

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF
JOHN FREDERICK NEWMAN

9th November 1941 - 4th March 2019





TRIBUTE

But these are memories of John. So if it's alright with you we'll pick those memories with some care. And save the rest for the wake later on this afternoon.

Though we may immediately be pushing the envelope by letting John Granville up here...

John Granville

John lived at No 1 School View, Salford and I lived at No 5. We were the youngest two of a group of a dozen or so village boys who hung around together. During school holidays we would disappear after breakfast not returning home until teatime, having spent the day wandering the fields having adventures that are no longer possible in this day and age.

Wet days would be spent in John's parent's outhouse at 1 School View playing Monopoly in games that seemed to last for days.

Unfortunately, there is no way a group of young lads can avoid getting into mischief at some point. Such as games like wrapping an empty cardboard box and placing it in the centre of the main A44 (which carried very little traffic in the mid-1950s), tying a long string so that we could hide behind the roadside wall and wait for a curious driver who, when he went to pick it up, would have it snatched away followed by a group of small boys shouting and jeering from behind the wall.

One November evening we were walking down to John's uncle AJ when John thought it would be a good idea to pop a banger into a neighbour's front door keyhole which was duly lit and we slipped next door to his uncle and aunt. While sat in their living room drinking orange squash there was a knock at the door and we could hear the neighbour ask to use his uncle's telephone to call the police because some little sod had put a firework into his keyhole which blew the lock clean off the door firing it across the room narrowly missing his wife.

On Guy Fawkes night there would always be a large bonfire on the green next to the village school, and failing to learn any lessons from the previous year's door lock incident, John discovered that the small courtyard on the side of the schoolhouse which was about 12ft square with 8ft high stone walls and was half covered by a corrugated tin roof had the acoustics of a base drum when a firework was lobbed over the wall.

The then school mistress's husband, who was not our favourite person due to his constant whinging about us playing football and cricket on the green, and refusing to return our balls when they ended up in his garden, complained to the Police that the village boys were letting off fireworks in the vicinity of his house.



Over the following days all of the lads had a visit from the constabulary and were charged under the 1780 something firearms act for letting off fireworks on the Queens Highway. We all appeared at Chipping Norton Juvenile Court and were fined 10 shilling plus one and sixpence costs.

One of John's work mates at Oliver & Newman's was George Keyte who says that John saved him from serious injury. Part of John and George's work was the erection of television aerials. They were installing one on quite a high roof when the roof ladder slipped and George was diving towards a concrete coal bunker when John attempted to catch him.

The bad news was that John dropped him, but the good news was that he deflected George from hitting the coal bunker. George sustained a badly bruised spleen, John broke his arm in two places.

John was a very talented footballer and really excelled at school, so much so that he and school friend John Evens were sent for trials to West Bromwich Albion in an attempt to become professional footballers, and for the 1958-59 season played for WBA school boys but unfortunately did not make the senior teams.

But he played for the school who won the much-prized Banbury Gold Cup amongst other trophies and regularly played in the County teams. He also played senior football for Chipping Norton and Morton in Marsh then in 1965 returned to his home village of Salford where he was quite influential in remodelling the team. In 1966 after many years in the doldrums Salford won three trophies in one season, the Chipping Norton Engineer Cup, the Witney & District Supplementary Cup and the Junior Cup. A few years later gaining promotion to the 2nd division of the Witney and District football league and then winning the second division outright.

Every Easter Salford Football Club would set off on tour, with the help of a few guest players, mostly from Churchill FC. we had two tours in Belgium, two in France and one in Germany, Switzerland and Jersey Plus two non- footballing football tours in Spain and the Lake District.

On one of the last tours was a Non-Footballing Football Tour. We went to stay at a Hotel overlooking Lake Windermere with a sweeping drive that took you to a large parking area in front of a magnificent hotel framing a row of tall flag poles with the flags of different nations fluttering in the breeze. It looked stunning. Unfortunately, it was the first week of a new season with a new untrained staff and resembled Faulty Towers more than the Ritz. But we all had a great time.

On this tour we were join by other regulars from the Black Horse (being our HQ). On the morning we were due to leave one lady who was travelling with her husband, complained that some of her lingerie was missing, namely a fairly large pair of red knickers. Upon leaving the Hotel she found them flying high on the middle flagpole. The perpetrators were never found but there were strong rumours of John's involvement.



Like all clubs it was a continuous struggle raise funds to keep the club going and during an alcohol fuelled meeting in the Black Horse, Rodney Blackman came up with the idea of running our own ITS A KNOCKOUT along the lines of the television programme. After a few derogatory comments, mainly about Rodney's sanity, the feasibility of such a project was discussed seriously and decided on. After six months of planning and quite a few gallons of Carling Black Label the first Salford It's a Knockout took place in the close in the centre of the village. Compered by John Newman it was a massive success and was followed by five more each bigger and better than the last.

By the second one John had obtained a Radio Microphone which was quite futuristic in those day and enabled John to reach his full potential as a compere, allowing him to roam the arena talking to contestants and spectators, filling in the long gaps while we set up the next game, then having to explain the new game to both the teams and spectators. He was no less than brilliant, to hold a crowd reported by the Oxford Mail to be 3000 people.

The games we devised and meticulously planned and rehearsed during heavy sessions in the bar at the Black Horse in THEORY should have worked faultlessly on the day, but unfortunately that was not always the case. John would have to entertain the spectator whilst the problems were resolved.

Th Black Horse was the centre of our social world and we would meet every Friday night and discuss how we would win Saturday's match. Then meet every Saturday night to discuss why we lost.

John was in his element at the Black Horse and there would be a sing song most Saturday nights with Kenny Woodward on guitar and Vince Johnson and John Newman on vocals interspersed with John telling his latest stories.

There was the annual sunflower competition held each September on the lawn behind the pub. On this occasion, just as the judging was finishing an Oliver & Newman van rolled into the car park. Tied to a ladder on the roof was a sunflower. John and Roger Percival unloaded it and carried it to the lawn. It was certainly quite tall and when measured was a couple of inches taller than any of the others and was declared the winner. That is when John owned up that it was in fact two sunflowers spliced together.

Every Boxing Day lunch time the Black Horse held its annual Tipit competition where teams of three would try to find a coin held in the hands of the team on the other side of the table. As it was a lovely sunny Boxing Day morning John suggested, we should dress for the occasion, so, dressed in swimming trunks complete with knotted handkerchief on heads. John, Roger Percival and myself using a big heap of sand left at the front of the pub ready for the building work, arranged our deck chairs complete with buckets and spades, a large beach ball and striped wind break. Where we sat and drank our first pint before the tipit.



The next day the Oxford Mail carried a photograph with the heading of SUN SAND AND SILLINESS AT SALFORD.

In the last few months I have spent more time with John than I have in the last few years, reminiscing about our lives when we were young men which included many of these stories, and I do believe that this is how John would like to be remembered as a person who loved the company of people and who loved to laugh.

Thank you, John, for keeping it so. . . respectable.

Though the image of a bunch of grown men in budgie smugglers and knotted handkerchiefs in deck chairs outside The Black Horse on Boxing Day will take some time to fade.

Moving swiftly on. To romance.

John was on the roof of the Kings Arms in Chippy installing an aerial. He saw Pam walking down the other side of the road. He sent a mate down to ask her for a date. She said no.

Because when they were at school together he had ignored her. So she ignored him. And kept on walking.

John sent his mate back after her. He was “really interested”.

So they met for a date. Teatime. At the cinema in New Street. Pam can't remember the movie. But she does remember that she had to be home by eight o'clock.

The young couple were allowed to meet once a week.

As they got older they were allowed to see each other more often.

They got engaged at eighteen. Pam says there wasn't really a proposal, just an agreement that they would marry and they should go and choose a ring.

They were married at St Mary's Church on second of March 1963. Three weeks ago, the second of March, was Pam and John's 56th wedding anniversary.

John Glanville's tribute mentioned, in passing, John's interest in football.

John told Pam that in marrying him she was marrying football. He wasn't kidding.

Pam would loyally attend all his matches.

When he retired from playing, John ran the Chippy Swifts, the Chippy Town Youth and the Adults Sunday morning team *Real Armas*. In due course both Martin and Shawn played under him at



different levels and both will confirm that they were shown no favouritism when it came to team selection.....

John started work as a driver's mate for Hitchmans Brewery and then for Leach & Haynes as an electrician

He then joined the family electrical business of Oliver & Newman at their shop in Moreton in Marsh, ultimately taking over from his father as director. He worked mostly in the shop.... selling

He was good at it. Shawn worked there for a few years and says his Dad's sales technique was "a cross between Del Boy and George Clooney".

John retired when the family business was sold but he kept on working at bits and pieces. Like Chalford Blinds – where – certainly as far as my wife was concerned – the Del Boy/Clooney charm still worked its magic.

Then John wasn't the kind of guy to get old. He may have sometimes been chronologically the oldest member of the party – but he never behaved like it.

Because he kept himself fit. He was doing circuits every Monday night until well into his 70s. Jason, who ran the class, looked on in amazement one evening as John was doing shuttle runs at some speed "What are you Newman's made of?" he asked Shawn

John and his partner in crime, Dave Hicks, would often have the rest of the class in hysterics at their antics.

John had to keep himself fit. How else would he have crammed so much adventure into his life?

Like that time in Switzerland when he danced on the tables with an umbrella Mary Poppins style. In his Y fronts.

He liked to dance – anything from Rock and Roll to Ballroom. As his family told me: "If there was music he would be there jigging along."

And he liked a laugh. His sense of humour was - uninhibited.

Remember the Jimmy Hill incident?

John and Roger, fresh from accidentally killing some goldfish by feeding them bananas, booted, suited and probably not entirely sober, noticed a donkey in Jimmy Hill's field.

Jimmy Hill died in 2015 still unaware of what happened that night.

But for us, the image of John in suit and tie riding a donkey bareback and backwards is hard to forget. Even though it was dark.



So John loved his football, his family, and a bit of a laugh. And Spain.

The family company bought a villa outside *Mojacar* on the *Costa Almeria* in Spain. John and Pam would holiday there three times a year. They were even thinking of moving there permanently.

At this very moment John's friends in Spain are on the Plaza remembering him. They can't join in today's funeral – but they can have a drink in John's memory. We'll have to wait until the Crown and Cushion for that.

Four years ago, when John was having a difficult time, his granddaughter Gemma visited him in hospital. He told her: "Gemma, in life there are good times and bad times. I'm having a bad time at the moment but the good times will come again and I'll be back in Spain having a beer"

He was right. He did get better. He did get back to Spain. I hope he had more than just one beer. Because even on his sickbed he managed to console his granddaughter.

He was where you went when you were troubled and needed advice. By the end of the conversation things just seemed better

But back to Gemma. Time for some of her other memories...

Gemma Newman

Gramp,

I have so many memories of you, but if I was to say them all I'd be speaking forever, so I here are a few...

I remember going to fairgrounds and going on the helter skelter slide with you each time without fail.

I remember our family holidays to Spain, a place where you truly loved visiting with Nan and seeing all your friends there, you both always came back very tanned which would make me extremely jealous each time.

I remember singing karaoke with you from a young age in the garage, I'd mostly sing Amy Winehouse but you always encouraged me and said I was a good singer, but hearing myself sing now makes me think you were just saying that to be kind and to make me feel better.

But most importantly I'll always remember your smile, your positivity, your laugh, because in your words 'the best laugh is a belly laugh'.

You taught me that no matter how tough life gets there's no point in getting upset or angry about things but to be the bigger person and to always smile, because 'when you're smiling the whole world smiles with you', a song that you would sing to me throughout my whole life.



And always remember you are my sunshine, my only sunshine, forever and always.

Sleep tight grampy, and keep smiling.....as we all will when we think of you

Gemma's younger sister Rachelle sent John a birthday card back in November with a poem she composed for him. She's asked me to read it for her:

Rachelle Newman

Dear Gramp,
I'm not good with words so I thought I'd write it down.
But basically, you're the best person in this town.

I wish I had to study less and could spend more time here,
But you're the one who suggested I should become an Engineer!

Your strong will is what I most like.
You single-handedly organised and completed a 22-mile hike.

From coaching football to putting on a DJ show,
You leave a trail of laughter wherever you go.

The fun times we spent will always stay with me,
Whether it's Karaoke, Dominoes or hearing a brand-new story.

You may not think I learn from what you say, but I do.
A lot of who I am today comes from you.

You've showed me how to smile when the going gets tough,
And to simply sing louder when you think you've had enough.

So Happy Birthday to the amazing man you are,
And know that wherever you may be I will not be far.

As this poem ends my love for you does not.
With hugs and kisses, I will send you the lot!

Lots of love,
Rachelle

Rachelle's birthday poem for her grandfather.

And surprisingly – so far – we've managed to keep the stories fairly clean. I say so far. We're about to hear Dobby Robson's memories of John...

Brian "Dobby" Robson:

We are all here today to pay our respects to John and our condolences to his family. John was always there for Heather and myself, advising and listening when needed. He always had a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eyes and only ever saw the good in people. John always liked his weekends out and about and loved nothing more than a beer or two and a good old sing along at the pub, especially if there was dancing.....you'd often see him and Pam rock and rolling round the floor, to great applause.

Although I knew John in his Salford days and when he managed the Real Armas and the Veterans teams, I will concentrate on my recent memories of him.

Pam, John, Heather and I used to go to North Devon for long weekends away. On one occasion there was a beer festival at Ilfracombe.....so we thought we might take a look. Well! After a few Devon ales we ventured outside and there on the grass were a couple of sumo suits laid out for members of the public to have a go. Nobody was bothering with them, so John and I decided we might get things started.

What a sight we were once kitted up, John just couldn't stop laughing! We had a couple of quick bouts and a spot of posing and then I managed to throw John onto the floor whereupon he lay there on his back, stranded, flapping around like an overturned ladybird, arms and legs kicking about, trying to get up, all the while tears of laughter running down his face. One of the girl assistants rushed over to help him. She grabbed his legs and yanked hard and he popped out of the suit like a cork from a bottle! Needless to say by now a large crowd had gathered, raring to have a go (we should have asked for a bonus)!

After the Sumo suits we moved onto the Bucking Bronco. John went first and stayed on for about 20 seconds and of course I laughed when he fell off. Then it was my turn and as I got on I noticed John having a word with the operator. He had only gone and talked him into adjusting the speed and needless to say I shot off 5 seconds later. Good old John, he had the last laugh!

One other small thing. Whenever we were away John was the only one who wouldn't or couldn't cook either breakfast, brunch or tea.....but he did tell us he could cook the perfect boiled egg. So, we challenged him and one morning he got ready and started the eggs with his watch in hand and meticulously not taking his eyes off the pan until they were ready, they were indeed perfect, but he'd forgotten the toast which was by now burning..... However, John did tell us he'd take a cookery course and surprise us....John.....we're still waiting!!

I think I can speak for everyone here today when I say that we're all going to miss you a lot John. You were a good friend, a lovely bloke who showed great strength and dignity throughout your illness and in the words of David Beckham.....JOHN you are a true LEG-END.

Plenty of memories, from friends and family.

As Rachelle mentioned, John would tell stories to his grandchildren. They sometimes went on a bit long. They sometimes turned into a bit of a lecture. Especially about Brexit.

So perhaps we should stop while we're ahead.