

## Harold Perry 07/07/25 to 18/05/20



Harold Ernest Perry was born 7th July 1925 in North Middlesex Hospital to Father Ernie, a Commercial Traveller for Provisions, and mother, Lily, whose family, the Higgins', ran the Bedford Arms pub in Finsbury Park. Harold was joined by younger siblings, Madge, who sadly passed away in 2019, and later Barry, who survives and is living in Ireland.

The family lived in Wood Green and had quite a sporty background. Mum Lily was a keen swimmer and the family were stalwarts of the local Tennis Club. Young Harold was a keen swimmer and cyclist and only recently pointed out to us the Rookery Café near Welham Green, Hatfield, to which, as a 14-year-old, he and his cycling club friends would ride on a Sunday morning from Wood Green.

Harold attended Noel Park Primary School where his 1932 school report noted, as a July baby, “a good start from our youngest boy. He will improve”!!

He moved onto The Stationers Company School in Hornsey, with which, although no longer in existence, he retained contact in his later years through the Old Stationers Association. He was their President in 1971, and latterly, a member of the Stationers Company and the Stationers Company Masonic Lodge. His academic progress may not have lived up to the hopes of his earlier school report as his December 1940 school report shows 18 detentions during the term and the summary comment: “Is generally weak and making no serious efforts to remedy it.”

In September 1939, at age 14, with the outbreak of War, he was amongst 280 pupils from Stationers to be evacuated to Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, from where the school continued to operate. We do not know much about this period other than he was separated from younger siblings Madge and Barry who were evacuated to Wales.

In 1941 he left Stationers to join a West End firm of Estate Agents, Lane Savill & Co, to train as a surveyor. However, by 1943 (at age 18), he left Lane Savill to volunteer for the Fleet Air Arm. His reference from Lane Savill said that “he has proved himself a pupil of more than usual ability, having both a pleasing and reliable personality and one showing a keen sense of responsibility”.

This reference shows how quickly the young adult Harold had grown up since his school days and was becoming the much-loved man so recognisable to us all.

Harold's war service was varied, training with the Fleet Air Arm in the USA and Canada, albeit failing to acquire his pilot's wings; being transferred to the Army and then posted to the Indian Military Academy. Commissioned in 1945, he served with the Indian Army in India and Java, returning in 1947 to join the Royal Fusiliers in Britain, before being demobbed in May 1948 with the rank of Lieutenant.

During this last posting, Harold was based at camp in Meriden, Warwickshire, when, at a village hall dance, he met future wife, Vera. Harold and Vera were married at the Parish Church of Temple Balsall on 3 January 1948 and made home in Warwickshire. In 1953, son Michael was born, followed in 1957 by Richard.

Harold had resumed his studies as a surveyor after the war and qualified as an Associate of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in 1956, joining the Birmingham Quantity Surveying practice of Silk & Frazier where he became a partner in 1960. He became a full fellow of the RICS in 1966. In 1963, as a native Londoner, Harold was chosen to lead the expansion of Silk & Frazier with the opening of a new London office and after much long-distance house hunting, he and Vera agreed to buy a property still under construction in Arlington, Woodside Park. This house was to remain the family home for over 55 years.

Always well turned out, I remember Harold leaving home each morning to catch the Underground to the new London office dressed every inch the city gent in his bowler hat and starched collars, which were sent out to the laundry and returned every fortnight. Business would later take Harold overseas with some hair-raising trips to Nigeria, Iran and Saudi Arabia, but eventually he retired from Quantity Surveying in 1990. I recall that he held 2 separate retirement parties at the RAC Club in Pall Mall to ensure that his many business associates could all attend.

Upon returning to London, Harold quite soon joined South Herts Golf Club, as did Vera a year or two later. The club was to become the hub of their social life for over four decades, and where they made many great friends and acquaintances. He would not mind me saying that he was not the most accomplished golfer, leaving it to Vera to take the glory and bring home the trophies.

Balancing a busy professional life with golf, Harold served on the South Herts Committee for a number of years but could not commit the time necessary to serve as Club Captain. He did provide his professional expertise during the planning and redevelopment of the Men's Locker Rooms and later, in the building of the current Professionals Shop. He was rewarded with the Presidency of the Club from 2005 to 2007 and later served as a Club Trustee, protecting the club's legal rights over the course and club property.

Golf and South Herts Golf Club provided Harold and Vera with many friendships and was instrumental to keeping them active throughout their 80's.

Their love of golf took them, and their golf clubs, on holiday to the Penina Golf Resort on The Algarve with their good friends from South Herts, Marjorie and Stan Whines. It may have been after a glass of wine or two that the Perry's and the Whines signed up for 20 years' time share where they enjoyed many happy holidays with friends and family.

In retirement, Harold and Vera discovered long-haul travel, visiting Kenya, Thailand, Florida and a number of Caribbean islands. They later became hooked on visiting St Lucia, staying at “Le Sport Spa” resort for over a dozen years in succession. They frequently enjoyed a sundowner of Rum Punch or a Pernod in the Piano Bar after a hard day of massages and treatments.

Harold was a very sociable person and, apart from visiting the nineteenth hole after a round of golf, enjoyed regular lunchtime get togethers in London with groups from the Old Stationers, and other acquaintances, until caring for Vera began to take over.

By January 2019 it became clear that caring for Vera was taking its toll on Harold and they moved to Oakview Lodge Care Home in Welwyn Garden City. He was never far from Vera’s side, making sure that she had anything that she needed, but sadly, she passed away in November 2019.

Harold was fit and well and in typically good humour until only a couple of weeks ago. He had continued to take interest in the daily newspaper, the sports pages and crossword. Whilst he seemed only a little off colour for a few days, he was suddenly hospitalised and declined quickly. He maintained his sense of humour until the end, endearing himself to all who met him and the staff at Oakview to whom we send much thanks for their care.

To quote Harold: “people ask what is my secret of long life and good health?” With a twinkle in his eye he would continue: “It is to always do, eat and drink the things that people tell me not to!”

To conclude, I will steal some wording from an email received this week:

“Harold was one of the best of fella’s you could have wished to have met. A Gentleman in every respect. He’s played a great innings and will be sorely missed by us all”.