

Ken Oldham's camp visitor...

THE TAPPING PHANTOM!



Partner in electrical firm dies at the age of 44

MR JOHN LAWLOR, a partner in the electrical firm Robinson and Lawlor, has died. He was only 44 years of age.

Born and educated in Nelson Mr Lawlor was well known throughout the area. He had been suffering in health for over a year and died in Victoria Hospital on Friday after being admitted some two months ago.

The cremation took place at Burnley on Tuesday following a service at Holy Saviour's RC Church conducted by Fr P. Birmingham.

Mr Lawlor served his electrical apprenticeship with Nelson Engineering Company and started in business with Mr Norman Robinson in 1957.

He lived in Barkerhouse Road and will be missed by many friends.

NELSON WILL

Mr Ernest Stanfield, Henry Street, Nelson, who died on July 26th, left

AT THE age of 51, Ken Oldham, clad in his usual garb of shorts and open neck shirt, looks as far removed from the role of headmaster as a policeman on point duty in swimming gear.

But then Ken Oldham's school is no ordinary place of learning.

And Ken Oldham, an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society, an accomplished lecturer, film producer, author, naturalist and photographer of repute, is no ordinary chap, either.

His school is, of course, Whitehough Camp School, Barley, the mere mention of which conjures up for generations of local folk happy memories of days spent roughing it in the natural beauty of the Pendleside countryside. Of an early morning run round the Whitehough field, a cold shower before breakfast and then a day packed with excitement — hiking, camping or simply learning about the countryside — with Tapping Johnny thrown in for good measure to frighten the living daylights out of the occupants of the dormitories (more about him later).

Since Whitehough was opened in 1939 by a far-seeing Nelson Town Council, no less than 30,000 youngsters have been up to the camp school.

Ken Oldham has been at the school for 21 of those years, and the healthy way he looks he would be there for the next 21, given half the chance. It would be difficult to find, by nature of his job if nothing else, a teacher who is as well known to such a wide section of the community. The children of past visitors to the school are now attending Whitehough, a fact that gives Mr Oldham an outward feeling of satisfaction.

These days, Ken Oldham, his school now under the direct control of Lancashire County Council, is having to concentrate much more on the administrative side of things, something he says he dearly wants to change. He now has a staff of two — Doug Storton as chief instructor and Eileen Edmondson as an assistant



by Leigh Morrissey

"There is a tremendous amount of good done by young people, but this is generally not given enough publicity," added Mr Oldham.

It has been a happy and rewarding 21 years at Whitehough for Mr Oldham and his wife, who though she says she likes to stay in the background has played the role of "mum" with enthusiasm to the thousands of youngsters who have passed through the grounds of Whitehough.

The road to Whitehough started for Mr Oldham, a native of Hyde, Cheshire, when he took a teachers' training course after service — he rose to the rank of flight lieutenant — in the RAF in Canada and the Far East during the second world war. That course resulted in Mr Oldham finding his correct niche in life and it was not long after joining his first school in Cheshire that he made it clear that he was not going to be a nine to four teacher. He ran the science department and was often still in the class when people came in for night school. He became involved with his pupils — to the extent that he started a school farm, for which shares were sold to the children, who worked hard but benefited from the profits.

"It was sixpence for a non-working share and half a crown for a working share in the poultry club," recalled Mr Oldham.

But it was his appointment as headmaster of Whitehough Camp School in April, 1955, that gave him full rein to put many of his ideas into practice.

Those first years at the school had their difficulties and he recalls quite clearly some of the headlines in our newspaper reflecting the concern of local councillors at "the goings on up at Whitehough," like children sleeping on the ground instead of camp beds.

Wrapp sausage at an airpo hote

A LOCAL firm hired London Airport's Hotel last week to trade its latest breakthrough—in sausages.

Carrington P Ltd, of Bradley F Nelson provides example — and by an isolated one type of inventive adaptation we are trying to persuade parts of the country

Mr Ernest Stansfield, Henry Street, Nelson, who died on July 26th, left £6,587.26 gross, £6,467.26 net.

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change. He now has a staff of two — Doug Storton as chief instructor and Eileen Edmondson as an assistant teacher, with a third member of staff being advertised for at the moment.

Whitehough might be better equipped today, have a more organised appearance administratively, but the format for its visitors remains the same — "Using," to quote Mr Oldham, "the country environment for the benefit of children."

"There is a great deal to be got out of a visit to Whitehough," he says, interrupted by his wife Marian to say that the washing machine is broken again and minutes later by two boys who want some advice on what to do with a hedgehog they have found. As I said, this is no ordinary school. "But one of the things which I think is of the utmost importance," he continues, "is the two-way relationship which develops between a teacher and his pupils when they visit Whitehough. The youngsters become totally involved with their teachers, they share experiences, and it is inevitable that this is carried back into the community of the school when they return. This is why I feel — and this is where Whitehough has been something of a pioneer — that it is better for individual schools to come to stay with us rather than a cross-section of children from all over the area."

"A big factor in the success of Whitehough has been the enthusiasm of the teachers who accompany the children, and without their wealth of goodwill it would have been difficult at times to carry on."

Today's visitors to Whitehough, admits Mr Oldham, are "Different" to the youngsters who came to the school in the early days. "I would not say today's youngsters are a lot more cheeky, just more questioning in their outlook, more open. I would hate the youngsters to have to stand on formality before they could approach me. We get very little vandalism here, although I admit it is a problem in the community as a whole. I feel it is all to do with the larger groups we have in today's society; the closer relationships of smaller unit have been lost. It is a community problem. Unless our young people can be activated in some way to do something more positive than things like vandalism are inescapable. Everything these days is so tied up with finance and not enough thought given to the human side of things

local councilors at the going on up at Whitehough," like children sleeping on the ground instead of camp beds. "Their concern was understandable, though," points out Mr Oldham.

Many of Mr Oldham's pioneering policies are now accepted ways of teaching about the outdoor life at the many camp schools which have sprung up around the country since those early days of Whitehough.

The remarkable thing about Ken Oldham is how he has managed to run successfully the camp school and at the same time enjoy his many diversified hobbies which have taken him around the world, including an expedition to Ruwenzori (the Mountains of the Moon) in Uganda. Mr Oldham's film of this was shown on BBC TV. His cine films have won him awards, and he lectures widely on his interests through the Scottish Lecture Agency. He writes books, his most notable being "The Pennine Way," now in its sixth edition, having sold about 30,000 copies. He has written for the "Times" educational supplement.

His familiarity with the Pennines led to a remarkable piece of detective work as part of the moors murders case, when he pinpointed for the police within five days 13 places photographed in an area north of the Peak District by murderer Ian Brady.

At the moment, he is working on a report for the School Council, into the effect of outdoor education on young people, and he is still trying to complete a book he has been writing for the past 10 years on camping and expeditions.

On call virtually 24 hours a day, Mr Oldham never switches off from his camp school duties. "If I am involved with something, I am relaxed. If I am not, I become very irritable."

Looking to the future, Mr and Mrs Oldham, who have two sons, Mark (16) and John (22), have bought a house and plan to retire in the area when the day comes to leave their beloved Whitehough.

I almost forgot about Tapping Johnny.

He is not a ghost, as generations of visitors to Whitehough have thought when they have heard tapping on the dormitory windows in the early morning. It is simply magpies tapping at their own reflection in the glass. This legend, and little things like negotiating Fat Man's Agony in the labyrinth of caves near Ingleton, the early morning cold water wash down with a hose pipe, the friendliness and approachfulness of Mr and Mrs Oldham . . . all of these things make up the happy memories of camp school for many people who enjoyed life at Whitehough.

adaptation we are trying to persuade parts of the country in large measure.

Working from once a cotton mill of the area's great turing families, the currently marks unusual machine, its own mini-exhibit introduce it to the sector of the food The machine costs £6,000 and is a sm sion of one the has been making years which is use large sausage mak in different part country.

Sainsbury's, for has a bank of larger machines in factories. And the products may not same romantic lea RB 211 engine our more sophisti tiles, the jobs t ufacture provides tant and the techn in their developi tribute to local al

The large mac £14,000 and, says controller Mr S kington, is the on can overwrap without the use o tray to support t additional £6,0f widens the firm' market, for it is e be of interest to fi output would no larger machine.

"Despite the situation, many cannot get enough many jobs, an where these mac in," says Mr Pilk

To stage the Hotel exhibition £400 a day, inch travelling and a tion expenses bu Pilkington, this the price. Repr of some 50 potent ers firms actually exhibition, and a from Scotland.

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The firm's te exhibition was managing directe Wardle.