

then digital cameras. He then spent hours with his computer, editing, scanning and printing photos. His computer holds 1000's of photos, mainly of trees and the natural beauty of Great Comberton.

Bob also became part of the Great Comberton Flower show and for some years was secretary. This used to take over his life for part of the year and he developed his computer skills during this period, working with the web-site and with the annual entry booklet. Bob was an avid learner and was still using his computer and the internet this year. Ann and Bob made a formidable team (albeit not a very fast one) when it came to online shopping with Ann sorting out her Waitrose lists on her iPad and Bob checking and placing the orders. Bob was still ordering from Amazon a few months ago!

Bob enjoyed his life and appreciated the quality of his retirement. He took the opportunity to do the things he enjoyed whilst giving his support to those things he believed in. He was a kind and helpful man who understood the inequalities in our society and did not judge people for that. He was a gentle man and will be missed by the community, his friends and his family.



Bob Smith

29th November 1929 – 25th March 2023



Bob, one of five children was born in Hastings and at the age of 9, as World War 2 started, went to Mayfield College not far from Tonbridge Wells as a boarder. He became a trainee for Cable and Wireless in 1947 and in 1948, as a “probationer”, was posted to Gibraltar. After a short time there, he went to Sierra Leone and then in 1952 was posted to Egypt. Later that year, in Suez, he met Ann and married her in 1955. He initially lived in the company “mess” which he shared with Ken Stuart who had interviewed him when he joined Cable and Wireless. Ken married Morwenna, Ann’s sister and so became Bob’s brother-in-law.

Christopher, his eldest son, was born in 1956 in Port Said but left with Ann shortly before the “Suez Crisis” started. Bob stayed on but left a couple of days before warships entered Egyptian waters. In the UK, Bob and his family moved to Cable and Wireless’s training college in Porthcurno (in Cornwall). The next posting was to Brazil which was cut short when Ann became pregnant. Michael was born in the UK in 1959, and soon after the family moved to Fayal in the Azores. This was followed by Doha (Qatar) in the early sixties and then Barbados in the early 70’s interspersed with time in London. The nomadic life ended in 1973 with Bob becoming a project manager for Cable and Wireless in London commuting every day from Ash Vale. Ten years later he retired and after much searching Ann and Bob moved to Great Comberton.

From a life filled with suitcases and cocktail parties in sweltering climates they settled into Quay Cottage chosen for its quiet location a short stroll

from the river Avon. Here Bob had the opportunity to undertake many projects (hobbies which allowed him to become totally committed and involved in). The early projects included planting trees in the garden – his personal arboretum and buying a 40ft canal boat shell.

We had had many a boat holiday as teenagers over the years and in part Quay cottage was chosen so Bob could have his boat just down from the house. The boat arrived in 1985, well, Michael and I helped Dad bring the boat down the Avon from Stratford loaded with all the materials needed to completely build the interior as it came just as a shell. Bob had had a mooring built and spent a huge amount of time using the skills learned in his work to completely fit out the boat - including all the interior cladding and electrics. At one stage he even went on a welding course at Pershore College. He spent many happy hours in his workshop over the years, on his lathe, repairing (or keeping to repair later) any number of bits and pieces. In 1988 the Avon flooded so badly that the boat (called Thomazina) broke its moorings and was washed into the field next door. Thanks to friends in the village Thomazina was pushed back onto the river and safely moored. Bob and Ann used to go on many trips down the Avon, including memorable times with their children and grandchildren. It gave picnics another dimension and it was always fun to see the look of horror in Bob's face as one of us took a turn steering. Their grandchildren and great grandchildren always had fond memories of coming down to Great Comberton.

Bob gave up the boat in 1999 but continued to care for Comberton Quay getting it officially recognised.

In addition to using his practical skills on Thomazina Bob also prepared experiments and demonstrations for the engineering club he set up and ran at

Elmley Castle First school as a volunteer for about 12 years. It was highlighted in an Ofsted report in 2003, noting its popularity and influence on pupils' future careers.

He was a very patient and practical person. Mike remembers buying some very high quality hifi loudspeakers (second hand) but with a tiny filament wire to one of the speaker cones broken. Bob had the steady hand, specialist soldering kit and the electrical engineering skills to fix it in 10 minutes, something which had eluded my brother despite weeks of effort.

He was always ready to explain, discuss or enquire about a subject or issue and had quite liberal views for his generation and for someone living in the wilds of the Worcestershire countryside. I think Bob would be glad that that sense of practical application, precision and an enquiring mind has rubbed off in various ways on both Mike and I. We are both appreciative of the influence Bob has had on our lives in this respect.

Bob was a Great Comberton Parish councillor for many years, spending a stint as chair and always having the interest of the community and the environment at heart. As his hearing started to fail, he decided to step down, but it didn't stop him challenging and questioning whether it be about trees, roads, caravans, the quay... he wanted the best for the village and always tried to present arguments in the politest way.

Bob had a great love of trees and volunteered as a tree warden. He spent many days in retirement taking photographs of trees and of nature in all its beauty. It was another of his passions. As a child I remember turning the bathroom into a darkroom and developing black and white prints. Bob moved on from there and had a variety of cameras progressing to SLR's and

