

Colin Douglas Gray

1923 April 30 — 2003 April 9

At a time when the Society was having quite severe financial problems, Colin Gray seemed to appear from nowhere to volunteer to take on the duties of Hon. Treasurer. From that moment, the Society turned the corner and its finances improved continually. The ASSA owes Colin a great debt of gratitude.

After completing his school career, Colin entered the Royal Navy in 1941 early in World War II and was placed in the Fleet Air Arm. The love of flying stayed with him and he later developed an interest in naval history. I clearly remember the delight on his face when I could remember the names of the three British ships at the battle of the River Plate when the Graf Spey was scuttled. But the greatest pleasure I saw in him was his birthday treat a few years ago when his wife arranged a flight for him in a Tiger Moth, the type of aircraft in which he probably learned to fly nearly 60 years earlier.

On his release from the Fleet Air Arm he went to Cambridge where he graduated from the science tripos and in 1948 he and Fiona came to South Africa where Colin joined Anglo Vaal. He continued studying, this time for his CIS, and before long he was at Harvard for an MBA. After his return to SA he was appointed to the boards of various companies associated with Anglo Vaal. He soon gained a reputation for improving the fortunes of companies which had not been doing too well and at one time he was on a dozen boards simultaneously. He retired in 1983.

During the time I knew him, he loved watching cricket, preferably at Newlands, but I never heard whether he had played the game in earlier days. Another of his in-

terests was walking on Table Mountain. With a group of retired friends, he would climb the mountain almost every week unless the weather was really bad. The group would time their progress and compare it with their previous records over the same route. Colin told me that their desire to show improved fitness was becoming a handicap to their conversation. A bench dedicated to Colin's memory has been installed on the mountain by his wife and family. It is located high on the jeep track leading up from Constantia Nek, overlooking Kirstenbosch, Newlands and the Observatory.

He was meticulous about the correct usage of the English language and instilled his love of it in his three children and five grandchildren. His study was filled with books on all sorts of subjects – was there no end to the variety of his interests?

We have lost a fine gentleman and we offer our sincere sympathies to Colin's wife Fiona, to his three children Diana, Roger and Heather and to his five grandchildren.

(Cliff Turk)



Colin sitting in the cockpit of a Swordfish, similar to the one he flew in World War 2.