

The Funeral of

Colin Roland Frankling

7th July 1932 – 30th March 2019

Langney Crematorium, Eastbourne
16th April 2019, 11.30am

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The Tribute

Colin was born here in Eastbourne, one of the three children of Doris and Frank Frankling. He was not keen on school, taking himself off whenever he could to Ned Sayers' boat yard to help to repair boats. Sayers was not just a boatbuilder, but also a lifeboat man, and from him young Colin acquired a love of the sea and of sailing. He wanted to train in carpentry and become a boat-builder himself, but his father apprenticed him to an electrician.

Not happy with this, Colin pursued his desire to go to sea. He secretly took himself off to HMS Ganges, and signed on as a boy seaman. The recruiting officer advised him not to tell the master he was apprenticed to what he was planning, as he might try to stop him, but rather to just take off, which was what he did. I doubt his father was very happy!

But Colin was, and he stayed in the Navy for almost a decade, with all his practical skills coming into use, and specialising in mine sweeping towards the end of his time. He didn't have a very high opinion of naval officers, mind, and the radio comedy, *The Navy Lark*, was later one of his favourites – the eternally incompetent Sub-Lieutenant Phillips with his "Left hand down a bit" struck a very familiar chord.

The first time Pearl and Colin met was not auspicious. Her uncle had a off-licence, and Pearl used to collect contributions for the Christmas Tontine for him. Doris was one of the people she collected from. She knocked on the door one day, and Colin opened it – on the phone as it happens to his then girlfriend – and slammed it again in her face! But not long afterwards, she was out with her mother walking their german shepherds, and they bumped into Doris and Colin, also out walking. He asked her out, they went together to see the film *Island in the Sun*, and they never looked back. They were married on the 11th March 1961, and never regretted a day of their fifty-eight years of marriage.

Colin was a practical man, who continued with building maintenance work all his life, in positions of increasing responsibility, at Relay Vision, the British Syphon Company, Chandlers' Builder's Merchants, Brighton Technical College and finally the Eastbourne branch of Brighton University. He was a well respected boss, of which one of his colleagues later said "The time with Colin was the best years of my life. I never had such a good boss".

In their spare time, Colin and Pearl, as most of you will know, were enthusiastic folk singers. So now Steve, on guitar, and Di, with Pearl, are going to lead us in “The Call and the Answer”, a great song about a loving partnership between two people. This was a great favourite with Pearl and Colin, and they felt it was their song. The words are on your order of ceremony – please do join in if you wish.

*You called and I ran
As wild as the wind which rows across the moor
All we needed was each other
Like the eagle we will soar*

*You are the call and I'm the answer
You are the wish and I am the way
You're the music, I the dancer
You are the night and I am the day
You are the night and I am the day*

*You and I, we're like two rivers
Running round into the sea
When we meet we're lost forever
Lost forever, you and me*

*You are the call and I'm the answer
You are the wish and I am the way
You're the music, I the dancer
You are the night and I am the day
You are the night and I am the day*

*Lay your head upon my pillow
Let your heart beat next to mine
There's no past and no tomorrow
Two hearts lost in space and time*

They started their involvement with folk singing by going to folk clubs, then the Mid-Sussex Folk Singers sessions in Steyning, where they joined in the choruses. Then first Colin then Pearl, were encouraged to sing alone with everyone joining in the choruses. Well, I say encouraged – Colin’s first reaction when she started to sing on her own was “I’d be careful, if you sang the National Anthem you’d be done for treason”. But that was just his wicked

sense of humour, in fact she had a good voice, and they both went from strength to strength.

They also travelled around the world, having particularly close friends in New Zealand, where for a while they went for Christmas every other year. The granddaughter of those friends, Rachel, called Pearl and Colin her “English Grandparents” and was devastated when she heard of Colin’s death. In Tunisia, the ever-chivalrous Colin took responsibility for protecting not only Pearl, but several other English women travelling alone, from unwanted attentions. They went to the Arctic Circle for their 50th wedding anniversary, and standing there in the snow, those words from “The Call and the Answer” came to mind: *“There’s no past and no tomorrow, Two hearts lost in space and time”*.

They also travelled in their camper van, often to go to folk festivals. They were particularly fond of the maritime festivals, harking back to Colin’s time in the Navy. They always shared the driving, but when Colin developed neuropathy in his left leg, she took over, doing two thousand miles on one Irish trip as the sole driver.

The last few years were not easy for Colin and Pearl, but working together, and with the support of their friends, they made the best of those difficult times. Colin worried about her having to take on so much, after such a long and very equal partnership. He continued to enjoy the company of his mates – Bob and Alan would come round regularly for “men’s talk”, and Pearl found support in her regular Wednesday night chats with Mavis. Mavis, of course, had already lost her own husband, and when Colin died, their daughter Belinda wrote: “I like to think that Colin has met up with Dad, and they are having a good old catch up over a very large glass of wine”.

We often think of death as a cruel enemy, taking away those we love, but for those who are suffering or who have reached the end of their endurance, it can come as a quiet friend, closing the curtains, blowing out the light, and settling us into a last sleep, free from pain and weariness.

And I hope it was so for Colin.