

OBITUARIES

LAWRENCE EDGAR TILLER (LAURIE) 17th. DEC. 1922 – 2nd OCT 2011.



“Of manners gentle
Of affections mild
In wit, a man
Simplicity, a child
A safe companion
And an easy friend
Unblamed through life
Lamented in thy end”

Laurie Tiller who died on 2nd October 2011 was an easy friend to all of us in the Society, and particularly and noticeably to new members attending their first outdoor meetings. He was unfailingly polite and very welcoming and always unnecessarily diffident about his own perceived knowledge of the subject of the meeting. He led many Access and Bird Section meetings and indeed his last appearance to other Society members was at a Bird Section meeting at West High Down two weeks before his sudden death. He made his mark at that meeting when the extraneous noises emanating from his hearing aid erroneously persuaded the leader that day to claim a yellow-hammer in very unlikely terrain.

He was born in Hampton, Middlesex on 17th December 1922, one of five children. The family moved to Surrey and he was sent to boarding school, in his words “presumably to learn to speak proper”. He left school in 1936 at age 14 to work with Hawker Aircraft at Kingston upon Thames where he developed his interest in all things aeronautical. He would later work at Brooklands where test flights for Hurricanes were taking place. Membership of the Air Training Corps led to his joining the RAF as an engine fitter. Service in Hampshire, St David’s, Thorney Island and India followed.

LAWRENCE EDGAR TILLER (LAURIE)

At the end of the war he married Peggy, settled in Ryde, produced two children and embarked on his career in the County Fire Service, rising to Divisional Officer with special responsibility for Fire Prevention. Latterly he studied for an Open University degree and graduated with a B.Sc. He retired at the age of 60 and he was then able to exercise more his interests in photography, walking, natural history, science and travel. Unfortunately, Peggy died in 1993, after 47 years of happy marriage.

He joined the Society in 1993 and his interests particularly in walking and natural history perhaps almost inevitably led him later to pair up with Toni Goodley, recently herself widowed and 16 years of contentment, happiness and fulfilment followed. Work with the University of the Third Age and a Millennium Prize in 2000 resulting in 10 weeks in South Africa studying dolphins, together with numerous foreign natural history trips kept them both busy.

Joint Membership Secretary of the Society since 1998, with Toni, resulted in someone ideally placed being the very first face and voice of the Society to greet new members.

He died suddenly on a walking holiday with Toni in rural Devon. He leaves two children, Margaret and David, Toni and her children and many friends: the huge number of people who attended his funeral service at Ryde Methodist Church demonstrated the love and affection in which Laurie was held. We will miss him. Nearly £700 was collected in his memory and sent to Wight Nature Fund to help with the management costs of their five nature reserves. He left his microscopes and microscopical equipment to the Society.

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