

Barry Page's Eulogy – Maurice Nutt's brother-in-law

I first met Maurice about 60 years ago when as a young boy I opened the front door of our house and he said he was there to see my sister, Shirley. They had met at the Savoy Ballroom in Portsmouth whilst he was on a short training exercise during the early years of what was to prove a highly successful naval career.

Before that, Maurice had studied in Winchester and had for a long time wanted to become a doctor. However, on seeing a notice inviting applicants to take a naval entrance exam he decided to change course. He took the exam, passed and was accepted into Britannia Naval College as a midshipman.

It was soon after that Maurice and Shirley met but within three weeks he was posted away for a year. Such was their attraction, however, that they remained in contact by letter and became engaged shortly after his return.

I was honoured to be the Page boy at their wedding in June 1956 and this was to prove to be a very strong marriage which would have to withstand the many separations and demands of naval life. This incredibly strong bond between them was to prove vital over the next 58 years that followed.

Naval postings for Maurice were many and varied but I am sure that even he will have been surprised to learn that on transfer to HMS Raleigh in July 1959, among his many duties was to supervise the handling of Walter the goat, the station mascot

It was around this time that Shirley and Maurice started a family with the arrival first of Simon, followed by Sally and then Sophie.

It was clear Maurice's work was highly regarded and promotion to Commander in 1973 was followed in 1982 by promotion to Captain. This led to a truly exciting period in life when Maurice was appointed British Defence Attaché for Naval and Air at the British Embassy in Mexico City. As a couple they enjoyed diplomatic life to the full with Maurice's responsibility for military matters in Cuba, Honduras and El Salvador as well as in Mexico itself involving a great deal of travel and much entertaining. The success of Maurice's work in this post can be judged by his being appointed President of the Admiralty Interview Board in Whitehall on his return. Retirement from the Navy finally came in 1988.

The next chapter in life proved equally enjoyable and rewarding when they moved to Devon. They were warmly received by the local people of Bishopsteignton and found themselves integrating into village life seamlessly involving themselves in many activities. Maurice became Chairman of the homes committee at Huntly, the retired officers home. He was for a short period a Parish Councillor and served as a Churchwarden for 13 years. He also joined the Masonic Lodge in Teignmouth and another in Torquay. That so many representatives from those various organisations are here today reflects the high regard and respect with which Maurice was viewed.

Maurice had struggled with his illness over the last 11 years or so but retained the grace and dignity which had been such a hallmark of his character throughout life and remained a fine example to all men. The support of so many during these last few years has been wonderful, especially from the church in general and Reverend Steven West in particular.

Whilst we mourn the passing of Maurice, we will all retain wonderful memories of a kind, caring and gracious man who enriched the lives of so many.