

Jim Kerridge 1926 – 2017

JAMES WILLIAM KERRIDGE – or Jim to most of the village – was born on the 7th October 1926 to Sarah and Walter Kerridge at Mill Hill, Peasenhall. Jim's father was a self-employed small holder and also the local gamekeeper. The family grew and Jim was one of six children. He went to the local school, regarded as the "high school" as it had 72 steps up to it and two classes. Jim left at 14 and took a blacksmith's apprenticeship which paid him 12/6 per week. Now he could save up for a bicycle instead of borrowing his friend Peter Snell's bike!

Peter and Jim decided to join the Navy and at 17 ¼ years he went to sea, celebrating his 18th birthday whilst at sea in 1944. His world opened up; sailing through the Panama on troop carriers in convoys to avoid German submarines. He became based in Australia and then drafted on to the Aircraft Carrier, The Indefatigable.

Jim celebrated his 19th birthday whilst sailing in the Pacific Ocean. It was at this time that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. He recalled that, shortly beforehand, the Captain announced to the crew "Emergency – Full Speed Ahead out of the Area". They had no idea why! The ship returned later to assess the damage caused. Jim was not able to get a shore pass, even though he tried to bargain, which even included his rum ration for the week. In 1946 the Pacific War was over and his ship came back through the Suez Canal and sailed around the islands. On a destroyer he sailed on to Ceylon and India. He also sailed to New Zealand on a victory tour.

The excitement was over, and he was demobbed and returned home to Peasenhall, taking up a job as the blacksmith at Smyths' Drill Works. During this time he met Pauline, who was in the Land Army and billeted in Peasenhall. They married in 1948 at Tuddenham Church and lived in Peasenhall where their two daughters, Julia and Sally, were born.

In 1956 they decided to take on a business and moved to "The Volunteer Inn" at Saxtead, where their son Des was born. They stayed for five years. Jim continued to garden, supplying fruit and vegetables. He also kept pigs and chickens. It was a busy life, with memories of cricket matches and village hunts.

In 1962 the family moved to Tuddenham, taking over "The Fountain Inn" from Pauline's uncle, and building their business. Jim enjoyed family life; watching the children grow up, marry and have children of their own. He loved the orchard where he kept pigeons and continued gardening. His hobbies included walking, shooting, fishing, darts, sports and horse racing. Holidays were taken, and he particularly enjoyed sailing on the QE2 to America with Pauline.

The British Legion was very important to him. He had been made an honorary member at Peasenhall. He joined his local branch and attended their meetings. Jim was very proud to take his Grandson Luke, wearing his Cub Scout uniform, to Remembrance Day parades, and his other Grandson George playing the "Last Post" on his trumpet!

After 28 years as landlord of the Fountain, retirement beckoned and they moved to Primrose Cottage (where Pauline was born). Jim was an ardent poppy seller and organiser. He also collected for the 'Lifeboats'. He became a regular at The Fountain, enjoying a pint and meeting old friends. He had a much smaller garden and we all remember the ritual of tomato planting! There was time for feeding and watching the birds, lots of walks in the Fynn Valley, stopping off for a cuppa with daughter Sally and husband Allan. He also enjoyed trout fishing at the lake and sea fishing with son Des on his boat.

In August 2008, after 19 years retirement, Jim and Pauline celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary with their family at The Fountain. 60 years of marriage – a wonderful achievement.

In 2009, Pauline sadly died. Jim managed to maintain his independence at Primrose Cottage with daughter Julia helping with some of the chores. He went for short breaks to visit his sister Biddy in Cromer. The annual HMS Indefatigable reunions were a must. The last of which takes place this year and which he will sadly miss.

Traditions were kept, including the morning coffee with whisky, which he called 'his Heart Starter'! He became a keyholder to close village friends, patrolling their properties and feeding their animals whilst they were away. He taught countryman skills learned from his father – the art of mole, mouse and rat catching – and advising on spectacles for chickens! Also came the constant words of wisdom that many people will remember him for.....

Good health continued and he celebrated his 90th birthday in October 2016 at home with family and friends. Shortly after, his health rapidly deteriorated but he seemed content with the full life that he had had. His glass was always half full. It was with the help of his family and Edit, his live-in carer, and other support, that he was able to end his days at Primrose, his very definite last wish!