

Tribute to Captain John Stewart OBE

By Lord Denham

In addition to the Nuffield scholarship, in 1974 John won a Churchill Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to study animal husbandry in New Zealand. He also became a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society and in 1980 was made an Officer of the Distinguished Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to British agriculture.

Much of his leisure time was spent supporting local community activities, in particular the Royal British Legion in Olney where he was heavily involved for over 15 years in a number of roles, including five years as President. He was also:

- Governor of the Carlton Reformatory for 12 years.
- General Commissioner of the Inland Revenue for 29 years, including being Chairman of the Milton Keynes area for 10 years.
- Chief Inspector in the Special Constabulary for 10 years
- Founder Vice President of the Newport Pagnell Rotary Club
- President of the Weston Underwood Fishing Club for 21 years, and others.

The combined contribution to the community amounts to significant effort impacting on many people in many ways. This is all the more notable for the fact that he was significantly hard of hearing for over 50 years, an unforgiving situation that caused him much frustration as difficulties in communication impacted most parts of his life in one way or another.

He was an enthusiastic and expert cook, being runner up in the AGA cook of the year competition when in his seventies. He was co-founder of the Northamptonshire Branch of the International Wine and Food Society and Branch secretary for 17 years organised a large number of very successful events. He greatly enjoyed his food and wine and the happy company that he shared with fellow bon vivants at hostelrys around the area which was a significant pleasure in his life. Not only was he very knowledgeable, he liked to share this knowledge and gave many popular wine tastings as well as a regular event for the pupils at Stowe School. He was holder of the Society's Silver Medal given to individuals in recognition distinguished service or very significant contribution to the Society at large at the international level.

John is survived by Eileen, a former WRNS Officer whom he married in 1954, and by their four children and five grandchildren. Throughout their married life John and Eileen made a tremendous partnership, together experiencing the highs and lows, the delights and frustrations in their family and professional lives.

It is said that behind every successful man there is a successful woman. It would be no disservice to John to say that without Eileen's enthusiasm, patience, care and support, his contribution to our society could not have been achieved to the same considerable extent.

John seemed rather larger than life, often with exuberant bonhomie and a catalogue of tales told with a sparkle in his eye and a glass in his hand! His integrity of purpose, vision and determination marked his passage through life, marked as it was by many achievements realised despite his disabilities.