**Ian Peak**

**5th July 1926 – 22nd February 2015**

The 22nd of February 2015 was a sad occasion because on that day we lost one of our most loyal and long-standing members when Ian Peak passed away.

How best to describe Ian? Where to start? A larger than life personality with all of the exuberance and enthusiasm of a youngster, Ian seized life with both hands and wrung the juice from it. Always popular on the regional sales stand, Ian would engage brilliantly with the public and was a fine ambassador for the Spitfire Society (despite his dashing spitfire-pilot looks – complete with handlebar moustache – Ian in fact served as a sergeant in the army during the war) with many a customer going away all the richer for having met with Ian.

My own memories will always be of his love for firearms, in fact anything that went ‘bang!’ Ian’s home was like a museum with many assorted handguns and rifles arranged on racks on the walls (I went in once to find a Bren Gun set up in the living room all ready for action); his door-stop was a mills-grenade, which he told me he scraped the explosive charge from as a schoolboy, using a broken hacksaw blade. I assume his time in the army served his interest in firearms well, and I recall a few years ago when a few of us had met up for coffee at Elstree Aerodrome, Ian pulled his service-revolver out of his bag to show us; asking him if this was a wise move, he cheerfully replied with a big grin ‘nothing to worry about old chap, perfectly harmless – no ammo in it!’.

The Spitfire Society was not the only charity that Ian donated his time and efforts to; he had over the years been involved in Bushey with the Round Table, the Rotary Club, the local operatic society, the Handlebar Club (of course!) and Lincolnsfield Centre, a local educational hub set up at a former United States Army base whose remit is to educate youngsters about the Second World War. Some years ago along with two friends (a group calling themselves ‘Last of the Summer Wine’) Ian made a trip to Hendon one day and took accurate measurements of Messerschmitt 109 ‘Black Six’, from which they built a full-size replica fuselage and tail which they planted in the ground at Lincolnsfield to represent a downed E/A; very effective it was too, and as I understand, it is still in place today.

Such was Ian’s energy that even in his later life when things started to become difficult for him he would still get along to Duxford to help out whenever he could. An indispensable member of our committee, a hard-working enthusiast, connoisseur of real ale, a delight to be around and above all, a true gentleman; Ian Peak will always be remembered with joy.

P.W.