

**Ivor Reginald Guild CBE, WS
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**Ivor Guild: Much-loved solicitor and genealogist
who became a leading figure in the Scottish Establishment**

With the death at the age of 90 of Ivor Guild, the people landscape of Edinburgh will miss a spare, tall, upright figure, walking through the streets of the New Town and Old Town like a figure from Lord Cockburn's memoirs.

Clad in his inevitable raincoat, come sunshine or showers, he would doff his hat in the style of 19th century society to his many, many friends and acquaintances as he walked his way between his Princes Street home, in the New Club – he was one of its Batchelor Permanent Residents for 57 years – to the Charlotte Square, Castle Terrace and Lothian Road offices of the distinguished solicitors, Shepherd and Wedderburn; Guild had been picked for his integrity and discretion by the discerning Professor Sir Ernest Wedderburn, Deputy Keeper of the Signet, for whom he was to work with great discretion for many clients from 1948 until 1994, becoming senior partner in 1984.

It speaks volumes about Guild, who always took the long view of any problem or investment, that in his elegant office overlooking Charlotte Square gardens – known to many as the venue of the Edinburgh International Book Festival – he should have had on the wall behind his desk a wily, Dürer-like portrait of Matthew Guild, a prominent Edinburgh lawyer of the late 16th century. To my first-hand knowledge many a bereaved widow thought the world of Ivor Guild as their candid, practical and kindly solicitor.

Ivor Reginald Guild was the second son of Colonel Arthur Guild, a stockbroker and a significant figure in the jute industry of Dundee, who as a Territorial Army officer had won a DSC at Ypres; and Phyllis Cox, a relation of DC Thomson, publisher of the *Sunday Post*, *Beano* and *Dandy*. He was forever loyal to his many connections in the city of Jute, Jam and Journalism, and to my knowledge – he was a very private person – gave significant amounts to the then infant, but now world-class, bioscience departments of Dundee University. Unusually for a solicitor he was elected in 1990 as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Sent away at the age of seven to Cargilfield preparatory school in Edinburgh, he came under the domineering headmaster, HJ Kittermaster. He found it rough and disagreeable and was thankful to gain entry to Rugby, which was tough but civilised. He always remembered the practical and sympathetic concern of his house master, Theodore Lynam Thomas, and the legendary headmaster of Rugby, Hugh Lyon. Alas, as a 15-year-old he was struck by rheumatic fever, which meant that he was bedridden for 15 months, and against his will, and to his lifelong but needless embarrassment, was not accepted for military service.

Going up to wartime New College, Oxford in 1942 – at the suggestion of HAL Fisher OM FRS, a family friend and warden of New College (1925-1940) – he was taken under the wing of the then acting warden, AH Smith, and read *Literae Humaniores*, the demanding first part of Greats, before turning to Law. He was inspired by the lectures of Maurice Bowra, Warden of Wadham, who, he told me, sparked an enduring interest in antiquity.

Gordon Rintoul, Director of the National Museums of Scotland, told me: "Ivor was a great supporter of the National Museums for many years – indeed, he was chairman of the Museum of Antiquities until its merger with the Royal Scottish Museum to form the National Museum of Scotland. From 1991 until 2012 he was chairman of the Charitable Trust which was set up to support the National Museum; as one of the trustees my wife witnessed Guild's skill and conscientiousness."

Another Oxford influence was Sandy Lindsay, Master of Balliol and the founding vice chairman of Keele University. It was in Guild's character that he should give philanthropically, not only to the University of Edinburgh, to whom he gave a great deal of service, but to the young Edinburgh Napier University, whose outgoing vice chancellor, Dame Joan Stringer, told me: "Ivor was devoid of academic snobbery. I first met him at the home of the Earl and Countess of Elgin. Lady Elgin was the pro-patron of Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, of which I was principal. Hearing of our high-quality niche research into speech and language science, he helped us financially. And later he helped Napier, an institution to whom his help could make a difference. Ivor did not give money for recognition, but furtively, for the good it would do."

Nor was my wife, Kathleen Wheatley, scion of the Clydesiders of the 1930s, surprised that this denizen of the New Club – epicentre of the Scottish Establishment – should donate money in support of those chronicling the history of the working class in Scotland. Sandy Lindsay was mentor to Denis Healey, Roy Jenkins, Edward Heath – and Ivor Guild.

Guild was my personal solicitor for half a century; only once did I get into court. It was in 1978, the hugely political case of Brian Wilson, Tam Dalyell and Archie Birt versus the Independent Television Authority. Labour's Vote No campaign in the devolution referendum won an injunction barring the broadcast of an unrepresentative television programme on the referendum (to the fury of Michael Foot). Lord Ross, later Lord Justice Clerk, found in our favour, a verdict that was significantly due to the notes passed by Guild to our counsel during the High Court hearings. Indeed, thousands of times he turned up in court to help his clients.

He was a much sought-after chairman of trustees, and was deeply associated with the Dunedin Trust. He was also a Baillie of Holyrood House – loosely but not inaccurately described as an upmarket Beefeater. But he was also a Baillie who did a large amount of work helping to organise mundane matters such as the palace plumbing.

He was a pillar of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Introduced to ecclesiastical administration by Ivor Ramsay, then Dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh (and later Dean of King's College, Cambridge), Guild went on to become Registrar of the Episcopal Synod (1967-2007) and Chancellor of the Diocese of Edinburgh (1985-1995).

Lord David Wilson of Tillyorn told me that Guild was the epitome of old-fashioned courtesy and quiet generosity. "As a young boy, I knew him through family connections, and wondered if the jute-baron background did not lead, as it did in the case of Lewis Robertson and others from Dundee, to a sense of unobtrusive public service."

It is a measure of Guild's kind impact on his clients that so many of us remained his friends in his semi-retirement – alert at 90, he never did retire. My wife and I travelled with him on tours of the British Museum Travel Company to Jordan, where in an empty Petra one of his concerns – he was ever sympathetic to others' misfortunes – was the plight of the unemployed donkey drivers (at a time when most people had been scared off by troubles in the Middle East).

We also visited Iran, where the mullahs of the Holy City of Qom discovered I was an MP and asked to meet me. My wife and I asked Guild to come too, as our “ecclesiastical and theological adviser”. He elicited from the mullahs (from whom in appearance he was physically indistinguishable), the statement, “We like your Jesus Christ, we love your Virgin Mary. It is only the British government we do not like.” Ivor nodded gravely, as he often did.

Guild had the end I feel he would have wanted. He used the Christmas period, when his New Club home was closed, to travel – sometimes to visit his sister in South Africa, sometimes to join a group with Voyages Jules Verne to places such as Syria (before the civil war). In 2014 he decided on “Weihnachten in Berlin” with a group from ACE cultural tours.

On the morning of his death I am told by Colin Bailey, tour director, that he was on sparkling form during a visit to see the political satires on the East Side Gallery of the Berlin Wall. During the ensuing lunch at an Italian restaurant this most abstemious of men suffered a stroke. Edinburgh has lost one of its human landmarks.

Tam Dalyell

Ivor Reginald Guild, solicitor, genealogist and Procurator Fiscal of the Lyon Court: born Dundee 2 April 1924; educated Cargilfield School, Edinburgh; Rugby; New College Oxford; Edinburgh University Law School; partner and senior partner, Shepherd and Wedderburn, WS 1951–94; CBE 1985; Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh 1990; died Berlin 3 January 2015.