

## ROBERT AVERY: 1934 - 2012

Chris Sprent

It is with sadness we record that Robert Avery died on 16th April, his life having been brought short by cancer. He now lies with other family members in the churchyard at Worminghall.

He was a grandson of William Avery, who started a timber yard in Wheatley in the 1890s that remained a family concern, and a major employer in the village, for half a century. William came from Naphill, a village in the beech woods that provided the raw material for the furniture trade in nearby Wycombe, and it was during a train journey from there to Oxford that he identified the land next to Wheatley station as suitable for his business. William, who had six sons and three daughters, lived in what is now 94 High Street. The youngest son, Leonard, who was Robert's father, was involved in the management of what became known as Avery and Sons until his ill health led to the business being sold. Leonard died in 1949 leaving 14 year old Robert, an only child, to be brought up by his mother Doris at Longside, their fine house at the top of Ladder Hill.



Robert attended Magdalen College School. His walk to and from the bus stop meant that he had to pass the station twice each day, and trains and everything to do with them, became a consuming interest. He enjoyed spending time in Wheatley signal box watching and learning about the operation of railways. From school Robert went to Trinity College, Dublin, in due course becoming a schoolmaster, firstly in Oxford and later at Marlborough College.

Devoted to his mother, Robert cared for her in the years prior to her death in 1980, thereafter making Longside his home for the rest of his life. He was a gifted person and although trains were always his great interest he was an accomplished artist and expert photographer. He enjoyed cricket, amateur dramatics, music and opera; and he took great pride in his garden.

Robert never married, but he was not without companions. He had good friends and his beloved dachshund Sam went everywhere with him, including being driven around the village in his master's beautiful Rolls Royce. Of course, dogs have a limited life span, so Robert sensibly replaced one Sam with another, having four in all. But there was only one Robert Avery. May he rest in peace.

From the Parish Newsletter June 2012