

A celebration of life

Reg Lawson

17 August 1936 – 20 December 2019

11am Monday 13th January 2020 at Lawnswood Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Reg was born on 17th August 1936, welcomed by his parents, Jenny and Arthur, and his big sisters, Barbara and Dorothy. Sadly, Arthur died when Reg was only a few years old, and Jenny brought the children up on her own for a number of years, until she met Leonard. Reg was old enough to look after himself when Jenny and Leonard got married, but he always got on well with his stepdad.

At school, Reg was a keen rugby player, playing for the school team and also Headingley Juniors; here he was coached by Ken Dolby until it reached the crunch point when he had to choose between his sporting career and the lure of cigarettes. Reg decided to keep smoking and give up the rugby, but he never lost his passion for the sport, and followed Leeds Rhinos all his life.

Aged eighteen he signed up in the army, to beat his National Service, as he used to say. He served for three years in the Royal Engineers, spending much of his time out in Germany. He and his fellow soldiers were often busy building pontoons; Reg was usually given the task of rowing up and down the river, ready to fish out anyone who fell in the water – this may or may not have had something to do with the time he was actually involved in the engineering and nearly managed to blow his finger off! Other than that incident, though, Reg obviously did pretty well in the army, as he was promoted to Lance-Corporal...briefly. Seems he did equally well in the German beer cellars, and ended up being demoted again a fortnight later!

All those years Reg spent away, he remained devoted to his teenage sweetheart, writing to her often. Reg met June when he was 16, she 14, and their romance survived the test of time and distance, and even Reg's phase as a teddy-boy! He never gave up using Brylcreem, and was very dapper all his years, taking pride in being turned out smart. He and June married on 28th March 1959 at All Hallow's Church, spending their four days of honeymoon down in London, watching the rugby! That was the first of many a trip to Wembley, Reg and June making the pilgrimage every year for the Challenge Cup Final and taking their own family along with them as they grew.

Reg was a proud dad to Garry, Diane, Graham, Kevin and Sandra, Garry and Diane arriving while the family were living at Clarendon Road and the rest of the children after they moved to Stanmore Mount, the house which remained Reg's home for the rest of his life. Reg was a sheet metal worker, spending twenty years or more at Oliver Douglas, and he enjoyed the work, hard though it was. He liked to relax over a pint or two (or more!) at his local for many years, the Hark To Rover pub. Reg played with the darts and dominoes teams there on Mondays and Thursdays every week, and would go up on a weekend while June was fixing the dinner. He'd be back in time for his grub, though, except on the odd occasion he got waylaid at the New Burley Club, and June would send the kids up to fetch him. Reg was a real social drinker, enjoying the atmosphere of the pub and the chance to catch up with other regulars.

When Garry and Graham were old enough, they might join their dad for an odd pint, but even before then Reg would bring them along when he went fishing with the Hark

To Rover Angling Club. Many a weekend they would go coarse fishing, or even sea fishing, and sometimes it would be a full coach expedition, the men and boys dropped off at a good angling spot while the rest of the families went on for a day out in Scarborough or Bridlington. Reg and June visited Bridlington themselves over the years, calling on June's brother Robin, who lived over there.

Reg also used to take the boys swimming on a weekend when they were young; Diane couldn't go in the water, so he would treat her to a comic while she sat on the side. And they enjoyed some fun-filled holidays at Butlin's, making the most of the pool and even venturing on some of the rides, though Reg's adventure on the Wild Mouse was not one he chose to repeat!

Reg wasn't a big one for going away, anyway. The long weekend in London each year for the rugby was enough for him; in general, he would sooner stop at home. He always liked to see family, calling in on his mam, who he doted on, every Sunday. As his children grew up, he welcomed their partners, Bernie, Ian and Debbie, into the family too, and he was delighted to become Grandad to Martin, Kelly, Katie, Matt, Nicola, Linzie, Sam, Charlotte, Rebecca and Sarah, as well as Great-grandad to nineteen little ones! Reg was happy to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren whenever they came to visit, and would have a cuddle of the babies, but he mostly preferred to watch them playing from his armchair. He wouldn't say much, just sit quietly and smile, content to see them having fun.

He was, perhaps, closest to Rebecca, as she grew up at home with Reg, June and her mum, Sandra until she was seven, and Rebecca would bring her two children to visit every week. With such a big family, there wasn't room to have everyone round at once, but Reg and June would have everyone in turn for Sunday dinner, and spread them all out through Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Reg worked hard all his life, and when it came to retirement, he wanted something to occupy his time, which was when he took up jigsaw puzzles, the harder the better. At least that meant birthdays and Christmas were easy to buy for, for several years, anyway. Reg was a prolific jigsaw puzzler, until one day he just stopped doing them. He continued to enjoy socialising, switching his allegiance to the Queenswood Social Club when the Hark To Rover closed down ten years ago. Having been a heavy smoker and a practised drinker most of his life, he gave up both without a backwards glance when health reasons prompted action, but he carried on going to the club to play bingo on a Sunday, still enjoying a home-cooked dinner on the table when he returned. Kevin would always join his dad playing bingo, and often ended up having to keep an eye on Reg's sheet as well as his own. Kevin was always there for his dad, though they could be more like sparring partners with each other at home, unless June put a stop to it.

Reg was a reserved man, never one to push himself forward, but he was a constant presence in his family, always there if they needed him and missed very much now he is gone.