

50 Years In The Chair - A Tribute To Ken Pearce

By Tony Mitchell

At the Society's Annual General Meeting on 20th November, 1969, it was announced that the Society's Chairman, Lewis Donald Jarvis J.P., would be moving away from the area in 1970. As a result, he would, therefore, relinquish his position as Chairman after 17 years. With that in mind, two Vice Chairmen were appointed to ensure that the Society's business would continue uninterrupted between Mr Jarvis's departure in the summer of 1970 and the next Annual General Meeting. They were Mr K Richmond Crum and Mr Ken Pearce, a Bishopshalt Schoolmaster in his thirties. A presentation was made to Mr Jarvis at the Society's social evening on 8th April, 1970, which was presided over by Ken Pearce.

Mr Jarvis was in the chair for the last time at the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd October, 1970. When it came to the election of Officers for the following year, he stood down, and Ken Pearce was unanimously appointed Chairman in his place. In October, 2020, Ken completed 50 years at the helm of the Society.

Ken Pearce joined the Society in 1962. In the very first issue of our magazine, The Uxbridge Record, in March, 1963, it was announced that he would be joining two other members of the Society at that month's meeting to give talks about 'Some Aspects of Local Transport History'. Ken's particular topic was 'Railways In Uxbridge', and the full talk was published in the second edition of the magazine. After becoming Chairman in 1970, he has usually written one or more articles for each issue of the magazine. As we all know and appreciate, during his time as Chairman he has been an accomplished and regular speaker at our monthly meetings.

With Ken's Chairmanship, the Society has flourished. It was under him that, in 1972, the Society held an exhibition in a tent at the Hillingdon Show. In preparation, a lot of effort was put in by various people, and two nights were spent under canvas before the show, and another after, to ensure the security of items displayed. It was a great success, but as a result of all the work and stress needed to get the show on the road, it was decided not to participate again. But there they were with similar success three years later.

Prior to every monthly meeting, Ken researches the local newspaper archives in order to present his 'Anniversaries' of events for that month in the previous 100 years. He actually started this reporting in the November, 1972, edition of The Uxbridge Record. In 1989 he took over as Editor of The Uxbridge Record, and in 2005, he decided that the magazine would be improved if the front cover was to be produced in colour. Under his editorship, it continues to be a successful magazine produced twice each year. The British Library holds copies of our magazine in its archives, and on one occasion when we were a month late producing it, they contacted us to ask if we had omitted to send their copy!

Apart from being our Chairman, Ken (sometimes referred to as Mr Uxbridge) is widely recognised as Uxbridge's local historian, and the author of several authoritative books on the history of the town, its neighbourhood and its characters. In 1997, in recognition of his services to local history, he received an honorary degree of Master of the University (M. Univ. for short) from Brunel University. Apart from his involvement with our Society, he has frequently and willingly given talks to other organisations, and more recently he has had a regular podcast on Uxbridge FM.

2019 marked the Society's 70th Anniversary, and Ken organised an excellent celebration garden party held at Bishopshalt School. His influence really showed on this occasion because he was even able to provide a warm sunny day.

Thank you Ken for all you have done and continue to do to ensure the success of our Society.