

Extrovert Bruce was 'an alchemist with people'

YOU may know he used to walk his bearded collie dog everyday around Castlehaven Community Park but you may not know he rebuilt and recommissioned one of the cars seen in the Alan Bennett film *The Lady in a Van*.

Bruce Fielding, trustee at Castlehaven Community Centre, copy writer, voice-over artist, restaurateur and motor enthusiast has died suddenly after a short time in hospital aged 73.

Bruce was born in Edgware and grew up in Hampstead, the son of Toby Feldman and Lilian Turner. He studied at Mill Hill School and after a happy summer as an eligible bachelor laying out deckchairs on sunny Eastbourne Beach and went on to study at the Ealing School of Art.

At art school, Bruce realised he perhaps didn't have the talent to be the next greatest artist, so he started a career as a copy

writer. He went on to have a successful career in advertising, working on campaigns for Kawasaki motorbikes, Mercedes Benz, Tourism Canada and his most famous campaign for the bread brand Allison's.

His former wife, Daryl Fielding said: "He could truly write about everything and anything.

"He was breathtakingly good with words and was very quick witted, had a powerful sense of the absurd and a completely restless curiosity about things."

For 18 years, Bruce lived in the notable "yellow house" in Inverness Street and used to rub shoulders with neighbours Alan Bennett and Sir Jonathan Miller.

Bruce, being a car enthusiast, even recommissioned and rebuilt a Red Elvis car that was seen in the film *Lady in the Van* from Bennett's play of the same name.

In later life, he moved to a flat on the corner of Hawley Street and Hawley Road. Still creative director of his own advertising agency, he started working as a voice-over artist for commercials and foreign language films being translated into English, in his purpose-built sound recording studio in his flat.

"He once delighted in telling me he was the voice of Sherlock Holmes in some German museum, showing his appreciation for the slightly absurd," said Ms Fielding.

Friend and member of the Ariel Club Steve Mozley added: "He had a fantastic sense of humour and had a very warm distinguished baritone voice."

For over 10 years, Bruce was a valued trustee at Castlehaven Community Centre. With his ear to the ground, while walking Baxter – the most recent of many bearded collies he



Left: Self-confessed petrol-head Bruce Fielding with a treasured Ariel car and right: In Camden Town with his beloved bearded collie Baxter



PHOTO: DEXTER FIELDING

owned – he would notice exactly what needed to be done to improve the space for the community.

Derek Jarman, chair of Trustees at Castlehaven said: "He would pick up and notice things that he said needed doing. And they would get translated into the grounds as we have got them now."

Ms Fielding added: "He was hugely valued in the

community. He was a great connector of people. He was an extrovert, he loved being with people and was one of those folk that you'd come home from work and he'd have a television on and radio on in two different rooms in the house.

"He loved having an impact on people and genuinely liked the gift of bringing people together,

an alchemist with people."

Bruce was also a member of the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride, a charitable motorbike organisation that raises money for Movember and the founder of the Ariel Club, a club dedicated to Ariel Vehicle owners and enthusiasts of the lightweight British car. He

would arrange early morning drives in the cars designed for racetracks around central London, a city he believed was the best in the world.

Bruce leaves behind his beloved dog Baxter, who has gone to live with friends in the Oxfordshire countryside, family, colleagues and many friends.

CAITLIN MASKELL

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

CAMDEN has a rare opportunity to place itself at the centre of one of Britain's most exciting industries. As members of the film, television and wider creative sectors, we want to express our strong support for the vision of Camden Film Quarter. Projects that combine industry investment, education and community benefits are rare, and we encourage Camden Council to seize this opportunity and bring it to reality.

Camden Film Quarter represents a major investment in an industry that is vital to the UK's economy and international reputation. By creating accessible, well-located sound stages and production facilities, it will enable writers, producers, editors and crews to develop and deliver world-class content from within the UK, working with British talent and expertise.

Our industry supports thousands of skilled jobs across a wide range of trades, far beyond the actors and directors audiences see on screen. Film and television production relies on writers, line producers, translators and voiceover artists. It also depends on a huge network of behind-the-scenes professionals. These include sound engineers, lighting technicians, camera operators, electricians, carpenters, builders and painters. There are prop makers, set designers, hair and make-up stylists, costume makers, special effects teams, virtual production technicians and animation artists. Productions also rely on hospitality staff, logistics teams and administrators.

Camden Film Quarter will also bring world-class film training together with real industry activity. This creates skilled jobs and new opportunities for young people and local residents. It will also help build the next generation of talent. The proposal includes new facilities for the National Film & Television School and the London Screen Academy, forming a powerful educational hub and a clear pathway into the industry.

This matters for widening access. Organisations such as the London Screen Academy, which is free for students to attend, provide life-changing opportunities for young people and families who might otherwise never have access to this sector. Locating these institutions alongside working production facilities allows students to see and experience the industry first-hand.

Recently, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, wrote about London's growing reputation as a global screen capital, comparing its momentum to that of Hollywood. That momentum is real. But maintaining it depends on the right infrastructure, training and creative spaces where young talent can learn and collaborate. Camden Film Quarter represents exactly that kind of investment in the future.

For those who live in Camden, the benefits to the local community are significant. The proposal commits to delivering 50 per cent of the homes as affordable housing, with 60 per cent of those homes available at social rent or London Affordable Rent levels.

It will also create spaces for small and medium-sized businesses within a creative ecosystem that supports the wider film and television sector. Film production regularly works with local companies and individuals, from builders and electricians to caterers and other services, meaning investment in the screen sector often directly supports neighbourhood businesses.

The plans also include new park space and improved public realm, reconnecting this former industrial land with the surrounding neighbourhood and creating welcoming spaces for residents.

When our industry grows responsibly it strengthens local economies, supports small businesses and creates real

futures for the next generation. Camden has always been a place where creativity thrives, and Camden Film Quarter builds on that identity while creating a practical pathway for talent and the local workforce.

The UK film and television industry stands firmly behind this vision and believes Camden Film Quarter represents an important opportunity for the borough and its residents.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Greenfield & Mark Smith, co-founders, Oxygen Studios
Andy Serkis, co-founder of The Imaginarium, actor, producer and director (North London resident)
Tim Bevan, Co-Founder of Working Title Films and Chair of Governors for London Screen Academy
Dougray Scott & Claire Forlani, Acclaimed Actor
Sean Hargreaves, producer, composer, and pianist with over 500M Spotify streams (Local company based in Camden)
Dr Jon Wardle, Director, National Film & Television School
Charlie Kennard, CEO, Day One Trust
Sam Summerson, Principal of the London Screen Academy
Olly Bengough, CEO, KOKO
Neil Hatton MBE, Chief Executive, UK Screen Alliance
Raj Singhal, Project Director, UK Screen Investment Programme
Myroslava Brayford, Film Service Manager, Camden Film Office
Andrew Pavord, Chairman, FilmFixer (manage filming on behalf of 15 London boroughs, including the Camden Film Office)
Karen Everett, Chief Executive Officer, Filmfixer
Kate O'Connor, Executive Chair, Animation UK
Adam Morley, Lead Creative Industries, HCC
Tim Angel OBE, Chairman, Angels Costumes
Abubakar Salim, Actor
Ashley John-Baptiste, Broadcaster
Chris Berry, Senior Director, Lambert Smith Hampton (Media)
Joel Mishcon, founder & CEO, Chrome Productions (Local production company based in Camden)
Barrett Loades, local filmmaker