

A celebration of life

Junior Aitken

18 October 1942 – 24 May 2020

11:45am, Thursday 18 June 2020, The Counties Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

Junior was born on the eighteenth of October 1942, to Isa and Tucker Aitken, in Newmains, Lanarkshire, where he lived for 29 years. He was the youngest of five boys until his little sister Margaret came along to complete the family.

Junior attended school in Newmains and left when he was fifteen going to work in a garage for a while before finding work on a building site. He continued in construction for most of his life before taking a job with Lionverge, a company that undertook railway track maintenance for Network Rail. Finally, Junior worked as a delivery driver until his retirement.

In January 1966, twenty three year old Junior was set up, by his best friend at the time, on a blind date with an eighteen year old girl named Rosemary. This was a double date and, not only, Rosemary's first trip to a pub, but also, her first taste of alcohol – vodka and orange as she recalls. At the end of the date, Junior went home and told his mum that he had met the girl he was going to marry; his mum, who happened to be holding a frying pan at the time, was so unimpressed by this announcement, she threw the pan at the wall!

However, she came around to the idea and as Junior predicted, he and Rosemary married at Wishaw registry office on the 27th of August, that same year. The newlyweds spent a year living with Junior's parents before moving into a little council house. A year, or so, later they had Colin, just in time for Christmas 1968, then Sharon in June 1970 and Dawn in September 1971.

In 1971, Junior and Rosemary made the decision to move to England as work was becoming increasingly scarce in Scotland and because Junior's brothers had already made the same move.

Junior was hard working and could be hard work as he was a quirky man and a bit of a scrooge! He would drive five miles away so he could fill his tank with petrol that was a penny cheaper/litre and wouldn't have it that this actually cost him more money than it saved!

On family holidays in Benidorm and Tenerife, he was an expert at tracking down the cheapest pint and loved to tell new arrivals where they should go for a cheap night out. He used to photograph the menus outside the restaurants so he could show everyone how cheap the food and drinks were!

Despite visiting New York, Niagara Falls, France and many different areas of Spain, Benidorm was Junior's favourite place, he just loved going there. His favourite thing was to hire a car, and he and Rosemary would just go where the mood took them; they were intrepid explorers, and found many hidden gems away from the main tourist spots. He always said that he actually preferred driving in Spain to driving in England; he loved being able to toot the horn, like a local, which he did as often as he could.

Junior wasn't a man given to hobbies but he enjoyed football; he was a Rangers fan but had a slightly complicated relationship with his favourite team as he was convinced that if he watched them play, he would jinx them and they'd lose. He never watched Scotland play in case he jinxed them, too, but was more than happy to watch England matches!

Horseracing was a passion in his later years, and he loved to have a little flutter but only ever placing a 10p Lucky 15 bet which cost him £1.50. This became a daily ritual; it didn't matter what the family were doing or where they might be going, Junior had to go to the bookies, first. He liked to search the racing section and would bet on any horses

with family names such as Rosie, Billy, Sam, Dawn etc, but he never did find a Londi! Junior very rarely won but, if he did, he would return to the bookies in the afternoon to place another bet with his winnings. His love of the horses didn't make him rich but it didn't make him poor, either.

Cats were another of Junior's passions. He hadn't had any growing up but Rosemary did and it was at her family home that Junior first came into contact with cats. When he and Rosemary got their own place, they adopted two Persian kittens from a friend and Junior just absolutely fell in love with them. Later, when Rosemary became involved with the Cat's Protection League, Junior became a very willing helper and would do anything he could for the cats and the League.

As the years passed, the family left school, and started work, Sharon and Dawn at Barclaycard and Colin at British Timken. In due course Sharon and T got married, closely followed a month later by Colin and Mandy who married at Gretna Green. The only two occasions the family saw Junior in a kilt, and very well he wore it too! In the fullness of time the family increased to include the Grandchildren Billy, Sam and Londi, all very much loved by Granny and Grandpa, who became very proud Grandparents indeed.

Many happy summers were spent round the swimming pool at Overstone Lakes with all the family, or walking round the lakes feeding the ducks and geese. Junior was a real Dr Doolittle, as the ducks came running as soon as they saw him. He never missed a day feeding them, and one year he even had a swan family, cygnets and all, who used to come to the living room window, and off he would go, food in hand, across the park with the birds waddling behind him, patiently waiting for their snacks.

Rosemary and Junior spent 14 very happy and peaceful years living there, watching the little ones grow, but when Juniors health started to deteriorate the time had come to leave and the difficult decision was taken to move back into town in June of last year.

Dementia had begun to take hold over the previous few years, but this was then complicated by lung cancer which was diagnosed in December last year. It then came to light that the cancer was there two years previously but had been missed on a routine chest x ray. By the time the cancer was discovered, it was too far advanced and in April, Junior was admitted to hospital for a week before being moved into Cliftonville Care Home for end of life care. Junior died at 6.15 p.m. on Sunday, May 24th aged seventy seven.

Junior's granddaughter, Londi, has written these next words for her grandpa:

To Grandpa

Even though you're up in heaven, you're with me every day.

I definitely will never ever forget the jokes you used to make.

I really wish we could've found out sooner.

I really wanted to see you but we couldn't because of stupid Corona.

I will never forget your laugh and smile.

For you I would've run miles and miles!

I will never forget you; you will always be in my heart.

Love Londi XXxxXX