

# A celebration of life David Hazard

28th November 1930 - 21st December 2020

2.00-2.30 pm, 12th January 2021, Cam Valley Crematorium

*a personal goodbye*

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## The Tribute

David was born on 28th November 1930 in Stepney. The family lived in a cul-de-sac next door to the local pub and David went to school in nearby streets, Caley Street School and then in Halley Street.

David was only eight when the war broke out, and his sister Joan, three years old. Life in Stepney became very different. With bombs falling all around them, every night was spent in the Andersen Shelter in the back garden, where it was covered over with a protective layer of earth. As soon as the sirens sounded the family would move into the shelter where they would sing their hearts out, so they couldn't hear the bombs falling. For the children, every night was like a party and they were not scared.

One morning, when the all clear sounded, they emerged to discover that they had been 'blasted out'. A bomb falling nearby had damaged the back wall of the house and all around them fires had broken out. Joan remembers the flames and an atmosphere of excitement, but she and David never doubted that their Dad would get them safely out and indeed he did, managing to drive the family to Barnet where his sister lived. Their father was not in the army because he was blind in one eye. Instead, he was "directed" to work in Swaffham, but they never did get to know what he did there.

The family lived for a while in a block of flats in Barnet, the Acacias, and Joan remembers that there was an overturned car behind the flats which the local children called '*the wreck*' and they enjoyed playing in.

In winter they would venture out in the dark of the blackout to swap comics with their friends. There were no new ones, so an extensive swapping system was very important. They loved comics. One Christmas, their mother saved up a lot of old comics, storing them in a cupboard. They remembered it as best Christmas they ever had.

As soon as possible the family had moved back to the East End, despite the buzz bombs and the rockets and Joan remembers how wonderful it was when the war ended, Union Jacks everywhere and families welcoming people back from the war.

The family were moved out of Stepney to newly built '*luxury flats for working people*' in the West India Dock Road but they had been built too quickly and needed remedial work within a year. It was not the right environment for a family and when David was about eighteen the family moved to a pub just off the Commercial Road. The pub had a radiogram, an unusual asset in those days and David was in charge of choosing and playing the 78's for music in the pub. His choices were not always popular with his Dad though, who had difficulty emptying the pub when he called 'time'. Joan remembers one occasion when David had played music for a conga to empty the pub but then, having succeeded to his Dad's relief, he swapped to Tzena, Tzena, a lively tune that had everyone dancing back in. His Dad was not pleased but this was typical of David, full of fun and larks.

David left school at fourteen, working initially for his Dad who had a small haulage business. At that time in the East End you took whatever work you could get and Joan remembers the family waiting at home for David to return with his first pay packet earned away from his family. David was late, had he gone out to celebrate? No, he had gone to buy presents for everyone, that was typical of David.

Sewing machines were very important to people in the days of clothing coupons and David started to train as a sewing machine mechanic and became very good at it. He went on to have a sewing machine shop in Harlow and then became the company representative for Pfaff in the South East. He also worked for Toyota and Knitmaster, making some wonderful, lifelong friends along the way. When he retired he continued to service and repair sewing machines, there was not a machine that he couldn't fix.

David married Audrey when he was very young and had two children David and Janice, whom he adored, but the marriage ended in divorce. By this time David had moved to Harlow and the rest of his family to Epping.

David first met his second wife, Anne Bodkin, on a trip to Italy with his friends. Anne and her friend Evelyn were taking their first unchaperoned holiday and on the plane David and his friends were sitting behind them.

David's friend, Billy, was petrified of flying and his friends were mercilessly teasing him. After chatting on the plane, the girls didn't meet up with them again until the return journey home, where David and his friends collected as many portions of cake as they could from the hostesses, to give to the girls.

Several months later the girls went to the Ideal Home Exhibition where low and behold, they spotted David. David noticed these two girls looking over but unfortunately didn't recognise them. He went over and through listening to their conversation was able to work out who was who and how they had originally met. From then on the friends all met up regularly in London and eventually David and Anne started their relationship.

David lived in Harlow at the time and he casually mentioned to Anne that it was a long way for them both to travel and maybe she should move in with him. She replied that she wouldn't live with him but she would marry him!

Anne and David were married at Willesden Registry office on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1971, amongst family and friends, with their reception held in The Mortimer Arms, Tottenham Court Road, a pub run by Fred and Marie Rix. The day was so wonderful that on their first anniversary, Anne and David invited everyone who attended the wedding to a party, to recreate the day.

They welcomed their daughter Louise in September 1976, then on New Year's Eve 1978, their son Sam.

Family was very important to both Anne and David. Anne's parents stayed for long weekends every other week and David's Aunt Ada often came to stay for a break.

Everyone was welcome at 83 Purford Green. When not meeting at each others houses, friends would head over to Hatfield Forest, loading up the cars with food and drink to enjoy a day outside in the sun.

The family were also regular visitors at David's Aunt Lylie in Pitsea, near Southend. David had loved visiting her and his other aunts, Sue & May, as a child and as he grew older, often took friends Billy and Butch there for a sing song and a few drinks. He would encourage Lylie to bring out her homemade Parsnip wine that they used to call Pearsnap wine, but it was an acquired taste.

David loved holidays with both friends and family and they were always filled with fun and laughter. Early trips to Jersey with friends and also with Anne. Fond memories included stays with their friends, Ann and John, at their villa in Portugal and also at the Hotel Riu in Nerja, in Spain, not forgetting the trips to Cornwall. Family holidays included trips to Rye and also to Sandford, with Anne's family in 2002, where the traditional Boxing Day BBQ took place. A tradition started by David, who used to put on his big gardening coat and stand outside in whatever weather Boxing Day brought, with a glass of wine, encouraging others to join him.

It was a family decision to go on Anne's dream holiday to Las Vegas and Miami in December 2009. The family spent a week in Las Vegas taking in the sites and attempting a little gambling. They took a helicopter ride to the Grand Canyon and then circled back along The Strip to the sounds of Elvis singing "Viva Las Vegas". They were all moved by the dancing fountains at the Bellagio and enjoyed the laser shows at Freemont Street and David particularly enjoyed the ribs at *Tony Roma's*. The second week was spent in Miami Beach with trips to the Everglades to see the alligators and a tour taking in the homes of the rich, famous and infamous.

David remained close to his two sisters Joan, and Margaret, who he had helped to look after as a teenager, walking her in her pram with his mates. Each of them lost their partner to cancer and David would say that he would "spin down the M11" and take them out. Margaret and Joan would get dressed up for the occasion and David would delight in supposing that people in the pub would be thinking, "Where did he get those two from?" He tried to make life for his sisters nicer, as he did for everyone.

David enjoyed watching most sports, in particular football, boxing, and rugby – he supported Arsenal and West Ham, but over the years had been a fan of Italian football, American football, Sumo wrestling, Formula One – anything that you could cheer along to!

David had several catchphrases that he often used and was known for. He always picked you up if you used the word "stuff" – saying it back to you on repeat as if it was the worst word you could use!

He never said he would call you, instead he would say "we'll have the speaks" and would end every call to family with, "love you lots".

He would always toast “to absent friends and God bless Tiny Tim” and when there was just nothing else to say, could present a wry smile with a shrug of the shoulders saying, “Whaddya gonna do” emulating Tony Soprano from one of his favourite programmes.

David never grew tired of watching his favourite films and television programmes over and over – a recent favourite was *Our Yorkshire Farm* where he marvelled at how the family lived in such an environment. Prior to that his absolute fave was *Midsomer Murders*, a daily occurrence only reluctantly replaced with other detective dramas when it wasn't showing. He also roared at *Cactus Jack* and loved to rewatch old classics such as the *Godfather* (mostly 1 and 2, but he didn't mind 3!)

David found joy and laughter in most things and if you want to picture him roaring with laughter then think of him watching *Laurel & Hardy* (Dancing to “At the ball” or singing “Trail of the Lonesome Pine”) or even the old *Tom & Jerry* Cartoons.

David was adored by children, both in the family and amongst friends – who often received nicknames such as *Rocket Rachael*, *the Mighty Josh*, *Phantom Phoebe*, and *Fearless Fred* or had things like their “pokey tail” (their pony tail) or sparkly shoes pointed out and admired. He could always encourage children to march around a coffee table, usually to music, or even when he recited the infamous *Captain Beaky* poetry with *Hissing Sid* and *Batty Bat*!

David loved to wear a waistcoat to events and these ranged from the ultra-smart to the novelty. An essential piece of clothing was a clean, pressed handkerchief, which he would always offer up as soon as he saw someone get upset.

He had a wonderful memory, for history but best demonstrated in his memory for song lyrics. He absolutely loved music. “Friday night is music night,” he would declare and then settle in with the radio and a few drinks. Music was always playing in the house, often loudly and a common theme used to be Anne turning the music down and David turning it back up when she left the room.

He loved a good sing song, particularly anything that was considered old and painful to listen to such as:-

*Hear My Song Violetta*, as sung by Josef Locke in the 1940's  
*The Pig Got Up and Slowly Walked Away*, as sung by Frank Crumit,  
*If It Wasn't for the Houses In Between*, by Gus Elen,  
all of a similar vintage, and of course *Tzena Tzena*, from Connie Francis.

One of his favourites to sing was “*Give Me a Nail and a Hammer*” which is ironic considering one Sunday morning in the mid-80s, David noticed a loose floorboard in the bedroom and decided to nail it down, putting 4 nails perfectly through the water pipe just below. It wasn't long before the bowl lampshade in the dining room below started to fill and then the ceiling started to sag. Those 4 nails needed 4 workmen to resolve the resulting issues, a plumber, electrician, plasterer and decorator and David returned to not taking part in DIY ever again.

David was a fan of the traditional pub, whilst he enjoyed nice restaurants and bars, his heart belonged to his favourites over the years, The Bees in the Wall, The Green Man, The Chequers and The Champion of the Thames in Cambridge. The latter being of particular irritation to his wife Anne who didn't appreciate the spit and sawdust/sticky carpet appeal of this particular pub – preferring a swish bar with a cocktail. One of the things that everyone would say about David is that he was always first to the bar to buy everyone a drink, that was his nature, generous to a fault – if he had it, you could have it, no questions asked.

David was gregarious and friendly, open hearted and generous. When he left Addenbrookes after recovering from a rather bad fall in October the nurses lined up say goodbye and how much they would miss him!

David's many friends have sent messages of support and expressed their sadness at his death. Here are just two,

from Brian Tomkeys,

*“From the day we met we were best friends, two of a kind his wife said. I will always remember him as the most generous of men, proud of his East End roots and heritage. He had history, music, humour and unusual knowledge in abundance. A great man.*

and from Mick and Glynis Wright, to Louise,

*I couldn't recall a **single** funny moment as we had so many of them, we laughed every single time we got together, in our houses, weekends away or on the cruise we took to the Isle of Wight or that's what your Dad called it. Whether there was 4 or just the two of us, all we did was have a great chemistry, your Dad's sense of humour, his conversation was entertaining (as long as you didn't say stuff), and once we'd had a couple or three both of us were as bad as each other, as you possibly recall when we gave you a rendition of 'Ernie the fastest milkman in the west', 'Bridget The Midget' and 'Along came Jones', if I remember, you retired to bed.*

*Your Dad was a Gentleman, generous, funny and a great friend. and he will be missed by us,*