

## Lost Retirement

My father George Beacham worked as a civilian at RAF Little Rissington from 1939 until 1976 when it closed as Central Flying School and he reached retirement age. No parties on retirement in those circumstances, he was off sick and died after only 16 months of retirement.

### A Little Recognition Helps

However, back in the 1960s he received two commendations in recognition for his service. One was from the Air Officer Commander in Chief, which meant that they had to have a formal ceremony to present it to him. I can remember having the day off school so that I could attend with my mother and brother. It poured with rain, and the airmen had to march about in it! I can remember getting soaked. A few years later both my parents were presented to the Queen Mother on a visit to the base.

My mother-in-law Flossie Mitchell worked at the BT Training College at Leafield for over 20 years, and on retirement she was presented by BT with a certificate and a present of her choice. They held a party, which I attended with her. Like my father she was robbed of her retirement by illness and died after 16 months.

With a family history of lost retirement years can you wonder at my own reluctance to retire!

My husband's Uncle Bill, who lived in Oxford, worked for many years as a dustman. We have a gold watch, engraved on the back - 'presented to W J Page in recognition of 25 years service with the Oxford City Council'.

When he retired he received a glass tankard engraved with the coat of arms of the Council.

### And What About Me?

I started working for the Inland Revenue in July 1970, mainly in Oxford. Reaching retirement age in 2009, I elected to continue working part-time. After 25 years' service I received a letter signed by the Regional Controller - four months late! At 30 years' service I had a letter signed by the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue. No gold watch or bunch of flowers! I did not quite make it to 40 years' service, as in March last year I was dismissed without notice for gross misconduct. I was apparently looking at computer records that I was not entitled to look at. My manager arranged for a good luck card to be circulated round the office, and I was heartened by the kind messages of my former colleagues, who were more shocked at what had happened to me than at what I had supposedly done against the rules. They had a collection and gave me a gift of my choice, but of course my employer gave me nothing.

I received support and work from my accountant colleagues, Graham and Emma in Witney, who helped me through some of the most difficult months of my life. They gave me the confidence to carry on with my own tax business.

I must also thank Milton PC for giving me a job in the public service where what I do is appreciated. I used to think that when I retired I would get a little job locally where I could walk to work, after all those years struggling up the A40! As a lengthperson I am walking as I work, about 10 miles a week! After being out of the village for 12 hours a day, and too tired to have a social life, I am really enjoying being out and about in the village getting to know more people.

**Margaret Ricketts**