

A celebration of life

Richard Ian Godwin

6 November 1968 - 12 August 2020

3pm, 1 September 2020, South Oxfordshire Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

Richard's life

Richard was born on 6 November 1968. Like now, it was a time of great protest and unrest across the world. But all that discord probably felt far away from the quiet Oxfordshire parish of Ducklington where he grew up.

Richard's parents, Ian and Anne, were a true rural family - him a builder and her working at the village shop. They grew, cook and ate their own fruit and vegetables, and both Richard and his brother Peter attended the local schools.

When he finished his education, Richard followed his father into the construction trade - the two of them working together, specialising in ground works, and building (among many other projects) the Waitrose store in Witney. Always close and very much alike, they formed an even stronger bond during this time.

Richard's ideal career as a policeman was ruled out because of his eyesight, so when an illness forced him to stop building work, he took up a different uniform, and (as we've just heard from Neil) found the perfect calling as a postman. And not just any postman - an old-school, pillar-of-the-community postie for over 20 years. Richard was known, appreciated and liked by everyone on his round in Aston, and was even more popular with the local dogs for whom he always kept a pocketful of treats.

Music was the great passion of his early adulthood - The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Queen and other greats, and Richard loved the Spaghetti Western films, with their magical combination of Sergio Leone, Clint Eastwood and Ennio Morricone.

And at the West Witney Sports & Social Club, he developed a taste for two other fine things: dark rum and real ale. It was at the Club in 1994 that Richard met the true love of his life, Amanda. And they hit it off immediately. Casey, you were just three at the time, and you told me how Richard became your dad - someone who always had your back as you grew up, and who was immensely proud of your achievements and own career working with children.

You also said Casey what a close family trio you were together - the Three Amigos! There were great times at the house in Cyprus - particularly at St George's: a dramatic spot overlooking the sea cliffs and caves near Paphos. A trip there usually ended up at your favourite, traditional eating place, The Shack, where Richard would tuck into the biggest pork chop and a few beers.

Some difficult times lay ahead though, with Richard going through a prolonged period of mental health problems, and he and Amanda deciding to separate. It was a traumatic and painful experience for everyone, but all the while you continued to care for and love each other as a family.

It's often said that 'love conquers all', and this was proved true in your case. Drawn closer back together shortly before Richard had some heart problems and surgery at the beginning of 2019, he proposed to you Amanda, out of the blue in August, and you were remarried on a beach in the Dominican Republic in November. What a great story...

There was time for a trip to the Bahamas in February, and some further breaks were planned to Cyprus and Grenada later this year. But the worldwide Coronavirus intervened, so Richard found himself forced to isolate from work but able to enjoy the simple pleasures of home: taking Ted the dog for a walk; collecting his early morning paper; watching his favourite television quiz shows and tucking into his Saturday night takeaway.

Richard had been back at work for just a week before his death. It's some comfort I hope that he was able to reconnect with the people (and dogs) who meant so much to him. The mutual affection and appreciation for Richard is clear from the dozens and dozens of comments on the Aston and Cote village Facebook page. Here are a few:

'A true gentleman.'

A true gem; a diamond.

One of a kind; one in a million

A wonderful man and a pretty special postie. Always happy, always upbeat and always in his shorts!

A big part of life in the village, with a friendly word for everyone he met on his rounds.

The loveliest man who had the special quality of humour and kindness.

The most wonderful, cheerful postie anyone could wish for.

Totally honoured to have known him.

Always, always had a smile and made time to chat.'

Aston held its wonderfully named annual 'village knees-up' a few weekends ago, and I'm sure Richard was much talked about there. Plans are also underway to place a bench in the village in Richard's memory.

Reading all those comments made me think about what it means to be a postman or woman - as some of you are. This year has reminded us all afresh of how crucial public services like the Royal Mail are - an essential, treasured part of the fabric of our communities, a quiet army of heroes who make things tick for the rest of us.

Just think: through his work, Richard brought millions and millions of words to the families, households and businesses he served - good news, bad news: words of love, joy, sorrow and disappointment. And countless exciting parcels and packets - hopefully filled with nice surprises.

All of life was in his delivery bag and dedicated, capable hands.

He will be dearly missed.

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Now Casey is going to share her thoughts.

Thank you all for coming. I would like to start by saying how much dad would hate all this fuss. He was not an emotional man generally, but was

always a reliable pillar of support to the people around him. So my mum and I are grateful for your support today.

My dad, Richard, was a man of simple tastes and took the most enjoyment out of the simple pleasures life brought him. He was never happier than being surrounded by friends and family; with a beer or rum in hand; eating a lamb madras; his favourite music blasting out loud; chuckling to himself about his latest toilet based joke.

To me dad was the epitome of a friendly giant. He was always so bold, strong and gentlemanly, but with a heart of gold, his soft and gooey centre evident from his rotund beer belly.

My dad and I had a unique and very special bond. When Dad joined our family when I was very young, we grew close and many times I often called him my best friend as a child. He was always there for me and supported me in my decisions throughout life. Dad was always quietly proud but would always be there with a little nod or smile, which said more than any words could.

Growing up dad and I bonded in the afternoons, once he had his afternoon sleep of course. I remember the best afternoons where I would come home from school to AC/DC blaring down the street, and would walk in the door to dad ready to dance and play air guitar around the living room to all the rock'n'roll classics. We always shared a love for music. He taught me everything I know. He would spend hours talking

about his favourite bands and sharing his latest vinyl purchases or memorabilia with me. He taught me to love all music and how he believed most genres of music stemmed from his all-time favourites, the Beatles. I remember being a teenager going “really, dad?” but as I got older I loved seeing him get so excited about his passion.

We spent many hours in Cheltenham going around vinyl shops and fayres and researching the next releases for World Record Day. We enjoyed a number of great concerts and gigs over the years and he was even more happy when I met my fiancé, Nick, who was someone with a similar love for music and unique vinyl, to join us in our passion.

Personally I have always loved films. Something I managed to share with Dad a lot. I worked at the cinema for a number of years so many of our Daddy/ Daughter days out revolved around a cheeky ‘spoons and going to the cinema. He often used me as an opportunity to see some of his guilty pleasures, animation films, like Shrek, Despicable Me and pretty much anything Disney.

We loved going to see the yearly blockbuster at Christmas. It was our little tradition together to go see the film and then spend a few pints dissecting every moment. A special moment for me was taking Dad to see the Bohemian Rhapsody film a couple years ago. Dad explained after the film that he cried watching Freddie Mercury at Live Aid scene, as he remembers it as a young man at home, who loved Queen, and like many were in awe of this monumental music moment. He said he could see his own childhood and teen hood played out alongside the film, with

every song released and album he purchased. That moment brought us closer and help us understand each other a little more.

For many years we had holidays in Cyprus. I think it was there where Dad gave me my first sip of beer and where we spent hours sat around eating cherries and playing rummy or crib until the early hours.

Considering Dad was not a typical traveller, he certainly settled into the relaxed Greek way of life very quickly. Those holidays hold some of the best memories of my childhood and will forever be a special place for me and mum too.

Playing games as a family was a tradition at every gathering or holiday. We all would end up laughing till our sides hurt because of Dad's overly cryptic Pictionary drawings or clues, and chuckle at his secret competitive side coming out when he's on a losing streak, or his smug little face when he's on a winning one. Dad taught me how to play crib about eight times during my life, but the last one finally stuck and we enjoyed a few genuine games against each other during our holiday in Mexico last year.

It makes me so happy that Dad had an incredibly strong bond with Nick in the few years they had. They connected so much in interests and values, and Dad was truly honoured and delighted at being asked for my hand in marriage. I know Dad was so happy and proud of the life we have and will continue to achieve together and I know he will be right by our side next May.

My dad was not a man of many words. I am so lucky that just before his passing we were able to spend quality time together as a family, working on mine and Nick's garden. He built the most gorgeous stone wall that I will cherish for the rest of my life. The love, skill and sweat that he put into that wall tells me how much he loved me in Dad's own special way.

Dad was so in love with his 'grand-puppy' Ted and spent the last two years being completely besotted by him. He was looked after by Ted as he recovered from his heart operation last year to make sure he was walking plenty, which I think was one of his favourite parts of his rehabilitation. I know Ted will miss him very much, especially those morning biscuits in bed. So, Dad, I promise to give Ted's treats from you and I will be sure to tell him to be a good boy just like you did.

Now, my dad was a man of routine and I know he would be anxious now, wanting to be home soon for the four o'clock episode of 'The Chase' or 'Tipping Point', or be looking forward to a trip West Witney Club, saying "it's a bit dry in here". So I will choose to end my tribute soon.

There are many things I wish I told my dad but I have made promises to him now to remember him always. I promise to drink rum for him, play loud music for him, eat Saturday night curry for him, visit his favourite places for him, play games and laugh for him, and of course be happy and tell his stories with love. My mum and I will miss him always.

As I finish, in honour of my dad we have arranged a photo tribute to a special song. It is a song that, of course, Dad introduced me to and has been a firm favourite of both ours for a long time. I had originally picked this song as a surprise to walk down the aisle to at my wedding, so it felt right that I played it for him and for all of you today. I hope you enjoy it and all of his pictures as I know he would have.

Thank you.

Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, *If I Had A Gun*