**Joe Stirling (1924-2020)**

On his death, Joe Stirling left a generous legacy to Norfolk & Norwich Music Club (now Norwich Chamber Music), in appreciation of the great pleasure he had gained from his membership and the concerts it has organised.

It was his wish that the legacy be used to provide an annual concert offering free admission to current members, his family and students. Members are invited to make a voluntary contribution to extend the duration of the fund for future concerts (or at the Trustees’ discretion, the musical education of young people). The Trustees are to select the venue, programmes and performers, but he expressed a preference for the John Innes Conference Centre and 18th and 19th century secular compositions.

Joe Stirling died in 2020, having been born in Germany in 1924 to Jewish parents and named Gunter Stern. He was fortunate to escape to this country from Nazi Germany in July 1939 aged 14, saved by the Kindertransport.

Subsequently, he served in the British Army with distinction, towards the end of WW2. It was whilst he was in the army that he was obliged, for obvious reasons, to anglicise his name. As his mates called him Joe and because he was stationed near Stirling at the time, he became Joe Stirling.

By the end of the war, he had risen to the rank of Sergeant in the Education Corps. Whilst stationed at Portsmouth, he had met Jean Skitmore, who was in the ATS and whose family lived in Attleborough, Norfolk. One of the first outings organised by Joe was to take a party, at the Army’s expense, to the Wigmore Hall to hear Schubert’s Winterreise. Jean was in the party!

Joe and Jean married and they settled in Norwich shortly after the war. They raised four children of whom he spoke with great pride. He established a very successful travel business in Norwich and in 1976, he was appointed the Sheriff of the City. He was a very keen supporter of the Lions and was a long-standing member of our charity.

We remember Joe with our grateful thanks,

*In 2016, Phyllida Scrivens wrote a biography of Joe called “Escaping Hitler” published by Pen & Sword History which provides a great deal more information about Joe’s extraordinary life.*