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Quinta Nova  
Carcavelos  
2777-601 PAREDE

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## ST JULIAN'S SCHOOL 1932-42

d'Arcy Orders

*compiled from files of the Eastern Telegraph Company*

Early in 1932 it became obvious to the British Community that a school offering a British-type education was urgently needed in the Lisbon area. As a result, a group styling itself *St Julian's PNEU School* was formed- the PNEU standing for *Parents' National Education Union* in the UK to which the group was affiliated.

The first attempt to obtain premises centred around the Quinta do Lameiro in Carcavellos (two l's in those days) but a sudden outbreak in the house of typhoid fever caused the Committee to promptly discontinue negotiations.

As the Eastern Telegraph Company, owners and occupants of Quinta Nova in Carcavellos were reducing the number of their staff, Mrs Marguerite Bucknall, Honorary Secretary of *St Julian's PNEU School in organisation*, wrote to Major Montgomery, the local Manager of the Eastern Telegraph Company, asking whether the East Block of the Staff Quarters at Quinta Nova could be rented for the use of the proposed school either permanently or as a temporary measure until suitable premises could be found. The Honorary Secretary suggested purchasing surplus furniture from the Company to initially equip the school and, explaining their lack of funds, hopefully offered £150 per annum as a rent.

Major Montgomery sent the letter to the Company's Head Office in London accompanied by a strong recommendation to allow the school to occupy the whole of the East Block together with six small store rooms, a refreshment room, a social hall, a kitchen and lavatories but, although beginning at £150 per

annum, the rent should increase by £25 per annum up to a maximum of £250.

However, Head Office considered the rent suggested far too low, pointing out that the capital value of the building to be occupied was in the region of £8,000 and, therefore, an increased initial rent should be negotiated or, failing that, a higher ultimate maximum. It was also made clear that no long term agreement could be concluded as there was a possibility that the Wireless Station at Vendas Novas might be moved to Carcavellos.

St Julian's PNEU subsequently increased their rental offer to £175 per annum "*such sum to be reviewed at the end of each year in the light of the School's financial position*". This was accepted and it was agreed that the School could purchase surplus furniture at 25/30% of inventory value.

Before opening the School it was decided that a manservant should be engaged to deal with cleaning, the boilers and general maintenance. Major Montgomery advised that "*as this work is likely to be onerous, a salary of Esc. 270\$00 per month would be appropriate plus a food allowance of Esc. 3\$00 per day*".

In October 1932 *Colégio Inglês de São Julião Lda.* was incorporated to manage the School.

Plans were filed to meet the requirements of the government department responsible for the establishment of private schools in order to satisfy the authorities that the buildings were suitable for use as a school. This, it appears, led to the Concelho de Cascais reassessing the properties for taxation at five times the level of the existing rate. The Eastern Telegraph Company submitted a protest but to no avail.

An early visitor to the School was a local Schools Inspector who was greatly impressed and stated that he had not seen a school so well-equipped anywhere else in Portugal. Praise indeed.

Although the lease did not become effective until 1<sup>st</sup> June 1933, the School opened in October 1932 and soon, in February 1933, there was a slight controversy over the payment of the rent, which, at £175 per annum, amounted to £14 11s 8d per month. The Portuguese lease provided for a monthly rent of Esc. 1.600\$00 but when the sterling cheque was sold in London at Esc. 110\$20 to the pound Esc. 1.609\$30 was realised. The School felt that the excess of Esc. 9\$30 should be refunded. The Eastern Telegraph Company replied, quite firmly, that "*This would entail a loss to the Company of approximately £17 per annum and, truly, I cannot see why the Company should be subject to such a loss*".

In Carcavellos, the Company continued to give material support to the School, donating books, providing a *cricket outfit* (whatever that is) and allowing the children to use the pitch and grounds.

The first accounts – audited, of course, by the old-established local firm of chartered accountants, Barton, Mayhew – which have survived are to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1935 and show accumulated losses of Esc. 45.844\$00 (c. £290) mainly financed by an overdraft at The Bank of London & South America guaranteed by Mr and Mrs D. Bucknall.

Because of the School's critical financial position, F. E. Ethrington-Smith, Chairman of the Council, wrote to Major Montgomery asking him to use his influence with Head Office to obtain a reduction in the annual rent, particularly as the

School had had to meet an unbudgeted expenditure of £50 per annum Predial Tax attributable to the buildings now occupied by the School. Head Office was unmoved by the appeal.

In April 1936, the Council realised that, if the School was to attract more pupils, it was necessary to replace Mrs Bucknall with a man as Head of the School and set about seeking a Headmaster with a wife who was prepared to become Matron. A Mr and Mrs Raggs were appointed.

In April 1937, Eastern Telegraph Head Office wrote to the Council complaining that the annual rent paid had remained static at £175 whereas, under the lease, it should have risen to £250 after five years. In reply, whilst expressing surprise that the Company felt it necessary to place an additional financial burden on the School, the Council agreed to an increase to £200 p.a. from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1938. Major Montgomery, who had, in March 1937, been invited to join the Council, felt it necessary to resign because of his invidious position of being both Manager in Portugal of the Eastern telegraph Company and a member of the School Council. However, he continued to be most supportive of the School.

In 1937 Accounts recorded a surplus of Esc. 27.660\$00 mainly due to donations of Esc. 17.776\$00 and the proceeds of a Pageant held in the June to commemorate the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and produced out-of-doors at the School by Cecily Wright (daughter of Marguerite Bucknall) and Mary Davidson (wife of the Scottish Minister) which contributed Esc. 17.145\$00 to the School's funds.

By the end of 1938, the finances of the School had improved again due to the proceeds of an event, similar to the Pageant held in 1937; this year entitled "*An Old English Fayre*". This, togeth-

er with the desperate need for additional space for over one hundred pupils, gave the Council sufficient confidence to approach the Eastern Telegraph Company to allow the School to occupy the upper floor of the North Wing, offering a total rent of £225 for 1939 and £250 for 1940.

It is more than likely that Head Office, conscious of the School's failure to keep to the terms of the original rental agreement, thought that this request was a bit of a nerve and replied that the offer was not considered commensurate with the extra space required, but after protracted negotiations, the Company agreed to the School renting the extra space paying an additional rent of £75 making a total of £275 per annum.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1938, St Julian's School Association was legally constituted under Portuguese Law as "*Associação do Colégio de São Julião*", the Statutes providing that it was deemed to have been founded in January 1938 in order to be the successor of the "*Colégio Inglês de São Julião Limitada*" which was founded in 1932 and which voluntarily ceased to be in existence on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1937.

It appears from the correspondence that towards the end of 1938 Lord Lloyd of the British Council approached the Eastern Telegraph Company asking whether it might be possible that Quinta Nova be given or, at least, sold for a small consideration to the British Council. He quickly received an answer in the negative.

With the onset of war in September 1939 the situation of the School dramatically changed. There was some doubt as to whether the Headmaster and Matron (presumably, the Raggs) would return from their holiday in the UK, so Marguerite Bucknall with the help of her daughter, Cicely, and her husband,

L. H. Wright, took over the management of the School.

Not knowing the role Carcavellos would play in wartime communications, the Eastern Telegraph Company was reluctant to make any long-term commitments concerning the North Wing and allowed the School to use only the ten ground-floor rooms on the basis of a nominal rent of five pounds per month, but at two months' notice.

Because of the sensitive nature of Quinta Nova as a vital link in communications, it was obvious that enemy children and their relatives must be excluded from the precincts of the School and a detailed list of the nationalities of non-enemy children attending the School in July 1940 indicates that there were: 69 British, 35 Portuguese and 39 other nationalities, a total of 143 pupils. The British Embassy examined the case of each non-enemy child on its merits and came to the conclusion that there was no reason to expel any of these children. Major Montgomery, in the interests of security, was given "*complete control with regard to the admission of adults and relatives to Quinta Nova and full authority to issue, suspend or withdraw permits of admission*".

Numbers at the School decreased. Children with enemy nationalities were withdrawn and other children were sent by their parents to North America. To some extent the shortfall was made up by accepting, at HBM Ambassador's request, several refugee children at reduced fees, a decision which had a negative impact on the School's revenue.

By 1941, the School sought to regularise its position with the Eastern Telegraph Company and asked for a lease covering the area occupied by the School with a year's notice on 30<sup>th</sup> June in any one year to give the School time to find alternative accommodation. The Company suggested an annual rent of £500 for

the area occupied on the three sides of the quadrangle plus Peak House No. 2 (Company staff quarters) which had been used by the School for boarders.

Mrs Bucknall felt that the School could ill afford such a rent and a compromise was reached: a rent of £416 per annum but excluding the use of Peak House as the School decided that there was now little demand for boarding.

It appears from the files that the British Council paid the rent due by the School direct to Cable & Wireless, the holding company of Eastern Telegraph, in London. There is no mention in the files that the School reimbursed the British Council in Portugal so it may be that this was a method by which the British Government subsidised the School during the War.

The "*enemy children*" matter came up again in 1942 when Thailand declared war on Great Britain. As the son of the Thai Minister in Portugal was a pupil at the School, Major Montgomery was forced to take the necessary steps to remove a most popular boy.

Later files of the Eastern Telegraph Company, relating to the School, have not survived.

*d'Arcy Orders, a graduate of Cambridge University, was in 1974 one of the founders of the Society and its first secretary, serving on the Council for many years. He wrote several books and articles about British Institutions in Portugal for which he was appointed MBE. He now resides with his wife Susie in Cambridge.*