

ADDENDUM No. 1 TO OLD MORGANIANS

NEWSLETTER No. 17, October 2017

R.I.P. Rodney K. Browne.

Rodney had been a member of Old Morganians for only about 3 years but, though living in Eastbourne, has been a Patron of Bridgwater Carnival for numerous years. He was at Dr. Morgan's from 1951 to 1956 and had to all intents disappeared "off the screen" as I had tried many times to find a contact address or telephone number for him. Then, in 2014 I think it was, he dropped into the Carnival office and made enquiries about fellow old members of DMS. Thankfully, someone was on duty who could give him Mike Dodden's and my details and he got in touch – with Mike to become a member of OM's, and with me to tell me what he had been up to all those years since leaving DMS and to renew friendships as I obviously passed on his contact details to all those in our old class who he wanted to contact. Rodney came to the 2015 and 2016 OM dinners and thoroughly enjoyed getting back into school friendships. His lovely wife, Elaine, had been down to Bridgwater with him for many carnivals and she told us that Rodney always took her along the Durleigh Road to show her where he had been to school and also where he had lived. She came to Bridgwater with him on the dinner day in 2015 and had dinner on her own at the Harvester attached to the Bristol Road Premier Inn where they were staying. When we got to know that, and after we had also met up in Eastbourne and met Elaine, my wife and her enjoyed a dinner together at the same Harvester while Rodney and I were at the 2016 dinner. We knew Rodney had a kidney problem but thought, because he said so, that things had slightly improved. However, it was a great shock to hear from Elaine in June that Rodney had passed away at home in Eastbourne, with his family and carers with him, on the morning of Tuesday 13th. June. He leaves his wife, daughter, and two grandchildren. He has done so much for the local community in Eastbourne – the local hospital friends, the Devonshire Club, and even the Mother's Union's accounts.

The photo below is reproduced from the June 2016 newsletter and shows Rodney on the right, myself on the left, at Rodney and Elaine's home in Eastbourne.



Rodney sent me this “Short History” of his life after DMS back in 2014:

SHORT HISTORY

After leaving Bridgwater in 1964, and after getting married, I moved to Wokingham for two years and then went to Zambia and was there for seven years. In the meantime I qualified as a Chartered Accountant. I was employed by the government to train Zambians to take over their own country after independence from Northern Rhodesia. As you probably remember Ian Smith was Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia. Interesting times, which if we meet sometime I can tell you about.

My daughter was born in Zambia and caused a stir going through immigration even in the early seventies. We were there for seven years and returned to U.K. and settled in Plymouth, Devon as the situation in Zambia was beginning to change.

My daughter and family now live in Southfields (Wimbledon) with two grandchildren, Thomas 10 years and Hannah 12 years.

I was in Plymouth for 26 years and then moved to London for ten years where I was sorting out companies who had difficulties with trading, non payment of tax/ Vat etc. I was on my own for the ten years in London although near my daughter who had become a consultant in the Health Service.

I met Elaine seven years ago and we married in Eastbourne and live in the Meads district 5 minutes from the sea.

I am involved in several charities, the biggest being The Friends of Eastbourne hospital which has a turnover of a million and a half pounds per annum. I am the Treasurer. We have probably given the hospital for equipment some 9 million pounds over the last ten years. People in Eastbourne are very generous!! I am also in Rotary where we raise a lot of money for good causes. When the Somerset levels overflowed early in the year we raised a thousand pounds to send to the district which includes Bridgwater. We were fortunate to receive from our sister club in Ghent a thousand euros as they had seen the pictures on European television.

We were in Bridgwater at the end of September to see the fair and also visit the house I lived in at 3 Durleigh Road, the first house past St Matthew's field. The colours of the paintwork are still the same as it was when my parents left in the early seventies. We called in on the present owner and had a look at the alterations they have achieved. We also come to the carnival (not this year). Next year we will be coming with friends from Eastbourne for a few days I am a patron of the carnival.

Rodney Browne

7th November 2014

Unfortunately we never did get to chat about the 'interesting times' in Rhodesia but we did enjoy lunches out together in and near Eastbourne, & at the White Hart, Congresbury..

May he rest in peace and rise in glory. *Geoff. Marchant, Editor OM Newsletter, June 2017.*

We were very pleased that OM & fellow classmate Brian Haggett, who lives in Crawley, attended Rodney's funeral. He said “Many people there, standing room only.” Elaine also sent us an order of service and said over 150 attended. She had spoken to a gentleman who said he went to school with Rod. Brian said that there was also mention of Bridgwater Grammar School for Girls when he spoke to the family.

See a futher Tribute on next page...

From “Hospitality” magazine No. 147 – The Friends of Eastbourne Hospital's Quarterly Magazine.

“RODNEY BROWNE

It is with great sadness that I record the passing of Rodney Browne after a long and courageous battle against the illness that finally claimed him. Rodney spent much of his life living and working in senior accountancy roles within the Commonwealth and, on moving to Eastbourne with his wife Elaine, approached the volunteers' Office at the District General Hospital in 2008 to offer his services. Realising the wealth of experience he possessed they referred him to the Friends to see if he would be of interest – an understatement!

Rodney was immediately recruited as Assistant Treasurer to support the Treasurer with much needed help and expertise in a role that was becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Rodney was elected as a Trustee of the Friends and contributed not only on financial matters but wisely on many of the issues that arose. As the role of Treasurer became more complex, he was invited to take on this role – a position he held with distinction until the increasing demands of treatment for his illness prevented him giving it the attention he felt it deserved.

Rodney was both a gentleman and a gentle man - “old school” might be seen by some as being slightly derogatory; it is in Rodney's case certainly a compliment. He was always immaculately dressed (collar and tie most definitely order of the day) and never late for an appointment. Indeed he would always be ready well ahead of time and it seemed, no matter how early I might have been, Rodney would always be there to greet me. He would put his point across firmly but gently. However, he would listen to and, if need be, accept different points of view. Full of compassion, Rodney was a great asset to the Friends of the Hospital.

I am proud to have been able to call Rodney my friend – but he was more than that, he was OUR friend and he will be sadly missed and remembered with great affection by all who knew him.

Peter Nash, President, Friends Of Eastbourne Hospital.”

The above was reproduced verbatim from Dr Peter Nash's Tribute in Hospitality Autumn Edition July – October 2017, Number 147, kindly sent to OM Editor by Rodney's widow Elaine with the express wish that we could find room for it in our own newsletter – Our great thanks to her for that and much appreciation of Peter's remarks; it gives our “Old School” a great compliment too. Elaine also arranged for the photo of Rodney below to be sent to us.

