



12th January

Stanway Villa FC founder Ernie Mann was a 'great character', say his family



TRIBUTES have been paid to a local football legend whose hobby organising friendly matches led to the creation of **Stanway** Villa FC.

Ernie Mann, of Stanway, died from vascular dementia aged 88.

He had moved from Epping to Lucy Lane in Stanway in 1967, with wife Sylvia, who died last July.

In those days, the **A12** did not exist as it does now and neither did a local football team.



Daughter Janet, 57, said: “Dad used to watch the lads kicking footballs around and he and another neighbour would take them to Stanway playing field so they could try a proper game.

“Others kept coming along so he arranged friendlies against Colchester Athletic, which was the only other real team back then, and Stanway Villa was born.

“He also experimented with a girls’ team but girls playing football wasn’t taken seriously in the early Seventies. The club grew and dad took a back seat.

“Stanway Villa is, of course, still thriving. The strip of tangerine and black was taken from one of the colour schemes in our home at the time.”

“Little Ern” as the children used to call him, then ventured into other sports to encourage his children to be as athletic.



'Little Ern' had a huge smile



Janet still remembers the swimming club he launched at the Garrison swimming pool and eldest sister Sandra, 61, has been an instructor at Leisure World for the past 30 or so years.

Ernie worked as a craftsman, commercial lorry builder and postman with Royal Mail.

Janet said: “While with Royal Mail, dad was a popular member of its bowls club and the Ernie Mann trophy is still played for annually.

“In dad’s youth, he made his own bicycles and would race them and do time trials. He was actually going to do Olympic time trials but got called for National Service.

“He always had a friendly word for everyone he met and was such a great character in Stanway for many years.”

Ernie left five daughters and seven grandchildren.

His funeral was held on January 22, at Colchester crematorium.