

## Donald Bean (1920-2001)

Younger paddlers who use the shiny new yellow and blue club boats may wonder about the initials on the front of the boats, DB1, or the significance of the colour scheme. Much of the club's prosperity is due to the generosity of the late Donald Bean. He always insisted that his boats were yellow with DB1 on the front and over the years he donated many of them to the club and bought many more. (Blue is the club's colour). Continuing with DB1 is the club's way of remembering his generosity. His legacy will enable the club to flourish well into the future as his money will always be reserved for capital investment.



Here is a tribute written by Andrew Preston at the time of Don's death:

Don was a man who lived life to the full and had a personality which was always engaging, generous and genuine. Once met, never forgotten, Don breezed through life, impressing others who invariably moved on richer for the experience. Stories involving him are numerous and legendary: a slightly built, elderly man arriving to go canoeing in his suit and trilby hat; the experience of taking a swim and having Donald effortlessly paddle to you to explain the virtues of well-practised, defensive swimming - the memories will always stay with me.

"As my paddling progressed he demonstrated these techniques more frequently and, as my anxieties increased, he was never fazed and always continued paddling with that infectious smile.

"Donald knew how to make an occasion out of a canoeing day. He assisted me coaching a group of adult offenders over a number of years and gave substance to their achievements however small - with the net result that all grew in confidence and self-esteem and many were able to mature and put their anti-social behaviour behind them.

"I know numerous groups would express similar sentiments – Scouts, Stafford and Stone Slalom Club, Staffordshire Police and others, both home and abroad. He gave freely of his time, energy and enthusiasm and said he fed off the excitement of the participants. Donald's influence extended beyond canoeing. He volunteered his time to charity to such an extent that, in 1992, he received an MBE for services to the community. He was born in the house he died in and was well known in the town of Stafford.

"Donald enjoyed life and never shied away from a challenge. One year, he decided to run the London marathon and thought he should have his one and only practice run in the early hours of the morning. Once changed, he felt cold so put on his old mac and trilby before leaving the house. The Police were very understanding.

"...Don was honest, genuine, energetic and generous. Those who were fortunate enough to know him are richer for it. I'm sure the spirit of DB1 will endure."