

100th Birthday Party of Commander John Simpson

On Sunday 31st March 2019 John celebrated his 100th birthday with many members of his family, from across four generations. His daughter, Helen Chapman, mother of OFs Hetta O'Connor (P94-99) and Sophia Rogers (M94-02), also both present, had kindly invited Norman Porter and Peter-Howard Dobson to join them, as representatives of the Society of Old Framlinghamians whom John had served so well and for so long. They were able to present John with a 100th birthday card from the President and members of the SOF – a card uniquely designed by Chris Keeble. Other OF members of the family present were John's son Jeremy Simpson (K56-64), his cousin Charles Simpson (K65-72), and his grandsons Robin Smallwood (S82-86) and Adrian Smallwood (S84-88).



It was especially gratifying that John was not only able to attend the party in The Crown in person, but that he was able to chat meaningfully with those who were there to wish him well. Not only that, but he was also well enough to respond warmly to a toast proposed by his son-in-law Alastair Chapman. The original plan had been for the College to host the party but concerns about logistics and John's well-being had led to a change of plans and venue, so it was all the more pleasant a surprise for all present to be able to chat to him in person, and express their affection and good wishes.

Another card was sent to the party from College Headmaster, Paul Taylor, congratulating John on his centenarian status and recalling the special role that the Simpson family has played over the period of the history of the College since its foundation in 1864. It was also announced that John had received two special messages – one from the Queen, and another from Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.



In all this was a very special occasion, and it was wonderful that the family felt able to invite members of the SOF from outside the family to be part of their celebrations. We wish John, who still lives in one of the Mills Almshouses in Framlingham, ever greater longevity.

