

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Miller:

Former Crown Equerry

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL Sir John Miller, of Shotover House, near Wheatley, who was a former Crown Equerry, has died aged 87. From 1961-1987 he was Crown Equerry, in charge of the Queen's Horses, carriages and cars. He was known for opening up his Shotover estate to the public to show how his stables were managed, and for people to see his selection of horse-drawn carriages, saddlery and postillions' livery. He was an excellent horseman who enjoyed hunting, polo and driving. He introduced the Prince Wales to hunting and Prince Philip to carriage driving. Born on February 4, 1919, as the third son of Brigadier-General Alfred Douglas Miller, CBE, DSO, 3 was born into a military family. A giant stuffed bear, a gift his father from the last Tsar, Nicholas II, stood in the hall of Shotover House. His mother, Ella, was a descendant of Andrew Fletcher, the distinguished 17th-century political writer, and of the Earls of Wemyss and March.

He was educated at Eton and Sandhurst, and served in the Welsh Guards during the Second World War.

A courageous soldier, he distinguished himself in particular after the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944.

As a company commander in August that year he rallied his men under intense shell fire and was awarded an MC.

Only a month later, he received the DSO for re-establishing two companies that had been dispersed during a fierce onslaught by enemy tanks.

In September 1944, he commanded the first British troops to enter Brussels after the city's liberation.

After the war, Sir John was ADC to Field Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, from 1945 to 1947. He commanded the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards from 1958 to 1961.

He joined the Royal Household as Crown Equerry in 1961, running the Royal Mews and all attendant equestrian and

ceremonial affairs until his retirement in 1987, when he was appointed an Extra Equerry to the Queen.

He took part in more than 64 birthday parades and rehearsals. Most of these occasions passed off flawlessly, but the Queen's official birthday celebration on June 13, 1981 was an exception.

He was already nervous for superstitious reasons, because of



the date. And in the event the Queen was shot at in The Mall, the Queen Mother slipped on a staircase, injuring her leg, as she left the Duke of Wellington's office from which she had been watching the ceremony, Prince Philip's horse went lame and his groom was injured in an accident.

Sir John's duties brought him into close contact with the Royal Family.

He blew the hunting horn at Balmoral to welcome the Waleses home from their honeymoon, and was responsible for mounting members of the family on to their horses when they expressed an interest in riding.

Injury ruled him out of Britain's eventing team for the 1952 Helsinki 'Olympics, but two decades later he was in the gold-medal-winning British team at the World Driving Championships in Germany, and in 1974 he was a member of the team that won a gold medal in Switzerland.

He was appointed CVO in 1966, and advanced to KCVO in 1974 and GCVO in 1987. He never married.