

## Post-war recovery

As the war progressed Headmaster John Nugee became increasingly concerned that the College might never reopen in Eastbourne. To ensure its survival he arranged for an 'Eastbourne branch' to be established and in September 1942, this opened with 14 boys and four tutors in Gonville House.

It was also decided (again to boost College numbers) to open a preparatory school. As head of the Eastbourne branch, Kemeys Bagnall-Oakeley was set the task of starting one in Gonville. In 1946, the preparatory school moved to the site of the former Ascham St Vincent's School in Carlisle Road and opened in May of that year.

Under John Nugee's headmastership, the College continued to recover and expand: the Cavendish Library in the Memorial Building was enlarged, a new music school was opened, new headquarters for the CCF were completed and a war memorial lych gate (designed by Sir Hugh Casson) was unveiled at the Memorial playing fields. Much credit must go to the Bursar, James Bowman, who played a major part in reducing the College debt during this period.



# Ascham Preparatory School

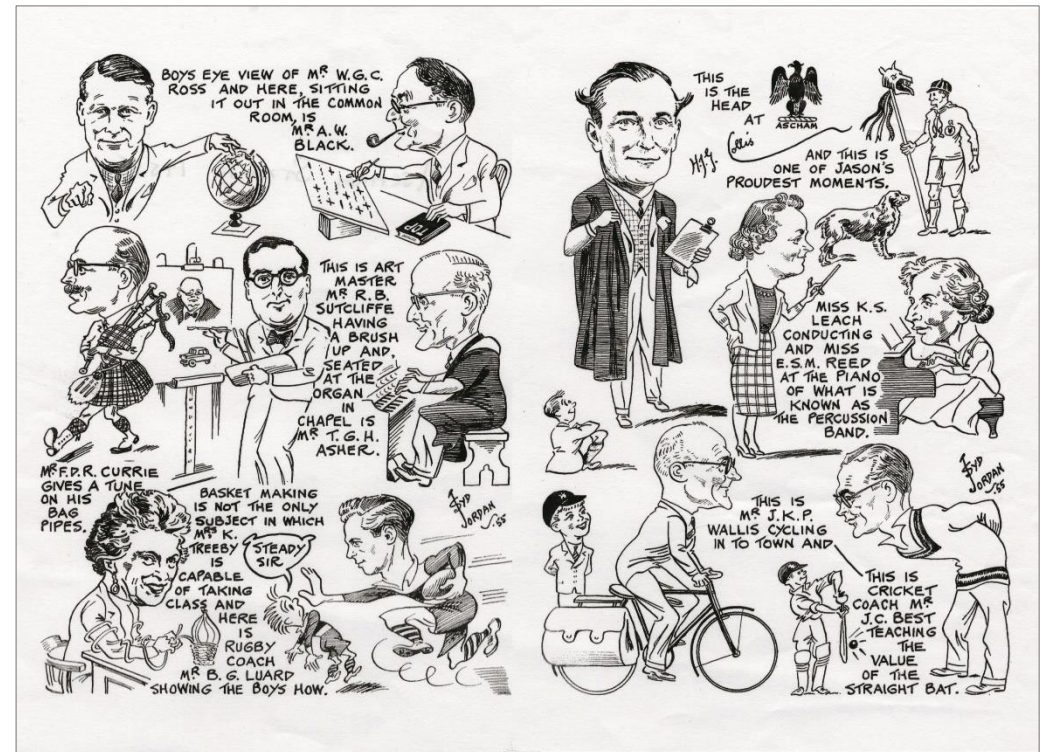


Now demolished, the only reminder of the school is the First World War memorial arch dedicated to the former pupils of Ascham St Vincent's School, who were occupants of the site prior to its acquisition by the College.

*Ascham School staff, 1955*

Originally acquired by the College just before the Second World War, Ascham became the College's preparatory school in May 1946 under the headmastership of Henry Collis.

By the time of its closure in 1977, it had its own swimming pool and theatre.





# Commemorating the Second World War

The Old Eastbournian Association (OEA) wanted to provide a permanent memorial for those former pupils who had been killed during the Second World War. Unlike the period after the First World War, playing fields - rather than buildings - were needed.

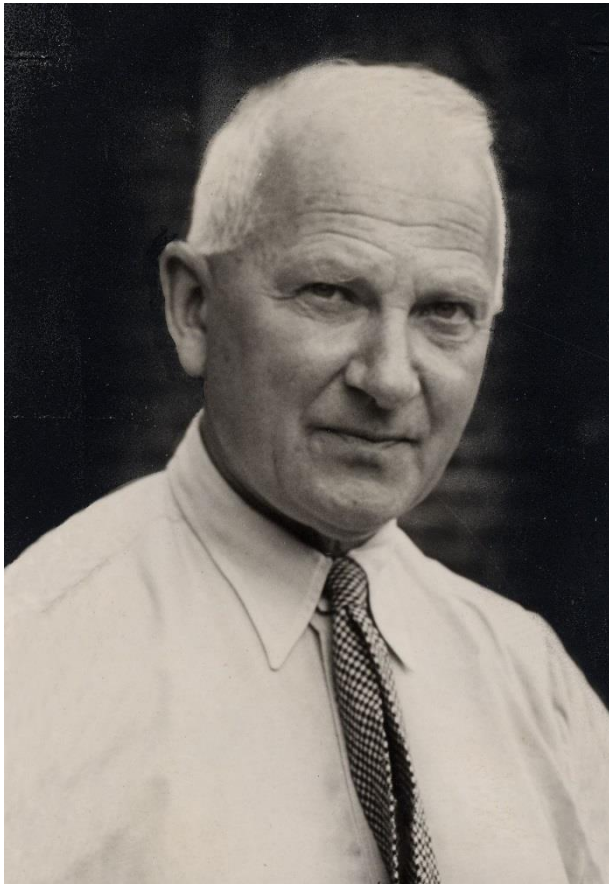


*St Cyprian's before the fire,  
seen from Paradise Drive*



The OEA purchased what remained of St Cyprian's School (destroyed by fire in 1939), including its grounds, to be known as the Memorial Field. A lych gate commemorating the war dead was later built at the entrance to the playing fields. It was designed by Old Eastbournian Sir Hugh Casson.

## John Nugee (Headmaster 1938-56)



As with Crowden before him, John Nugee could be said to have saved the College from closure. It was he who negotiated the evacuation to Radley (other public schools closed down completely), maintained the College's traditions while there and, concerned that the College might never return to Eastbourne, opened a preparatory school, known as 'Eastbourne College, Eastbourne Branch', in 1942.

After the war it was his determination that made the Admiralty (HMS *Marlborough*) give back, unwillingly, some of the buildings. The fledgling

preparatory school he had begun was moved to Ascham where it opened fully in 1946. He also reduced the College debt from £105,000 to £50,000 and still managed to open new buildings.



*Mattresses being loaded as the College evacuates, 1940*



## Developments in the 1950s

Under Nugee, the College gradually recovered. Major building works took place in the 1950s with the opening of the new music school and the Combined Cadet Force Headquarters in Blackwater Road.

*CCF building*

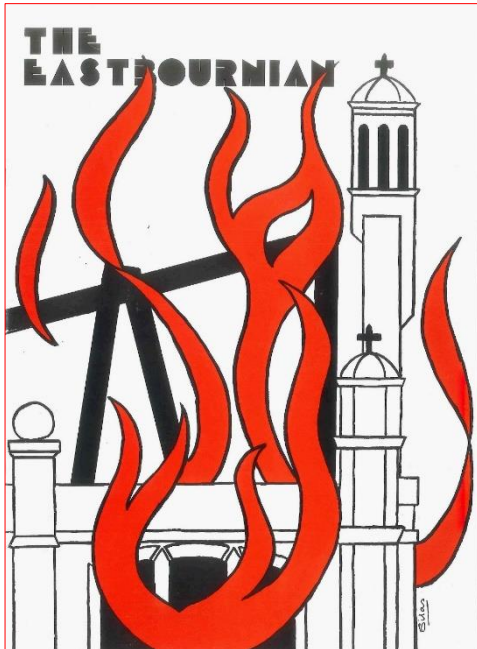


*The music school opened in 1955. The music department is now housed in the Birley Centre and the original building pictured left has since been demolished for the Project 150 development*

# The Big School Fire

On 19 November 1981, the interior of Big School, together with the carved panels, the painted reproduction of the Bayeux tapestry and the 'relics', were destroyed in a devastating fire.

Headmaster Christopher Saunders described the interior as being a 'ball of flame'.



So intense was the fire that water had to be pumped from the College swimming pool to supplement the supply from the hydrants.

*Front cover of the 1981 Eastbournian magazine depicting the Big School fire*



# Devastation



*Inside of Big School in the 1920s. The walls were covered by panels carved by pupils*

*The charred remains, looking towards the balcony at the south end of the hall*



# Fundraising



*Ronnie Corbett with Headmaster Chris Saunders at the College summer fete, July 1982*

*£10,000 was raised that day to help finance the rebuilding of Big School*

*Forbes Wastie, former Deputy Head, used a unique way of raising money - by building a float with a model of Big School*





# Big School rebuilt



*Reopened in 1984 by Sir Christopher Leaver (Blackwater 1951-55), former Lord Mayor of London, second right. On the left is Admiral Sir Derek Empson (Wargrave 1932-37), Chairman of Governors, with Headmaster Chris Saunders on the right*



*Inside the restored Big School (now the College Theatre) showing the retractable seating*