

Charles William Wharton (G44-51)

b abt 1934 – d 12 September 2013

Charles William Wharton (G44-51) died suddenly on Thursday 12th September 2013 aged 79, whilst playing tennis. A Service of Thanksgiving was held at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich on Wednesday 2nd October at 2pm. Donations to Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution. He was the brother of the late James Wharton (G56-65) and father of Edward Charles Wharton (G80-85).

(based on the Eulogy delivered by Edward Wharton)

Charles was the son of another OF, similarly named Charles (G1919-22). He also had a younger brother, James (G56-65), who died tragically young and the loss of whom deeply affected Charles. Charles' own school days had set him up in key ways: he engaged in debates, began a lifelong love of racket sports under the inspiring tutelage of Norman Borrett. Charles played squash for Norfolk until 1965, and, indeed the family owned a series of dogs most of which answered to the name of "Squash". He was playing tennis to the end. Indeed his death came all too suddenly on the tennis court. His school career culminated in his winning a place to read Agriculture at Downing College, Cambridge, and that set him up for his life's work in farming.

After leaving school Charles spent two years National Service with the Royal Norfolk Regiment, serving in Cyprus, and, unusual for a National Serviceman, achieving the rank of Sergeant. It was farming that took over his life thereafter. He returned to the farm in 1958, married his wife, Pauline, in the same year, but could only manage a 2 day honeymoon as he had to get back to look after the cows. He was unable to be present at the birth of his first daughter, Katie, in 1960 because he was scrambling to get off some particularly highly priced potatoes. There followed the birth of two more daughters, and one son, Edward (G80-85), who followed in his father's footsteps and attended the College.

Charles made his mark as a farmer. Some 60 people were in his employment. He loved the marshes, drained them, and brought them into productive use, even though much of the land remained below sea level. He was into pigs, poultry, raspberries, beans, gooseberries, sprouts and much besides, but his greatest love was his cattle. His abilities took him to influential positions both regionally and nationally. He was Vice Chairman of the Milk Marketing Board ('79 to '81), Chairman of the Trehane Trust ('86 to '90) Chairman of the Nuffield Scholarship Trust ('92 to '96), and Chairman of Norfolk County NFU in 1993. He gained a reputation as a moderniser, and one who influenced agricultural policy. He displayed hard work, acumen, and an eye for innovation. His resignation from the MMB in 1984 was a great loss. In its heyday the industry had 90000 producers. That number is now down to 11000.

Charles always had an eye for a deal, he gained the respect of all, staff and customers, and made many friends. The evidence for this came in the presence of a packed congregation at St Peter Mancroft in the centre of Norwich.

Charles' son, Edward, returned to the farm in 1989, and then farmed with his father, which allowed Charles more time to pursue some of his passions, particularly South Africa and the Zulu wars. He had many books on this subject and collected memorabilia including pictures, shields and spears. He became a very keen amateur historian and a great organiser of historical tours, especially to First World War sites.

He was also a ridiculous optimist, and one who filled his time with a wide range of activities and people: 4 children, 12 grandchildren, Norwich City Football Club, learning to ride a horse - two gears only: stationary or flat out - parties, laughing, a trip in a hot air balloon, ownership of a Jensen Interceptor, but, above all, making friends until the end, making the most of every day, and making time for his family, which was central to his life.

Source

The society of Old Framlinghams

<http://www.oldframlinghamian.com/>

About Framlingham College (wikipedia entry)

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