

Don Lovell (1923-2009) - An Appreciation

I am speaking of Don, not as a personal friend, but regarding his indefatigable support of the Widcombe Association, including what many who worked with him have told me. He was elected to the committee in the early nineties and became secretary under Eva Lewis in 1993, a role he held until 1999 when elected chairman. Eva, Charles Whateley, Eda Pomeroy, Richard Squires and I, with whom he worked, are of one voice – he was hardworking, meticulous in detail, totally committed, reliable and knowledgeable.

As Chairman, he held things together for Widcombe: it is not easy to recruit a Committee but he encouraged people to come forward while he himself kept important issues going and completed unfinished business. He was outstanding in his awareness of the necessity for political (small p) activity and engagement with the BANES Council and what is more he knew whom to approach whatever the issue. He never forgot to express his praise and thanks for the Committee's contributions, then and up to the present time. He set himself a standard for his successors – we and our current membership of over 600 owe him a lot.

Don's main interest however was WA's campaign to restore the Widcombe Parade shopping street by diverting through traffic to a two-way Rossiter Road. He battled through numerous designs with the Council's engineers and their consultants and even until about eighteen months ago still served on the Widcombe Association Rossiter Road sub-committee. I asked him when he left, "When do you think we shall succeed?" He replied, "Not in my time."

I cannot omit Don's many years representing us on the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations where he was a ready contributor in all discussions. On one occasion everyone was to come to the meeting with suggestions for traffic management in the city. While no-one else responded effectively, Don tabled a whole city centre map with revised route round an inner ring road and radial access to the centre, detailed and possible: typical of this man, such was his determination and application.

When I first met Don he was researching the recent history of Claverton Street for the Widcombe and Lyncombe Local History Society. Apart from his own research projects, he recorded for a period of six or seven years their Annual Proceedings. It is fitting that very recently the Association included a walk and talk about Holloway led by Margaret Burrows and Doreen Collyer of the history group. Don and his wife Ursula's research pamphlet on the area was in evidence and Don was there at the meeting. Sadly, that was the last time he was with us in WA.

Mayveen Blackwell, Chairman WA 2004-2008