

Obituary:

Dennis Godfrey Bunce (OEI 935-40)



We are saddened to announce the death of Mr Dennis Godfrey Bunce (OEI935-40) who recently passed away at the age of 95 after an appendectomy. Dennis won a Foundation Scholarship to attend Emanuel where he flourished and is referenced in several Prize Day lists, including 1937 where in 2B his "General Proficiency" was noted and later in 1941, where his London General School Certificate was included in 'The Hants and Sussex News'. In recent correspondence with Dennis's family we were touched to hear that during a clear-out he asked after this book, which he won as a prize all those years ago when he was in 2B!

Dennis was in Clyde and played rugby for the House, was a cross-country runner and like many of his contemporaries was in the Junior Training Corps. Whilst in his final year (5M) Dennis was a member of the Dorset Club which engaged in debates, music, and other cultural activities aimed at older pupils. He was briefly evacuated to Petersfield and later donated to the memorial fund which was given to the local hospital in Petersfield as a 'thank you' gesture from Emanuel School.

In his youth, Dennis was a staunch Chelsea fan and regularly cheered them on at Stamford Bridge. However, cricket was his main sporting love and he often visited the Oval to support Surrey. He did well at school, but in the end left at sixteen and joined Sun Life Insurance where he worked for some years. In 1963 Dennis took the plunge and went it alone, starting his own insurance company which was very successful.

Sadly, we were not in touch with Dennis when we wrote our 'Emanuel School at War' book but he would surely have featured prominently in our Italian section! After being called up in 1942, he joined the Reconnaissance Corps and

later a Tank Regiment before being sent to Sandhurst to train as an Officer. It goes to show the different experiences individuals had in the war; whilst D-Day was raging Dennis was training in the Scottish Highlands! He often said to his family that he had a "good war" after three great years in Italy.

Dennis's love of Italy lasted all his life and indeed his last holiday was in the northern region of the country in July of 2019. Whilst there, first time around, he completed a correspondence course to pass his insurance exams and used to spend happy Sunday afternoons in St Mark's Square. On his 21st birthday he was ill in hospital in Rome, but when he returned to the UK his parents threw a party for him to celebrate his birthday and his safe return.

Dennis met his wife Margaret whilst on holiday in 1950 and later got married on 14 May 1953. As he was an Army officer he had points to buy a new house and was able to purchase one in Potters Bar. In 1957 and 1959 their children Sheila and Michael were born.

As the insurance business flourished Dennis joined both the Freemasons and the Conservative Party in which he was Chairman of a local group, even meeting Margaret and Dennis Thatcher at a Conservative Party social in Finchley. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Dennis and his wife Margaret had a full social life and both loved a good party. Dennis eventually became the Worshipful Master of the Lodge of Integrity and President of the Rotary Club of Barnet. Margaret passed away in 2003 and the couple sadly just missed out on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Dennis leaves behind a large family whom he loved and will miss him, including his children Sheila and Michael, four grandchildren and a great granddaughter born in 2018 whom he took delight in hearing about. He was a great family man and when his grandchildren became of university age Dennis was known to drive to distant places and take them and their friends out for meals. 95 is a great innings and Dennis lived independently until the end and his family take heart that he had a full life which touched many others.

