



Bob playing in the Northern, 1992

BGA stalwart Bob Bagot sadly passed away on Friday 4th March.

Bob's wife Lesley and sons Sam and Rob chose a family send-off rather than a public funeral. Adrian Abrahams, Helen Harvey and Martin Harvey attended the lunch buffet on 30th March near Settle. This obituary is based on their memories of Bob related there.

Memories by Martin Harvey of Manchester Go Club.

On a sporting level, we know that Bob excelled in table tennis, being a top player in Cheshire.

Bob showed even more strength and stamina, though, in tennis. He and his

wife Lesley both played for Stockton Heath Tennis Club, which is where fellow club members Helen and I first met them, some 40 years ago. Also, Lesley and I coincidentally attended the same evening course in beginners' guitar-playing, but please don't ask me to pick it up nowadays!

Stockton Heath is one of the strongest tennis clubs with, at the time, eight men's teams, playing in a top league in a strong Cheshire hotbed of tennis. With Bob a regular in the first team, Stockton Heath won the Warrington League on many occasions.

However, many were the times when Bob and I, after the men's tennis, would stay in the clubhouse, eating, drinking ... and playing Go. You can imagine the bemusement of visiting teams!

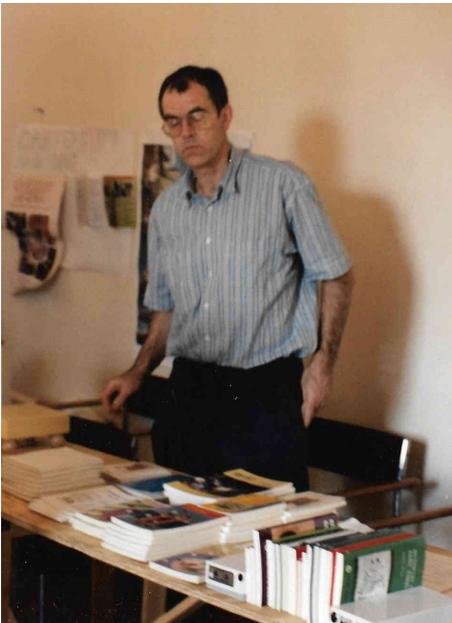
Also, Bob invited Helen and me to his house for Go on several occasions.

So, yes, Bob was one of those few lucky people, able to devote time to practising both sporting and intellectual pursuits.

- He reached the very high level of 2-dan in Go.
- Fewer than 1% of lifelong Go players reach that grade – and I know my own hopes are slim indeed ☺.
- Bob travelled to well over 100 tournaments, throughout the UK.
- He won the prestigious Northern Go tournament – often won by British Champions – not once, but twice in a row, winning all of his rounds in 2008 and 2009.

- He also finished in 1st place (out of the top 19 players) in the 2006 'British Candidates' leading event.
- He was a committed member of the British Go Association, doing much for the game, both locally and nationally.

Bob had been a teacher, so what could be more logical for him than to run a local Go and Chess club for kids. Bob was pleased that one of the lads he taught went on to help run a successful Go club of his own, over in the Isle of Man.



**Bob the Bookseller,
at the British Go Congress,
Nottingham 1992**

Bob undertook the unpaid role of Go-book buyer and distributor, indeed he was the second longest-serving, from 1987-1994. This involved him travelling with a selection of his

supply of newly ordered books to well over 100 Go tournaments the length of Britain. He was indebted to Lesley for allowing so many books in the house and letting him devote so much time to travelling and book-ordering. I'm sure Lesley highly approved ...? But who could blame her if at times she wished Bob hadn't taken the job on!

Bob and Lesley left Cheshire many years ago, moving to a few places, including Devon, before choosing Settle in North Yorkshire as their current home.

Not content with the book-distributor role, Bob also ran an annual Go tournament – the Three Peaks Tournament. And not just any old tournament but a (sadly rare) all-weekend one.

When Bob presented prizes at his Three Peaks tournaments, he took pride – every year! – in reminding us that the wine bottles were supplied by his son, and hence we could be "assured" that they were "of the finest Italian quality" ... which the assembled players duly applauded!

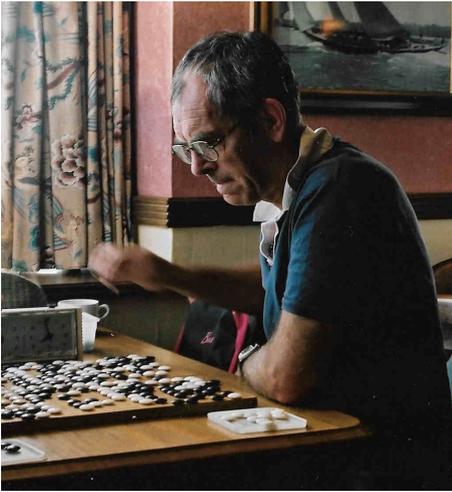
Martin Harvey

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*Memories by Adrian Abrahams  
(Lancaster Go Club).*

Bob and I became friends when he joined the Lancaster Go Club about 20 years ago. He would drive from Grange, then later from Ingleton, almost without fail every Wednesday night, come rain or shine. He was still playing Go on the internet until a few days before his sudden demise. It has to be said that he had been very frail for a few years, but that did not diminish his love for the game of Go. He was also a very keen cyclist – of the old school and never swapping

his cloth cycling cap for shiny new headgear. Cycling was the thing that cemented our friendship. We would make up a cycling trio that also included keen Go player, John Walsh, and ride out as far as the Lakes and around the Grange area. For quite some time, Lancaster Go Club was reduced to just us three, and Bob half-jokingly said we should call it the Lancaster Cycling and Go Club!



**Bob playing in the  
Cornish Open, 2000**

He nearly got us into hot water with a motorist passing far too fast past our elbows on a single-track road that follows Coniston Water – someone in a very large 4 x 4. Bob, in the lead, gave him that very common cycling salute to bad drivers. The Chelsea Tractor screeched to a halt and rapidly backed up. On my life, I tell you that when the driver got out to greet us, he was bigger than the 4x4. We just had to swallow the tirade of abuse that he bestowed upon us. If you want to get an idea of this man's build, look up Eddie Hall, one-time world's strongest

man. The moral here is: never ever give the finger.

Not many know that Bob's keenness for cycling led him and his son Rob, backed up by elder son Sam, to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats (the 'LEJOG'), a distance of 874 miles. Bob is one of only two people that I have ever met to do this.

When asked, even years later, what his most significant memory of the ride was, this was the tale ... At a lunch rendezvous with Sam and the car, Bob gave Sam £10 for food for when they would meet up later again that evening.

It was a cold, wet and dark night when they rolled up many miles later to Sam's car, dreaming of hot pies and chips. Sam, when asked to hand out the hot supper or whatever, said "What food?". "You know, the food that I gave you the tenner for". "Oh" replied Sam, "I thought all the food was for me". He had scoffed the lot. To say that the air must have been blackened darker than by the man in the 4x4 would probably be no understatement.

This is not to forget that between them they raised £1,850 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

Finally, Bob, since you left our last OGS game unfinished, I hope you won't darken the air up there with expletives when I claim a win by default ☺.

### **Adrian Abrahams**

*Following the funeral, Martin adds:* The buffet was splendidly organised, as an episode if you like along the lines of the *This is your life* UK TV series. Several personal memories were given while we ate, drank, laughed and shed a tear. ▷

The few minutes' memories of one guest in particular stood out, for Adrian and me, from John Birt (Baron Birt). Those of a certain age will recall that John held, among an array of jobs in his distinguished career, the post of BBC Director-General (1992–2000). It transpired that Bob and John had

been best friends since they were both four years old. John's down-to-earth modesty, and his obvious affection for Bob, were heart-warming. Such was Bob's humility that he never name-dropped such friends, but I feel it's fitting to do so now on Bob's behalf. □