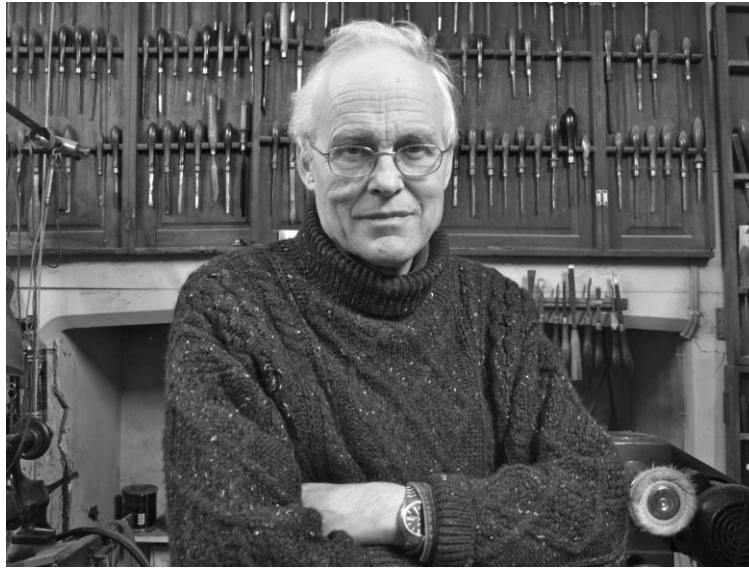


## Simon Richard Smallwood 1937-2016



A true polymath and fairminded husband and father with a dry irreverent streak.

Simon was born in Sydney on March 11th 1937 His father, Commander H D Smallwood was serving with the British fleet at the time. His mother Eleanor Nancy Smallwood, née Harvey, had joined him in Australia. Simon was christened in the ship's bell of HMS Canberra. His godfather was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Caspar John, son of Augustus John.

As war was predicted Simon and his mother were sent back to England when he was a few months old.

He spent the first years in London and when the bombing became too dangerous they went to stay with relatives in the New Forest. During his very first years he had a much loved Swiss nanny with whom he stayed in touch until she died four years ago.

Simon was sent away to prep school when he was six years old..

His father was retired from the Navy in 1945 and took up a position as Coast Guard Inspector for Wales. His patch was Liverpool to Sharpness. This is where Simon's lifelong love of the Gower Peninsular started as his parents made their home there close to the Mumbles.

Simon went to Marlborough College in 1950 where he thrived and had very happy memories of being able to persue his interests. He was very active in the Marlborough Press, an interest which stayed with him throughout his life.

He was not considered medically fit for national service.

In 1955 he went up to Magdalene College Cambridge to read Natural Sciences. He finished in two years rather than three and he was not allowed to graduate so he read medieaval history for his third year.

When he came down in 1958 he joined his mother's family firm of John Harvey & Sons having managed to escape a career in the navy which his parents had hoped for.

Harveys recognised his potential as a chemist and mathematician and sent him to UCL Davis in California to study oenology.

From California, after a brief spell back in Bristol, he was sent to Jerez de la Fronterra in Andalucia to sort out some of the problems in Harveys sherry laboratory. He returned to Bristol and spent many very rewarding times learning about fine wine and making lifelong friends.

Whilst at Harveys he spent half a year's pay buying his first 1932 Rolls-Royce so that he and a couple of friends at Harveys could tour the vineyards of Bordeaux and Burgundy in style.

Having bought a house in London he joined IDV as product controller for Peter Dominic, then a thriving off licence chain. He married his wife Valerie in 1968. In the first week of their marriage they bought a 1932 narrowboat which led to many happy times on the Grand Union Canal.

In 1970 Valerie was enlisted to help him with his studies to become a Master of Wine - a very steep learning curve as she knew very little about wine. He became the 71st MW in the world. This was then, and still is, the most prestigious qualification for members of the Wine Trade. Shortly after that they had to suffer the indignity of being moved to IDV's offices in Harlow New Town by which time they had two young children. A third child was born whilst in Essex.

They bought a 15th century farm house and set about excavating a spacious cellar beneath their ancient barn. Later they moved to Sawbridgeworth and Simon decided to leave IDV. He and a partner bought an ex Peter Dominic branch in Billericay which thrived under their stewardship. In 1979 the partnership decided to expand and they moved to Bath, buying Sainsbury Bros, the oldest established wine merchants in Bath, with an additional partner.

This was one of the few career moves which Simon was to regret, so he then established himself as a restorer of fine antiques and started to experiment with ornamental turning. He bought numerous lathes and his workshop is still an astonishing sight with equipment on every surface, including the floor. His collection of craftsmens' tools is huge.

He was a very experienced and imaginative ornamental turner but at the same time he was also using his ancient letter presses again and became an accomplished letter press printer. He had several enthusiastic pupils. He was always happy to teach and guide anybody who wanted to learn any of his numerous skills.

He was invited to become a Trustee of the Bath Archaeology Trust which suited his interests very well.

Whilst all this was happening he was asked, by Woolley & Wallis, auctioneers in Salisbury, to join them as their wine adviser. His auctions were immensely well regarded and also successful for the company.

He was a founder member of the Bristol & Bath Real Tennis Club which gave him a huge amount of enjoyment.

His field of interests included sun dials and the science behind the *equation of time*, megalithic astronomy, leading with Valerie, one of Barbara Robertson's tours to Brittany. He also lectured on the history of wine shipping in the 18th century.

When he was diagnosed with bowel cancer he was given 18 months to live. He endured surgery, which failed, and 27 cycles of chemotherapy whilst a volunteer on a drugs trial. This gained him an extra eight months of life. His final two years were some of the most creative and inventive of his life and he leaves behind some wonderful examples of his skills.

Just two days before he died he and Valerie took their Rolls out to visit a friend. He drove it "like the wind". This was the final thing they did together before he went into hospital. Sadly he died very unexpectedly. He leaves Valerie, his wife of 49 years and Rob, Susannah, Caspar & Jessica and eight grandchildren.

He was buried in Swainswick churchyard just outside Bath on December 23rd 2016. He was loved by many and is much missed.