

John Rawlins 1930 - 2012

Despite inclement weather on February 10th, when the assembled crowd was ushered into the crematorium chapel, it was obvious that not a seat would be empty. It was a fitting tribute to a man who used his 27 years of retirement from teaching to collect and meticulously document old local photographs, as well as recording important events as they happened. His remarkable archive has been left to the Wychwoods Local



History Society and it will be an invaluable resource for many years to come.

John was the only child of Kenneth Rawlins of Milton and Gladys Ruth Hall. Gladys came to Milton, to teach at the local council school. When the young couple married, they bought 'Sunnyside' a cottage on Shipton Road in Milton and it was here that John was born in 1930. A brother, Richard, had been born in 1928 and had died within weeks.

John attended the local school, never forgetting his teachers there. Gwen Silman, Win Slater and Annie Pearce were lovingly remembered in one of his many talks at the WLHS. He progressed to Burford Grammar School and later attended Goldsmith's in London, following 18 months of National Service in the RAF. John had set his heart on a teaching career at secondary level but

increasing ill health intervened. Instead he taught at several primary schools in Kent with periodic interruptions for hospitalisations. His final post was at Barming, Kent, where he remained for 17 years. He reluctantly retired in 1985 due to illness and his students just as reluctantly bade him farewell.

And so began his second career at 'Sunnyside' in the Wychwoods. Over time he acquired both

Norman Frost's and Mike Linfield's photography collections and began his own extensive one. During his years with the WLHS he gave nine illustrated talks to the Society and many more to other local and area organisations. He produced a video entitled 'Walks in Milton and Shipton', co-wrote the Second Wychwood Album with Sue Jourdan, mounted countless displays for the Society at Milton and Shipton fetes and was vice-chairman of the organisation for many years. John wrote 13 articles for the Journal and was runner-up in 2002 for the Publication and Research Award by the British Association for Local History.

He was justly proud of this recognition but perhaps he would have been prouder still at the number of Miltonians and Shiptonians who gathered at his funeral to show affection and respect for the Wychwoods' Local Historian.

Trudy Yates