

Michael Holton 1927-2006

Michael Holton died following an accident in Market Place on March 24. The following is an extract from an appreciation given at his funeral service by the Minister of the Free Church Rev Dr Ian Tutton.



Michael Holton died suddenly, without warning. Yet it is to his credit that today we do not so much lament a life cut short, as celebrate a life lived to the full. None of us knows what might have happened had not the accident occurred; what the future had in store, but what we do know is this, Michael did live a very full life indeed. Thanks to the attention of a beloved uncle, with whom he went in his early years on expeditions to the Lake District, he fell in love with mountains. Michael wasn't so much a mountaineer, as a man of the mountains. To paraphrase a nephew with whom he shared this passion, 'We didn't necessarily go for the summit, but we always went for the enjoyment.'

Nearly sixty years ago Michael was instrumental in founding the RAF mountaineering association, an involvement that would lead him to explore the Himalayas in the days when much of that region was clouded in mystery. He took safety very seriously and gave a lot of time and energy to the establishment of the RAF Mountain Rescue service. He was seconded from the air ministry for two years specifically for the task of setting up the organisation. As recently

as last year Michael and Joan were walking in the hills of Scotland, as long into retirement he maintained his love for the mountains.

Michael's teenage years were dominated by the Second World War. His cousin Anthony died in Normandy and he is remembered on the Free Church memorial. His elder brother Philip lost his life in Italy. These experiences inspired Michael to take a serious interest in the history of Hampstead Garden Suburb during the war years. He grew up on the Suburb, a pupil at the Garden Suburb School; he remembered clearly the bombs on Willifield Green and in Coleridge Walk. It was particularly galling to him that for whatever reason the so-called official histories of the time showed scant regard for the level of suffering and hardship endured by the civilian population. It was due to Michael's energy and determination that the recently erected gate into Bigwood is in

the form of a memorial to the Suburb's civilian casualties.

He was very much involved in the contemporary life of the Suburb and served on the RA's Trees and Open Spaces committee for many years. Michael was a civil servant. He was a true servant of civic society. He was well respected by all who worked with him and for him, and held in high regard by those under whom he served. His work with the MOD took him to difficult and dangerous places, involved him in sensitive diplomatic exchanges, and his advice was often sought and invariably acted upon by senior government representatives. But it was during a 'Sabbatical' from the MOD that he was able to accomplish what was most precious to him as far as his working life was concerned. He was given the opportunity to harness his passion for all things outdoors when invited to oversee the establishment of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, and then to act as secretary to the United Kingdom wide Carnegie Trust. Death can come to anyone of us at any time. If Michael Holton's death teaches us anything at all it is just that. Whatever we imagine the future might hold for us, it is not in anyone's gift even our own. It is not appropriate to mortgage the present for the sake of the future, rather it is incumbent upon us to so fill up the present that it spills over into the future whatever it may contain, wherever we may find ourselves.

IAN TUTTON

Michael Rowley AA Dipl; RIBA

Michael Rowley, who died at his home in Denman Drive, Hampstead Garden Suburb on February 10, had become, in recent years, an increasingly active champion of the conservation and community of the Suburb.

Something of a rebel, he joined the Residents Association Council just to campaign for the preservation of a particular group of threatened trees. Once on the council his acute sense of what was the right or wrong way of doing things, made him question everything. He was never satisfied with an easy answer. His considered contributions and sometimes quirky views often had us straining, he spoke very quietly, to catch every word. He could be very witty but angry too.

"Michael had a tremendous knowledge of the architecture of Hampstead Garden Suburb. He was an enthusiastic member of many Residents Association committees and was a hugely active and effective member of the Conservation & Amenities Committee where I first met him. He used his sharp mind and sound



judgement to help defend the Suburb against the many threats against its essential character which the Residents Association is pledged to defend. He became a good friend to many of us as we learned to appreciate his unique sense of humour and he will be sadly missed," said David B Lewis, Chairman of the Residents Association.

Michael also served on the Property and Plans Committee of the Trust and represented the RA on the Conservation Area Advisory

Committee which he chaired. In 2004 he became one of the four residents elected to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, the body which manages the Suburb and has to approve all planning applications. Before his election he said he would bring his professional expertise to bear on what he saw as "the creeping loss of the standards set by its original planners and architects, that make the Suburb so special."

Trust Manager Jane Blackburn said, "I will miss Michael very much, both professionally and personally."

An architect, he trained at the Architectural Association and practised internationally. On his retirement from his practise, he used the Suburb as a training ground for students he taught at the Kingston University School of Architecture.

He and Dorothee moved to the Suburb nearly 40 years ago. Their two sons were born here.

To all his family, friends, colleagues, and the Suburb he loved, he will be a great loss.

RICHARD J WAKEFIELD

Ann Lawson

Ann Lawson, who died in January 2006 at the age of 91, had lived on the Suburb all her married life. Born in 1914, having lost her father in the First World War, she left home at the age of 17 to train as a nurse at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. It was whilst working as a nurse during the Second World War that she met and married Alan (a patient at her hospital) in 1941.

With Alan, who was born on the Suburb, she moved into the Suburb in 1944, living first in Corringham Road, where her two children were born, and eventually into Oakwood Road.

JANETTE HARRISS

Famous women

Sadly we have to record the recent deaths of two well known Suburb wives. Mary Mandelson 84 whose husband Tony was chairman of the RA in the '80s and Joanne Bower 93 who was, with her husband George, one of the gallant band who 'saved the Suburb', when it was under threat from developers in the sixties. She was a founder of the Farm and Food Society and wrote about its work in early issues of *Suburb News*.

Dinner for two

If anybody has a voucher for 'Dinner for Two' at 'Just Around the Corner', bought at last year's Family Holiday Association Craft Fair, will they please get in touch with Pat/Joan Laurance on 8455 1777 for a refund as the restaurant has been sold and the voucher is no longer valid.

Centenary Celebrations



A joint Trust RA group has been working on developing major events such as the revival of Central Square, an international academic conference on July 11-12, a pageant written by Suburb resident Ian Davidson, an autobiography of the Dame from Alison Creedon and a new book on the Suburb by Dr Mervyn Miller.

The Residents Association's celebrations committee held a well attended public meeting in January in the Free Church Hall, courtesy of the Free Church, to bring together individuals and

organisations to pool ideas and suggestions. The meeting started with a power point presentation by Alan Cohen, HGS Synagogue, and a member of the committee, on what had been planned so far and urged participation and input. In the chair was Alan Walker, St Jude's, also on the committee, who sought proposals from all the Suburb organisations.

David Littaur, RA Events Chairman says "The duration of the celebrations will be one year, from May 2007 to May 2008. However the biggest concentration of the most important events will be during the summer of 2007."

June 17, Henrietta Barnett Day, will be an important date featuring an interdenominational service at St Jude's, a big party in Central Square, a major Proms concert in the evening and a firework display to end the day.

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Suburb in Bloom competition

Why not enter your garden (front or back) in Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society's annual competition? This popular event would love to have more new entries. Judging takes place on Tuesday 13 June and entries must be in by 7 June. There are three prizes of gardening gift vouchers, together with a silver cup for the winner to hold for a year. We are not looking for the biggest or most expensive, just a love of plants and gardening. If you have a go you'll receive an appreciation for all your love and hard work in creating your own piece of green heaven.

Entry forms are available from M. Franklin, 94 Oakwood Road, NW11 6RN, 8458 5846, mikefrank@onetel.com.

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