



Though , by accident , born , not in Bramham but in London , where his father, the late Colonel , was on guard duty on Horse Guards Parade , George Lane Fox is a true Yorkshireman and a proud son of Bramham. Even in the days of his childhood , when the family moved around as forces families do , and again when he continued in the tradition with his own wife and children , Bramham , the family seat , was their base.

Initially , of course , until his parents inherited the Park , home was York Place , near Regent ' s Park , and Boston Lodge in Yorkshire, though George spent much of his childhood away at school -- kindergarten from age 5 or 6 at the PNEU School on Eton High Street , then on to Prep school at Maidwell Hall as war broke out in September 1939 , in the Northamptonshire countryside. This George loved , accessible for country pursuits , most especially horseriding , and his time there spanned almost exactly the Second World War. Thus , on D Day 6th June , 1944 , George was sitting the examination to enter Eton College , which he did that

September. Bullied unmercifully at first , he eventually settled in to become , in his own description , a " blissfully inefficient classicist ". It was at Eton that his interest in and grasp of the French language began.

Inspired by the Hornblower novels of C.S.Forester , George 's early ambition had been to join the Senior Service , but practicalities allied to some family persuasion saw him follow his father into the Royal Horse Guards [the Blues] --- though the free months between school and Army allowed a few cherished weeks' stay with a family in Florence. The " absolute hell " of initial training at Caterham [only in retrospect " not to be missed "] led on to Pirbright and Windsor , before officer training at Sandhurst in September 1950 . For George , the great culmination of Sovereign 's Parade became an anti climax ; the King 's death the day before resulting in an unexpected cancellation by Winston Churchill . Further courses as a weapons training officer , and in riding training , preceded service at Knightsbridge , before which George found himself in 1953 involved in the Coronation of the new Queen , Elizabeth II . The Procession to the Abbey saw him walk 13 miles in full regalia. Pausing at Hyde Park Corner in the rain as he listened to the service on the tannoy , he was struck by the sudden emergence of the sun at the precise moment of the crowning of the young Queen . A sign of good luck for her perhaps , and certainly one for George. Escorting the Sovereign to the Palace on her return from her World Tour , a horse just behind his , startled by the band , caused havoc to his division just in front of the Queen 's carriage. He was saved from Royal attention by the even worse behaviour of a Foot Guard commanding officer 's horse which utterly refused to face to the front as the Monarch went past.

The couple of years which followed had far fewer excitements before , in 1956 , George was on his way to Cyprus to serve as Escort Troop Commander to Field Marshall John Harding . These were times of trouble as the Cypriot terrorists , or freedom fighters as they saw themselves , struggled under Archbishop Makarios for their independence. George enjoyed the leadership of his own command in these tricky circumstances rather more than the barrack - bound paperwork as Adjutant at the time of the Suez invasion .

In 1958 - 9 George , despite a natural vertigo [or perhaps with a desire to test himself against it] , opted for parachute training , becoming a member of the

Guards Independent Parachute Company before returning to Windsor in 1960 as Recruiting Officer for the Household Cavalry. He thus spent 7 months touring England, Wales and the Scottish Borders --- after which he had the more onerous job of training those young lads he had recruited, often lost, lonely and away from home for the first time. It was this sort of experience with youngsters under his command, here and in Cyprus, which gave George much professional satisfaction.

Having been a specialist in horses, armoured vehicles, parachuting, recruiting and training, George in late 1961, unaccountably, Army style, was selected for electronics and guided missile training at The Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham in Wiltshire, later to become part of Cranfield University. Here George initially made up years of missing maths and science before finding, much to his surprise, a real fascination in a course which lasted until early 1964. Naturally, once having trained him in electronics, the Army sent George off to deal with tanks, before, in 1965, transferring him to regimental duties in Germany.

Meanwhile, in 1962, George had married Victoria, a neighbour from Follifoot near Harrogate, and they lived happily in a semi-detached bungalow during his time at Shrivenham. After Germany, they spent an even happier couple of years in Paris from 1967 until Bastille Day 1969, during which time the infamous student riots took place. Here George was able to polish up his French, and, as Assistant Military Attache [Weapons], to visit French Army bases as far away as Beziers, Bayonne, Montpellier and Pau, the last the home of the French Parachute School, where George had the privilege of jumping with his allies. George and Victoria lived in a flat off the Place des Ternes, near the Russian Church, just north of the Arc de Triomphe. It was towards the end of that tour of duty that, owing to Army readjustments, the Royal Horse Guards and 1st Royal Dragoons became the Blues and Royals in which two of his sons were to maintain the family tradition. Thus, after a short return to Germany, did George bring to an end, in September 1970, his military service, a service of such variety that it had included work with horses, armoured cars, tanks, parachutes, guided weapons, electronics, in Britain, France, Germany, the Mediterranean, and Jordan.

By the time of their permanent return to Bramham to take over 'the family business' from his retiring parents, George and Victoria had produced two sons,

Nicholas and James , with Edward to follow 10 years later. They inherited The Park and began a productive further career running the Estate until Victoria 's early death and George 's semi - retirement in the late 1990 ' s . These years included a wealth of good works and honorary positions --- 7 years as Joint Master of the Bramham Moor Hunt ; the county 's High Sheriff for a year ; President of the Yorkshire Show ; South & West Yorkshire Deputy President of the St. John 's Ambulance Brigade; Chairman of the Governors of Queen Margaret 's School , Escrick ; Chairman of West & South Yorkshire Playing Fields , set up to assist small sports clubs ; President of the Council for the Protection of Rural England in West Yorkshire ; and , not least , as a dedicated , worshipping Christian , Patron of the four Anglican Churches at Bardsey , Bramham , Clifford and Walton.

George looks upon the creation and building of the Bramham International Horse Trials with particular satisfaction . Celebrating its 27 th anniversary in Millennium Year , Bramham has long established its reputation among the foremost Three Day Events , in Britain and in the World , attracting the cream of international riders. Proud of all this though he is , George is especially keen to " use a beautiful situation to be enjoyed by a great many people." Typically , he points , not to the Event 's prestigious main competition , but to the pro - am which brings together the younger riders to be paired with the internationally famous , working together in the best spirit of a generous sport.

What he does not talk about , however , is his own good - hearted spirit , quietly yet frequently at work in the community , with effects felt by many organisations and especially by many individuals . He would disclaim with a quite genuine modesty any thought that the great many in and around Bramham who have seen or received his help or generosity hold him in the highest regard. Yet that is so , and Bramham is well cared for under his constant influence. What gives George the greatest pleasure is to see his sons making their way : Edward , the youngest , in the Army after university at Newcastle ; James , having graduated at Cirencester , married and working in Gloucestershire ; and Nicholas , the eldest , another Newcastle graduate , winner of the Queen 's Medal in his Intake at Sandhurst , now taking the reins at Bramham Park , where George can enjoy his company , and that of Nicholas 's wife Rachel and his five lively grandchildren.



former Household Cavalry officer was the ninth generation of his family to live at Bramham Park and he set up the horse trials in 1973 as a one-day event.

THE eventing community is mourning the loss of George Lane Fox, founder of Bramham horse trials. Tributes have poured in for Mr Lane Fox, who died peacefully at home on 9 October, aged 81.

The

TRIBUTE
GEORGE LANE FOX

Over the next 39 years Mr Lane Fox grew Bramham into the international three-star event it is today, despite having to finance the competition himself during its first 10 years. He never once missed a prize-giving and was proud of the team of staff and volunteers he recruited to run the event.

British Eventing chief executive Mike Etherington-Smith, who spent three years at Bramham as course-designer, paid tribute to Mr Lane Fox's "vision, passion and enthusiasm".

"George was respected across the eventing community as someone who had the determination, commitment and vision to provide top level competition at Bramham and he was the most generous host at all times come rain or shine," he said.

Farewell to...

The founder of Bramham horse trials



George Lane Fox founded the event at his family estate in 1973

GEORGE LANE FOX, founder of Bramham Horse Trials, died on Tuesday, 9 October. He was 81.

Mr Lane Fox spent 20 years serving in the Household Cavalry before returning to Bramham, his family's estate.

The first equestrian competition was held in 1973 — a one-day event, with Mr Lane Fox as event director and course-designer. The following year, he turned it into a three-day event and, seven years later, the Yorkshire event was awarded international status.

This year, the trials were the last chance for many athletes to qualify for the Olympics. William Fox-Pitt won both the CIC*** and CCI*** titles.

"It's really sad news," William told *H&H*.

"George was passionate about eventing and his enthusiasm made Bramham the top-class event that it is. He was an incredibly generous host and was very supportive of the sport.

"We will miss his twinkle next year," he added.

British Eventing's Mike Etherington-Smith, who was course-designer at Bramham in the 1980s, added: "George had a really good 'feel' for what horses could be asked to jump."

Mr Lane Fox never missed a prize-giving and was well known for his smart dress — in a bowler hat and suit. **AM**



