

A celebration of life Howard Grimmett

17th April 1944 – 9th November 2019

11am, Monday 16th December, Charing Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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I didn't have the pleasure of meeting Howard, but I did spend some time talking to Noel and Ian about him, and I did have the privilege of seeing his wonderful front room, full of the items he had collected, and his splendid wall of pug pictures, both of which told me a lot about the man.

Noel will now talk to us about his brother.

Firstly, thank you all for coming to celebrate the life of Howard and say your fond farewells!!

***Lesley and Howard** were born on the 17th April 1944 in Barkingside Ilford Essex. Soon after we moved as a family north to stay with relatives in Nottingham as the V1 & V2 Rockets were falling all around us. Dad having returned through Dunkirk a few years earlier was preparing for D-Day, but had managed with the help of his friends in the Military Police to get to Ilford to see the twins before he left to join the invasion.*

After hostilities ceased we returned to a normal family life and were fortunate to get a brand new council house on the outskirts of Ilford, with our school at one end of the road and a farm at the other. It was a wonderful setting for us, with great freedom to enjoy our childhood, wandering hither and thither.

*In those days you walked everywhere and most Sunday's would find us on a bus, followed by a walk in the country lanes, with the often heard cry – **'how much further Dad'** just round the next corner – **Yes, but how many corners?** In those days **Howard** could never walk in a straight line he had to be springing along ahead with the odd pirouette, perhaps he had designs on **Covent Garden?***

*We all left school in the summer of 1959, I joined the Army, **Lesley** trained as a Comptometer operator and worked in the City, and **Howard** chose farming. His farming exploit lasted 6 months - I thought a pig had pushed him in the Thames, but Lesley tells me that he could not stand the **RATS**.*

***Howard** returned home and made the wise decision to go into **RETAIL** joining **DUNN & CO** the Hatters in Ilford. The only problem he had was that he was required to wear a hat. He chose a **ROBIN HOOD** style but always carried it to the end road to avoid the wolf-whistles and jeers from the neighbours.*

*He then made an inspired decision to join **HARRISON GIBSONS** Furniture store in **ILFORD** and train in soft-furnishing. He then moved to **CALEYS in WINDSOR** the John Lewis store to head up the soft-furnishing Dept and then onto **WARING GILLOWS** in **OXFORD STREET** and finally to **HOUSE OF FRASER** in **BROMLEY** with promotion all the way.*

*At this point it was suggested that he may wish to set up his own company and did a lot of work for the Arabs who owned the luxury apartments at **ARLINGTON HOUSE** in **MAYFAIR** and prospered on the back of that decision, with the great help of Catherine who he had married by this time.*

*I was thinking that after Howard's entrance tune of **Big Spender** should be followed by **Don't Get Around Much Anymore!!** which sums up the last 10 years of Howards life being a bit of a trial being plagued by a number of medical conditions; they certainly slowed him down and limited his social activities, but fortunately did not dim **his sense of humour**.*

*On my visits in recent times, we and, I include Ian in this, always had a good laugh. It was a fact that in the past if you saw a group of people at a gathering laughing and joking then you could bet that **Howard** was in the middle. He was a firm favourite at dinner parties because he would guarantee lively amusing conversation.*

*Through his business he got to know a huge range of people from the top to the bottom of society and could communicate at any level without fear or favour, although he very much valued politeness and took a dim view of rudeness. He once told me that if someone patronised him when discussing business – he would make them repeat the question **THREE TIMES**.*

*Through his knowledge and expertise in his field of soft furnishing and interior design **Howard** had great authority when advising his clients. I remember him telling me that one of his wealthy clients had laid his drive with tarmac at which Howard **threw up his hands** and said **it must be gravel** – sure enough it all came up and was re-laid with gravel much to Howards approval.*

*I know that clients at an Auction, and undecided on bidding for an item, would consult **Howard** as to the wisdom of the purchase. **Howard** himself was a modest collector, always looking for a good piece and at times doing a bit of dealing. His collection although he would consider modest is still interesting and it would have been nice for me to have details of why the pieces were purchased and their history. The disposal of **Howards** collection is a sad but unfortunately necessary thing as the items are personal and would not be to everybody's taste.*

*But on the upside **Howard's** nephew **Terry** and wife **Karen** recalled their wedding in Gibraltar and how **Howard** kept everybody entertained with his stories and **name dropping**. Howard was not showing off but recalling interesting events to which he was often party.*

*Ian and I have often suggested to **Howard** that he should record his experiences as they would make excellent and entertaining reading. Unfortunately, Howard was not that way inclined and the thought of tapping it out on a keyboard horrified him – being non-technical and not the academic?*

*And now to **PUGS!** First there was **HECTOR** a wonderful little chap – although not so little. Howard would state how obedient he was, one word from Howard and he would continue to do just as he liked. I can picture him now giving Howard a dirty look as only a Pugs can and then carrying on about his business and muttering under his breath - **who do think you are talking too?***

*I am sure you will be pleased to hear that **Marley**; Howards second Pug has been returned to the Charity that cares for Pugs and is enjoying his retirement with other aged Pugs and eating well, as Pugs do!!!*

*So finally, we have arranged for **Hector** to join **Howard** on his last journey – **Hectors** ashes are in the coffin.*

Thank you.

And thank you, Noel – what a story!

As Noel has said, the last few years were not easy for Howard, and the last few months, in particular, were very difficult. We often think of death as a cruel enemy, but for those who are suffering, or have reached the end of their endurance, it can come as a good friend, drawing the curtains, switching off the light, and settling us into a last sleep, free from pain and weariness. I hope it was so for Howard.