

TRIBUTE from Richard and Caroline

On 31st July 1918, the First World War was still to rage for a further four months, but much more happily, Henry Temple Smith was born on a farm in northwest Buckinghamshire.

Named Henry after his paternal grandfather, a successful Australian farmer, and Temple because it was a former surname of his mother's family, who still lived in nearby Stowe House at the time, he was soon nicknamed Henty due to his inability to pronounce his "r"s, and that name stuck throughout his life. He was the youngest in his family by seven years, having 2 elder brothers and a sister who were all born prior to the First War.

He had a happy childhood at Boycott Manor, near Buckingham. Taught by his sister's French governess until he was old enough to be sent to prep school, he retained a love of France and all things French - even to the extent that all his cars were Renaults. As a child, all the family were expected to ride, until Henty's father Tom decided to economise in the Great Depression and announced that two of his children must give up hunting. Henty was secretly rather relieved as he had never enjoyed riding much. Nevertheless horses did play a big role in his adult life through his love of flat racing, and many a winter evening was spent studying the form books to work out next season's winning two-year-olds. He was a member at Newmarket Racecourse for years, and loved his days there and at Ascot and Newbury.

When Henty went to Eton he was described by the school doctor as "a sturdy little chap". What was unusual was that he was still the smallest boy in the school several years later! This attribute was put to good use on the river, where his light weight and steering skills were much in demand, and he ended up as cox of the school's first rowing VIII.

After Eton he went up to Magdalen College, Cambridge and those 3 years were a particularly happy time, where many longstanding friendships were forged. In 1939 he achieved the pinnacle of sporting prowess in his field, when he won his blue as the cox of the Cambridge crew. They beat Oxford in that year's boat race - an event which attracted much more attention then than it does today.

As the Second World War broke out Henty joined the Welsh Guards, and eventually was part of the Guards Armoured Division. He used to be the one who stuck his head out of the top of the tank to tell the driver where to go, accounting for much of his deafness in later life. It was a matter of some pride that his division was one of the first into Belgium and they liberated Brussels from German occupation.

After the war he became a jobber, or market maker, in the stock exchange, but this was at a time of contraction for that business and in 1951 his brother Charles introduced him to the world of insurance. He spent the rest of his working life as a marine underwriter at Lloyds.

He first met Cicely during the war when he was best man at her sister's wedding, and she was a bridesmaid. However, it was some years later, when they used to make up a four at tennis, that romance blossomed, and they married in 1948. It was a marriage that was to last 63 years, produce two children, and an immensely happy family life. They each brought their own skills to the union. Cicely was a consummate cook and household organiser. (This was just as well as Henty was *hopeless* at doing odd jobs. Richard once found him painting the window sill on the house with a tiny pot of very expensive black car touch-up paint. When asked why he was using this, he said it was only because there was a brush in the lid!) He did however, deal with all the brown envelopes and planned wonderful holidays. He also of course adapted with astonishing dedication when Cicely became less able, and his newfound interest in the special offers at Sainsbury's took everyone by surprise. His devotion and care of Cicely were remarkable and it was typical of him that, when

praised for this, he simply said that she had looked after him for the greater part of their marriage, and now it was his turn to look after her.

You will all have your own memories of happy times, as Henty did love a good party, or at the very least a good gin and tonic. Some of you will remember their first home at Chalk End, or the many weekends and Close-Smith family Christmases at Boycott. He always looked forward to visits to the Bellews at Barmeath in Ireland, and meticulously organised great trips with them, both there and in Europe.

Henty and Cicely moved to the Old Vicarage at Messing 43 years ago, in April 1968 and they immediately embraced village life. With his firm Christian belief, and sense of responsibility, combined with his total honesty and attention to detail, Henty soon became in succession, Treasurer of the PCC, Churchwarden, and Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. He also took on responsibility for winding the Church clock; he loved to climb the tower to do this each week, and never let it stop. It is typical of his sense of responsibility and affection for this church that even when in hospital last month he was worrying about who would be doing his job of locking and unlocking the church each day.

Unsurprisingly with such talents, he was everyone's choice of executor, both inside the family and out. In connection with this should also be mentioned his skill in writing a good letter. He had a lightness of touch and a turn of phrase which could turn a commonplace thank you letter into something to treasure.

We all have our weaknesses, and Donald Farqharson, who sadly died very recently, summed up Henty's when he was asked how he would like to be reincarnated. He replied, "As Henty's dog - no-one gets a better life." Koko, Timmy, and Geordie in succession got away with almost anything and he would be delighted to hear them get a mention today.

Henty particularly enjoyed a family party, and took great pleasure in outings with his grandchildren, such as when Emily, Rosalind and Edmund took him punting on the Cam as a ninetieth birthday present; or when he went on holiday in St. Mawes with Georgina and Rosanna. Many of you will remember his 85th birthday in Richard's garden, where, in front of 55 Close-Smith cousins, he insisted on launching himself down a 60-metre zipwire from high up in a tree, with a huge grin on his face.

Henty was something of a connoisseur of things done well - and punctually. Woe betide you if you were late, and Cicely took quite a risk in arriving 15 minutes late for their wedding. In addition to his enthusiasm for racing, he also much enjoyed the opera, tennis, a flutter at the casino on holiday, good food, fine wine (particularly if they were French), his outings with the local Fine Arts Society, and a game of chess. However, his social life in retirement increasingly revolved around the bridge table and he was prepared to travel many miles for a game and the camaraderie which accompanied it. He had always loved bridge, and played it well and with good humour. It generated a whole raft of new friends and several of his partners are here today.

Henty was a most remarkable man: traditional in the best sense; thoughtful; steadfast; unassuming; self deprecating; charming, and will be particularly remembered for his infectious ability to see the humorous side of every situation. He was also intensely loyal and always prepared to put himself out to support a family member or a friend. Many here will have been touched by this quality.

We will miss him greatly.