

Eulogy – Dad (1935 – 2005)

We are all shocked and deeply saddened by the sudden death of Dad in France a fortnight ago.

Thank you all for your cards and letters and to everyone for their support.

It really helps.

I would particularly like to thank our friends Ray and Ruth Simmons for looking after Mum at the time.

.....

The final conversation I had with Dad was when I phoned him from my mobile to France from the UK. It was brief ...because he was paying for it!

He said “...The weather’s lovely...Just filling up the outboard with petrol...Will try and get out in her tomorrow...ok...cheers.”

This summed him up really.

He was adventurous, talented, funny...and an inspiration to all of us.

.....

(Adventurousness)

Adventurousness was always apparent:

I remember one particular family outing where Dad sailed the entire family across the Firth of Forth in Scotland from Ely to North Berwick in our 16 foot Wayfarer dinghy, Seascaper.

It was a beautiful day, and the return trip was planned for that afternoon. Having arrived safely, the weather rapidly worsened during the afternoon until eventually it was blowing at least a force 5.

Ignoring the coastguards advice, dad nevertheless proceeded with the return trip ...but this was eventually abandoned after the first squall and some gentle persuasion from us kids....finally we all ended up getting a bus back.

Within the past year, not only had Mum and Dad celebrated their Ruby Wedding anniversary, but Dad had also celebrated his 70th birthday with a trip to India. Dad was also planning sailing with Mum around the French coast to southern Brittany in their yacht “Bright Dawn”.

.....

(Talent)

Dad was always planning things...and he still had masses in the pipeline.

Raised in Tottenham, London, Dads beginnings were humble. It was his brother, David, who was really influential, telling him to "go and do something with his life".

And he certainly did!.

Grabbing life's opportunities became very important to him.

Dads talent was evident throughout his Music, Art, Chess, Bridge and Scrabble of which he rarely lost a game.....

He could be competitive and occasionally quite critical.....but he was a perfectionist.

Playing the piano was perhaps his greatest passion.

In 1959 when only 24, Dad won Melody Maker's Soho Fair Amateur Jazz Pianist Contest in front of a packed audience of 300 fans. ...and once stood in for Dudley Moore in his Trio.

His watercolour paintings are excellent. I remember, he occasionally helped me out with my Art homework....I started getting quite high marks...until it came to the exam!.

If this wasn't enough, Dad was also a keen gardener and birdwatcher, he enjoyed cycling, walking and reading and had a taste for wine and Radio 4.

Although talented himself, Dad was always great at spotting talent.

He appreciated it.

He gave huge encouragement to those around him.

Knowledgeable.

Generous.

A really friendly guy.

.....

(Humour)

Little things in life made Dad laugh. He had a dry sense of humour and never took anything too seriously.... especially when something went a little bit wrong!.

One particular incident, if you've ever crewed on board a yacht, you have to be fastidiously tidy. One evening, after a day's sailing aboard his yacht Bright Dawn, Dad spotted a spare rope lying around on deck coming out of one of the lockers. Naturally, he pulled on it trying to yank it free, but it still wouldn't come out. So he ended up giving it quite a tug. The rope was obviously caught somewhere. So he eventually opened the locker only to find that it was attached to and happened to be the ripcord for inflating the life-raft!

Incidents like this really made Dad laugh.

**He could identify birds not only by sight but also by their birdsong.
During family walks together at Cley in Norfolk, we'd be chatting away
exchanging conversation when he would suddenly stop mid sentence, tell
everyone to be quiet...point slightly.... "Chiff-Chaff".**

His brain was always whirring.

He was the man with a plan.

Inspirational!.

.....

**And as we retraced Dad's final steps up the "Rue du Port" in Dinan,
France with flowers we had picked along the banks of the River Rance,
and placed them under the arch of the "Porte du Jerzual" where Dad
fell.....**

**It became apparent, with his boat moored nearby in the stunningly
beautiful mariner at Plouer, chatting with Ray about how he could
perhaps break into the local jazz scene thereand might even become
a bit of a celebrity.....**

This was a time when Dad was exceptionally happy.

.....

**Thankyou Dad, from all of us, for your enthusiasm, your inspiration
and your passion.**