

John Cedric Ritchie

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OBITUARIES

John Cedric Ritchie, a colourful councillor and member of Ryde community, had died, aged 83.

The second of three sons, he was born into a family of general engineers and motorcycle dealers, in Wimbledon.

He joined the family business, moving to Oxford, where his father ran a garage and haulage business, before enlisting into the army, under age, with his older brother, Gordon.

They both served with The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) in Europe in the Second World War, Gordon died in Belgium, aged 21.

Moored off the Island, before crossing the Channel for D-Day landings in 1944, Mr. Ritchie's last view of his homeland was the IW coastline and he vowed to return for a closer look if he could.

Recovering from wounds and tuberculosis, he returned to Oxfordshire, where he met and married Winnie in 1947. A year later he moved to the Island.

Mr. Ritchie enjoyed a varied working life, including crop spraying, blasting and plant operation until he and his wife opened their Autospares vehicle business, at Niton. His vehicle restoration earned him the nickname The Rust Surgeon and many of his successes are still seen on the annual Historic Commercial Vehicles Club's London to Brighton run.

Mr. Ritchie moved to Ryde in 1968, where he traded until retirement.

He was known for his love of the Island and served as a county councillor in Ryde. He was also a member of the former Medina Borough Council and was one of the last mayors, in 1989.

A flamboyant extravert, Mr. Ritchie invariably wore his trademark Stetson hat and other regalia.

As Welly Boot Santa, he collected seasonal contributions to St. Mary's Hospital across the Island for 30 years, even after his health began to deteriorate.

He leaves his wife, daughter, Teresa, son-in-law, Tim and grandchildren, Edward and Georgia.

A service will be held at the Minster Church of Sts. Thomas, Newport, followed by a family burial.

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