

# A celebration of life John Russell Savory

3<sup>rd</sup> June 1936 – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Surrey and Sussex Crematorium  
25<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 12 Noon

*a personal goodbye*

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Ceremonies

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## The Tribute

John was born in 1936 to Lillian and Ernest Savory, who managed a hardware shop – he was born in the flat above. His sister, Margaret, remembers them having a happy childhood - despite growing up during the war. In 1939 during the “phony war” they spent a few weeks with relatives in Buxted in Sussex, and then in 1940 they were evacuated to Sherborne in Dorset. The first night they were there, Sherborne had its only bombing of the war. After nine months, they returned to Sydenham, where they never realised the full danger, and used to wander the streets looking for shrapnel, and play cricket in the road.

So this may be where John’s love of sport began. He learned to play badminton at Perry Rise Baptist Church where he played every Saturday evening. He also played for the church cricket team, travelling around south-east London carrying all of his equipment on buses & trams. He was a very good batsman and wicket-keeper.

He once played cricket against the pop singer Marty Wilde (although his real name was Reg Smith) who was a fast bowler and played for the Blackheath Baptist cricket team back in the late 1950s.

In his teens, John went to Switzerland with a friend on several skiing holidays, becoming a very good skier - something he enjoyed for many years. Tim has fond memories of skiing with him in Austria, while Sue and Sally waited in a cafe drinking Gluhwein or hot chocolate, and he only hung up his skis for the final time ten years ago after getting the chance to ski with Fiona & Terry.

But back to his childhood.

In 1947 John passed his common entrance exam and gained a place at Dulwich College, thus getting an education he was always proud of.

He left school at the end of 1952, and signed on as an “articled clerk” to train as a chartered accountant at Bagshaw & Co. in St. Helens Place, in the City. He was fully qualified by the young age of 22, and eventually became a partner. He worked there until 1988. He loved his work, and was very proud of his prestigious clients. Not being much for trains, he travelled up to the City each day on his motorbike for his entire career.

It was in 1959 that John moved to a brand new bungalow in Allenby Road, Biggin Hill - and it was here that Fiona & Paul grew up. They also had a happy childhood, with sport being an integral part of family life, as John continued to play cricket, badminton & tennis.

In the 1970s John found himself a single dad to his two children. Looking back on it, Fiona wonders how he coped. He was still travelling up to London every day on his motorbike and then coming back home and dealing with two (probably moody) teenagers, a dog and the house. This was at a time when single fathers were rare, and few men knew how to use a washing machine. But Fiona can't ever remember him complaining. He did an amazing job.

Then he and Sue met at the tennis club.

For Tim and Helen, John came onto the scene in their early teens, appearing more and more at dinner parties or to accompany Sue to tennis club events. For two teenagers this was a red rag to a bull, and poor Sue had to endure lots of teasing, particularly after John showed up several times wearing trousers just a little too short for his tall frame. This prompted them to give him the unfortunate nickname of Funky John. But John slowly and quietly became part of the family and Helen describes how they were "chuffed to bits" when Sue and John announced their marriage in 1984.

So now John had four children to worry about (although by then most of them had left home). Or so he thought!

Paul moved in, and then so did Helen after travelling and university. Despite the fact that Helen had written off one of their cars when they were on honeymoon, they let her use Sue's beloved little Mini while they were on holiday – and yes, she wrote that off too. As usual, John took this in his stride.

John equally took it all in his stride when many years later Helen, Andrew and Kirsten, then aged around 2, asked if they could move in with them for three weeks whilst their own house was being renovated. Three weeks turned into three months while once again they enjoyed John and Sue's hospitality to the full, including lovely meals, evening games of Scrabble, and even better, free babysitting. It was only after another car incident (this time Sue's fault and involving Andrew's BMW parked in the driveway), that it was diplomatically suggested that 'the holiday was over' and it was time for the Adams family to go home.

When John left Bagshaws in 1988, he kept a few private clients, but then he finally decided to retire. He and Sue took up golf - despite John having told Terry when he first met him, that "golf was a good walk ruined". But ever the natural sportsman, John did rather well at it, and ended up being the Men's Vets Captain (twice) for Park Wood Golf Club. They took regular breaks abroad, often on golfing or skiing trips. Sue tended the garden, and they entertained and ate out. In 2009 they celebrated their silver wedding at the house.

The arrival of grandchildren coincided with John retiring, and for the next few years he and Sue spent many happy times with Nicola, Chris, Beth, Louise, Kirsten, Jack and Billy. Nicola remembers staying with "Gran & Grandad", playing Uno, Pass the Pig and enjoying Easter egg hunts around the house, and Kirsten loved the time spent with him at Biggin Hill with her building blocks and Slyvanians or pottering around the garden with him. Whatever chaos they caused, he would just smile & laugh - calmness personified.

Kirsten, will now read us a poem called *A Poem for Our Grandad*, adapted from a poem by Kelly Roper, which describes how all the grandchildren and indeed great grandchildren will remember him.

***A poem for Our Grandad.***

*Our grandad was a quiet man,  
But his silence could speak volumes.*

*The warmth of his gaze said, 'I love you'.  
The strength of his hugs when we were little said, 'I will keep you safe'.  
The gentleness of his hands said, 'you're precious to me'.  
His nod of approval for a job well done said, 'I respect you'.  
The raising of an eyebrow said, 'I'm watching you!'  
And the steadiness of his stare said, 'I believe in you'.*

*In the years to come, we may not remember many of the words Grandad spoke.  
But the memories of what he conveyed without speaking a word will stay with us forever.*

Thank you, Kirsten.

Eight years ago, John had a stroke, which affected both his movement and his speech. Sue was his carer at first, but after her death he relied on a team of carers who looked after him very well, particularly Yvonne who was a lifeline during lockdown, when the opportunity for family to visit was so limited.

Despite John's ill health, he continued to enjoy being surrounded by his family and friends. Fiona visited him every month and he enjoyed regular trips out, organised by Helen, Sunday lunches with Tim & Sally, and weekly visits from his good friends Margaret & Ray. He saw the family grow, with the arrival of great-grandchildren - Archie, Amber, Ivy & Reuben, and he liked to be kept up to date with how they were all doing (especially Amber - who has a rare condition called Angelman Syndrome). The various family dogs were welcome visitors too, reminding him of the labradors he and Sue had loved so much.

In the last few years his interest in sport was undiminished and he enjoyed watching all sports, but particularly cricket, on the television, something that was so important to him that he'd seem a little distracted if the family visited while the sport was on. He now read his beloved Daily Telegraph on his iPad, rather than the newspaper, and more recently enjoyed doing jigsaws.

He also enjoyed his occasional trips out, often with Margaret and Ray, for fish and chips in Addington or for a tootle around one of the local gardens. During lockdown they kept in touch via Zoom. His last major trip out was to meet them at Emmetts Garden, just after the end of lockdown – which turned into quite an adventure when his wheelchair slipped sideways off the path and into the flower bed, with Yvonne in hot pursuit.

Lockdown was, of course, a particular trial, with the family having to talk to him from outside the window, and not being able to give him a hug until he was in hospital, though they did their best, including bringing a cake onto the patio for his birthday in June.

The last few years were not easy for John. 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 John.