

The Egbertian

NEWS FROM THE OLD EGBERTIAN ASSOCIATION

see our website at www.oldegbertians.co.uk



INAUGURATED 1928

Winter 2018

Editor's Comment

Welcome to the Winter Edition of EgbertNews.

Many thanks for all those who have made contributions to this issue, namely:

Peter Pleydell, Kieran Donnelly, Mike Fitzgerald, Peter Burke and Victor Mould.

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.

Enclosed you will find a membership application form to renew for this year. We rely on membership fees to keep the Association financially sound so your prompt renewal would be much appreciated.

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2018

Dennis Cook *by Peter Burke*

With the passing of Maurice Suckling last year, the committee decided to honour our oldest member in an official capacity, although at the time of writing we have yet to come up with a suitable position. The position of President is taken by Gerry Abbott, who you will recall reformed the Association some 18 years ago. If anyone has any ideas on a suitable position then we will welcome your suggestion.

Our Chairman, Peter Burke recently met up with Dennis Cook, who at 92 years young now has the honour of being our oldest member.

I had the pleasure of meeting up with Dennis Cook at his home in Chingford recently on a very hot afternoon during an otherwise normal English summer.

Dennis told me that he attended the college from 1933 until 1941 when he matriculated and joined the RAF for war service.

Born in Bethnal Green in 1925, he first attended the Collegiate School in Warren Road from the age of five until he was eight. Dennis' memories of that time were clouded by the eccentric behaviour of the Headmaster Mr Mann, who seemed to terrify the children by keeping canes behind every picture and thought nothing of using them to intimidate the pupils whenever the opportunity arose – I wonder what OFSTED would make of all this nowadays!

He joined St Egberts aged eight in 1933 when he lived in Kimberly Road, Chingford. Although his memories of the school were favourable, Dennis did not have a meeting of minds with the college on some aspects of teaching thus becoming

something of a rebel in the process.

Dennis remembers Stuart Secker, two years his senior, who later became his brother-in-law and Chairman of the Association. He also fondly remembers playing football at Sopers Farm, carefully avoiding the cow pats, and played for the Old Boys from 1947 to 1948 with Bill Crisp and Len Russell, who he remembers as a very tall goalkeeper ideally suited for the task.

From January 1940 until September 1940 he was evacuated to Stainsby Hall in Derby. His memories can be summed up thus – 'the cricket was good but the food was bad'. The weather that year was very cold, in winter the snow was deep and sometimes they were marooned and had to rely on the provision of a sledge for supplies. Although this was considered to be fun, Dennis feels the overall experience was not a particularly good one due to the harsh environment. Indeed, if readers

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

would take the time to refer to previous articles relating to Stainsby Hall one glance at the sprawling property that was his home during a very harsh winter would sum up his sentiments nicely.

On his return to Chingford in the Autumn of 1940, the school was closed so the pupils were relocated to a house in Crescent Road where Dennis remembers Bros. Isador, Finton, Jarleth and Aiden.

Dennis left the College in 1941 and after turning down an apprenticeship to become a Chef in the Connaught Rooms in London, he later joined Midland Bank in West Smithfield.

In 1943 Dennis joined the RAF as a leading aircraftman where he received pilot and navigator training. He finished the war as a RT Officer guiding planes into Benson Airfield, Oxfordshire.

In 1947 he was demobbed and returned to Kimberly

Road to live, and returned to the Midland Bank in Loughton before later moving to the branch in Buckhurst Hill for two to three years.

Dennis then moved to work in the City of London, later becoming Manager of the Shoreditch Branch where he stayed until his retirement at the age of 52.

Dennis married Margaret in 1951 and moved to Elmfield Road in 1955 before moving to his current flat in Warren Road in 1961.

Dennis currently spends most of his time looking after Margaret, but still manages to drive which enables him to get out and about.

I hope I did not tire Dennis out too much but for my part it was an interesting and pleasant way to spend an afternoon hearing all about his memories and how things have changed over the years.

Peter Burke

Old Egbertian in Print by Peter Pleydell (Pen name John Halden)

Since retiring from teaching a couple of years ago, I have been pursuing a long-term ambition – to become an author!

Prior to retirement, I was already honing my style – sitting in Costa Coffee with a cup of hot chocolate, or in Epping library, and making notes on the people I saw there. I was guessing at their life styles, their motivation for being there, what sort of characters they might be, and how I would describe them physically. I had also written down some of the stories which I had made-up for my children as they were growing up - these, in bound form,

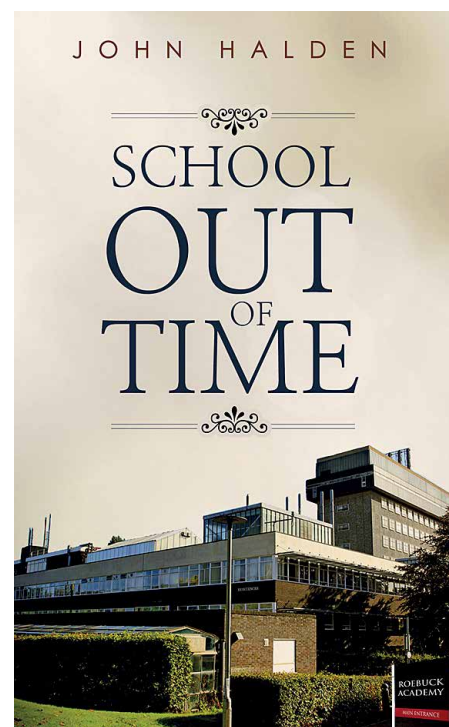


constituted part of their Christmas present a while back – and some are now read to my granddaughters by their Mother.

On retiring, I decided to take my writing more seriously. My first earnest attempt at a story was called **The Record**. This was a time travel story aimed at 9 – 14 year olds. After a couple of rejections, I decided to take the story into St John Fisher Primary School in Loughton – where I volunteer twice weekly – to seek some critical help from some members of my target readership group. I duly re-worked the story, renamed it **School out of Time**, and hey presto! Pegasus offered me a contract.

The book is about a 12 year old boy called Larry Bowler, living in 1964, who is transported into a school 54 years into the future and how he survives with the help of his new friend Abigail, against the nasty bullying schoolmaster of 1964 who is making Larry's life a misery.

It should appeal to some of the Association members who were school children in the 1960s and there are shades of characters whom you may possibly recognise from St Egbert's days – but very changed.



Since then my second book called **The Invisible Twins and the Zoo Gang** – which is written for a younger readership – 6 to 9 years, has been published.

I have recently been invited to lead a day's session at a writers' symposium Schloss Gimborn in Germany - my topic being Children's Fiction.

If you wish books can be ordered from any of the online book sellers, or from my website www.johnhalden.co.uk



Saintly Connections *by Victor Mould*

St Egbert's College closed in 1970 but it is worth recalling that three of the Brothers had rather special relatives.

Brother Edmund Campion

In 1966, Bro. Edmund, who was a native of Preston, was appointed Headmaster in tandem with Bro. Aloysius as Director. He had joined the Brothers of our Lady of Mercy in 1958 and took that name upon receiving the habit in 1959. His baptismal name was John Southworth and he was directly related to the English Martyr of the same name whose remains are in Westminster Cathedral, clothed in his priestly vestments (*picture below*).

Saint John Southworth came from a Lancashire family and is thought to have been born in 1592 and was martyred at Tyburn on 28th June 1654.

In 1618, he was ordained a priest at the English College, Douai (Douay) in Northern France. After returning to England, he was arrested and condemned to death in Lancashire in 1626, and imprisoned first in Lancaster Castle, and afterwards in the Clink Prison, London. On 11 April, 1630, he and some other priests were delivered to the French Ambassador for transportation abroad, but, in 1636, he was

reported to have been released from the Gatehouse, Westminster, and was living at Clerkenwell. From there it seems he frequently visited the plague-stricken dwellings of Westminster to administer the sacraments and comfort the sick and the dying. In 1637, he appears to have been based in Westminster, where he was arrested on 28 November, before being again sent to the Gatehouse. From there he was transferred to the Clink and, in 1640, was brought before the Commissioners for Causes Ecclesiastical, who sent him back there.

On 16 July, John Southworth was again freed, but by 2 December he was once more imprisoned in the Gatehouse. After his final apprehension on 19 June 1654, he was tried at the Old Bailey, where he insisted on pleading guilty to being a priest. He was reluctantly condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered. On the day of his martyrdom, he was allowed to make a long speech at the gallows.

The French ambassador bought his body from the executioner and, in 1655, returned it to Douai after

the corpse had been sewn together and embalmed.

When England and France went to war in 1793 St John Southworth's body was buried in an unmarked grave below the college for its protection. The grave was discovered in 1927 and his remains were returned to England. In 1930, his major relics - the only complete body of a Reformation Martyr - were brought to Westminster Cathedral, where a shrine was prepared for them. He was beatified in 1929 and was canonised in 1970 by Pope Paul VI, as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.

Following the closure of St Egbert's, Bro. Edmund moved to St Aloysius' College in Highgate teaching his specialist subject which was English. However, as time passed he felt that his vocation was to be a De La Salle Brother and he made his profession with them reverting to his baptismal name of John Southworth. He spent the rest of his life with the Brothers until his death in 2007. He is buried in Midhurst, West Sussex.



The shrine of John Southworth in Westminster Cathedral



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux was born Marie Françoise-Thérèse Martin on 2nd January 1873. She was to become a French Catholic Discalced Carmelite nun who is widely venerated in modern times.

Thérèse has been a highly influential model of sanctity for Catholics and for others because of the "simplicity and practicality of her approach to the spiritual life". Together with Saint Francis of Assisi, she is one of the most popular saints in the history of the church. Indeed, Pope Saint Pius X called her "the greatest saint of modern times".

Thérèse felt an early call to religious life, and after overcoming various obstacles in 1888, at the early age of 15, she became a nun and joined two of her elder sisters in the cloistered Carmelite community of Lisieux, Normandy. After nine years as a Carmelite religious, having fulfilled various offices such as sacristan and assistant to the novice mistress, and having spent her last eighteen months in Carmel in a night of

faith, she died at aged 24 on 30th September 1897, following a slow and painful fight against tuberculosis.

Thérèse is well known throughout the world, with the Basilica of Lisieux being the second-largest place of pilgrimage in France after Lourdes. Her feast day is 1st October.

Unbeknown to any of us pupils at the time, Bros Hugh and Oswald were directly related to Thérèse's mother, Zélie. Indeed, this only came to light a couple of years ago when Thérèse's parents, Louise and Zélie Martin, were canonized on Sunday 18th 2015 in St Peter's Square by Pope Francis. There was great joy for Monica, who is the niece of the Brothers, and her family when they went to Rome for the Ceremony.

Bro. Oswald was an excellent teacher of Scripture, Maths, Physics as well as organizing sports during this period. Bro. Hugh was a splendid Director and Headmaster from 1949-1952 before moving to Belgium to teach English for the remainder of his religious life.

Bro. Hugh is buried in Belgium while Bro Oswald is buried in Kettering. It would seem that their branch of the Guerin family emigrated from France to Ireland as a result of the anti-clerical and anti-catholic problems in France in the late 19th century.

Bros. Oswald and Hugh

Those Old Egbertians associated with the school between 1946 and 1955 will probably remember Bros. Oswald and Hugh.

They were blood brothers with the family name of Guerin and were from Limerick in Ireland. Guerin is a French name and was the maiden name of the mother of Thérèse of Lisieux, who was popularly known as the "The Little Flower of Jesus or simply "The Little Flower".

Snippets

Kelly Turner

You may recall that monies from the sale of 'Nuffink in Particular' was going towards treatment for a young girl from Dover called Kelly Turner who had a rare type of cancer. The family needed to raise £1 million for treatment in New York and had managed to collect over half that sum which was

enough to cover the preliminary stages.

Unfortunately, despite showing great courage, Kelly has now very sadly passed away aged 17 years before reaching the point at which treatment could begin. Her funeral took place on Friday 23rd November 2017.

The sale of N in P raised £600

and I feel went towards giving Kelly a goal and sense of optimism over the two years the campaign lasted. My sincere thanks to everyone who contributed.

The Turner family have decided to use the money to set up a foundation into finding a cure for the cancer in question.

Best wishes, **Ted Roche**.

River Cruise to Whitstable *by Mike Fitzgerald*



Whitstable Harbour

On the 23rd of September the intrepid explorers of The Old Egbertians embarked on a cruise across the high seas to Whitstable. We left from Southend Pier and travelled across the Thames estuary to the lovely Kent coastline. It was a repeat of a trip that the Association took several years ago with many members asking us to repeat the experience at some stage.

Fifteen of us made the journey on the lovely paddle steamer HMS Waverley, which is the World's last seagoing passenger-carrying Paddle Steamer. This beautifully restored vessel was built in 1946 and until 1973 sailed from Craigendoran on the Firth of Clyde to Arrochar on Loch Long.

She was commissioned to replace the original PS Waverley which served as a mine sweeper during the second World War and was sunk at Dunkirk.

It was a lovely sunny day and the journey took us down the river and

along the Kent coast. We arrived in Whitstable after about two hours and had time to have something to eat, walk around the harbour before our return to Southend.

Whitstable has a population of about 32,000 people and is well known for its "Native Oysters". About twenty five years ago Whitstable was fairly typical of your run down English seaside town but since then, following a better commuter route into London

and the second home syndrome, house prices have rocketed and it has now become a very desirable place to live which is reflected in the Harbour and the surrounding area.

We arrived back at Southend at about 6 o'clock and a small group finished the day with a coffee and then it was time to make our way home. Everybody agreed that it was a great day and many thanks to Brian Pieri for arranging this event.



HMS Waverley

The Egbertian Football Club

I will elaborate further in the next newsletter but sadly I cannot see the Football Club being in existence in its present form after this season.

With this in mind the option to

donate to the football club has been removed from the membership form.

On behalf of the football club committee I would like to extend our thanks for your previous

generous donations. I have always been amazed with the generosity of the OEA members which has always been much appreciated.

Jeff Thomas, Hon Secretary, EFC

St. Egbert's - The Final Years! *by Kieran Donnelly*

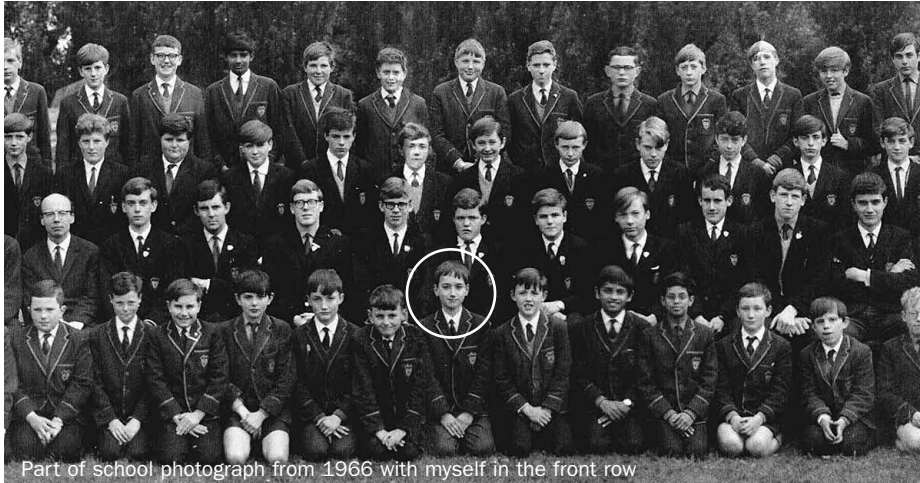
It was in May 1964 that I had my interview at the College. My parents and I were greeted at 'The House' and taken to the staff room by a serious, yet avuncular, Brother Fergus.

later discovered, had a passionate interest in soccer.

Our French teacher, who taught us throughout the school, was Brother Aloysius ('Frenchie'). His knowledge of the language, of

During my final two years there were, unfortunately, several different Maths teachers, which was unsettling for us. There was one ray of hope which did occur when Brother Oswald was 'borrowed from Highgate' for about a term. In this short time he turned things around with his energy and enthusiasm. What a pity he didn't stay longer!

There were two young teachers on the staff at the time, as readers will be aware. I need to thank Peter Utting for his patience and guidance in still life and perspective. That I still recognise surrealist paintings such as Salvador Dali's 'St. John of the Cross' is due to being shown the slides in the portacabin (art room) all those years ago. When I have visited Germany and have attempted to communicate and order a meal through pigeon German, it brings fond memories of the lessons with Eric Lindemann. German was a popular subject and many of us were very disappointed when the subject was dropped from the school curriculum.



Part of school photograph from 1966 with myself in the front row

Prior to making any assessment of my abilities, he took great pride in expounding about the recent successes of the school. At the time the school was over-subscribed and there was a waiting list. He was pleased to announce that a number of boys had gained eight and nine O'levels the previous year. He seemed particularly excited about the imminent completion of 'the new gymnasium' - the largest one in Essex at the time! The next phase of the plans were to involve a Science laboratory on the (flat) roof of the gym.

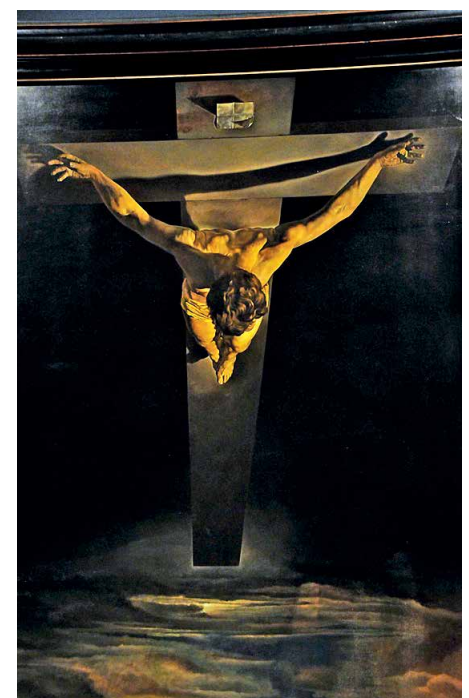
I had the good fortune to meet Brother Fergus on several occasions in later years, by which time he was Head Teacher at St. Aloysius Junior School in Highgate. He reminisced with a certain satisfaction and poignancy at what might have been!

In September 1964 I started at the school and was in Brother Paschel's class. One's first impressions were that he was somewhat austere and unforthcoming. This was only a façade. In his own way, he was dedicated and caring and as we

French customs and way of life were impressive. Ever the affable and always the approachable, his classroom management skills were never his strength. He gave many of us a solid foundation in French in spite of this.

Science in those days, or so it seemed, was taught largely by rote. Woe betide anyone who forgot Boyle's Law or the 'Periodic table'. I wonder how many readers remember Mr. Moran! He was a task master for sure. However, he used to, voluntarily, referee school football matches on Saturday mornings. It was on these occasions that it was possible to detect a more jovial side to him.

The main English teacher, during my final years was Mr MacSweeney. He was, at times, larger than life and had a wealth of experience behind him. He had previously been a Chief Examiner for the exam board and knew exactly how to get most of his cohort through the exam. Many of us, at some stage, incurred his wrath but his entertainment value was second to none. He was, perhaps, in part at least, responsible for me deciding to become an English teacher myself.



Salvador Dali's 'St. John of the Cross'

The PTA was a fairly active organization in my early years at the school. The main events on the calendar were the Christmas social, the garden fete and, of course, the main spectacle, the Annual Sports Day. The latter occasion included the presence of the Mayor and a marquee ('Old Boys beer tent perhaps!). I seem to recall that sporting achievements were somewhat modest at St. Egberts, notwithstanding the odd lad who represented Waltham Forest at Athletics.

As far as football was concerned the main fixture of the season was the match against St. Aloysius which was 'the old firm derby'. They were a much larger school than us so invariably we were trounced! There was, however, one occasion when a few of us were lucky enough to play in what appeared to us to be something along the lines of an F.A. Cup 3rd Round shock. What a Saturday Morning! We actually beat St.

Aloysius 6-5. The banter during the post-match customary tea and bun are memories to treasure!

The diets that the boys followed at the school were a far cry from the present day recommendations of Jamie Oliver or the 'Five a Day'. Most boys seemed to survive on pasties from Gallops van, sweets from Pracey's (tuck) or pie and chips from May's Café! School lunches in 'the house' tended to be taken mainly by the prep school.

I was delighted when, circa 2000, I met Ted Roache, who had previously taught in the same 6th form college as me, to learn that the 'Old Egbertians' were undergoing a renaissance for 'the forgotten generation'. It's been mentioned in previous articles that the 1960's was a time of expansion in state education. By this time the marketing skills of Brother Fergus were no longer the asset the school had previously enjoyed and the writing was on the wall.

That so many of us recall those days with such fondness and amusement is great testimony to the Brothers of Mercy, the staff and parents.

We owe them all so much!



Kieran Donnelly

Christmas Social *by Jeff Thomas*



The Annual Christmas Social event was held on Thursday December 14th at the Upper Clapton Rugby Club, Thornwood Common in Epping.

We held our first event there in May of last year, which was our AGM/social which was very well received by those who attended, so we were confident that our main social event of the year would be an equal success.

Happily this seems to have been the case as the feedback that we have received has been excellent



with many compliments on the quality of the food, the venue and the general intimacy of the building.

The clubhouse was built two years ago with all the modern facilities that you would hope for including a disability lift and has a good balance for us between being big enough without being too cavernous, which was always the problem at previous hired venues. It also has the added bonus of having plenty of parking and being very close to the M11. The only downside is the lack of public



transport so for next time we would hope to be able to arrange lifts from either Epping Tube station or Harlow Overground station for those who need one.

It is something to be discussed at committee level but personally I can see this venue being the long term solution to our venue needs.

If you attended the event and wish to make your feelings known then please email our Chairman Peter Burke on vicky@carecompany.care or call 01580 752858.

Socially speaking

It's been another good year socially for the OEA with all events being well supported. The final event of the year, before we sent out next year's potential social programme, is a Theatre Trip to the Queens Theatre in April. Final details were not available

at the time of writing but those who have intimated on their social form that they wish to partake in this event will be contacted in due course. However, it is not too late to get involved by contacting Brian Pieri on 020 8524 0258.

Membership

Enclosed you will find your membership renewal form for 2018 which we would appreciate you returning in a timely manner to our Treasurer, Hector Watts in the enclosed envelope (stamp required).

We have a target membership number of 100 members which for an organisation with a dwindling pool of existing and potential members we feel is very respectable. Indeed, if everybody renewed then we would

achieve our target but unfortunately some members forget to renew which affects our membership number. Please don't be one of them!

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.

Snippets

John Steggles

I was very pleased to receive a letter from the wife of the late John Steggles.

John was one of our more recent members who only discovered us fairly recently and was very enthusiastic about the Association. Indeed, so much so that he contributed two articles in the last newsletter so I was sad to hear of his passing.

I sent his wife, Monica, several copies of the last newsletters to distribute to his family and received a very nice letter back thanking me and telling me how much they enjoyed reading the newsletter and discovering things about John that they did not know. Ed

Archive material

Do you have any material from your school years that you want to donate to The Association so we can keep it all together in a safe place? I am sure that some of you may have a box of

material in the loft which will inevitably be discarded because somebody won't know what to do with it.

The Association is building up quite a collection of archive material which we hope to eventually put on the website, so we welcome as much material as we can so we can maintain the history of the Association. 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 the hard copy newsletters allow and having your email address, if you have one, would allow us to do so.

If you have an email address then please email jefftd@ntp.co.uk. Thank you.

The Old Egbertian Association

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