

## **BEN MAY – PHOTOGRAPHER KING ETHELBERT SCHOOL PUPIL**

A few years ago I was delighted to take the photographs for a new school prospectus. Being one of the first KES pupils in 1938 and a professional photographer, I jumped at the chance. Recently, I have repeated the assignment for an update and the new glossy brochure is now available.

On returning to the school, I was immediately aware of the many changes. Technology, education and life in general have changed out of all recognition since the early days and I was pleased to see that King Ethelbert's has surged ahead with ICT and other modern subjects and appears to have all the latest equipment.

The school was brand new when I transferred from the Pettman Central School in Margate and many things were not operating fully, so we found ourselves engaged in projects such as building cycle sheds, marking out gardens, growing seedlings in the greenhouse and such advanced tasks as casting aluminium 'Keep Off The Grass' signs. Groups of pupils were pressed into service by our physics teacher and given the job of making working models of things, such as water pumps, to be used by future pupils. We used all the school's facilities and helped to turn a squeaky clean building into a living, working school. We certainly enjoyed the challenge and learned a lot.

Walking round the corridors while taking the pictures, many memories returned, like the arrival each day of Miss Brown on her vintage Douglas motorbike. But in 1939, the war clouds were gathering and many parents moved their children away from East Kent to safer places, and classes got smaller each day. Mr Kennard, who taught, among other subjects, gardening, brought in packs of cards and taught us how to play crib, which brushed up our mental arithmetic skills. Soon, though, we found ourselves en route for Staffordshire, gas-masks bumping on our backs and ID labels tied to a convenient button and a new phase of our lives as evacuees.

My message today is – work hard, play hard and be proud of your school; it's a good one!

Mr Ben May