

NORTHERN FARMER Mark 2017

# Tributes to writer who was 'great character'

By Andrew Hitchon

THE world of agricultural journalism has been shocked by the sudden death of Northern Farmer writer Neil Ryder.

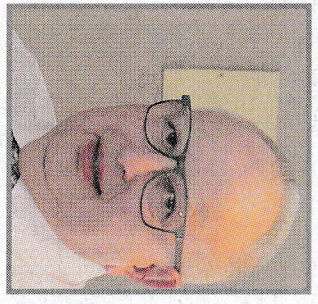
Mr Ryder's work had appeared in The Northern Farmer since the magazine was started in 2010. Though his main focus was on sheep farming he wrote articles on a variety of different topics, and in recent months he had been writing profiles on prominent figures in the industry.

He was working right up to his sudden death on February 8 at the age of 73, and two of his final articles appear in this month's Northern Farmer, including the profile on page 15.

Born in the Nantwich area of Cheshire, he went to school locally. Though his father was a farmer, Mr Ryder did not initially seek a career linked to agriculture, as he studied applied biology at university and worked as a junior reporter covering general news with the Warrington Guardian Series.

He began a lengthy and distinguished career as an agricultural journalist when he started work for Farmers Guardian, which included covering Wales for about 15 years.

Mr Ryder became a freelance journalist in the 1980s, then returned to Farmers Guardian in 1993, working in a number of roles. In 2008 he returned to freelance work, writing for a number of different publica-



MUCH VALUED: Neil Ryder

tions and organisations. He concentrated particularly on sheep-related topics for The Northern Farmer, but contributed articles on a variety of subjects, both features and news stories.

One of the issues he focused on for The Northern Farmer

was the link between the use of organophosphates in sheep dip and ill-health in farmers.

Mr Ryder was also a keen and experienced photographer.

His daughter, Kirsty Carter, said Mr Ryder 'absolutely adored' his work. "He was the only person I know who lived and loved their job," she said.

Jenny Thompson, Managing Director, Lifestyle Magazines for Newsquest, said: "We were very saddened and shocked to hear of Neil's death. He was a great character, a highly valued member of our team and he was instrumental in the successful development of The Northern Farmer.

"He will clearly be sorely missed by all who knew him."

Andrew Hitchon, recently appointed editor of The Northern Farmer, said: "Though I had only dealt with Neil for a few weeks, I was immediately struck by his friendly and welcoming approach, and I was impressed because he was absolutely bubbling with enthusiasm and ideas."

His funeral took place on February 24 at Lancaster & Morecambe Crematorium, followed by an informal gathering at Morecambe Sailing Club, where Mr Ryder and his widow Rosie had been members for the past ten years.

Mr Ryder leaves his widow, his daughters Helen and Kirsty and two grandchildren. ■ Profile: Page 15. ■ Undetected risks: Page 47.