



A Celebration of the Life of

Matthew Trotter

14th January 1939 – 18th April 2021



Conducted in the presence of his family and friends on

Friday 7th May 2021
at Rose Hill Crematorium

Celebrant

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Hello and Welcome. I'm Bob Kiddle. I'm a celebrant accredited by HumanistsUK. Thank you so much for joining this ceremony of remembrance for Matthew Trotter - to mourn, yes, to grieve, of course, but also to celebrate his life – a life really well lived.

The music we were listening to as we came in was, of course, Gilly Gilly Ossenteffen sung by Max Bygraves. That music is very dear to the immediate family. It was the first song that the children learnt and it has passed down through the generations. It's been sung many times around the table, at family gatherings and in the backs of cars on log journeys.

Matt was a person who believed in making the best and the most of life. He embraced the responsibility for looking after his family and himself. He cared deeply about his family and his friends. He knew for himself what was right and what was wrong and lived by the maxim 'do the right thing because it is the right thing to do' Our shared humanity is what matters – this is a ceremony for everyone – for people of any faith and of none.

Matt - A Life Well Lived

Matthew Trotter, known as Matt or 'our Matty' to his family, was born eighty two years ago to Bob and Rosie Trotter in Washington, which then was part of County Durham. His was a large and loving family – his siblings, Joe, Jackie, Bobbie, Billy and Maggie all adored him. His father was a proud, serving member of the RAF. It was in the blood - Matt was a boy entrant at the age of fifteen to join his father and brothers who all served in the RAF. Pride of place in all of the families' homes is a beautiful family photo of the five of them, in their blues, posing outside Admiralty House, looking so proud and tall and just magnificent at a point when Bob Trotter and his four sons were all serving at the same time.

Matt qualified as an electrician in Bomber Squadron to the level of Sergeant. He served several tours abroad in Bahrain and Egypt – where the nickname for an afternoon snooze is ‘having a bit of Egyptian PT’ a phrase Matt used daily.

His real love and passion in the service was sport. He earned his colours for cricket in the RAF but his first love was for football. He was a staunch supporter of Sunderland football club from childhood and, in the forces, he matured into an excellent player himself. He represented the United Kingdom Royal Air Force Football Association team on very many occasions. Before he left the service in 1972, the RAF sponsored him to do his Football Association coaching badge at Lilleshall, where he trained and qualified as a fully certified FA coach – alongside the likes of Terry Venables.

A letter from his Wing Commander, Colin Heal, on Matt’s retirement from the RAF reads ‘I would like to express my gratitude for the magnificent contribution you have made to Command football over the years. No-one can fail to notice the tremendous team spirit which you had instilled in the Support Command team, and it is also very clear that all of the players held you in the highest regard’

This positive attitude and discipline along with a contagious approach to success, which started within the Trotter family, and grew throughout his time in the RAF continued into his new career in Financial Services.

Leaving the forces in 1972 with a wife and two children Matt quickly looked for work that would interest him and would support his young family financially. He answered an advert for a job which included the question “are you sports minded”. Thinking he was heading into some sporting career, he attended. He came home to Christine to tell her that he was now going to be a self- employed door to door insurance salesman – no salary, no car and, she thought, no prospects!

Well, the rest in history. As Matt would often say “what the mind can conceive and believe, man can achieve.” And he did.

There followed twenty nine years of dedication and hard work. He became a regional director for the company and retired in 2001. He and Christine have lived for almost twenty years in style and some comfort in their lovely retirement home down in the Dell. Golf became his new sporting hobby. They travelled a lot in Europe and further afield to Acapulco, the Dominican Republic and America. They’ve enjoyed cruises with dear friends Dot and Wilf. Skiathos and Italy, with family and friends, were also favourite destinations.

Matt met Christine at a dance in Doncaster in 1962 when he was stationed at Finningley. Cupid shot his arrow straight and true! Matt was smitten from the first meeting, with a love that endured until the day he died. He told Christine that he loved her every day – there was none of the tough Northern man stuff for him. They were married in 1963 and spent fifty seven gloriously happy years together. Matt was welcomed with open arms into the large clan of Doncaster Thompsons - eleven siblings and their families. He was adored by Doris and even Albert liked him! Within a few years Lindsay appeared and then Beverley came along to make up the family quartet.

A promotion took them to Diss in Norfolk – the first time that Christine had ever left Doncaster. They lived there for many years. Together, as a family, the four of them got involved in the local community, played a key part in the social life of the local football club (which Matt coached for several years) and of the cricket club. It was a great time for all of them!

By 1987 the girls had moved on and another promotion brought Matt and Christine back to Doncaster. Matt was so proud to buy the beautiful family home on Cantley Lane also known as the party house. When Matt was at the head of the dining table you could be sure there would be singing (he had such a beautiful voice), there would be jokes, there would be wine, and there would be lots of fun. It was a happy and welcoming house - he and Christine had an open door policy.

In that house and that gorgeous garden which he loved so much, (he spent hours getting the lawn 'striped' just so, - he did like straight lines, the result, perhaps of all those years of RAF discipline). He spent precious time in that house and garden with all four of his adored granddaughters and Adam, a nephew he treated as a grandson. They spent a lot of time with Grandad playing games, feeding his prized Koi carp, walking up to the top shop to get a ten-penny bag of sweets and the morning paper. He just had a way of all the kids wanting to be with him - he got on to their level. Hence his nickname - the Pied Piper.

Matt's many friendships endured for years. He was the most loyal, most fun, most generous of friends - generous with his time as well as with his money. He was a man who listened, and who helped. He was always there when needed.

Matt shared famous big brown cow eyes with his little sister, Maggie. There was also a very special bond between the two of them. She has a few words for us now.

Matty was 8 when I was born into a world of four young, strapping, competitive boys, hammered into shape by one extremely competitive father. I really should not have stood a chance against these four boys, but then there was Matty, gorgeous on the outside but even more so on the inside. Of my four brothers Matty's firm feminine side stood out, he was always so very kind and gentle. Always good for a cuddle but most of all for sage advice.

He was always there for me. Especially later in life when I was going through some very hard personal times. He just made things better. My first task when Bill and I found love, at the second go, was to head straight up to Doncaster for his approval and Bill was well and truly welcomed with open arms into the Trotter/Thompson family and needless to say a good few drinks were had by all.

Always a constant, for me, the inspiration was always Matty and Chrissie. So much in love for so many years. They were the target to aim for and if we end up like that, then life couldn't get better.

One of my earliest memories is of him teaching me to swim when we were all in Egypt. His method defied convention – he'd throw me off the jetty into the sea, wait a second, then jump in and get me. He did this again and again 'til he didn't need to come in and save me. This was all done with much laughter.

Matty was the brother who would make the arrangements for us all to come together from various parts of the country for events such as New Year's Eve - and boy weren't they legendary parties as many of you would know - birthdays, weddings or just a plain let's have a party, be it London, Doncaster, Diss or wherever. He was a "bon viveur", the focal point and catalyst that made it happen.

His big brown twinkling 'cow' eyes, dimples, and soft full features – the best of mummy's and daddy's – made him the most handsome of brothers. And boy was he handsome!

Matty had a great sense of style and was always immaculate. His dress sense was very important to him but he did it without effort as he seemed to do everything else in his life.

And I am sure, all of you who knew him would be aware of the rows upon rows of perfectly tailored suits and shirts he had. So timeless that even Chesca and Gabriella have taken some of his jackets, obviously with the permission of Chrissie, to have them tailored to wear themselves. What memories for the girls to carry forward in life.

I see all the girls have put on quite a show for him today – he'd be so very proud of them for that... as proud today as he always was of his beautiful girls. But there was more, much more to Matty, which I know Bev and Lindsay will touch upon. Matty was a smiler. And if he wasn't smiling, he was laughing. Or singing.

And boy could he sing renditions of his favourites such as My Way, New York, The Lady is a Tramp and that little known, but treasured family favourite of, "Gilly, Gilly Ossenfeffer Katzenellenbogen by the Sea". To name but a few. And, even as he was well into that wicked cruel world of Alzheimer's, he could still sing along with Frank Sinatra, word for word without fault.

He was a very good footballer. He played to a high amateur level and also represented the RAF. He even organised a football match on his wedding day - Trotter's vs Thompson's. Think the Trotter's won that one but the number of Babycham's I had as a 14 year old may have confused my memory somewhat.

In fact, Matty was good at anything he applied himself to. He did well in the RAF... and he did well after the RAF. He was a stickler for detail and hard work – and it served him well in his second career.

He had a kind word for everyone – I'm sure he'd have seen some good even in a serial killer. I can only imagine how well he managed the people he worked with. He was a true gentleman and a very gentle man. I think this is why children latched onto him. Bev always called him the Pied Piper, but the Pied Piper was in it for himself – Matty was never in it for himself.

Matty was the one I looked up to most when I was a little girl, and that's lasted all my life with him. When I was happy, he was happy. When I was sad, he did all he could to make things better.

How I've loved you Matty. And I will always remember you as that wonderful, smiley, gorgeous man. Full of life and love

Bless you my boofins brother because you touched the lives of so many people by just being you. You made a difference Matty, a big difference.

And now, our last task, for you, Matty is for us all to make sure that your lovely Chrissie is looked after as well as she, right up to very end, looked after YOU.

Matt was adored by his four granddaughters, Olivia, Chesca, Gabriella and Maddie. They will, I know carry his memory with them for many many years to come. Their tribute today is in this poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, which says so much about the man that Matt was.

That Man is a Success by Robert Louis Stevenson

*That man is a success who has lived well
Laughed often and loved much
Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and women
And the love of children
Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task
Who leaves the world better than he found it
Who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty
Or failed to express it
Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had*

The Lord's Prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Time for Reflection

Let's take a minute now to reflect on all that we've heard. An opportunity to acknowledge what Matt's friendship meant to you; to remember good times, those times when family and friendship are so important. A chance too for people of faith to say a prayer. For us all to remember Matt in our own way. We'll have a short period of quiet and then, recorded specially for today and accompanying herself on the piano, Matt's adopted grand daughter, Elissia, who often sang to Matt and Chris at family gatherings. She has recorded her own special arrangement of Morning Has Broken.

Matt's eldest daughter Lindsay has a few words for us now.

Well what can be said about my Dad, Matt Trotter. He was a proud professional man and the patriarch of our immediate family but also our extended family. If anyone had a problem whether it be personal, professional or financial, Matt was always on hand to give advice and help out. He was though by far the biggest family man you could ever wish for.

My best memories are the holidays and party times that we shared. Dad played Cricket and managed a local Football team whilst he lived in Diss and the social life then was tremendous. Saturday nights after a few drinks in Scole Inn or dancing on the carpet at Diss Cricket Club followed by drinks back at our house were regular occurrences and sometimes we even saw the Dawn arise. Many of the people that Matt knew from those times have sent me messages of fond memories and passed on their condolences.

Later, parties at Innisfree were also legendary, very good times, and though the house was quite substantial we always seemed to converge in the kitchen! Summer garden parties were frequent, with BBQs, jugs of Pimm's and games of rounders – it wasn't known as the Party House for nothing and Dad was the perfect Host.

I remember fondly the family holidays when myself and Bev were little, the race weeks away at Sutton On Sea and later Mablethorpe (who remembers the breakwater bungalows?). Morning wake up calls of 'Morning Campers, The Sun Has Got His Hat' on were regular. Dad would be on the beach with a line of kids after him and we built sandcastles and went crabbing along the breakwaters whilst the women relaxed and watched from a distance.

The love for exploring rock pools went on when we moved to Wales and although we only lived there a couple of years it seemed like we were constantly on holiday. Family visited frequently and we would spend time exploring castle ruins and time on the beaches like Southerndown, Porthcawl and Rhysilli Bay where Dad would take us off with a bucket and spade and we would explore the endless rock pools coming back to show the women what treasures we had found before returning them to the nearest rock pool.

A few years ago, Bev and her family hired a farmhouse in Tuscany for the whole summer holidays and me, Livvy and Maddie went over for a couple of weeks. Lots of memories from then, but the one that sticks out in my mind the most was the 2 or 3 mile walk home from the local restaurant in the dark, in single file, a torch at the front, and one at the back singing songs from the war, 'Hang Out Your Washing On The Siegfried Line' being a favorite, at least people could hear us approaching in the dark.

We all also shared a 2 week holiday in Skiathos for Mum and Dads 40th Wedding anniversary. The girls were little ranging from 4 to 9, and they spent a lot of time, with Dads encouragement, penning a song entitled 'The Fabulous Four', which we could all recite now. Now you probably all know that Matty had a fabulous singing voice, alas the rest of us did not inherit this, so you can just imagine the pained looks from the other people enjoying their evening meals whilst the girls sang their song... I could go on and on, Dad, simply, you are the best, and your memory will go on forever in all of our hearts, love you Dad, your Pins

Matt's younger daughter Beverley is going to speak to us now.

I must have been in my late teens before I realised that Dads real name was not Matthew Cornelius Lindsay Hudson Trotter as he has always told Lindsay and I, but simply Matthew Trotter. He loved a good nickname, a tradition passed down by his Mum Rosie, Flossie Floobrush, Fenella Fanakerpan, Bablins and Boofuls were, and still are, used regularly.

Dad loved words, and he spoke them so eloquently in whatever environment he was in (maybe a little more passionately on the football field!). whether it was telling his much anticipated famous jokes, when he would pause before the punchline, or whether he was reading a bedtime story to us and later the girls, he would bring life to the characters in the story, with accents and personalities and made the stories come alive. If it was on the stage when he was doing a motivational talk to an audience of hundreds, his was the talk that got them captivated, he drew you in and made you listen to every word and want to hear the next one. He spoke with passion and integrity, and made it look so easy but I know full well the research and time that he used to put in beforehand - because it mattered to him that it may help or inspire someone. Using the right words always mattered to Dad. A favourite phrase was 'if you have nothing nice to say, then say nothing at all'.... and he lived by that.

But to hear him sing was my most favourite way of hearing his words - such a beautiful voice, with power one minute, and a gentleness the next, with passion and sincerity. True - at 6am in the morning when he was blasting out the sun has got his hat on wasn't always what was needed -but we'll forgive him that for all of millions of other beautiful moments he gave us all. Sunday morning breakfasts around the table with the papers and Matt Munro, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin in the background are treasured memories, as well as so many live music events together, Frank Sinatra at the Albert Hall was a highlight, Les Miserable 3 times and many many other West End shows, Andre Rieu live, Tom Jones live at Scarborough, the list goes on.

So –what was it about Dad that made him just the most special and bestest of people. It isn't a case of where to start - it's a case of where to stop.

At work and with his friends, he was genuine, helpful, encouraging, loyal, considerate, caring – he took real pleasure and pride in seeing others do well and succeed in life, and would help them in anyway he could.

He was non-judgemental, an equalizer of all people, trusting (sometimes too trusting but he thought it a better quality to trust than to not), he had an integrity that was most natural to him, and he really did look for the best in people. But in case you think I am lionizing him - I am not – he did not suffer fools, they just didn't know it - but on occasion, if you listened hard enough you could hear him mutter under his breath ..what a supercilious..... beep beep! It is still one of my favourite words. His generosity was legendary, in a restaurant you'd go to pay the bill or your share of it – to find he had already done it. Discreetly helping people out in times of trouble. But more so - he was generous with his time. He listened, cared and helped. To me - he was always there for me, I just knew.

There were so many phrases, one liners that he used -and I use them myself daily, I'm often quoting him back.

If at first you don't succeed, try try and then try again. It wasn't that Dad was afraid of failure, certainly not. It just never entered his head not to keep on trying. If you have one finger pointing out to someone, remember that you have 3 fingers pointing back at yourself - so check yourself first. Surround yourself with people better than yourself, for they will take you with them -so don't be afraid or resentful of others success, learn from them. The secret of success? you become what you think about.....so be careful what you think about!

His many friendships endured, whether from the RAF, or work, or from family – and on retirement the golfing crew and the holidays they had here or abroad. You always knew when Dad was off on a holiday – he would disappear a few days beforehand, and come back several hours later with bags of dapper clothes (boy did Dad love his clothes) from Robinsons in Bawtry - because of course – he never had anything to wear! He was always immaculately turned out, shoes polished, elegant with a twist.

Tributes, A giant in my eyes. A massive influence in my Life. Legend. The man with the smile. Honestly -just the nicest man that I have ever met.

Dad as a husband to Chrissie – well. To use a famous football quote , they think it's all over, it is now. When Dad met Mum, he well and truly hung up his galavanting boots, he was smitten from the very first moment. A stunningly beautiful couple to look at, who danced the jive and cleared the floor, they had an open house ethic where everyone was welcome. I pushed that boundary many times, turning up with friends at short or no notice!

They shared a mutual hard work ethic and goal to succeed in life, and Dads drive, ambition, sincerity and hard work gave them the financial security and success that they so deserved. He looked after Christine, but not with just holidays, clothes, beautiful homes – but with a love that shone out of him whenever he looked at her. Always holding hands, always telling her that he loved her. For them to have been able to retire comfortably in 2001 and have the next 20 years having a ball was just the best reward for all of their hard work.

And, as a Dad and as a grandad. He was simply The best. Bar none. It takes hindsight to realise how the childhood you thought was normal was not – it was the best. Full of love and laughter, of freedom and independence.

The plodging on the beaches, the jumping from top decks of boats into the sea with no fear, the playing tennis until 9pm at night in the dark because I had a school match the next day, the story telling, the holidays in Mablethorpe and Isle of Wight with the Thompson Clan and how dad was the official day baby sitter for all of us and our cousins!! Truly he earned that moniker of the Pied Piper. Giving of his time, never a raised voice, never a raised hand.

I see that now through my own parent eyes, I see that now when he was there the same day they were born for everyone of his granddaughters. How he would cuddle them to sleep singing beautiful lullabies. How he would be the first in the sea with them. How he built sandcastles with them. How I would meet with him and mum at j18 of the M1 at Easter and Summer when my girls went for their holidays at Nan and Grandads for 2 weeks whilst I was working – how my girls got out of my car with not a backward glance and ran upto Mum and Dad. how he went on AIR at Thorpe park with them when he was in his 60'S. How he told them he loved them all the time, how he always had time for them. How he made each of them feel so special. How he did with the girls what he did with me and Lindsay. So many photos of them holding his hand walking along with him - enthralled and gazing up at him adoringly.

He gave us all his love, he gave us all his very best, all of the time. We know without doubt that we were loved. As did he back, because we told him always too.

If grief is the price you pay for the love you had, then dad - you were most truly loved.

Matt was conscientious and hard working. He was a kind and caring friend, a wise and generous father and grandfather, a loyal and loving husband. Indeed he was very loving of all of his family and he was very well loved in return. Surely one can say beyond shadow of a doubt that his was a life very well lived.

The Committal – A Last Goodbye

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose on Earth;
A time to be born and a time to die.

In the family he so loved – his wife, his children, his grandchildren, you will remember him.

In the blue sky and the crisp morning air of a Yorkshire spring day You will remember him.

In his friendship, his generosity and his lovely sense of humour. You will remember him

In the deeply human qualities that he brought to your life – You will remember him

In sorrow, but with deep love and affection we now commit the body of Matthew Trotter to its end, to return to the elements from which he came, to continue the great and natural cycle of living and dying in which we all take part.

Rejoice that he lived, take delight in his friendship, treasure that you shared in his life, cherish your memories of him.

With love we leave him in peace.

With respect we bid him farewell.

There are no magic answers to heal your pain, or even to lessen your grief. But you know, grief is love. It's all the love you want to give but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes; it's the lump in your throat, and that hollow feeling in the pit of your stomach. Grief is love, just with nowhere to go.

As human beings, we can love; and love is stronger than grief, stronger than despair, and stronger than death. It is love that is with us at the beginning of our lives and it is love that remains after we have gone. Hold on to love, hold on to all those wonderful memories you have of Matt. For as long as you do that, he will be with you – in your heart and in your mind.

A short poem by David Harkins that expresses something of what I am sure Matt will have wanted for you. It's called 'He is Gone'

*You can shed tears that he is gone,
Or you can smile because he has lived.*

*You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he's left.*

*Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
Or you can be full of the love you shared.*

*You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.*

*You can remember him and only that he's gone,
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.*

*You can cry and close your mind,
Be empty and turn your back.*

*Or you can do what he'd want,
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.*

On behalf of all Matt's family I would like to say a very big thank you for all the many words of condolence, the messages, the cards, the e-mails and for being here today. That support does make such a difference. A particular thank you as well to Gillian and Graham for helping out whilst he was shielding – shopping and just generally being there. And a special thank you to Auntie Betty for being a superstar. Amazing! As Matt would have said "She's a good lass"

Any donation you would like to give in memory of Matt will be split between two charities SilverLinks which supports older people when they're facing tough decisions about their housing and care for future life and DonMentia working with volunteers to help those affected by dementia and their carers across the Doncaster region.

The Forget Me Not seeds are a gift from Matt's family in the hope that they will bring colour into your world like Matt did so wonderfully. Please do take a photograph of the flowers and send it to Christine along with a happy memory of Matt.

And finally, let's leave Matt with another of his favourite songs – Unforgettable by Nat King Cole.