



## **IN MEMORY OF TREVOR WALKER 1930-2024**

My first meeting with Trevor Walker was on 5 July 1976. Having left school about a month earlier and, whilst still awaiting my A Level results, I had been invited to join Francis Webb & Son Accountants as a trainee accountant.

As very much a tax specialist, Trevor tended to deal with the more complex client issues which meant that it was about 4 years before I found myself in his office, surrounded by binders full of "Taxation" magazines and about 23 volumes of "Simon's Taxes".

Francis Webbs was a general practice covering a wide range of client types from Engineering, Hospitality, Construction, Retail, Textiles and Farmers. It was the latter category which by default I found myself sitting opposite a man who I recognise all these years later played such a large role in my career development.

Getting to really know and understand this man was quite difficult at first. He was a very private person who rarely shared any details of his life away from the office, although across the years which followed I felt honoured to be taken into his confidence on many matters. He had many great qualities but sadly these did not include any sense of navigation or indeed recognition of people even if he had only spoken to them an hour or so before. He was probably the most disorganised of professional people I ever met but he overcame that trait by always carrying numerous lists and packs of post it notes which he would stick all across his briefcase.

It was whilst at Webbs that we found ourselves trying to reconcile a list of cattle provided by a farming client, to a separate list provided by MAFF. We were calling across the names of each animal when I realised that Trevor was laughing uncontrollably, and we had to pause for a while. With tears running down his cheeks and hardly able to speak he confessed that he had an aged aunt with the same name as one of the cows listed and he had in mind that the said relative had been somehow transformed into a black and white Friesian heifer wearing a straw bonnet.

Trevor was an exceptional linguist who despite his own protest to the contrary could speak German, French and Italian to a very high standard. In addition, when the mood took him, he would start to learn other languages including Russian, Urdu and Mandarin Chinese.

Later on, he would be very supportive when I myself started to learn modern Greek. At home when I visited him he was keen to show me his language corner where he had all his books, dictionaries, tapes and headphones all readily to hand.

In 1985, following disagreements within Francis Webbs, Trevor together with Ray Thompson decided to set up a new practice together and I was asked by Trevor to join the practice which would carry their names. I am proud to say that even with the passage of time, the name Walker Thompson still adorns our building and represents the ethics and integrity which Trevor stood for.

Perhaps, when some today would have been thinking of retirement, Trevor was ready to start again and put in a further 17 years, during which time he supported and helped many of the young trainees who passed through the firm.

Aside from languages, his main interests away from the office were skiing and meeting up for a drink and a takeaway with friends. Skiing for Trevor was not a hobby but an absolute passion. I would be treated to stories of his exploits on the slopes of Europe for at least a week before he went and similarly when he returned. I once had the audacity to say that I would not enjoy such holidays to which he replied, "that's ok because I don't think they make skis big enough for you".

I recall well in the height of summer, Trevor arriving at the office with skis fastened to the roof rack of his car. He delighted in telling me that he was going to Barmote Barracks near Nuneaton where they had a rudimentary short dry ski slope in a hangar which he could freely use. He said that the Gurkhas on the gate thought he was completely insane.

It came as no surprise that in 2002 when he retired from practice he was presented with a pair of Salomon racing skis which he spoke of many times in the years following.

Perhaps some of the lesser known parts of Trevor's world which I came to know and which fascinated me included that he qualified as both a Certified Accountant and a Chartered Accountant, he had previously worked as the financial accountant at one of the divisions of Courtaulds Group and finally that he had served his time completing his National Service with the Royal Air Force where he held the post of Wing Commander's Shorthand Writer as well as completing a course to become, of all things, a sniper. In his early life he had also been a keen cyclist and was extremely proud of a certificate on the office wall stating that he had completed 20 miles in 60 minutes.

Without doubt I could not have had a better mentor than Trevor Walker. A man I respect and hold in the greatest regard and whom I could never thank enough for his support. I raise a glass of red to you sir.

RIP Trevor

Sherod Williams. Director.

Walker Thompson