

OLIVER TEMPLE GRIFFIN (K50-55)

The following obituary has been provided by his daughter Alice Massey, along with the photos. Below is her favourite photo with the shire horse Samson.



Oliver Temple Griffin was a forceful personality, and could be both mercurial and incisive as work colleagues attested to. He found a love for beer long before he did his Masters in Brewing at Birmingham, as his parents ran the White Horse pub in Kersey. Prior to this the family business had been a mix of banking and the manufacturing of beer fining through Herring and Giles which operated on the now rejuvenate site of the 2012 Olympics. While he studied brewing, it was the chemical processing that he took forward within the malting industry. In the late sixties, the malting industry was expanding and transforming from its centuries old floor-malting heritage to industrial scale. Oliver relished this change. He recognised the system's potential for areas with wet, late harvests. He developed static malting for his then employer [R & W Paul](#) and they built a 10-vessel plant at Mendlesham in Suffolk. This single-vessel malting system was able to dry enormous quantities of barley rapidly and cheaply. After further research he proposed that Paul's should build such a plant in the Moray Firth area to serve the expanding malt whisky distillers and through his biochemistry background he saw the potential of a new type of barley called Golden Promise which could be grown locally. While they didn't take up the opportunity, he was not going to let it go.

So newly married to Rosemary, they set off with his English setter Soames and three other keen young men to the Highlands of Scotland to establish Moray Firth Maltings. There a tweed wearing Englishman had to persuade the local Scottish farmers that there really would be gold in growing a new type of barley. And persuasive he was. Soon a second malting plant was established in Arbroath, attracting Royalty to its opening.

Along came a couple of children, Alice first and then Daniel. Oliver was not just interested in manufacturing, he started to farm beef cattle. He loved Limousine and Charolais breeds, but he also had a rather raucous pedigree Aberdeen Angus bull called Parraus (Gaelic for Paradise). He trialled growing various feed types of kale, turnip and legumes with varying success and to the dislike of his children who also got to taste them.

He moved from operations to sales and worked across the world looking at export /import markets in India, China and Japan. The family had several visits to India after he forged what became a lifelong friendship with the Jundal family. Their son came to study brewing in Edinburgh and holidays in the Highlands. Having

studied in Birmingham and with an Indian visitor, there were quite a few family made curries, which was pretty rare in those times.

Mid-1980s he left Moray Firth Maltings and set up Tore Mill to use the waste output from malting into a foodstuff for cows. He also established and built Alice Brewery. As part of the marketing, he bought two old shire horses, Samsung and Big Al to pull a drey around Inverness to deliver both ale and lager to the pubs. They also attended all the local agricultural shows in his distinctive self designed no button waistcoats. This was well before the micro brewing climate of today, and the plant is now in use in Boston brewing ales for the American market.

Oliver remarried in Turkey in 1989 to Christina, and after a few years they moved to Lincoln where Oliver backed various ventures including production of organic beer under the Lincoln Green label. Again ahead of his time. Furthermore, he enjoyed investing in the markets too, and along with others at the turn of the twentieth century observed the decline in direct UK public and household fixed-asset investment, where he benefited from a major shift in equity and derivative market capitalization away from pure UK-based holdings to broader overseas markets. He learnt all about using herbal leys to improve soil and gained organic status in selling his Aberdeen Angus organic beef to Waitrose and M&S -whomever would pay more, and under which label as often Aberdeen Angus would mean more profit than organic!. He also started to farm with sheep, though it was the cows he loved most, and continued to own both up until his death. Many he kept as pets after they stopped being productive and even when he towards his end he lost mobility, he managed to get around the farm to view them all.

Always travelling widely, by the 20C he had started to take an annual monthly break in Argentina in Jan-Feb when farming was quiet. He enjoyed a steak of two, listened to his favourite classical composers Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff at high volume (he was deaf in one ear) and continued to read the Economist and the Financial Times. He had a strong interest in metallurgy, and silverware in particular. He had a large collection, gifting both children with a set of silver on their marriages. He later became the curator and carer for Lincoln Cathedral's silver and donated a silver swan topped mitre for their services.

Oliver had an eclectic knowledge, and often cross-pollinated one idea with information from a completely different source. He promoted his schemes with vigour and force and was well known as a man who would not take no for an answer.

I can confirm you have found the obituary pulled together by his long term colleague from their business Moray Firth Maltings. \: <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/obituaries/2135578/barley-pioneer-oliver-griffin-dies-aged-84/> . While it is a lovely picture of him, I prefer the one of him from 1969.

I have attached a photo of him with one of his shire horse, Samson, and the Alice Brewery beer mat design. Below is my version of his obituary, which I hope might attract others recollections of him, or be of interest to others who studied at Framlingham.

