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# HISTORY MAN JOHN DIES AT AGE OF 87

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JARROW'S very own history man has died at the age of 87.

John Rippington was one of South Tyneside's most respected amateur historians for more than 60 years.

Although born in Scotland, he developed a great passion for all aspects of his adopted town.

With his camera and tape recorder, John was a familiar figure at various historical events in Jarrow from the 1940s onwards.

He amassed a huge photographic and audio collection about the town, which TV companies utilised when making documentaries.

Some of the historical records John preserved are unique, such as the last day of the old Jarrow ferry, or the final recordings made inside the town's Theatre Royal before it was demolished.

His wife, Ethel, 84, said: "It was quite bleak when he first came here, but John would never hear a word said against Jarrow.

"Although he took an interest in things like Jarrow History Society, he was never one for joining any clubs.

"He preferred to work alone, photographing and recording things around the town."

In recent years, John loaned part of his huge archive to Tyne Tees Television for a north-east documentary it screened.

John was always generous with his time, helping many students with local history projects.

Apart from the history of Jarrow, John's other great passion was music, and he played piano in bands around the town for many years, sometimes accompanied by Ethel, an accomplished singer.

He also played the organ at Monkton Methodist Church, Wood Terrace, Jarrow, where his funeral service was held on Friday.

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