

## Trevor Williams

The name Trevor Williams is synonymous with the New Malden department store Tudor Williams, which finally closed its doors in 2019. Famous locally as an independent store with its own character, it thrived during the early twentieth century and was an important landmark and feature of local life.



Trevor was born in New Malden in 1930. He had an elder brother, who was 15 years older than him, and Trevor was a surprise addition to the family. His father started Tudor Williams in 1913 when he bought the freehold of a shop for £200, with a flat above it, in which they lived. At that time it was a tiny little shop on the corner of the High Street and Cambridge Road.

In 1914, when war broke out, Trevor's father joined the Navy. His mother, Nora, who was in business

with him, carried on running the shop throughout the war. She was a talented milliner in a time when hats were worn by everyone, and there was always a large display of hats in the window. She said "You would never go to church without a hat".

Trevor's father returned from the War, and he and his wife continued to run the business together, with

his father extending the shop lengthways so that it became a long, narrow shop with a small frontage on the main road. Meal times were a time when his parents talked over the events of the day in the store, and so the business became very familiar to Trevor.

In the early part of the Second World War Trevor's brother was sadly killed and his parents were heartbroken. The atmosphere in the house was

very sombre. Trevor was at King's School, Wimbledon and, when he left, he felt honour-bound to help his parents in their store.

His father did not pressurise him to go into the business and said that if he wanted to do anything else, then he could. However, Trevor never regretted his decision to enter the business. When told of Trevor's intentions, his father said that he should go elsewhere and train, and so he spent nearly three years at Harrods where he was called 'laddie' and then two years with C&A before returning to New Malden when his father's health started deteriorating. "I felt I knew everything, and once I'd been back for a few months, I felt that I really didn't know anything".

They worked together for at least five years, but his father would come in later and later as his health grew progressively worse. When he died, Trevor bought the two adjoining shops and it became a department store. Trevor's wife-to-be lived in the same road in New Malden. They got together at the

Over 21 Club in New Malden and married and had two children, Ian and Susan.

Unfortunately Susan died of cancer when she was just 35, leaving three young children. A commemorative stained glass window in Christ Church, New Malden, remains as a wonderful memorial to her.

Trevor's wife suffered latterly from Multiple Sclerosis, which she endured for 27 years.

Trevor came to St. Mary's because of its proximity to where he lived. Although his parents were not regular Church-goers, his uncle was actively involved at Christ Church, New Malden, and Trevor used to go along with him there. Trevor lived for 47 years on the corner of Dene Close and The Avenue, but moved to his



The memorial window for Susan at Christ Church, New Malden

present maisonette, which he loves, ten years ago.

Trevor's activity-packed life is now significantly reduced and he stays mainly in one room. Once a regular walker with the Church walking group, a keen film-goer, a giver of dinner parties and a voluntary assistant in a school, his life is very different now.

Trevor has complete faith and has no fear of dying. If he were told that he had a week left to live, he would be literally quite pleased. "It is something that is going to happen to everyone".

The Tudor Williams Store closed down in early 2020 after 107 years of trading at the same location in New Malden.

### Footnote

Sadly, Trevor passed away on the 2nd of June 2020 a short time after this interview.



The original Tudor Williams corner shop on the right of this picture circa 1918



Tudor Williams department store in 2019