



Obituaries and Tributes

Stratton St. Margaret

Time has been called for a true gentleman

TRIBUTES have poured in for the head of Swindon's biggest brewing dynasty.

Peter Arkell, 87, died peacefully on Friday and was the former chairman of the company set up by his great-great-grandfather John from his home in Stratton St Margaret in 1843.

As well as his work with the brewery, Peter was also a pilot in the Second World War who flew Lysanders, Spitfires and Mustangs behind enemy lines delivering and retrieving secret agents and provisions under the cover of darkness. Peter's son James Arkell, who took over as chairman when his father retired in April 2008, said: "My father was a man of action, who lived life to the full. "An unsung war hero, he was shy and modest. "He was a great chairman of Arkell's Brewery, a man of the people and a wonderful family man". Peter, who was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1997 for his work as chairman of the Anglo-American community relations committee at RAF Fairford, once said: "My initials are 'PA' – Pale Ale. "I was born in the brewery and I married a brewer's daughter – I'm in it up to my neck." Arkell's is one of the most successful family-owned breweries in the UK with more than 100 pubs and hotels in and around the Swindon area.

Publicans have paid tribute to Peter Arkell. Landlord of The Carpenters Arms in South Marston, Robert Feal-Martinez, paid tribute to the larger-than-life chairman. He said: "Peter was a truly remarkable man whose presence will be sadly missed both at the brewery and amongst tenants and managers. "Anyone who met Peter would testify as to what a gentleman he was, as are all the Arkell family. "Directors' lunches will never be the same again." Judy Dudley, landlady at The Bull Hotel, Fairford, had known Peter for more than 20 years and said he was a one in a million. She said: "He was a fine gentleman and was such a dynamic man. "He was absolutely fantastic and exceptionally co-operative. "I think a lot of people will miss him. "He was a one off."

Peter is survived by his wife, Anne, children James, Jane Bayley, Rosalind Arkell and Alison Jenkinson and their families, as well as his one surviving brother and three sisters.

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