

# A celebration of life

# Robert Edward

6 January 1938 – 31 January 2020

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
Huddersfield Crematorium



*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

*Robert was born on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1938, the first child of Gladys and Ratcliffe Holroyd. He was joined by his younger sister Irene, and grew up with her in Elland. Even as a lad, Robert was always sport-mad, football and cricket being his lasting passions. But he did also find time to take up the euphonium, playing in the CEFA band for several years. The band took him all over the country, and even across to Germany just a few years after the end of World War 2, but more importantly it introduced him to the love of his life. Robert and Joyce were teenage sweethearts, though they were a bit too young to commit when they first got together.*

*It was after some years apart that Robert spotted Joyce, jiving on the dance floor at the Vic in Halifax, and decided to try his luck again. He and his friend walked Joyce home that night, and the two of them started courting and fell in love all over again.*

*They tied the knot on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1958 at West Vale Church before enjoying a week's honeymoon in Rhyl. Even then, they made sure they were home in time for the cricket match the following weekend, a pattern Joyce became familiar with over their 61 years of happily married life! The newly-weds bought their first house at 19 Scarborough Terrace, in Elland, thanks to Joyce's mum, Mary, loaning them the princely sum of £350 for the asking price; it may have only been a one-up-one-down with an outside toilet, but for Robert and Joyce it was home, and the place they started their own family, with the arrival of their eldest son, David. After moving, and upgrading, to a semi-detached on Greystone Avenue, they also welcomed John and Stuart to the world.*

*Robert was a devoted dad, always spending time with the boys; they told me what a happy childhood he gave them. He would be out playing sports with them during the day or settling down with a pack of cards and a tin of pennies for a game of Newmarket on an evening. With his engineering expertise, Robert would put all sorts together for his sons, and helped them construct anything from soap-box carts to throwing arrows! Robert had left school and started his working life at David Brown's Gears, joining the company as an apprentice on the shop floor, grafting at night school to get his HNC and working his way up through the drawing office. And he didn't stop there; he finished his career at David Brown's as Divisional Managing Director, a position that took him right round the world. From the US to Canada, China to India and beyond, Robert enjoyed the opportunities his work brought him; it even resulted in him and Joyce being invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Robert, and his family, were rightly very proud of how far his intelligence and determination had taken him. After forty years with David Brown's, Robert left, but continued some consulting work for the British Gear Association for a few more years before retiring completely.*

*Work and family would be enough to keep most people busy, but Robert never lost his passion for sport; it ran in his veins, coming down the generations from his grandad, Ben Holroyd, a renowned athlete and rugby player back at the turn of the twentieth century. Robert continued the family tradition.*

*From the age of 14 he played cricket for Elland, then moving to the team at Baildon and then Primrose Hill, before a nine-year spell with Paddock. He returned to Elland, then played for Rastrick and finished up as chairman at Blackley. Robert batted third in the order, assisting his team to victory in the Sykes Cup on at least five occasions, and even played alongside the great Gary Sobers in the Huddersfield League in 1962, standing firm against the top-class bowling of Wes Hall.*

*Never one to sit idle, Robert used to spend the winter months playing football, at least in his earlier years; he played for Brook Sports and Firth's Carpets, and several times ran out as centre forward for Halifax Town. By the mid-sixties, though, cricket was where his focus lay, and certainly the boys' childhoods were punctuated by weekends geared around cricket matches, the three of them making mischief and taking a turn at the crease at half-time while Joyce was busy helping with the teas. Robert taught all his sons the game in the back garden and on their summer holidays, holidays that could never be taken too far from home, as he would have to be back on the middle weekend to take up his bat!*

*They did have some wonderful times, though, camping in the Lakes or Wales, Robert taking the lads fishing or out on the lake in the dinghy with outboard motor that he would tow across.*

*Robert's sport brought him great satisfaction, and also a whole host of friends. When the boys were young, mates from the cricket club would often come round to Robert and Joyce's on a Saturday night for a Chinese and a drink or two, resulting on at least one occasion in the boys finding their breakfast milk spiked with whisky! When Robert's knees finally dictated the end of his cricketing career, he promptly took up golf, and was a much-loved member of Halifax Bradley Hall Golf Club for over twenty years. He would be out on the course four times a week, and, as with every sport he turned his hand to, he put his heart and soul into the game, and managed to bring his handicap down to an impressive eight. He and Joyce threw themselves into the social side of the club as well, and were always out at dinners or dances. They went on golfing holidays to Portugal with their great friends Pam and Dave, who treated Robert to a *This Is Your Life*-style red book to celebrate his captaincy in 2004.*

*Robert also enjoyed going away with his family, especially once he became a grandad, to Thomas, Emily, Helen, Sarah and Samuel. He and Joyce had some great holidays with Stuart and Diane, and John and Moira, and he also loved it when the grandchildren came to visit. When they were small, Robert would like as not be splashing about in the paddling pool with them, or joining in with their shows, and he was always glad when Samuel could make it over from Germany for a trip. Thomas and Emily shared some of their memories of their grandad:*

*Emily put, 'One of my fondest memories was when he would help us all out with small drama plays or concerts in the back sitting room. Tom would always play the dragon. I, Helen or Sarah would play the princesses or the prince. Grandad would always know just the right music to play.'*

*I think another memory which will stick with everyone is the family holiday to Mallorca. The family pictures with us all, and Grandad with cocktails and the longest straw in the world, will stick with us for a long time to come.'*

*And Tom said, 'I will always remember Grandad teaching me to play cricket in the back garden. He also taught me to place chess, which I still enjoy to this day.'*

*I loved it when he let me help with jobs such as collecting apples. One time in particular, when I was about four or five, Grandad, my dad (Stuart) and I chopped down a tree. We had a standing joke that we were Holroyd, Holroyd and Holroyd, "Tree Fellas"!'*

*Robert was a caring man; a gentleman and a gentle man, respected by many and deeply loved by those closest to him. His was a life of endeavour and integrity, as well as loyalty and love. Leonardo da Vinci wrote, 'As a well spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death.' And Robert's was certainly a life well used. For those of you left behind, that makes his death all the harder to bear, but it also equips you with a myriad of happy memories to comfort you.*