

Tribute to Captain John Stewart OBE by Peter Nixon NSch, Chairman Nuffield International, on behalf of Scholars worldwide

I met Captain John on two memorable occasions – the first in 1990 when I received the legendary hospitality of John and Eileen Stewart over a weekend. We were the first draft of Scholars under the care of new Nuffield Director, Stephen Bullock, and I felt that this man, who had contributed so much to Nuffield, was now missing the intellectual engagement with new Scholars, missing the daily involvement with this organisation that he had nurtured for so long.

Most of my knowledge of the Stewarts originated from anecdotes related from other Scholars outside the UK, who had called the Olney Millhouse ‘home’ – some for a large part of their Scholarship. In fact, such were the stories that one came in trepidation to meet the “Regimental Sergeant Master” of Nuffield.

But I will leave the stories to others. I think it more appropriate for me to briefly comment on his contribution to Nuffield.

Most organisations have periods of crisis, or periods of great change, where individuals of courage and vision step forward. John Stewart was not alone in stepping up at such a point in time, but his dedication and influence over 20 years as Director of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust set him apart. Successful organisations do not arrive by chance, but through vision, wise nurture and great dedication. It needs people of character and determination and, at appropriate times, an authoritarian approach – all of which he had as a product of his previous career, and an age from which we are sadly, and rapidly, receding.

Within Nuffield we are the beneficiaries of a great legacy – one that has benefited our industry, and has had a profound impact on the lives of most of our Scholars.

Now in its 63rd year, by any measure, the Nuffield Farming Scholarships have been an outstanding success – something, I am sure, that would greatly please our founder, and first benefactor, Lord Nuffield.

Captain John Stewart, OBE, along with the strength, modesty and sure support of Eileen, can take a large share of the credit. For that they are owed, by Nuffield, a huge debt of gratitude.

Peter Nixon.
International Chairman