

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

### **CONFERMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH**

#### **SECTION 249 (5): LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

##### **SIR ROGER BANNISTER**

Roger Bannister was born in Harrow on 23 March 1929 and commenced his education in the Borough. The family subsequently moved to Bath.

Having entered Oxford University in 1946, he combined his academic studies with a talent for athletics. He established a reputation for competing at the mile and 1500 metre distances.

He missed the 1948 Olympics in preference for concentrating on his medical studies. In 1951 he captured the British title in the mile and was selected for the 1952 British Olympic Team and came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1500 metres in Helsinki.

Roger Bannister decided to continue running for a further two years. His preparations were undertaken whilst he was in full-time medical studies at St.Mary's Hospital Medical School.

The attempt on the mile record was staged at an athletics meet in Oxford on 6 May 1954, with Roger Bannister's friends, Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher acting as pace makers for the first three laps. Roger Bannister at age 25 had completed that mile race in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds to become the first person to break the four minute barrier. He was awarded the 1954 Silver Pears Trophy for the outstanding British achievement in any field. It was recognised as possibly the most significant athletic feat of the twentieth century.

He subsequently ran at that summer's British Empire Games in Vancouver in the race billed as "The mile of the Century" which he won to beat Australian John Landy, both runners completing the mile in under four minutes again. He also secured the European title and record in the 1500 metres before retiring from competition in December 1954.

Roger Bannister completed his medical studies in 1954 and was appointed Consultant Neurologist in 1963 at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Paddington and the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen's Square, London and for the next three decades combined a career in research with clinical practice. After recovering from a serious car accident he devoted more time to research. He maintained an interest in athletics, serving as Chairman of the Sports Council of Great Britain from 1971 to 1974, and as President of the International Council for Sport and Physical Recreation from 1976 to 1983.

Dr. Bannister was knighted in 1975.

Sir Roger Bannister became Master of Pembroke in 1985, retiring in 1993.

Sir Roger Bannister was appointed Trustee of St Mary's Hospital Development Trust in 1990 becoming chairman in 2000, and additionally in 1990 was appointed honorary consultant at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases and St Mary's Hospital, London

perjp/R Bannister