

Roy Thomas

Roy was born **Roy Leonard Thomas** on 16th February 1924 in Erdington, the only child of Len and 'Dollie' Thomas. The family were very involved in Nechells Methodist Church and his grandfather was Choirmaster there. As a child, Roy attended Waterloo Road Infant School, followed by a private school in Harborne (possibly Clewer House, now closed), then Newport House, before ending up at King Edward's Five Ways (when it was still located at Five Ways).

For reasons that are unclear, the family later moved to Monmouth where Roy started preaching on the Wye Valley Circuit, which was very short of local preachers.

In 1942 he did a two-year Degree in Engineering with Radio at Birmingham University, combining this with fire watching duty. He was subsequently sent to the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough to work on aircraft-to-ground communication. He spent his off duty time cycling round the area.

In 1946 he went to work at Stourport-on-Severn power station and continued to work in electricity generation for the remainder of his working life. He met his future wife, Elsie Morgan, at the Methodist Church, and they married on 23rd November 1948.

In 1948 he moved to work at Tir John power station, Swansea, whilst living in Mumbles and attending Sketty church. He enjoyed exploring the Gower Peninsula.

This was followed by a further move in 1951 to Leeds, where he worked initially on checking boiler drums for cracks, and then on general plant testing.

While in Leeds, their children were born - David on 18th March 1952 and Gwyneth on 3rd March 1956.

In 1957 he moved back to Birmingham and worked at Castle Bromwich, still on plant testing. During that time he helped to start Kingshurst Methodist Church, which initially met in the community hall, and later built a small church, served as treasurer, senior steward and trustee. He enjoyed playing records of classical music and Arthur Askey and reciting poetry he had learned as a child.

In 1967 he moved to Moseley and joined Cambridge Road Methodist church, where he met Ruth & Alan Ratcliffe. During the 1970s he became very involved with Kings Heath Council of Churches (later Churches Together in Kings Heath). He was secretary for many years and Chairman from 1981, finally resigning in 1997.

Throughout that period he continued to work in plant testing, but also used programmable calculators to calculate test results, helped write the official test code, and provided the engineering input to a team writing plant simulation software. He was good at adapting to new technology.

In 1982 Elsie died and in 1985 Roy retired.

He had always been interested in industrial archaeology and so he joined the Moseley Local History Society, almost inevitably becoming secretary. He spent a lot of time in the Local Studies Library and wrote booklets on *Listed Buildings of Moseley*, and later on *Moseley Personalities*, which form part of the History Group's collection today. One of the personalities he investigated was F. W. Lanchester (of Lanchester Cars). When he discovered that the Lanchester Papers were in Coventry Poly, he went to look at them and ended up spending 25 years going to Coventry every month to help index them. He was later involved in organising the celebration of the centenary of Lanchester's first car, (the first proper British car), and the publication of a three volume work on his achievements.

2007 saw Roy's last preaching service and in 2012 he moved to Highbury Court, where he occupied himself by joining the Music Group and attending coffee mornings and quiz evenings. Roy died on 7th January 2017.

Compiled from notes of a eulogy delivered at Roy's funeral service by his son, David Thomas.