

Obituary:

Raymond Geoffrey Sampson (OEI 1953-58)



Raymond Geoffrey Sampson was born on 14th October 1941 in Mitcham Surrey. Following Brenda, Brian and Peter, he was the youngest child of James and Lilian.

His pre-Dorset days were all London-based and he attended Emanuel School, Wandsworth. He enjoyed school and was a keen scholar, and this thirst for knowledge never left him. Ray's memory was phenomenal and his family named him The Oracle as whenever an answer was required, he could somehow summon the right one.

Ray's first job was as a book keeper with Ellerman Shipping Lines and he subsequently moved on to Brian Reidy Associates, a PR company. PR in the 'seventies, was one long party and long business lunches became a way of life. Ray's second home was Simpson's in the City, where the bar staff knew his name and he spent his days entertaining clients, comrades and passing friends.

Ray would make friends wherever he went and it is little wonder that he was successful in PR, his sociable disposition made him the perfect fit for the job.

Eventually, though, he moved to the London Metal Exchange where he worked as a Marketing Consultant. In this role, he travelled the world, delivering seminars and attending global conferences whilst finding the time to explore some of the world's great golf courses. These trips and the people he met, would stay with him forever and his repertoire of stories became legendary: his travels giving him a never-ending supply of experiences to draw on as he recalled, with great animation, his experiences from Russia, Australia, the Philippines and so many more.

Ray took an interest in so many things. He loved both watching and participating

in sport. He grew up playing cricket with his brother Pete and became Captain of Bellevue Cricket Club as well as playing for his old school team. His joy was the sport itself, and when watching matches he never had a favourite, simply relishing a really good game. Ray shared his love for all things sporty with his children and many summer days were spent playing cricket out on Wandsworth Common, with winter tobogganing in Richmond Park. In his later years, many an hour was spent together shouting at the television, righting the wrongs of any unsportsmanlike behaviour.

Ray was also a peaceful man who loved to be outdoors, and the joy he took from nature remained with him throughout his life. Even in the middle of the winter, he would somehow be sporting a suntan. As a young man, he sailed with his brother Brian, and lovingly remembered waking one morning in a bay filled with whales. He loved the trees and the birdsong, finding sanctuary out walking with his dogs Sheeba and Nellie upon commons and cliff tops.

In the early 1990s, after a few too many wet camping holidays, Ray bought a holiday home in Swanage and the town became a firm favourite with the family. Summer holidays were spent crabbing on the pier, fossil hunting and on long walks exploring the Jurassic coast. When he retired, Ray decided to make Swanage his home and, as his health deteriorated, Polly and Geoff followed him to Dorset to take care of him.

Christmas at Ray's house was always a lively time and he was never happier than when he had all his kids and family around him, playing games, swigging whisky and eating together.

And then, there was his writing. Ray had always been a writer – his jobs had

involved writing. In retirement, he wanted to write a novel. One of his many passions was the Peninsular War, so setting his book, Ridley's Revenge, in that period was a no-brainer.

To his many friends and his family Ray appeared invincible. There was nothing he couldn't do and nothing he couldn't put right. Many tributes have referred to him as the perfect gentleman, a gentle giant and his genuine sociability and love of his fellow man made him so many friends.

He really did spread 'a Ray of sunshine' wherever he went and will leave a huge gap in the lives of so many people who knew him.

(Words taken from Ray's memorial service)