

## Obituary:

### John Harry Bowers (OE 1944–50)



John Bowers was born in Hendon in 1932 and he earned a scholarship to Emanuel School. The first impact of the 2nd World War was to have the family home 'bombed out'. He was evacuated with the school to Norfolk & Hampshire and witnessed the movement of troops and munitions associated with the build-up of D-Day when staying in Petersfield.

John was good at sports at Emanuel and represented the school at rugby, cricket and athletics. He was in the rugby sevens team that reached the semi-finals of the Public School Sevens.

John was then called up for National Service and saw duty in Egypt with the Royal Signals regiment.

On his return, John joined Westminster Bank as a clerk and he stayed with them for over 40 years working in both the City and the West End, preferring the West End as the lunches were longer. He then had the great fortune to meet his future wife, Iris, at a party in Wroughton Road Battersea and they subsequently married in 1955. They were married for 53 years.

John and Iris had 3 children and in later years 6 grandchildren were added to the family.

Rugby was always a big feature in John's life. He played for Westminster Bank for many years and was a member of the winning team for the first 3 years of East Grinstead Sunshine 7s, which was the longest running active charity tournament in the country. He also played for and became Chairman of United Banks Rugby.

They were great days at Westminster Bank Norbury sports ground where all players from all teams went into the Men Only bar and drank unknown quantities of beer served in half pint mugs poured from watering cans and the referees were kept fully topped up and barred from leaving. They also had to join in the singing - and this included London Society referee Dennis Thatcher, who was the last to leave. Recently John found himself to be the 'last man standing' as all his old rugby mates of 60 years have gone to the great club house in the sky.

John's other great interests were going on holidays with his wife, playing golf and charity work.

In retirement, John added his experience to the Garwood Foundation and supported the Wooden Spoon Society.

John was Captain of the Addington Palace Golf Club which was handily placed 20 metres from his house. He was known for his 'lively' contribution to committee meetings and I believe he was instrumental in taking the Golf Club in a new direction. We were reminded of the times John would phone up the steward from the back garden to bring over a tray of beers for all on a summers day.

John's last sporting interest was cricket and he enjoyed going to watch Test matches and County games at the Oval and also International touring teams at Arundel with his brother Douglas.

In latter years, health became a challenge and 6 years ago he underwent major heart surgery and gradually declined over last 12-18 months.

John has been described by his friends as a true gentleman, who lived life to the full. Indeed, friends and friendships were always important to him, in particular those from NatWest, the rugby fraternity and the golfing world.

I will finish with a quote from John Kirwan, an ex New Zealand international rugby player, because it probably encapsulates why John played and loved rugby so much.

"I often say rugby's like life. You can have the ball in your hand and be running down the field feeling unstoppable.

Then someone tackles you and you hit the deck and you're vulnerable; you're lying there exposed.

Suddenly your team-mates are there, not just over the ball but over you, protecting you.

They are prepared to put their bodies on the line for you.

That's what happens in life, you fall over and your friends come to your aid."

So it was with John in his later years; the family all rallied around him so he could continue to live an independent and comfortable life at home, which is what he wanted.

He had a good life and he will be greatly missed.

RIP John Bowers.

*Phil Bowers (son)*



WAKEFIELD EALING 1000

Standing : R. Washington Jones, Esq. D. S. Frost J. H. Bowers P. Robinson P. M. Jones J. H. Pressdee P. J. Meaus M. A. Forrester L. Shaw, Esq.  
Seated : M. C. Marshall D. G. Garlick A. M. Davenall (Hon. Sec.) R. S. D. Veal (Captain) R. G. Dear B. S. Gooden B. M. G. Prior  
On Ground : A. H. Dartnall D. R. Jacobs



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Seated : D. Garlick R. S. D. Veal (Captain) R. G. Dear



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Seated : B. S. Gooden D. Garlick (Captain) B. M. G. Prior