

A tribute to a Local Bobby Robert 'Bob' Salmon 1949 - 2007

Bob Salmon first introduced himself to readers of The Wychwood in the August/September Issue of 1989 (Volume 10). At that stage he had lived in Ascott-under-Wychwood with his wife and two daughters for five years. He also referred to "Our Daffy" the duck, about whom he had written two years earlier. Bob talked of his agricultural experience, saying: "Because of this experience I am aware of some of the area's problems." He went on to say: "I intend to do a lot of my policing on foot, where I believe the best contact can be made." He talked about the schools programme and the fact that he wanted to see more Neighbourhood Watch Groups throughout the whole of the area. Bob's comments nearly twenty years ago are just as relevant today and remind us how sadly we miss his style of personal policing.

On 12th October 2007 Robert Allan Salmon sadly passed away. He had been suffering with bone cancer for the past 12 months. Robert was probably better known in the area as PC Bob Salmon, a local beat officer who patrolled the Wychwoods for over 10 years.



Bob was born in Ealing on 8th April 1949 to Doris and John Salmon. Growing up in London, he spent holidays in the Devon countryside and decided at a young age that he wanted to leave the big city and work with animals. He attended agricultural college and after graduation decided to try his hand at pig farming. Whilst farming he met his wife Sheila at a young farmers' party. Neither of them were looking for love that evening but something sparked between them and a year later they were married.

When pig prices started to drop in the early 1970s, Bob decided to look for a new profession and this is when he joined the police force. He served as a police constable for 30 years, starting his career in Oxford and later moving to cover the

Wychwoods, based in Chipping Norton. Bob was a well-respected police constable and a good role model for the younger recruits. When he wasn't out fighting crime he was honing his ping pong and snooker skills...he was apparently unbeatable. As a community police officer, Bob's work took him to many schools in the area, teaching the children all about the police force. He relished this role and will probably go down in the annals of history as being the only officer who allowed a small class of children to draw round him as he lay on the classroom floor. Bob was well known for his cycling, often seen in the early

hours frantically cycling out of Ascott up the steep hill toward Chipping Norton. One morning he was lucky enough to receive a tow from some of his colleagues. Holding on tightly, the car pulled him and his bike up to a speed of 40mph; apparently at this speed a road bike will be rather wobbly. Clinging on all the way to Chipping Norton he arriving at the station looking considerably 'windswept and interesting' not to mention having numerous flies stuck to his face and teeth.

Following the death of his father in law, from cancer, in 1982 Bob decided to help raise money for cancer research by doing a sponsored bike ride from his home in Ascott-under-Wychwood to his mother's home in Fareham, Hampshire, a 98 mile journey and no easy feat. Following a story in the local paper about his ride, Bob earned himself an admirer who requested the very shorts he cycled in...unwashed. This of course led to hours of ribbing at the police station but he always gave as good as he got. And I don't think he ever sent those shorts! Retiring in 2004, Bob decided to take life easy for a while, but not able to sit around for too long he took a job at Certikin in Witney. Here he made many more friends and was known for often causing a comical raucous in the canteen at lunch-time. Bob had a real zest for life

and wanted to travel the world. He was surprised on a recent trip to China to discover some fellow Manchester United fans living right in the heart of Beijing. Producing his Man U membership card from his wallet created a furore of excitement as his new friends were convinced that this made him a personal friend of Sir Alex Ferguson. They insisted on having their photograph taken with him for posterity.

Bob's love of music was evident throughout his life. In his younger years he was in a band with three of his closest friends, they never quite made a number one but they did manage to entertain the neighbours on numerous Sunday afternoons. From classical to rock, he loved it all. He was even known to sit through Cliff Richard concerts as surprise treats for Sheila – now that is love! Although Bob has now gone he will not be forgotten. He was a loving husband to Sheila, father to Caroline and Natalie, grandfather, son, brother and uncle. He was also a wonderful friend. His compassion and understanding always shone through, along with his wicked sense of humour. We will probably never know how many lives he touched but one thing is for certain he truly was a remarkable man and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Natalie Salmon

“One of Bob's favourite stories was the time we were out together on patrol. We were parked at a set of traffic lights. We could see the car at the other side of the traffic lights. The driver suddenly got out of his car and began to run away from it. Bob and I both assumed that he had stolen the car and was running away from us. We leapt out of the Police car and ran after him, hurling him to the ground. It was only then that we saw his car burst into flames and realised why he had been running away from the vehicle. The driver was fine about it once we had dusted him down and called the Fire Brigade!”

(Another wonderful story taken from Bob's Eulogy)