

A celebration of life Reginald Gordon Joseph Beckington

20 August 1928 – 20 June 2018

11.45 am, 09 July 2018, Thornhill Crematorium, Bridgend

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Reg was a quiet man who tended to live in the now, he didn't dwell on the past and looked forward to the future. This meant that he didn't speak much about the past, so Pauline does not know much about his early life. Occasionally he would tell a story no one had heard before, but most of this tribute comes from the memories of family rather than from things he spoke of himself.

Reg was born on the 20th of August 1928 in Risca, the youngest of Thomas and Winifred's four children; John, Lillian and Winnie, being his older brother and sisters. His father was a school attendance officer, but unfortunately, he died when Reg was very young, and Reg didn't really remember him.

Winifred remarried, and Reg and his brothers and sisters were brought up by Paddy MacCarthy, as if he were their own children in Bryan Street in Cardiff, where Winifred and Paddy ran the corner shop.

Reg joined the Navy to undertake his National Service and once mentioned to Martin that he served on Prince Phillip's ship, HMS Sparrow. He was stationed in Bermuda and told of how on one deployment they sailed down the east coast of South America, up the Amazon to the head of the navigable waters, then back into the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal and up the Western Seaboard of the USA.

He must have liked the life because he signed on for another year, leaving after three years to run the NAAFI in Port Said. He did this for two years and returned to the family home in Bryan Street in about 1950 and worked in the family shop.

Sometime in the next few years he started to work at the Rover Car works and met and fell in love with Martha, who he always called Murph. They were married in 1956.

Martha was a widow who lived in Milton Street with her three daughters, Sheila, Patricia and Maria. Reg moved in becoming the step father of three girls the eldest of whom Sheila, was only ten years younger than he was.

He had great relationships with all the girls. He never expected Sheila to look on him as her father, but he earned her affection and respect because he made her Mum's life complete.

They became good friends and when she married Albert the two couples became very close; more like best friends than anything else, often going out together, and always remaining close.

Patricia recently wrote to Pauline saying that Reg was a good step dad to all the girls, she remembers Sheila and Maria were well behaved and didn't cause Reg any problems, but that she could be a bit of a worry for him.

Whenever she was going to the cinema with her friends Reg would ask Martha to go with him and they would sit three or four rows behind Patricia, so he could keep an eye on her.

Maria wrote Reg a Father's Day card this year, which unfortunately he wasn't able to read, this is what she said.

"Thank you for being my Dad. You brought such fun into our lives and made ours a very happy home. My first memory of you, is of you coming to the house with a big bag of Jaffa Cakes and rolling them down the hall to me like a bowling alley.

I was four years old and squealing with excitement as I tried to catch them all. I have loved you ever since."

Their happy home was to suffer tragedy over the next few years, Martha and Reg had two children; Terrence and Maureen, both of whom died when less

than a week old. Perhaps the sadness of this time contributed to Reg's preference not to dwell on the past.

Eventually they got their wish and Pauline was born. Pauline echoed Maria when she told me that Reg was a fun Dad. She fondly remembers Saturday morning lie-ins with him, when both of them would sing their hearts out.

He would often frighten and delight her; showing her that he had accidentally cut off his finger and was keeping it in a bloody piece of cotton wool in an old tobacco tin or show her the mouse he kept in a handkerchief running up and down his arm.

It took her years to realise that he couldn't have cut off that many fingers, that there was a hole in the bottom of the tin he poked his finger through and that the mouse was a couple of ball bearings wrapped in a hanky.

In 1969 the family followed Sheila, Albert and their children; John Alan and Annette moving to a new house, on the new Trowbridge Estate.

The families were very close, and Pauline remembers her father playing with all of the children, making them laugh with more of his tricks and jokes.

In 1976 Reg was made redundant from the Rover Works and was given his lump sum in cash. This amounted to several thousand pounds, which at the time was enough to buy a house. He had never seen, never mind held so much money.

He walked in to the house and started throwing the money in the air like confetti in his excitement.

He worked at Llanederyn High School, dealing with maintenance for a while until he took another job working for Brains Brewers.

Initially he worked at the Brewery but later became the roving maintenance engineer, travelling around the many pubs repairing anything that needed it.

But when he got home, he never spoke about his work. His only real interests in life were his family, his house and his garden. He didn't even learn to drive until he was in his fifties, because he didn't see the point.

His relaxation from work was spending time with those he loved and who loved him, so he took to retirement easily because it allowed him more time to spend with his Murph.

He and Martha had a good retirement for many years until she started to suffer from dementia. She got progressively worse over the following four years, but Reg was determined to continue to be the one who gave her the love and care she deserved. He looked after her very well and refused to allow her to go into care. He would often sit up all night in front of the bedroom door, watching over her and making sure she didn't try to leave in her confusion.

When Martha died in 2002, Reg was heartbroken to lose his soulmate. But his pragmatic attitude to life got him through it.

He decided he needed a flat instead of the house and moved into a flat in Rumney.

He decided he needed a dog to keep him company and adopted a little Patterdale Terrier called Patsy, who became his constant companion and best friend.

He also got a computer and learnt how to use it. He researched his family tree, dabbled with Facebook for a while and kept in touch with everyone using email.

Pauline said he would often complain that he had been so busy on the computer his finger was hurting, so she'd tell him to try using more than one.

Reg was happy in his flat and lived well, he enjoyed walking Patsy and he had many friends in the area. He was highly independent until the heavy snow in March this year when he was taken ill. It became apparent he was getting confused and was taken into hospital where he was diagnosed with a brain tumour.