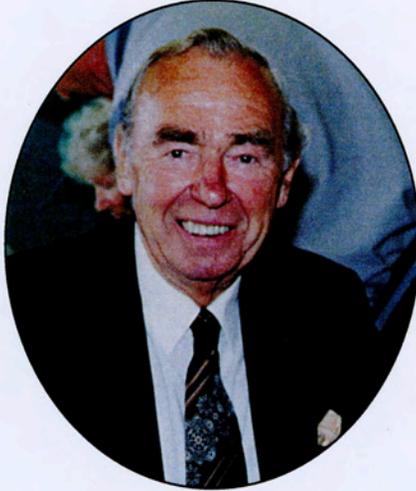


St. Mary's Church
Bampton



LESLIE THOMAS KING

10th March 1927 – 5th October 2012

Thursday 11th October 2012

1.00pm

Order of Service

Welcome

Hymn

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.*

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning,
That brightens up the sky.

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows for our play,
The rushes by the water
To gather every day.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Bible Reading

John 14 : 1-6 and 27

Address

Prayers

Music for Quiet Reflection

'Ave Maria'

Commendation and Blessing

The Committal in the Cemetery

~ ~ ~

You are invited back to The Horse Shoes for refreshments following the service.





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Notes from the afternoon Terry and I spent talking with Les King September 2009. Sadly, Les never felt able to do the filmed interview that Jo Lewington and I hoped to do, but I did make notes as soon as I got home. He never got over losing Stella; he had to fight back the tears when talking about her and he was too afraid of breaking down while being filmed.

Les and Stella came from Coventry to live in Bampton in 1960 to be close to Stella's parents, Dolly & Eric Stroud who also lived here in Bampton. They bought a shop, now a private house on the corner of Bushey Row and High Street opposite the Physiotherapy shop. The private dwellings are Strawberry Cottage and Lesta House.

They'd never owned or run a shop before so came as raw recruits to the job and had to learn on the hoof. Faye Ham was a member of their staff and years later when Faye started her own shop in Bampton Les and Stella helped her choose things to sell in her shop they knew Bampton people would want.

The solicitor Les and Stella used, to sell their house in Coventry, also saw to the purchase of their shop here in Bampton. Unfortunately the solicitor was rather fond of a drink and when Les and Stella turned up here to move into their new shop, they found the contract the outgoing shop owner had was dated one month later than their own for moving in.

So, Stella and the budgie moved in with her parents, Dolly and Eric Stroud, for one month and Les had to stay elsewhere, because there just wasn't space for him as well.

When they eventually moved in, they found the contents of the upstairs were very much a store of everything that hadn't sold over decades as well as stock that did. It was an hilarious Aladdin's cave which gave them many laughs and it also took them a long time and a lot of hard work to get it all cleared out and the upstairs made into a home.

The garden was like a jungle but particularly thick with face-high nettles and at the far end was a very friendly two-holer, which at that time was the staff toilet.

The items on sales gradually settled to those of a drapers plus ladies and gents clothing and some footwear and they made a great success of that. They also tried offering made to measure suits which were beautifully made. Fittings were done after the shop closed. Amazingly, these suits were ordered and bought by people from all strata of Bampton, from gentry to the ordinary working man. Hoppy Smith who lived in the caravan on the left as you go out of Bampton had one suit made.

When he went to London he went to a Jewish tailor and asked if he could make him a made-to-measure suit with the same quality material and if so, how much it would cost. The answer was, yes, he could, and the price quoted was three times more than he'd paid in Bampton so Hoppy immediately ordered another one from Les & Stella.

Les and Stella worked none-stop for their first 5 years in the shop, never once having a holiday and Les in particular became very run down. Dr. Bullen realised he wasn't going to be able to persuade them to go away on holiday so prescribed Guinness and oysters.

They were good friends with Paul Bovington who owned and ran the wet fish shop across the road and when Les told Paul what the Dr. said, Paul said if he, Les, supplied the Guinness he'd supply the oysters, and so for weeks they met two or three times a week to down oysters and Guinness. Les loathed the oysters then and always did, but he dutifully consumed them along with the Guinness as prescribed and eventually felt much better.

Stella was a beautiful dancer and if Les had not been able to dance well enough, their courtship would probably never have taken off. One of the SPAJER'S fund raising events was an annual ball at Weald Manor, by kind invitation of Col and Mrs Colvile and later by his son Major

Robert and Mrs Colvile. It was a joy to see Les and Stella dance there where they also helped with the whole function.

About 10 years after they bought their shop on High Street, they sold up and it became a private dwelling, now called Strawberry Cottage. The shop opposite was a wonderful hardware store owned and run by Stella's parents. Les and Stella went to live in Kenilworth for a couple of years, where they bought a dilapidated house, turned it into a wonderful home, sold it and came to Bampton where they bought the Wheat Sheaf pub in Bridge Street, almost opposite Papworth's newsagents shop and turned it into the Post Office. Mrs Reynolds had run the post office in Bampton for decades at Wheelgate House, but she didn't want to move out of the house when she retired hence the need for new premises to be found for the post office.

Les and Stella then turned their barn, which sits diagonally on the corner of Bridge Street and Church View, into a delightful home and gave it to Dolly and Eric to retire into from their hardware store which they sold to Frank and Evelyn Godwin. When Les and Stella finally retired from the post office they converted the barn that stood right behind it into a home, doing much of the work themselves, and with a big smile, called it 'King's Court.' From there they moved to Minster Lovell but only for a short time and Bampton called them back yet again and they bought a house in The Pieces which was to be their final home.



REMAINS OF BAMPTON CASTLE.

GENUINE HAND COLOURED
PRINT GUARANTEED
OVER 100 YEARS OLD

to: Les and
Stella

Thank you for
your friendliness
and all the
'hand stamps'

love
Richard

Happy
retirement

Coaster 1981

West gatehouse of Bampton Castle before the later Victorian addition to the south aspect. Farmhouse to Ham Court Farm. This picture was a gift to Les and Stella King at Easter 1981 when they left the post office in Bridge Street to retire to Minster Lovell.

The back of the picture BPTBM:2012.426 which shows Ham Court farmhouse before the Victorian addition to the south aspect. This picture was a gift to Les and Stella King at Easter 1981 when they left the post office in Bridge Street to retire to Minster Lovell.















KINGS BAMPTON



KING'S BAMPTON

KING'S BREAD



St. Mary's Church
Bampton



STELLA MARY KING
18th August 1924 – 20th July 2009

Wednesday 29th July 2009
3.00pm

LESLIE THOMAS KING (10th March 1927 – 5th October 2012)

Les was born in Coventry in 1927 to Gertrude and William King; a brother to Bill, Mary, Terry and Roselyn. He attended King Henry VIII Grammar School, passing his School Certificate in six subjects, two with credits. At school he was keen on sports particularly football, cricket and rugby. He left school during wartime, and trained as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, learning to fly Tiger Moths; but the war ended before he saw active service. He got a job as a landscape gardener with a company preparing sports fields and his first job was building a bowling green at Shipton-under-Wychwood. One Saturday evening he went to the Butchers Arms in the village for a drink and saw a girl playing the piano, his first meeting with Stella. They got talking and he escorted Stella and her friend to a dance at the Beaconsfield Hall. Stella said she was not too keen at first, but when she danced with him she was smitten. They were, and continued to be, brilliant dancers. The next week Stella took a cup of tea from her Aunty Mabel's to the bowling green for him and the rest is history!

Les worked for Jaguar cars, before starting a haulage firm with his brother Bill. He always remembers one contract delivering rabbits to a butcher in Warwickshire! At weekends he drove the lorry down to see Stella. They were married 1949 and moved to Coventry where they both worked in the car industry. They moved to Bampton in 1960 to be near Stella's mum and dad who owned a building firm and hardware store in the village, and they opened Kings of Bampton.

They'd never owned or run a shop before so came as raw recruits to the job and had to learn on the hoof. When Les and Stella turned up here to move into their new shop, there had been a mix-up over the contracts so, Stella and the budgie moved in with her parents, Dolly and Eric, for a month and Les had to stay elsewhere, because there just wasn't space for him as well. When they eventually moved in, they found the contents of the upstairs were very much a store of everything that hadn't sold over decades; as well as stock that did. It was a hilarious Aladdin's cave which gave them many laughs and it also took them a long time, and a lot of hard work to get it all cleared out, and the upstairs made into a home.

The items on sales gradually settled to those of a drapers plus ladies and gents clothing and some footwear and they made a great success of that. They also tried offering made to measure suits which were beautifully made. Fittings were done after the shop closed. Hoppy Smith who lived in the caravan on the left as you go out of Bampton had one suit made. When he went to London he went to a Jewish tailor and asked if he could make him a made-to-measure suit with the same quality material and if so, how much it would cost. The answer was, yes, he could, and the price quoted was three times more than he'd paid in Bampton so Hoppy immediately ordered another one from Les & Stella!

They worked non-stop for their first 5 years in the shop, never once having a holiday, and Les in particular became very run down. Dr. Bullen realised he wasn't going to be able to persuade them to go away on holiday so prescribed Guinness and oysters. Les loathed oysters but he dutifully consumed them along with the Guinness as prescribed and eventually felt much better.

About 10 years after they bought their shop on High Street, they sold up and went to live in Kenilworth for a couple of years, where they bought a dilapidated house, turned it into a wonderful home, sold it ... and came back to Bampton where they bought the Wheatsheaf pub and turned it into the Post Office. Les and Stella worked as postmaster and postmistress for 10 ½ years. The Standard, Times and Echo for April 24th 1981 marked their retirement by saying, *“Both Mr and Mrs King have endeared themselves to all users of the post office, having been extremely helpful and cheerful at all times. Les in particular is well-known for his sense of humour and quizzical quips.”*

When Les and Stella finally retired from the post office they converted the barn that stood right behind it into a home; doing much of the work themselves, and (with big smiles), called it “King’s Court”. The newspaper article quoted earlier went on to say, *“Les is a keen gardener and he is hoping to devote more time to his gardening activities.”* I understand he was particularly fond of growing dahlias. From there they moved to Minster Lovell; but Bampton called them back yet again and they bought a house in The Pieces which was to be their final home. We moved in four doors down the road just three years ago. I visited Les and enjoyed talking to him about life in Bampton and seeing his amazing

collection of old photos; but this was shortly after Stella died, and he obviously missed her dreadfully ... and continued to do so.

His family want to pay tribute to many special friends including Gary and Anne (Stella's relations), Ian and Sue, Joan; David, Rosemary and Nigel, great neighbours where they went for Xmas lunch every year. They have asked me to say that Les's family are so grateful to everyone for their help and care. Les was a loving brother and Uncle; he will be greatly missed. But, finally, his loneliness is past ... and he and Stella are re-untied once again.



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Bampton



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Indestructible
SOCKS
The Safety Project

Indestructible
SOCKS
The Safety Project

Indestructible
SOCKS
The Safety Project

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Thank you for
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love
rachael

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Coaster 1981



KING'S BAMPTON

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