

*Obituary published in Lancing & Sompting Pastfinders journal 'Retrospecs'*

*Bill Lindfield (1927 - 2011)*

The first time I met Bill he told me he was born in Bull Pit Lane, Sompting. Probably most people would have said Millfield Cottages, but Bill had a sense of history. For any who do not know, Bull Pit Lane runs immediately south of the dual carriageway of the A27 west of Hillbarn junction. Still traceable as a track next to the boundary wall of Rectory Farm Estate, it is probably the remains of the Roman road from Chichester to Portslade.

All at Pastfinders enjoyed Bill's tales of living and working in Sompting and Lancing. We listened spellbound as he retraced his steps as a teenager working for Staker, a farmer in North Road, Lancing, who had the Council contract to repair the village roads. This was delegated to Bill, the horse and cart, and a dog. These stories and more can be found in his book of Sompting memories, 'The Last Cowboy in Sussex', of which we have a copy in our Pastfinders library. The book fills the Sompting landscape with memories of bygone ways of folk and farming.

And who will ever forget his poems that he so willingly shared with us on many occasions, especially his way of reading them. Thankfully Bill made a number of tapes some of which are now saved in the WSRO oral history archive.

Bill also took and collected from others many important old photographs of Sompting people and places and carefully annotated them. Many are in the Sompting Old exhibition.

At some time, (was it National Service?) Bill went into the army, and eventually became a Regular soldier, serving in the Parachute Regiment. Bill was married to Hilda who in recent times he nursed at home. For those of us able to be at Sompting Parish Church for Bill's funeral service, it was good to meet other members of his family, and to hear the fitting tribute brought by his son.

Bill had a gift for sharing, not just his curiosity and passion for the past, but also his infectious laughter, joy, sorrow, hope, frankness and personal warmth.

Bill, thank you. Knowing you has enriched our lives.

Philip Tout & Mike Tristram, November 2011