

## **PS Tregidgo – a Short Biography**

My father, Philip Tregidgo was born in Portsmouth on 3 March 1926. His war service was spent as a Bevan Boy working as a miner underground in Lady Winser mine at Ynsabywl South Wales. War meant that his entrance to Oxford University on a scholarship was delayed until 1947. He read French at Oriel College and, on graduating, then qualified as a secondary school teacher. In August 1950, he married Vera Williams whom he had met in Treforest South Wales.

In 1953, Philip applied to join the then Colonial Service to teach English as a foreign language. His first post was at Winneba Teacher Training College, Ghana (or Gold Coast as it was then). He became troubled with the standard of textbooks available at the time and started to write an English Grammar book for overseas students. Submitted to Longmans, it was published in 1959. This was followed by a "Background to English", also published by Longmans.

Longmans then approached him to write a Secondary School English textbook series. With advance royalties, he returned with the family to England in 1963 to write "Practical English – Books 1 to 5". Published in 1965, the series became a best seller throughout West Africa and other parts of the continent.

Philip continued to write books for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) market. He lectured and taught under the auspices of the British Council throughout the world. He also became increasingly interested in Linguistics, but was sceptical about its relevance and appropriateness for teaching EFL. To learn more about this 'new' subject, in 1970 he enrolled onto the MA Linguistics course at Reading University.

This all led to him writing what he referred to as his 'Magnum Opus' – a review of how Linguistics might be helpful to the teaching of EFL. Increasing ill health from a lung disease contracted while working as a miner during the War meant he never finished it and it was never published. He died aged 66 in 1992.

It wasn't until his wife, my mother, Vera, died in 2011, that in clearing the family home, my brother and I came across the 'Magnum Opus' manuscript. Our initial thoughts were to throw it away, believing that if it had had merit in the 1980's, time would surely have overtaken it now. But I couldn't throw it away without trying to get an 'expert' view on it. In effect, I was seeking permission to 'throw it away'.

This led to my making contact with the Linguistics Department at Reading University where my father, 46 years ago, had completed an MA in the subject. Dr Jacqueline Laws agreed to meet me. We discussed all the above and I left the manuscript with her.

Stephen Tregidgo  
August 2017