

Robert John Shepherd

1937 - 2019

OBITUARY

I have recently learned of the death, in Canada last October, of Robert John (Bob) Shepherd. Bob was born in Finsbury Park and in 1948 came to Stationers by way of Stroud Green Junior School. Whilst he had a good academic career it was on the sports field that he really excelled being awarded colours for both athletics and football. In 1953 he was selected to represent the school in the Middlesex Schools Finals at the White City where he finished 4th in the 400yds. His fifth and final year at Stationers was marked by his being elected House Captain of Meredith.

However, it was on the football field where he really shone, securing the position of 1st eleven goalkeeper as early as the start of his third year, retaining it up to his leaving the school in 1953. The pen pictures that appeared in the school magazine at the end of that season said of him "A big hearted player he has again sprung a surprise. First in his usual



1st XI SOCCER TEAM, 1952-3
Front row (left to right): R. D. Hermans, D. G. Lyraes, T. G. Butler, L. W. Marsh, B. S. Williams. Back row: A. J. Berwick, P. R. Hawkins (Capt.), R. J. Shepherd, B. K. Morley, P. Cooper, S. H. Behn.—By courtesy of the "Hornsey Journal."

role as a goalkeeper, he enthused the defence with his fine play. Then, after Christmas, he became a centre forward of the harassing type - he supplied the forward line with just the punch which maintains pressure on opposing defences. Already a robust and dangerous leader, not only helping other forwards but also netting with both head and feet" He was already developing those qualities that were to see him successfully through life.

On leaving Stationers he joined Barclays Bank while his football career progressed at Hendon FC, playing in their youth side. Very soon National Service beckoned and Bob went into the R.A.F He was trained in Signals being posted to Singapore where he spent some 1½ years at R.A.F. Changi. In 1957, after demobilisation, he joined the Sales Department of Olivetti then in 1958 married Ann whom he first met when he was 15. At this time, he was to be found at Underhill, not playing for the O.S but up the road at our noisy neighbours, Barnet FC where, as a goal keeper, he played in their reserves

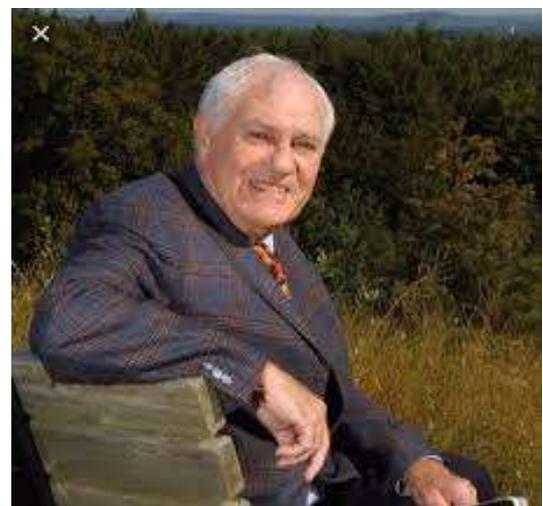
It was at this time that several of his workmates emigrated to Canada where they found employment with Olivetti Canada. Bob and Ann decided to follow them and in April 1960 set sail for a new life over the ocean, settling in the Toronto area. After a short break, Bob again worked for Olivetti. Initially in Toronto and then, as a national sales manager, in four separate provinces in less than a decade. Finally, in 1972, they returned to Toronto, settling in the nearby township of Uxbridge where they bought 10 acres of hardwood brush on which they built their dream home. This they surrounded with beautiful gardens which were often featured on the Uxbridge town tour.

Throughout his life Bob believed in lifelong learning and was fascinated by new ideas and developments. He learnt to play the piano, played bridge, learnt Spanish, went running, read a lot and became a keen gardener. He even found time, twice a day, to meditate and also practiced yoga. Perhaps therefore it was no surprise when, in 1977, a change of career beckoned and he spent some time studying computing at York University in Toronto after which he set up his own business, the RJS Group, a supplier of cash registers and point of sale systems.

Bob was passionate about living in Uxbridge and keen on contributing to its betterment. In 2000 he sold the business and retired and then, in 2003 was elected to his local council; serving as Mayor between 2006 and 2010., a role in which he excelled especially in the support of small businesses in the town. Many years before he had also developed an interest in the natural environment and, in his own words, become an avid environmentalist. His time as Mayor of Uxbridge was marked by his being the driving force in gaining for the municipality "The Fields of Uxbridge", an area of some 70 acres and which is now a multiuse outdoor recreational area. He was also instrumental in winning for the town the designation of the Trail Capital of Canada with over 136 miles of managed trails within its borders.

Although passionate about business his focus throughout life was on his family and he taught his children to live honestly and with integrity and to follow their passions in life believing that in doing so success would follow.

In June 2019 Bob was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He chose quality of life as opposed to quantity and decided to forgo any treatment. At a meeting of the Council on the 23rd of September he was honoured by the naming of one of the winding paths in the Countryside Preserve "The Mayor Bob Shepherd Woodland Trail." In thanking the Council, he said he could not think of a better way to be remembered. Bob had registered for assisted dying and in his last moments, in true Bob Shepherd style, asked his son to check that there wasn't anything anyone present needed to ask him. He just needed to be sure there was no unfinished business. Bob passed away peacefully on the 23rd October, in the presence of his family, leaving his wife Ann, four children, fifteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Bob stood for leader of the council about 7 years ago, and It occurs that some of Bob's contemporaries might like to see and hear him again in this candidate video at www.durhamregion.com/video/4865497/

Lucien Perring - with help from Bob's daughter, Lynda Sauder