

## **EASTER HOCKEY FESTIVAL MOURNS DEATH OF LONG SERVING CHAIRMAN**

**Torbay Easter Hockey Festival's Chairman , Tony Forward , has died at the age of 77 after a short and unexpected illness on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July in Southampton General Hospital .**

**Tony was Chairman of the Festival for 41 years , having taken on the post from David Powell in 1979 . All through this period , Tony applied to the role the same enthusiasm and dedication he applied to the many other enterprises he supported during his life , typified by his motto “ never look back, always look forward ” . He worked tirelessly with his Committee , Torbay Councillors and Officers , to ensure both the Festival and The Borough of Torbay got the maximum benefit from the collaboration .**

**His first Festival - then the Paignton Easter Hockey Festival - was Easter 1960 with the Oddfellows Club , and since the he never missed a Festival , clocking up 60 appearances this Easter . The Festival started in 1951 with 11 teams , and over the period 1983 - 95 over 40 teams attended each year . This required the use of up to 17 pitches , mainly grass ; a nightmare to be managed , bearing in mind the fickle Devon weather .**

**The Festival has now settled back to around the dozen mark , with games being played on the 2 local astro pitches at Clennon Valley and Torquay Girls Grammar School . The decline in numbers must be viewed in the context that Torbay's Easter Festival is one of only 3 surviving from a population of around 15 such events . Already , Tony had started preparations for the 70<sup>th</sup> Festival in April 2020 .**

**Tony Forward was a man of many parts - apart from the Hockey Festival , he was a senior player in Rotary and Rotary International . His latest Project was as co-founder of the Romsey ( Hampshire ) Relay Marathon , where the 2019 event will be the 7<sup>th</sup> , attracting up to 170 teams of 10 runners . In true Rotary fashion he built Rotary contacts wherever he went , including locally in Paignton .**

**Tony spent all of his working life as a respected Senior Teacher and Housemaster at what was the Embley Park School , an Independent School based at Florence Nightingale's family home near Romsey . This lead to a life always involved with young people , with activities including Scouting and the Old Tauntonians / Romsey Cricket Club . In addition , he and his wife were actively involved with local Conservative Parties .**

**Tony Forward is survived by his wife Rosemary , Alex and Steve , Charles and Rhiett , and his four grandchildren , Mariella , Llewellyn , Amber , and Megan , all of whom are active playing members of the Oddfellows Hockey Club .**

ENCLOSED - photo

Mike Carter Vice President , TEHF