

## Seamus Burke 19th April 1954 - 2nd June 2014



It is with great sadness that I have to inform the Association of the death of Seamus Burke after a short illness. Seamus has long been a part of the fabric of the Association working tirelessly behind the scenes for many years. He was a first XI goalkeeper, passionate cricketer, tourist, as well as being our Treasurer.

As John Hickey said in his thoughtful and touching Eulogy to Seamus, very few people are universally known by ONE name – there was really only one SEAMUS, every Xaverian knew who you meant when you said SEAMUS! A huge crowd turned up and paid their respects to Seamus at St Anselms last week; tributes were voiced at the Mass, the burial at Richmond Road Cemetery and later in the King's Head in Tooting. He will be sorely missed by us all and we all wanted publicly to show what he meant to us.

The huge crowd included over FIFTY Xaverians who attended the Mass and Funeral Service included Seamus's brother Brian Burke, Ray Gately came over from Galway to pay his respects, also Dave and John Leathem, [and Lynne] - The Milligan brothers [Paul and Lawrence], Mick Power [and Dot], Mick Powell, Ted Hayter, Brian Sanders, Scotty Macdonald, Frank Barretta, Eddie O'Brien, Colin Garvey, Bob Morris, Vic Roszkowski, Harry Hickland,, Chris Kavanagh, Mick Duffy, Chris Smith, The Benedicts, Ben, Matt and Joseph, Brendan Kearns, Brendan Williams, Alec Morrish, John Hickey, Tony O'Shea, Frank Ryan, John Ryan, Jimmy Burke, John & Spencer McGuire, Mick Carrucan, Gerry Taggart, Mick & Tom McLoughlin, Paul West, Trevor Jones [and his wife], Jim Thornton, Harry Mellor, Mark Preece, Connor Rooney, John Mansi, Pat Burke, Mick O'Sullivan, Paul Morgan and Matthew Murtagh:- I think that is everyone who were there, a great effort, a fitting tribute—**SEAMUS BURKE RIP ...** Scotty



Loyalty, Reliability, Dependability, all wrapped up in that teasing, slightly edgy, witty banter that hid a very kind and caring individual who was always there for you when you needed him. Seamus was born in April 1954. His father Jim moved to England on D-Day. He met Seamus's mother while living in the Charing Cross Road.

Seamus considered himself a cockney as he was born in the Highgate branch of the Whittington hospital which is, he told us, within the sound of Bow Bells. But the family moved to Balham when Seamus was just five months old. Kath, his sister, tells me, incidentally, that Seamus was born a week early, which was one of the few times in his life he was ever early for anything.

Seamus went to St Bernadette's, then St Bede's and then on to Clapham College from 1965 to 72, he had many friends, it's fair to say that when Seamus made a friend, he stuck by them for life. Seamus was famously loyal, throughout his life to one football team Tottenham Hotspur. Kath tells me that in those early years the only time Seamus would leave her alone and give her any peace was if she recited the names of the 1961 Tottenham double-winning side to him; the cats only got tuna when Spurs won!

Right from the start at Clapham College, he was a member of the school cricket and football first teams. He first played cricket for the Clapham Old Boys while still at school at the age of 15. A-Level results were followed by a degree from Birmingham. He then worked in various mining related jobs in England, Ireland and South Africa before he settled down in Wandsworth Council, starting work there within three days of his beloved Christine, with whom he was to spend the rest of his life.

But back to sport briefly... Skiing **was** another of Seamus' loves, while Christine's skiing style could be described as gentle/stylish, Seamus was more Kamikaze/Downhill. What he lacked in ability, he made up for in bravado. His efforts were equally intense on the golf course. I remember we played the Old Course at St Andrews. Seamus found himself by the first green on the edge of the burn or stream. His almighty heave did land the ball on the green, but also landed Seamus in the burn and he proceeded to squelch around the next 17 holes.

At cricket, he was the club's dedicated gully fielder. He was a stalwart of the Cricket committee for many years and a regular tourist. For the past 35 years he contributed to the running of the Association by joining its committee and was the Association's Treasurer. As one Old Boy put it recently on the Web-site, "He was never really complimented enough for his services. I'm afraid we all took his efforts for granted, he was so reliable...He was a real gentleman who gave freely of his time and was always there for you, one of the "quiet ones.". Seamus' general knowledge was phenomenal. Of course, he was very much the family man and would always appear at christenings, communions, weddings and funerals. Seamus spent time caring for his sick mother, learning to cook and cajoling her to eat in her final days. Seamus reached 60 just 8 weeks ago. He celebrated with just a few family friends in the pub where we will later have his wake. **Seamus, we will miss you.** May you rest in peace. **John Hickey**