

Dr John Wroughton

Dr. John Wroughton, a very early member of HBRG died on May 16th 2023. The Group would like to pay tribute to him by a brief recapitulation of his life and achievements.

John was born in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and brought up in Swadlincote (Derbyshire). He was educated at Ashbury Grammar School and felt a lasting respect and gratitude for the 1944 Education Act which enabled him to get his excellent education free and for teachers who nurtured his scholarly interests. Between school and university (1953 - 1955) he did National Service in the RAF at a high security base near Birmingham. During that time, with funding from the RAF, he took an archaeology course at Birmingham University and joined his first dig. He went up to Hertford College, Oxford, in 1955 to read History, and his special subject was the history of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. He was a keen sportsman at both school and university and coached rugby and athletics (he was a qualified AAA coach and a member of the British Olympic Association).

After teaching at various schools in different parts of the country, he arrived at King Edward's School in 1965 as head of the History department. He became second master in 1974 and Head in 1982. His eleven years as Head were a very successful period for King Edward's.

In the midst of his demanding professional life, he found time for serious writing and research, with Bath Record Office being an invaluable resource for his interest in Tudor and Stuart Bath. He was awarded a Ph.D by Bristol University in 1991 as result of his researches, using his time as a Schoolmaster fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1987 to do uninterrupted work on his dissertation. The period of the Civil War in Bath and North West Somerset remained a leading interest. He felt that the Battle of Lansdown should be better known and arranged for the Sealed Knot to stage a re-enactment. He established The Lansdown Press in 1993 to publish books on the West Country and Tudor and Stuart Bath. He also contributed articles on nine Civil War leaders to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

John contributed to many aspects of life in Bath. He was the only President of the Friends of the Survey of Old Bath, which has done invaluable and detailed work on the city. He gave lectures to local history societies and to the HBRG, he was a governor of schools and chaired the capital appeal committee of Dorothy House (the local hospice) from 1993 - 1995. He was a keen supporter of such diverse organisations as Derby County FC and Bath Rugby and chairman of the Friends of Bath Abbey.

Underlying this active and virtuous life was his Christian faith, which found practical expression as a Lay reader for over 40 years, first in the Diocese of Derby and latterly at Bath Abbey. He never married, but always said - when asked - that he actually had 870 children at any one time!

Sources: Interview by Elaine Chalus in Bath History, vol.XIV