

OBITUARY – PRYCE URBAN BUCKLE – 17th APRIL 1936– 9th NOVEMBER 2019

Pryce Buckle was born in Stepney, London, in 1936 the eldest of three children. Aged three when the Second World War started, Pryce was not evacuated but experienced all the horrors of the Blitz – the nights in the air-raid shelter and the sounds, sights and smells of war. Of course, bomb sites were out of bounds for obvious safety reasons, but never the less they made great play-grounds for inquisitive small children! Pryce and his young friends spent hours hunting for shrapnel, brightly-coloured jagged bits of metal from the anti-aircraft fire, and sometimes, if they were lucky, parts of bombs too. Even at this early age Pryce had an eye for detail and distaste for war.

Pryce was proud to attend Raines Academy, in Arbour Square, Bethnal Green. In those days there was a very strict segregation of the boys and girls. Even the Hall space was separated down the middle by a folding wooden partition! Pryce enjoyed school and made good academic progress. He then moved on to attend the Royal Veterinary College in Camden, London. Pryce served his National Service as a radiographer in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was stationed in Cyprus. This time cemented his anti-war sentiment, although he made good friends in the Army. While in Cyprus, Pryce enjoyed the recreation of learning to sail.

Pryce relished detail and careful planning. On returning to Britain, he began working for the Prudential as an Underwriter in their Ilford Office. He married Christine, his childhood sweetheart, in 1963 and was soon promoted to Claims Investigation. This enabled him to be out of the office in his Alfa Romeo with opportunity for random wildlife sightings along the way. Daughters Geraldine and Stephanie completed the Buckle family. The Prudential became Pryce's life-long employer until he retired on April 1st 1994. Pryce also gave up pipe smoking on his retirement. He used his "Gold Blend" tobacco tins to store all manner of "treasures", no doubt including some mollusc shells.

Pryce had an abiding interest in Natural History, ranging from birds to flowers and eventually to molluscs. This strong Natural History interest meant that Pryce was an active volunteer



Figure 1 Pryce and Christine Buckle

with Hertfordshire Natural History Society. He also went bird watching both locally and for away weekends. He also became a keen photographer of the fauna and flora that he found and achieved his ARPS (Associate of the Royal Photographic Society) in 1989.

Pryce joined the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1981. He regularly attended the Society's field meetings, courses and workshops and his immaculately kept collecting gear and tool-kit were the envy of other members. In addition to fieldwork, Pryce gave generously of his time to the CSGBI in various officer roles, including being Treasurer from 1999 to 2010. In this capacity he developed a forward thinking Business Plan to take the Society into the next decade, for which he was rewarded with Honorary Membership. Pryce was an early adopter of computer technology. He took time to understand and develop their capabilities, and soon became the Society's Webmaster. He took the embryo website and developed it into a facility worthy of the Society.

His involvement with the CSGBI and their appreciation of his detailed approach to the recording of molluscs led to a wonderful commission. It had been decided to create a record of all the species of flora and fauna to be found in the gardens of Buckingham Palace. This commission led to a number of private visits by Pryce, often accompanied by his wife, Christine. On



Figure 2 Pryce front row, second from right at a Conchological Society Council meeting 2006

these occasions they were escorted by the Head Gardener to all the nooks and crannies, to turn over logs and stones etc., but due to the enclosed nature of the gardens very few new species were actually found and recorded. The results were published in 1999 as: *The Molluscan Fauna of Buckingham Palace Gardens*.

Undoubtedly Natural History was Pryce's greatest interest. After retirement he and Christine enjoyed guided walking holidays abroad with natural history themes. Pryce had many other interests too. He was very good at DIY; loved listening to modern Jazz and sea shanties; enjoyed walking and finding real pubs with real beer. Pryce was also an accomplished book binder, and abstract painter. Both he and Christine continued to study courses with the local WEA for as long as Pryce was able.

Pryce led a full and active life until succumbing to Paget's disease. He is survived by wife Christine; daughters Geraldine and Stephanie with their husbands Bryan and Adrian, and five Grandchildren – Emma, Zoe, Oscar, Dylan and

Maisie. Pryce was a proud Grandfather, considering them all to be fine young people and he was delighted with their progress through life.

Pryce has been a good member of British society. He has worked hard and sustained his difficulties with resilience and humility. These are qualities we admire. In this country we tend to overrate our public and media figures, raising them almost to the status of icons. In so doing, we forget those who actually make life worth living. The backbone of every nation and community is made up of people whose day to day existence is rarely publicised and hardly ever acknowledged. Yet these people are homemakers; raise families; work in vital industries and – overall – ensure that the country does not grind to a halt. There are many whose quality of life, though seemingly conventional, is actually built into the fabric of our country, its traditions and its institutions. It is this daily quality of hard work and goodness that is held up to view so that we can show our respect, our gratitude and our affection for Pryce.

Mike Weideli