

It is with sadness that we inform you that Michael (Joe) Shingfield passed away suddenly in May after a short, unexpected illness. Joe was known for his interest in Norwich tools in particular, putting together a wonderful collection of Griffiths planes and various items sold by J. Frost. Meeting up with his many friends at David Stanley tool auctions was always a great pleasure to him, especially if he found something better than he already had. That was always very difficult because more often than not he already had the best! He had a standing joke with David Stanley that Joe would say "Not many Griffiths lots in the sale." and David's answer was always "That's because you already have it all!".

Joe was born in Heacham, Norfolk in 1946 and was the only child of Joe and Elsie. As a young boy, he bred rabbits in the back garden to sell to market and later had a small plot with pigs. He loved rearing animals and intended to make this his lifelong career. However it was not to be, as when he finished school his Dad told him in no uncertain terms he had to get a trade; so he became a carpenter's apprentice. His apprenticeship was served with Wittons, a business in the village that ran both a funeral directors and a builders company. One day he might be making a coffin, the next being a pallbearer and the rest of the week repairing windows in a fine local manor house. It was this varied apprenticeship that gave Joe the skills to be able to turn his hand to anything. He was just as able to make a delicate Edwardian style plant stand, as build a roof on a house.

After his apprenticeship, Joe worked on the local construction sites as there was a boom in bungalows being built. Being that there was a plethora of Michaels, Mikes and Micks on the sites, he started using his father's name Joe to stand out from the crowd. It is at this time that he met his wife Jacqueline, who worked in a hardware store. After visiting the shop so frequently that he had a lifetime supply of screws, he plucked up the courage to propose. Once married they moved down to a small farm near Cheltenham where the owner was undertaking large-scale renovations throughout the farm and village buildings. Once the renovations were completed Joe was tempted to stay on the farm, but being concerned about raising his new baby daughter in such a remote location, he instead got a job with the National Trust in High Wycombe.

It is at this point that Joe's interest in antique tools started. Before he started his new job at the National Trust, he felt that he couldn't possibly go into the stately homes with a bag full of modern plastic handled tools. Knowing that the tool dealer Reg Eaton lived a few doors up from his parent's house in Heacham, Joe walked up the road and introduced himself. It was from that point on that a life-long friendship was formed, and every time he visited Heacham, he'd pop up the road knowing that Reg would have something interesting put aside on the shelf for him.

Joe absolutely loved working for the National Trust. He'd always had an interest in historical buildings and had frequently visited Trust properties with Jacqueline when they were newly-wed. To now be able to go behind the scenes and see all the hidden parts of these buildings was an absolute treat. The job was varied and challenging, and Joe took great pride in the work he undertook, repairing or replacing woodwork to such a high standard that no-one could tell if it was new or original.

On a personal note, I met Joe many years ago at one of Reg Eaton's sales in London and a very good, long lasting friendship came about, and one thing Joe instilled in me was a very wise piece of advice to "spend your money and put it on a shelf". Joe's many friends in the tool world will miss the banter. Denny, David, Eddie, Roy & Pat, Reg & Jane, Brian, etc. Apologies to any not mentioned (Brian Jackson).

After over 25 years with the National Trust Joe retired, moving back to his family home in Norfolk. While in High Wycombe Joe and Jacqueline had learned how to research family history, and now once he was back in Norfolk Joe turned that skill into researching more about Norwich. They took regular trips to the library in Norwich and in time wrote his first book "Norwich Tool Makers & Tool Dealers". This covered the family life of the men that made the tools and was illustrated with photos of some of his collection.

Joe became fascinated with all things Norwich and was soon researching the different businesses of the Victorian era. He collected all kinds of everyday objects such as spectacle cases and pocket knives, anything that had the maker's name on it. He also collected billheads from all kinds of businesses, some reaching back to the 1700s. After being shown a carte de visite by Phillip West, Joe delved into the history of the photographers of the city. He amassed a large collection of cartes as each one had the name and address of the photographer on the back. Using censuses, trade directories and newspapers Joe pieced together their history and published his second book "Norwich Victorian Photographers" in December last year. His knowledge of the history of Norwich was wide-ranging and in-depth, and his untimely death leaves a lot of it unrecorded.

Jacqueline passed away 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 aged 61 and Joe joined her 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 aged 71. They leave behind their only daughter, Jennie.

Brian Jackson