

J. Trevor R. Baines
19th December 1939 – 14th July 2022

The Cresta metaverse rippled with shock at the news of the death of Trevor Baines on Bastille Day. He was so central to so much of the heartbeat of the Club in between his election to the Club in 1977 and the early 2000s.

Never a Top rider and only making the occasional dart from Junction, his times were not stellar, with a best-ever of 58.43 in 2004. But this was not important. What was – and is – important, is that, together with Arnold von Bohlen und Halbach (the Winter Guru), Trevor (the Spring Guru) was responsible for introducing hundreds and hundreds of Beginners to the Cresta Run, with a lightness of touch, quick wit and ready smile that calmed the nerves of white-faced novices. His Beginners were deemed by Digby to have joined The Baines School of Dancing – whether this was a reference to the nervous shifting of feet of the Beginners, their need to raise a hand when their names were called by Tower, or because Trevor frequently came straight from Draculas to the Run to fulfil his Guru duties, history does not relate. Possibly all of the above.

It was Trevor with his wife, Wendy, who helped to elevate the last weekend of the season from a somewhat anti-climatic event to one that became a key element of the season, by orchestrating the End of Term Party and encouraging the development of a day in which ladies could ride. To begin with in the late 80s, ladies rode under the name of their male sponsor, but gradually the event was formalised, with winners riding closest to a time. The event grew and grew in popularity and eventually became official in 2004, with ladies riding for the Wendy Baines Challenge Trophy until 2011. It is arguable that their support and enthusiasm was the start of the slow process to acceptance of ladies riding that we now enjoy today.

Trevor was an enthusiast, and he and Wendy were very, very, good at attracting people who, like them, were good at having fun. He had connections in the music business, car racing, an interest in Miss World, travelled widely and was responsible for organising almost too many Cresta events to list – but highlights include the Centenary Ball in 1985, the 125th Anniversary Celebrations, Shuttlecock Dinners, and End of Term Parties. Those were official and semi-official Club events. Then there were Cresta off-shoots – the St Moritz Sporting Club, the Inner Circle of Digby's Unmentionables, tray racing on the Bob Run, elephant polo in Nepal, parties in the Isle of Man, Portugal, nights of music and dancing at Draculas and of course, long lunches in the Sunny Bar, all punctuated with frequent laughter, smiles and full glasses, with Trevor presiding benignly, conducting proceedings with a feather touch and broad grin and quite possibly puffing on a large cigar.

In the early 2000s, Trevor fell foul of the financial authorities and there was a protracted legal battle, which he eventually lost. He bore his sentence with stoicism and dignity, and afterwards lived quietly in the Isle of Man, posting regularly on Facebook from a huge horde of photographs of happier times – and by heaven, there was so much material to draw upon and so many people to whom he gave joyous memories of fun and laughter and friendship.

The Baines School of Dancing may have closed its doors for ever – but the memories pirouette on.