

## Autumn 2025 Newsletter of the Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee

### Second Statue of Sir George Dowty.

The titans of British industry in the second half of the 20th century such as Lord Weinstock of GEC, Sir John Harvey-Jones of ICI, Lord Hanson of the Hanson Trust and Lord Kerton of Courtauld's achieved great prominence in their lifetime, but none have had a statue erected in their memory. Sir George Dowty -who received negligible attention during his lifetime - will shortly have two! The location of the second statue is still to be decided. The preference is for it to be erected in 'Lancaster territory' ideally the IWM at Duxford. The Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee would welcome comments - email martinrobins@ [btinternet.com](mailto:btinternet.com).

### John Charles Bracher FCA, FCT.



Charles Bracher - always known as JCB- attended the Selfridges Hotel on the 25 th January 1979 to become a ' pioneer' of a new professional body called the Association of Corporate Treasurers and served as its President from 1983 until 1985.

JCB was educated at Lord Wandsworth College in Hampshire and held an executive commission in the Royal Navy during the Second World War serving in the Far East on HMS Sussex. After the war he qualified as a Chartered Accountant in Bristol with Thompson McLintock & Co and in 1952 joined Rotol Ltd - rising steadily through the ranks and was Chief Accountant at the time of the Dowty acquisition in 1958. The Dowty Group

recognised his great ability and in 1969 he joined the board becoming Group Financial Director in 1973 and Deputy Chairman in 1981. Health matters caused his premature retirement in 1989.

I joined the Dowty in 1973 in the Group Finance office which composed three people- JCB, his deputy Reg Moore and myself - I was a distant third!

It was the time of pen, paper and mental arithmetic- nonetheless the Group finances were well controlled. I saw JCB at close quarters for a decade. Dapper in dress he enjoyed the finer aspects of life - often referring to the celebratory meal at the end of the audit as the ' Annual General Eating ' and of much more importance than the Annual General Meeting!

His grasp of finance was extraordinary, and he could reduce complex matters to simplicity without effort. Dowty accounts were a model of clarity and during his stewardship there were no profit warnings or revisions to numbers.

Although a glittering city career beckoned he preferred provincial life - serving as a Lay Governor of King's School, Gloucester from 1971 until 1994, was also the Hon Treasurer of the Cheltenham Housing Association and a Governor at Selwyn School in Gloucester.

The Dowty Group rose from obscure origins in 1931 ,in a small garage in Cheltenham ,to become a world respected engineering concern employing 15,000 people - its later growth helped greatly by JCB's financial expertise. Shortly after his retirement Dowty were acquired- for half a billion pounds- by the T I Group creating an engineering business second only in size (in this country) to British Aerospace. Products made by the business JCB joined over seventy years ago are today in great demand by Airbus.

It was indeed the privilege of a lifetime to serve under JCB- some might say it was luck, some coincidence and some the grace of God.

### **Kenneth William Browning**



Kenneth William Browning

( known as KWB ) was born on the 14th of October 1925 in Cologne where his father was serving in the British Army. During World War Two he joined the Royal Marines 44 Commando and served in Dutch East Indies. As a Lieutenant he saw intense action in Southeast Asia.

After war service he attended Cardiff University where he obtained a 1st in

Economics - subsequently joining Hoover as a Training Officer. In 1952 he joined the Dowty Group marrying a local lady in 1954.

His Dowty career spanned 33 years - 16 of which he served as a director. Sir George Dowty had a burning desire to train through apprenticeships and worked very closely with KWB to establish one of the finest training schemes in the

country. The continuing success of the Dowty Group brought the challenge of recruitment to which KWB was admirably suited to solve . Perhaps his greatest contribution however was his ability to identify senior managers- he had that uncanny knack to pick those who would fit well in the Dowty Group. He served on numerous bodies involved in training including the Manpower Services Commission, Gloscat and the Cheltenham Grammar School .He was awarded an OBE in 1984.

He retired in 1985 after a stellar career. His namesake wrote " never glad morning again " and KWB 's leaving gave much truth to these words.

He passed away on 20th April 2006.

**Both of the above tributes were written by Martin Robins**

### **Sir George Dowty Diaries.**

The official launch of the Diaries of Sir George Dowty occurred at the Worcestershire County Cricket Club on early June. The resulting demand has been very considerable.

The Diaries cover the years 1919 until 1975 - with a few years missing. Since publication the years 1971 and 1973 have been found and the next reprint of the Diaries will include these years . 1971 was a particularly significant year in that during that year Rolls Royce collapsed due to problems with the RB 211 engine giving the Dowty Group a significant bad debt.

### **The Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee.**

This autumn brings the third anniversary of the formation of the Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee. To commemorate the occasion the grandson ( John Whitaker) of the first Dowty Chairman and author of the world-renowned history of Cheltenham based architectural specialists H H Martyn ( constructors of the Speaker's Chair, Despatch Box in the House of Commons and who carved the stone for the Cenotaph) together with his partner( Marion Udwin) have written a fascinating account of the last three years.

To receive an illustrated copy of the story email [martinrobins@btinternet.com](mailto:martinrobins@btinternet.com)

For any further suggestions for this newsletter and future issues please contact:

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