

ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE FUNERAL OF MR FRANCIS ERNEST BROWN

at All Saints, Eastleigh on 25th May 1994

In the death of Frank Brown, Eastleigh has lost, I believe, someone devoted to his family, a loyal friend to our community and a distinguished journalist.

Frank was never happier than when he was at home, with Ellen near at hand, sitting in front of his typewriter (or more recently his computer) writing about the town and community he loved.

For me he typified the best kind of journalist : accurate reporting, painstaking in research, phenomenal memory, courteous in interviewing - and perhaps the secret of it all : he loved people and writing about them.

The Eastleigh Weekly is the kind of newspaper in which ordinary people have as much coverage as community leaders or politicians, or Vicars, or even Mayors !

Things are reported in the right proportion and perspective - with the avoidance of sensationalism and large banner headlines - and with the emphasis on the positive rather than the negative.

It reminds me of a phrase of Bishop John Taylor's in one of the prayers in the Induction Service for a new Vicar (which will be used very soon now when my successor is installed) :

"Fill the heart of your servant with joy in affirming all that is good in this community and with courage in challenging all that is mean and destructive".

I believe that as a journalist and Editor Frank carried out these twin tasks admirably.

As many of you know, Frank started work at Eastleigh Printing Works at the age of 16 and was appointed Editor of the Eastleigh Weekly News within two years - you could hardly have quicker promotion than that !

At 18 he was the youngest newspaper editor in the country and continued to work for the paper, apart from war service and a spell in India and Pakistan, till 1991 - a period spanning well over 60 years.

Even after his retirement he continued writing for the paper with his weekly column "As I was saying" and occasional memoirs "Before Memory Fades".

For his service to the paper and to the local community he was made a Freeman of the Borough in 1986, an honour which, I know, meant a very great deal to him.

I mentioned a moment ago that following the outbreak of war Frank went abroad. He joined the Hampshire Reg't and was posted to the Middle East. Here very soon he found himself sent to GHQ Cairo and editing the Indian News Review and assisting with the Egyptian Mail and Egyptian Gazette.

At the end of the war he was posted to India where he served on the public relations staff of the Commander-in-chief at GHQ Delhi, editing an inter-services weekly newspaper called 'Contact', and later in Karachi, subediting a daily paper at the creation of Pakistan called Dawn.

Writing, reporting and editing were in Frank's blood throughout his life how fortunate for Eastleigh that we were to have the benefit of his wide knowledge and outstanding talents for over 60 years !

Yet somehow or other Frank had time for other interests ! He was involved in numerous local organisations.

There was the Eastleigh Carnival Committee which he first joined in 1932 and rejoined when it was revived in the 1950s, being invited to become a life vice-president.

He was a founder member of the Borough Community Fund Management Committee, the Eastleigh Twinning Association and the Citizens Advice Bureau Management committee. He also served on the old hospital committee, Age Concern and the (former) Accident Prevention Council.

He was a life member of the Eastleigh and District Chamber of Commerce and Eastleigh Trades Council, Chandlers Ford Central Club and Eastleigh Unity Club.

I have no doubt that all who served with him in these various organisations will attest to the quality of the interest and commitment he showed and appreciated above all his friendship.

I said at the beginning that Frank was never happier than when he was at home with his typewriter - or computer. (incidentally he adapted from the one to the other with incredible dexterity, which made me feel very ashamed at not replacing my very ancient Imperial typewriter !)

However, he did have time for other interests and hobbies. He loved reading - he was familiar with all the classics and especially liked biographies - no doubt his extensive knowledge, acquired through his reading, fed his considerable talent as a writer and journalist.

He also enjoyed listening to various kinds of music, particularly 1930 dance bands, and built up a wide collection of CDs. He was very familiar with local history and an enthusiastic member of the National Trust. Robin used to take him frequently on Sunday afternoon outings and he particularly enjoyed visiting cathedrals.

His links with All Saints go back to his days as a choir boy. He never admitted it, but I suspect that he got up to the usual tricks that choirboys do in all ages !

He certainly retained a deep love for this Church over many years and was always willing to give our various activities plenty of publicity. Our invitation to him to become patron of our Appeal, (which he willingly accepted) proved a valuable asset to our fundraising campaign.

I've left till last mention of his family. I've done this deliberately as I feel that the love and support he received from Ellen, Robin, Nick and his wife, Maureen formed the bedrock of his happy & contented life.

Frank & Ellen were married for 48 years and were devoted to one another - they gave each other tremendous mutual care and support. To have one of your sons follow in your footsteps is very gratifying (as I know) and it must have brought Frank much happiness that Robin should work so closely with him and succeed him as editor. I know, too, how much Nick & Maureen, and their daughter Nicola, meant to him. They were indeed a very happy and united family and are all going to miss Frank terribly.

Let us use this service as an opportunity of thanking God for all that He was able to do in and through Frank, and giving us the kind of person he was : caring, generous ; modest, unassuming, always friendly & courteous, using the gifts and abilities given to him in the fullest possible way.

The whole of our community is going to mourn his passing greatly.

We commend him into God's loving care and assure Ellen, Robin, Nick, Maureen and Nicola, and his brother Eric (who is unable to be with us today because of ill health) of our deepest sympathy.

Nigel Harley



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CLOSED

OUR LOCAL  
NEWSPAPER  
SALE HERE

OPEN

ON 8:45-5  
TUE 8:45-5  
WED 8:45-1:00  
THURS 8:45-5  
FRI 8:45-5  
SAT 4:15-12:30  
SUNDAYS 10:30-12:30  
10:30-12:30

EASTLEIGH  
CARNIVAL  
WEEK

10th-17th AUGUST  
NEAR FROSTON

HAMPSHIRE NEWSPAPERS

EASTLEIGH WEEKLY NEWS

HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

Romsey Advertiser

THE ALTON GAZETTE

EASTLEIGH  
CARNIVAL  
WEEK

10th-17th AUGUST  
NEAR FROSTON



# EASTLEIGH WEEKLY NEWS

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