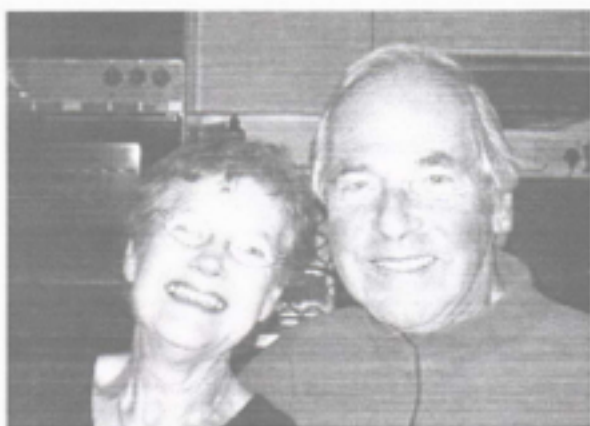


Know your Neighbour

In our second article on this series we delve into the lives of the owners of Scypen. Scypen is the lovely house and gardens owned by John and Ann Bracey. This house is the first house on the left as you go up the lane alongside the church to Kingston.



John and Ann have lived in Ringmore for 27 years. They purchased Scypen in November 1980 when it was still a cowshed. Scypen is the old English name for a cowshed.

John and Ann met in 1954 at a party when Ann was 16 and John was 17. It was love at first sight. John became an architect and Ann a primary school teacher. As John came from Bristol they eventually settled in a little hamlet outside the city and that's where they lived until moving to Ringmore. They had bought a house which needed completely renovating and had just more or less finished it when the opportunity came in 1979 for John to

set up an architectural practice in Plymouth

John initially commuted each week to Plymouth whilst Ann stayed behind to look after the children. He used to go out and about in the evenings searching for the perfect place to live and found it in the shape of a ramshackled old cowshed in the village of Ringmore. The views down to the sea were lovely, an ideal spot—fortunately Ann felt the same and so the decision to purchase was made. John designed the house with the local landscape very much in mind, an eco-friendly property, which was very much ahead of its time in those days. The house was highly commended in the Arnold Sayers Award for architectural design.

John and Ann had contractors for the constructional work but the rest of the work on the house and gardens was carried out by them. Ann brought down lots of the plants and shrubs that had been in the garden of their previous house, but found that some didn't survive with the garden in Ringmore overlooking the sea open to the winds and rain.

The next few years was spent getting the house and gardens to how they wanted it, bringing up their three boys, Peter, Shaun and Andrew and John expanding the architect practice in Plymouth.

It was in the 90's that Ann was approached by the National Garden Scheme about opening their garden to the public on certain days and in 1996 the garden at Scypen was opened. Ann has continued to support the National Garden Scheme over the years opening the garden each year to the public with only a couple of breaks. She hopes to open the garden again in 2009. Ann lovingly devotes a lot of time and energy to the garden, its design, the layout of plants and shrubs. The garden has been featured in numerous magazines such as Gardeners World and Country Life.

Both John and Ann have always shared a passion for travelling, with their children in a touring caravan when they were growing up, they travelled around Europe. Later when their sons, Shaun and Peter lived and worked abroad they took full advantage using their visits to family in Dubai and New Zealand to stopover and visit places like Nepal, India and Egypt to name a few. Next year they are hoping to visit Tanzania and Zanzibar.

Their interests closer to home include table tennis, from which we have the illustrious John Bracey Cup, played for at the Journeys End each year, badminton and croquet. They both have a love of Chamber Music and regularly go to the chamber music concerts at the Sherwell Centre in Plymouth and Ann is a trustee of the Plymouth Chamber of Music Society.