

Archive Tribute

David Williams

15/08/1946 – 28/12/2018

Written by

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Humanists UK

Accredited Funeral Celebrant

(Working Script)

Tribute

Dave was born in Merthyr Tydfil on the 15th of August 1946, the only child of Haydn and Anne. He attended George Town Primary School, but while he did well and won a place at the County Grammar School in Merthyr, he never liked school, apart from enjoying cross-country running.

He scrapped through his O-levels and aged seventeen started work for the Royal Mail as a post man.

When he was twenty he went for a drink in the Bellevue Inn and started chatting to a young girl called Mary, who was to be the love of his life. They courted for about two years and were married on the 30th of August 1969.

Dave's career was developing, and their first home was in Swansea where Dave had a new role and where they met their life-long friend Ray Morris, who is going to come up and tell you about Dave. 2.23

Ray Morris's Tribute

I first met David fifty years ago, in Wind St , when I was at the start of my Post Office career, and David had decided to transfer from Merthyr to the bright lights of Swansea bringing with him Mary whom he had married a year earlier. We quickly became friends and drinking partners, also on occasions treating Mary and my then girlfriend Margaret to a meal in the No 10 bar after doing our Tesco's shopping on a Friday evening.

I well remember David's early career in Swansea, frequently late, either sleeping late or running out of petrol on the way to work. Whilst I am sure that

his line managers were very frustrated by him in the early days he got away with it because basically he was a character that everybody liked.

Our careers started as counter clerks working in most of the Branch Offices in the area, Wind St, High St, The Kingsway, Mumbles and Gorseinion to name but a few. We then progressed to the Head Post Office in Wind street as Postal Officers on 'Writing Duties' which included Television Licence Investigation, stores, Sub Post Office audits and remittance work. We now had young families, so we worked hard and worked as much overtime as we could which unfortunately for Mary and Margaret, meant a few drinks after work to wind down.

In 1971 the Union of Postal Workers called a national strike that was to last nearly two months and although it would be hard to believe today the union demands were for a fifteen to twenty percent pay rise across all postal grades. I am not sure who's idea it was but David and myself decide that we had to make some money because we didn't have any pay.

We decide to sell soap products, I believe that they were made by the blind with a commission to the sellers . It was January and we left sunny Swansea to pick up the supplies in Merthyr which upon arrival was under two foot of snow returning to Swansea to start selling. Our original intention was to sell door by door, but our managerial skills were already evident because we gave a load to Mary and Margaret to sell in Mettoy where they worked, and I went to my previous employer Viscose whose staff also sold for us. The bottom line was that although we made money, because of the numerous union meetings that we had to attend, there was always a bar at the venue, so in the end I doubt that we broke even. I should add that we didn't get the pay rise either.

David's next objective was to become a manager, and he was placed on the 'acting list' which meant he could be called upon to cover Post Office branch managers who were on sick or annual leave. This was an interesting period in his development. He arrived late at the Kingsway Post Office one day to find about a hundred pensioners and staff queuing outside the doors because he had the keys to open the office.

On one occasion he left Gorseinon Post Office one evening and managed to lock the keys inside when he was outside. I can't remember fully how he got back in, but I know it involved the sorting office at the rear of the building and a very small window. When we both were asked to run Pontarddulais post office, because it was closing down, and all the staff had been relocated, David and myself were chuffed .

It was very quiet, so we decided on a Wednesday morning, one would open the office and the other wouldn't come in until 11am This worked fine for a few weeks but one Wednesday when it was my turn for the early shift David didn't appear at 11, at 11-30 I had a visit from the assistant head postmaster checking up on us. 'Where's David 'he said, 'I think he must have been stuck in traffic 'said I. Of course, in those days there was no mobile phone to send him a warning text. He waited an hour and then he said, tell him to ring me as soon as he comes in, and left David turned up at 1pm most apologetic. I can't remember his excuse, but you could probably perm any one from about three, he rang the big chief but being David got away with it with his future career prospects still intact.

Despite all this we both got promoted into management the same year, David to Bridgend whilst I moved to Llanelli We had been on holidays together when our families were small but now our career paths moved in different directions

and we didn't see each other as much as we would have liked, and we never worked together again. I went from working in Llanelli to Cardiff, Chester and then Bridgend whilst David went from Bridgend to the Mail's branch in Cardiff where he achieved a further promotion before he retired. He then did some part time work for the Inland Revenue before finally retiring for good .

Although we didn't meet up frequently in this period, true friendship meant that whenever we did it felt like yesterday that we last met. After retirement we had the opportunity to see more of each other and have been on numerous short breaks and foreign holidays over the years.

David loved travelling the problem was that his idea of a holiday, such as wandering through the Souks in Tunisia or a boat trip from St Petersburg to Moscow, wasn't everybody's cup of tea, so we used to have holiday meetings over a meal or a drink and then later Mary, Margaret and myself would have a chat decide where to go and then tell David.

David loved visiting Italy and one of our best holidays was when we visited Bologna and Florence, the highlight of the evenings, apart from the food, was to sit outside a cafe on one of the squares have a coffee, nibbles and a cigarette and watch the world go by. David was interested in people, of all races, and he was prone to disappearing to talk to people wherever we went. Although there was one visit where he didn't want to get out of the car to speak to the locals. On our way back to Florence from Torre del Lago Puccini where we had been to an open air opera I accidentally took a wrong turning into the local red light district in an industrial zone full of ladies of the night, hundreds of them, all shapes and sizes. I was driving frantically trying to turn around and get out but David who was sitting in front got so excited that he

misted up his glasses and my windscreen too. We finally escaped, and it gave both David and myself a conversational piece for years after.

In David Williams my family and myself have lost a true friend , we will miss him greatly I will miss the phone calls on a Saturday at 3pm when he was sitting at his computer waiting to watch the streaming of a Swansea City game when he would say 'Ray what foreign tv channel are the Swans on'. It is a total coincidence, but all my family are travelling to Tuscany in May for a holiday so Margaret and myself have decided to go to Florence for the day find David's favourite restaurant and sit outside in the square and raise a glass to our friend I know that he will be looking down on us and saying 'hang on I just have to finish my coffee'.

DAVE by Ian Willacombes

Having received the heart-breaking news that my friend Dave had died I felt compelled to write down my thoughts about him.

He was without a doubt one of the most amazing people I have ever had the good fortune to meet. I am truly thankful to have known Dave and considered him to be a dear friend for the better part of thirteen years.

I first met Dave through work although, he called it socialising, when we were in the Inland Revenue. Immediately we struck up a bond which developed into a strong friendship. I can recall him looking at me in utter disbelief when at the age of thirty-three, I informed him that I had never had a curry. He then made it his mission to get me to experience a curry and arranged for us to watch a game of rugby down Swansea followed by a trip to the Anarkali Restaurant. It is fair to say that from that moment on I have had my fair share of curries all thanks to Dave.

I know if he was here now what I am about to say would embarrass him, however his qualities deserve to be highlighted. Dave educated me, was always there when I needed advice, was a true friend, loyal and supportive during my difficult times.

I loved his stories and his wicked sense of humour. He was always ready with a quick-witted response that would bring a smile to my face. We have shared many, many moments together, either devouring cooked breakfasts, Indian curries or watching games of Rugby. I thank him for introducing me to books, curries, Clarks pies, wine and the need for bigger trousers.

Dave, I was blessed to have you in my life. Watching Rugby will never be the same for me again. You were a special man, a true gentleman. You leave a great legacy behind you in your children and grandchildren. You were also lucky to share so many years with a loving and supportive wife.

Mary, I hope you can take some solace in how well Dave was thought of.

So goodbye my friend. I hope to see you smile again one day when we stuff those damned All Blacks.

Loved and forever missed

Family Thoughts

Dave's family were central to his life and I will now read some of their thoughts about him.

His granddaughter Ffion said; 'Grampy was always wandering off and looking for an adventure. He made me laugh so much. He gave nice hugs and his stubble tickled when he kissed me.'

And Granddaughter Jessica said "Soon you were going to be a great grampy, so please watch over Ella, you will always be her angel."

His son in law Willem said 'David has been a father to me. He got me in some trouble and got me out of it as well!! He showed me how to be a good person by how he talked to a lady in a shop and to an Emerati man in a Russian bar. David's personality was one of a kind, I looked up to him as a person and will miss him dearly. My son Noah and daughter Ffion will tell his stories on to their children and it will never be forgotten what an amazing man he was.'

And his daughter Helen said "They say the only man a girl can really count on is her Daddy and wow did you prove that right. You were always there for me, whenever I needed you, whether it be in the middle of the night or hundreds of miles away, not once did you ever let me down!! You taught me to be a good person, love with all my heart and to see life as one big adventure. I promise that every new person I meet in every new country I visit I will take your memory along with me. Love you forever Dad xx"

On the 28th of December, Dave died in hospital and left behind a family and friends who will miss him greatly; bringing to its end a life well lived; a life full of love and laughter, a life that had made many other lives better for having known him.