

A celebration of life

Dennis Taylor

18 October 1943 – 26 October 2019

11am – 11:40am, 13 November 2019, Walton Lea Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Music: "A Tear" - Modest Mussorgsky

Dennis Taylor

To help us remember Dennis and start our tribute to him, we will hear from three people who knew him well - two of his friends and his daughter Geeta.

Ian Fletcher sharing some of his personal recollections from his time with Dennis in the Civil Service

Politics were important to Dennis - someone who worked alongside him throughout his time in Frodsham with the local Labour Party - Brian Lloyd, will share some memories.

Brian Lloyd sharing some of his personal recollections from Dennis' time as a member of the local Labour Party

Daughter Geeta remembering her Dad



Dad

Dad was kind, gentle, loyal, funny, talented, hardworking, selfless there aren't enough adjectives to describe my Dad. These are a few things which will always remind me of him:

I fell in love with water and swimming at the age of 4. Dad always made time to take me to the baths at the weekends when I was young, however busy he was with work. Along with my school lessons, he taught me to swim and not be afraid of the water. He would throw me in while I squealed with delight. As a family we spent Summer holidays at Butlins and all I wanted to do was be in the pool or at the beach in the sea. To this day I still religiously swim every week remembering those happy times. Recently whilst Dad wasn't well I did a sponsored open water swim in the Mersey raising £100 for Cancer Research. (Thank you to my family and friends who donated.)

Gardening was Dad's favourite pastime. He would stay out in the garden all day and until it was almost dark so as you can imagine he didn't particularly like the dark evenings as it meant he had to leave the garden and go inside. I do wonder if it was coincidence that Dad left us on the day the clocks went back?! Anyway, he had greener fingers than Percy Thrower. Pity I could never learn his secrets. I only have to look at a plant and it dies. Dad often rescued my house plants and I don't know what he did but within a couple of days they would be revitalised and take over the house like Triffids! Dad also played a huge part in making Frodsham bloom and win awards for the prettiest town.

The thing that will remind me most of Dad is music. From him singing Irish songs, dancing to Rock and Roll at parties, singing and dancing for Frodsham players and more lately listening to Classical. Those of you old enough, will remember a musical quiz show called "Name that Tune" hosted by Tom O'Connor. Dad was always first recognising most tunes after only 1 or 2 notes being played. We had no chance of beating him! We often listened to Pick of the Pops on Radio 2 and again we would play games to see who would be first to guess which years music was being played. Yet again there was no beating Dad! Coming from Belfast and being part of the music scene in his younger days, Dad got to know some famous musicians, Van Morrison and Mik Kaminski from ELO to name but a few. Dad loved ELO and we saw that they were playing at Liverpool Philharmonic a few years ago so Graham and I got tickets. I spent most of the time watching Dad rather than the band as he knew every single word to every single song played which fascinated me. Dad bought me my first single at the age of 7, The Wonder of You by Elvis. He sang that song to Mum at Butlins, sang it to my Grandma when she was ill and sang it to my cousin at her wedding in India. To this day it's my favourite Elvis song and I couldn't believe it when I turned on Pick of the Pops on the day Dad passed away, that it was the first record to be played!

To finish, I would like to share a few of the messages which have stood out for me since Dad's passing.

- My friend Sally in France said, "Great man, great personality. I can hear that tumpin' in my room Geeta". This tickled me 'cos Dad used to say that to Sally and I all the time as we played our music at 100s of decibels but being the kind person that he was, never made us turn it off just kept repeating that phrase which made us chuckle as we ignored his pleas for turning our music down.
- My friend Susie wrote, "top man" – says it all really!

- My friend Annie wrote, “no words will help” She was right.
- Debby at the funeral parlour said, “Don’t make his death bigger than his life”

So although we will all miss Dad very much, let’s try and think of the great, kind and gentle man that he was and celebrate his life.

Geeta



Dennis was born on the 18th of October in 1943 in Belfast, County Antrim - the fourth of 5 boys born to parents David and Jane Taylor. A happy childhood saw Dennis develop a wry affable sense of humour which would never leave him.

He grew up amongst some of the big names from Belfast- though he thought nothing of it. In later life he might casually reveal that he had played football against George Best whilst he was at school. He was lead vocal and guitarist in a band called the "Blue Orchids" - who once supported Acker Bilk - the famous jazz clarinet player.

On leaving school - he would have been 15 or 16, he started work in a greengrocers. In scenes reminiscent perhaps of Granville on the TV show Open All hours, Dennis had a delivery bike with a large basket at the front - on one occasion he somehow managed to get it caught on the back of a bus - and the bus pulled him along. He probably enjoyed being towed for a while.

Determined to see something of the world and, with mind set to travel to England and then continue to Australia where he had some cousins living, Dennis left Belfast and found work as a hospital porter at Birmingham Accident Hospital.

In 1966 whilst visiting the house of Ashok - one of his closest friends, one of his friend's cousins turned up - visiting from London. Dennis opened the door to a young woman by the name of Promilla - Pammi.

Dennis wanted to see something of London, and so Ashok's dad arranged for him to stay at Pammi's flat in Acton for a few days so that she would be able to show him around.

In 1967 - on a short visit during the "Summer of Love" - Pammi recalls, the weather was so inclement that the two had to stay in a lot and so got to know each other. The day after Dennis came to London, they went to London Zoo where, in the aquarium, Dennis turned his head to Pammi and said (and I quote) - "You must think it very soon , you must think I'm mad - will you marry me?"

You can guess Pammi's response...

Of course she agreed with him that it was too soon, that he was mad and that she wouldn't marry him!

When he returned to Birmingham he would phone her every day and he would visit when he could.

Eventually, after some time had passed, he wanted Pammi to meet his mother and asked Pammi to come over to Northern Ireland with him. Well Pammi wasn't going to meet his mother without a ring on her finger and so - on his birthday - 18th October 1968 the two were married at Ealing Registry Office, London.

Yet the two would always count the 2nd June 1967 as their anniversary - the day they met.

Dennis transferred to London, working at Whitechapel and Acton hospitals and trained as a theatre technician but later changed jobs completely to work with United Friendly Insurance Company.

With daughter Geeta and son Neil, their family lived happily together though Dennis and Pammi started to think about moving out of London - to give Neil and Geeta a different experience and to get away from the pressures of the "metropolis".

When Pammi transferred to Runcorn with the Civil Service - Dennis was able to secure work with them too - and he was to stay within the Civil Service for the next 20 years or so. The family moved up to Frodsham and shortly after arriving settled in to their house in Doric Avenue.

During his time with the Civil Service, Dennis played snooker - like his namesake - and has numerous medals and trophies as testament to his prowess in the game.

1976 - the year of that long hot summer here - saw the Taylor family travel to India to meet Pammi's relatives. The entire family in India took to Dennis immediately.

The whole family made him feel really welcome and at home - and they returned several times with relatives also travelling to the United Kingdom when they could.

Dennis loved history and holidays were very often centred around historical sites including travel to Egypt, Tunisia, Andalucía in Spain, Russia (including the 5 "Stans"). In the fabulous city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan on a market area lining a section of the ancient Silk Road, Pammi recalls an old man started walking alongside the two of them. Despite the man not speaking any English and Dennis not speaking Uzbek the two managed to hold something of a conversation - using broken words and hand gestures Dennis managed to glean that the gentleman had been shot by Nazi soldiers as he had fought with the Russians in the Second World War. This incident is an example amongst many of Dennis' interest in people and the patience he could deploy.

A generally happy man, he was always making time for others. He didn't ask much of life and strove to make life better for others where he could. He loved gardening and spend hours in the fresh air tending the garden, several hanging baskets and window boxes - he loved roses in particular.

For Neil, his parents are true heroes in his life - the best role models anyone could wish for. He recalls fondly the terrible "dad jokes" - but also the warmth and the love - unconditional and supportive. When Neil was (in his own words) a young stupid teenager, drunk - on crutches, broke and stranded in Chester at half past two in the morning he could phone his Dad - he would be told he had been stupid - but twenty minutes or so later his Dad would be there to rescue him.

Always busy with one thing and another - Dennis and Pammi would sometimes be called "Mum and Dad" by other young people - Geeta and Neil's friends for whom they offered open house.

Grandchildren, Christopher and Alex came into his life and he relished time with them both. He doted on Alex and was very present in his life and though

circumstances meant that he couldn't see so much of Christopher, he would never forget him. He loved both his grandchildren deeply.

Dennis and Pammi were both members of the Labour Party whilst in London - helping to canvass at elections in Ealing. They continued this activism when they moved to Frodsham - and both became councillors for Frodsham Town Council, Dennis serving twice as Mayor. In his first "stint" as Mayor he met the Queen - though as a lifelong socialist it's not clear how much that may have meant to him.

As a councillor, Dennis' involvement in the local community was significant. He worked tirelessly and achieved a great deal. It was he who was primarily responsible for the introduction of the pedestrian refuges on Frodsham's Main Street for instance - so if you cross the road in future and stand on one of those refuges perhaps you may remember Dennis.

Suffering a stroke in 2016 Dennis lost some of his peripheral vision which meant he had to give up driving. He joined Frodsham and District Stroke Club and met some good friends there too.

In May this year, Dennis began to experience serious pain and had several spells in hospital. Eventually he was diagnosed with bladder cancer but it was sadly inoperable. Dennis went home - he was in pain but thankfully in a way, he slept - almost constantly, Pammi by his side. In the early hours of Saturday morning, 26th October, he died.

Pammi can't really find the words - there are no words - to adequately convey the love she shared with Dennis. Together a long time - they loved each other - loved their family - travelled the world together and were totally comfortable with each other. Their time together has never felt and will never feel a day too long.

It is a testament to the man that his family have received so many heart warming messages of support from people who met Dennis - all from different walks of life and with different world views. Geeta mentioned a few.

Whilst in hospital, and subsequently, Dennis - who suffered from tinnitus - listened to a music disc with several gentle classical tunes on it - it helped him sleep. It is from that selection of music that all of the tunes being played today are taken.

We will now hear the gently cheering piano tune called Remembrances - Opus 71 No 7 by Edvard Grieg. As this music plays please remember Dennis well - be glad he was in your life - in whatever capacity you knew him; remember the part he played in your life and, just as importantly, the part you played in his.

Music: Remembrances Opus 71 no 7 - Edvard Grieg

Music: Cradle Song - Johannes Brahms