

*A Humanist Ceremony
to Celebrate the Life of
Peter Weaver*

1st November 1938 – 25th April 2019



*Conducted in the presence of his family and friends
on Friday 17th May 2019
at Wakefield Crematorium*

*Service taken by
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Humanist Celebrant*

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Tribute

Peter was born on 1st November 1938, the eldest of seven children to his parents Peggy and Bill. He was a Wakefield lad born and bred, growing up in the York Street area along with his siblings Michael, Terry, Maureen, Brian, Christine and Gary. Peter came from an Irish Catholic background, and there was always the traditional pot of stew on the stove, bubbling away day and night; whatever was going spare would go into the pot, and the resulting concoctions were enough to put Peter off stew for life! His Aunty Ellen and Uncle Norman looked after him a lot when he was young, and he always remained close to them, and did all he could to repay their kindness once he grew up.

He was not what you would call an academic, and couldn't wait to leave school at fifteen, going straight into a plumbing apprenticeship at Gillot's in Wakefield. He spent his National Service with the Royal Engineers, working in the Post Office most of the time. Peter didn't particularly enjoy his time in the army, though he did appreciate the six months he spent over in Hanover, in Germany. But he was happy to get back to Wakefield, and his work as a plumber, which he always loved. Peter was self-employed for many years, and very good at his job, though he was never really hard-headed enough for business; he used to do jobs for little old ladies, then let them off paying as he could see they were pretty strapped. Peter always had a lot of time for the older generation, even when he was young. And he had a very kind heart, though that didn't help him pay his own bills! It was only in the last ten years or so of his career that Peter went to work for Wakefield District Council, so he could look forward to some sort of financial security when he retired.

Peter met Joyce when he was a teenager, and they married at Shafton when Peter was 21. Peter was delighted to become a dad, to Bridget and then Andy, and both his children said how supportive he was, of their childhood ambitions and their choices as adults. Peter wouldn't spoil his kids; he always lived within his means himself, and if they wanted something expensive, he expected them to work for it. He had a generous spirit, though, and gave his time and energy to others willingly; he and Joyce were both temporary carers at Flanshaw Children's Home, and were foster carers themselves as well.

Peter was always a grafter, and was out at work a lot when the kids were small, but Bridget and Andy both have memories of idyllic family holidays, visiting Wales, or relaxing with Joyce's family on a houseboat in Dorset. After these holidays, Peter would set up the projector back home, and invite everyone round to see a slideshow of the best photos from the trip.

Peter and Joyce separated in the mid-seventies, and Peter worked hard to look after Bridget and Andy on his own. He was a good cook, when it came to traditional English grub, made a lovely Sunday dinner and was always experimenting, trying something different or tweaking his gravy. It was lonely, as a single parent, and Peter appreciated the support of friends.

One of his mates had a club called Las Guitarras, and Peter used to help out in the bar; he was never a big one for pubs and clubs himself, but he preferred to be there than sitting at home alone. And a good job he did, as it was there that he met Margaret. They fell in love, and married on 20th May 1995. In so doing, Peter became step-dad to Margaret's sons Christopher and Robert.

Peter thought the world of Margaret – they had a lot of laughs together – and she was a good influence in getting him to try things he would never have ventured on his own. She couldn't get him to join in with her own passion, scuba-diving, but she did manage to get him to come abroad, to Egypt, and even try a bit of snorkelling. Once Peter retired, he and Margaret got a caravan at Scarborough, and they had many happy times over there, and made good friends on the site, with whom they would share barbecues, or join for a drink at the on-site club.

*Peter was proud to watch his children grow up; Andy joined him in the plumbing trade for a few years, and he welcomed his son-in-law, David, and daughter-in-law, Angela, into the family. He was delighted to become a grandad and a great-grandad, though was not so enamoured when the grandchildren were babies: crawling, squawking s**t machines, he used to call them! But once they were old enough to communicate, he would happily get stuck in, building Lego and playing games. He loved to hear about Jon and Ben's sporting exploits when he went to Bridget and David's on a Sunday, and Wes and Will would sometimes come over to the caravan with him and Margaret. Peter and Wes were very similar characters, and Wes accompanied his grandad and grandma on holiday to Egypt as well, as he shared Margaret's interest in diving.*

Peter never got to meet his great-grandchildren Aro or Molly, but he did chat with Molly on Skype, all the way from Australia. Bridget and David emigrated down under eleven years ago, along with Jon and Ben, and though Peter was obviously sad to see them go, he was glad for them, and promised Bridget he would be with her all the way, in spirit at least. He and Margaret did get out to Queensland to visit a few years back, and, once he was there, Peter loved it, especially exploring the history and geography of the area, and climbing Mount Tamborine to be rewarded with an incredible view of the Gold Coast. The trip did bring its own surprises, not least the sight of Bridget in a bikini, revealing her tattoos to her dad for the first time; needless to say, Peter was not that impressed, but Bridget promised him then that she was saving her left shoulder for him, a promise she is going to make good on this weekend, immortalising her dad's memory in ink.

Peter always loved finding out about things; his favourite shows to watch on TV were about natural history or engineering, normally viewed while laid out on the floor on his belly, a habit he kept up until he just couldn't get off the floor any more. That would be his habitual viewing position for the Formula 1 as well, an event he never missed. Peter was at his happiest at home in front of the TV, ideally with a smoke.

He was a determined smoker, carrying on until just weeks before he died; by the end Andy would cover his dad with a fire blanket, to stop him dropping his cigarette ends on himself, though he joked his dad could save them the cost of a cremation, the way he went on.

Both Peter and Margaret suffered ill health in the last few years, and after Margaret died, just over two years ago, Peter really struggled without his sweetheart by his side. Though Andy and Angela did all they could to look after him and keep him living independently, by last year he needed more care than they could provide, so he moved into Carr Gate Nursing Home. Everyone there loved him and made him feel at home, and Andy and Angela said they felt like they were all treated as part of the family. Whenever Peter was moved, from bed to chair or into his wheelchair, his stock phrase was 'The Eagle Has Landed,' to the point where the carers would prompt him if he ever forgot to say it.

Peter never wanted a fuss made; he had so much time for other people, but rarely a thought for himself. But he loved every minute of the birthday party his family laid on for his eightieth last November, and of course, his most special gift was the presence of Bridget, who flew over from Australia as a surprise; I think everyone cried, that day!

Peter lived for his family; a quiet, caring man with a heart of gold. He was a hard grafter, and generous with what he had, and he is sorely missed now he is gone.