

the **KEY** A Tribute to Jim Hearmon

October 2003

Jim was a blessing to all who knew him. There are two ways of knowing a person: knowing what he did, and knowing what he was like as a friend. Jim was a great friend, and a good friend, especially to those in need. His whole life was kindness itself and everywhere he went he spread a gentle influence.

Jim was born in 1915 in Sevenoaks. His father, George Hearmon, was the manager of a grocery store in Sevenoaks called Uridges. Jim had an older sister, Doris, who passed away 5 years ago, and was married to Walter. Walter first met Jim in 1938 and they have been firm friends for some 65 years. Jim's parents, Lily and George, were married for 68 years and, in their final years, they lived with Jim and his wonderful wife, Marjorie.

As a boy, Jim attended Sevenoaks School, bringing away many friendships, happy memories and a much-treasured cup for cross-country running. He joined the Sevenoaks Chronicle as a cub reporter, it was the start of a lifelong career in journalism. Jim came from a stable family and he himself greatly valued stability and loyalty.

When World War II broke out in 1939, Jim was 24 and he volunteered for service in the Royal Artillery, the Honourable Artillery Company. He was commissioned as Captain at the Arne Heath Anti-Aircraft Camp overlooking Poole Harbour, which defended the Southampton area against enemy bombers. His command shot down four enemy bombers and, when praised for it in later life, he was heard to say, "Ah, yes, but we missed dozens of them".

After the war, Jim returned to journalism and soon moved to the Daily Mail in Fleet Street. He became the Deputy Editor of the Provincial Desk. The work involved phoning up the Daily Mail offices throughout Britain. Over the phone to colleagues in Manchester and Edinburgh, he would dictate the entire contents of the London edition and help to organise the layout for the provincial editions. In this job, Jim made many firm friends, who all remember him for his charming manners and calm efficiency in organising the provincial editions.

In 1948, romance arrived in Jim's life, and he married Pat Hatcher. Pat's brother, George was one of Jim's close school-friends. So, Pat, Jim and George had known each other for some 20 years. Three years later, Pat was overtaken by asthma and passed away leaving her family and Jim in the deepest sadness.

Jim soldiered on. He lived in Sevenoaks and commuted to London.

In 1955, Jim met Marjorie Lack who, at that time, was President of the Chamber of Commerce in Dartford. They married in 1958, built a house in Bickley, and soon had a daughter, Clare. Jim and Marjorie were very active in the life of BPC and, for 25 years, Jim was a sidesman, a duty he treasured.

I came into Jim's life in 1980. Clare and I met during the Christmas holidays when, by chance, we were both walking leaders for the Holiday Fellowship at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. Clare and I were married in 1983. I moved my teaching job to London, to bring our small family closer together and enjoy weekly visits.

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In 1980, Jim retired after 34 years with the Daily Mail. For the next eight years, Jim had a very happy retirement. Sadly, Marjorie passed away in 1988. Jim summoned up all his courage to carry his great sorrow. Clare and I were able to keep in close touch with Jim and help him through. Since then, we have had our regular weekly visits, and almost daily contact by phone. Jim visited his many local friends and relatives as often as possible, including his cousin, Peter, bereaved in the same year as Jim. They spent many Christmases together with Jim's brother- and sister-in-law. Jim was always helpful.

At the age of 87, Jim quite suddenly, but peacefully, passed away. Everyone who knew Jim came to love and respect him. We all knew the same Jim' He was quiet and unassuming, but he created gentleness and kindness in all who met him.

For all of us, and throughout his kind and loving life, Jim was a perfect gentleman, and he will always have a happy home in our memories and a lasting influence on us. He made the world a better place, and in our hearts we thank him most sincerely.

Jim Hearmon's Son-in-Law



A Service of Celebration of our many gifts
Rochester Cathedral
Sunday 19th October 3.15

Preacher Rev Phillip Maddock
Archbishop's Council Adviser for Deaf and Disabled

Everybody Welcome

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