



The History of the Ray Laxton Lecture

In short, Harold Raymond Wentworth Laxton (known more familiarly as “Ray Laxton”) was born in Peterborough and educated at the Kings School before attending Cambridge University. He was an outstanding lawyer, and was a senior partner of Greenwoods for some years. He specialised in work place accident litigation, where he acted mainly for the claimant. Most of his work was sourced to him from the TGWU where he was regarded as one of their best Litigation lawyers. Ray has been said, to always have been on the side of the little man, the man with no voice.

He was very interested in the local community and local politics, and was a Conservative City Councillor for many years. Ray was Mayor of Peterborough in 1973-74 and was also a member of the Peterborough Development Corporation. The Corporation was set up in 1968 as a Government initiative. Its task was to provide homes, work and a full range of urban facilities and services for an extra 70,000 people. Ray was one of the first 7 people to be appointed to the board and played a massive part in contributing to our new City.

Ray sadly died very suddenly in 1981. This was a huge shock not only for Greenwoods, but also for the profession, and for Peterborough. At his funeral, Charles Swift (a lifelong Labour supporter) gave a moving tribute to Ray saying that he always put the best interests of this City above Party Politics.

He had been a stalwart raiser of funds for the Peterborough District Hospital and after his untimely death, the Medics and Lawyers got together and decided that the most fitting tribute they could think of was to instigate an annual talk and dinner which would be of interest to both professions.

Over the years there have been a number of eminent speakers. The topics were chosen to stimulate interest and discussion amongst both professions. The talks used to take place in the Robert Fawcett Post-Graduate Centre at Peterborough District Hospital, but with the closure of that venue, the lecture did not happen for a number of years.