

Eulogy

John Ives

24.3.1933 – 22.5.15

'John'; 'Pa'; 'The Captain'; 'Master Mardler'; 'Honorary Secretary'; and occasionally even 'Mr. Ives' – in his affable manner you could call Pa almost anything – but as he would regularly remind us, you just couldn't call him, 'late for dinner'.

Now, it may come as a surprise to many to hear that Pa was a very keen gardener, avid DIYer, accomplished mechanic, and enthusiastic cordon bleu cook – well, it would *certainly* come as a surprise to us, as Pa was none of those things – but instead, he was very many others.

Pa was born in Aldeburgh in 1933, to Herbert and Muriel, joining sister Betty. Pa's father Herbert was a gentlemen's outfitter, however when the opportunity arose to snap up a good shop-stock-in-liquidation, he would readily extend his product range. Herbert was a character and was renowned for his Sales events – adopting the word "Reap!" in his 'Ives Sales' promotions – and during sale time the word "Reap!" would mysteriously appear, painted down the middle of the roads at major junctions! Mother Muriel was a canny businesswoman, who had an eye for a bargain and she together with Herbert made a formidable duo of the Leiston business community.

Throughout his life, Pa didn't venture too far from Suffolk for too long – only living away twice: once when evacuated to Devon in 1940 to an uncle's farm; and then a spell of overseas National Service.

Pa spent his early childhood growing up on Sizewell common, in one of the cottages on the seafront. It was this idyllic natural playground that was to form Pa's lifelong love and knowledge of the countryside; and his fascination and joy of the sea and all things piscatorial.

Pa relished his school years, spending 8 happy years here, at Framlingham College from 1942 and he would regularly regale us with his stories – although noticeably, they were often long on sporting achievements, but somewhat shorter on the academic. Stories for instance: of playing in the '*1st XI vs Masters*' hockey matches and bullying-off against the late great Norman Borrett, knowing that the third and final strike of the bully-off was likely to result in a sharp thwack across Pa's knuckles; or of when, halfway through a geography lesson the whole class was ordered to get under their desks and the loud bang heard a few seconds later was of a V2-rocket exploding less than a mile away; or the year of a dreadfully cold winter when hockey had to be cancelled, but Fram creatively, rearranged their entire fixtures list as *ice hockey* on the Meres; of Pa missing out on playing at Lord's because someone contracted measles; and, of waking one morning to learn that someone *else* [Pa, not implicated] had for a prank placed a chamber pot on top of the school spire and as a result the cadet force were given some impromptu target practice. Truly 'halcyon days', that Pa fondly recalled and cherished – and the source of his self-labelled 'schoolboy sense of humour', that endearingly Pa never lost.

After school Pa's great love of sport saw him contemplate a career as a PE teacher – but in the end, head ruled heart and he joined the family business – having served an apprenticeship at an uncle's shop in Diss and also a holiday job at Harrods.

Pa first met Ma, Janet, whilst still at school, in the fish & chip shop queue in Leiston – where not entirely uncharacteristically, Pa had no money and Ma had to sub him! Pa and Ma were married in 1955 – and on taking over the ‘Corner House’ Shop, Pa decided to specialise and so ‘John Ives, *footwear specialists*’ was established – this after doubtless exhaustive market research, but mostly because Pa said he was useless at measuring for suits.

Pa and Ma worked hard to create a wonderfully loving and supportive family environment. ‘The Big Move’ from Leiston to Dennington came in the mid 70’s. Over the following years there were moves of ‘The Shop’, to Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Colchester, as Pa successfully navigated commercial threats and opportunities. Running The Shop was inherently demanding, not least of family time, but there were rarely dull moments growing up with Pa and Ma and even the ordinarily mundane was made fun.

Despite the constant challenges on time, Pa was also involved in the community and helped in the fund raising efforts for *The Aldeburgh Cottage Hospital* and *Dennington Village Hall*. And Pa continued to play an active role in the Woodbridge traders association.

As an ardent family man, the arrival of grandchildren during the second half of the 90s was a great source of pride and enjoyment for Pa – and one welcome byproduct was the opportunity to compete on school stories!

As a result of a life of playing sport – just about *any* sport - Pa began to require bionic bits and pieces to be added. A third hip replacement and near fatal MRSA infection at the end of the 90’s left Pa with an immovable hip and a shortened leg. For many that would have been a major inhibitor – but not for Pa – that wasn’t going to limit *him*! Although he did, in a weak moment concede that his ice hockey playing days might just be over. Pa had to wear a built up shoe, which over the years got progressively more built up – but in his inimitable way Pa passed it off as a brand new aspirational fashion trend, concluding that “once I’ve saved up enough money, I’m going to have the other shoe done as well”.

It’s a testament to the many great friends that Pa had that they went to such great lengths to maintain Pa’s ability to indulge in the things he loved doing, with the friends he loved doing it with; including more latterly, transporting a golf-cart to ferry him around to his shooting pegs – or implementing the finely honed ‘Operation-rescue-John’ to pull him out of The Dee!

Finally losing Ma to Alzheimer’s nearly three years ago took it’s toll on Pa. But he was characteristically stoic. And continued full-on at The Shop. And found solace in family and friends which gave him a new spur and a new lease of life.

Outside of home and family life, Pa had two principal domains: The Shop and fishing.

The Shop was the perfect venue to do what Pa enjoyed and did best, interacting with people. Pa built enduring relationships with staff, customers, wholesalers and fellow traders, many of whom of course became great friends.

Friends have recalled visits to The Shop – as little markers in life’s rites of passage: their first pair of party shoes; school shoes – where one friend to this day likes to think that if lost on a dark night, that he could still navigate home by the stars because of the booklets handed out with his Clark’s Commandos. Another friend recalled a trip to The Shop to collect some boots that she had asked Pa to order in, and when it came to settling up Pa then feigned concern that “unfortunately” he couldn’t find the ‘discount button’ on the till.

Pa had always said he would never retire, although in the last 6 months he was beginning to take a lesser role and had one foot – and one stick – out the door. But whenever ‘out’, he was always in phone or email contact enquiring how they’d done that day at The Shop – with an encyclopedic knowledge of how it compared to the same day, same week, the previous year. And he continued making astute strategic and tactical decisions, to ensure he left a thriving business.

Pa’s second principal domain was on a river bank. Or on a river. Or in a river. Or on a lake. Or at sea. Or anywhere on or near water that presented an opportunity to fish! Notwithstanding the enjoyment of all of his many other pastimes - it was fishing where Pa was in his most natural habitat. Pa’s life was interspersed with a number of fishing forays, but two recurring and much loved events, both in Scotland, were the expeditions to the River Ythan for sea trout and the annual pilgrimage to Pa’s beloved Dee for salmon, and always accompanied by a party of close friends.

Fishing was a sport where many of Pa’s key traits were always readily on display: his tremendous fortitude - Spey casting in a fast flowing and boulder strewn Dee, on two crutches and a wading stick; his indomitable spirit at hauling himself around; his eternal optimism and perseverance, encapsulated in his seemingly perpetual “*just one more cast*”; and his joie de vivre and bonhomie, before, during and after - fishing with his friends.

And so, to ‘The Lake’ at Walpole – Pa’s second home for over 35 years - and possibly on occasion his *first* home! Where Pa would revel in his delight of fly fishing. An oasis of utter tranquility, where Pa and his fellow anglers could lose themselves, far from the madding crowd, in a landscape of epic flora and fauna – where the only sounds to be heard would be nature’s natural chorus: the wind rustling in the reeds; the chatter and twittering of birdsong overhead; the sound of swallows skimming and scooping up water; the muffled splash of an airborne trout’s re-entry; and, the occasional, “**Aah-haa!!**”, from Pa as he lifted into a fish, sometimes followed a second later by a somewhat more subdued mild expletive, when he and the fish parted company.

Pa loved The Lake and the camaraderie - and with his infectious enthusiasm took any and every opportunity to get others hooked too.

Pa didn’t take himself too seriously and was naturally self-deprecating, and illustrated again on a fishing outing. This time Pa was launching his boat from a trailer for the very first time at Orford. As Pa began reversing down the slipway, it occurred to him that there was probably a skill required in reversing a trailer - and it was at that very same moment that Pa realised he didn’t possess it. After what seemed like an eternity, of one aborted attempt after another, of snaking left and right but never centre and after a sizeable crowd of bemused onlookers had gathered, the Harbour Master’s tannoy crackled into life and bellowed: “Sir ! Are you coming or going?!” To which Pa, in defeated tone shouted back “I have *absolutely* no idea!”

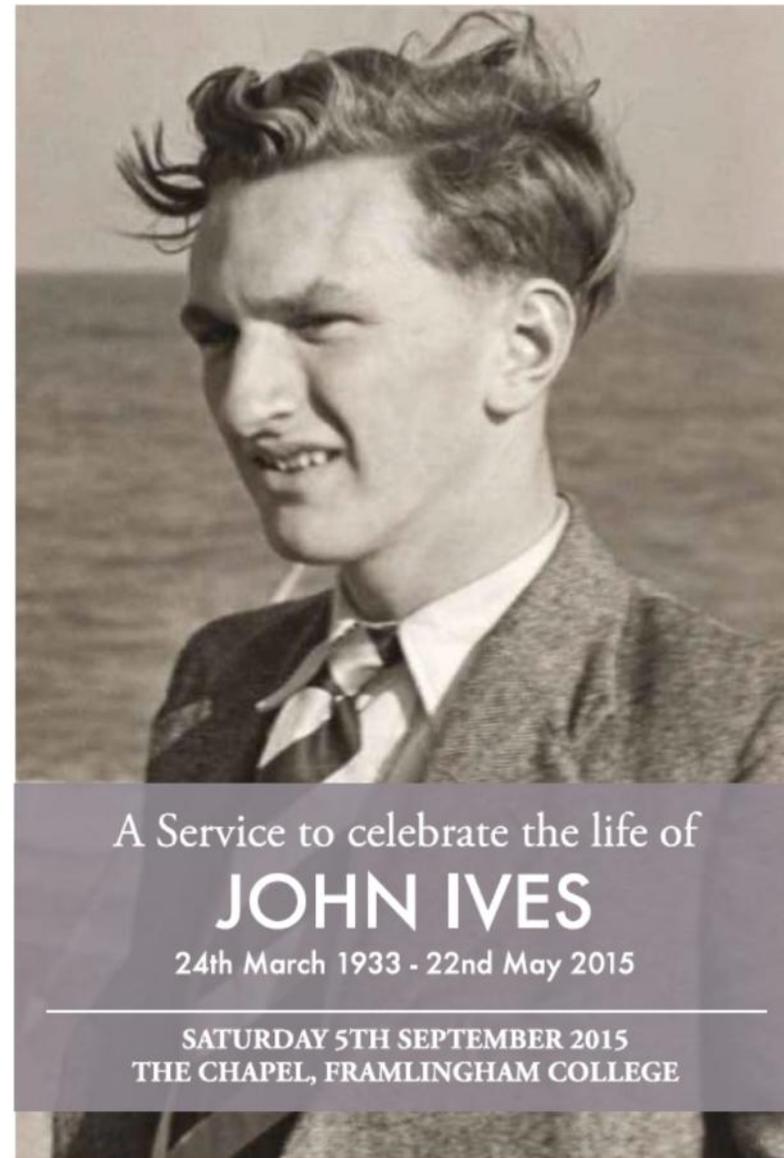
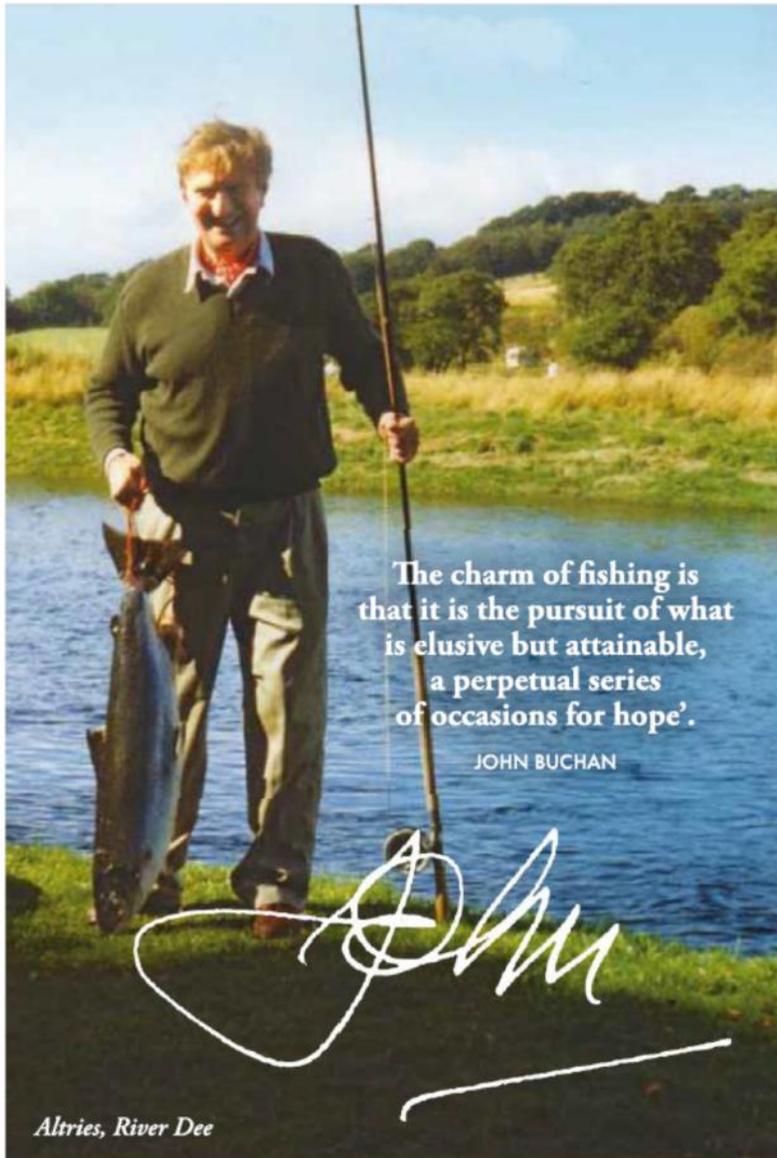
‘Carpe diem’ was Pa’s unstated approach to life - although if it had been stated, Pa no doubt would have made some reference to “not just *carpe* diem, but let’s try a bit of trout and salmon ‘diem’ too!”

Invariably one would come away from an interaction with Pa feeling a little bit the better for it. A silly quip; an amusing anecdote; a pithy observation; a burst of enthusiasm on any one of his ‘specialist subjects’; or, just a bit of a mardle – but always accompanied with an engaged and genuine interest in your well being – and delivered with either a twinkle, a grin, or beaming smile.

So we’ll each remember Pa for being and doing many things.

But most of all, he had a laugh. And we were lucky enough to have had a laugh with him.

The following is the Order of Service from the Chapel at Framlingham College on Saturday 5th September 2015.



JHM

The family welcome you and thank you all for the friendship that you have shown Pa throughout his long and happy life.

ORGANIST

Peter Moorhouse



Gorleston Yacht Pond, Norfolk



MUSIC ON ENTRY

Rhapsody in Blue,
George Gershwin –
*One of Pa's favourite
Gershwin pieces*

WELCOME

The Reverend
Simon Pitcher
Team Rector
Solebay Churches

HYMN

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise;
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word,
rise up and follow thee;
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity
interpreted by love!
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace;
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire
O still, small voice of calm;
O still, small voice of calm.

by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

SPM

OPENING PRAYERS

BIBLE READING

John 14.1-6 read by
Norman Porter

EULOGY

Read by Matthew Ives

MUSICAL (mostly) INTERLUDE

ADDRESS

Reverend Simon Pitcher

READINGS

Requiem per Salmo Trutta
by T.C. Kingsmill Moore
Read by Archie Hillier

Bear my body when I die,
Far from men and let it lie
By a sea trout river.
Where larches troop their ranks
And, above the granite banks
Silver birches shiver.

Stay not, stranger, passing by,
For decorous lament or sigh
Where I rest beside you.

Go, my brother, cast your line,
With a craft that once was mine,
And good luck betide you.

There, who knows, I still may ply,
O'er the stream a phantom fly
For a midnight capture,
And, if heaven attends my wish,
Bring to the bank a ghostly fish
In a ghostly rapture.

Fisherman's Prayer (Unknown)
Read by George Ives

God grant that I may live to fish
Until my dying day
And when it comes to my last cast
I then most humbly pray,
When in the Lord's safe landing net
I'm peacefully asleep,
That in his mercy I be judged
"As good enough to keep".

PRAYERS

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and
the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen

HYMN

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

William Blake (1757-1827)



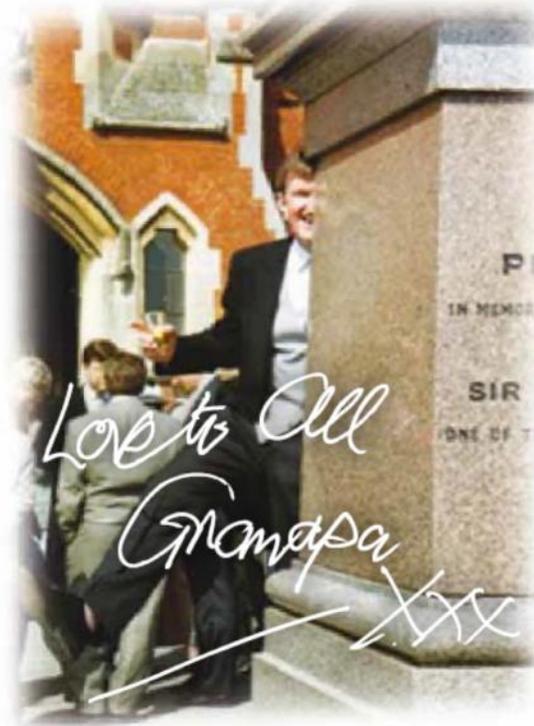
BLESSING

MUSIC ON EXIT

Wedding Day at Troldhaugen,
Edvard Grieg –

*A favourite of Pa's and Ma's,
a regular accompaniment to
a Sunday morning at Reap
House, from the Stereogram
at full volume!*

John



**The Ives family would like you to join them
for light refreshments after the service
at The Headmaster Porter Theatre.**

*Sincere thanks to Framlingham College for enabling us to celebrate Pa's
life in the place where he held so many fond memories.*