

# Brave gentleman who gave his life for care of animals

## Tributes flood in for Hopefield founder Ernie Clark who died at 84

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BRENTWOOD is mourning the death of Ernie Clark, the founder of Hopefield Animal Sanctuary, who has died aged 84, following a year-long battle with cancer.

Early Sunday morning the town lost a man described by those who knew him best as "inspirational, gentle and selfless".

But even those who hadn't spent time with Ernie can see for themselves what he achieved in 28 years at the Sawyers Hall Lane animal centre, which has saved the lives of hundreds of abused and neglected animals.

Despite his poor health, Ernie insisted on helping out at the sanctuary up until recent weeks when he eventually grew too weak.

He died at his home in Pilgrims Hatch with son Lee, 51, by his side.

### Compassionate

"My Dad was very laid back and he took everything in his stride," Lee said. "He liked the quiet life but he definitely did something right away when he felt it needed to be done and he was a very compassionate man."

"Months before my dad died he said that he has lived a full life, he had been around the world and he never had any fear of dying."

Ernie, who was born in Mile End, east London, set up Hopefield with his beloved wife of more than 50 years, Paula, who herself died of cancer two years ago next week.



PATRON: Brian Blessed

Lianne Angliss, 24, the assistant manager at the sanctuary, wept as she spoke of the man she describes as the "backbone" of Hopefield.

"When times were hard he was always there fighting for the animals he loved," she said.

"Both Paula and Ernie touched the hearts of people they met and were inspirational to many. If only there were more people who had the courage to do what they did."

"The animals totally loved him and when Ernie became ill his bravery was amazing and he never let it get him down."

"Ernie was an especially strong character and he will be missed by supporters and the animals alike."

Popstar and patron of the charity, Leona Lewis, 26, also paid tribute to Ernie, who served in Burma during the Second World War.

She said: "I was so sad to hear of Ernie's passing and my thoughts and prayers go to all his family and friends. Through getting involved with Hopefield Animal

Sanctuary I have learnt of how many animals' and people's lives Ernie and Paula have touched.

"Their passion, dedication, care and relentless mission to help save abused and neglected animals is so inspiring."

Fellow patron and actor Brian Blessed, 74, told the Gazette: "The world needs people like Ernie, he was a guardian of this planet."

"People like Ernie, they never die. He will go on living and the legacy there is quite wonderful."

Former Mayor of Brentwood, David Tee told how Ernie - who travelled the world as an engineer in the merchant navy - put every penny he had into the sanctuary.

He said: "Ernie was a quiet, gentle, gentleman who just gave his life for the care of animals."

### Efforts

In 2008 Ernie's efforts were recognised, when he was awarded an MBE by the Queen for services to animal welfare.

In March this year he was presented the Lifetime Achievement Award at Brentwood council's Civic Awards.

Ernie's funeral will take place at South Essex Crematorium, in Upminster, at 1.20pm on September 21. All are welcome to meet at Hopefield at 12.45pm ahead of travelling to the service.

The family has requested no flowers, instead asking for money to be donated to the sanctuary.

Ernie leaves behind his son Lee, three grandchildren and close to 200 animals at the sanctuary.



SAVIOUR: Ernie Clark with one of the many animals he helped

### In brief

#### Pixie tops charts yet again with new track

BRENTWOOD: Pop star Pixie Lott, who grew up in Warley, has scored her third number one as new single All About Tonight went straight to the top of the chart with more 88,000 sales.

The track follows Mama Do, which debuted at number one in June 2009, and Boys & Girls which went straight to number one in September that year.

#### Question the council

HERONGATE: The next meeting of the Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council takes place on September 28.

The public forum will be held at St Andrews Methodist Church, in Brentwood Road, at 7.15pm.

The meeting is open to all and the first 30 minutes will be open for questions on council business.

#### Lib Dem hits out

BRENTWOOD: Lib Dem leader Cllr David Kendall has accused Labour's sole councillor Mike Le-Surf of creating "hype" when they announced part of their line-up for next year's borough council elections.

In a statement on brentwoodongarlibdems.org.uk he wrote: "It is complete disingenuous hypocrisy when Brentwood's Labour party say they are the 'real opposition'."

"Just look at their voting record on some of the big issues. They voted with the Conservatives in December 2010 when the idea of leaving our Town Hall was first voted on, while the Liberal Democrats voted against the proposed move to Coptfold Road and campaigned to retain the Town Hall."

"That's not opposition from Labour. Even now they are more concerned with Lib Dem bashing than taking on the Conservatives."

### Facebook and Twitter users say their goodbyes

TRIBUTES for Ernie have poured in on Facebook and Twitter...

**Lisa Payne:** "An amazing man, who taught me so much, a true animal whisperer who will be missed by everyone who knew him, sweet dreams Ernie you will always have a special place in our hearts xx."

**Sara Colenutt:** "It's a very sad day. RIP Ernie x."

**Laura Baylis:** "A sad thing to hear x RIP x He was so nice to everyone even those he hadn't met before like me :)."

**Sue Spiteri:** "So sorry! I'm so glad I met such a wonderful caring man whose love for animals will carry on at Hopefield. Rest In Peace Ernie you will be missed!"

**Hayley Ward:** "Sorry to hear that, I am sure he will be able

to rest in peace knowing that you will carry on with the good work he and Paula did x."

**Maureen Lazarus:** "My Mum and I are sorry to hear about Ernie."

**Russell Quirk:** "I'm so sad this morning to hear of the death of Ernie Clark, founder of Hopefield Animal Sanctuary. A local legend."

**David John Bishop:** "Condolences to the family of Ernie Clark, founder of the Hopefield Animal Sanctuary who has passed away."

**BleedingLvBunny:** "Condolences to his family, friends and everyone at Hopefield."

**Stevencullen:** "God bless you all at Hopefield at this terribly sad time."

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