

OBITUARY.

JOHN PHILIP LAWSON 29th August 1926 – 15th October 2021.



J.P. Lawson and Roy Daines. 1993

Born in the Anlaby Park area of West Hull to parents Philip and Doris, John was one of two children. His sister, Margaret, died some years ago. The family's early years were difficult. John's mother died when he was young and housekeeper, Eva, moved into the family home.

Educated at Eastfield Road School and then Hull Technical College, John's initial employment was as a cashier with East Riding Motor Services. In 1944 he joined the Royal Navy, serving as a 'coder' on board HMS Slinger. During his time in the forces, he visited Sydney, The Philippines and Hong Kong.

On returning to civilian life, John met his future wife, Joan. They shared a joint affinity for Hull City A.F.C.. Married at St. Augustine's Catholic Church, they took up residency on Wold Road. The marriage was blessed by children Kathryn, Karen and David. John

moved employment to the Gas Board where he remained until retirement at age 60. During this time the family moved to Rokeby Avenue and enjoyed visits to Bridlington, Scarborough and Whitby.

John had a picture of jockey, Franki Dettori, on the wall at home, a reminder of the day he won seven races at one meeting. A bet on this happening secured John a significant pay-out. He once told me that it would have been bigger had his trip to the bookmaker's office been made earlier in the day. I'm told that the odds against Dettori winning all seven races were 26,051-1.

John and Joan enjoyed music, attending Hull City Hall symphony and brass band concerts plus Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. They also cruised the Rhine and attended Royal Navy reunions. John died peacefully in the company of his family. Several friends and officials from local chess club joined family members at his funeral at Haltemprice Crematorium on 8th November 2021.

The Chess Player and Administrator.

Instrumental in reforming and reorganising Hull & District Chess Association during the early 1960s, in co-operation with colleagues Thomas Atkinson and John Devine. It grew from 8 teams to 50 by 1980.

At various times, held the posts of Hull & District Chess Association President, Past President and General Secretary.

Co-founder of the Hull Chess Congress. The idea was floated in 1963, the first congress was held in 1964 and John acted as Controller/Arbiter on 44 occasions. His efforts were recognised by way of a presentation at the 50th Congress in 2013. A period of silence was observed at the 2021 Congress.

Initiator of the Hull & District Chess Association grading list.

Sustained a regular chess column in the Hull Daily Mail for nearly 30 years.

Involved with telephone matches between St. Andrews Chess Club, Hull and Alcazar, London, Hull and Rotterdam and Hull and Ghent during the 1970sa and 1980s.

Received the British Chess Federation's President's Award in 2001.

Arbiter at the first three Civil Service National Individual Chess Championships, commencing in 1991.

Long time member of the Gas Board/NEGAS and St. Andrews Chess Clubs in Hull.

Practitioner of the Colle System for white and the Albin Counter Gambit for black.

Personal Memories.

I first met John on 1st December 1971, when playing top board for the Hull Grammar Schools team against Gas Board 'A'. He adopted the Colle System, of which I had no knowledge, and won in 19 moves! It quickly became part of my opening repertoire and continues to be used on occasion to the present day. We subsequently met on many occasions, in particular when I captained the Hull Civil Service team. Some

'grandmaster draws' enabled me to benefit from his knowledge of organising chess activities.

John had fond memories of meeting Sir Stuart Milner-Barry at the inaugural Civil Service National Individual Chess Championship 1991 at York University. Like many of the competitors, he felt compelled to ask how I managed to persuade such a renowned personality to attend the event and present the trophy named in Sir Stuart's honour. The simple answer was, 'I wrote to him and sent an invitation'.

John always made himself available if you required his services for chess and enjoyed whatever task he was allocated. In recent years ill health and advanced age meant he was not seen very often by local players. Nevertheless, his impact on the game in this area continues despite his passing. Rest in peace good friend.

David G. Mills.

December 2021.