



WORLD'S OLDEST MAN DIES AGED 201

Charles Sidney Harper, or 'Sid' to those that knew him, was an extraordinary man. No one could have predicted on the cold morning of January 1st 1900 that the newly born Charles Sidney, second son of John and Mary Harper, would die peacefully in his sleep over 200 years later.

Born into a wealthy middle class family, Sid was educated at Bristol Grammar School, and displayed an aptitude for maths and physics at an early age. He went on to study Mechanical Engineering at Bristol University, wanting to stay close to his mother who was then suffering from an illness that would later take her life. His experience at university was mixed. He had a passion for his subject, but quickly gained his reputation for being a brilliant, but unreliable student. With interests extending far beyond the confines of the curriculum, Sid often beguiled his lecturers and frustrated his fellow students. Nonetheless, he was well liked and made many close friendships that would prove life-long (of course Sid lived 130 years longer than most of them).

It wasn't until a minor car accident at the age of 79, that doctors began to realise quite how extraordinary Sid might be (his relationship with doctors till then had been solely in relation to his mother and father. Sid had never been ill with more than a cold or overworking- both of which he

was able to sleep off without the need for medical support). After standard testing, doctors found that his metabolism, strength and agility were closer to that of a 40 year old than an 80 year old; a condition that would not alter for the next 100 years. Although technology and engineering were an important part of Sid's life, art, and music and a connection to nature were his first passion. Country walks as a child developed in adulthood to year-long trips to India, the Far East, South America and Central Africa. Sid relished the diverse beauty of these varying cultures, expressed in its purest sense through the art, music and literature. He was a hoarder. Sid was always fascinated by technology, and argued that it enabled you to delve deeper into what it means to be human. With technology you could see more art, listen to more music, relate to more people, protect the environment and live more freely.

At the age of 104 he pioneered the use of web 2.0 technologies and began to make strong connections with people across the world, but more importantly with the local community. His blog inspired thousands to

join in with his community projects and contribute to a better quality of life for us all.

Ironically, Sid had a remarkable ability to avoid seeming 'old'. He continued to grow and develop with the world, and never seemed to be 'of another era' as many of us feel about our grandparents. Sid existed in the moment, and was motivated by his core human passions that never changed, but were expressed in new and exciting ways through new technologies.

Although Sid will now be immortalised as the first man to reach 200, we should also remember him as a man that lived life fully and truly. He never lost his passion for technology and youthful innovation; a devotion his closest friends say fuelled his long life.

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