

Gus Tysoe

26 August 1938 – 25 September 2016

A Family Historian's Tribute

Family historians around the world have lost a great friend with the death of John Jeremy Tysoe, better known as Gus, after his battle over recent years with motor neurone disease. He passed away on 25 September at St Richard's Hospice, Worcester.

Gus came to family history as a result of undertaking research in local history: if memory serves me correctly it was research into a brick-maker that set the ball rolling: a ball that gathered considerable momentum.

But he had other interests, too, and a wry sense of humour. He loved cats: they ruled his life ... he was their "monkey". As an accountant he recorded everything...often regaling his friends with the averages! As he became ill, he even recorded the decrease in cigarette and beer consumption. Canals were a compelling interest: he and Brian, who had a boat on the canal, used to have jaunts each year with mooring places carefully planned to be near a pub with good beer. Gus was the "junior" crew member! It was his knowledge of the canal system that took us to Stourport where he pointed out the former site of the dry dock once occupied by a branch of my family.

Did I mention beer? Real ale was a passion. Many a trip with his genealogical friends involved finding a good pub! But what would a day trawling graveyards be without visiting the local hostelry where our forebears likely went, too. The last meal I had with him was at a pub selected for its real ale awards – the food wasn't bad, either! On that occasion, our route had been meticulously planned through almost-forgotten lanes to end up on the main road by the pub! Those who had been on trips with Gus will know of his planning – and routes that included some exceptional views over the best of the local countryside.

Folk music had been an avid passion too – he was involved with a local club and is well remembered by members and singers alike.

Gus helped so many family historians over the years with his regular visits to archives to delve for those unable to visit themselves. He loved the process of finding and proving – or dis-proving – the links. He developed a network of friends spread far and wide. There were times when he had to try and persuade somebody that their hypothesis was fairytale – researchers will know that not all are willing to accept such!

Gus would assist his regular contacts on their visits to Worcestershire – both in visits to the archives and around villages and graveyards. Only family historians will appreciate the worth of this – someone who knew the parish areas; who knew the location of a burial ground long overgrown with trees and barely visible on even older Ordnance Survey maps (I did wonder quite where we were going!) and who understood the need to visit these places. And if you had flown in from foreign parts, this help was immeasurable.

Gus was meticulous in his research – and this included vast work on maps. I remember him describing the number of detached parts of one parish that he laboriously plotted on his wonderful maps. Ecclesiastical parish boundaries of the past are not well recorded yet are critical to family history research.

He was an ardent collector of many things but especially of all mentions of TYSOE and its variants. He would take a new find and work out the connections – occasionally it would be a "one off" in a parish with no others yet further research followed in an attempt to prove whether it really was TYSOE or some incomer whose surname was "guessed at" by an incumbent unable to understand the accent.

His family is currently considering where to deposit his research to make sure it is safe and with access for researchers.

Gus is already greatly missed by his many friends.