

John Ashley MBE 1931 – 2017

John was born in 1931 and started work at 15 for British Railways, leaving after 23 years. The story is that he met Brenda (always called Betty) on the train to work when he was just 18 and five years later they married in St. Mary Magdalen, Enfield - a marriage which was to last 67 years and be blessed with two daughters.

In 1969 he took the bold step of moving to Hunsdon to run the Post Office and General Store which, as other shops in the village dwindled, thrived and became very much the heart of village life. They ran the shop until retiring and passing the - still active - business on in 1992.

After several years as a Parish Councillor and Vice Chairman of Hunsdon Parish Council, John took over the role of Parish Clerk – a position which benefitted hugely from his years of experience in the village, and in November 2002 John was richly rewarded by appointment as MBE for services to the community. John retired as Parish Clerk in 2002 but he was immediately 'press ganged' into taking the position of Parish Paths Warden which entailed a constant watch on local footpath conditions.

A regular member of the Hunsdon History Society, the Gardening Club and annual fete helper, John was infamous for his – sometimes - forthright views from which he rarely backed down. A gentleman with a dry sense of humour, always willing to help, courteous and polite - attitudes belonging to his generation. His gardening efforts maintained an annual profusion of pansies and begonias surrounding the village pump and the Village Hall entrance, and his invention of a device for watering the display atop the old gas lamp next to the village pump will be long remembered by Hunsdon residents.

Our heartfelt thoughts go to Betty and the family, but also with thanks for sharing with the villagers the values and community spirit which was the make-up and personality of John Ashley MBE.