

## **John Burton (1925-2017)**

John learned his Fives on the quirky old courts at Christ's Hospital (1936-43) and continued to play at King's College, Cambridge (1948-51), representing the University in the Varsity Match in all three of his undergraduate years, 1949-51. He was Hon.Sec 1949-50 and Captain in 1950-51, playing first pair with Raman Subba Row.

After Cambridge John threw himself into the game both as a player for the RFA and the Jesters but also as an administrator: he was RFA Hon. Assistant Championship Secretary 1952-55; and thereafter full Hon. Championship Secretary until 1962.

John was elected RFA Club President from 1965-83 and served as RFA President 1979-81.

A man of many interests, John developed an impressive knowledge of wine. The piece below was published in the RFA Handbook for 1980/81 when he was President of the RFA. The author of the article was Ron Colville, his predecessor as President.

John is a man of many talents, a person who is always ready to help, who has that enviable ability of being able to write just the right kind of letter for the occasion whenever called upon. His quiet helpful manner and sound advice is readily appreciated by all who have the pleasure to come into contact with him.

John lists among his many interests painting, jazz and oriental carpets and is still a very much sought-after doubles partner. The year 1951 saw John, partnered by John Rogers, as runner-up in the Doubles Championship for the Cyriax Cup.

His versatility and diligence attracted him to new fields when in 1979 he joined the Wine & Spirit Association. After two years of part-time study and arduous examinations including long written papers, John was awarded in 1979 the Rouger Guillet Cup for best student of the year. His success he attributes to the university of life.



Such was John's expertise that in 1983 John was 'intrônisé' as a Chevalier de la Confrérie du Tastevin at Clos Vougeot in 1983. He described the event in an article that year for the Bulletin of the Wine and Spirit Association, typically describing the honour as "undeserved".

John became a Jester in 1950 and later served on the committee, including a stint as Assistant Honorary Secretary. There is a heartfelt tribute from the Jesters Club 1973/74 report:

For some time there have been murmurings that John Burton was contemplating retirement as Assistant Secretary but the committee have always chosen to disregard these in the hope that they might prove to be unfounded, John being far too valuable to lose. This year, however, the murmurings became reality and it was with mixed feelings of gratitude and regret that the committee saw him step down from the job he has done so splendidly for the last eighteen years. In our organisation, the praises of his hard work have been largely unsung but, should anyone be unaware of the debt that the club owes him, suffice it to say that without him we would have had no members list or fixtures list and most of the club records would be in chaos. To one of the longest-serving committee members then, our sincere thanks for all that he has done. He will be much missed, in particular for his ready wit.

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John Burton extreme left 1999 at the Past versus Present in Magdalene College



1951 John Burton Captain CURFC centre front



1950 Hon Sec CURFC left front



1949 rear right