

# Rev. Richard Paten M.A., C.Eng., M.I.C.E. Freeman of the City of Peterborough (1932-2012)

Richard Alfred Paten was born on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1932 into a Peterborough Business family, owning wine merchants and hotels. He has three sisters, Susan, Angela and Priscilla. For the past few years Richard lived at the Lindens, Lincoln Road, in a building donated to the city in 1959 by his grandfather. He was diagnosed with cancer in 2009; he fought bravely, but died peacefully at Park House Care Home at 6:30am on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012, less than a month off his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Richard is blessed with three children, all married with their own children, they live all over the world. Josiah lives in Bangkok, Thailand. Benedict, Santa Cruz, California and Naomi in Melbourne, Australia; he has 5 grandchildren. Josiah Paten was with Richard when he died

Richard obtained engineering degrees from Cambridge University in 1956, became a Chartered Civil Engineer 5 years later after working for Rhodesia Railways, Halcrows London on harbour design and Costain opencast mining in Scotland. Richard became an ordained Anglican minister in 1963, after training in Oxford, serving in Leicester and Peterborough. Whilst in Peterborough, Rev. Paten served as Community Relations Chaplain for 24 years, building many links within the City's minority ethnic communities and assisting with the formation of Gladstone District Community Association (GLADCA). He also founded the Interfaith Council in 1978 and his work with other faiths in the city has been largely responsible for the good race relations we have today.

Whilst he was hitch-hiking across America in 1955 Richard noticed a redundant steam locomotive preserved on a plinth in Tucson, Arizona. He thought it was a splendid idea and in 1968 he purchased locomotive number 73050 from British Railways. Too good to plinth, the decision was taken to renovate and this led to the formation of the popular Nene Valley Railway. Richard gave the locomotive to the City and was named 'City of Peterborough'. Richard held the positions of Chairman, Vice President and most recently Patron of NVR, alongside HRH Duke of Gloucester.

Richard later founded Railworld in 1985 to promote Sustainable Transport, with an emphasis on rail travel and sustainable development, which Richard was also passionate about. Land at Railworld was made available to build a wildlife haven and an environment centre; he helped raise the money and gifts in kind totalling £400,000 to build this exciting project for the youngsters of Peterborough.

Brian Pearce, dear friend and current Chair of Railworld said: *"I am devastated – we have worked together for 25 years on building the Nature Haven and Globe Hall. His ideas for engaging people in caring for the environment and principles of tolerance and generosity to others will be his continuing inspiration. – In my eyes and the eyes of many, he was an incredible person - a truly great man!"*

*Although Richard will probably always be known as the Reverend that brought a loco – That was 44 years ago – Much has happened since then! - Richard was always looking to the future. One of his greatest wishes would be that his home city of Peterborough would be granted Environment Capital status and that our volunteer project at Railworld would contribute. . Peterborough's longest serving Councillor, and ex railwayman Charles Swift OBE said of Richard *"Peterborough is a much better place because he lived here"* It certainly shows how volunteers and our city can create and work together - Especially for the environment, tourism and the common good."*

Rev Richard Paten whose motto was **'Think globally; Act locally'** was awarded the Freeman of the City of Peterborough in 2008. He also held positions as President of Peterborough Civic Society; An active Rotarian for over 40 years; member of Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT); and the local United Nations group;

**Brian Pearce continued:**

*“Even though Richard and I are of a different age and originated from completely different social backgrounds our ideals blend into one. Our goals are the same – Our desire is to **Entertain and Educate about our environment**. The Railworld Wildlife Haven is primarily a habitat creation programme. However, its deeper purpose is to emphasise the important links between ‘Our Man-Made World’ and ‘Our Natural World’. We cannot flourish without the benefits of a healthy, properly functioning natural environment; it is the foundation for our very own well-being and a key resource for economic growth and prosperity!”*

*“Without doubt the Industrial Revolution has had a huge effect on our climate. The increased burning of fossil fuels has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. One of the things that we can definitely say is that the more carbon dioxide we put into the atmosphere, more of a warming takes place in the World. The reality is if climate change is not as bad as we think, then the worst that we could have done is cleaned up some pollution and made our fossil fuels last longer. However if climate change is real, then the worst we can do is make the planet much more difficult to live on. If we do not know for an absolute certainty - caution dictates that we should consider climate change to be real, until proven otherwise.”*

- **We only have one ‘World’, the very least we can do is look after it.....**
- **If only for our Children’s Children. - What would you say to them if we got it wrong?**



**‘DOUBLE CELEBRATION’**

**The ‘City of Peterborough’ Locomotive Overhaul Appeal  
& Rev Richard Paten’s 80th**

The planned double celebration – On August 15<sup>th</sup> - Richards 80<sup>th</sup> and the launch of the City of Peterborough Locomotive restoration appeal will still go ahead! Richard has insisted all along, he knew he was gravely ill – he knew he might not make it!

His very last final words to Brian on the plans for the ‘**Double Celebration**’ were “**So everything is on track then!**”

**For further information or enquires:**

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