

OBITUARY FOR JEFFREY SMITH

Jeffrey Smith, a Vice President of the Trust, died last month. In his long life, he contributed greatly to Winchester as a historic city and community and did so particularly as a founder and long serving member of the Trust.

Although born in Southampton, he spent almost his entire life in Winchester except for his service in the Royal Engineers during the second World War and briefly afterwards in London. A measure of his ability and determination is that he took his final examinations to become a Chartered Surveyor in an army tent on Salisbury Plain, having enlisted before he could take them. In 1948, he was invited to purchase the firm in which he had been articled, George Smith and Son and with that he returned to Winchester.

As he settled back in the City and his practice prospered, he became alarmed at the plans of the City Council to pull down most of the centre for redevelopment. He was determined to change those plans and became a founder member of the Winchester Preservation Trust, later becoming one of its most distinguished and hard working Chairman. At the same time he sought and gained election to Winchester City Council which then governed only the ancient city. He worked hard there too and in 1967 he was elected Mayor. He remained a member of the City Council until it was reorganised in 1973.

During his chairmanship Jeffrey saved the building that houses our offices in Lower Brook Street from demolition to make more car-parking space by getting it spot listed (one of his many skills). He then initiated its restoration from near dereliction to become the Heritage Centre. He also initiated the restoration of the porticos on 33 – 39 Southgate Street, and played a major part in opposing the demolition of Northington Grange.

Jeffrey's work for the City continued in this Trust and in other charitable and public bodies. In later years, his direct involvement lessened but his interest in and commitment to Winchester did not diminish. He contributed generously to support the Trust in publishing the highly successful "Time Gentlemen, Please" by Phil Yates (himself a generous donor) and in presenting to the Trust, in memory of Pat Edwards, a splendid painting of the Westgate. Many will have seen it reproduced as one of the Trust's Christmas cards. It now hangs in the Heritage Centre. Jeffrey is survived by his two sons and a large number of grandchildren and great grandchildren.