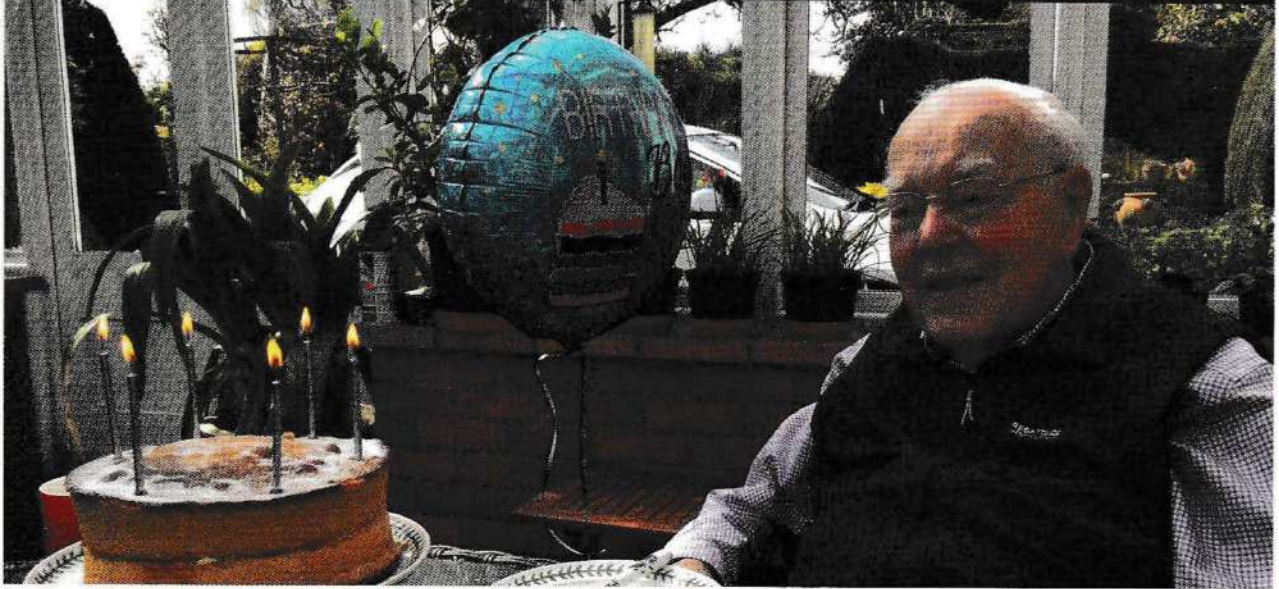


Meet the Neighbours

John Durdin from Plumstead



John was born in 1926 and lived with his parents and four siblings in Hendon. In 1940 he and his younger brother were evacuated to his aunt's home in St Albans. Although John didn't like the school in St Albans there was an excellent art teacher who taught him to paint with oils. One day John and his brother bicycled home to see their parents, who were very surprised to see them. They let them stay the night and the next day they cycled back to their aunt's. After a year in St Albans, they returned home and spent the rest of the war years, including the Blitz, in London.

John was trained as an accountant and worked in the motor trade in London where he lived and raised his four children. When John was an accountant, he went to visit a farmer in East Sussex and was introduced to his two-day old son. Sixty-five years later John was at a meeting of the Freemasons in Norwich and recognised the surname of a visiting mason as being the same as the farmer from East Sussex. He spoke to the gentleman and asked whether he knew the farmer of the same name and it turned out he was the farmer's son whom John had met when he was only two days old.

John has, during his life made long standing commitments and likes to "stick with things". He has been a Rotarian for 65 years and a Freemason for 65 years. He was a Church Warden in Plumstead for 30 years (27 of those years with Thomas Wormald), a Trustee of the Cloudesley Charity for 44 years and its chairman for 26 years. The charity's history dates back to January 1517 when the Tudor yeoman, Richard Cloudesley, left in his will 14 acres of meadows in Islington to benefit the church and charitable bequests in perpetuity. Last year the charity had a grant budget of £1.8 million.

John has had a house in Plumstead since 1972 and has lived there full-time since 1984. He loves plants and gardening and has a beautiful garden and conservatory. His other passion in life has been painting, mainly landscapes but also animals and birds. On the 28th and 29th May there will be an exhibition of fifty of John's oil paintings in St Michael's Church, Plumstead. Thirty of these paintings will be for sale. From the proceeds 80% will be given to St Michael's Church and 20% will be given to The Honeyguide Wildlife Charitable Trust which helps conserve the natural environment and wildlife.

Emma Youngs