

Tribute

Sidney Herbert Buckland was born in Bermondsey on 31st December 1917, one of eight children and the only son. His sister Joyce is his remaining sibling. He didn't talk much about his early life and it is only from Sid's marriage certificate that we know that his dad Herbert was a tram driver.

Sid worked in London as an engineer in precision tool making and in 1939 was called up to the army, the Tank regiment in the Irish Guards to drive tanks. Apparently, there was a family Irish connection, so this was quite appropriate.

Sid didn't see active service however, until 1944, but there is a recorded act of heroism when an incendiary bomb fell into the conservatory at his aunt's house. Sid duly picked it up, put it in a bucket and took it outside.

He met Vera who was in the WRAF after the war when he was 29 and she 25 and they were married on the 27th December 1947. For a reason Neil has never known, Sid used to call Vera, Bill.

In the 1950s in the housing boom, Sid, Vera and baby Neil moved to a new house on an estate in Eastbourne. This suited them very well as they were very sociable and the estate provided lots of people to get to know and have parties for. Sid was a guitarist in an accordion dance band and he taught the guitar too. They both loved dancing, were avid fans of 'Come Dancing' and Vera used to make all her own flouncy dresses. At this time Sid made all the tools for the British Syphon company, later to become Philips. Those of us old enough will remember all the iconic colourful soda syphons which were all the rage then. There was a time when Sid might have taken a risk to start his own business in central heating but a possible partner didn't want to take the chance, so nothing came of it.

Always busy, both Vera and Sid tried archery when they lived in Eastbourne and Sid had an allotment which Neil remembers going to sometimes. He also remembers being taught by his dad, to ride a bike, to read and to play the guitar. Neil's recollection is that Sid wasn't always the most patient teacher but Neil's ability and love of music, exemplified by the original piece that we heard at the beginning of the ceremony, was passed down from his dad and is something Neil is very grateful for. Patient he may not always have been, but he was certainly alert, and Neil remembers another tale of his dad's heroism from this era. A removal van suddenly started to move and realising there was no driver in the cab, Sid leapt up the steps, into the cab and put the brakes on.

There were a few family holidays, one in a caravan in Essex which wasn't entirely successful and later on in the 1960s to Jersey. Neil also remembers a Singer sports

car which Sid bought to impress Vera. Neil certainly wasn't impressed as he was cramped in the back telling his dad to slow down.

Sid loved watching wrestling on the television and he was also convinced that he was going to win the football pools. He was so convinced, that come the time to check the draws on the Littlewoods coupon he would shut the curtains in case he made a lot of noise and alerted the neighbours!

After Neil left home Vera and Sid were living in a flat which was a bit isolated so when the opportunity arose to buy the little millworker's cottage next door to Vera's sister in Brighouse in West Yorkshire, they jumped at the chance.

They continued to lead a very full life, dancing, singing and both having jobs at the local dance studio, cleaning and working in the shop. They went on holiday, often to Devon, and usually on hobby holidays, dancing, painting and the like.

When Sid retired they went on a cruise on the QE2 from Southampton. It wasn't quite what they had expected however. Vera had taken her dance dresses but sadly there was no dancing and to make the matter worse, in conversation with other people on the cruise, they realised they had paid much more than anybody else!

Sid and Vera were a devoted couple and were very good for each other. They were also very good to Vera's sister and continued well into their eighties to go into nursing homes to 'sing to the old people'. Sid was a family man who cared very much for Neil and wanted him to be happy. When Neil met Rosie, Sid wanted to meet her very soon to check out that indeed she was going to make him happy.

Seven years ago, they finally accepted that they were no longer coping on their own in Brighouse. By this time Vera was suffering with dementia and Sid had had two hip replacements, a pacemaker and treatment for glaucoma. So, they accepted Neil and Rosie's offer to come to live in their house in Somerset where, in the extension, they could be as independent as they wanted. There would be large family gatherings with Sid on the keyboards and everybody singing. He loved the music of Joe Browne, Country and Western and jive. He also loved being in the bosom of the family with Neil and Rosie, their children and spouses Christopher and Ali, Cathy and Tim and Stephen and Amy. To the grandchildren, Donovan, Jossie, Archie, Charlie, Essie and Rafe, Sid was Superbubba and Vera Supernanny

After Vera's death Sid soldiered on because that is just what he did. He was a product of his time, a man who accepted his lot and as a man thought you kept your emotions to yourself. He still read, especially detective novels: Colin Dexter, Reginald Hill and Ian Rankin, loved the humour of Ronnie Barker, Peter Sellers and Richard Briers but his world began to shrink as he became more infirm and dependent and he found this hard.

He was still very mentally aware and remained sociable and interested in other people, but he was no longer able to manage for himself when Neil and Rosie couldn't be there and 'Candlelight' and then 'Somerset Care' came to help. When he was on top of things Sid felt that he wanted to get to his 100th birthday but when everything was too much of an effort it wasn't important enough.

Sid went to live at Avalon Court Residential Home six months ago where he died peacefully in his sleep on the 1st of March.