

Tory of the old school

HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

Romsey MP, Michael Colvin (67) will be remembered as an old-school Tory, a country gentleman who championed rural values.

Son of a naval officer and a mother awarded the OBE, he was a country sports enthusiast and a landowner who oversaw an 855-acre estate at Tangley, near Andover.

A product of Eton and Sandhurst, Mr Colvin, who was married for 45 years to Nichola, daughter of Baron Cayzer, was commissioned into the Grenadier Guards and served in Berlin, during the Suez campaign and in Cyprus.

His political career began in 1965 when he joined Andover Rural District Council. He became Test Valley Borough Council's first vice-chairman in 1972, and deputy chairman of Winchester Tories in 1973.

He was elected to the Commons in 1979 as MP for the urban seat of Bristol NW, but returned to Hampshire to contest Romsey and Waterside in 1983, which he won then, and at the three elections since.

Mr Colvin retained broad support across his constituency, and was returned with a majority of 8,585 in 1997.

During over 20 years in the House, he served on select committees on employment, energy and defence and was PPS to Baroness Young.

Away from politics, he was chairman of the Council for Country Sports, vice-chairman of the British Field Sports Society, president of the Westminster Shooting Club and a patron of the Countryside Alliance.

But he enjoyed nothing more than a drink with regulars at the Tangley pub he once owned, the Cricketers' Arms.

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'True gent' says fellow MP

New Forest East MP, Julian Lewis, said: "From the day I became prospective parliamentary candidate four years ago, right up until our joint participation in the annual Defence debate on Tuesday afternoon, I never knew him to say a harsh word about anyone. He was a true gentleman and a great patriot, dedicated to the defence of the UK.

"It is often said that constituencies with married MPs get two for the price of one. In the case of Nichola and Michael Colvin this was absolutely true. Westminster and Hampshire are the poorer for the loss of this golden and dedicated couple and our hearts go out to their family."

