

George Jales 1923 - 2012 : from the eulogy at his funeral written by his wife, Margo

George was born at 9, Eastbury Grove, Chiswick to Henry and Florence Jales. He had an older sister Peggy and his Grandfather also lived with the family. When he was about 8 years old the family moved to 71, Devonshire Road – he remained in this house for the rest of his life ! He had a happy childhood. He went to Hogarth's boys' school and being a bright lad passed the 11 plus to gain a place at the County Grammar School in Chiswick (now Chiswick School). The family was not wealthy but nevertheless well provided for – they were the only family in the street to have a holiday every year. At school George gained his matriculation certificate and intended to go on to university.

When war broke out the school was evacuated to High Wycombe. But one day George cycled home to Chiswick and announced he had left school and was going to join the RAF. However his father (who had fought all through WW1) had other ideas. George was stubborn and refused to return to school; his father equally stubborn would not sign his papers to join up – so George went to work at Fuller's Brewery pending a more permanent job. Eventually he joined the Post Office and trained as a PO engineer. This work kept him out of the war for a couple of years but eventually he was called up.

He still wanted to enlist in the RAF, or the Army as second choice. Of course he was drafted into the Royal Navy ! His success in the 'entrance' exam resulted in an offer of a commission; this he refused and trained instead as an Electrical Engineer with his main work being to look after the ship's gyro. Although trainees were told that they would serve on large vessels, as part of a team, George found himself on a small ship alone with care of the gyro compass – a responsible job for a 20 year old lad. After surviving the war unscathed he returned to the GPO but in 1947 he moved to work at the Civil Service Commission for five years. From there he went to the Ministry of Defence where he remained until he retired. He was a rare breed in the administration side of the Civil Service because he had a technical background. This meant he was in great demand for all sorts of work and that he was out and about to most of the MOD establishments around the country, meeting people, which he loved doing.

His final posting as a lecturer in the Training Branch, being 'paid to talk' as he put it, suited him to a T. It was there that I met him. I fell head over heels the first time I talked to him. There was something charming and charismatic about him. He was a contradiction because he was old-world Gentlemanly but with a very modern outlook. He was a great raconteur and had a story for every occasion. There was just one very big problem. I was 21 and he was 53 years old. Thus began the chase. Nine long years it took for me to get him up the aisle but I managed it in the end. Those of you who knew George from his pre-marriage days will, I am sure, back me up when I say that it was hard work trying to tie him down. At the first training course I attended, at which George was lecturing, I was told that in his previous job they would run a book with bets about whether George would appear at a social function with a different lady on his arm from the previous occasion. When we announced we were getting married I remember a number of very shocked reactions !

George had numerous outside interests – he held high rank in the local Civil Defence, was a fabulous dancer, a cycling proficiency examiner, a motor cyclist, the owner of one of the few

cars in the area (who can now imagine such traffic-free days ?) not to mention a caravan near Herne Bay.

When he reached 60 he didn't want to retire and was delighted to be retained as a training consultant by the MOD. It was around this time that we married. In 'retirement' he was a governor at St Mary's Primary School, Duke Road. He joined school outings and went to listen to the children read. He loved children and seemed to have an affinity with them. One Sunday afternoon the doorbell rang and I answered. There were three young children standing on the doorstep; they asked me if Mr Jales could come out to play, please !! Our only regret was that we were never blessed with children of our own.

I did have a rival for George's affection and that was his garden shed at the bottom of the garden. From his dad he had inherited both the love of doing woodwork there and the actual shed itself. It was falling to pieces but he would never hear a word against it. I was terrified it would have a preservation order slapped on it. It took me 9 years to get him to the altar but twice as long to get rid of the shed and a new one in its place. He spent hours there making all manner of things – he was clever with his hands. He couldn't walk past a skip without wanting to remove a pallet. Like many do-it-yourselfers he was a great hoarder and had an incomparable collection of 'useful' bits and pieces which might come in 'handy'. When I was clearing the loft a few years ago I came across all sorts, including bits of WW2 radar sets (left over from the building of his first television set – see, I told you he was bright). I have always maintained that if someone knocked on our door and asked George if he had a green ¼ inch widget with yellow spots on it he would say, 'Yes, I have one of those in the loft', and produce it.

I must also mention his great love of St Nicholas Church. He served here as Sidesperson, Server, as Churchwarden for seven years, as a Eucharistic Minister, a Baptismal visitor and in many other roles, including his annual Advent appearances on or near 6 December, St Nicholas Day, when he appeared with mitre and crozier and a splendid cloak to play the part of St Nicholas for the children and tell them stories of the Saint.. This church played a very big part in his life and in our married life. His parents brought him here at one month old to be baptised, we were married here in 1985 and it is only fitting that his final farewells should be said here.

Finally I would like to say that in our life together we had a lovely time, some fantastic holidays, experiences and adventures. When Alzheimers struck we tried to maintain our normal life as much as possible. When our previous happy life seemed to be slipping away along came Billy our little dog who brought George such joy and comfort. George remained gentle and caring towards me right to the end, and he was happy. I was indeed blessed and privileged to have been loved by him. Thank you, George for being such a lovely husband.

Editor: George's funeral was held on 27 March 2012 attended by friends, relations, many members of the congregation and by his dog, Billy. The eulogy was read on Margo's behalf by Christabel Ames-Lewis.

