

JOHN NYE

Bill Bailey writes:

John and Gwen sat down with us to lunch in the Wax Chandlers' Hall to welcome those players from the U.S.A. Three days later John left us, his score 73.

Near my plate stood a silver chalice engraven with the motto: FAIRE SANS DIRE - roughly ameri-anglicised: DON'T TALK, GET CRACKING. Link this with what the vicar said: whenever a cause, a situation, demanded action, John never stood by, his hands in his pockets; he acted.

Having known John from Alleyn's on for 60 years, I would, if I were a Herald of Arms, grant him that motto to his escutcheon. For he was always "cracking". Once I mentioned the litter along the school boundaries near my house; two hours later he came round with a self-cracked-up spiked litter-stick, so that I too had to get cracking; Sunday at 6 a.m., bonfire at 7.

Then when we faced a serious ball situation, he acted..... and gave me a test-composition ball. It certainly bounced and would have provided glorious comic relief.

Again when he noticed that spectators' rigid knees painfully negotiated the court-benches, he "cracked" up 2 low wooden steps to ease the ascent. You may have stepped up them yourself. I see them still from my window.

He was kindly, wise; never uncharitable. He lived and spoke his faith, being a lay-reader and preaching often. His eyes really twinkled: for every company he had the apt, relieving wit. Once when someone was

overlong fumbling with the ball, he gently cracked "They also serve who only stand and wait." When I asked him, when conversation was heavy, "John, tell us a funny story", he related that one about the Salvation Army recruit, with its evangelistic twist. I will retell it to you, on request.

He was the only player in my experience who at times discarded his gloves. The crisp crack of ball on his horny palm was an excruciating joy to hear.

His other activities were legion. He joined the Artists' Rifles, was specially retained by the Bank of England in the War for Exchange Control, served in the Home Guard, played Rugger and Chess and, of course, our game for as long as he could; served for many years on committee and as auditor for the R.F.A., achieving his climax as our President in 1971/72. And so I could go on and on, and on and on

But, John, leave to go now. The game, too, goes on: you are due for a foursome on the Elysian Courts with Taverner, Pussy Malt and our Gracious Dr. Cyriax. Gloves optional