

John Hewson 1932-2017



My father John died on 26 November having battled with cancer for 18 months in his typically stoic and modest fashion, supported at home by his wife, Wendy, and a team of devoted carers.

John was raised on the Suburb and spent most of his time living there, but in 1940, when aged 8, he and his family moved to Upton Bishop in Herefordshire to escape the bombs falling on Brim Hill. After a week or so at Highgate School he transferred to a small village school where one teacher taught 40 pupils aged 5-14! He was lucky enough to win a scholarship to Hereford Cathedral School, which he attended as a weekly boarder.

After the war he and his sister Anne moved to Wembley, and Dad was saved from becoming a chartered accountant by the call to National Service. He was proud of his work in the Royal Army Service Corps (Intelligence no less!) Then based in Sussex, he met my Norwegian mother, who was working as an au pair.

The young couple married when both were 20, moved into Brunner Close (bought from his grandmother) and had me two years later. The marriage ended in 1958 and in the early 60s Dad found himself the man about town again, meeting his mates Dick, Mike and Alan at Foote Cone and Belding, at which he had followed his father's footsteps into advertising.

John was a media account executive who bought air-time and Wendy worked for a TV station and sold it! They wed in 1964 at Kensington Registry office, and Chris was born in 1966. In the following years Dad enjoyed a succession of misbehaving dogs, took holidays

in Turkey and well beyond, and loved gathering together his family and friends.

Dad was very successful at work, joining in 1973 the innovative advertising agency, Collett Dickenson and Pearce. He was renowned for developing new ways of working in his field and for mentoring his team members. They repaid him with affection and by taking every opportunity to create scenarios in which he might unwittingly entertain them! Dad had a wry sense of humour and could laugh at himself, which endeared him to others.

After a few years working part time for Portland Outdoor Advertising, Dad retired around 1990, and he took to the golf course and his 1.5 allotments with gusto. Like his mother he was a keen gardener and we were plentiful in beans and various vegetables for many seasons. The balcony of the flat in Homesfield was resplendent in petunias.

John did much for the community on Hampstead Garden Suburb. He was Chair and Treasurer of the Fellowship for many years. During this period he took part in arranging the refurbishment of the Fellowship premises, funded largely by a legacy, and he was very pleased with the improvements. He spent much of his spare time at Fellowship House facilitating events, playing croquet and generally enjoying the company there. He also served teas and lunches at Abbeyfield, read with children at the local primary school, and could always be relied upon as a good neighbour.

Dad was a devoted father and Chris and I both benefited

from his firm but relaxed approach during our teenage years. Becoming a grandad was a high point for him. He was very proud to see Isabel, Ben and Connor come into the world and he followed their progress with sometimes forensic interest. Although thankfully he never took to Facebook! He was delighted to meet Elijah, his first great-grandchild born in April 2017.

John has been generous to so many of us. He let us be ourselves and do our own thing, but the minute we needed him, he was right behind us. He

welcomed his in-laws, and reached out to support many individuals beyond his immediate family, because if he could help, he would. Dad had a sort of moral fibre about taking responsibility, and sharing what he had.

In the family we are missing him for so many things, but John would want us to remember him with wit, more than sentiment... he was a great fan of Peter Cook (some say he even sounded like him) and this quote resonates for me, "I have learned from my mistakes and I am sure I can repeat them exactly."

INGER GORDON

John Hewson's successor at Fellowship pays tribute

I had known of John Hewson for as long as I have lived in the Suburb, but more recently I came to know him more closely when I succeeded him as Chairman of Fellowship. He had been a leading figure in Fellowship having been Treasurer for many years before becoming Chairman, a post he held until 2015. His was a hard act to follow and I was conscious that my actions were very much prefaced by the thought of how John would have responded.

As I came to know him better I realised that he was a man of clear will, with resolution, determination and above all integrity and sincerity. All the more surprising when I realised that he had worked in advertising for over 30 years, for these attributes are not commonly associated with that profession!

In 2014 John was interviewed by Sally Botterill in the form of Desert Island Discs, an occasion many readers will remember. Much of John's early life was revealed, how he had been born in the Suburb and after a bomb had destroyed the Hewson home, he had been evacuated to Herefordshire. Some of that rural upbringing may just have crept into his voice leaving a trace of that soft West Country burr that was so attractive.

John returned to live in the Suburb and after leaving the

advertising world he became involved in local voluntary work, helping children to learn to read at the local school, and joined the Horticultural Society and Fellowship. Peter Falk has told me how they both had a love of dogs and would often meet in Big or Little Wood, whilst walking their dogs.

John was Treasurer whilst Eileen Whelan was Chairman. But when Eileen's infirmity became more serious, John found that he had to assume the role of both Treasurer and Chairman, which he found excessive. Their two dogs conferred and by canine agreement Peter agreed to become Treasurer and John Chairman. Perhaps I should get a dog!

With John's support and encouragement, Eileen Whelan's legacy was used to refurbish Fellowship House, and though ill-health curtailed his role as Chairman, he was able to see Fellowship House emerge as the fine building and flourishing enterprise it is today. As you enter Fellowship's garden and the sun is shining, you can tell the time of day on the handsome sundial which was given to Fellowship by John.

And John Hewson was given the unique honour by Fellowship to be "Life Time Honorary President" an accolade that always will be his.

JOHN MATHIAS

Joan Beales son, Peter, reflects on his mother's life in a letter to our editor, following our obituary in the last issue

Dear Terry, Three thoughts have struck me as I've been thinking about Joan.

First, she – often with Leonie – made full use of the theatre visits that the HGS Theatre Club used to arrange, and I do hope, incidentally, that that excellent service has been maintained.

(Unfortunately not. See page 6 of our last issue, Ed)

Second, her fondness for the Suburb included extensive walks on the Heath, often ending at the Spaniards, particularly when her beloved Labrador, Max was still with us; she was pleased to be able to do things in return for the place that had been her home for so long – so was a Governor at Childs Way for a time as well as all her RA work.

Lastly, and when not driving her old Honda that she had bought with Mick when he

retired, she was a great user of the H2: for example, until quite close to her move to Worthing she would come into the City almost every week to have lunch with me and other family members and friends that were around. The Cannon Street El Vinos was her favourite haunt, the staff liked her and would always ensure that she had the table that she liked best.

So many fond memories but, if truth be told, she missed the Suburb after she left and would always share with us the news that she picked up. I often think that if she hadn't had that accident on the Tube, which shook her confidence so much (in spite of the brave face she put on it), she might not have decided that it was time to move on.

All best wishes, Peter Beales



Ruta Teteris 1926-2017

Ruta was born in Ventpils, a town on the NW coast of Latvia, on 7 September 1926. Her parents were both teachers. Her father was the head teacher at Ventpils primary school No.1, and also founder and head of Ventpils public library up until the time the family was forced to flee their homeland in 1944 in fear of the advancing Russian forces. Ruta and her family were on the last fishing boat carrying refugees, which crossed the Baltic Sea to the Swedish island of Gotland. Ruta, her brother and parents eventually moved to Lund in Southern Sweden, where Ruta's father worked as a librarian at Lund University.

Ruta was a promising music student in Latvia, but her family's life as refugees meant that any further music studies had to be put on hold. Ruta studied Baltic philology at Stockholm University, and then followed in her father's footsteps and qualified as a music librarian.

Ruta met her future husband, Karlis Teteris, in 1950 when she attended a Latvian song festival in Leicester, organised by the Latvian refugee community in England. Ruta and Karlis were married in Stockholm on 26 December 1957, and moved to London in January 1958.

Ruta's husband died in 1975 and Ruta was left alone to bring up her two young children, Maris and Jana. She spent her professional career working as a librarian in various public and school libraries in London, before retiring in the late 1980s. Any free time she had was devoted to her family, the Latvian school in London and various Latvian charitable organisations.

When she retired, Ruta continued volunteering for various Latvian organisations in the UK, and with the political changes in Latvia she also began a new career as a translator and interpreter. She continued translating until shortly before her 90th birthday, as it was very important for her to keep her mind active.

Nevertheless her main interests following retirement were horticulture and particularly growing roses. Her passion and

enthusiasm were infectious, and therefore, it comes as no surprise that she was known throughout the Suburb as the 'Rose lady' and a very knowledgeable gardener. Ruta moved to the Suburb in 1981 and lived in Asmunds Place up until the end of 2011, when her mobility started to make life difficult. She spent the last years of her life at The Orchard.

Ruta participated in Suburb life in many ways. She was an allotment holder for many years and served as the secretary for the Asmunds Place site. She also helped with the gardening at Abbeyfield House and she took part in the Trust's Suburb Appraisal. However it was the Horticultural Society that received the most attention; she worked on organising the library; served as membership secretary for many years; sat on the committee until November last year; organised a rose festival; won the Rose Cup 12 times and the Banksian medal once.

Ruta first returned to Latvia in 1988, when political changes in the region made it easier to travel there. Whilst her dream of returning to live in Latvia did not materialise, she continued to visit Latvia regularly over the next 20 years. In between meeting her many relatives and enjoying Latvia's cultural life, she acted as an adviser to libraries in both the capital Riga and her hometown of Ventpils. She also taught translation, and assisted a number of museums, universities and schools.

Ruta lived a long and productive life, and never regarded herself as old. In her opinion, age was just a number, and a person's good heart, actions and interests were far more significant. For her the family, life-long learning, self-development and keeping busy were of utmost importance. She always tried to encourage those around her to follow these ideals, and loved helping other people whenever she could. She had so many varied interests, and despite her increasing lack of mobility she kept her mind active right up until the very end of her life.

JANA TETERIS

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