

A celebration of life of George Edward Moore

10th January 1947 - 15th April 2021

Thursday 13th May 2021, Southend Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

The Tribute

George was the only son of parents George, a commando, and Isa a land army girl in World War Two. He was born on 10th January 1947. He had an older sister Renee and a younger sister Anne; he was known by them and his nieces as Nobby. He was brought up in Bow, London; the family later moved to Dagenham. He was described as a quiet boy and “Angelic”, but he was an adventurous one, often ending up in A & E with broken bones or requiring stitches. Renee, who was left in charge of her siblings when her parents worked, took the blame for not looking after George; his parents not admitting that he was accident prone.

His school report from Eastbrook secondary school describes him as “mannered and reliable with a pleasing attitude but too fond of ruminating and a tendency to hibernate in class”. Reports were also puzzling as they alluded to his lack of attendance due to ill health. The parent’s signature on the school report sometimes appeared to have been forged, the big finger being pointed at Renee. George described happy ‘school days’; lots of them spent swimming and smoking at the local gravel pits with his friend Kenny. Renee remembers asking the teenage George to help her carry home an artificial Christmas tree from Woolworths, warning him to carry it carefully. George succeeded in becoming stuck in the sliding doors resulting in the top of the tree being sliced off. Danny, a toddler, was howling, worried about where the fairy could now be placed. Renee’s husband, Mick, had to construct a new treetop with a bent metal coat hanger.

George left school at 15, his mother marched him down to the local butchers to get him an apprenticeship; not George’s choice but his mother knew best. She wanted him to have a trade. This was in fact the career that ended up supporting many of his adventures and took him around the world.

As a young man George was a “mod”, tonic mohair suits, handmade Beatle boots and a scooter. Sandra worked in a bank and met George, at a dance hall, The Railway hotel in Dagenham. She was impressed with George even more so when he told her he had a scooter (it transpired later that it had in fact been stolen before they even met). They started going out and were often joined by Sylvia and her boyfriend, David. The four of them used to go to East End gay pubs on a Saturday night, often to watch female impersonators, they felt they were living on the edge as homosexuality was still a crime in those days.

David, a photographer, took a job in Chelsea and introduced Sylvia, George and Sandra to a new world of the West End. George and Sylvia celebrated their joint 21st birthday party at a 5-star hotel, The Mayfair, with its trendy Beachcomber restaurant, drinking cocktails costing 10 shillings and 6 pence each, (£11 in today’s money when the average wage was less than £20 a week), they felt they were the “Bees knees”. No one remembers how they got home, especially as they would not have had money for the train fare after paying the hefty bill.

Sandra and George also went out regularly with Anita (a friend of Sandra’s since they were 8) and her boyfriend Jeff. George and Jeff both owned Triumph Spitfire sports cars. Once again, London pubs were popular venues and, more than a few times, Anita had to be manually handled back into Jeff’s Triumph, with the ever-modest George, shouting ‘someone pull her top down’. There was an infamous occasion when George, Sandra, Anita and Jeff were on a walking weekend in Dorset. The rain was incessant and George seemed to have some residue detergent in his jacket with the rain causing his jacket to produce a stream of bubbles. As George insisted on being the orienteer, it was not long before they were lost, so after a few hours wandering in circles they happily accepted a lift in the back of a local farmers truck. George continued to cause fits of laughter as his coat bubbles streamed from the back of the truck.

Over the years, there were many stories about George's incompetence and lack of sense of direction. There was the time when Sandra was a bridesmaid at David and Sylvia's wedding and George's role was to organise the guests 'transport from the church to the reception. His organisational skills were brought into question as he guided Sylvia's parents to shelter from the rain in the church yard. It was 20 minutes later that Sylvia the bride asked, 'where is my mum and dad? George had forgotten them, they were still in the church yard.

At 21, George saw a newspaper advertisement stating that South Africa needed migrants, particularly butchers. For £50, the flight and hostel accommodation were included until work was found. George and Sandra set off for Cape Town where George started at the butchery department of Stuttafords store (the Harrods of Africa at the time). Life in South Africa was an eye opener for the couple dealing with the apartheid issues, meeting people from all backgrounds and becoming independent young people living in a totally new culture. They were learning to stand on their own feet enjoying beach parties and BBQs and being with other young people. The couple lived in South Africa for two years from 1968 to 1970, moving to Durban and touring Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. George had imported his beloved Triumph Spitfire to SA later selling it to a rich South African for his son's 21st birthday. This made them enough money for their deposit on their first home in Tilbury. Sandra and George were "living together" quite shocking for the time. George walked straight back into a butcher's job in a large supermarket in the UK proving his mother's belief in the trades right.

Three and a half years later Sandra and George were getting itchy feet and ready for a new challenge. It was the "winter of discontent" and reason enough for them to set off on an overland trip to Australia. The journey started on the number 174 bus to Dagenham Heathway railway station, then, via trains, boats, buses and hitching lifts made their way to India. Their travels included the Greek islands, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, enduring and enjoying many scrapes and adventures. By the time they reached India they heard rumours that Australia would require a visa for entry in just a few weeks' time. As their jobs were not on the permitted jobs list, they had to abandon the backpacking trip and spend most of their money on air tickets to Australia. The cheapest tickets were to Perth, where they knew no one and only had their scruffy backpacking clothes and sixty dollars between them. However, Australia being the 'Golden Country,' within three months they had a flat with a swimming pool and a car!

They stayed in Perth for a year then onto New Zealand for 9 months before returning to Sydney for a few years. With enough money saved they were able to complete the interrupted overland trip in the opposite direction through Indonesia, Nepal, China, Hong Kong to India from where they flew to Greece where they hung out in a small village on Crete, not wanting to return to reality. They returned to the UK to their home in Tilbury. George started a new job with Asda, where he worked for 27 years. In a casual conversation with a colleague, he learned that his colleague was bringing home £5 a week more than him, because he was married! With this in mind, George and Sandra married at Hornchurch Registry office in 1979, Sandra peevish that she was only worth £5. The honeymoon was less than romantic when the camper van they had borrowed, broke down in Manchester. They had to wait all night at an AA depot before being transferred to their destination, Scotland.

Their next adventure in the 80s was prompted by a special offer of a £59 Freddie Laker flight to Miami. From here they travelled through Columbia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. There were more scrapes, close calls and adventures including flying into Colombia where Customs officers were suspicious about what turned out to be white washing powder in their luggage. In Ecuador, George was stopped by police at the main post office, demanding to see his passport. Sandra ran back to their accommodation for the passports, but not before shouting out to anyone that would listen that if George was taken away to call the British Embassy. On her return to the P.O, the police were still trying to intimidate George who was unfazed, writing a postcard home, 'dear mum and dad,

having a lovely time in South America'. On their return to Miami, Immigration took a shine to them and offered them a 6-month visa, an offer not to be turned down, even though it precluded the right to work. George got a job at a restaurant. He was working on false papers; it was a dubious establishment with dubious staff. The catering staff were mainly African Americans who nicknamed George 'Whitey Boy.'

Once again, he was unfazed when at lunch time the staff would smoke cannabis and lay out their guns and knives to be admired. After several months they had saved enough money to buy a beat-up American car, long enough to sleep in, and drove from Miami to Quebec, Canada, over a few months. The car broke down just outside New York, with the car being beyond repair, they decided to return to Tilbury using the last of their savings to buy the flights.

1985 brought another adventure, the arrival of Edwina heralded the start of a new domestic life. George loved being a dad. Tuesdays were his day off and the early start for work and early finish allowed him to spend lots of time with her. He was a real hands-on dad. Calamity was always close though and on her first day at school, when George was in charge, she somehow fell backwards into the window cleaners water bucket. George managed to dry her new school uniform out in time for her to start school that day. The trips became less adventurous, many holidays spent under canvas with Edwina and a friend or two. Edwina was not at all adventurous and claims she was 'scarred for life' having to spend The Millennium celebrations on a road trip around Morocco when she could have seen in the New year hanging around Old Leigh with her friends.

At the age of 48 George had a stroke and lost the use of his left arm; it also affected his mobility. He spent six weeks in hospital and six months off work. George was in constant pain following two spinal operations. He never let his disability get in the way of having a good life right up until the end. His needs were basic in the last year, his treat would be an ice cream and a bacon roll at Rossi's after a spin in his wheelchair along Southend Promenade.

Edwina met Tom, and George was happy to give her away at their wedding in 2010. Tom was more adventurous and encouraged Edwina to expand her horizons. Over the years, they enjoyed seven family holidays with Sandra and George in South Africa, the last one in 2019 including granddaughter Rose. George's lack of sense of direction reared its head once again on their very last South African road trip just before Covid. The drive was to be a leisurely 2-hour drive to a town near the airport. A short time into the journey their Sat Nav broke leaving the map reading to George. He kept missing turn offs, with Sandra shouting at him to just keep the mountain range to his right and eyes peeled for directions to the town. Four hours later, and after driving over two mountain passes, they eventually arrived at their destination. His sister Anne always laughs when she sees a notice 'YOU ARE HERE'. It reminds her of a walking trip in Devon, George in charge of the Ordnance Survey map, us being lost but George insisting we were at point X on the map even though we were all staring at a board clearly stating: 'YOU ARE HERE'!

George was absolutely delighted when granddaughter Rose arrived, he loved being a grandfather. She was his life and she made a big difference to his life, especially during the Lockdowns when he could no longer go to the "Harry pub", his second home, to have a pint with his friends.

During the last few days of his life, after being discharged home from hospital with Covid, Sandra and Edwina were supported by Edwina's husband Tom. His skill and compassion as a GP made the last days more manageable. He made sure Edwina and Sandra were fed and also sat with George, giving them a break.

George was always a great observer of life and people. He believed he was right about most things, even when he was wrong. He was not easily fazed, laid back and adventurous. He was accepting and tolerant of the world.