**

*The Funeral of*

***David Albert Lindley***

*29th March 1938 – 10th March 2018*

Eastbourne Crematorium

3rd April 2018, 10.45 am

* Celebrant: Felicity Harvest
* [felicity.harvest@humanistceremonies.org.uk](mailto:felicity.harvest@humanistceremonies.org.uk)
* 01892 783226

**

‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

**The Tribute**

David was born in Worthing in 1938, the eldest of Bessie and Albert Lindley’s three children. Albert (known as Richard) was a police sergeant, and Bessie’s Jewish parents had arrived in England with only a suitcase, fleeing a pogrom in Odessa. During the war, the family moved to Walthamstow, which might seem rather a strange move considering the dangers, but it was probably connected with work opportunities for Albert. While Bessie was pregnant with Paul, she and Richard went to stay with Albert’s family in Sheffield – which to be honest was probably not particularly safe either. When they returned to Walthamstow, Bessie was not well pleased with the house Albert had got for them – indeed she burst into tears at the sight of it. But in due course Ruth was born, and the family settled in Walthamstow, and that was where the children grew up, going to Henry Maynard School.

He left school at 15, and did various odd jobs including working for a pastry chef, till he was called up for National Service in 1956. During his 2 years of National Service, he was based in England and in Germany, and it was when he was on leave before heading off to Germany that he met Hilary at a dance. She spotted his bright blue eyes across the room, and those, and his gentle manner drew her to him. They corresponded while he was away, and in 1961 they were married.

There was a real shortage of new homes in those days, and David and Hilary particularly wanted to live near their good friends Peter and Shirley. Eventually they found homes to suit them both in Hatfield Peverell, and managed to get a mortgage – also then in short supply.

On his return from Germany, David had joined what was then the GPO as a telephone engineer, and with them he stayed till he retired, though it of course became British Telecom and he became a manager, gladly leaving the days of climbing up poles behind him.

But he retained his love for hands on work, which he channelled into his home life. He started by doing up the cottage in Hatfield Peverell, where he did everything himself. Nothing daunted him, be it electrics, plumbing, bricklaying – and in later years re-wiring the car when the girls managed to blow it up. David was the family’s very own Heath Robinson, and a perfectionist with all his creations. It was always his dream to build his own house, which he never quite managed, though he did have the pleasure of giving a lot of help to Karan and Kevin when they built their house on the farm in Blackham.

He inherited Hilary’s father’s tools, and over the years the collection grew and grew, until it needed those three sheds to accommodate them, plus something like a bus shelter to keep the wheelbarrow in.

The girls were born in Hatfield Peverell, but soon after they moved back to Walthamstow, which gave David better opportunities with the GPO. Karan and Nicky remember him as a kind and calm father, one who made them toys, and dolls houses, and was always good tempered – though perhaps not when they blew up the car! Nicky describes him as follows: “He was a rock for his family, he took his “roll” of consummate provider very seriously and was, very quietly, proud of their achievements, and his own. He adored Hilary and was utterly devoted to her wellbeing.”

Karan will now read us a short poem she’s written recalling David’s style of dealing with family life:

***Dad’s little catch phrases.***

*When Nick and I were little and in answer to our plea,*

*Of “Can we have this?” “Can we go there?”*

*He’d answer…*

*“We shall see what we shall see”.*

*We were rarely naughty children*

*And we never got a slosh.*

*Dad’s regard for minor errors was…*

*“It’ll all come out in the wash”.*

*Dad pondered and was thoughtful, we rarely heard him cuss.*

*He’d find answers to our questions shrugging…*

*“‘Twas ever thus”.*

*At home in the garden, straw hat on his head, reclining on his chaise.*

*He would finish his cuppa, close his eyes, and mutter*

*“Ah , happy days”.*

After 4 years in Walthamstow they moved again, to Eastbourne, where they ran a guest house – well, Hilary mainly ran it, because David was still working for BT, though he would always do the after-dinner washing up when he got home. He did all the necessary DIY too, of course, including fitting the fire alarms and fire doors which new legislation required. In the final week of October, before they closed down for the winter, they would routinely offer places at the guest house to a club for older people in Maidstone, who otherwise would not get a holiday, and it was this group who were staying the night the new fire alarm went off in the middle of the night. Recognising that it was a false alarm, David leapt out of bed and ran up the hall to turn it off. So quick was his reaction, that he forgot he was not wearing pyjamas. Fortunately the reactions of the elderly guests were much slower, so he did not have to walk back to the bedroom watched by a phalanx of bemused elderly ladies coming down the stairs.

In Eastbourne, the girls would do chores to earn pocket money, which helped to pay for their passion for riding, and they lived a carefree life, able to run off to the beach unsupervised and cycle off to Beachy Head and all over town. The family also owned a piece of woodland near Gun Hill, where they would go to have parties, do some maintenance, or just have a country stroll.

They left the guest house in 1980. They knew they loved the Sussex countryside, but, being tied to the guest house all the time in summer, they didn’t feel they could see enough of it. So they bought a house in Willingdon, from which they could walk out onto the Downs. These walks were in fact essential, as the girls had bought the Springer Spaniel puppy, Chippy, for Hilary for her birthday, now that they no longer had the guest house to keep clean and tidy. It was while they were in Willingdon that David developed his passion for brewing home made wine. There were some successes (Karen remembers the strawberry wine as being particularly good), and some failures, and some very special flavours. He made birch sap wine from their own woodland, the trees in which were fitted with rubber bungs so the sap could be collected when it was rising.

When David retired, they made their final move to Hailsham, to a house with a wonderful garden with great views and lots of space for David to pursue all his hobbies. The wine came with them, on a flatbed trailer, and the sheds were installed as a home for the tools and the spiders. Then there was the little Fergie tractor to move things around. David and Hilary had planned to travel when he retired, but the lure of the garden, and the view, was too strong for them, and they rarely went further than into Hailsham to the shops or the cinema, though they did have three wonderful holidays in New Zealand with Nicky.

They were frequent visitors at the farm, and they loved eating out, particularly at the Thai restaurant at Sovereign Harbour, and at the Crossways at Willingdon. And David loved to read, a passion he shared with Karan, Nicky and Charlotte, and the four of them were always sharing books and recommendations.

He was very proud of his grandchildren. He was impressed by Charlotte’s academic achievements, and by her interest in the family history. Josh shared his love of tools and woodwork, and will inherit the little grey Fergie. And Sonny is a keen gardener, who loved pulling up weeds with his grandad.

Charlotte will now read us a poem she wrote for her “Dadad’s” birthday in 2015.

*“We were always excited to go to their house and in the garden. Dadad loved letting us have a go on his little grey Fergie tractor, and whilst our tractor escapades rarely reached this level of chaos, Grandma did indeed teach us knife throwing once, much to Dadad’s and our delight.*

***Grandma, Dadad, Charlotte, Josh and Sonny’s adventure***

*It was a Sunday afternoon*

*A nice hot day in the middle of June*

*When Josh, Sonny and I all went out*

*To go to Grandma and Dadad’s house*

*Once there we saw our Dadad sat*

*On his little grey Fergie wearing his hat*

*And his glasses balanced just on his nose*

*Feeling the grass between our toes,*

*We ran down the garden to try and greet him*

*(Sonny fell over with his legs beneath him)*

*Dadad declared, “who wants a go?”*

*And quick as a flash before we know*

*Sonny had climbed up onto the seat*

*While Josh and I went inside to eat*

*Sonny began driving around*

*And soon the garden was filled with the sound*

*Of Sonny’s laughter and Dadad’s shouts of*

*“Sonny be careful”*

*“Don’t touch that”*

*And “why on earth are you wearing my hat?”*

*But then it went quite, which was quite funny*

*Then Dadad exclaimed “Oh dear, Sonny”*

*And then “Hillary, you’d better take a look”*

*Grandma pulled her nose out from her book*

*And walked outside*

*With us in tow*

*Sonny should have been driving slow*

*But whilst all of the garden was totally still*

*Sonny was speeding down the hill*

*The tractor was moving faster and faster*

*Grandma exclaimed, “oh it’s a disaster”*

*Quick as a flash Dadad sprang into action*

*And with this lightning fast reaction*

*Grabbed some rope and pulled it to*

*Using it like a sort of lasso*

*Tied the rope around a tree*

*Then flung it round the tractor so it wouldn’t break free*

*The tractor stopped stopped and Sonny too,*

*Jumped right off and pulled it through*

*The grass and trees of the Lindley back garden*

*Grandma got the biscuit tin and offered us a bourbon*

*We sat there for a while and ate*

*Whilst Sonny contemplated his close escape*

*Sonny yelled “Wow Dadad, that was great!”*

*And*

*“Grandma can you teach us knife throwing next?”*

David had a heart bypass a few years ago, and continued in good health till last year, when bouts of sepsis kept returning him to hospital, which for such an active man was very depressing.

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 David.

I’m going to conclude this tribute with an anonymous poem called Lines to a Lineman, written for the Bell Telephone System in the US in the 50’s, which could stand as an elegy for any engineer who used to climb up those poles.

*No word of pen or stroke of artist’s hand*

*No flowered phrase or oratory’s boast*

*Need tell the story of the world you’ve made,*

*‘Tis writ upon the pages of the land*

*From north to south – from coast to coast*

*Those poles you mount – those lengthened strands you string*

*Are not just sturdy uprights in the sky*

*That march across the miles in proud parade.*

*You’ve made them into words that help and sing:*

*A doctor’s call, good news, a lover’s sigh.*

*Deep etched in time the record of your skill*

*The work you’ve done – your willingness to do*

*The heights and storms you’ve tackled unafraid.*

*Your signature is carved on every hill*

*Yours too, the creed – “The message must go through”*