

A celebration of life

Chris Rowlands

21 June 1945 – 19 June 2021

Thursday 15 July 2021, Grenoside Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Born to Kenneth and Jean Rowlands at his paternal grandmother Mary's house on Cross Lane in Stocksbridge, Chris arrived in the world on 21st June 1945, just weeks after the end of World War II in Europe. He was joined three years later by Tony, and the whole family lived at Cross Lane for a number of years.

Throughout their childhoods, Chris and his friends would often be accompanied by his little brother when they set off on their various adventures exploring Stocksbridge and the surrounding area. Almost as often, they would end up carrying Tony home at the end of the day, having worn him out! Chris and Tony's cousins, Melvyn, Robert, Paul and Jackie, all lived nearby, so they spent a lot of time together when they were growing up. Chris used to like fishing, and he and Melvyn would sometimes take their rods and go together.

As a teenager, Chris developed his interest in music, especially jazz, blues and rock, as well as frequenting the local folk club. And he was proud to wear the uniform of the St John Ambulance Brigade for several years, helping at various community events.

Chris was happy enough to leave school when the time came, and was keen to join the workforce. He went straight in at the steelworks, and remained there as a general steel-worker until he was sixty. He grafted hard, and made good friends on the job, friends like Dave Broomhead, and Bob Clarke.

Chris and Bob really enjoyed each other's company; they shared a keen interest in Land Rovers, and went to Land Rover trials all over the country, Chris driving the vehicle he had refurbished himself. He was always mechanically minded, spending hours as a child, along with Tony, helping their dad maintain the family car. And he had a similar interest in motorbikes, though tragically it was out on a bike ride in 1968 that Chris and his dad suffered an accident that took Kenneth's life and left Chris in hospital for weeks, and took him many months to recover from.

Chris stayed away from bikes for many years after that, instead finding his thrills on four wheels, competing for a number of seasons in bomber car races. He did move back to the bikes in later years, when his friend Eric introduced him to speedway. They went to many National Speedway events, and Chris became mechanic for a member of the Sheffield Tigers speedway team.

Eric was from South Africa, and he invited Chris back home there a couple of times to stay with his family. Those were the most exotic trips Chris took, and he thoroughly enjoyed them, but he also enjoyed his holidays around the UK. Family holidays had been spent camping down in Devon and Cornwall, and as an adult Chris often went away with Bob. They would go to Scotland or the Lakes, find a B&B and explore the local area, Chris making the most of a chance to properly escape from work.

Chris always lived in the family home, he and his mum keeping each other company after Kenneth died, and he would sometimes bring Jean over to visit Tony and Catherine and his nephews Mark and Paul in Preston for the weekend, as well as bringing his grandma, Kenneth's mum, for the day when he could. His grandma doted on him, as did his mum, and it must have been something of a shock for Chris after Jean died in 1987. But he became self-sufficient, and managed on his own, 'bobbing along', as he used to say. He had a good friend across the road, Ian, and they would go out for meals, and shared Christmas together some years.

Chris lived life his own way; he wanted to do what he wanted, and once he retired, he did just that. His choices may not have been the ones we would all have made, but they suited Chris. And I hope that he himself will have looked back on his more active years – the cars and bikes, the nights out and trips away, good times spent with friends – and felt content. Chris is missed today as a brother, an uncle, a cousin, a friend – you each have your own memories of him.