

O B I T U A R Y

ERIC SKIPSEY

28 December 1919 - 23 July 2019

Eric died on 23 July 2019 after a short spell in hospital. He had managed to live at home until only a few months before his death and as you will see from the dates above was almost 100 years old. He and his late wife Monica lived all of their life in the same house in Lanchester. They had one son who is married with two daughters.

Eric was a founder member of the Eddis Owners Club and was appointed Honorary President after the death of Siddle. He handed over the presidency to Derek Jackson when he himself gave up caravanning.

He was quite an unassuming man who was dedicated to producing the best product he could. He enjoyed his work and his caravanning. He and his wife Monica spent many holidays in France and elsewhere with John and Ann Harrison. They also ran or helped at many Factory Visit rallies and attended numerous rallies all over the country.

It was an honour to have worked with him and to have known him personally throughout his time at Eddis.

Eric Hepplewhite

A note of gratitude and appreciation from Raymond Cook Managing Director of Eddis Caravans Limited from 1966 - 1978

Eric was born in Medomsley in The Miners Arms public house which his family owned at the time. Shortly afterwards he went with his family to live in Lanchester, County Durham where he lived for the rest of his life.

Long before he joined Eddis Caravans (Consett) Limited in the spring of 1966, after leaving school he trained as a master carpenter. However, at the outbreak of the Second World War he joined the British Army and was given formal training to become an explosives expert. He then went on to

become a member of the Churchill Special Operations Executive and in turn trained army saboteurs to blow up targets in mainland Europe.

After the war ended he returned to his original vocation as a highly qualified carpenter and became the works manager of a small joinery company. Unfortunately that company went out of business in 1966. Subsequently, and much to the benefit of the Cook family Eric applied for the job of works manager at the fledgling Eddis Caravans factory at Esp Green. Shortly after Eric joined Eddis the founder, Siddle C. Cook, developed heart problems and was advised by his doctor to “take things easy and avoid stress”. So in late 1966 he appointed me to be Managing Director and Eric to be General Manager.

Without much personal knowledge of the caravan industry and how it worked, together with little experience in coach building and joinery, Eric’s guidance and help in those early days proved to be an enormous benefit in establishing the Eddis name. Fortunately we worked well together in developing the product as well as the manufacturing techniques to a level that in November 1968 we took a stand at the Earls Court Caravan Show and sold out our whole year’s planned production in the first 3 days of the show. This spurred us on to build a larger factory at Delves Lane and we moved the production facility there in autumn 1969.

With Eric’s help we were able to develop export markets in Scandinavia as well as going on to win 3 consecutive, highly coveted, Concours d’ Elegance awards at the Caravan Club International Caravan Road Rallies.

In 1973 we were approached by Ace Belmont International who were seeking to expand their product range and sold the Eddis Caravan company to them in November of that year. Through all of these changes Eric remained for ever loyal to the Eddis brand until his retirement.

I will be for ever grateful to Eric for his help and loyalty, especially in those early years for without his skill, knowledge and tenacity I’m not convinced that Eddis Caravans would have attained the stature and profile in the British caravan industry that it enjoys today.

My wife Muriel and I became close friends with Eric and his dear wife Monica and I am proud to have worked with such a gentleman.