

Tribute to Ian Griggs

Dealey Plaza UK – an internationally renowned organisation involved with all aspects of research into the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy – universally respected for the accuracy of its output and professionalism – and how did this all come into being? Well it can be put down almost entirely to the tireless efforts and doggedness of Ian along with the help of a few friends back in the mid 90s. He was determined to ensure that the UK should have a forum to continue this influential and important investigatory work.

He was quick to ensure that our group became well known by researchers and foremost investigators in the USA, particularly in Dallas of course where that terrible deed was carried out in November 1963. He paid numerous visits to Dallas and other American cities to conference after conference often presenting papers of his own on a variety of subjects and receiving several awards in the process. He became known as the “Retired English Detective”. Believe me the fact that he was so well respected used to get us into places associated with the case that few others have been able to visit. For instance, the basement of the old police headquarters where Jack Ruby famously shot Lee Harvey Oswald. Strictly out of bounds to mere mortals such as us. His book entitled “No Case to Answer” that he had published, covering many aspects of the case, was also very well received both here and across the Atlantic.

I first got to know Ian at an AGM of the Group in January 2004 and was welcomed into the Group that very day. I started encountering Ian regularly at meetings and events and got to know this guy from Essex very well indeed. He was very proud of his roots. We would telephone each other on a very regular basis when we would discuss the case, latest world events, or just have a good old chinwag and catch up on the latest gossip. I will always be very pleased that he was able to spend a few days with my wife and I at our home in Sandy during which time we took him to the RSPB close to where we live – his love of nature was obvious – we were also able to spend a very interesting day at Bletchley Park together. His knowledge of WWII was also remarkable – I remember bringing up the subject of the German occupation of the Channel Islands one day, thinking that I knew quite a bit about the subject. Well actually no - my knowledge was sorely lacking - Ian had visited the Islands many times – had a detailed knowledge of the subject and even written articles on the military history and individual important sites of interest.

When I took over as Secretary of the Group his help and advice was especially beneficial to me. His list of useful contacts was colossal both in this country and the USA.

One of Ian’s favourite subjects for research was the Dallas Police Department as it existed at the time of the Assassination. His knowledge was astounding. He actually interviewed several of the police officers who were on duty on the day of the assassination and became close friends with some. He interviewed the guy who had called the police when Lee Harvey Oswald was seen entering the Texas theatre without a ticket. Ian could give you a blow by

blow account as to what happened that day. He was even warned off, in very threatening tones, by an anonymous caller from interviewing one potential witness.

Now some of you may remember way back in the 50s, the TV programme called "Highway Patrol" where Broderick Crawford as Dan Matthews used to growl out messages like "10-2" which meant that the "radio signal was good" or the famous one of course "10-4" meaning "Acknowledgement" or "Roger That". Well on top of these "10" messages, the Dallas Police operated a system of over 60 different coded signals and I used to regularly test Ian on them. By the way, he could do a pretty good impersonation of Broderick Crawford.

Now I always used to address Ian as "Mr. Ian" so a morning call might start - "Morning Mr Ian - signal 41. Back would come the reply - "Felony in Progress" or Morning Mr. Ian - Signal 23 - "Parking Violation" or Signal 51 - "out on Coffee Break". I am convinced that Ian knew every single one and I never managed to catch him out.

Later in life when he was finding it more difficult to get around Ian still kept going to DPUK meetings throughout the UK and to his beloved Dallas - his resilience was absolutely staggering, researching until the very end. "Always use source documents in your work" he would say - no guessing or story telling.

He'll be up there now regaling the angels with stories of the Assassination and showing them how to assemble and dis-assemble a Mannlicher Carcano rifle. ----- I just hope that nobody has let on as to who actually did the deed -----that would really mess things up!!!

We sank many pints together over the years but I never managed to coax Ian into drinking a pint of Real Ale - he always stuck to his Fosters - the amber nectar - ----- and normally his choice in things was so sensible!!

So, Ian, I know that you're up there looking down on us and I want you to keep that Archangel Michael on his toes and get him to pull you a pint of that nectar this afternoon -- ----- well I assume they have that stuff in heaven!!?? At that time, I will be raising a glass of ale in your memory.

You may have left this mortal coil, Ian, but in DPUK you will always be part of us - Our President.

Rest in peace my friend.

Stuart Galloway