

East Anglian Card Collectors Club

Newsletter No. 575

Saturday 15th August 2020

This was to be our 2nd post Covid meeting and although there has been a significant improvement nationally and East Anglia has some of the lowest infection rates in the country, most people who attended today's meeting were still apprehensive. However more members were ready to catch up with their collecting needs and in all 42 members turned up. I'm pleased to say every one was very conscious of social distancing and the other rules the hall has asked us to keep to. Another successful meeting and as always EACCC leads the way being the only club in the cigarette card club world open in the country. I understand Lea Valley our nearest neighbour is opening on Sunday 23rd.

I had several dealers booked in today and only a couple dropped out late, but we were still pleased to welcome Peter Beer, Brian (minus Charlie), Mike Heard, Robert Butterworth and Darren Moyse ably assisted by his daughter Gemma, all providing many cards and other ephemera for us to look at and buy. Gary Challis was booked in to but never showed again.

We had to move the coffee bar inside this month as the forecast was predicted rain (and showed), I hope our 'al fresco' cafe of last month was not a 'one off' but we are at the hands of the elements. We managed to maintain social distance throughout the day.

There was never more than 30 people in the hall although we came very close on a couple of counts. Hopefully soon we will be able to get back to the way we were and all the missing members will feel more confident to return.

It is with much regret and shock that I have to inform members of the death of Ken Courtney, his mother Alice rang this morning, we don't know (at the time of writing) the cause. He was a stalwart member of the club and enjoyed setting out his stall each month, liking the chatter and social life probably as much as the buying and selling. I will always remember his colorful shirts and his Christmas attire always more colorful than almost every other member. Ken can be found on number 8 card of the 3rd series of Personalities, he joined the club in the early 90's. A very knowledgeable and likable man he will be missed by many many members. I will miss him sitting at his stall when ever I went through to the coffee bar. I have sent Janice and Alice a card on behalf of club members.

Unfortunately I have been informed of another death of a past member who did a lot for the club. Please read my tribute enclosed.

It seemed a busy morning with lots of jobs to be done, it did however pass very quickly. I had bought quite a few used albums to sell and most went very swiftly. There will be more next month. I did sell some new pages to a few members. I have discovered that our wholesaler has had to put her prices up (the first I have known in over 10 years) so from my next order I will have to increase our prices – they will still be cheaper than other suppliers.

I have been given some film posters to sell and had them out on the tables – a few sold – but I brought them back and will put them in a future auction. Also available next month more card related books, mostly reference.

We had a committee meeting to discuss relevant matters and the main item was what we wanted to do at our Christmas meeting this year. Several options were offered and we have decided to defer our decision to the October or even the November meeting. Main consideration being what we are allowed to do (by the Government and Hall committee). Watch this space.

Membership subscriptions have been coming in nicely and another 17 members have paid since last month. You have until the September meeting to avoid being removed from the register and not receiving this amazing newsletter! Send it to me at the address on the bottom of the newsletter, remember it is just £15 for nearly two years, - next renewal April 2022. I have run out of the dreaded red spots this year so they are blue. If you have one on your envelope it means we haven't received your subscription.

The auction at this meeting was originally planned for April and had a predominance of 'silks', Alan and the team were ready at the prescribed time and he was soon reeling off the lots. As we had plenty of postal bids, the signs were there for a good result and it was over £4k, the best for a long while. The facts and figures read the 250 Lots sold for £4201 with only 43 remaining unsold. There were 4 vendors providing the items. There were 21 successful in house bidders who spent £2380 and a further 12 successful postal bidders spending £1821. Top spot went to a postal bidder, lot number 76 for £235, a lovely set of James Taddy British Medals and Medallions.

Alan and I had a discussion about items we need for future auctions, both of us have picked up 50 plus Albums from collectors this past month and have been busy preparing them for future auctions – that will be the new year now, but we can still take some more so get sorting and bring them along.

It is five weeks before we meet again on Saturday 19th September – usual place and usual time. I hope more members will feel confident to come along, we do have a safe friendly club.

Dealers booked in are Peter Beer, Brian/Charlie, John Shaw, Darren Moyse, Robert Butterworth and perhaps Gary Challis (?)

In the meantime stay well, keep active and most important of all continue to collect. All current national and local 'covid' rules will continue to be applied : keep at least 1 metre apart, 3 members maximum per dealer, wearing of masks optional, continue to use the sanitiser. This will all change in the future but we must continue to be safe. Please don't come to the club if you have any covid symptoms and in order for Track and Trace to work let us know if you develop any symptoms after your visit.

Remember to maintain social distancing and stay safe.

Chairman Les Woolnough 01473 743794

Secretary/Treasurer Colin Fawcett 01553 674358

1, Levers Close, Kings Lynn PE30 3UU

Auctioneer Alan Worthington 01473 714411

East Anglian Card Collectors Club

Special tribute to a EACCC legend.

The Legend that was John Knowles - it is very sad to report the death of the legend that was John Knowles, he had suffered many years of heart issues and he sadly passed away last week at his home in Manchester.

A man who was instrumental in the early development years of the East Anglian Cigarette Card Club. He was Chairman from 1987 to 2004 and Auctioneer from 1981 to 2004.

There are many words that can be used to describe John most of them complimentary but he wasn't shy of upsetting people and his disagreement with the Cartophilic Society of Great Britain still lives in the memory.

He ran the monthly auction like a 'rod of steel' and you darn't look him in the face otherwise you would buy something you didn't want, but in every auction he showed us his unique sense of humour, usually at someone in audiences expense. It did make the auctions fun and something to look forward to each month.

In partnership with Bill Peck he held the club together through many difficult years. He traveled each month from his home in Manchester to be 'at his club'.

When we were preparing a history of the club for it's 50th anniversary year, John very kindly gathered together some thoughts and memories of his time with EACCC, 27 very important years and I enclose a copy for all members to read and enjoy.

Those of us who remember John can acknowledge his legacy and we all have 'special' memories of this 'larger than life' character - a legend in his own lifetime. Thank you John from everyone at EACCC.

EACCC 1976 to 2004 John Knowles

When Brian Sweet, a local collector/dealer introduced me to the East Anglian Club, I was surprised on entering 'the little schoolroom Euston village, to find a world quite divorced from anything I had previously experienced. I was introduced to two esteemed gentlemen who were sitting by the tiny bar, drinks in hand - this was Ritchie Summers, Club treasurer and the no nonsense driving force - and this George Potter Club secretary and (more importantly) the author of the Club's monthly newsletter. I remember Ritchie welcoming me and on hearing that I was a Deputy Headmaster at a Felixstowe school and telling me that before his retirement he had been a headmaster so therefore I could buy him and George a double libation each. To this day I do not understand the logic in the demand but, like so much in the club, one went with the flow, and surrounded by cigarette cards and bonhomie, I was immediately immersed.

Over the course of the next few months I met, got to know and was quite enthralled by the personnel there present. One of the prominent members was Alexander Gooding, the Guinea Gold expert, well into his eighties, but with a large brandy in one hand and a four inch cigar in the other would sit, surveying the scene and periodically striking a hard bargain with feckless youth's like me. There was Francis Pitt, a somewhat austere joint founder of the club, who sometime clashed with Ritchie and George's belief that the club should be very much of a social persuasion - with a few fag cards thrown in to help its legitimacy.

The main suppliers of cards in the room was the Universal Cigarette Card Company in the form of Eileen Prior and her son Michael, who would soon take over the company. Other local dealers were the Bradshaw's, the Hadden-Silvers and to a lesser extent, the Jenkins, the retiring organisers of Club Corner, where a bargain was often to be had.

Prominent members who added to the simple fun of the club, Tony and Beryl Page (who can forget Beryl's massive hats at Christmas parties ??), the Debenham family, always in attendance with their burgeoning family, but arguably the prominent of all was Ronnie Rouse and his string tied suitcase, cream cakes and somewhat beguiling aroma. Ronnie rarely missed a meeting and provided much of the material in George Potter's frequently acerbic newsletters. This was much appreciated between club meetings and most certainly from my point of view, was a monthly source of great joy. George adopted the simple philosophy in his writing - never let the truth get in the way of a good story. At times his claims were outlandish. He once told that Ronnie's suitcase had caused great consternation for the Bomb squad at Norwich railway station, when he left it against a pillar whilst in search of chocolate eclairs or whatever from the station buffet. George was utterly convinced that the suitcase contained untold treasures by Taddy etc. and was about to be blown up by a controlled device (this being at the height of the troubles in Northern Ireland).

Another accusation by George aimed at the hapless Ronnie, was that on the rare occasion that a lift was given to George and Ronnie in a Norwich members car, they had broken the speed record from Norwich to Thetford because of the prevailing wind. 'Which wind?', I asked George, Ronnie's he replied and couldn't wait to abandon the car.

I can only recall two pieces of controversy during this period. One was when, despite the efforts of Peter Scully, who was briefly Chairman in the late 70's, the club declined through its officers, to amalgamate with the Cartophilic Society of Great Britain - the reason being simple - what were the benefits for the club? Even greater controversy, started innocently enough with a drink I had with Alexander Gooding when I enquired whether he, himself had ever appeared on a cigarette card? Alexander confirmed that he had not, even though he claimed, to the day he died, that he was the world's first ever cigarette card dealer and he felt, as I did, that posterity might be pleased to have photographic evidence of the other aficionados of the club. In discussion with George and Ritchie I discovered their enthusiasm and having arranged with my photographer, Deputy Headmaster Arthur Hallworth, we came to

the club armed and ready so, in the course of a Saturday afternoon, got the likenesses of all the prominent members present. Whilst the cards were in production, one or two important members of the club protested that the whole project (which incidentally was to cost the club nothing financially) was a waste of time. Nobody had done anything like this before. After a somewhat volatile meeting I got home to Cheshire that night and received three phone calls, the first was from Alexander Gooding who said 'Publish and be damned and I'll pay for the whole issue', the second was from George Potter who said that he thought that it would be great to start a tradition like this, the third was from Ritchie Summers who said 'If I were you, I would print them but watch your back. Those who were protesting loudest happened to be absent on the day of the photo shoot. Members were almost unanimously delighted with the end product which over the years, led to an extension in the series.

In the early 80's I had taken over as Club Chairman and Auctioneer and had formed a strong bond with Bill Peck, our Treasurer, throughout this period excellent back was provided Bill's wife Muriel and Ritchie's widow Vera, who helped tremendously with the club's administration.

The club had many highlights particularly caused by the change of venue. Membership always hovered around the 100 mark, the great majority of whom would attend the Christmas lunch, dominated by excellent food and an enormous raffle!

I have many happy memories of the club which I left in 2004 when the 350 mile round trip was starting to take it's toll on me. Many of the members I knew there will have to forgive me for not mentioning them by name but time has clouded my memory.

If I was to record my fondest memories they would be:

- a) the torturous tale of Felixstowe Fred Young's attempt to purchase a rare card he needed at the biggest auction house in London - a story to be recounted at another time.
- b) The great Alexander Gooding sitting at the back of the room, brandy and cigar at the ready, during a club auction and entering the bidding authoritatively by telling the auctioneer 'if you like'.
- c) On a more sombre note, the loss of Ritchie Summers and even more poignantly, George Potter. The latter because on leaving the meeting to start the 175 mile drive back to Cheshire, standing at the doorway of the Anchor Hotel was George who wished me a safe journey and finished with the words, 'See you next month'. I drove the 175 miles with pleasant memories of the day to be met on the front step by one of my children who said 'there's some sad news Daddy', George Potters dead ! And I being tired from the journey replied 'That's a strange joke. Don't be silly. I've just spoken to him but the just was 'of course' actually meant 4 hours before. George has gone home to his sisters who said, 'I'll put the kettle on' and he said 'I've had a lovely day' when she came back into the room - I'll leave the rest of the story to the reader.