

Tribute To Dad

Dad wasn't sporty, but he was a huge Formula 1 fan. We all knew something was seriously wrong when a race was on, but the television wasn't turned up loud and people weren't being told to be quiet. Dad's illness was short and he would have been grateful for that.

I want to begin by thanking everyone who helped my mum and dad during his final weeks and those who have provided support afterwards. Your practical support and kindness is appreciated more than we can ever express in words. Thank you.

My dad Roger was raised in Creswell with his younger sister Jennifer and his even younger brother Geoff. Memories of his childhood involved train-spotting and cycling trips. His love of trains manifested itself all too well in later life when records of steam trains played at full volume most Sunday mornings.

Those train sounds came from Dad's much loved speaker, which also became an important and long lasting part of dad's home security measures. One day he returned from "stanton and staveley" with a 5 foot concrete pipe which he covered in fablon and placed a speaker on top of. I remember the post holiday "tradition" of tipping it up to empty the share certificates and Krugeran hidden inside it. Despite some logistical difficulties the speaker proved a better hiding place for valuables than behind the gas fire; where one year dad's forgotten bank cards melted.

Most of dad's life was mum's life too. One day mother suggested he give her a ride home from work in his souped up A35 van; a van which pedestrians jumped into hedge bottoms to avoid when they heard it coming. That was the beginning of a relationship that enabled them to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary just over 2 years ago.

Only when I was older did I realise why Dad was mowing the grass at Harthill church yard while I sat there making daisy chains. This was Dad looking after the grave of his daughter, Sarah. Sarah was Mum and Dad's first child who tragically died after just six weeks.

Fortunately mum and dad went on to have Maxine and me. A particularly proud moment for Dad was Maxine's marriage to Maurice. He rode to church in an open top car and walked Maxine up the same aisle, that mum had walked to marry Dad decades earlier.

Dad first met my wife Fiona in Edinburgh. A wife who, sometimes to my annoyance, always wanted me to phone dad to check I was doing something properly.

And Dad was someone who had to do things properly. He wouldn't pay for anyone to do anything. If he couldn't do something he learnt. He fitted his own kitchen and bathroom, erected his own scaffolding and built his own porch and garage. Naturally dad serviced his own cars. During MoTs mechanics often remarked they'd never seen anything maintained so well. His engineering skills were undoubtedly impressive. But there was only one thing that did defeat him. And that was Cameron's pushchair. Despite his struggles, it just would not fold into position.

Cameron was Dad's first grandchild - Dad loved trips to Bermuda and Switzerland to see him. And every-time Cameron visited these shores he had to wear his luminous "Grandad's Little Helper" jacket. By coincidence Maxine and I both ended up in Switzerland and that's where he met his second grandchild, Kenna. She loved spending time with her Grandad and was never happier than last July when collecting pinecones with him at Sherwood Forest.

Work was important to dad. He began his career as a trainee electrician and progressed to Chief Quality Engineer. The first company name I remember was Davy McKee, but even though the company name kept changing, dad was a constant until his retirement at 62.

Undoubtedly Dad was a hoarder - as a child I remember paper spilling out of his much loved bureau every-time he opened it. Occasionally Dad would buy something new but that didn't mean anything old went in the bin - it just found a new home somewhere else.

Dad had a strong sense of service and a desire to improve things for others. He served on the Clowne fete and gala committee, whose achievements included getting celebrities like Richard Whiteley and Bett Lynch to Clowne. He was a member of the parish council and spent many years as a governor and chair of governors at Heritage Community School. I was always impressed with the dedication and professionalism he brought to these roles. And they required public speaking, which Dad was never comfortable with. But he always pushed through and never shied away.

For fun dad enjoyed experiencing new things and loved rollercoasters. He ignored protestations from Mum about being too old and ran off to join the

queue. He didn't enjoy log flumes so much; well not since the day mother flung her head back and almost broke his nose as the log descended.

My dad showed how much he cared with actions - by doing things for others and putting his family first. He did an enormous amount for all of us, especially taxiing us around wherever and whenever we wanted. Dad struggled to sit still and always had to find jobs to do. Maxine's neighbours in Bermuda looked forward to his visits, as it meant the pool umbrellas and children's swings would get fixed.

Now he's gone we have to find out how to do so much ourselves. Dad: we will never do the proper and professional job you always did, but we will try our best. We would do anything to buy you another rum and raisin ice cream, to take 'some spice' out of the glovebox for you to eat while driving or for you to say „is it time for a cup of tea“ just one more time.