

## **Brian John Lee (S 46-52)**

Passed away peacefully on Monday, 13th April 2026 at Beechwood Grove Nursing Home, aged 91.

Brian was born in Colchester on 22nd July 1934, the only son of Harold and Winifred Lee, known as “John & Wynn”.

In September 1945, Brian moved to Southwold due to his father’s work with Adnams Brewery. He attended Sir John Leman High School for a year before becoming a boarder at Framlingham College from 1946 to 1952.

Apart from cricket, he played all sports with enthusiasm and distinction, being awarded 2nd XV Colours, 1st XV Colours, and a Rugby Cap all within one season. He rose to the rank of Company Sergeant Major in the school corps and achieved three A Levels in the sciences — Physics, Biology, and S-Level Chemistry.

It was while living in Southwold that Brian began “messing around in boats” from the age of 11, sailing in and out of Southwold harbour. This love of boats and sailing continued throughout his life.

Following two years of National Service, Brian attended the University of Birmingham British School of Malting & Brewing from 1954 to 1957.

After qualifying, he began what would become a highly successful career in the brewing industry, starting as a Junior Brewer for Davenports Brewery in 1957. By the age of 35, he had become Head Brewer at John Smith's Brewery in Tadcaster and was reputedly the youngest Head Brewer in the UK at the time.

Following the merger of John Smith’s with Courage Brewery, Brian moved from Yorkshire to the Courage Head Office at Southwark Bridge. By 1976, aged 42, he was Group Production Director, responsible for 10 breweries, four packaging sites, 38 depots, three hop farms, and two maltings.

During this period, he oversaw the design, construction, and commissioning of the Berkshire Brewery in Reading, then regarded as the largest and most modern brewery plant in the UK. Sadly, it closed in April 2010.

In May 1981, after 25 years in the brewing industry, Brian joined Wigan Richardson International as Managing Director. He also served as a Director of Hop Factors (UK), a Director of Hop Developments Ltd, Executive Director of John I Hass UK Trading Ltd, and Chairman of the Hop Merchants Association, before finally retiring in 1994 at the age of 60.

Outside his busy career, Brian enjoyed a full, active, and colourful life with his family and friends. He will be remembered for his humour, his many sayings, and his unmistakable joie de vivre.

Beloved husband of the late Margaret, father to three children, grandfather to six grandchildren, and great-grandfather to three great-grandchildren.

Brian's hobbies and interests were wide-ranging: beekeeping, fly fishing, clay pigeon shooting, beer, wine and cider making, regular games of backgammon, and completing the daily crossword online. He also had a keen interest in watermills, windmills, solar power, and steam engineering.

Over many years, he compiled an ongoing PowerPoint presentation covering countless subjects, reflecting his remarkable scientific and mathematical mindset. A "Coverdale" approach was often employed in solving problems — usually accompanied by a spreadsheet!

However, his greatest love was being aboard his sailing yacht, "MegaMeg", with family and friends, light-heartedly barking orders to his crew. Meals were always preceded by the words: "God bless MegaMeg and all who sail in her!"

He also enjoyed his gin with plain water so that "you can taste the botanicals," as he explained to many.

An amazing and supportive man whose influence touched so many lives, Brian will be sadly missed by his loving family.

Yet, in his own words:

"Don't mourn the cocoon. The butterfly has flown."

Obituary provided by his son, Stephen Lee.