



John Robert Kennedy Smart

John Smart, who went aloft on 9th December 2012, at the age of 92, was a life-long cricket fan who had joined the Romsey Cricket Club in 1935, when he was just 15, and eventually became a Vice President. He played for them until his 70s, then qualified as an umpire and continued to officiate until his 80s. He was also an enthusiastic member of the Eastleigh Rugby Club, playing in the second row until he was 45.

During the war John served in the RAF as a wireless operator, being posted initially to Canada, where he worked in reconnaissance and coastal command. Later he joined a mobile signals unit which crossed to Europe alongside the Canadian forces from Stokes Bay on D Day + 4, and travelled through France and Belgium before being recalled to be sent to India.

After the war John met Marjorie and they were married in 1951 and subsequently had a daughter, Edwina.

John brought his cricketing expertise to the Southampton Master Mariners' Club when he joined in 1961. He was then Manager of the Eastleigh-based company Fitch & Son (Export) Ltd. who were the Shipping and Export Provision Merchants that served the majority of the ships trading from and to Southampton.

At that time those without the requisite seafaring credentials were enrolled as "Messmates" and their participation in the management of the Club was limited but John's worth was soon recognised and he quickly became a member of various committees. He was a man who expressed his sound opinions without fear or favour and his strong views enlivened many a committee meeting.

He crossed swords with many committee members at many meetings but - once the meeting was over - any disagreement was forgotten and John would happily buy his opponents a drink.

John and Marjorie -often accompanied by Edwina - were regular attendees at the Club social functions and they rarely missed a Friday lunchtime session.

As well as serving as Captain and Chairman of the Cricket Section he was also appointed Chairman of the Entertainments Committee - a position he retained until his health prevented his regular attendance. He was a lifelong and active Freemason and his connections there undoubtedly helped when arranging venues for Club functions.

He took a very special and personal interest in the Sea Pie Supper and the Guildhall caterers were left in no doubt as to who was in charge. He was the mainstay there for many years and would organise a complete table (22) for the Cricket Section, including all the drinks which he insisted keeping separate from the main SMMC accounts. Just how he accomplished this we never dared ask but everyone poured home fully satisfied.

Undoubtedly, at that time, had the rules of the Club permitted - as they do today - ALL club members to be classed as full Cachalot members and eligible for the highest office then John Smart would have been a candidate for appointment as Captain of the Club and, more undoubtedly, he would have been appointed.

John was a great lover of Christmas and at his funeral service, held just one week before Christmas Day and conducted by the Reverend Bill McCrea, the usual hymns were replaced with carols.