

A Celebration of the Life

of

Joey McKeown

6th February 1934 – 19th Feb 2021

Ceremony at 1pm on Wednesday 24th February 2021

At Malcomson's Funeral Home, Lurgan

Followed by Committal at 2pm Aghalee Cemetery



Tribute to Joey

Joey had enjoyed very good health right up until these last few months. Although he had been unwell during January, he was recovering. Unfortunately, he suffered a fall just over a week ago and was taken to Craigavon Hospital, where he sadly died quite suddenly last Friday. Joey was 87 years old.

Joseph Thomas McKeown was born in Aghalee on the 6th February 1934, the second son to parents Lena and Joe. He had an older brother Billy and two younger brothers Stanley and Ronnie. He attended the Aghagallon Victoria National School, just across the road from his home from 1939 to 1947, he didn't like school though and left when he could and went to work in Barbour Mills in Lisburn.

Unfortunately, he had an accident at work and lost fingers from one of his hands. After he had recovered, he didn't return to Barbour Mills but instead went to work at Lurgan Hospital as a porter. He worked there until he retired. He liked working in Lurgan hospital, and actually missed the camaraderie once he had retired. He was very discreet in his role as a porter and wouldn't gossip with others about who was in hospital. He was very kind too, when his sister-in-law Nellie (Joyce's Mum) was in hospital back in the 60s, Joey would sneak her in fish and chips as she absolutely hated the hospital food! She would have to hide it under the bed covers to eat it...

Joey was born in the house that he lived in his whole life. He was a child during the second world war and the family had five or six evacuees from Belfast staying with them. The family didn't have much, but what they had, they shared. When family members would come to visit, Joey would keep away, he didn't like the fuss, he preferred to sit quietly and read Dickens, out the back in what was referred to as 'the shop'; or to play cards with his mates out in the shed. He was even known to have climbed out the back window on occasion to avoid chatting with visitors.

Joey was a very private man, he never gave away too much. He did have a girlfriend in his younger days called Annie Weathers; and he and his brother Ronnie were incredibly close and fond of each other. Ronnie and he shared the family home together until Ronnie moved out, after that Ronnie would get a taxi out to visit Joey every day.

Andy, who knew Joey his whole life, told me that Joey could most certainly not have been described as security conscious! He would regularly leave his back door wide open, even in winter. Andy also told me about how Joey would take the grate out of the fire and rather than take the time to chop up a branch for firewood, he would just sit and hold the log, feeding it into the fire as it burned. The

house would be full of smoke, but it didn't bother Joey. Once when he had run out of wood for the fire, he decided to use the skirting from the bedroom, he said "Sure it was rotten anyway..."

In the 50s he rode a motorbike and had a near miss when he was involved in a serious motorbike accident. Later he rode a scooter everywhere, right up until 2012 with his old-style helmet and goggles on. Joey's car was his pride and joy and he kept it spotless.

He was a very independent person and drove his car right up until Christmas 2020. His home was always kept gleaming, he was frugal and preferred the simple life. There was very little in his house, but what there was, was ordered and very neat and tidy.

Joey loved animals and would feed any cats and dogs that came by. He would look after Davey and Carol's dogs and their cat too if they were away. He enjoyed going to the library and reading the newspaper, or as Joyce, Joey's niece, reminisced, when she had bumped into Joey in the library on more than one occasion, he had been sitting reading poetry.

He also enjoyed going to the betting shop and having a wee flutter. He watched boxsets of 'Men Behaving Badly', and 'Bottom' – he had a wacky sense of humour. He enjoyed watching rugby and football, or listening to it on the radio. He also listened to classical music on the radio. For years he would walk about ten miles a day, every day. He never went on holiday, or left the country, he was happiest at home and he knew everybody for miles around. He enjoyed a tippie and his favourites were Magners cider or Thompson dark rum.

Joey McKeown was a character and a man of few words, and perhaps he related to what Dickens' character said in his novel entitled 'Barnaby Rudge':

"There are talkers enough among us; I'll be one of the doers."

Joey will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Music for Reflection - 'The Parting Glass' by The High Kings.