

A celebration of life

Oliver Fyson

31 October 1953 – 12 March 2020

11am – 12pm, Monday 23 March 2020

Fairspear Natural Burial Ground, Leafield, Oxfordshire



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

Oliver's life

Let's briefly look back on Oliver's life and times.

He was born not far from here, in Witney on 31 October 1953 - the fourth of five children raised by parents Richard and Ella. It's clear where Oliver's amazing capacity and drive for work came from - his father had a successful career as an officer in the Royal Navy and then became an incredibly gifted woodworker and carver.

His mother also served in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a 'Wren' during the Second World War, and then went on to run the family's smallholding in Kencot; looking after animals and growing daffodils and strawberries for sale.

All of the children were, quite literally, born to all of this, and Oliver took to all of his parents' activities easily and with enthusiasm. There's a beautiful photo of him as a baby lying happily in a crib hand-carved by Richard, and another of him carefully planing a piece of wood when he was just two.

Ella wrote in her *Baby Book* that Oliver was:

'Very happy, contented' and 'most lovable'. He 'smiled at three months' and was 'bright and intelligent.' He *'handles tools well,'* she

observed - *'holds them naturally', 'always busy and never wastes a moment.'*

So the habits of a lifetime were obviously formed early in Oliver's life.

From school, he became the first member of his family to go to university; studying engineering at City University in London and learning the basics of the profession that became his life's work.

After qualifying, Oliver worked on some high-profile projects (like the stunning Bahá'í Lotus Temple in New Delhi), and he spent two years in Iraq helping to build bridges and other public infrastructure in the early stages of the country's war with Iran.

That posting ended though, when having met Sophie, he was faced with a clear ultimatum: Iraq or Sophie. He chose well.

They married at a Catholic church in London in April 1984, then moved from the flat in Tooting, which Oliver had already singlehandedly renovated, to a house in Wimbledon, and later onto Oxford to raise a family.

Here, Oliver joined AKSWard - the company with which he was to work for the rest of his career. John, I know you and Oliver were the closest of colleagues and friends, and how well liked and respected he was at

the firm. So thank you for being here today as a link to that part of his life.

Oliver's sense of adventure and love of the outdoors played a big part in family holidays on the South Coast, Snowdonia and in France - walking, climbing mountains and in and out of the sea in all sorts of ways (no wet suits of course)!

And in between all this, the family home and garden were expertly extended, improved, decorated and equipped - complete with handmade furniture and night-vision camera to observe all the hedgehogs, foxes and other nocturnal wild visitors.

In the last few years of his life, Oliver became involved again with Wolvercote Community Orchard - helping in particular with the annual Apple Days and improving access for people with disabilities. I'm sure his energy and skills will be greatly missed by that group and the community.

After being diagnosed with melanoma in 2018, Oliver bore his illness and the pain it brought with bravery and dignity. He continued to cycle to and from work and hospital appointments for as long as he was able; he stayed positive and generally proved himself to have the constitution of an ox.

What really matters at the end of someone's life is not that they've died, but to know that they've lived, loved and used their time and talents productively and well.

And from all that we've just heard and are about to hear, it's clear that Oliver did that and much, *much* else.