

Donald Grattan (1926 - 2019)



Donald Henry Grattan, broadcaster and educator
7 August 1926 - 21 August 2019

Very sadly the Society announces the death at the age of 93 of its Vice President Donald "Don" Grattan.

We acknowledge the significant contribution that he made to the community of Marlow. Don became a very active member of the Society and its executive committee following his retirement and was its Chairman in the 1980s. We have in our archives the record of the valuable efforts he made to reduce the noise caused by the opening of the new By-Pass.

In his final years Don ceased to play an active part but he maintained a keen interest in the Society. We offer our condolences to his family.

A tribute by friend and neighbour Hugh McNearne:

In 1975 Don Grattan and I were unknown to each other. Don, his charming wife Valmai (who sadly died earlier this year) and their son and daughter lived in Pinner. My family home was in neighbouring North Harrow. By a strange coincidence we had each decided during 1975 to move to Marlow. I had exchanged contracts on the purchase of a house in Gossmore Close. When Don went to cancel delivery of his newspapers and told the newsagent he was moving to Marlow, the newsagent told him that another of his customers had cancelled delivery the previous day and was also moving to Marlow. By another unique coincidence the Grattans bought the adjoining property to our new home! We remained close friends and neighbours for over forty years - until Don's sad death in August at the grand age of 93.

Don won a scholarship to Harrow Grammar School and subsequently gained a first-class Honours degree in Mathematics at London University. In 1945 Don was drafted into secret work at the Telecommunications Research Establishment, Great Malvern. In 1946 Don was appointed Mathematics Teacher at Chiswick Grammar School and from 1950 to 1956 he was Senior Master at Downer Grammar School in Edgware.

Then in 1956 Don began his illustrious career with the BBC. Don produced and directed some of the first BBC educational programmes on Building, Civil Engineering and Careers in Industry. In 1970 after holding several important positions in educational broadcasting he was appointed Controller of

Educational Broadcasting with oversight of all BBC's schools and Further Education output in radio and television.

After leaving the BBC Don became a sought-after adviser on educational matters in the UK, the Commonwealth and elsewhere particularly Iran, Indonesia and China. In 1989 he was appointed CBE for Services to Education.

Don enjoyed his retirement in Marlow. He played an active and leading role in the work of the Marlow Society. His knowledge of building, physics and civil engineering was of inestimable value to the Society in its tussles with Planning Authorities (Development of the Brewery site), the Highways Agency (noisy road surfaces on the Marlow By-Pass) and other contentious issues. Don was the author of an excellent book "Science and the Builder" which described how science and technology are integrated into the work of the builder and civil engineer when building houses, bridges, tunnels, new roads etc.

I shall remember Don as a generous host, a gifted raconteur, a "mean" croquet player and above all a good neighbour.

Hugh McNearne

... more about Don's life at [www.theguardian.com ... donald-grattan-obituary](http://www.theguardian.com...donald-grattan-obituary)