

JOHN NEILD (1923–2014)



John, who died on 28 February, aged 90, was born in Shanghai, China. His grandparents were medical missionaries; his father a surgeon. The family left China when he was five and settled in Tunbridge Wells.

As a teenager he took up sailing on the Hamble River because, as he maintained, his father and brothers were altogether too accomplished at golf, cricket and tennis, although he played much golf later in life. John studied Mechanical Sciences at Cambridge. His first job was with a firm of civil engineers in London.

He married Molly in Hampshire and they remained happily married for 61 years. For two years they lived in a village near Romsey where their first son was born. Then, to escape working with 'too much red tape', John took a job in what was then Southern Rhodesia where they stayed for 30 years, except for a year in Zambia building a dam.

In 1980 the family returned to England where they had trouble finding jobs but were content, finally, to settle in Deddington. John became a fundraiser for Katharine House and was a volunteer at the local Police Office. He also joined Bicester Rotary and worked for Victim Support.

His family gave him a lively 90th birthday party at home this summer, at which he said he intended to live until he was 100. Alas, his health, already bad, deteriorated from then on and he died, very peacefully, at home.

He was a quiet, patient person with strong principles and an unexpectedly naughty sense of humour. He will always be much missed.

Molly Neild