

Jeremy Taylor, Gibbs' 1949–1953 (July 2015)

We were incredibly saddened to learn of Jeremy's death in July. There was no greater supporter of Lancing and the Foundation Office.



Spoken by Nick Evans at the funeral of Jeremy Taylor.

"It's probably a boarding school thing, but I always remember the initials of people I was at school with! PMHR, CKH, JDH, NAOB – they are all here! And of course, JMVT - Jeremy Taylor. As I said to

him one day, with initials like that you could have been captain of Hampshire CC, but of course, Jeremy was a footballer.

I only overlapped with Jeremy for two terms back in 1953 and remember him playing for the 1st XI against the famous Pegasus side which Ken Shearwood (our Master in charge and their Wembley centre half) brought down to the College. The first time I actually played with Jeremy was an Arthur Dunn game in 1957, just after I had left school. When all 11 players had finally arrived in the changing room, our captain, Peter Watkins, announced "Ok, we are all here - who's going to play in goal?"

But it was not until 1961, when I had returned from abroad and was back in the swing of things once more, that cricket and not football brought us together on the occasion of a Privateers' cricket tour to Paris. I soon realised that it was not for his cricket that Jeremy was selected, but for his fantastic linguistic ability! I thought I was quite good having done modern languages at Lancing, but soon realised that Jeremy had worked out a much better way of communicating. You simply added an 'o' to all words. For example "More vino rosso!" and "Another gino tonico!" plus gestures.

But it is not about cricket or languages that I want to speak today... It is about Jeremy's life-long love affair with the Lancing family and in particular the Lancing Old Boys Football Club. I had a chat with Chris Saunders, former team mate and then Head Master at Lancing, and I thought he summed it up perfectly. He said that Jeremy had Lancing written through him like Brighton through rock.

Jeremy was involved in just about every aspect of Lancing life. He supported all the OL events: lunches, club dinners and all manner of social functions. He had one mission in particular which is still outstanding and which was to persuade the OL society to fund a full Centenary Foundation Bursary in honour of the 179 OLs who died in the First World War. This is still work in progress, but I can assure you, Jeremy, that we will follow this through in the way that you would have wished.

However, it was the Old Boys Football Club that was his first love. Jeremy was a player, committee member, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman, President and loyal supporter throughout. As a player he was – to put it mildly – committed! If you thought Dave McKay was tough, you should have seen Jeremy. I have sought views from several of his contemporaries and opinion ranges from 'uncompromising' to 'ferocious' to 'aggressive' to '...he just went straight through people...'

Charles Howe (CKH) sent me a note to say that he was honoured to have been part of the best Lancing school half back line ever. (When I say half back – for the younger ones this is the midfield.) The line up was: JMVT (Jeremy Taylor) - DJW (Donald Wylie) – CKH (Charles Howe). Donald Wylie, who scored a century before lunch at Tonbridge in 1953 and was a member of Mensa. He was obviously the brains, like Bobby Moore! Charles Howe had the silky skills like Martin Peters and Jeremy was the enforcer – a Nobby Stiles with teeth! I have to add that Jeremy was a very good footballer and I never knew him to do anything but encourage those he played alongside. Saturday evening in those days would find us at the Dive Downstairs, opposite Big Ben.

It was Jeremy's duty as Secretary to phone in the result to the Hayter Agency. One day we had beaten the Old Etonians 6-1 and on hearing this result the operator declared "Now that's a blow for the working classes".

I note that there are seven Presidents of the LOBFC here today. Surely a measure of respect for Jeremy.

Jeremy involved himself with the whole club, young and old. Always anonymous, I am aware that he insisted on helping the club with the extra cost of getting the recent leavers and university lads to

come down and play and he always insisted on being included on the distribution list for all club e-mails. One of these was the weekly call to training at Battersea Park which is sent to 127 members including Jeremy. On one occasion the email reminded us that a very fit ladies' hockey team would again be on the next door pitch and that we should try to derive some inspiration from them. Jeremy emailed back that he was going out to buy some boots and would be there on the Wednesday.

After our annual dinner at Stamford Bridge stadium (home of Chelsea FC) on 5 June this year, Jeremy wrote a letter of thanks to our President, saying how much he had enjoyed the evening. He wrote "...it was amongst the highlights of the many OL functions that I have attended over 62 years..." Then typically added "...I would like you to consider me as an anonymous donor for next year's event".

Last month, on the 2 June, Jeremy played in the Privateers' annual golf get together in Aldeburgh. Then two days later he attended the LOBFC Dinner at Stamford Bridge and then a week later, a service and lunch at Lancing attended by 120 of the Oldest OLs, the over 75s. This was all in just one month and this is why he was a Lancing legend.

Claire, our thanks to you for persevering with Jeremy in those early days of courtship. It can't have been easy! You a Methodist teetotaller and Jeremy working for Truman's Beers. You at the Academy of Music and he tone deaf. You loving rugby and he the round ball. You loving theatre and he films. You even allowed him to pop out in the middle of a film once to make a few calls from a public payphone just to be sure that the LOBs had 11 players on the following Saturday.

Claire, we all very much hope that you will continue to join us at Lancing functions in the future and particularly the football ones! We might even understand if occasionally you want to watch Henry at Saracens or perhaps at Twickenham playing for England. Jeremy would certainly love that!"