

## Savernake Cottage Hospital's very own Who's Who

**Name: Raymond Eric White 1916-2013**  
**Committed to League of Friends (which became Friends of Savernake Hospital and The Community) from 1958-2013**

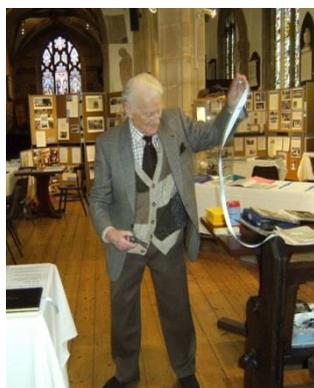
When Savernake Cottage Hospital contributory scheme was disbanded in 1948, it appeared that local involvement would cease in the hospital and the new-fangled National Health Service would provide everything. To some extent this was true, care given was free at the point of delivery just as it is now, but over the next 10 years it became apparent that local people were still needed, health provision was just that, but Savernake Hospital was well known for always going the extra mile (or rather more) for the comfort of its' patients.



Prior to the NHS, giving to the hospital had been a way of life for local farmers, businessmen, church congregations etc and society at every level was used to doing their bit. The fund raising events had been spectacularly successful and involved huge amounts of work. Seeing that the NHS was unable to provide all the "optional extras" of care, in 1958 a League of Friends was constituted for Savernake Cottage Hospital and

we first see the name of Ray White at the inaugural meeting.

Looking through the history files, Ray appears time and again, raising money, inspiring people, wielding a shovel, writing letters to the paper, designing a logo, opening an exhibition and we must remember, this was only the visible part of his work and the very tip of the iceberg. Behind the scenes was a mountain of



files and paperwork, endless hours of

meetings, tedious research and reading to keep up with the latest healthcare organisation, talking to groups... listening to local people, the list will be endless. Savernake Cottage Hospital was not just a huge part of this gentleman's life, for him it was a way of life.

Ray was not a man who would say "this is the way we've always done it...", he embraced progress and moved in his mind with great agility in an ever changing time. His sense of humour was legendary, his chuckle infectious, his interest in people real and Savernake Cottage Hospital was clearly one of his passions. He never lost sight of the purpose of the League of Friends – he never became pompous but always chaired the group with great humility – allowing everyone to input equally regardless of whether



their views coincided with his or not. He was Chairman, then President of the group that became Friends of Savernake Hospital and The Community and his involvement lasted from 1958 until his death in 2013.

His work, his loyalty and generosity of spirit will never be forgotten as he appears regularly throughout the history files. He was a truly inspirational man remembered with great affection by all. He was summed up beautifully at his funeral;

*When asked to describe Ray people would say “the perfect Gentleman” and they weren’t simply referring to his immaculate dress, his beautifully brushed white hair and his gentle speech, always charming, they meant Gentle Man. Gentle he surely was, loyal to friends, modest, one might almost say private, never seen to be angry, always ready to give quiet advice.*

