



## Hamish Patrick (1946 - 2014)

In December 2014 Pilton lost a leading light of its community with the unexpected death of Hamish Patrick at the age of only 68. A founding member of the Pilton Green Man Festival, a staunch supporter of many local charities and most giving of both his time and his energy to the people of the village, he will be much missed.

Hamish was born in London in May 1946, one of four children of a Church of Scotland Minister. He moved with his parents, first to Guernsey, then Canada, and then on to rural north east Pennsylvania in the USA. He went to High School and College in Pittsburgh. Eventually he came back to London and attended the Central School of Speech and Drama and, after graduation, went on to be a member of the democratically-run Actors' Company - of which he was very proud - working with people like Ian McKellen, Felicity Kendal, Jack Shepherd and Ed Petherbridge. He did a lot of theatre work, with the Royal Court Theatre and the Oxford Players - working on a world premiere of a play by Samuel Beckett in which the man himself came down to work with Hamish in rehearsals. He then went on to work in a number of TV series in the 1970s - *General Hospital* (1974), *Space 1999: The Dorcons* (1976), *Romance and Maidens' Trip* (1977), *Crossroads* (1978) and *Airport Chaplain* (1980). However, as a truly modest man, he made light of these achievements.

He moved to North Devon in 1981 and worked for many years at Vicker's bookmakers and was known to many people in Barnstaple. He was a huge influence in the strong community events in Pilton. To quote a member of the Festival Committee, *"His dream was to turn the tide of communities becoming fractured when children grew up and went away to find work. He believed that if we create a strong bond within a community, those children would always come back at least to visit and keep those ties. Twenty five years later, our children have grown up with Pilton Festival – and some are on the Committee and making it happen today."*

Perhaps most remembered for his work for the Pilton Festival in which he was involved from the very early days, he directed the Green Man Pageant on the day and in recent years laboured long and hard with his team to organise the lovely family friendly haven that just seemed to spring up magically in Rotary Gardens on Festival Saturday. He worked tirelessly to get more than twenty local pantomimes onto the stage, adapting, directing and sometimes acting as well, and was often called upon to be a public speaker and quizmaster at the Big Pilton Quiz and other such events. He was a staunch supporter of many local charities through these activities. He also found time to narrate beautifully and act in a very evocative video *The Myths and Legends of Exmoor* in 2003.

Before a private family funeral, his hearse drove slowly down Pilton Street where several hundred people had gathered to mark his last journey, invited to celebrate his life with bright clothing, smiles and cheerfulness. Colourful Festival characters, including the Prior and the Green Man, preceded the hearse with musical accompaniment and the brightly clad crowd followed. There were of course a few tears and it was a most moving occasion, especially on hearing a wave of respectful clapping from the crowd lining the street as the hearse drew level and passed them by.

When all have finished adding their comments, a 'Memories of Hamish' book will be in The Pilton Story archive in the Church Office where anyone interested can look at it or borrow it.

Hamish Patrick, much loved by many people in Pilton and the Barnstaple area, will be greatly missed.

*Martin Haddrill with many thanks to Pip Cartmell, Bev Neighbour and Sheena Ferguson for their contributions and Andrew Bargery for the photograph.*