

## the late Billy Hammond



### Obituary.

Billy Hammond, former club president between 1993 and 2011.

Born July 20, 1926, died, July 15, 2021.

A leading north Norfolk farmer Billy Hammond has died peacefully five days before his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

He was president of Holt & District Farmers' Club for 17 years and was only the second to serve since it was founded in 1948.

He succeeded one of the club's founders, Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe, in 1993 and stood down in 2011.

George William Hammond was born on July 20, 1926 into a well-known north Norfolk farming family. His uncle, Prof Sir John Hammond, who farmed at Briston, helped to revolutionise livestock farming by pioneering artificial insemination in the 1940s, initially in cattle and then across all the major species in the following decades.

When Mr Hammond started farming at Aldborough, near Aylsham, horse power was still supreme and his farm didn't have electricity. He kept pigs, sheep and beef cattle for many years which expanded into a significant arable enterprise, Aldborough Farms, now run by his son, Jack and grandson Will.

He built up a collection of vintage and veteran farm machinery and tractors, which was used at practical events including the Tunstead Trosh. A keen supporter of the Starting Handle Club, he drove some of his vintage tractors, always standing up, including a 1942 Case at ploughing matches.

As club president, he supported Holt's long-running ploughing match, which was staged until the early 2000s.

Elected president of Aylsham Show for 2005, Mr Hammond recalled that he had not missed the annual event in more than 30 years. He brought machinery to display at the show including one of his three vintage steam traction engines, which he sold in the early 1990s.

Another rare survivor, a Ransome's MST 56 trailed combine, with a 5ft header and dating from 1956, was given a new lease of life in early September 1999 at an impromptu harvesting demonstration with his grandson Will driving the tractor. A great friend, the late Roger Beck, of Brunstead, who was president of Stalham Farmers' Club, had invited fellow enthusiasts, into the 10-acre field to harvest wheat.

He was an early member and later chairman of Aylsham Growers for four years, when the group was growing seven crops including peas and beans. For 22 years, he was chairman of the Upper Bure Internal Drainage Board and he did a six-year term as chairman of his local rabbit clearance society.

Mr Hammond, who was a member and former chairman of Aldborough and Thurgarton parish council for 12 years, lived at Manor Farm – almost opposite the village green.

It enabled him to support another love of his life, Aldborough Cricket Club. He was a former chairman and later president. In 2005, he hosted a special match, and stood at the wicket as an umpire when his Show President's XI played the home team.

A stalwart member of Holt Farmers' Club, he attended almost every meeting possible. His annual presidential address, which became a feature at the club's first autumn meeting, was not to be missed. Delivered with humour, it was a good summary of the farming year with some topical and retrospective insights and some historical background.

When Holt Farmers' started the Norfolk Sixth Form Students' Day in 1998, which enabled pupils and teachers at dozens of schools and colleges across the county to learn about food, farming and the countryside, he was always to the fore.

Again, when Aylsham Agricultural Show Association launched the Norfolk County Farm Business competition in 1978, he encouraged fellow farmers to take part in what has grown to become the premier farming award.

He was a keen golfer and a very good hand at bridge.

Mr Hammond, who married Anne in June 1952, and the reception was held at Felmingham village hall, recalled Mike Gamble, chairman of the AASA.

Anne was his father's cousin and he was a page boy at their wedding.

Mr Hammond was a farmer's farmer, who took enormous pride in helping to feed the nation. From the days of farming's recession in the 1930s, through 14 years' of food rationing to July 1954, he saw massive changes during his lifetime from the horse and cart to a combine able to cut almost 40ft.

His wife Anne predeceased in 2011, and he leaves three children, son John, daughters Susan and Jane, nine grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

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