

Obituary

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Jadene Doak at jadene.doak@springernature.com

All submitted obituaries should be 400 words maximum in length (apart from obituaries for past presidents of the BDA where the length should be 800 words).

Content of the obituary is down to the individual author, and the approval of the family should be given for the obituary prior to submission to the *BDJ*.



**Miroslaw 'Mirek'
Alfred Woolwich**

1951-2019

Mirek was born on 10 July 1951 of Polish parents who met in Coventry, not long after Mirek's father, Alfred, returned from Italy after serving with the Polish Regiment, alongside the British Army during WW2. Although born in the UK and schooled in Birmingham, Mirek was intensely proud of his Polish heritage, but remained fiercely British with lifelong interests in cricket, military history and steam trains.

Qualifying in 1973 from the Royal London Dental School, Mirek was a skilled oral surgeon. He had a successful practice in Exeter for fifteen years before working

overseas in the Cayman Islands, South Africa, Spain, Majorca and the Middle East, where he met his second wife, Odette. His most recent international venture was in Cairns, Australia, where he worked as a senior dentist in private practice and at Cairns Base Hospital. Mirek resided in Cairns for 20 years, enjoying the vicinity to the tropical outdoors and The Great Barrier Reef. He recently returned to the UK and worked in oral and maxillofacial surgery posts at the Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead and Medway), Luton and Dunstable University Hospital, and most recently, Somerset Partnership NHS Trust.

Mirek was a complex personality, very much of the old school, who saw treating patients as an enormous privilege and not a business. He was a gentle and able surgeon who always had his patients' best interests at heart. He did not tolerate fools gladly but was intensely kind to his patients, acting as their biggest advocate.

Mirek was an accomplished scuba diver, qualified to instructor level, and taught many people to dive. His total confidence and imperturbability underwater made him an excellent teacher.

Until the week before his diagnosis, Mirek was working full time. Sadly, he left many unfinished plans. His dream was to retire and live in the Philippines on a farm surrounded by a veritable Noah's ark of animals and a Kew Garden of fruit trees. He was also hoping to accompany the author of this obituary on a humanitarian expedition to the Himalayas next year to provide dental care to child refugees.

Mirek died on 2nd August 2019 following a very short illness and diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife, Odette, and their daughter, Karen, children from his first marriage to Penny - Adele, Sarah and James - and his brother Tad. He will be greatly missed.

Trevor Barnes



"Thank you for making the last year possible. Your support has meant our lives have not spiralled to irrecoverable depths and we have gradually been able to rebuild ourselves as a family."

You do not need to be a member of the BDA to receive help.

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