

GEORGE CECIL GRIMSHAW M.B.E

8 September 1910 – 29 August 2008

We say goodbye to George Grimshaw and place him with his much loved wife Nancy. They will lie together in the earth of Ringmore that they loved so much.

George and Nancy came to Ringmore 26 years ago, made friends, and served and supported the village and its community. They loved the village and the people who lived in it.

Their home at Middle Manor was also a second home and port of call to George's large family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren; above all George was a family man, loving all his family.

George was born in India 98 years ago, his father was killed at Gallipoli in 1915. He was brought up by his young mother in the pretty and close knit village of Dunsfold, Surrey. There, together with his brothers Tommy and David he learned to love the countryside and from his mother to love gardens.

George was a great sportsman excelling at rugby, hockey, athletics, sailing or whatever came to hand. After leaving Wellington College (where he was head boy and captain of most of the sports teams) he joined the Royal Military College Woolwich where he learned to become a gunner. He was awarded the Sword of Honour, and was commissioned into the Royal Horse Artillery as a second Lieutenant.

In 1932 he went to India with his first wife Barbara (who sadly died there) patrolling the northern frontier, playing polo, hunting wild boar from horseback, fishing in the mountains and enjoying that great country.

He returned to England, married Barbara's sister Nancy, and went to war first as a staff officer in the Abyssinian campaign, and later as commanding officer of the 304 East African Anti Tank Regiment in India. He was awarded an M.B.E for his war time services.

After the war he retired from the army, and was invited to East Africa as Regional Secretary of the Church Missionary Society. He brought his family up in Kenya and initiated changes in the church hierarchy that resulted in an African managed church administration. He loved picnics, and always found lovely places to rest and eat. Almost every birthday saw a memorable picnic on Kenya's lovely Ngong Hills, blackberrying in Surrey or on the moors of Dartmoor.

He brought his family back to England in 1960, living first near Guildford, commuting to London as the CMS Overseas Secretary with special responsibility for overseas students living in Britain. On retirement he moved to Stoke Gabriel where he was Commodore of the sailing club, teaching practically every child in the village to sail. Twelve years later he moved to Middle Manor where he will now be forever.

Throughout his adult life George was a strong and steadfast Christian, maintaining strong beliefs in family values and personal discipline. He was indeed the much loved and respected patriarch of an ever-growing Grimshaw clan. He always was a great listener, prepared to discuss and debate any subject. Although we did not always share his views we respected him. At times he seemed rather a stern father and friend, but underneath he never failed to support and love his family and friends. He always gave good advice and showed great interest and pride in all the family achievements.

In Ringmore he was Church Warden, Chairman of the Parish Council, and Chairman of the Historical Society. He was also village Church bell ringer, a task that he relished.

In the past four years George's life deteriorated physically, his legs gave out on him and he was irked by other problems that afflict the very old. Despite all this he lived a good life supported by his carers - Loralee and more recently Joan. His spirit never flagged and he remained characteristically in control right to the end. He steadfastly refused to move. Rather he wanted to live the remaining days of his life in his bedroom over looking his beloved garden and the sea, where he could still pick out the sails of passing boats, where he could smell good fresh air, where his favourite robin could fly through the window and feed off his hand, where he could hear the barn clock strike the hour throughout the night and the bells of the church, where he could hear the chuckling of the pheasants and the barking of the badgers in the woods, where his village friends could visit him, and where he was surrounded by pictures of his family and his memories.

He died a true Englishman, a loyal subject of his Queen, a gentleman, and strong in his faith in his Lord.

Richard Grimshaw