

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN ALLINGHAM. 1929-2015

September 1969, I was appointed as a primary school teacher at Mossley Road, my first encounter with John. He had a very authoritative countenance, a person who stood no nonsense and I was completely in awe! I wasn't the only one as the pupils viewed him in the same manner and were very apprehensive as they entered his top junior class. However, as they got to know him, respect prevailed. John was very fair, he knew how to encourage the pupils to achieve their potential and indeed many passed the 11+ and went on to Grammar Schools.

Many times on a Friday afternoon, I would gaze out of my window and see John outside with his class engrossed in a game of shinty, John rushing up and down with his stick enjoying it as much as the children. John was also in charge of the annual trip the top junior children made to Staithes and the children viewed it with eager anticipation.

Although, John was a very private person, he was extremely loyal and always willing to help colleagues. He was a respected and well liked member of staff.

In the late 1980's, education took on a new era, the old traditional style was blown out of the window. Many found it hard to accept the new ways and either left or retired. John, and his beloved wife Brenda decided to retire and that was a sad loss to education.

I kept in touch with John and Brenda and consequently became more acquainted with the other side of John. He was an accomplished historian and often spent his time pounding the hills and dales that he loved. He was a collector of antiques especially grandfather clocks and first edition books. He also had a passion for art and had a collection of fine paintings and was himself quite an accomplished artist. He loved going to book fairs and auctions. John also constructed models of ships his father was a crew member. His aptitude is demonstrated in the photograph of John with one of his models.

John, took an interest in my small holding at Diggle and we would have long discussions regarding the history of the area. His first encounter with my small holding was in 1982. I had just purchased the land which was covered in rushes. I decided to rectify this and set them alight. I had never seen anything travel so fast and soon the whole valley was ablaze. John was walking over Stanedge at the time, saw the smoke and came to investigate. He got a Hessian sack from the farmer across the way and proceeded to spend the next three hours getting it under control! John introduced me to a brewery at Marston and we went several times to test the beer! On the day I knew he had died, I went to Marsden and drank a pint in his memory.

It was John's idea to turn my two stone stables at Diggle into an artist's studio and I will dedicate them in his name. They will be known as The John Allingham studios.

It has been a privilege to have known John. He has been like a brother I have never had. He has enriched my life and although I cannot see him, he will never leave me. Thank you John.

