

BILL DRAKE (1925–2014)



Bill Drake, who died on 22 August 2014, was born in October 1925, the middle of three boys in Harleston, South Norfolk. He went to a nearby grammar school where began his lifelong love of cricket. On leaving school he progressed to Durham University, reading history. Then the war caught up with him and he went to Canada to train as a navigator in the RAF. Missing the war in Europe he was posted to the Far East on photographic reconnaissance, flying Blenheims and Mosquitos. He was based at times in southern India and what was then Burma and Ceylon, countries which he loved.

He returned to England in 1948 to the Empire Test Pilots School in Farnborough, Hampshire, where he met Pauline and they were married in 1952. They then began a peripatetic life, having four children on the way. Several of his tours were in Holland where he played cricket for a Dutch team, and Germany where he introduced the game to international NATO personnel. This proved very popular.

After leaving the RAF the family settled in Deddington and Bill became an office manager at Bibbys in Adderbury. In the meantime he played cricket with the team at North Aston as there was no Deddington team at the time. However, with a few friends, he helped to reform the Deddington Cricket Club which has proved so popular over the years. For some years he was a regular at a lively domino session at the Duke in Clifton and then, with Oliver Hawes, beginning Gardeners' Question Time at the Unicorn, on the strength of their knowledge of growing vegetables on their allotments. Very few questions were asked but the expanding team enjoyed their beer.

Unfortunately in later years he suffered from severe deafness which prevented him from listening to his favourite jazz music. But he loved going out and he became quite a familiar sight in his red woolly Arsenal cap. He is survived by Pauline and their four children and eight grandchildren.

Pauline Drake