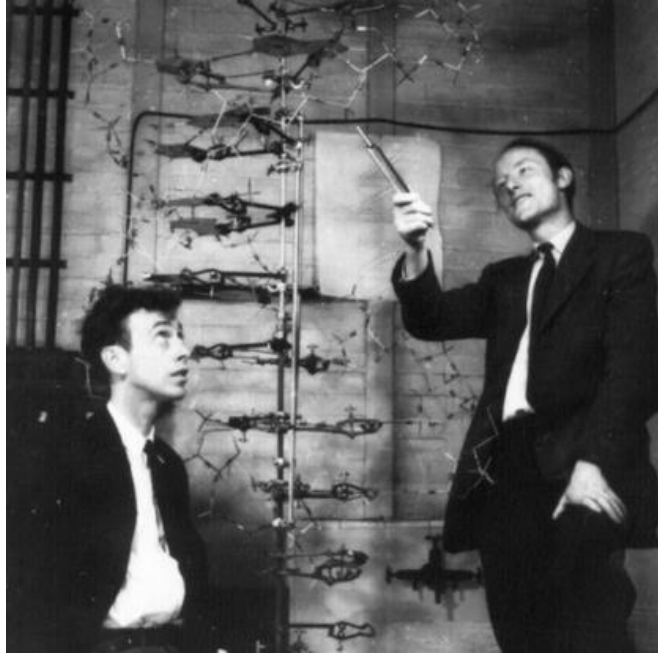


Upton Lovell

Photographer who took iconic image killed with wife in crash



Tributes were paid last night to a photographer who captured one of the iconic images of the 20th century, after he and his wife were killed in a car crash in Wiltshire.

Antony Barrington-Brown died alongside his wife Althea just a few hundred yards from their home when their car was involved in a head-on collision with an 18-tonne tipper lorry in the village of Upton Lovell, near Warminster on Tuesday afternoon.

The 83-year-old and his wife, a 75-year-old sculptress and parish councillor in the Wiltshire village, were pronounced dead at the scene of the tragedy, which happened at around 3.25pm.

Mr Barrington-Brown had numerous careers as a photographer, designer and businessman but is perhaps best known for one photograph – the first image of Cambridge University researchers James Watson and Francis Crick with their original model of DNA, which they discovered in a lab at the university back in 1953.

The photo, which shows the two young scientists smiling sheepishly either side of the now-famous double helix model, was taken for a feature in Time Magazine but never even published. But because the discovery of DNA proved the biggest scientific breakthrough of the 20th century, the image became an iconic one and is even on display at the National Portrait Gallery. Mr Barrington-Brown, who was working as a jobbing freelance photographer at the university at the time, went on to forge a career as a designer, engineer and businessman – he invented a new, quick way of assembling the frames of buildings – and relocated to west Wiltshire in the 1980s.

He was awarded the MBE for services to his home village of Codford after retiring to the house he had built at nearby Upton Lovell, where the garden was filled with Althea's sculptures.

John Perrett, chairman of Upton Lovell parish council, said: "It only happened yesterday and we know very little. Everyone in the village is naturally very upset.

A friend of the couple, Jeff Eadney, added: "They were an integral part of the village – it is a great loss. They were just always here and doing things and in a small village that always means a lot.

"She was a sculptress and he was a photographer. They've got a beautiful garden full of her sculptures. They built their own house about 15 or 20 years ago in the early days of self-building," he added. Mr Barrington-Brown was married twice, and between them, Antony and Althea had seven children.

His ex-wife Pamela, who now lives in Salisbury, said she was told by their son David, 49, who now lives in Los Angeles.

"I received a call at midnight from David informing me of what happened. I was very surprised to hear the news. He was extremely inventive and creative. He was particularly proud of the James Watson and Francis Crick picture. He had it mounted and it was display in his house and I think the family looked on that with great admiration.

"He used to take a lot of pictures when he was at Caius College. He was very talented. We were married for 25 years and he was a very good father to our children," she added.

The 50th anniversary of the discovery of DNA sparked renewed interest in that first photograph, and Mr Barrington-Brown was often asked about the circumstances surrounding it being taken.

Back in 2003, he said: "I was affably greeted by a couple of chaps lounging at a desk by the window, drinking coffee. 'What's all this about?' I asked. With an airy wave of the hand one of them, Crick I think, said 'we've got this model' indicating an array of retort stands holding thin brass rods and balls.

"Although supposedly a chemist myself it meant absolutely nothing to me and fortunately they did not expose my ignorance by attempting to explain it in terms I might just have comprehended. Anyway, I had only come to get a picture so I set up my lights and camera and said 'you'd better stand by it and look portentous' which they lamentably failed to do, treating my efforts as a bit of a joke. I took four frames of them with the model and then three or four back with their coffee," he added.

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