



Press Release

For immediate release

In Memoriam: Professor Jack Scarisbrick MBE (1928–2026)

Esteemed Tudor Historian and Tireless Advocate for Mothers and Babies

It is with profound sorrow and deep respect that the national pregnancy support charity Life, announces the passing of Professor John Joseph “Jack” Scarisbrick MBE, who died peacefully on Saturday 28 February 2026.

A distinguished historian, educator, and co-founder of the UK charity Life, Professor Scarisbrick leaves behind a legacy of scholarship, conviction, and compassion.

A life in history and service

Born in 1928 in London, Professor Scarisbrick educated at Christ’s College, Cambridge, and later served in the Royal Air Force. He became an acclaimed authority on Tudor history—his landmark 1968 work *Henry VIII* reshaped scholarly understanding of the English Reformation, illuminating it as a largely top-down revolution.

He served for many years as Professor of History at the University of Warwick, where he influenced generations of students and colleagues.

A pioneer

In 1970, together with his wife Nuala, he co-founded Life, one of the UK’s leading pregnancy support organisations. What began as small act of compassion around their kitchen table in Leamington-Spa grew into a national charity that has supported thousands of women through pregnancy, motherhood and beyond.

Kerry Smart CEO of Life said:

“Jack’s compassion and vision shaped Life into the charity it is today. His legacy lives on through the women and their families who have received support, hope and practical care because of the charity he helped to co-found.”

Today, Life is committed to continuing the work that Jack and Nuala started 56 years ago, and will strive to honour that legacy not only in memory, but in action – by standing beside every woman who feels alone, by opening doors of safety and hope, and by ensuring that compassion, courage and practical care remain at the heart of all we do for generations to come.

In 2015, Professor Scarisbrick was honoured with an MBE for his services to vulnerable people, including his support for Zoe’s Place Children’s Hospice in Coventry.

Legacy and mourning

Professor Scarisbrick’s passing brings deep sadness to the fields of maternal support, historical research and academia. His life embodied compassionate conviction and scholarly courage. His legacy continues through his writings, the charity he nurtured, and the lives he changed.

He is survived by his two daughters, Emma and Sarah, along with grandchildren and great grandchildren.

His wife Nuala predeceased him in August 2021.

Funeral arrangements

Details are available via the Life website and social channels.

“Being a mother obviously isn’t always easy, but it’s always something to be proud of.”

Professor Jack Scarisbrick MBE

ENDS

Editor Notes

Life is a national charity providing pregnancy-related support, counselling and practical assistance to women and families across the UK. Life's services are free, confidential, non-directive and client-led.

Media contact:

Beth Gray - Communications and Marketing Manager

bethgray@lifecharity.org.uk

www.lifecharity.org.uk