

ERIC SANDERS



Eric Sanders was born in St George's Road in Yeo Vale on 22nd April 1919, the middle child of three boys and two girls. He was christened in Pilton Church. His father, Alfred, died of meningitis in 1931 at the age of only 35. His mother Jenny (née O'Brien) had a hard life bringing up five children with no social security in those days. At that time they were living in Brayford.

In the photograph possibly from the late 1920s, left, Alfred is front right with Jenny behind him. Next to Alfred is Eric's

grandmother, Ellen. Bessie Mitchell (née Sanders), Eric's Aunt, is on the back row, second from the left. His grandmother ran Pilton Post Office at 27 Pilton Street for a long time and it was then taken on by Aunt Bessie who subsequently moved to Parminter House, 80 Pilton Street when she retired.



Basil, his eldest brother, joined Worcestershire Police, while younger sister Rosie had to work in service at Brayford to help support the family. Eric joined the RAF in 1939 and was variously stationed in Uxbridge, near London, then in France, in India and on the Cocos Islands. This photograph shows Eric, centre front, in Tobruk, Libya, after the Japanese surrender at the end of World War II in 1945 with Bill Edwards from Dudley and two unknown Irish men at the back.

Eric lived for a while at 26 Pilton Street next to the old Post Office (shown elsewhere in The Pilton Story

Archive) and then swapped with his sister, Beatrix (known as Betty), and went to live with his mother in Landkey. Betty live there for two years before she and her husband moved back to London. In the 1960s, Eric lived in Buckfastleigh for a while and worked at Wrangaton Motors on the southern edge of Dartmoor. When Rosie's husband died in 1972, Eric moved to live in nearby Ugborough and then back to Barnstaple to Portland Buildings to help support Rosie and his own mother, Jenny. Jenny lived in Salem Square, Trinity Street, until she died aged about 93. Rosie lived at 78 Pilton Street for about 50 years. This photograph shows Eric, then age 86, with Barnstaple's Mayor Arthur Windsor in 2005.



Eric moved to No 7 Feoffee Cottages, Pilton Street, in 1984 at the age of 65 years and lived there for 30 years until he moved into Pilton House in 2014. During that time he enjoyed many trips to London in his 70s and 80s until he had a stroke in 2009 age 90. He always stayed at The Victory Forces Club in Marble Arch and enjoyed the pageants, museums and sightseeing each time.

His grandfather and grandmother are both buried in Pilton Church Graveyard (left) although, when the grave was opened, the body of Sid Sanders, a builder, also was found in it.

Many thanks to Celia Bock, daughter of Rosie Sanders, and therefore Eric's niece, for putting together the information and photographs for this story. Additional information is always welcome.

