



If man's existence on earth represents just thirty seconds in the 24 hour scale of evolution, then the existence of EIC must be marked by something like a micro, micro millisecond! It therefore makes it even more amazing just what has been achieved during this infinitesimally tiny window of time. In true parallel universe fashion, we are going to part the curtains to take a look at our school over the 25 years since it was first formed. We have reminiscences from the first students to attend the school as well as memories from some staff who have spent more than 10 years teaching at EIC and some a great deal longer than that – some of us are or have been teaching the sons and daughters of ex students!

The Birth of EIC

The EIC as we know it today opened its doors on 27th September 1982. Twenty-five years may seem like a long time but the school has been a source of inspiration, challenge and satisfaction for me as well as for the thousands of students and hundreds of teachers who have been exposed to the EIC experience.

I had previously been working at the English section of the German College when they decided in January 1982 that the English section was no longer financially viable and would close at the end of that academic year.

There were an increasing number of English speaking students, as well as parents, who felt that they wished



their children to continue in the British system of education and were willing to become involved in finding a new venue. It was clear that parents on the coast were concerned about the educational opportunities available for their children.

1982 was a chaotic year. Understandably, many of my teaching colleagues decided to continue their teaching careers in the UK. I also left for the UK at the end of June to be with my family as my father was terminally ill. While I was in the UK with my family, my husband received numerous phone calls from students and parents.

It was when I arrived back in Spain after my father's death, with the encouragement of students, parents and especially Mrs Kirsten Heristchian, plus a very supportive husband, that I realised a new school could be born. Many locations were studied including the Artola Hotel but, eventually, Hotel Ricmar was chosen and with a parent guaranteeing the rent, the EIC took possession of the main block.

At this time the owners of the premises were living in what is now the Director's office and there were still a few hotel clients in the block which is now the Primary School.

The next few weeks were spent cleaning out bathrooms and converting bedrooms into small but functional classrooms with the help of some of the Year 9 students and



supportive parents. Desks, chairs and blackboards were kindly donated by the German College.

On 13th September, just prior to the school opening, there was an air crash at Malaga airport when a Spantax DC 10 bound for New York failed to take off and crossed the main N340. 52 people were killed.

I also had an accident in August, when a small boy called Oscar who



we were fostering for the summer holidays, tried to remove my right eye by throwing a cane through the kitchen window. Although I was not supposed to drive I found that I had no alternative but to do so in order to prepare the school for its opening. (Fortunately I was left with corneal scars which do not affect my vision).

The school finally opened its doors on 27th September 1982 with a very large Year 11 examination class and smatterings of all other ages down to Primary. This was when all the Primary pupils fitted into what is now Mrs. Stevenson's office.

My first priorities were to apply for examination status for the 29 students who would be taking their 'O' levels in June 1983, to arrange for the staff to obtain work permits (four full-time teachers plus many part timers) and to get the school officially licensed.

At this time Spain did not belong to the EC and my Spanish nationality along with my Spanish qualifications gave me the legal status required to open a school. This was on top of a full teaching timetable!

By the end of the first year we had 119 students and were looking at opening a full Primary section and Sixth Form for September 1983. Rather a back to front way of starting a school!

Our 'O' level results at the end of the first year were excellent (a trend which we have continued during the past twenty-five years) and which quickly became a deciding factor when attracting new students. Within



three years of its birth, we had our students applying to top Universities in the UK, America and Europe.

Our first library was made up with books, mostly from second hand book shops, along the coast from Estepona to Torremolinos supplemented by individual donations. Today our library has one of the most up to date and technological systems available.

During the past few years many innovations have taken place with state-of-the-art teaching technology throughout the school. This includes: new science laboratories; drama and art studios; a new English building; a new library and media centre; a new Key Stage 2 primary building; computer laboratories; language laboratories; an examination hall; cafeteria and restaurant facilities; a complete renovation of utilities; Astro turf football pitch and a rebuilt and heated swimming pool to

name but a few. EIC has always been fortunate to have a supportive and caring parent body which has invariably helped to make a difference. What makes EIC so special? The list is endless but perhaps for most students our school is more than just a place of learning, it is a 'cool and fun' place to be, it is an extended family where the campus somehow enhances and embraces this concept. It is a place where students, teachers, and ancillary staff are happy, caring people with mutual respect for each other. It is all these factors which have helped towards creating a homely, comfortable atmosphere for learning to flourish.

The English International College, a great place to learn!

Val Artacho

Top of page and below, EIC circa 1995





My first acquaintance with the school was as a Mum, far back in 1986. Both my sons started in Primary, Jesse in what was then called P1, which is now Reception, and Wesley in Kindergarten with Miss Maribel. I remember touring various schools with anguish, I always found something wrong with them being a normal apprehensive mother, until quite by chance, we came across EIC.

It was love at first sight! The set up immediately captivated me: it did not look like a cold, rigid, purpose-built school! The grounds by the Primary entrance were unkempt, tall wild grass growing everywhere, jutting out of a rusty, chicken-wire type fence; some parts of the buildings looked almost



like shacks in bad need of repair. There was a dusty field on the far left that was used as a football pitch but there was a lovely big pool. What a perk! The place was a mess and yet we took to it straight away - both my sons and myself - it was the 'feel' of it.

I am still here after going through trials and tribulations, I look around and all I see is the most immaculate set up, nice façades, fresh paint, tiled patios and beautiful gardens thanks to Manolo's hard work, new buildings, astroturf, showers, lockers, basketball courts. How about the school entrance and the lunch room and kitchen? What a far cry from the old days! And all this has a name, a firm hand, good financial wisdom and a great team behind. Chapeau!

Lola Naylor

Having moved to Spain at the beginning of August 1994, my daughter, Elizabeth, firstly attended the school in Year 6 at the beginning of September. Having been a senior teacher in West Sussex, I was recruited into EIC in the following November. Classes were indeed small and teaching methods were mostly based on 'chalk and talk'. I found myself facing the arduous timetable of facing one Year 11 candidate for GCSE German. My immediate need was an overhead projector. The school then had no such equipment. It was bought especially for me.

The arrival of Ron Griffin the year after heralded a radical change and a long-term overhaul of the whole system. I found myself running the Modern Languages Department. My classroom was Yvonne Stevenson's current office. The school was aligning itself with the National Curriculum and other worthwhile educational developments in the UK.

EIC, during the remainder of the nineties, was an exciting place to be. We were growing and going places and establishing ever more that our results in public examinations were in the very top league of the national results in the UK. The introduction of staff appraisal based firmly on UK criteria, ensured the high degree of professionalism which we know and enjoy today. Colossal investment in interactive whiteboards have placed us at the forefront of technological progress in the classroom. At the end of every year the glittering prizes were so much in evidence. I am so proud and pleased to have been a part of it which has benefitted so many students including my own children.

'Thank you EIC'.

David Saxton

Before life at EIC, if anybody had told me that I would be teaching at the same school for nearly 18 years, I would have treated this prediction with some scepticism but, here I am, because EIC is, truly, a 'special' school. My early memories from November 1990 reflect an infectious, lively spirit instilled by the enthusiasm and energy of some of the early staff and I was made to feel really welcome. I found the students' attitude to learning and their willingness to converse with staff refreshing, as well as their ease, confidence and sense of humour.

Some of my earliest memories revolve around the Sixth Form Shows of the 1990s which I produced together with Mike Sutcliffe and David Dunckley. Back then we had no state-of-the-art lighting, proper staging or sound technicians' booth. Instead, we lived in dread of the antiquated electrical circuits blowing all the fuses – it was not an option to have the house lights and the spotlights on at the same time! Sound effects were recorded onto cassettes and cued manually, and the lighting design was simply on or off. I remember staying at school with some Sixth Formers until almost midnight on several occasions when we had to build the set as well as paint it and decorate the hall and foyer. We borrowed extra lighting equipment from David Dunckley's own theatre stash and Mike Sutcliffe's ubiquitous LSD (Loud, Slow Diction) posters were on every spare bit of backstage and changing room wall.

This goodwill and heart of the school which had its foundations in the very early years has been retained and complements the many technological, structural and academic advancements that have been made in the last ten years. I have heard people say recently that we are a truly professional establishment and I believe that to be true. During my 18 years of teaching here, I have been proud to be a part of the evolution of EIC, in fact, I'll be around for a few more years yet!

Lesley Lawrence

In the 'olden' days, Suzanne and I, for several years, managed the office between us which meant everything from prospective parents' enquiries to dealing with first aid. The one thing I miss is knowing every child in the school, this changed once we passed the 250 mark.

There is one incident which sticks in my mind and it was when I was sorting out uniform for a new family – getting out the trousers for the boy and a kilt for the 'girl' who had lovely, wavy long hair. You can guess . . . 'she' was a boy. I think that has been my most embarrassing moment.

Helen Mackie

'we lived in dread of the antiquated electrical circuits blowing all the fuses'

I recall during my first term here (1996) trying to organise a 'Halloween' party for the few children and parents in the school at the time. This would give me the opportunity to 'get to know' everyone.

We had an ancient PA system and very, very 'iffy' electrics! During the set-up, and having plugged in, our resident electrician Andy Patterson gave the thumbs-up to switch on. Faint music was heard struggling from the system. Our one and only microphone was then connected and, suddenly, there was silence. Panic! Parents were due within the hour! "I can fix that," cried this young blonde boy student helper from primary, "I know how to do the fuses." Well he certainly knew the PRINCIPLE of 'doing' fuses. He understood that a new fusewire needed to be inserted to link the terminals. Utilising this 'knowledge' - and unbeknown to anyone else - he sourced his fuse wire from a few discarded off-cuts from a nearby chainlink fence! If I tell you that a fusewire is designed to take about 220 volts, and the diameter of the chain-link 'fuse' would easily carry 10,000 volts, you will not be surprised that the resulting surge blew out every circuit in the school, leaving most outlets smoking! It took a week or so to regain any semblance of a return to normal service! Happy days!

The postscript: We had a very quiet halloween party!

Years later, the 'blonde boy', Mika, gained a scholarship at Jesus College Oxford, to read Engineering Science!

Ron Griffin

Our Experience at EIC

by Ajit Nandwani and Justine (Jo) Riccomini (nee Oakes)

Still best friends after 30 years . . .

Jo says, "Ajit wants to go first as usual!"

"I still remember that summer. We had been forced to leave the school we were in which was the English section of the German school. Teachers and parents were forced to make a decision and what a decision it turned out to be! After a number of meetings and many obstacles they founded what is now considered to be the best English School on the Costa del Sol.

It was a unique summer I'll never forget. Many of you might be surprised to know that some of the first students of the EIC, including Jo and me amongst others, actually helped to transform what was a run down old hotel into our school. I remember getting a phone call from my good friends Jo and Maria . . . "Hey Aj, you wanna come down to school and help out?" Yes, we all sacrificed our summer holiday and travelled down to the hotel and helped paint the walls, clean up the swimming pool, the gardens and we even painted the first blackboards that were used in the school! We did it in just one summer . . . and we were so proud to have a place to study that was ours at last.

In the following four years, that old



hotel was gradually transformed bit by bit into the school you all know today. Many people have put in a lot of effort over the years since then. From having literally no infrastructure at the beginning, to within three years having a football pitch, volleyball, badminton and basketball courts, computers (I still remember programming those Commodore PETs, ('peeks and pokes . . . God,



I'm old!) we set up a Chemistry and Physics laboratory and, most rewarding of all, convincing the teachers that we needed a common room, right Jo?

Jo says:

"Oh, it's my turn now is it? I thought I was never going to get a word in! Only joking my friend. It's funny sitting



here in Scotland writing this. At 41 (which isn't old AT ALL, by the way) it's great to look back. I have so many good memories – the school was a true home from home to all of us and we were lucky to be in such a great class of kids with such interesting and varied backgrounds. It set us up for life I reckon. And we had the best darn volleyball team on the planet (which I am pleased about because I was the captain of the girls' team). And, yeah, the common room was a work of art – literally!

We mostly did rather well at school as I recall - Mrs Artacho once told me I must like sitting exams, as I had done so many of them. Our achievements haven't held any of us back either – I've been a tax accountant for the last 20 years and you are a

businessman, and we've got friends running property companies, their own restaurants and other empirical enterprises too, all over Europe. You always made me mad though, Ajit, because you passed all your exams and you never did any homework, you pain.

All in all we can both honestly say that we're very proud to be part of the first



Sixth Form and graduates that came out of that school.

VIVA, CLASS OF 1985!

Ajit Nandwani and Justine (Jo) Riccomini



EIC visited by former head of OFSTED

At the beginning of the year we were visited by Mr Chris Woodhead, who was formerly the head of OFSTED and chief inspector of schools in the UK.

He spent a day with us touring the school, meeting staff and sitting in on some of their lessons. The day after his visit he sent us the following letter.

28th September 2007

Dear Mr Griffin

I knew from your examination results that EIC was a very special school, but I had not realised how special. I don't think I have ever in 30 years of visiting schools had the pleasure and the honour of meeting so many exceptionally committed and enthusiastic teachers. I now understand why the school is so outstandingly successful.

I very much hope that there is a chance to return in the near future. For now, all the very best with your twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations.

Yours ever,

Chris Woodhead

Former head of OFSTED and chief inspector of schools

