

CRANBROOK & SISSINGHURST PARISH COUNCIL

BIOPIC

FRANCIS J. ROOK

I came to Cranbrook in 1977 when I opened a stationery and printing business.

This after a career in the British and Danish Merchant Navies as a senior Radio Officer and Marine Radar engineer circumnavigating the globe and witnessing life at its best and worse.

On leaving the sea I spent a few years as General Manager of an electronics manufacturing company in Rye and New Romney making marine radios for the RNLI, electronic organs for Woolworths and developing the now popular radio microphone and took pride in getting the first one on the BBC.

During this time I was very proud to be part of the support team for the British Olympic yachtsmen who went onto success in Montreal.

Looking for a change in career I moved to Cranbrook and Studied offset litho printing at Gestetner in London and became a member of the BOSS (British Office and Stationery Suppliers) federation.

The stationery company in Stone Street became very successful and over the years I branched out into investigative research for the Sunday Times, exported stationery to Africa, co-ran a civil engineering company and studied at Open University, reading mathematics, geology and technology including planning and house design.

Wishing to give something back to the town and people who have made my life so worthwhile I joined the parish council in 2002 helped manage the £240,000 SEEDA grant that was mainly spent on the old fire station turning a dark dingy hole into the Weald Information Centre then in 2010 I was elected to the borough council and served for 4 years and during that time served as chairman of the parish council.

I have been involved in many successes in Cranbrook and I hope to see the regeneration of the Cranbrook Engineering site that I got involved with about 10 years ago, before I retire from public service. However as trustee of the newly formed Tom Veitch Memorial Trust formed to provide money for public projects, I know I will be involved with Cranbrook for many years to come.

After the death of my partner Dulcie for 35 years I married Ann who was deputy principle at Sittingbourne Community College and selflessly she has taken on the role of vice chair of governors at the High Weald Academy helping them achieve the magnificent results they now have.

For relaxation I enjoy sailing and have taken part in the Round the Island race and qualified to participate in the 1997 Fastnet race as watch leader, when after being becalmed on the finishing line we came 22nd. I still have a sailing cruiser moored at Conyer from where I venture forth with my Ann to explore the Thames Estuary and the rivers of the East Coast.

Cllr. Francis Rook