**Chris McKay** BSc, C Eng, FBHI 4/5/1949 - 10/7/2023

A Eulogy *Prepared by Malcolm & Sue Loveday.* Funeral at Poole & Wimborne Woodland Burial Ground

Wednesday 16th August at 12.30pm

Chris’s death leaves a large hole in all our lives in more ways than one. Whether we knew him as a family member, as a friend from the world of clocks and ringing, his working worlds of electronics, education, Scouting, village life or simply his journey through life.

Chris had a gift for making and keeping friends and we have all may have benefitted from his kindness and generosity, his patience and his adventurous cooking and his personality and hospitality.

Chris had Scottish heritage and was born in Sutherland, Scotland in May 1949. His father was in the police force and the family moved south to West London, initially to Ealing and subsequently to Greenford. As a youngster Chris contracted polio but thankfully recovered well but giving the reason why Chris chose the Polio Society as the charity for any donations we may wish to make in his memory.

When Chris was 11 years old, he attended a local grammar school where his games lessons were held next to the Hanwell Community Centre which had a tower clock. This is where the seed of interest in the world of turret clocks was planted.

I will leave Keith Scobie Youngs to say more later about Chris’s wealth of experience and knowledge of clocks later.

My wife, Sue, and I first met Chris in 1968 when he came to Sussex University to study electrical engineering. He joined the University of Sussex Guild of Bell Ringers and we all rang at St Peter’s Church Brighton. We went on ringing tours to ring at other churches in various parts of the country where Chris and I would also take the opportunity to examine the church clocks. Our friendship continued after university cemented by his and my interest in clocks and , as for many of us Chris became a man loved and valued part of our extended family, particularly by our children.

He regularly came to stay with us at Chertsey, several times at Christmas and he joined us on a number of holidays in the UK & in France.

Chris was an active Scout, and I think he took up ringing in about 1963 when he was taught to ring at Christ the Saviour’s Church in Ealing, being taught by Wilfred Wilson, one of the giants of the ringing exercise in the 1960’s – 1990’s. After University I think he joined the Civil service and was based in Barry, South Wales, where he was involved in fitting electronic equipment to an ocean research vessel. I don’t think he enjoyed the bureaucracy and left to work in the electronics industry, I think initially at EMI, Hayes whilst living with his parents.  He kept up ringing and rang one full length peal in November 1974 of 5040 changes of Grandsire Triples at Ealing lasting 2 hours and 53 minutes.

He subsequently changed jobs working for the electronics manufacturing firm Schlumberger which was based in Farnborough, Surrey, eventually moving into technical sales . This move led to Chris buying his first house in Crookham and establishing his own particular style of homemaking where the requirements of clock restoration and domestic life were equally served! In Crookham, his elderly next-door neighbour had been a longstanding friend of the previous occupant of the bungalow; when she expressed in what changes he had made Chris characteristically invited he into see. He gleefully reported that her reaction to a lathe housed in a bedroom had been to ask if people were allowed to do that sort of thing!

Whilst he was at Crookham, a serious fire burnt down Yateley church, so together we removed the damaged wrought iron turret clock before the days when health & safety was a consideration since the some of the bells were still hanging precariously above us on their burnt fitting! He subsequently fully restored the clock.

Chris went with Schlumberger when they moved to Dorset in the early 1980’s.

Although Chris was an archetypical bachelor, he was amused when house sellers mistakenly assumed that he was married to Sue when we accompanied to look at houses in Dorset with him when he was moving from Fleet, thus we helped to choose *Lavenham*, his house in Hinton Martell.

When he was made redundant by Schlumberger Chris began another career in education teaching design technology in several schools in the area. Chris always seemed to have time for the youngsters who struggled elsewhere but had an interest in practical things.

I worked for many years as a research scientist at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, and I became involved in the 1976 failure investigation into the *Big Ben* clock. I was invited to presented the opening paper at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers seminar which gave the finding of the investigation and since I was keen that we put the failure in an historical context I enlisted Chris to help in research the history of the clock which he continued for the next thirty years culminating in his *magnum opus* on Big Ben, published by Oxford press in 2010.

Those in the turret clock world with long memories may recall our participation in ‘*The Great Salisbury Clock Trial’,* held in the Medieval Hall, Salisbury in May 1993, organised by Chris and with Mike Bundock acting as the presiding judge. The proceedings, edited by Chris were produced as a Monograph published by AHS Turret Clock Group.

In later years, Chris rarely rang other than when he regularly stayed at Chertsey. He regilded the St Peter’s Church Chertsey dials for the Millenium in 2000 AD and together we refurbished the 1892 Smith’s of Derby clock movement in 2006, which he used as an example in his book ‘*The Maintenance, Repair, Restoration, Conservation and Preservation of Turret Clocks’* published in 2016. He also helped in the regilding of the weather vane and cockerel for Chertsey church in 2012. We also worked together on refurbishing the Gillett bell chime at Headly, Bourdon, Hants.

I am sure that Chris’s latest book issued early this year on *The Port Regis Clock* will be of great interest to local historians and school members alike for many years to come.

He was an active participant in village life in Hinton Martell, including restoring and maintaining the village fountain. He was called upon to play important roles such as Father Christmas and a raffle ticket seller. As recently as 4th June 2023 he acted as Master of Ceremony for the Coronation celebrations in Hinton Martell and few will forget his masterful appearance in his union jack waistcoat!

Chris was a big hearted generous man and willingly shared his encyclopaedic knowledge of turret clocks and training a number of people in practical skills of clock restoration and gilding.

It was a privilege to have known Chris as a friend or an acquaintance and we will all have our own special memories of Chris especially missing his phone calls or e-mails. His tangible legacy is an extensive range of publications and the skills he passed onto many as a teacher, mentor and clock restorer; his intangible, but just as significant legacy is the many ways which he enriched all of our lives.

Chris achieved much, possibly because he was a workaholic and did not own a TV!

**He will be missed but not forgotten.**

*Thankyou*