

## **Peter D Eckersley (57-63)**

Peter was born on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1945 in a Horsforth maternity hospital.

I first met him at the Grove in 1957 (I had gone to Bronte House in 1956). He was awarded a scholarship via the entrance exams.

We were in the same form. The Headmaster was Dr Pritchard – other teachers I remember were Mr Jones for English, Mr Bolt for Maths, Mr Auty for Chemistry, Mr Windle for Physics & Mr Bairstow for PE.

Peter was a dayboy. We boarders sometimes felt slightly 'superior' because we did not 'go home for our tea'!

We moved through the school together. Peter played both rugby & cricket. In the 6<sup>th</sup> Form he took Arts. He was always interested in languages particularly French & German. I took Sciences. He left at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year Sixth – I left a year later.

He then joined the Civil Service for 4 years. Initially he worked as a clerk reporting on court proceedings progressing to auditing court houses within a 150 miles radius of the Leeds Court House.

After various part-time jobs he then emigrated to South Africa in November.1968. He started work at the company Remington Rand in Johannesburg as a debtor's clerk in the credit department rising rapidly to manager which involved travel to Rhodesia & Zambia.

After training for 3 years as a photographer in a London studio and then working as a ship's photographer for 18 months on Union Castle liners going to, amongst other places, South Africa I decided to also go there to live. I deliberately chose Johannesburg. My obvious contact was Peter. I arrived on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1970. Peter was up country in what was then Rhodesia. When he returned, I then started to share his flat in a Johannesburg suburb together with various other 'ex-pats'. We had many shared experiences. I well remember listening in May 1970 to the FA Cup Final between Leeds United & Chelsea. Peter was just as avid about Leeds as I was/am. Leeds were leading 2-1 – the match had almost finished. Peter said "I'll just go to the fridge to take out the champagne". I warned against this – Chelsea equalised and then won the replay!

Peter was responsible directly for me meeting my future wife Louise. Peter's family & Louise's family lived on the same estate in Horsforth.

Louise had gone to SA to be a hairdresser in mid-1969. Peter had arranged for her to stay in the same flat in Johannesburg as his secretary together with some other girls. After many trips between our 2 flats we decided to all live in one big house.

Louise & I got married in the house in August 1971. Peter had his own apartment but he was at the wedding. He and another friend transferred the entire contents of our bedroom into the orchard as a prank!

We stayed with Peter as part of our honeymoon on our journey to and from Victoria Falls.

Peter had a real passion for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. He had applied for the Manager's job at Remington Rand in Salisbury. However, during the process of being transferred, the company closed in Rhodesia. Undeterred he drove over the Limpopo to find a job. He found temporary work and then returned to the UK for a few months. In 1972 he returned and started work at Glens Removals as a credit manager. Eventually he progressed to Divisional Manager and then onto the Board of Directors of Glens.

In March 1982 Peter went to Singapore for a removals conference. There, at a cocktail party, he met his future wife to be, Maimon. It seemed to be the classic 'love at first sight across a crowded room'! He went back to Harare and assiduously wooed her. For the next 103 days he wrote, phoned & telexed returning in June to marry her in July.

Peter had also become heavily involved in cricket. He played at a club in central Harare. He served on the board of the Mashonaland Cricket Association and later the Zimbabwe Cricket Union. Part of the trip back to Zimbabwe from Singapore was via the UK to meet family and to watch an ICC Trophy match between Zimbabwe and Bermuda at Grace Road, Leicester which Zimbabwe won!

In 1985 they left Harare to return to the UK. After various abortive work attempts he had an opportunity to open a removals company in Portugal in Lisbon. They moved there in 1991.

He developed the international removals company that he owned and was well regarded in the industry.

Again, he became heavily involved in cricket. After playing he became an umpire rising to an official for some ECC tournaments. He was also the Portuguese cricket team manager.

In 2006 Peter experienced cardiac issues and had a double coronary bypass. A few days later he had a cardiac arrest and was implanted with an ICD.

In 2013 he was diagnosed with an incurable lung disease IPF – a form of fibrosis.

This new health situation meant that he had to retire his removals business and his cricket administration. He required a constant supply of oxygen to help his breathing.

The last overseas trip was in 2015 to Singapore and to Sussex to see their son Paul. Peter also celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday there.

My wife passed away in December 2018. I was frantically trying to contact him unaware of his condition. His last email to me was on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Peter finally passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019 3 days after his 74<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Peter had many adventures across the world far away from the Grove. However, he (& I) look back fondly on our school days and now appreciate what a truly sound foundation the school provided to enable us to cope with the real world.

***Graham Thompson (56-64)***