

## Bob Holland (1954-2005)



*Bob Holland - a familiar figure*

Robert George ("Bob") Holland followed his father and elder brother to Giggleswick School in May 1964. Here he became an enthusiastic Fives player, being captain of his House and School teams in 1971/72, as well as playing with the first XV Rugby squad. He worked hard to encourage the juniors in the School to play Fives and improve their game. His love of Fives remained with him and when the opportunity arose, he became a regular player with the Manchester Y Club (formerly the YMCA). He also turned out occasionally to play for the Old Giggleswickians against the School, most recently on OG Day 2004.

After leaving Giggleswick, he qualified as a chartered accountant, and choosing to specialise in taxation, gained the ATII qualification in 1979. After working initially with Touche Ross in Manchester, he elected to work within his own accountancy practice. Working in the Manchester area made it obvious that he should join the YMCA Club.

Bob's sartorial appearance on court in his prime will be recollected as markedly eccentric. His sagging jock strap and the tattered fawn cardigan were distinguishing hall marks that are still remembered. The suggestion that these and other items of his Fives kit spontaneously combusted, causing the serious fire at his house that necessitated the purchase of new kit is no doubt one of those exaggerated Fives players' stories that have a habit of transcending fiction and achieve a reality of their own when re-told over a post-match pint.

Bob was a valued character in the Fives world. This made the news that he had cancer, followed all too swiftly by his death in August 2005 at the age of 51, all the more shocking. It is sad to reflect that Bob, his sister and his brother have now all succumbed to the same condition within the space of a year.

A funeral service was held at his local church in Handworth, near Wilmslow, Cheshire following his cremation. At the service, his brother in law, Stuart Watson, reminisced movingly and humourously about the Bob Holland that we all knew and will remember. He laid stress on Bob's qualities of loyalty – to his family and friends; qualities that are increasingly rare in the modern world.

Bob is survived by his wife Joyce and their children Richard and Sheila, with whom we all sympathise. Together with Bob's father Harold, they attended the commemorative tournament held at the Manchester Y Club in his memory on 12 November 2005 to celebrate a gifted fives player, who would always tenaciously fight on to the end of a game, often securing the desired result in the process. We shall undoubtedly miss him.

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*Ian Roberts*