

JOHN GARDINER 1934 - 2019

Surrey Branch members were saddened to learn of the death of John earlier this year. News of his passing reached the writer slowly as John was a bachelor with no immediate family to pass on the sad news.

John died suddenly in April, in his 84th year from a massive brain haemorrhage.

John joined our Association in 1970, as member number 196, and until just recently was the Surrey Branch Collection Secretary. He was Collection Secretary in 1995 when I joined the Association and probably held that post for some years prior. John's role was to set the themes for our monthly Branch meetings, an onerous task thinking of new themes without too much repetition. Inevitably, virtually every month the theme was framed around items from in his own large collection and us lesser collectors took along items fitting the theme. To my knowledge John never held a Firearm Certificate just a Shotgun Certificate in the past, all his guns were held as antiques and never used

For a few years the NRA hosted Open Days at Bisley and Surrey Branch provided the muzzle loading clay shoot. Behind the firing line and loading area the Branch marquee housed a display largely consisting of choice items from the Gardiner collection with John on hand to inform the visitors. One gun always attracted a lot of attention, the 4 bore short barrelled elephant gun!

For John's life outside the MLAGB I am indebted to his nephew, Sir Richard Gozney. John was born in Swansea in 1934 and while still a boy moved with his sister and father to London after his mother died. The family lived in Chiswick and John was awarded a scholarship to Latymer School. National Service followed and John served in the Inniskilling Regiment in Kenya during the Mau Mau troubles. After National Service John joined BEA (British European Airways) before setting up, in his twenties, his own company, John Gardiner Airfreight which he ran until retiring in his late 70's. John handled the airfreighting of our GB Team's guns to both the Australian world championships, not an easy task given the regulations involved.

Outside of his collecting interests no one in the Branch knew John was a car enthusiast and amateur rally driver. Just as well the old Jaguar he drove to the end had a boot big enough for the long guns he took to the Branch meetings. Whilst a keen member of the Round Table John towed a caravan to Skopje, Yugoslavia (now Macedonia) with emergency supplies after a major earthquake in 1963. John was an active member of the 41 Club (after Round Table) for 44 years until a fortnight before his death.

John was liked and respected by all who met him, a true gentleman.

Paul Roberts.

Hon.Sec MLAGB Surrey Branch.