

# Obituaries

*Since our last edition the Society has lost a number of enthusiastic members who contributed to our success in many different ways. We take this opportunity to extend to their families and friends, our sincere sympathy.*

## DAVID BAKER 1926 - 2022



We have been very fortunate over the years, to have had as members of our Society some memorable individuals who brought to us, not just their friendship and unique life-experiences, but an infectious enthusiasm for our activities. Of no-one was this more-true than of David Baker, who died in January. David, and his cousin, the late Mary Haire, joined our Society in 1992 and both soon became very popular and committed members, immersed in our many projects.

David Baker was born at Bellshill near Glasgow in 1926 the son of Tom Baker and his wife Jean, nee Turner. Jean's roots were here in Crewbeg townland and, as a youngster and indeed throughout his adult years, David spent many holidays in Crewbeg with the Turner family, or with his cousin Mary in Tyrone's Ditches. He came to love the area and its people and to regard it as his home.

David's quiet, unassuming manner belied his wide knowledge and concealed a very eventful life and

widely-travelled career. While still a young teenager, he trained as a radio-operator and joined the Merchant Navy. In that capacity he circumnavigated the globe many times as his ship brought much-needed supplies from far-away places like New Zealand and Argentina, to the war-torn United Kingdom. As part of the vital cross-Atlantic supply line, his convoy was attacked several times and, while his own ship luckily escaped damage, he saw several merchant-ships sunk by German U-Boats. He recalled the particular anguish he and his fellow mariners felt at not being permitted to stop to pick up survivors.

When David eventually ended his sea-faring career and, having fulfilled various ambitions – such as walking to Base Camp on Mount Everest - he enrolled in a course in Cambridge where he qualified as a bacteriologist. He married his wife Norma in 1970 and together they moved to Poole in Dorset where he followed his new career at the Ryvita factory in the town. He continued in his profession there till his retirement in 1991, at which point, they left Poole, came 'home' and set up house in Tandragee.

Shortly thereafter he joined our Local History Society. He served on several sub-committees and had a considerable input into projects such as the 'Visitors' Guide to the Poyntzpass Area' which we produced in 2001. For twenty years David acted as Minute Secretary at our meetings and he not only recorded our doings accurately but, with his unique turn of phrase, enlivened and made a minor art form of our records. Well into his eighties, David thought nothing of walking the Tow Path from Tandragee to Poyntzpass to attend our meetings and would protest strongly when lifts to and from Tandragee were arranged.

Pre-deceased by Norma in 2018, David's loss in

January 2022 at the age of 96, was sincerely felt by all of us fortunate enough to have known him and

he is greatly missed and will be remembered with genuine affection.

Prefix	Handed in at			ADMIRALTY & COMNAV WASHINGTON, (RUGBY RADIO)		Date Received	9 MAY 45	
Number	No. of Words	Date handed in	Time handed in	Service Instructions	Time Received	By		
/1	-----	8 MAY 45	1324Z	IMMEDIATE	0024Z	CAB		

**To** BAMS ALL AREAS--- BRITISH BAMS LETTERED MESSAGE QK.  
 U.S. BAMS NUMBERED MESSAGE 79.

GERMANY HAS SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY STOP CEASE FIRE HAS BEEN ORDERED FOR FROM 2201 G.M.T. EIGHTH MAY REPEAT 2201 G.M.T. EIGHTH MAY STOP PENDING FUPHTER INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE SECURITY AND CONTROL OF MERCHANT SHIPPING ARE TO REMAIN IN FORCE STOP MERCHANT SHIPS AT SEA WHETHER IN CONVOY OR SAILING INDEPENTENDLY ARE TO CONTINUE THEIR VOYAGES AS PREVIOUSLY ORDERED STOP

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Form 53

*Good news, the telegram that David baker recieved to tell his ship’s crew that the war was over.*

### GEOFF CROSS (1939 -2022)



When he retired in 2012, Manchester-born Geoff Cross and his wife Sylvia, came to live in Poyntzpass to be near to their son Jonathan. They had lived in Carrickfergus from 1973 when Geoff had taken up a teaching post in Engineering at the University of Ulster. They soon became very much involved in the social life of our community and became active members of several local clubs including the Local History Society, The Wednesday Club and the Village Choir.

Geoff was a very regular attender at our monthly meetings, before we were disrupted by Covid, and was always ready to help with technical problems when they arose. A very talented musician and very pleasant company, Geoff is greatly missed by his many friends and a great loss to Sylvia, Jonathan and his daughter Alison.