

**Archive Tribute of**  
**Kenneth Herdman**  
**23/12/34 – 23/07/18**

**Written by**  
**Steve Parry**  
**Humanists UK**  
**Accredited Funeral Celebrant**  
(Working Script)

Ken was born in Hartlepool on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1934, so like all people from Hartlepool he was a “monkey hanger.” If you ask Chris later, he will explain this to you.

He was one of four children born to Ted and Elizabeth Herdman, his brother Ronnie being older than him and his sisters Vi and Kathy younger.

He didn't talk about his childhood in later years, but growing up during the war years, with rationing and the son of a ship builder working in the docks, it was certainly a much tougher childhood than later generations knew.

When the time came to undertake his National Service, he joined the army as a gunner in the Artillery and spent his two years based in Newport and at the artillery firing ranges in Penally, West Wales.

While stationed in Newport, he met his first wife and when he left the Army they married and settled in Machen, in the house he was to live in for the rest of his life.

1956 was a big year in Ken's life his first son, also Ken, was born and he was recalled to the Artillery during the Suez Crisis. He was stationed in Malta awaiting deployment to Egypt; but fortunately, was never sent. He returned home to his family and his job as a machine operator in Alcan in Rogerstone.

Two years later in 1958, during severe weather, Chris was born on the kitchen table at home as they were snowed in. Ken and Chris remember good childhoods, going on holiday to Kiln Park in Tenby for many years.

Ken was a father who would do anything for them and had different ways of dealing with things. For example, Ken remembers, the two boys were always

fighting each other, so their dad went out and bought them two sets of boxing gloves to use on each other and a Freddie Mills punchbag to tire them out.

Ken enjoyed walking up in the mountains and he loved messing about with motorbikes; working on them and riding them. He rebuilt at least five motorbikes and Chris remembers, as a young boy, sitting on the back of his Dad's bike with no helmet on, holding on tight, as his dad took him for a ride.

In 1975 Ken was one of the few people chosen by Alcan to go to America and Canada for training, ready for the establishment of a new foil mill, where he worked until his retirement.

All our lives are complicated and relationships very often the most complex parts of them. In 1987 with his two sons grown and making their own ways in their lives, Ken started a new chapter in his. He married Gaynor and gained three daughters.

Helen was twenty-one and married, but the twins Lisa and Sarah both moved into number 25 with him and Gaynor. I asked them what he was like as a new father to twin seventeen-year-old girls and they said that he was a great step-dad, a dad really. He was always there for them and was very generous.

Sarah remembers Ken picking her up on one occasion in his Mini, just after he and Gaynor had got together. He wanted to check with her how she was about them being together and he told her that he just wanted to look after Gaynor, and that was something he was to do for the rest of his life. He also later gave Sarah the blue mini he picked her up in.

Lisa told me that a few years later she started college in Bridgend and each Friday Ken and Gaynor would pick her up from the bus in Llantrisant when she came home for the weekend.

One day as Ken and Lisa were walking back to the car, he pointed out a brown Austin Allegro and said, "That's a nice-looking car." He walked up to it and saying, "Look its open," tried the door handle. This made Lisa nervous about getting into trouble and it got worse when Ken got in the car and told her to do the same.

She told him to get out and he said, "But do you like the car?" To hurry him up she answered that she did, and he replied, "Good because we've bought it for you.'

Ken retired from Alcan in the early 90s and he and Gaynor set about enjoying their retirement. Their children kept them busy looking after their beloved grandchildren and Ken busy helping with any work that was needed around their houses.

This included helping Sarah and Mark renovate and convert two houses into their family home. He liked to be involved in the lives of his family and when Mark and Lisa's husband Ralph started a mini rugby team Ken went to watch every game. All the kids liked him and gave him the top supporter award.

Just after they retired Ken and Gaynor bought a campervan and used to go off in it with Jess the dog and various grandchildren to Pembrey and other places. They later traded in the camper for a caravan at White Sands in Saint David's, where they spent all their summers and when they lost Jess they had another beloved dog called Seren.

They were very happy in St David's, had many friends and were frequently visited by children and grandchildren. Ken enjoyed sitting in the sun for hours and cycling through the lanes around St David's. For the rest of the year they continued to live happily in Machen, a part of the lives of their children and grandchildren.

When Ken was diagnosed with lung cancer he was more concerned about Gaynor than himself and so was determined to stay at home, where he could make sure she was alright. He was able to do this because of the loving care he received from Sarah and Lisa with support of the nursing staff from St David's Hospice.

This meant that when his life ended it was in the home that he loved, as he had wanted.

His family was the most important thing to him and so now we will hear tributes to him from three of them.

Chris would you like to come up.

## Chris's Tribute

Dad

Kenneth Herdman, also known as Ken, Kenny Boy, Kenneth Edward.....Dad, Pops, Old man...Big Ken, Gang Ken, Grampy.....just a few of the names he was known as...different names but the same bloke.....loving, kind, generous, opinionated...just don't mention England rugby...Steve asked us if there was a dress code for today, my suggestion for everyone to wear an England rugby shirt didn't go down very well

I would like to take this opportunity to thank dad's three daughters, my stepsisters, and their families for taking Dad to their hearts and the way they treated him. You have my heartfelt thanks and sincerest respect.

Everyone here will have in their minds a memory of Dad and what he meant to them, it is personal, my memory will be of Dad walking his beloved Machen mountain with Sheba the Corgi, Tess the Dalmatian, Lass the golden Cocker Spaniel, Jess the Golden Retriever and not forgetting Seren the Whippet...you might even catch a glimpse of Sunshine the ginger tom hiding in amongst the fir trees, he knew when to keep out of dad's reach...

Thank you

## Connor's Tribute

I want to say a few things about my Grampy, my Grampy was such an independent lovely man, a big part of mine and his relationship were the chats we would have, I could always go down there and tell him anything. He was so understanding and supportive!

For a man to not even be blood related and English, it never crossed my mind that he wasn't my Gramp.

Some of the memories me and my brother have had with my Gramp are the fun times we have down the caravan, catching crabs in rock pools and lighting fires down the beach. (I now know where I get my fascination with fire from)

## Ryan's Tribute

Hello, for those of you who don't know My name is Ryan and I am one of Ken's grandchildren.

So where do I start talking about Grampy? Grampy to me wasn't just a grandfather, he was a supporter, a teacher and a friend. Grampy would be someone that I could ring for help and advice when needed, for example the time I took my dog for a walk up the forestry and my dog caught a squirrel, I thought I know who will know what to do, I'll ring Nanna and Grampy, Nanna answers and says "Oh gosh I'll pass you to Grampy", so she passed the phone to Grampy who said "Take it home, chop it up and have it for your tea", which sums up his sense of humour.

I used to think growing up that Grampy was the smartest man in the world, as if we had any homework a bit too challenging for our parents, we would take it to Grampy, science, maths, history, Grampy knew it all. We used to go for adventures up Machen mountain, setting off with Jess the dog by our side, leaving Nanna to make her famous cakes, while me and my cousins would venture up the mountain. Grampy was always patient with us even after asking after walking for 5 minutes if we were near the top. Grampy during these walks also seemed like Action Man, for example of when Grampy had to rescue my cousin Hayley from some "sinking sand" we encountered, Hayley made it but sadly her welly did not. We also thought he was fearless, after picking up numerous sheep skulls and going through the life cycle with us.

Grampy was also fearless when he and Nanna decided to take me, Loren, Hayley, Liam & Rosie away in the campervan, we started arguing about who was going to sit in the front with Grampy before we even left. After the

campervan came the caravan, and me and my cousins had endless days of exploring St David's and visiting Grampy's secret beach.

Grampy was also our biggest supporter, becoming involved in the Machen Rugby kids team which my Dad and Uncle set up, never missing a match of Dan and Connor's, even after he had lost his eye sight he always came to matches. He also dabbled in coaching when Liam started competing in cross country, making Liam run around the rec endlessly, I think he thought Liam was the next Mo Farrah!

So, from me and all your other grandchildren, thank you for all these memories and the many others too Gramp, thank you for everything and even though I hate it, we will have a whisky for you later.