



Eric John Brown

18 July 1943 – 4 December 2021

“a kind and gentle man of great integrity and faith”

Eric as a young boy, at home
in East Cowes





and as an earnest schoolboy, in the days when he still had hair.



Eric in the Boys' Brigade



Eric was an active member of the Boys' Brigade, he was awarded the Queen's Badge and his D of E Gold. He played the bugle, a skill that came in handy many years later.





AWARDED BY
H.R.H The DUKE of EDINBURGH
To

Eric John Brown
on attaining
THE GOLD STANDARD
of the
DUKE of EDINBURGH'S AWARD

20th December

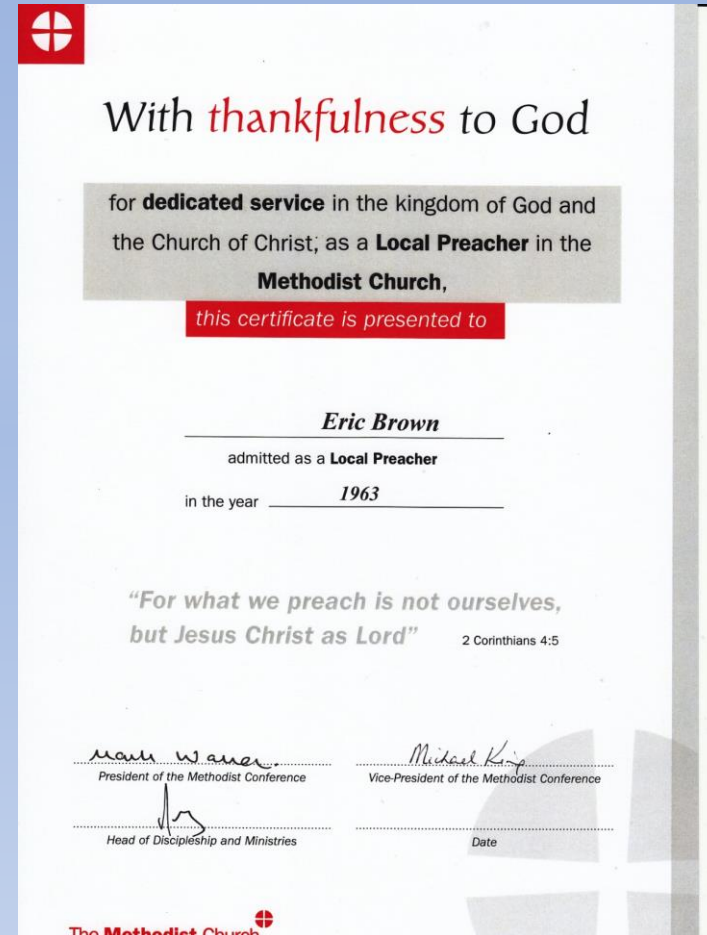
1961



From school on the Isle of Wight, he went to University in Manchester.



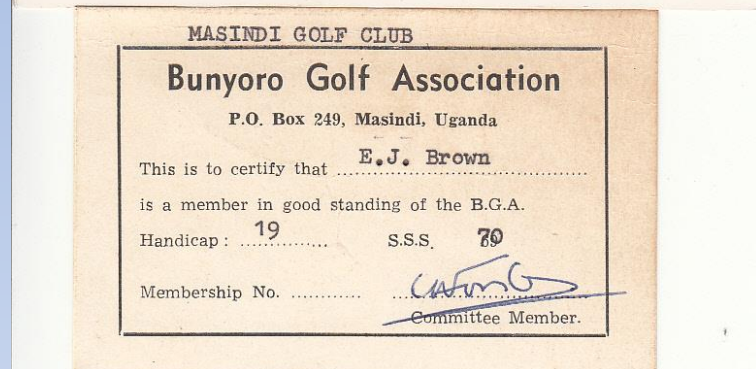
He took the Local Preacher training course and became a Local Preacher even before he received his degree.



His holiday job, living on a holiday island, was first as a bus conductor, and then he moved forward to the cab driving the buses. He remained fascinated by buses and we have quite a collection of models.



After a PGCE at Westminster College Oxford he returned south to a teaching post in Fareham, and in 1971 left to teach on an Overseas Aid contract – he did not express any preference for a destination, and was sent to Uganda. This was a time that became more exciting with the new President, Idi Amin. Eric made the most of his free time too.



Murchison Falls NP Oct '71



Karuma Falls on the Nile Dec '71



He loved the hills and mountains but sadly altitude sickness meant he did not make it to the top of Kilimanjaro.

A colleague from that time wrote this:

“Eric Brown – good friend, good colleague, good housemate, good bloke



We shared a house, played golf, went to the Masindi hotel for a few cold drinks, did a bit of rock climbing, went to Murchison Falls National Park on a number of occasions. At one time he was driving my car whilst I was half out of the car passenger window taking photos when a black rhino decided to chase us – danger was swiftly averted – we could trust each other”



Not sure why he was on the roof! DIY car repairs were a way of life (but had nothing to do with the East African Safari Rally passing through)



Whilst in Uganda Eric had trained as an examiner for Cambridge A level, the exam taken by many overseas schools at that time. Coming back to the UK he picked up this connection and for many years marked A Level Chemistry practical papers, rising in due course to be Principal Examiner, which involved writing the papers and also going to overseas centres to train teachers there. New Zealand, Mauritius, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Egypt and Zimbabwe were great experiences, though Zimbabwe was also at a turbulent time.



Home from Uganda, his next permanent teaching job was at Cranbrook School, in Kent. I had been there just one year, my housemate married the Chemistry teacher and they both left for new jobs elsewhere; Eric arrived as the replacement Chemistry teacher and we were married 3 years later in 1976.



A former colleague wrote:
"..... he filled the staffroom with his warm, dynamic and can-do attitude, He was a real gentleman who touched the lives of very many."

We stayed 3 more years in Cranbrook, before Eric got the job as Head of Science at Royal Russell School in Croydon, where he remained until he retired in 2003.

His former Headteacher wrote:
“Eric literally laid the cornerstone for Science at Royal Russell. His enthusiastic approach and professional manner were always much appreciated by staff and pupils”

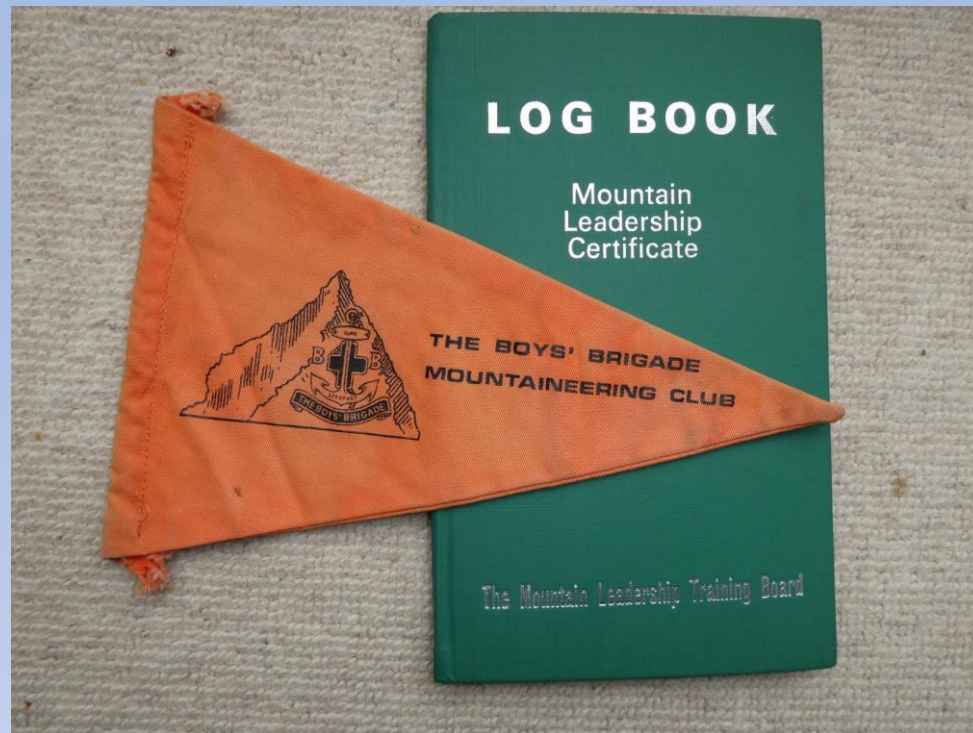


His lab technician at Royal Russell has written this:

“I have such positive memories of Eric, I could not have had a better boss while working at Royal Russell. He was supportive of his backup staff, always friendly, ready to listen and appreciative of our efforts. I just can’t think of anything negative about Eric, he was just great to work with.

The only ever so minor irritation for me was his ability to leap directly up onto the lab benches to shut the windows whereas lesser mortals had to scramble up via a stool. One can hardly hold that against him.”

Eric had become a member of the Boys Brigade Mountaineering Club, and had also learned to sail, I was quickly enrolled in both activities, and survived his teaching to come to enjoy both of them with him. In time we both progressed to become Senior Sailing Instructors: as well as running the school sailing club, this was how we spent our summer holidays, teaching for the YHA and Bowles Outdoor Centre.



We also found a common interest in learning to ski. We also tried canoeing and gliding



We shared our love of sport and travel in organising many school trips including Educational Cruises on SS Uganda, tours of the USSR, as well as sailing and ski “holidays”.

In 1993 Eric's school received a letter asking if any member of the Science Dept was interested in a teaching Exchange to Australia. We grabbed the opportunity with both hands and in July 1994 flew to Sydney where Eric spent a wonderful year at Blue Mountains Grammar. Friendships we made at that time have endured and we returned to Australia a number of times.



As retirement approached Eric thought he would try a new musical challenge. I had begun to play the French horn some years previously, so while I was out at work he played my horn, pleased to discover how much help it was to have blown a bugle so many years ago. He and I had lessons alternate weeks with the same teacher. When we came to live in Dorset we were both adequate enough players to join local amateur orchestras. This picture was taken at a Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra “Rusty Musicians” event, playing alongside professional musicians.

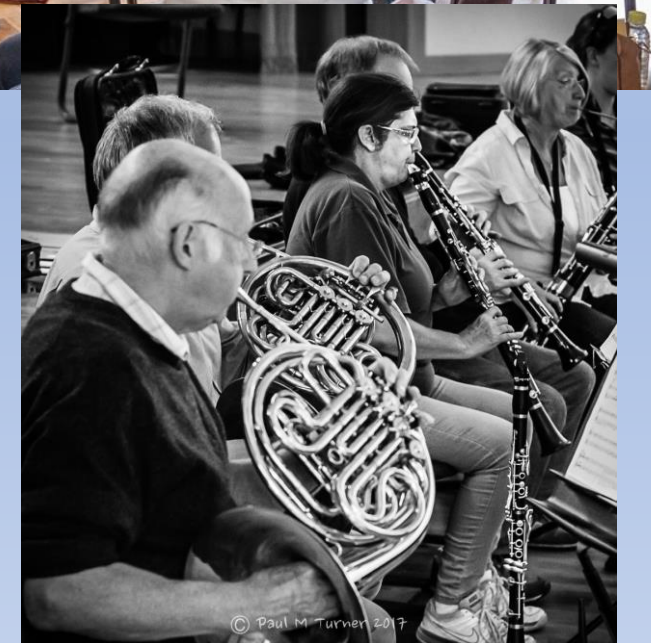


His viola still hadn't seen much action, but after I took up the cello when I retired we found we could start to play in string ensembles and orchestras too.

These quotes come from a couple of the tutors at Benslow Music where we spent many happy short residential courses together:

"He was a real asset on our courses and his enthusiasm and musicianship made the sessions a real pleasure. Whenever I saw Eric's name on the list I knew everything would be ok! I shall miss him."

"I, like the others in the quartet, was always grateful for Eric's supportive presence and very evident enjoyment at Benslow and will remember him with great affection."



Eric in a wind quintet at Benslow: no photos of him playing the viola, as he was the one behind the camera!

In retirement Eric also began to want to take better wildlife photographs, and although never a twitcher he spent many hours by the river in Blandford trying to take the perfect Kingfisher shot. He was also determined to take the perfect photo of the Northern Lights, spending hours on deck on our travels along the Norwegian coast. He was never quite satisfied. His final Aurora photographs were taken at the beginning of October, on our last and interrupted holiday, when his lung condition finally got the better of him.





Traveller,
photographer,
camera-shy, I
had to catch
him unawares!



Faithful Local Preacher



Eric and Grahame Downer receiving long service certificates from the President of Conference Rev Stephen Poxon, with David Mansbridge, in 2009.

Di Browning wrote of Eric:

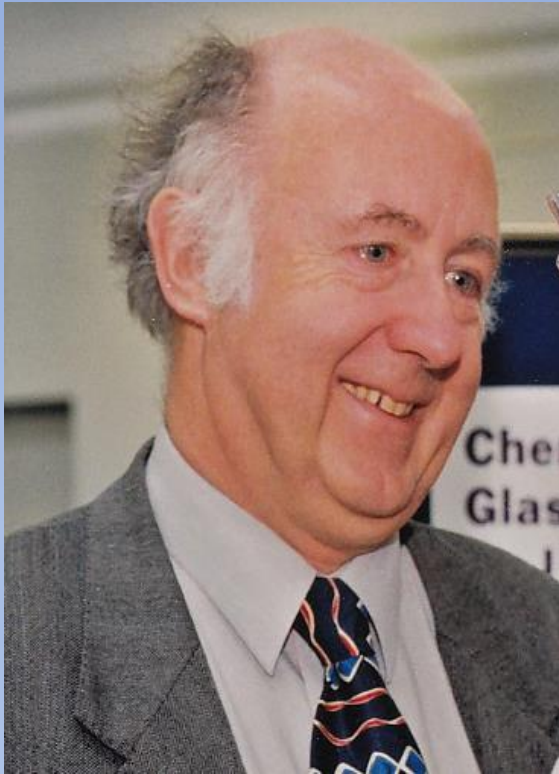
".....A true gentleman, full of knowledge and wisdom and always there to listen, give support and show such care and understanding".

From the circuit administrator Margaret:

"He was a quiet man, but well respected as a true gentleman who lived his faith daily".

And from Liz Ward:

"it was always good to have a conversation with him, challenging at times but with a very gentle touch. He will be truly missed as a local preacher"



Other tributes:

From a long-time friend, Martin

"... I still recall Eric's willingness to help others. Its also a pleasure to recall his enthusiasm, not only for his music and sailing but also for buses, particularly of the 'Bristol' brand"

And from my friend and former boss, Margaret:

" Eric was such a kind and gentle man of great integrity and faith. There are few gems like Eric and we all feel his loss"

I will leave the last word to our dear friend Patrick. Whilst Eric was teaching in Australia I became a pastoral assistant to a wonderful parish vicar. We have remained staunch friends through his bereavement and now mine. Patrick wrote of Eric:

“You are aware of my high opinion of your dear Eric. I’ve heard it said honour is the heart of integrity. Eric was an honourable man and sought to honour Christ in his life which he did and which blessed us all.”

RIP Eric

