

John Stringer was an extraordinary gentleman, both academically gifted and practical.

He was a great problem solver. He did not need power or authority, having a greater effect with cooperation, understanding and respect, a partner in seeking solutions. His approach has encouraged many: children, colleagues and friends.

Early in his lifetime John saw boom, crash, depression, popularism, re-armament and war. His parents separated and he did not see his father after the age of 13. These experiences clearly conditioned his thinking in adult life.

John was a pioneer in the field of Operational Research, the application of scientific method to management problems. Later in his career in Australia he was to do academic work on the management of major projects.

Born in Tettenhall near Wolverhampton in 1925, John attended Wolverhampton Grammar School and then St. John's College Cambridge gaining a first class degree in engineering in 1945.

Following Cambridge John was posted to Felixstowe to do experimental work with flying boats. John's career then turned to Operational Research, working in Steel, London Transport, Electricity generation and British Oxygen.

John had become an early member of the OR society and was on its membership committee, attending and organising several conferences. It was through the OR society that the Institute for Operational Research (IOR) was formed, John joined IOR and eventually became its director. He supplied Julian with an email list of colleagues from IOR, many of whom have sent tributes:

"I learnt everything useful that I knew from your father. He was very good fun to work with and all of us who knew him will miss him greatly."

"He was a great man and will be missed by all of us who had the opportunity to work with him. He taught us much more than he realized and marked several of our generations of applied research."

"John was a very important part of my working life at the IOR. He provided leadership and vision at a very exciting time. This has stayed with me throughout my varied career."

In 1976 John left IOR and moved to Australia to become a founding professor at the newly formed Australian Graduate School of Management. Here amongst other things he ran the PhD program, being the only professor without one. He became interested in problems of energy supply, and major engineering projects. He and Norma became Australian citizens in 1980.

He retired from AGSM in 1986 and came back to Ewhurst Green to retire. For some time after his return he worked on various consultancy projects. The last of which was to revisit work he had done much earlier at London Transport in the light of his later experience. He recalls that many of the techniques he pioneered in the 1950s were still in use in the late 1990s.

Now fully retired he joined a number of local organisations including:

- The Society of Retired Chartered Engineers in SE Kent
- Battle and District U3A
- The garden society.

"John was a founding member, President and for many years the leading light of our U3A".

John was married for the first time in 1948 to Josephine, having sons Julian and Colin. After Colin arrived, they moved to a new contemporary house in Tadworth, constructed to their own brief. A memorable feature was that the wall by the staircase was papered with an Ordnance Survey map of Great Britain – great for teaching children map reading.

In his time at Tadworth John undertook significant DIY projects, including building an ornamental pond, which the rest of the family persuaded him to extend into a swimming pool, provided that the boys provided labour to dig the hole.

Also memorable were camping holidays. Colin recalls that he took the boys on a short camping holiday in the New Forest in his Morris Mini.

As the boys grew up John and Josephine had less and less in common. They were divorced.

In 1972 John married his second wife Norma, they were a loving couple until her death in 2011.

Norma and John provided sanctuary for Norma's niece and great niece Olivia, who has written a poem, which will be on display at the wake.

After Norma died John lived alone in Ewhurst Green overlooking the garden that Norma had established and the Rother Valley. He has many friends locally who have been a great support in his later years. At this time he set about writing his memoirs, which Julian intends to publish on the internet.