

A celebration of life Graham George Bertram Holder

28 August 1937 – 19 March 2018

12.00, 9 April 2018, Cardiff and Vale Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Graham was born on Cardiff on the 28th of August 1937 to Rene and Bert Holder. He was the eldest of three brothers and grew up in Grangetown with his younger brothers Philip and Peter.

In later life he didn't tell a lot of stories about his childhood, but he enjoyed playing out with his many friends and riding their bicycles, roaming far and wide. He told Margo how he got in trouble with his mother for lifting a drain cover when he lost his marbles down the drain.

He attended Ninian Park School until he was fifteen but didn't enjoy school other than games and playing football and baseball for the school teams. When he left school, he served an apprenticeship as a plant fitter for General Plant on Newport Rd.

As I just said, he and his friends used to ride their bikes everywhere and when he was seventeen, one of their favourite trips was through the subway and across to Penarth, where they met another group of teenagers on the beach. Margo was one of this group.

The two groups and kids from the groups used to meet up over the next few years and he and Margo started courting. They knew that when he finished his apprenticeship he would have to do his National Service and so they got married, when he was twenty, before he went away, and they lived in rooms as Margo's parents' home in Paget Road.

When he finished his apprenticeship, he left to do his National Service and Margo stayed at home, working for Sherman Pools. He joined the Royal Engineers where they made good use of his skills and spent two years in Cyprus building roads. He enjoyed his time in Cyprus, where he played football for the Army and there are many photographs of him in Cyprus which make it look like he was on holiday there.

In 1960 he returned home and went back to General Plant where he undertook further training. He and Margo moved rooms in the house of one of Graham's relatives and it was here that Carole and Mark were born. Some years later they moved to Cedar Way, where Wendy was born, before moving to Dowland Road where the children grew up.

Once he was fully qualified he moved around several companies gaining experience before he began working for Coles Cranes in the late sixties. This job meant that he travelled all over the world to repair Cranes and he drove a van which had "Coles Cranes International Rescue" on the side, which resulted in some of his grandchildren believing that he was a Thunderbird. Just one reason he was a Superhero to them.

In this role he travelled across Europe, often on his own. Driving his van to Bulgaria, Turkey or Germany on a job. He had many adventures, while in this role and really enjoyed the job.

When working in Germany he attended social events at the British Embassy, representing his company. On another occasion he worked on the island of Montserrat in the Caribbean and had to fly to the island in a small island hopper plane.

But it wasn't all beer and skittles, he spent a week waiting in a hotel in Egypt for his contact from the client company to get in touch, he was so bored that he read a book that wasn't about cars.

When he wasn't working away he was very involved with his children and loved doing things with them, like going swimming on a Sunday at Penarth Baths and then to Rabiotti's for a treat.

In the summer they would all pile in the car and go away on trips, often on local trips to Lavernock Bay or Barry Island. But in the summer there are two

destinations that stick in Carole, Mark and Wendy's minds; visiting Margo's sister Doreen, her husband Jock and their family in Clydesdale and going with them to St Ives.

Mark and their cousin John, who were very close in age were always getting into trouble, but it was always Margo who had to handle the discipline, Graham was just too laid back.

Graham was really into cars and changed them frequently; Mark remembers being picked up by his dad from school one day in a new car and then the following day, his dad picking him up again, in a different new car. And Graham never consulted Margo, on one occasion he took her Morris Traveller for a run and returned with a different car he had bought to replace it, without telling her.

Graham has always been very sociable, quiet in his own way, but someone who really enjoyed a party. He and Margo had a close circle of friends who are still friends. They socialised together, their children all played together, and there were regular parties in each other's houses. For many years their best friends have been Barbara and David.

When he was sixty-five he had to retire from work but wasn't happy about that, so he got a part-time job driving. He delivered parts, and this took him back to places that he had worked in the past and knew people with whom he had become friendly, so he really enjoyed this job. He had to give up work all together when his eyesight deteriorated to the point when he couldn't drive anymore.

He hated not being able to drive but on the bright side, when he stopped work this time, Margot retired as well. They had always enjoyed their holidays, but now they began to holiday seriously, going on four or five holidays in a year. Every summer for at least the last thirty years they have gone to Playa Mar in

Spain, taking family and friends and sometimes going on their own as they had made friends there.

Barbara and David had persuaded them some years ago to go on a cruise of the Caribbean as Graham was not keen on the idea, but he was bitten by the bug and after they went on many more cruises.

One of the things he enjoyed about holidays was the opportunity to buy some very good value jewellery from the “looky looky men.” Graham liked his bling, particularly big shiny watches and was especially pleased with the deal that he once got on a Rolex watch.

He would buy a shiny, knock off watches on each holiday and then when he got back home and realised that, with his eyesight, he couldn't see the dials he gave them away as presents, usually to Matthew, who had similar tastes to him.

On one occasion Carole and Hollie asked if he could get them a Dolce and Gabbana copy each. He returned from holiday with half a dozen fakes for them to choose from as expected. But what they didn't expect was when he and Margo bought them each the genuine item for their next birthdays.

Margo and Graham had a caravan in St Mary's Well bay for many years and in the summer, they would pick their grandchildren up from school and take them to the caravan, so they could use the pool. All the family used the caravan and enjoyed many wonderful times there including many barbecues and parties for birthdays and other special events. Graham really enjoyed a party, I was told he would be mad as hell to miss his own party today.

He loved spending time with his children and grandchildren, Hollie and Robbie, Alex and Matthew and Morgan and Jade, whether at the caravan or just visiting each other.

But he especially enjoyed a party, perhaps to celebrate significant days like birthdays, Mothers' Day and Fathers' day. He would really enjoy all their company until, he'd had enough; at which point he'd announce, "It's about time you all went now."

Graham was well until recently, but his health started to deteriorate after Christmas when he and Margo got back from a holiday to Benidorm. But didn't want his family to worry about him and so he never complained and was always upbeat and positive around them, being a true inspiration to them.

Memories of Graham

Paul Galsworthy, Penarth Ex-Servicemen's Club

I've known Graham for most of my working life after my brother John decided to bring his daughter Wendy home who have been together now for some 36+ years later John also befriended Mark and together We all became good friends

Graham loved the Exs club and spent a great degree of his life with Margo and friends there watching a variety of entertainments in the evening or with his mates.

when he was a young man he played football for the Exs and was a top defender utilising his skills from playing in Grangetown and later in the Army. And when he hung up his boots it was then that he took up the competitive game of skittles playing in the Exs"c"s side. He also enjoyed watching sport especially wales playing rugby with the lads in the sports bar.

Grahams enjoyment of sports was 2nd to his enjoyment of meeting and socialising with his friends and family of who he was so proud.

In the club he used to love to listen to everyones adventures and stories and would love to tell of his adventures over the years be it when he was in the army or telling many stories like the one about the invisible dog Colin marsh took on tour to Blackpool or recounting stories of his great friends Robbo Fred Cliffy and Derek.

The famous tours to Blackpool and Benidorm were all about bonding and having fun but for me on my first tour was a baptism of fire as I was only used to drinking in the Royal Navy I Soon learned that was not a patch on these guys.

Graham and the gang also came on tour to Huddersfield with Mark, John and myself when we played for the Old Penarthians Rugby side and again many laughs ensued and lifelong friends made.

Graham was also a very competitive skittler and would regularly show up the younger guys with scores we could only dream of. But as Graham's sight got worse you'd imagine so would his skittling well Graham just developed a new method using Cliffy as an observer like a sniper Cliffy would tell him "left quarter, right quarter or middle" and Grahame would again put us to shame. Grahame's last score which was only a few months ago was an amazing 38 with 2 yes 2 9's thrown unbelievable.

Graham loved the club and when the club hit bad times about 6 years ago he was one of the first to put his hand in his pocket to bail it out, also helping as a

committee member. and it was all hands on deck with Margo and friends coming together helping, even to cover the seats in the Skittle alley.

And now I'm glad to say that legacy has continued and the Exs is now thriving.

Graham was always a gentleman and always had time for people. And I have never heard anyone ever say a bad word about him. He certainly left his mark on me, the club and so many people and will always be remembered I like so many people loved him.