

A celebration of life

David George Baines

3rd July 1943 - 15th October 2020

10.00-10.30 am, 29th October 2020, Cam Valley Crematorium

a personal goodbye

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The Tribute

David was born in Tottenham on 3rd of July 1943, the third of seven children. As a young boy he lived near to the football ground at White Hart Lane and earned pocket money by looking after the cars fans parked nearby to go to the match, though he and his brothers also knew how to get in to see the game sometimes.

His father arranged his first job, as a messenger for Barclays Bank on the Seven Sisters Road, when he was just fifteen. His time there wasn't without incident, he was snatching a quick smoke in the lift one day when one of the Bank's directors got in. Trying to hide the cigarette David quickly thrust it into his pocket, but the resultant copious smoke rather gave him away.

As it happened the family soon moved to Takely in Essex and rather than commute to London, David's Dad arranged an apprenticeship for him, as an aircraft engineer at Stansted Airport. At this time the airport was used as a base by several charter airlines. Over the years the airport continued to grow, becoming London's third airport in the late 1980s. David continued to work there as a flight mechanic throughout his career.

He worked 'on the ground' for Transmeridian Air Cargo and then in the 1970s began flying as well and travelled all around the world, which he really enjoyed.

He would bring back presents of exotic food not widely available in the UK at that time, pineapples and pistachio nuts for example. There were other souvenirs for the family too, a real bow and arrow from South America for Tim, a lion skin for his mother, some African carvings which Linda felt too scary for the home (they ended up donated to the pub) and there were exotic stories as well. David delighted in regaling his family with stories of encounters with alligators and tigers. He loved Africa, he said that, before Idi Amin, Uganda was the most beautiful country that he had ever seen.

At one point he was working in Hong Kong and the family were preparing to join him there but then plans changed and he returned to his Stansted base.

He worked on private jets as well and after undertaking repairs the flight mechanics would fly the test flight. David once replaced a window in Rod Stewart's private jet and so flew a subsequent test flight in it.

He made many friends at work and really appreciated the camaraderie there. Many people remained friends long after David's retirement. He formed a particularly strong relationship with an apprentice of his, Peter Bird, who said that David was the only person who would have put up with him. Peter moved

to the United States where he is now a senior captain with Polar Air and David and Linda went to visit him and holiday with him, 30 years after his apprenticeship time.

David enjoyed his working life, especially the travelling, Australia and , New Zealand being just about the only places that he didn't get to, but most of all David was a family man.

In Takeley he played football and for a long time there was always a Baines sibling in the team, there. His family were great football fans, his Mum washing the Takeley team's kit. He always loved sport and the associated social times around it. He also played darts and later some golf.

As a young man, as tradition dictated, he would be out with his brothers and mates on a Friday night before playing football on a Saturday and he met Linda when she was working weekend shifts at the Green Man in Takeley to save up for her first car. They were married in April 1971.

David was really proud of his family. He was a benevolent Dad, but firm. A raised eyebrow was enough to tell the children they were in trouble, or to warn them not to be!

He was devoted to his grandson Harry. He wanted to take care of him as a baby, though not the nappy changing, for this he 'supervised' Tim. Though he very rarely cooked, he cooked 'the best dippy eggs' for Harry.

He hated having his photo taken, but there is **one** of him smiling, with Harry crawling all over him. Harry was 'Grandad's little soldier'. David grew tomatoes in the greenhouse and these became the only ones that Harry would consent to eat.

David and Linda remained close to their extended families too. A village hall would be hired for Boxing Day celebrations so that all the generations could gather together.

There are so many memories of a rich family life. David loved sports of all kinds, golf, darts, rugby, cricket, he would watch any and all sports on the television, always finding something to interest him. He became an armchair expert.

Most of all though he was a football fan. A lifelong Tottenham Hotspur supporter he commanded that the whole family support 'his team' as well. They remember that wherever you were in the house you would always know if the Spurs scored a goal because you'd hear the cheer go up.

Although an engineer by trade David did not like to 'fix' things at home claiming that for a washing machine you need a washing machine repair man just as you needed an aircraft engineer for a plane.

He did not like to shop either. Linda recalls that he didn't enter a supermarket from 1973 until she broke her hip a few years ago. When necessary he would send Tim or Frances to shop for him. He wasn't very good with presents, sometimes purchasing items Linda had mentioned but not mentioned as things that she actually wanted. He was generous at heart though, if Linda referred to something that she had liked, his response was always, 'Well why didn't you buy it then'. He was more than happy to pay for Harry's football training.

He loved his Saab. Before he could buy it Linda had given him a Matchbox version to keep him going, then once achieved he drove it for 16 years and it is still going strong.

David always enjoyed a good argument and he did like to wind people up. He could tease with a perfectly straight poker face and deliver cutting sarcasm but never with bad feeling. On his retirement he was given a rather large wooden spoon, because he was such a big stirrer. When Harry gave him a loom band and expressed doubt that he would wear it he made a point of always showing Harry that he **was** wearing it whenever they met.

Although David had not enjoyed the best of health for the last twenty years, he never complained or moaned about being ill. He would never say that he was in pain or uncomfortable. In September, Linda had to secretly contact the GP when it became clear to her that David was very unwell and David was admitted to Addenbrookes. He did come home but had to be readmitted and Linda, Frances and Tim took it in turns to be with him there. David now had multiple health problems and they were able to be with him when he died on the 15th October.

Frances and Tim have written these words about their father.

Our Dad

What can we say about our dad that you don't already know? Behind the gruff exterior was, at heart, a very generous family man.

He wasn't a man of many words but 'the look' or a raised eyebrow would say it all. He was incredibly proud of us and we knew this because although he didn't always tell us, he would tell anyone else who would care to listen! He

told his very close friend Birdy, when asked, that his greatest achievement in life was his children. When Harry was born he took his grandad duties very seriously and he adored him, often telling his friends that he thought he might be a genius .

Our earliest memories are of him coming home from his flying jobs abroad, in his very smart uniform, armed with presents. One present, much to Mum's horror was an Alsatian dog called Pepper, who was being shipped to Saudi Arabia and dad was convinced that as the runt of the litter she wouldn't survive. This was not the first time Dad had arrived home with a surprise dog! Some years before when mum was heavily pregnant with Tim and I was two years old, Dad appeared home with a huge Alsatian called Sheena, who was going to be made homeless. Mum, about to be a mum of two under two and on her own when dad was away flying, was not best pleased but Sheena was a very gentle dog who became a much loved member of the family.

Much has been said about Dad's love of football so imagine his disappointment when Tim announced that he was better suited (and built) for Rugby. Despite knowing very little about the sport he took Tim to training and matches twice a week for over 10 years. He even joined the boys on tour one year in Holland but he was very disappointed with the facilities and so he carried a bucket of water and a sponge everywhere with him, for three days. Upon returning from the tour he took to his bed for three days to recover!

Dad was very keen for both of us to learn to swim, and Harry too, many years later, as he was unable to swim himself. He had no fear of the water though and took us swimming often going in really deep up to his chin but he claimed his body 'wasn't able to float'. I remember when I was around 11 and due to take my Gold Award in Bishops Stortford early one Sunday morning. We woke up to discover that we had been snowed in. Initially we thought that we wouldn't be able to make it but Dad drove me, sliding all over the place, and we made it just in time.

Dad was very opinionated and gave out lots of advice - sometimes wanted, sometimes not but you were never in any doubt about how he felt on a certain subject. Tim remembers a couple of years back when he not so politely told the elderly Tory MP who was canvassing at the door that it was about time he retired and gave a younger person the job but in slightly more colourful language.

Some very important life advice that Dad gave to both of us centred around pub etiquette! Always be the first to the bar and buy the first round! He also suggested it was a good idea to be the last to leave it although we are not so sure that that's always the best idea.

We will miss him more than words can say.

This is an excerpt from '*Let Me Go*' written by Christina Georgina Rossetti

When I come to the end of the road, And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom filled room Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little – but not for long.
And not with your head bowed low. Remember the love that once we shared.
Miss me, but let me go.

For this is a journey we must all take, And each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan,
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick at heart, Go to the friends we know,
Laugh at all the things we used to. Miss me, but let me go.