

ROGER RAYMOND



The Story of a Bloxhamist

ROGER MALCOLM RAYMOND (1909-1983)

Roger Raymond, who attended Bloxham School from 1920-1928, was a high achiever, a winner with an inner determination to succeed in whatever field he entered. He was also a very generous human being.

He joined the school at the age of 10 with his elder brother Basil. At Bloxham he set many athletic records and won full colours in four different sports. Roger was seen as the school's outstanding sportsman of his generation. He was Head of Crake House and also Captain of School. That he was a member of the school choir and Sergeant in the O.T.C. suggests that already he was displaying a strong work ethic and was an efficient organiser of his time. These qualities were his hallmark.

His record of achievement was to continue in the business world where he enjoyed spectacular success and where he became known as an innovator. Many of his ideas were ahead of their time and set new benchmarks that others were to imitate.

Despite all of his success however he never forgot his Bloxham days and has become the School's greatest benefactor. It is without exaggeration to say that every day each and every Bloxham pupil derives some benefit from the legacy of this grateful Old Bloxhamist.

On leaving Bloxham Roger Raymond sailed to the United States with just £25 in his pocket. He quickly found cheap hostel accommodation at the New York YMCA and employment bottling milk in a dairy.

He spent his days off travelling and observing the differences in lifestyle. His imagination was aroused by the American approach to housing. Ultra-modern homes sold with fully equipped kitchens and built-in furniture. Roger could see a future for this concept back home in England and was determined that he would be the person to introduce the American ideas to the English market.

ROGER M. RAYMOND 1920-1983

Pupil at Bloxham School

1920 - 1928

Captain of School

1927 - 1928

Chairman, Old Bloxhamist Society

1946 - 1961

Vice-President, Old Bloxhamist Society

1961 - 1983

Member of the School Council of Governors

1952 - 1983

*Fellow of the Corporation of
SS Mary and Nicholas of Lancing*

1957 - 1982

Honorary Fellow

1982 - 1985

*Instrumental in the founding of Raymond House, 1971,
the purchase of the Raymond Field, 1975,
the foundation of the Raymond Scholarships, 1982,
the setting up of the Raymond Technology Centre, 1982/5.*



These ideas must have been uppermost in his mind as he sailed for home but with little experience of the construction industry and with no working capital behind him he would have to be patient. Back in England Roger Raymond embarked on an evening course in construction at the London University of Architecture and during the day gained valuable hands on experience, firstly as an odd job man and later, as an extra money earner, as a part-time house salesman.

Finally, at the age of 24, Roger Raymond decided to put his ideas into action. Based on the same concept he had seen in America, Roger Malcolm Homes Ltd. (for this was his chosen name for a company which was to become a market leader) was launched.

Still with little money but with big ideas and inner drive Roger Raymond somehow persuaded an estate agent to sell him a piece of land attached to an old rectory. Roger was to pay off the cost of the land as he sold the houses that he intended to build on it. With family support and borrowed capital the houses started to take shape. All featured beautiful bedroom furniture, fitted kitchens, modern bathrooms and ready-turfed gardens. Nothing unusual for the year 2001 perhaps but in the 1930's this represented something of a revolution in design. The new innovations came at a price. Roger Malcolm homes attracted a 30% premium but it proved a price that people were prepared to pay. The market research that he had carried out in New York was being proved correct and the first 26 homes on the Old Rectory Gardens development were sold even before they had been finished.

Despite repeated applications for service in the armed forces during the Second World War, he was refused on account of his poor eyesight. In the event, he rendered outstanding service to the community by organising emergency repairs to the thousands of blitzed homes during the height of the bombing of London.

Roger Raymond never looked back and by the time he retired his business had been responsible for the building of hundreds of high quality homes and had earned a nationwide reputation for their specification and value. He had been honoured by his profession who elected him as Chairman of the London Master Builders' Association and by his school where he served as Chairman of the Old Bloxhamist Society for 15 years before becoming their Vice-President for a further 22 years. Roger served as a member of the School Council of Governors for a remarkable 31 years from 1952 until 1983. Unsurprisingly, these years were marked by brave expansion, innovation and change. Successive Headmaster's and Chairmen of Council had good reason to be grateful for Roger's advice, support and practical assistance to see through their shared vision. Roger's generosity was not confined to financial gifts and legacies, he was always willing to give his time and talents to the school despite his heavy personal schedule.

Roger Raymond was not a man driven by the need to accumulate huge personal wealth. The success of his business venture enabled him to help Bloxham (and many other good causes) to achieve levels, and fulfil ambitions, that would have been beyond them were it not for his assistance. He particularly favoured helping those who help themselves. One amusing illustration of this concerns the auction, in 1975, of land at Ridgeway, off Brickle Lane. The School, keen to acquire additional land for playing fields, entered the bidding for the 11 acre site but had to drop out having reached their limit at 8 acres. The remainder was snapped up by another bidder who, only after the sale, revealed himself as a representative of Roger Raymond! Roger immediately gave the land to the school!

