

Edlines

the newsletter of **Stourbridge Old Edwardian Club**

No. 11 April 2008

We begin with a letter from the President, Paul Thatcher:

Dear Member,

I know every President draws attention to the speed at which time passes but as I write these notes, I cannot believe that 3 months have already slipped by since immediate Past President, John Harris hung the prestigious SOEC badge of office around my neck.

At the **AGM** back at the beginning of December '07, I was sad to see Clive Bowen-Davies retire as Honorary Secretary. Clive had been doing the job for 7 years and served the club in a very dedicated and efficient manner. We have been very lucky to find an experienced replacement in Bob Glaze who, as a past president, knows his way around the inner-most workings of SOEC.

I was proud to have the honour of parading the **Boar's Head** at our annual supper on Christmas Eve. It was very heartening to see so many members and their guests coming along to enjoy this most traditional of all our re-unions. We are very lucky to have such a talent in Jem Norris's wife Rosanne who not only makes a mean boar's head chaul but also decorates the head in such an expert way and

of course thanks to Julie who cooked the roast beef to perfection, particularly the medium rare joint. Another growing use of our club premises, in addition to dining and business 'away day' meetings, is for **Wakes** of deceased members. Sadly, Past President Philip East passed away in February and his family booked the club to say their fond farewells to their father. My father, who at almost 95 is, I believe, the oldest active member of our unique institution, has already decreed that we will celebrate his life at the Club. [As he's still going strong he hasn't, as yet, made a firm booking!]

I think that we are all concerned about **the future of our Club**. As we go to print our membership is standing at about 350 Old Edwardians. I know that it has been a subject that has been addressed by various sub-committees over a number of years and initiatives have been put in place with varying levels of success. I believe it's time to take yet a further look at all the facets surrounding what is a fairly complex issue. Therefore, your new committee has decided to form a small group comprising John Brown, David Burrows, Andrew Taplin and myself to consider how we can increase the present 'footfall' through the Club's portals. New members are the life blood of any organisation but it is also still true that existing members really do need to use the club more frequently.

Later in this newsletter you will see a diary of **forthcoming events**. One event that doesn't appear yet

is a proposed Fifties Re-union for those who were at school during the 1950's. I am hoping to arrange it during September, probably on a Saturday, to include a tour of the College followed by a buffet lunch at the club. For updates on progress log on to the club's website www.oldedclub.org

I now look forward to seeing you in the Club over the coming months.

Paul Thatcher

SOEC Car Parking Facilities

An issue was raised under other business at the last AGM, in December 2007, of the occasional lack of Car Parking facilities, at the Club and your Committee was requested to investigate whether this could be rectified.

It should be noted that previous Committees have also taken various steps to utilize the car-park as an additional income stream, an essential ingredient to the financial stability of your Club. To summarise these are:

1. your committee installed a key-operated barrier to ensure only bona-fide members could gain entry to the site; either by regular users paying an annual fee for the use of a barrier entry-key or requesting the Steward to raise the barrier for entrance, NB. this facility is obviously only available during bar-opening times;
2. your committee has also rented the car-parking spaces, on the lower car park, to external business users, for an aggregate annual return of about £4.4k. This has ensured that your Club has been financially viable for a number of years and that the significant improvements to the fabric of your Club have been undertaken;
3. your committee has undertaken a review of the operation of the barrier and various adjustments have been made and are on-going.

Your car-park facilities experience further demands and pressures as a consequence of the extension to the above situation by allowing spouses of members, as indicated on our membership form, the use of the car-parking facilities, whilst they are using the facilities of the town centre. This has been generally accepted as a much appreciated gesture to our membership and assisting in maintaining our membership, at its current level. In order that the membership continues to avail itself of this it is essential that all of us ensure that we adhere to the principle of members, and their guests when using the club, or member's spouses when using the car-park for other activities.

What is without question is that it is not for use by brothers, sisters, daughters, sons or indeed any other relative of a member and therefore it is not within any member's remit to pass on a car park barrier key to anyone other than his wife or partner.

Your Committee has investigated the matter and has made the following decisions, which it is hoped with our members continuing assistance, will ease the situation. However, it must be stressed that with approximately 350 members, all of whom may use the car-parking whilst availing themselves of the Club's facilities, there are always going to be times when members may not be able to find sufficient car-parking spaces to use.

In order that your Committee can more effectively police the use of the car-park, every member who has taken the option of renting a barrier key, will be issued with 'The Car windscreen' badge, which should be displayed at all times the car-park is used. The badges will include sequential numbers to identify members.

It is the intention of the Committee to regularly police the future parking of cars to ensure these new measures are monitored.

NB. Members without keys will still continue to be allowed in by the Club Steward, as previously. Your committee hopes this helps to clarify members' understanding of the car-parking arrangements and will reduce both unauthorized use of the carpark as well as the number of occasions that members are unable to park at the Club. However, it cannot ensure that the car-park will not be full, at any time in the future.

Memorial Room Air conditioning

In June last year, at the Centenary Founders and Millennium Appeal dinner, it was agreed that air conditioning was needed for the Memorial Room, as the room becomes very uncomfortable when used by so many people at the same time.

John Harris, now Immediate Past President, launched an appeal to raise funds for the project which was estimated to cost between £3,500 and £4,000.

By the autumn of last year a total of 38 members had donated amounts of up to £150 which meant that the project could go ahead and we are now pleased to report that the installation has been successfully completed and is ready for use.

During installation particular attention was paid to the existing suspended ceiling, as with many things in the Club, it was part of the original fabric dated back to the opening of the present building in 1973, and was an imperial size with hidden fixing system, which is no longer available, so any damaged tiles would have been irreplaceable.

The main unit was suspended below this and the service pipes and wires were run above it to the outside condenser completely out of sight.

The installers did an excellent job and, by careful use of the tile replaced by the unit, were even able to eliminate some minor damage caused by electrical work over the years.

The system is controlled by a remote control, and will not only cool the air but also heat and dehumidify it to ensure maximum comfort during meals.

As the revenue from catering and business conferences is becoming more important to the Club, it is essential that we can offer the most up to date facilities possible, air conditioning being a basic requirement these days.

We would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the appeal and look forward to meeting everyone at a special function to be arranged shortly to officially "Launch" the new facility.

Social Round-up

Burns Night

January 25th saw us gathered to pay **tribute to Robbie Burns**. Following the resounding success in 2007, Bob Glaze readily took on the task of organising the event again this year. After more than 70 members, guests and wives were piped in by Ian Wilson, we sat down to traditional 'Burns' fare including haggis, neaps and tatties and the obligatory wee dram. We were then entertained with poetry, song and tributes to the great Scottish poet with Al Roden and Arthur Bancroft providing music during the evening and for the sing-a-long that concluded a right-royal honouring of the bard. Thanks to everybody who played their part under the direction of Bob Glaze who masterminded the whole event.

Quiz Night

Last month saw the welcome return of Russell Johnson, ably assisted by Nathan, for the first **Quiz Night** of 2008. As always it was a very professionally run evening with Andrew Taplin's team again coming out on top – we definitely need to devise a handicapping system for the Autumn quiz otherwise Andrew will need to extend his wine cellar.

SOEC Golf Society

On the subject of handicaps' the **SOEGS [Golf Society]** held its AGM and Annual dinner on 26th February. During the meeting Keith Harris, the society's hard working secretary, presented the fixture list for the coming summer season which included details of the annual trip across the Channel [or should I say under] to play some courses in northern France. This year we are going to Lille and nipping over the border into Belgium for one of our rounds and there will undoubtedly be some indulgence in après golf wining and dining .[The Club's website has details of all the fixtures including the French tour – www.olderclub.org]

Wining and Dining

Many of you have now experienced the superb culinary talents of Julie, our stewardess, who continues to present us with excellent food. Her reputation as a chef has spread and indeed we now have a number of outside organisations who regularly use the Memorial Room for their dinner meetings, and what is so good is that they keep coming back for more. If you are a member of another organisation or indeed if you wish to hold a family dinner party at the club you should start thinking about registering your booking with Bob Glaze or our steward, Gerald, sooner rather than later so as to avoid disappointment and now, thanks to Immediate Past President John Harris, who initiated an appeal during his term of office, we now have a 'comfort cooling' unit installed in the Memorial Room which will make dining in high summer a much more pleasurable experience.

The late Garry Chance

Just before Christmas, an envelope arrived through the Club's letterbox from solicitors, George Green & Co. It contained a cheque for £10,000, a legacy bequeathed to the Club by Garry, who died in June last year after a very long and distressing illness.

Garry lived with his parents in Stourbridge for all of his life and was educated at Hill Street Primary and King Edward VI Grammar Schools. He left school to follow his father's footsteps into Barclays Bank but, unlike his father, he became restless for change and spent the rest of his working life as an accountant, being made redundant a number of times with the closure of various employers. He seemed to be settled and most happy in his last post at Dudley Zoo but inevitable changes there brought this to an untimely ending.

Although he never drove, Garry loved to travel. He visited most places throughout England, having an ardent enthusiasm for cathedrals, churches and their histories. In his younger days, he even went on holiday in what was then the Soviet Union. His great love in sport was speedway and, in particular, the Wolverhampton Wolves. Like his father, he was a lifelong supporter of Aston Villa and Lye Town football clubs and Worcestershire Cricket Club. His other enduring love was music, particularly American country and old time rock and roll.

In moments of recall, Garry regretted the time when his restless feet caused him to let go the one real love of his life and, never finding anyone to take her place, he remained a bachelor.

Like his father before him, Garry was a life-long member of the Stourbridge Old Edwardian Club and both he and Cecil very much enjoyed their sessions on the green baize.

After his father's sudden and untimely death, Garry looked after his ailing mother for many years until she died, leaving him alone in the family home.

Very shortly afterwards, Garry was struck down by the rare condition known as Multiple Systems Atrophy. Despite his illness, which left him wheelchair bound and under 24/7 care in his home for six years, Garry remained a full member of both the Club and the 50 Club. He never lost his sense of humour, living in the hope of a cure being found and his being able to return to the Club and his beloved snooker. Sadly, it was not to be and your General Committee is now considering carefully how best to use Garry's generous gift.

Richard H. Gillam ~ Land Surveyor's Telescope

Last year, whilst surfing the internet, John Sanders happened upon the online catalogue of Rudd's Auctioneers, Cape Town, South Africa, for a sale on 5th June 2007 which included a lot described as *"A late 19th Century Land Surveyor's Telescope by J & W E Archbutts, 201*

Westminster

Bridge Road, Lambeth, London, presented to R H Gillam with the best wishes of Stourbridge

Old Edwardian Club, on his leaving for South Africa, April 1903".

On behalf of the Club, John obtained further particulars, subsequently placing a successful bid. The Surveyors telescope is now on display in the hallway display cabinet.

Just over a century ago the Gillam family lived in Hagley Road, Oldswinford. Gillam Senior was in business on his own account in the construction industry as a slater and slaters' wholesaler, and there

were eight children, of whom Richard Gillam was one.

Richard Gillam was born in 1879 and educated at King Edward's. In 1901 his occupation was recorded as Contractor's Assistant.

He was very much involved with the Club when it was established in 1898 and his name appears regularly in Committee Minutes and as a member and Captain of the Club's football team.

In 1900 Richard's elder brother, John, was made a life member of the Old Edwardian Club in recognition of his bravery in the Boer War, and it may have been his brother's influence that caused Richard to decide that his own future lay in early 20th Century South Africa. On 25 April 1903, as a single man, he sailed from Southampton for Durban (Port Natal) on the Union-Castle Line vessel,

Carisbrook Castle. He took with him a set of travelling trunks, presented by Stourbridge Cricket Club where he had been Match Secretary for six years, and the Land Surveyor's Telescope presented by the Old Edwardian Club.

Just prior to leaving Stourbridge Richard is recorded as saying, "If I ever come over again it will only be for a holiday".

The auctioneers were able to tell us that the vendor, who had no connection with the family, had bought the telescope from a Durban antique dealers in 1983 but the history of the telescope between 1903 and 1983 remains to be discovered, as does that of Richard Gillam.

Given his interest in sport, it is possible that Durban Cricket Club, for example, may have some information. So any member going to South Africa may like to investigate.

His sister, Dorothy, and his younger brother, James, are remembered with Ernest Taylor, Dorothy's fiancé and a founder member of the Club, on the memorial window in the Library at King Edward's following a tragic accident on 25 June 1907 when all three drowned in the sea at Blackpool.

Club Colours

The range of Club Colours is in stock as detailed in the list below. Items may be purchased via the Steward or on application with remittance to the Honorary Secretary (for collection). All items of clothing are in polyester (Club member pattern). They make very acceptable presents.

Ties £ 10.00 each

Bow Ties (ready tied) £ 10.00 each

Bow Ties (self tie) £ 11.00 each

Cummerbunds (Regular) £ 15.00 each

Cummerbunds (extra deep) £ 16.00 each

Cuff links (pair) £ 20.00 each

Dates for the Diary (2008)

April

Saturday 19th - Drama Group Re-union and Buffet

Wednesday 23rd - St George's Day Dinner

Thursday 24th - KE Concert at Kidderminster

May

Friday 2nd - Select 8 Lunch

Saturday 10th - French Evening with Buffet ****

Saturday 17th - Kidderminster Choir Evening with Buffet ****

Tuesday 20th - Old Foleys Snooker Evening

Thursday 29th - Saturday Club Dinner

June

Monday 2nd - Centenary Founders & Millennium Appeal Dinner

Thursday 19th - Charter Day Service, St Mary's Old Swinford

Saturday 21st - Charter Day Lunch

Saturday 28th - 'Last of the Ashes' Snooker and Buffet Lunch

July

Wednesday 9th - Charter Day Cricket Match (At Stourbridge CC)

August

Friday 15th - President's Ladies Evening ****

October

Friday 3rd - Annual Dinner

Tuesday 21st - Trafalgar Dinner

**** **DENOTES THAT THE EVENT IS A 'LADIES WELCOME' FUNCTION**

For latest information on upcoming events see notice board or SOES website

SOEC Website - www.olderclub.org

The website contains several pages of information for you to browse. Membership application forms are downloadable. This and future editions of Edlines will also be included together with an archive of (electronically produced) past issues all of which are available as pdf downloads.

Members also have the option of receiving their copies by email if preferred. Requests to Alan Cutler <info@olderclub.org.uk>.

Post Scriptum

Since writing his " Letter From The President", Paul has unfortunately suffered a heart attack, from which he is now recovering.

We wish him a speedy recovery and assure him of our full support for future club functions during his year of office.

Valete