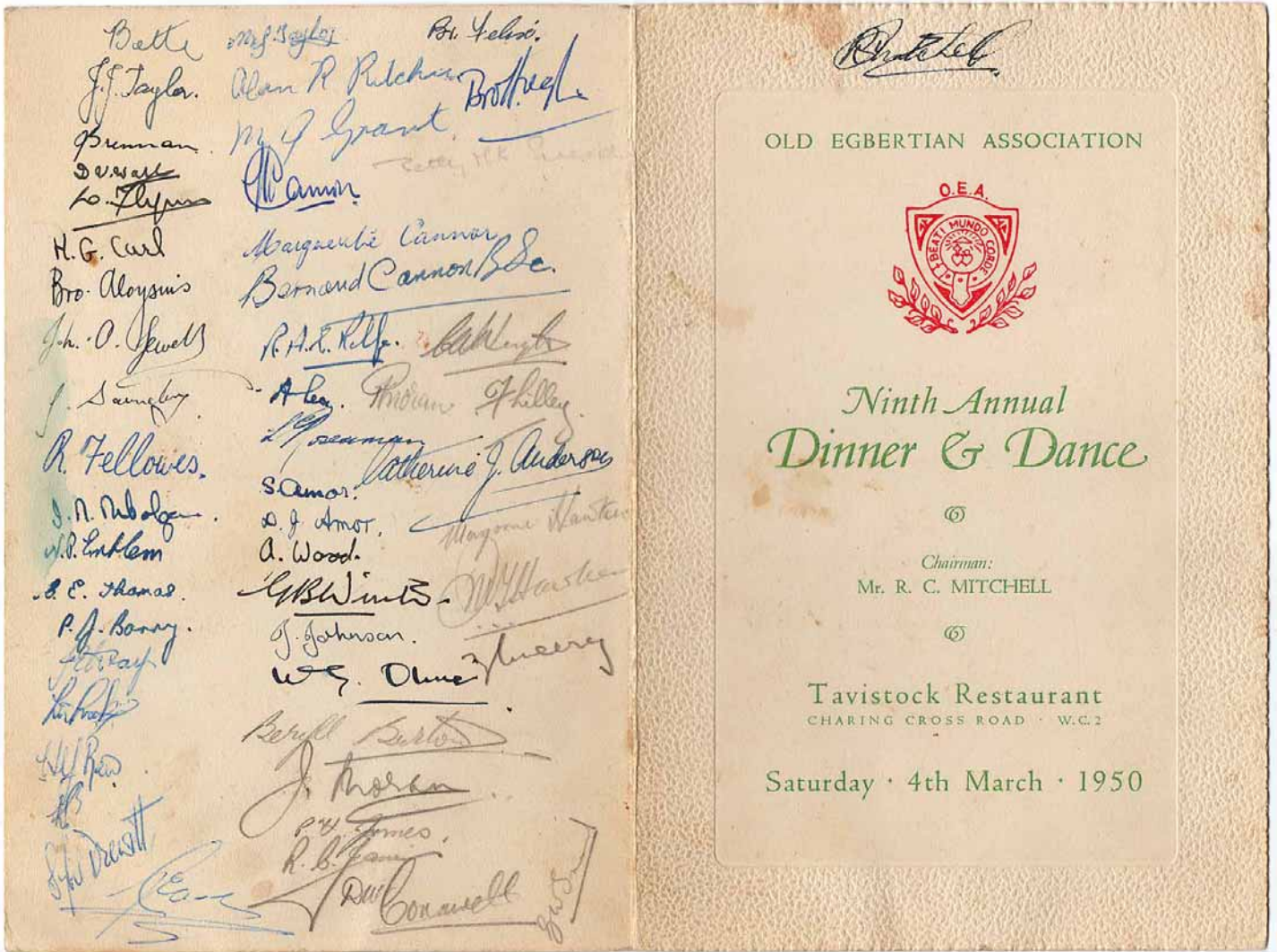
My appeal for articles in the last newsletter reaped rewards and I had many contributions- many of which are inside these pages. Thank you to those who have sent articles in.

My apologies that some articles have taken a long time to be published - my company moved premises during this year which rather put on hold much of my personal stuff.

To add to this our IT system suffered a major failure which resulted in us losing much of our stored data including incoming emails.

To this end if you have sent an article or similar to me and it has not been published in this newsletter then I am afraid to say that it has been lost. Please could I ask that you send it again with my apologies for the inconvenience.

Finally, if you do have an article for the next newsletter, which could be about your life at St Egberts and/or your life afterwards, then please do send it in. It would also be great to have a school photograph and current photograph as well, as images really bring articles to life.



Anyone for Dinner?

For many years the Football Club held their own formal Awards night and when I first joined the club it was held at the Royal Forest Hotel in Chingford, before it became part of the Brewers Fayre chain.

We then held it at a succession of different venues including Chasneys and the County Hotel in Chingford until I became Social Secretary and we then moved it to the Roebuck Hotel in Buckhurst Hill.

The event was there for about 10 years when we usually had about 100 players and partners attending and they were always very enjoyable nights.

We stopped holding formal events when the Roebuck closed and the land was subsequently developed

into flats, and it became apparent that there was no longer the appetite amongst our younger players to hold such events. It was a great shame but we had to accept that times and attitudes move on.

This coupled with the fact that there are very few available local venues these days means our Awards night is now a very informal affair and a long way removed from the grand Dinner and Dances that the OEA use to enjoy.

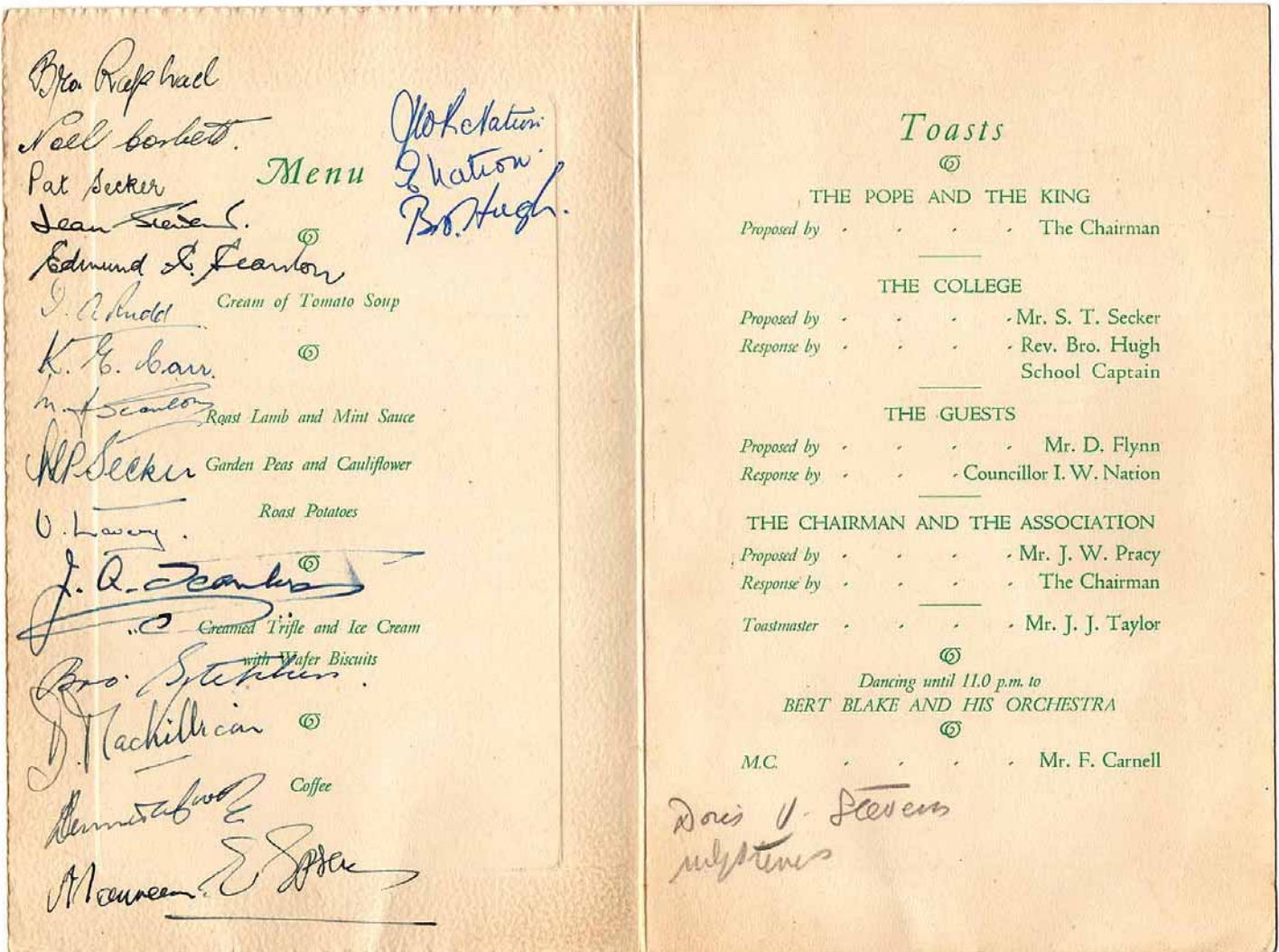
The photograph on the left is from the 1951 Dinner and Dance hosted by Chairman, Ken Course at the Tavistock Restaurant. The Menu on both pages is from the previous year, which was hosted by Ray Mitchell. Ed

Email address

Do you have an email address that we don't yet have?

The OEA committee is very keen to communicate with its members on a more regular basis than this newsletters allows and having your email address, if you have one, would allow us to do so.

If you have an email address and did not receive an email from myself recently then it would be greatly appreciated if you could email **jeffcthomas@yahoo.com** and we will add you onto our email address list.



CLASS OF '56 by Patrick Marchant

Left to right: Andrew McGovern, Ralph Steel, Pat Marchant, Paul Conrad, George Taylor, Peter Patterson and Bob Haydon.

Following the article I wrote for the Winter 2014 edition of *St Egberts*, I was contacted by Peter Patterson, who was in my class when we left school in 1956. He suggested that we meet up for a chat to talk about old times. I thought that it would be a good idea to have a reunion of our class so I put the wheels in motion to contact as many of our former peers as we could.

Peter was in touch with Ralph Steel and Paul Conrad and agreed to speak to them. I on the other hand would contact Bob Haydon, George Taylor and Pierre Kirk.

Bob and George were easy to contact but I drew a blank at Pierre's address in South Woodford. However never one to give up easily I wrote to his brother Gerald in Australia. A week or so later I received an email from him with an address and phone number in Hampshire. After what could have been a quick phone

call - but which lasted 45 minutes - he was up for it.

We also had an Old Boy join us in the form of Andrew McGovern, who is our OEA Archivist, who had some old photographs to show us.

Setting a date was a bit of a problem as George was in South America and was not due back until early May and of course when you get to our age Hospital appointments come first. However a date was set and agreed which was the 2nd July.

Things often never run smoothly and a few days before our get together I had a phone call from Pierre saying that he had been grounded having just undergone a medical procedure. What he told me does not bear thinking about.

We decided to meet at The Royal Forest Hotel in Chingford, as it was central for everyone to get to. I

didn't mind as it was only a five-minute drive from my home. We all met up and for three hours we chatted about old times and of course what we have done since we left school.

When you see people after 59 years you wonder what they all look like. Apart from Paul Conrad I did not recognize anyone when they came into the Pub but having being introduced I could then put a 16 year old face to the name.

I am glad to say that everybody is keen on another get-together, so I have agreed to get something on to Facebook to see if I can find some other Old Boys.

We all had a great day which I shall remember for a long time.

If there is anybody out there who wants to join us for the next reunion then do not hesitate to get in touch.

patrick.marchant3@ntlworld.com

“Nuffink in Particular” by Ted Roche

When Peter Burke asked me to write something for *The Egbertian* regarding poetry and in particular my book ‘Nuffink in Particular’ I, of course, agreed saying ‘Pete, anything for you’!

He did at the same time point out, I suspect by way of some emotional blackmail, that there was a long standing debt owing to the club for years of ‘dodgy back-passes’ made during my football playing days. Unfortunately, the truth of that assertion is difficult to counter. Ask Pete Norgate!

So, while I’m quite happy to fulfill this task, it occurred to me by way of a slight digression to mention, first of all, the importance other people have on the direction of one’s life and in particular my first contributor.

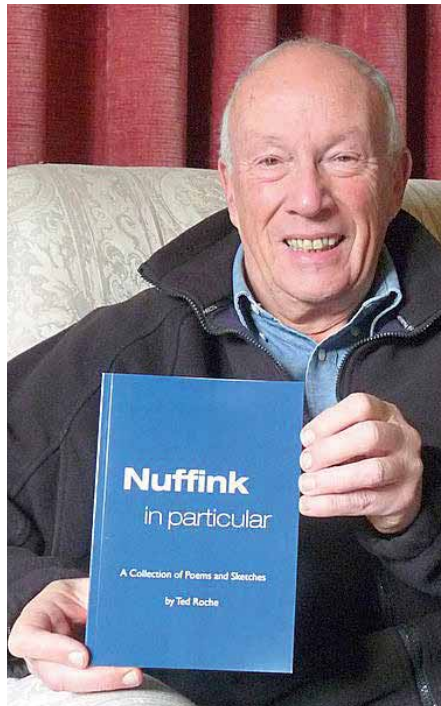
For me this came with the passing of O’Level History in December 1959 and was made by someone known to many of you; Brother Fergus. Much of the credit is down to his enthusiasm and expert preparation and its importance was that it was the first success I’d ever had at ‘anything’ and suggested the possibility of a few ‘little grey cells’.

By way of another aside I can still clearly remember sitting the exam in a school in ‘Bounds Green’ and that the invigilator was an elderly lady, not unlike an image of ‘Miss Marple’, who sat on a raised platform at the front of the room and ‘knitted’ throughout the entire time allocated for the exam.

Of course there were many others who had an influence in the years that followed but Bro Fergus was certainly the first.

Back to the poetry. I first took a serious interest in poetry while a student at Central

School of Speech and Drama which I attended from 1978-81. There was a poetry session every week and the idea was to choose a couple of poems to read aloud to the rest of the group. That fostered an interest in poetry although at this stage I made no attempt to put pen to paper.



That came about fifteen years ago when I signed up for the U3A (University of the Third Age) poetry course at Deal in Kent which is where I live.

Again someone influenced the direction of events because it so happened the group was run by a very knowledgeable chap called Jim Pearson Wood (who believe it or not is a retired pig farmer) who not only introduced members to a variety of poetry and poets throughout the centuries but also encouraged people to write their own. So I wrote one or two poems

and it carried on during subsequent years until I had enough material to produce a book.

Why publish a book which is what I am frequently asked? Well, the reason is that it seemed pointless to keep writing poems if no one ever gets to read them. So, with the encouragement of two friends, who seemed to enjoy my poetry, I decided to go ahead.

As to the book itself many people seem to enjoy the variety of content which has a mixture of poems, sketches and anecdotes and also the overall attempt to make the contents accessible to all.

A lot of poetry can be rather complex and difficult to understand and although I personally enjoy all types of work, I do appreciate that a glazed expression can come over peoples faces at the mere mention of the word ‘poetry’.

To that end I do regard it as a compliment that the U3A magazine reviewer described it as ‘simple but attractive poetry’ because it suggests that it can be enjoyed by a wide variety of people.

Similarly people have commented on the observation ‘of’ and relevance ‘to’ everyday life and that it gives people something to think about and perhaps highlights things taken for granted, rather than more introspective topics such as personal relationships, nature, the elements and so on.

Anyway the book should come with a health warning as I nearly have enough material for a ‘Nuffink in Particular’ Part 2! So stand by your beds.

A copy of Ted’s book “Nuffink in Particular” can be purchased for £3.00 plus postage and packing with £1.00 being donated to the OEA. Please contact Ted on ted.roche30@btinternet.com

My Life... so far *by John Willis*

I have to confess that I didn't like school and despite the valiant efforts of the Brothers, I remained ignorant about anything to do with Mathematics and was about average in all my other subjects, although I did show promise in art. My enduring memory was my final walk across the playground in 1956 to the exit at Kings Head Hill, onwards to the future on the 718 Green Line to my home in Epping.

I left St Egberts with really no idea about a future career. I did have some artistic talent so after discussions with my parents, it was decided that I should take a two-year course in graphic design at the South West Essex School of Art in Walthamstow.

I loved art school and thoroughly enjoyed my two years as a longhaired art student learning the basics of printing, typography, photography, airbrushing, etc. There were girls there too which was an added bonus.

The course tutor, Arnold Bolderson (or 'Mr Bee') advised me at the end of the two years to subscribe to *Ad Weekly*, which was the magazine of the advertising world, where I would find job vacancies advertised.

After several weeks of trudging around to interviews with my portfolio of college work, I was getting very despondent. 'We really want somebody with work experience,' they said. Then, hallelujah! Stowe & Bowden, an agency just off Fleet Street, recognised my supreme talent and employed me. The wage, an eye-watering £4.10.0 per week for the exalted position of water-pot filler, artwork file clerk, tea boy and gopher or 'Junior Layout Artist' as it was more generally known.

After a year learning the business, my wage was increased to £5.0.0.

so I decided to splash out and I bought my first car - a 1936 Austin Seven Ruby for £35.00. I learnt to drive in 'Myrtle' and sold her about eighteen months later for £25.00. They now sell for around £5,000 plus!

One Sunday in 1963 I was having a drink with an old art school friend in The Kings Head, Chigwell. A very attractive girl walked in with her parents. To cut a three-year story short, Sue and I were married at All Saints Church, Theydon Garnon in October 1966.

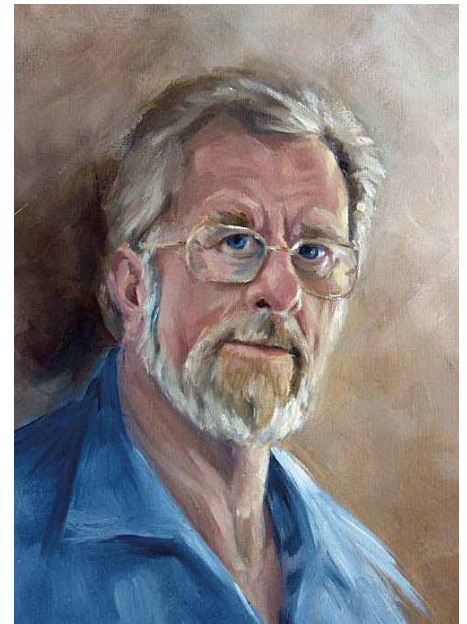
Our first house was in Sawbridgeworth from where I continued to commute to London. By this time I had joined Southcombe Advertising, a small agency in Knightsbridge as an art director.



Myself and Sue

In 1968 we sold the house, made a profit and moved to a flat. Two years later we sold the flat, again made a profit and scraped together enough to buy a cottage in Farnham near Bishops Stortford.

The cottage sat between two farms on a big estate and we became very friendly with both families. I volunteered to help Frank of Earlsbury Farm at harvest time with corn carting. 'Ever reversed an articulated vehicle?' Frank asked. I hadn't. But after a lot of practise,



Self-portrait

and a lot of shunting backwards and forwards, I got the hang of it and helped with harvest every year afterwards. Then there was the shooting, the horse riding and good old-fashioned village life in general. Genuine, lovely people and wonderful times.

In 1974, just to make things even more idyllic, our daughter Vicky was born.

Advertising is a very stressful business. By 1978 I was working at Royds, a West-End London agency with big budget accounts. After nearly twenty years of 'the ulcer business' and three hours a day commuting, it was all becoming a bit of a grind.

My brother-in-law, John, had been made redundant a few years earlier and he and my sister, Sally, had bought a huge old farmhouse in Melksham near the beautiful city of Bath. They had created an up-market guesthouse with a farming theme, complete with a Jersey cow, pigs, chickens, goats and a large heated swimming pool. They were keeping very busy and on the occasions when we went to see them, were very happy and relaxed.

Sue and I had both talked about how very different their life style

was. Could I be tempted to take the plunge and give up advertising and become self-employed? After long discussions, the decision was made. Yes, let's go for it - a new life and yes, let's go west! We contacted a big west-country commercial agent and made several trips looking for likely prospects. We had just returned from one sortie when my sister telephoned. They needed help with Shaw Farm and would we be interested in a partnership? I said we'd think about it. 'No' said Sue immediately.

After much discussion when I reasoned that it could be just the stepping-stone we needed to a new life running our own business. Sue finally agreed.

Despite everyone advising us against partnerships and worse still, ones with relatives, I handed in my notice with Royds. We sorted out an agreement, sold the cottage and moved to Wiltshire.

Despite living in, we bought a new house near Melksham as an investment and started our new life at Shaw Farm Guest House.

It is best if I gloss over that year of 1978. 'Everyone' was right, Sue was right. It didn't work!

We had a friend in Norfolk, who later became our accountant, looking out for businesses for us. He had been sent details of an interesting prospect, 'The Manor House Hotel for the Elderly' near North Walsham. Evidently the owner, a Mr Crowe, had been trying to sell for some time and was looking for a quick sale. He had landed a plum job managing a luxury hotel in Barbuda in the Caribbean. This sounded like a bit of a sales pitch but we decided to go and have a look anyway.

The Manor had been built in 1912 for a millionaire, a certain Mr Brooks of bicycle saddle fame. The house, approached along a rhododendron lined drive was

spectacular. The eighteen acres of wooded grounds were wonderful. But after being shown round, we wondered if we would be able to take on this sort business? We told the owner, Mr Crowe that we would think about it, and went back to Wiltshire.

The Barbuda story was true. He did have a deadline. We decided to go for it and made a very low offer which relied on the sale of the house in Wiltshire, the help of Sue's father and even more help from Barclays Bank. After further haggling we reached an agreement and bought the total assets of Crowe Hotels Limited with fourteen old ladies included in the deal.

We moved in October 1979. The Crowes stayed on for two weeks to show us the ropes then set off for Barbuda.

We soon discovered that the house needed totally re-wiring, furniture replaced and the outside painted. The residents had also been poorly fed on ready-made frozen meals, which subsequently we fed to our two dogs. Sue decided that they would have the same food as ourselves thereafter, home-made soups, roast dinners and fresh vegetables became the norm. Sue did all the cooking for two years, seven days a week and everything went well. After a couple of years we could afford to employ a chef which relieved the pressure on Sue considerably.

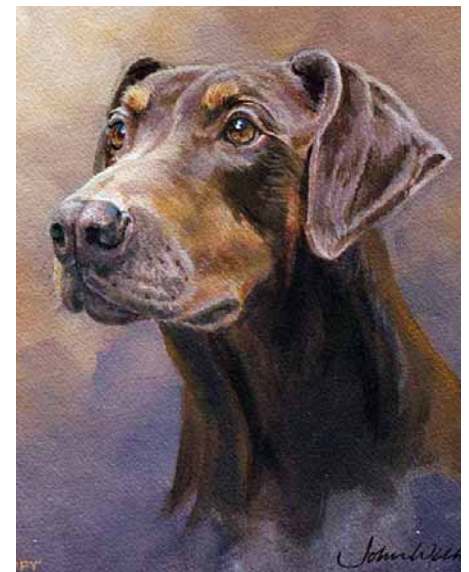
In late 1982, the chef gave us notice. Coincidentally, two very good friends of ours had just sold their restaurant business and were looking for something new. So, as a very convenient stop-gap, John and Deryk moved in and worked for us temporarily.

I could write a book about life running a home for the elderly. It could be very depressing and at times very funny. Breakfasts were served in their rooms and one morning Deryk was taking the

breakfast trays round. One old lady stood outside her door with her bra on back-to-front, quite unconcerned that she was topless, she said, 'I can't get my humps right,' Deryk turned her round very gently and got her 'humps' into the right place for her.

I will not relate anecdotally on any of the depressing times.

We had long discussions about what we all wanted to do next and, as we all got on so well,



agreed to pool our resources and search for a bigger and better enterprise. We would put the Manor up for sale.

We contacted a specialist agent who was very thorough and valued the business at a much higher figure than we had expected. It went on the market right away and sold in a few months.

It was now 1983 and the four of us needed somewhere as a base. We bought a three bedroomed semi on the outskirts of Norwich and started our search.

We looked for months at several prospects, one as distant as Devon but nothing seemed to fit the bill. To cut a long story short and still the best of friends, John and Deryk set up a new and very novel restaurant business in Norwich.

We bought two tenanted properties, both in multiple occupation and moved to a new barn conversion in Coltishall. I did a bit of graphic design and artwork for a local printer and was enjoying a quiet life when David, our accountant, dropped a bombshell! We had a complex tax problem arising from all the changes of property. We would need to sell the barn!

Lady Luck just happened to pop up just one mile away in the form of an empty three story, 16th century gabled property. The owner was in the middle of a divorce and badly needed to sell. We viewed the house, made an offer and arranged to meet him at the house with our surveyor. We arrived on a freezing cold February day to, what sounded like pouring rain, inside! The stopcock hadn't been turned off by the owner who stood with a crowbar in his hand. He had punched holes in all the ceilings to prevent them from collapsing. I had a quiet word with the surveyor and offered a lot less. It was accepted there and then.

We got planning permission to build a gabled extension with six en-suite bedrooms, applied for a full-on license and opened 'The Gable House' as a guest house in 1985.

A large cart shed stood at the bottom of the quarter acre grounds. We applied for planning permission, converted it to a single bed roomed dwelling and sold it to a delightful elderly lady. Then Lady Luck popped up again. We had sold one of the Norwich houses and had kept the mid-terraced one. A property development company had bought the four other houses for conversion to an office block. Could we be persuaded to sell?

We were not enjoying life at The Gable House. The business was not doing that well so we decided to sell. To make it a more attractive

proposition, I drew up some plans for an extension and got outline permission for a home for the elderly. We put it on the market and managed to sell very quickly.

We then bought a house in Bacton to live in temporarily whilst we took stock.

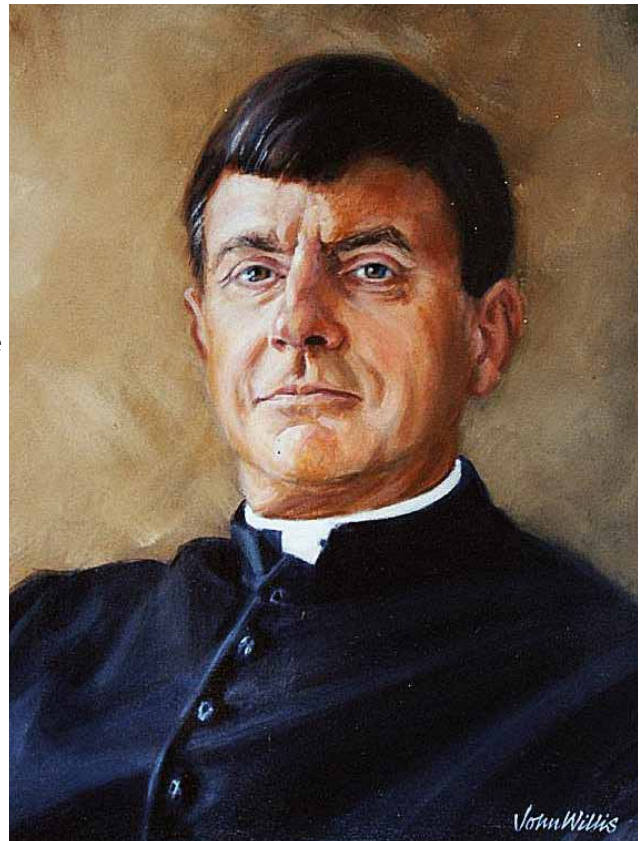
John and Deryk had friends who had a gallery and framing business for sale. It sounded just ideal for me. I met with them and liked everything about the business which was situated in the historical, cobbled street of Elm Hill. I bought The Crome Gallery and Frame Shop in 1989.

The business had a very good name and the framer was kept very busy. I hung work by several local artists on a sale or return basis and also bought and sold paintings and prints.

During all the moves (apart from at the Manor House) I had painted in my spare time, animal portraits mainly but at the gallery I got several commissions for human portraits. My claim to fame being a portrait of Stephen Platten, the Dean of Norwich Cathedral (above).

After fourteen years at the gallery I decided to sell. A year went by with very little interest, then in 2004, the estate agent sent a prospective purchaser along. Strangely enough, an art director wanting to leave advertising!

At exactly the same time, I was diagnosed with bowel cancer! I had a successful operation and with a stoma fitted, returned home and then back to work. This experience had made me even more determined to sell the gallery.



The advertising guy was still interested and the sale finally went through in 2005. I had a reversal operation of the stoma three days later.

After the sale we bought a dilapidated bungalow, demolished it and had a new bungalow, 'Borders', built to our specifications.

In retirement and to keep me out of mischief, I started doing more animal portraits, mainly dogs, getting commissions by displaying my work at game fairs and dog shows.

In 2011 we were getting itchy feet again. We sold Borders and bought another 'run down' bungalow, renovated it, then let it and moved to a new barn conversion in Statham in 2012 where we now live.

Ups and downs, changes of direction, businesses bought and sold, one daughter, two grandsons, twelve homes and after 48 years, Sue and I still manage to put up with one another...and we're getting itchy feet again.

Teacher Thoughts *by David Bridgman*

I was interested to previously read in *The Egbertian* an article by Peter Utting as he was a favourite teacher of mine when I attended St Egberts from 1962-67.

He was always friendly with the boys and often allowed me time alone to work on the art project that I was doing at the time. I well remember his little Ford Prefect. It is funny to think that he was only around 25 years old at the time, as I only saw him as another adult, even though he was much younger than most of the other teachers and brothers.

Another young teacher at the time was Erik Lindermann who was also a lot of fun. I remember him threatening me one day at end of year exam time. I had been doing well in my exams and wanted to move from 2B to 3A. As we passed in the corridor he said "You have to do well in German as well Bridgman or you won't go up" but he did have a wry smile on his face at the time.

Someone mentioned the chaos that often accompanied RI classes with Bro Morris who was a lovely man but totally incapable of controlling a class. We knew it and acted up accordingly. One time things got so bad that he fled from the class and Bro Fergus turned up to restore order, which happened very quickly as he was not one to be messed with.

My least favourite teacher was Mr Carney, who taught Maths. This was a subject that I was not very good at and it didn't help that he seemed to hold it against me, despite my parents arranging extra lessons with him to catch up after I missed nearly two months of school with Glandular Fever at the start of my year in 3A. I wanted to do Technical Drawing as well, which he also taught, but he wouldn't let me in his class.

I only vaguely remember Mr Moran who was again mentioned

as a despotic teacher, but I don't remember him being that bad, even though I had no interest in Science whatsoever.

Mr Spurgeon was another of the good guys. I think hard but fair would be a good way to describe him, I liked and respected him, and slightly feared him.

Brother Fergus was another much loved, respected and again slightly feared teacher/ headmaster, I well remember everyone swotting on the bus going to school if it was History or Geography as the class started with a question for each boy and a wrong answer earned you a leather whacking. But he loved a yarn and could be fairly easily distracted into telling a story and hopefully time being used up.

Going back to Mr Utting, he was always interested in my little group at school as Mick Holt and John Brushwood both had small Japanese motorcycles which they rode to school. I think Mick Holt was also in his Air Cadets but I am not certain of that.

We all went on the school trip to Lugano, where I went out with my first girlfriend. John, Mick and I all had to go around to the girls school hotel and ask permission of their teachers to take them out - how times change. I remember Mr Spurgeon on that trip but none of the other teachers.

I mostly enjoyed my years at St Egberts though it may not have been the right school for me as it was pretty much purely academic. I realised that I would have been better at a school that offered practical skills like Metalwork and Woodwork.

But I managed to use my skills and interest in art to obtain an apprenticeship in the Printing Industry as a colour re-toucher which in those days was a very artistic based job. As time moved



on so did I, moving to New Zealand, having a family, moving into management and then eventually on to Apple Macintosh and using all those skills learnt way back as an operator working in PhotoShop.

I kept in contact with John and Mick for many years after leaving school and I managed to get John's brother Philip an apprenticeship as a re-toucher in my company.

Unfortunately when I left to originally live in New Zealand in 1981 I lost contact with them both which was a great shame. There was previously a picture published of a 1970's reunion and we are all in that photograph along with few others I remember.

Unfortunately my school years were ruined in my final years at the College by the introduction of Brother Edmund as the new Headmaster. It has been mentioned before in this magazine that discipline at the school fell apart and by and large in the Senior School we were just left to do exactly what we wanted, which resulted in groups of us going into the village when we felt like it, rather than being in the school.

I'm sure he was a nice man but as a Headmaster he was less than adequate and I guess that this was a contributory factor to the eventual demise of the school.

I am now retired aged 63 and have returned to live in the South Island of New Zealand. We have a four-acre lifestyle property with a few sheep and a 1953 Grey Fergie tractor and wonderful views of the mountains.

Thanks for reading



The Old Egbertian Association
Presents a

CHRISTMAS BUFFET

On Sunday 13th December
at Royal Forest Hotel,
4 Ranger's Road, Chingford,
London E4 7QH
From 12 noon - 3pm

£8.00 per person

Call Brian Pieri on 020 8524 0258 for further details



Membership

We are getting towards the end of the membership year (December 31st) and are 11 away from our goal of 100 members. At the time of writing we have 80 paid members, five Honourary members and four life members.

For an organisation with a dwindling pool of existing and potential members we feel that 100 members is very respectable and we are very close! For the record only seven did not renew last year and we have had three new members in the form of Derek Barton, David Bettie and John Steggle - welcome!

We included a membership renewal form in last years Winter newsletter which proved to be very successful as we had many members renew during the first two months of the year. We would be grateful if you can renew as soon as convenient.

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 and the website so your prompt payment would be very welcome.

Thank you from the EFC Football Club

A big thank you for the generosity of the OEA, who always make a significant annual donation to the football club. This is in addition to the very generous donations that individual members of the OEA occasionally give us.

On behalf of the football club committee I would like to extend my thanks for your generous support. Obviously the financial contribution to us is very welcome but it is equally the knowledge that you are there for us.

Socially

It's been another good year socially for the OEA. We kicked off with the **Cutty Sark** trip in April which was followed by our annual **London Walk** in June which took us around Notting Hill. By popular demand we re-introduced our **Theatre Trip** last year which proved very successful so this year we went to the Queens Theatre in Hornchurch to see the play "Don't look now" which was followed by a meal at the Dick Turpin Pub in Newbury Park.

Our final two events of 2015 are both on Sunday December 13th. The **Memorial Mass** will take place at the Catholic Church of Our Lady & St Tera of Avila, Kings Road, Chingford at 10.30am. The **Christmas Social** will follow on the same day from noon at the Royal Forest Hotel in Chingford which is a different venue to last year (see advert above).

The Old Egbertian Association

Editor
Jeff Thomas
21 Oakwood Hill
Loughton
Essex IG10 3EW
Tel: 020 8508 1376
jeffctomas@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
Unit 51b, Waterfront Studios
North Woolwich Road
London E16 2AA
Tel 020 7625 5225