

Obituary - Harry Jones 1931-2019

By Rochelle Dazely



Harry was still coaching and doing his armoury until the week of his death. Looking back at Harry, he was always a sportsman. He enjoyed many sports including time as a competitive and successful cyclist before joining Ruislip FC in the 1950s. As a competitive fencer he was successful enough to be on an Olympic Training Squad, narrowly missing out on competing.

Harry met Jean when they were fencing at the Excalibur getting married in 1963. Sadly, Jean died in 1981. Harry brought up their children with help from family and friends. Kirsten Payne said, "He coped with the challenges so well". Moving to Salle Eton both of his children Ian and Karen enjoyed success as junior fencers and Harry began coaching in the late 80s.

There have been so many amazing comments about this man. Words coming in include; supportive, generous - especially of his time, non-conformist, mischievous, kind, inquisitive, a great listener, inspiring, enthusiastic, great friend, dedicated, selfless, friendly and practical.

Most of us knew him as a coach and an armourer. He was always happy to help and get involved with events across the county (BB&O) and region (Southern). The BB&O committee said 'he was always doing something most of us didn't really realise needed doing until we needed it doing'. He was also known and loved by the broader fencing community. Dave Lichfield noted that Harry was 'very great loss - a great friend'.

Becoming a fulltime coach in the early 1990's Harry worked at various schools including High Wycombe Royal Grammar School, Dr Challoners, Wycombe Abbey, Eton College and Headington School and Wellsbourne FC as well as Salle Eton. Harry had a good eye for who had potential, encouraging some English and British Champions and BF/EF internationals. Just from RGS he worked with Alistair Gerrard, Ed Rysdale, Adrian Griffin ("omnipresent during my fencing career and an excellent ambassador"), Tom Bennett ("Harry was instrumental in shaping my fencing career and I am so grateful for everything that he



did for me") and Paul Dazeley ("an absolute privilege to have such an inspiring person - a great many of us are indebted to him and will never forget him"). At competitions he would always encourage fencers and was always ready to chat.

Harry's background was as an engineer. In his spare time, he loved driving and working on sports cars, a favourite being his MX5. Often driving fencers to a competition, memories of very long journeys were recalled by Nick Payne and Sharon Chan.

Harry became an armourer, often creating bits of equipment to use to assist with tasks. He was regularly seen in this role at Eton LPJS, Slough Open and many county/region competitions, only requesting a decent cuppa and a treat (or 2!).

Harry was so proud of his family. Whenever you got to chat about them his face would light up, especially when talking about his grandchildren. Harry is a great loss to family, friends and fencing.

More memories will be going up on the new Southern Fencing website when it is launched.