

# James (Jim) Clifford Strevens Pople

Jenny Olpin

Our dear friend and Dover Society member Jim Pople has decided to relocate to Winchester following the passing of his dear wife of over 50 years, Sheila.

He was born in 1927 as James Clifford Strevens Pople, at Burnham on Sea Somerset. His father was a Master Builder who had served in the Signals Regiment during WW1 in Palestine and knew Lawrence of Arabia. Mr Pople Senior was an organist with the local Baptists Church and Musical Director and Conductor of the local operatic society. Jim's mother was herself a well-known local singer. It was in this environment of music and performance that Jim was fortunate enough to experience a very happy childhood.

Jim spent his early school years at Chelmsford Hall Boarding School, Eastbourne. However, following the death of his father aged only 42, Jim, then 11 years old, returned home to his mother and grandmother where he attended the County School for Boys, Weston-Super-Mare.

During these early war years Jim found himself engaged, whilst still at school, as an ARP Messenger who was tasked with cycling between incidents carrying messages from wardens. '..... when I was on duty, I used to do my homework' recalled Jim.

Jim's father had given him a cine projector which initiated his interest in film. As a 15-year-old Jim acquired a better cine projector (no crank!!) which enabled him to give film shows, selling tickets to a

variety of friends, family, and neighbours in aid of the war effort.

On leaving school, through the influence of the president of the local Operatic Society the well-known playwright Ben Travers, Jim was offered a job at Denham Studios in the cutting room on the film "A Canterbury Tale".

As an 18-year-old he was called up. After six weeks of Primary Training in Winchester he was lucky to be posted to the Army Film and Photographic Unit at Pinewood Studios. Before being wound up the AFPU produced its last major film "Burma Victory" on which Jim worked as Sound Editor. When that was disbanded Jim reverted to his actual Army Grade of Storeman 1st Class. Next posting .... Singapore!

Not being wildly excited at this development, he was offered to run the



*Jim 1959, Film Editor BBC TV Film Unit, Alexandra Palace*

Unit Theatre and Cinema at the Base Ordnance Depot which was in danger of closing down due to demobilisation. It was luck that when, after six months, it was time for his return to 'civvy street' and once more back to Pinewood Studios. His career now began to take off and, as an assistant editor for David Lean, was involved in such films as "Passionate Friends" and "Madelaine".

The British Film industry was having one of its occasional crises and Jim was made redundant. Working as a swimming pool attendant for 3 weeks he received a call from an old Army friend who was the Supervising Film Editor at the BBC TV Film Unit at Lime Grove. Jim had just signed up when he had another call from a friend asking him if he would like to work at Shepperton Studios on a new film. That was the moment when his career switched from film to TV. Such is fate!

Jim spent four years at the BBC and his last production was to edit five programmes in their major series "War in the Air". It was 1955 and the start of ITV. Jim was wooed away with the offer of a generous salary as a Film Editor/Director. Always willing to try something new, he moved into live TV, first with two cameras on late night promotions with Steve Race and a piano and later with four cameras on live Advertising Magazines.

In 1964 Jim met and married Sheila who was to be his life-long partner. She qualified as an SRN in Midwifery and Tropical Medicine. Sheila then moved into freelance occupational health, advising management in health and welfare at large firms such as Rank Xerox.

Jim then stepped into children's television where he experienced the most 'serious' fun of his career involved with the

production of magazine programmes such as "Tuesday Rendezvous" and "Small Time" as well as six-episode drama serials with titles such as "The Blackness" and "Frontier Drums". This was 'live' television and Jim recalls that during 'Frontier Drums' two of the actors completely 'dried up'! Everyone smoked during this time and Jim recalls being authoritatively instructed to ensure that those playing the 'family fathers' roles smoked a pipe and not a cigarette.

It was now that Jim moved into Outside Broadcasting. In 1977 Jim was pleased to be awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal and covered various Royal events. This proceeded two of his most notable achievements which were producing the OBs for Thames Television of the weddings of Prince Charles and Prince Andrew.

Jim retired in 1989 and, after all the 'Wish You Were Here' programmes and looking to travel, moved to Dover to be close to France and the continent. In November 2020, after Sheila had sadly passed away, Jim moved to a retirement complex near Winchester to be with friends and ex colleagues and with shops nearby. Jim looks forward to spending his days with new company and without the pressure of gardening and cooking! I am sure you all join me in wishing Jim a happy and peaceful life in his new environment.



*Queen's Silver Jubilee, Royal Opera House*