



Adrian Bird

1947 - 2020

Many in the Parish, and further afield, were sad to learn of the passing of their dear friend and associate Adrian Bird who died on

Thursday 9th April 2020. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife Agy, his daughter Emma and grandson Alex.

Adrian was an inspiration and a tireless driving force for so many organisations that we now all take for granted. Bramshott Open Gardens, the Sunken Lanes, River Wey Trust, Liphook in Bloom, The Heritage Centre, the Parish Council, Liphook Carnival Committee, Liphook Preservation Society . . . the list is endless.

In this tribute to Adrian we have drawn together some memories and anecdotes from his many friends and acquaintances who were privileged to know and work with him.

Adrian's father worked in the City and the family moved to Rectory Lane in Bramshott in 1951. Adrian attended Bramshott Chase Infants School, a private day school and later was a boarder at St Peter's Court Prep School, Broadstairs. He later attended Charterhouse School in Hurtmore, Godalming and went on to Trinity College, Cambridge where he studied for, and attained his B.A. in Architecture.

In the late 1950s he joined the newly formed Liphook Young Conservatives where he met, among others, Richard King

with whom he was to travel first to Europe and then the world tour of the Pillock, an ex Warrington Corporation Transport double decker bus. These adventures are documented in Richard's excellent book "Band on the Bus" (*The History Press 2017 ISBN 9780750970204*). Richard recalls that "I probably grew closer to Adrian than any of the others on our adventurous journey to India, and his good humour and skill as a conciliator and mediator took the heat out of many potentially fractious arguments. His easy-going personality and quirky sense of humour concealed a stubborn streak and he had a habit of doing his own thing in a laid back sort of way".

Sadly Adrian who had travelled as far as India had to curtail this journey as he was on a 'gap' year from his studies at Cambridge and needed to return to complete his finals, but not before he and his fellow travellers had performed before no less a personage than The Shah of Iran, his wife and their court. It was reported that His Serene Highness was so captivated by 'The Philanderers' performance that, at his personal instruction, had doubled their fee!

After Cambridge Adrian joined an architectural partnership in Guildford, but when he was made redundant in 1976 this gave him the impetus he needed to set up his own practice which he did from a small office in London Road, Liphook. Over the years Adrian has been involved in the construction and modification of many buildings in the parish including the Village Hall, various character houses and the large block of flats at the junction of Midhurst Road and Station Road. His knowledge of planning regulations and close relationship with the planning department at East Hants District Council enabled him to advise prospective buyers and developers, always with an eye to preservation of the conservation areas.



Adrian was for a time a member of Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council and advised on the planning committee.

Since establishing himself in Liphook he immersed himself in protecting the environment in many ways. In 1984 he established The River Wey Trust, a registered charity to co-ordinate historical and wildlife conservation and management along the southern branch of the River Wey. Typical of this work was the repair and restoration of the medieval aqueduct across the River Wey opposite Radford Park which is now a protected structure and part of the almost unique medieval irrigation system which Adrian had plans to continue to reclaim and restore.



Adrian championed the care of the Bramshott sunken lanes and once a year he would arrange for a road closure, and assisted by a loyal hard working team, fortified with tea and cake from grateful residents, he would arrange for the hedgerows to be cut back and fallen limbs to be removed.

He became a founder member and later Chairman of the Liphook Preservation Society in 1976 and, encouraged by local historian Laurence Giles, he became the custodian of a substantial archive of maps, notes, letters, diaries and artefacts. These were stored for many years in his office until the Heritage Centre, which he was instrumental in creating and designing, was established in the then new Millennium Centre.



When the Liphook Marketing Panel was founded in 1997 Adrian immediately became an enthusiastic member. His contacts with the Parish Council and East Hants District Council were very useful as was his practical approach to



getting things done. Liphook in Bloom was an initiative of the Marketing Panel and started in the same year. Paul Johnson, a fellow founding member along with Andy House and Bob Hall, recalls “Once Liphook in Bloom was established he became heavily involved in the physical work and had the chance to use one of his beloved tractors and trailer for transporting green waste. He donated chipped bark from the Bramshott Sunken Lanes project and was always ready to lend a hand when needed, especially when it involved tractor driving”.



Both Adrian and his wife Agy were enthusiastic supporters of Bramshott Open Gardens. The first Bramshott Open Gardens was organised in 1987 to help raise funds for repairs to the roof of the historic St Mary’s Church. Twenty five houses opened their gardens to visitors during that first summer weekend, and it proved so popular that over £1,000 was collected through ticket sales, raffles, and donations. Everyone worked very hard and enjoyed sharing the pleasure of their gardening efforts with enthusiastic and knowledgeable visitors. After that first weekend it was agreed unanimously by the villagers that the Open Gardens should feature as a regular biannual fundraising event, and it has been held, with one single exception, every two years since then. Angela Glass recalls “Adrian and Agy worked tirelessly on their garden at ‘Mallards’ and this was one of the most popular stops for visitors to the increasingly popular Bramshott Open Gardens”.

Few people are aware of the Arts & Crafts architect and garden designer Harry Inigo Triggs despite the fact that he lived in

the handsome house, Little Boarhunt, just off the Portsmouth Road that he himself designed. He also designed the old vicarage next to the Post Office sorting office and several other houses and features in the area. Adrian certainly did know about him and, aware of the fact that although he had written two books himself, no book had been written about him. Adrian had done a considerable amount of research towards putting together a book. He discussed this proposal with Paul Robinson a friend, bookseller and ex-publisher. "Adrian was passionate about Triggs both as a man and as an architect. He was contemporary with Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll and felt strongly that he should be better recognised".

Philip Jordan, who worked with Adrian on the River Wey Trust, Liphook Preservation Society, Liphook in Bloom and latterly on the Deers Hut float says of Adrian, "He was remarkably adept in persuading people to offer support and help in the activities of which he was passionate about. He realised that a direct request for involvement would alert his 'target' and possibly create the barriers of forewarned resistance.

No, Adrian was far too subtle for such an approach. His was the appeal to the subconscious with a gentle hint here, an oblique suggestion of a minor task there and the general environment of good humour and fun. Over time you were reeled in to become an enthusiast. Once involved Adrian's own example of dedication, achievement of results and pleasure to be involved with became a long term encouragement of involvement".

Roger Miller, who knew Adrian for over forty two years, endorses Philip's comments and recalls the enthusiastic leadership of Adrian during the recovery of many fallen ashlar stones from the river bed next to the aqueduct which were subsequently re-fixed into position. The completed restored aqueduct is a lasting memorial to Adrian.

The combination of a full time job and all these extra-mural responsibilities it is a wonder that he found time for any leisure activities, however he always found time for walking. He set himself a target to walk the length and the breadth of Great Britain which he did in sections; firstly from Selsey Bill to North Cape and from Cromer in the east to St Davids in the west. He also walked the length of the River Severn, the longest river in Great Britain, from Plynlimon to the Bristol Channel. Whilst not exactly endurance walking, his precision planning was careful to take in sites of interest and, at the end of the day, a satisfactory hostelry for bed, board, book and beer.

In 1984 Adrian joined Richard King, Peter Harris and one or two others for what was to become an annual walk in Scotland. They walked across Knoydart, a beautiful remote and rugged region in the North West Highlands. Richard King recalls "we were sleeping overnight in bothies, unlocked shelters and abandoned crofts far from the beaten track. Adrian was one of my oldest and dearest friends. Together we created so many precious memories which I treasure, and I shall miss him immensely".

Peter Harris added "I recall that on one occasion Adrian and I set off towards a pub that he knew of ten miles away. We found the pub but it was closed! So we walked the ten miles back to a bothy and discovered that half the roof was missing! Adrian had bagged the roofed section but later relented and allowed me to bed down in his half". Adrian was putting the finishing touches to this year's Scottish jaunt just three weeks before he died.



No mention of Adrian would be complete without reference to his contribution to the Deers Hut float. Paul Johnson recalls "Whatever the theme, Adrian always added a bit extra. Often physically by getting us to attach a fourth trailer to our already overlong cavalcade, upon which he would make an obscure reference to the main float whilst doing completely his 'own thing'. Who could forget him lying on his back in a full body skeleton stocking, performing 'Pilates of the Caribbean', sometimes joined by his grandson Alex, whilst the rest of us were being Pirates"!



Adrian's sense of humour was as sharp as a razor. Paul Robinson recalls "an innocent remark or political statement would immediately generate one of his outrageous puns, and we would all fall about".

Thank you Adrian for all you did and all you were.