

Tribute Paul Ormston Jackson 1/4/1956 - 20/2/2019

Paul Ormston Jackson was born on the 1st April 1956 in Rosedale Avenue, Shotley Bridge.

His parents were Harold, who was a plasterer by trade, and his mother Elizabeth. He was the youngest in the family, and his sisters Mary and Dorothy were older than him by about ten years, so we can assume that he got plenty of attention as the baby of the family.

He was a clever boy and attended Consett Grammar School where he developed an abiding interest in history. When he left he worked as a trainee architectural draughtsman in Corbridge. In 1981 he married Brenda, who he had met through his friendship with her brother, and their first son James was born in 1982.

They decided to look for work by moving to Leamington Spa, where Paul decided to pursue his interest in Early Modern History by enrolling to study for a degree at the nearby Warwick University as a mature student. Their second son Oliver, known as Olly, was born in 1986 and Paul graduated from Warwick in 1987. Paul always had a great interest in the English Civil War and there is a strong possibility, I am told, that Oliver was named after Oliver Cromwell, since Paul was very sympathetic to the Parliamentarians. Olly shares his father's interest in English history so his naming may have been very appropriate.

The family moved back to Consett in 1988 and Paul took on post graduate study at Sunderland University, obtaining a post graduate diploma in Librarianship. As part of his studies he volunteered in a small library just outside Stanley, where he was very happy because he loved books.

Paul and Brenda had taken the decision to home school James and Olly and Paul took on the main responsibility for this. Paul always said that the boys were his greatest achievement and they both remember the way in which he engaged their interest, particularly through his enthusiasm for the railways and for building models of aeroplanes. They both remember and appreciate the train sets he constructed with them , the models they built and the trips they took together: for example, visiting the Ravenglass and Eskdale heritage railway on a trip to Barrow in Furness. An example of the success of his educational strategy is that James was successful in being accepted to study at Teeside University, despite his lack of any conventional educational qualifications.

Olly recalls camping with Paul near Hadrian's wall where they were on the alert for a black panther which had been reported in the area. They were suitably scared when, in the middle of the night, they heard a creature moving steadily around them in the dark!

Paul and Brenda divorced in 2003 and Paul and the boys continued to live together. Sadly at this time Paul's health deteriorated significantly, he had a condition called *ankylosing spondylitis* which gave him chronic back pain and he also developed diabetes. In fact, James became his full time carer in 2006.

Paul was a very intelligent man who was highly emotional. He usually appeared cheerful, despite the depression which lay beneath the surface. He had always loved animals, he was a long term vegetarian and there were usually a variety of pets in the house. Thus it was a happy decision that, for Olly's 18th birthday, they decided to get a dog and Tinker, a border collie cross rescue dog, came into their lives.

Unfortunately Olly broke his leg shortly afterwards and so Paul took on the responsibility for him. They bonded very strongly and Tinker became a very important part of Paul's and the boys lives. Even more remarkably, they noticed that Tinker had become sensitive to Paul's metabolism and could alert them if he was becoming hypoglycaemic. Eventually Tinker's ability was recognised officially and he became the first home trained diabetic hypo-alert dog and got to wear an official jacket.

These years were actually among the happiest Paul had spent because of his relationship with Tinker. James has made a wonderful video tribute to this remarkable dog and his relationship with Paul which I strongly recommend. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BG Ae_h7DBM

Paul enjoyed watching football and followed the mixed fortunes of the Toon and he also supported Consett and his local team, Brandon.

Sadly, Tinker died in 2009 and it appears that Paul's grief for his companion had a big impact on his health. The household had been supplemented by two new dogs, Woody and Shadow, but it was evidently not the same.

Indeed, Paul took refuge in alcohol to help him cope and this also impacted on his health in these later years. He became very ill in 2018, but pulled through only to suffer a brain haemorrhage in February this year. He died on 20th February 2019, in Durham hospital where James was with him.

