

A celebration of life

Michael Walmsley

9 September 1960 – 4 May 2020

Thursday 21 May 2020, Park Wood Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Tribute

Born on 9th September 1960, Michael was welcomed to the world by his mum, Pauline, and his dad, Roy, as well as his Grandma and Grandad Grzesiak, Pauline's parents, who he was always close to. Four years later he was joined by his brother, David, who said Michael was a great big brother, always looking after him. The two of them would play out for hours together with all their mates around their home in Holywell Green; Pauline said she would only see them back when they were hungry. Those bonds made in childhood lasted a lifetime, and David has been touched by all the messages he's received from those lads since Michael died, saying what a top man he was, and how much they all loved him.

Michael enjoyed camping trips with his dad as a boy, and later going to stay with him and his step-mum, Joan. When Michael and David were younger, they had some great family holidays with their mum and dad at Pontins or Butlins. But most of Michael's travelling stemmed from his love of football. You couldn't know Michael for long without learning which team he supported; he was a Liverpool fan through and through, ever since Roy took him and David over there to watch a game when they were boys. They were both hooked immediately, falling in the love with the club and the atmosphere at Anfield. They would head across for every home game they could get to, and followed Liverpool all over the country, and beyond; Michael was somewhat annoyed when he had to take his little brother with him in '78, when the supporter's club went over to Anderlecht in Belgium. In 1981, he and some of the lads he and David had got to know from the club travelled to see Liverpool play Bayern Munich. David wasn't allowed to come this time, so begged his big brother to bring him back a programme for his collection. When Michael returned empty-handed, he had to confess that he had had a few beers before the match, and clean forgot! Though David did find the ticket stub the other week, that Michael had kept safe all these years.

David was often the designated driver for matches in England, but even when he wasn't available for a lift, Michael was still determined not to miss a game. On one occasion he told his parents he was going down for the Brighton match by car, then proceeded to hitch-hike all the way there, sleeping in a phone box on the Friday night! Michael being Michael, though, he made friends at the game, and managed to wangle a lift home to his door, and he never confessed his adventure to his mum until a couple of years ago.

Michael could make friends wherever he was; at school at Brooksbank in Elland, at Waller Brothers mill in West Vale, where he got his first job, or at Remploi, where he did book-binding until it closed, he always got on with those he worked with. He was a laid-back soul, so soft-hearted and described to me as 'a good bloke and a good friend'.

It was thirty years since that Michael moved out and got his flat at Stainland; he liked having his independence, was very happy settled down with his frankly enormous

DVD collection (upwards of 2000 discs, at a rough guess!). Between his John Wayne Westerns and war films, and the joy of viewing every Liverpool match, Michael was pretty content in front of his telly, with Socks the cat for company. David would come up and join him for some of the games, or Michael would go to David and Jane's for his Sunday dinner. He got on with Jane's son, Grant, was proud to see him join the Marines, and was delighted to become a great-uncle, to Grant's daughter Eva. Michael was made up when she came to visit, though the fact that she is a Man U supporter gave them scope for a bit of banter! Michael always liked getting together with family; he wasn't a big drinker, but he would usually succumb to a gin and pineapple or a sherry, at Christmas.

He ventured out less in his later years, but rang his mum every single day, and always asked after his step-dad Brian. Brian was the one who helped him order the latest instalments in his DVD collection. Pauline and Brian would take Michael shopping every week as well, and Pauline never stopped looking after her first-born, doing his cleaning and ironing right to the end.

Michael didn't ask for much in life; he was happy as long as Liverpool were winning. He was a gentle man, kind-hearted and loving, generous to a fault. He is remembered with great affection by many, and by you, who knew him and loved him the best, as 'a loving son,' and 'a great brother, who would do owt for you.' And of course he will always be remembered as the most devoted supporter his beloved Reds could have wished for.