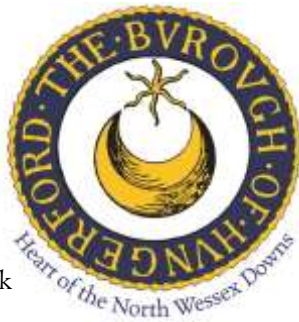


# HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor  
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Jack Williams - Civic Eulogy  
12.30pm - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 St Lawrence's Church  
Cllr Helen Simpson – Hungerford Town Mayor

Thank you, Richard and Andrew for inviting me to read the town's eulogy for Jack. The town's thoughts and prayers are with you and the family at this difficult time.

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I don't think I've ever had such a rich tapestry of material to choose from, from one person's life. Jack lived his whole life completely devoted to Hungerford and its community. Former Mayor Martin Crane once said if Hungerford was a stick of rock, Jack William's name would go right through its centre. I think we can all agree it would be much easier to mention the organisations Jack wasn't involved in, rather than the enormous list of those he was.

It's no wonder then, that Jack was voted Hungerford's "Citizen of the Century" following a poll held in the Adviser in 2000.

He was also awarded the "Freedom of the Town" in 2013 and honoured with a British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Year's Honours list in 2015 for services to the community. Former High Sherriff Sarah Scrope remembers this day warmly, both honoured and proud to read Jack's citation. Jack accepted the medal on behalf of the town.

Jack joined Hungerford Town Council in 1955 and remained a town Councillor for 45yrs. He was a previous Chairman and later become Town Mayor on 5 occasions.

Jack introduced the Mayor's Chain of office, sourcing sponsorship for the chain, so no financial burden was placed upon the public purse. Every time I saw him, he'd test me on the meaning of its symbols, thankfully... I knew to do my homework, which Jack would acknowledge with, "Well done, you're doing a sterling job my girl".

Following the demise of many of the town's main employers such as Chilton Electrics, Lo-Heat and James & Co, Jack was concerned about unemployment in the town due to the many new homes being built. Working with Hungerford Town Council and the local authority, he became instrumental in championing a new business park, now known as Charnham Park.

The Mayor's Carol service was founded by Jack in 1978. The service had been renamed over the years, and I was delighted to reinstate its correct title in honour of Jack's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, I know he was extremely pleased with my dedication.

In 1978 the British Council offered Hungerford the opportunity and finances to Twin with another European Town. Following an exploratory visit by Jack, Constable Dennis Simmonds, Robert James and Mansil Morgan when they met with the Mayor of Ligueil Michele Guignadeau, the association was formed and officially signed in 1980.

The town Mayor still serves today as the Twinning's President.

The Twinning's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations were due to be held in 2020. I know we'll feel Jack's absence enormously when we eventually host this event, hopefully later on this year.

Martin Crane will read a letter of condolence from the Mayor of Ligueil in just a moment.

Jack served as a Trustee of the Town & Manor for 32yrs, helping to forge a strong union between Hungerford Town Council and the Charity, which still exists to this day.

Serving on the Commons and Land committee he organised the Millennium tree planting project. 102 trees were planted on a cold January weekend in 1999. These trees will serve as a long-standing legacy to Jack and the town.

Jack partnered with Robert James and an ad-hoc committee to produce a community play, 'A Hungerford Connection' celebrating the tercentenary of the accession of King William and Queen Mary to England's throne. The play was performed here in the church over 3 nights.

Jack spent his National Service in the Royal Navy serving on HMS Cleopatra. He joined the Royal British Legion committee in 1998 as both Treasurer and President. He remained as treasurer until 2008 and president until 2019. Jack always collected each year for the poppy appeal.

He served as a retained/volunteer fire fighter in Hungerford from 1951, remaining in front line service until 1973, when he became chairman of the fire station charity, set up when the Bath Road fire station was sold. An incredible service of over 60yrs.

Hungerford Cricket Club was another organisation Jack supported. As a lifetime member of the club, he inspired and championed so many of the players as club captain, becoming president in 1979, a role he took with great responsibility and pride. He remained president until Roger Beard was passed the baton in 2008. I know Roger was incredibly hesitant at the prospect, but somehow, Jack always found a way to persuade people.

He always attended the club's annual dinner, and I know one of Jack's highlights was receiving special guest Brian Johnson in 1993. This turned out to be Brian's last public engagement before his death.

Jack loved to watch the summer matches with a cup of tea, and an occasional whiskey at the end of club play.

A governor at JOG school, a treasurer at the Friends of Hungerford surgery, Jack really did immerse himself into every corner of Hungerford's community.

He dedicated so much of his life to volunteer service.

Encouraging, thoughtful, dynamic and captivating, if Jack was by your side, everything would always be fine, and if it ever wasn't, he'd use his brilliant sense of humour to overcome the challenge.

I'm going to end my eulogy with that famous quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "In the end it's not the years in your life that count .... it's the life in your years".

I can't think of a more appropriate quote for Hungerford's Citizen of the Century!

Sleep tight our dear friend, re-united once again with your beloved Margaret.