

# A celebration of life

# Emma Louise Morley

11 May 1979 – 18 August 2021

Friday 17 September 2021, Rose Hill Burial Ground



*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

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*Born on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1979, Emma was David and Sheila's first child, later joined by her brother Phil. Apparently even as a young child she was incredibly independent, very sure of what she wanted and never one for a big fuss. Her intelligence was also obvious very early, picking up reading and writing before she even went to school and topping her class once she got there. Those school years began in Birmingham, before the family moved to Dudley in 1987, and there she made a wide circle of friends, including two of her closest, Steven and Emily. Steven did his best to describe their friendship:*

*I have stories, of course. Like the time Emma and I were very nearly struck by lightning in our early teens (she remained very calm, I did not!) and the numerous scrapes we all got into during our school days. But the joy of Emma somehow isn't in anecdotes or tales from the past. She wasn't one for dramatic scenes, big shows or emotion or ever, ever being the centre of attention.*

*It is more in her subtlety, her lack of pretension, her humility and her quiet yet brilliant sense of humour, which often focused on the craziness of the world around us. Consistent, loyal, kind, uncomplaining, endlessly practical and at times refreshingly straightforward, and all of this whilst being completely and utterly unique. She really was everything you could ask for in a friend and she was a truly wonderful person.*

*A huge fan of the pop music that was the soundtrack to her teenage years (a soundtrack she remained loyal to even as she grew up), Emma used to record the Chart Show from the radio, making cassettes of the Top 40 each week. With her excellent retentive memory, this grounding made her a demon at any pop quiz show in recent years! Her musical tastes did expand over the years, though, and she was a huge fan of P!nk, going with Richard to see her perform live. It was Steven who suggested the P!nk track we're going to listen to today, a song whose title speaks the truth of our experience: it hurts to be human.*

*Music: Hurts 2B Human by P!nk ft. Khalid*

*Emma was always pretty driven, with her studies and pursuits such as her Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Her old friend Emily said:*

*It's thirty years this month since I met Emma, on our first day of high school. Our school days were a lot of fun and I could share endless stories of these wonderful days. But one that particularly sticks out involves an ill-fated Duke of Edinburgh expedition, where my appalling map-reading skills found us stranded in the middle of a field, waist-deep in cow dung, staring down a very angry-looking bull. Whilst I stood there, flailing wildly, Emma managed to navigate us out of this undesirable situation to safety. Not only was she very forgiving of the situation, but we laughed and laughed our way through it. At this point, I knew I had made a friend for life.*

*Emma was equally committed to her principles, especially those related to the environment. As a teenager she used to harangue her parents for using aerosol deodorants, and it was no surprise, to them or anyone else, when she went to study Environmental Management at Bradford University.*

*Reversing the migration her father had made many years before, she moved to Yorkshire and wholeheartedly adopted it as her home county, though always made sure to ring her mum and dad every weekend without fail. She worked hard on her degree, and again made close and lasting connections, friendships that meant an awful lot to her. One of her friends from university, Caroline, described Emma as:*

*...fairly quiet, but did enjoy a good night out. We called her "Little Em" as she was "Ickle!" You knew it had been a good night out when she came home and tried to sleep on the stairs cuddling her shoe! You could always count on Emma, when out and James's Sit Down came on, that she would*

*join you in sitting on the sticky floor. We recreated this at my wedding, but luckily the floor wasn't sticky!*

*In the second year we shared a house where we took in a stray cat, Tinkerbelle. Emma loved this cat and cared for him as best she could. The cat was blind and deaf, but Emma made sure he was safe.*

*Since University we stayed in touch, meeting up every few years, especially at special events such as weddings and meeting each other's children. She was always that friend who was always there if we needed each other, and it didn't matter that we hadn't spoken for a few years, she would still be a friend.*

*I remember when she first told me about her cancer. I thought she was so brave, how she dealt with it and had the courage to keep going for as long as she had done. Sadly Covid meant that we hadn't seen each other recently, but the last time I did see her was at her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party, where she looked so happy and is a lovely memory to have of her.*

*Emma came away from Bradford with not just her degree but also a Diploma of Industrial Studies and gained a job in the early days of Aqua Enviro, as a Process Scientist. She was committed to her work, and found it both interesting and rewarding, even when it meant she was somewhat odiferous when she got home! It took her all over the country, including to high security sites such as Porton Down as well as pea fields in Colchester, and wherever she went Emma was respected and liked by her colleagues. She was always good value on a night out, as we've already heard from Caroline, and Richard remembers one work night out to the races when Emma came home rather tipsy, with her bag crammed full of scones that she had rescued rather than see them go to waste! The scones seem to have taken the place of her phone, wallet and keys, and had obviously disintegrated fully on the journey home, but at least they hadn't just been thrown away!*



*Despite her youthful appearance Emma was confident in her own expertise and progressed to Laboratory Manager and then Senior Process Scientist, as well as coaching newer members of her team. She was also very proud when she bought her first house, on Blamires Street, Sheila and David helping her to decorate it and make it a home. And she enjoyed travelling with her friends, visiting places such as Tenerife, Egypt, Israel and the USA.*

*Aqua Enviro sponsored Emma through her Masters in Environmental Engineering and Project Management, and while undertaking that course she felt the need for a little R&R. Still retaining her membership of Bradford University Games Club, Emma liked to unwind over various tabletop and card games, and it was a fateful game of Magic: The Gathering that brought her and Richard together for the first time. She played green, he played blue, and Richard said he won in more ways than one that day. He knew immediately that he wanted to get to know his beautiful adversary better, and before long he and Emma were on their first date, watching Gladiator on DVD.*

*The two of them complemented each other, in their approach to everything from the big stuff to the little details, especially in recent years when it came to their daily fix of the Times Quick Cryptic crossword; Richard took the analytical clues while Emma's forte was the more overarching ones, and they would ping the online version back and forth to each other all day. Emma had a very methodical mindset – she still had every pay slip she received since her days at Morrison's while at King Edward's Sixth Form College! Whatever the topic, she wanted to have all available information at her fingertips, preferably in a well-constructed leaflet.*

*Emma and Richard loved spending time together, be it on holidays in the Lake District and the north-east, or over their weekly Dungeons & Dragons sessions with good mates Adrian and Jamie. They shared a love of athletics, and of the Olympic games, so were delighted to be able to combine the two interests back in 2012, as enthusiastic spectators at the London Games. Emma and Richard bought their house on Windy Bank Lane together in 2010, a much-loved home even if it lived up to the street name and made it rather difficult for Emma to be as cosy as she would have liked – she would wear a hat inside and go to bed wearing enormous fluffy socks to keep the draughts out. Emma and Richard tied the knot six months later, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2011, at Bagden Hall. It was a lovely day, followed by a fabulous few days in Paris on honeymoon. And we're going to hear the song Emma and Richard chose for their first dance now.*

*Music heard: Gravity by Embrace*



*Two years after they married, Emma and Richard welcomed Benjamin to the world, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. Emma had collected all available leaflets on child-rearing and was an absolute natural as a mum. She was devoted to Benjamin, and she and Richard spent many happy times taking their baby boy to Oakwell Hall, walking, exploring, playing hide and seek in the gardens once he was on the move. Emma also loved taking him swimming and found a strong support network amongst her friends from NCT to help her through the first months of motherhood. She would also meet up regularly with her friend from university, Ruth, the two of them often taking Benjamin round Xscape for the day.*

*Benjamin and Richard were the most important things in Emma's life, and when her*

*world was rocked by her diagnosis in March 2017, they were what kept her going and motivated her courageous and stoical response. From the moment she was given the news, her only focus was on getting better for them, and for herself, so she could be with them. Benjamin remembers that day, though he was only three; it was the weirdest day ever for him, as he had had a late start at nursery, then within an hour his mummy and daddy were there to pick him up. But where else would Emma have gone after news like that, than to her little boy? The three of them spent the afternoon at Oakwell Hall, which became even more so their special place as time went on.*



*Emma was remarkable, not just in the way she approached the hand life had dealt her, but also in the insights she drew from her experience. She was never judgmental anyway, but even less so since her diagnosis; drawing from one of Benjamin's favourite books, *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*, she used to say you should always assume the best, even when someone is acting their worst, as you have no idea what else they are dealing with, or, more succinctly, 'You never know if they've just sat on a bee.'*

*Emma took every opportunity, every suggested treatment, every chance she had, and she put up with so much without complaining. The spare room was christened Granny and Grandad's room, and Sheila and David would be up for every round of chemo, to offer their help and support. And Richard's parents, Chris and Kathleen, were absolutely invaluable; living closer, they could drop everything and come to help at the drop of a hat – and they did, many times.*



*Emma continued her work for as long as she could, but even when she had to step back, Aqua Enviro, both the company and her colleagues and friends individually, supported her throughout. She maintained her love of games, especially when she could share them with Benjamin and Richard; Splendor was one of her favourites, along with Settlers of Catan. And she was still fascinated by puzzles, anything from crosswords and Sudoku to the escape rooms that she, Richard and Benjamin would undertake with Richard's brother Chris, and his sister Jo and her children, Jack and Rose. Even on recent mornings, Emma and Benjamin would sit together playing Stardew Valley, Benjamin generally abandoning his crops and running off to the mine leaving Emma to pick up the pieces (which she never minded doing). Emma kept a sort of diary; with all she was facing she still found positives to record in it each day, and the games were always in there. She also drew comfort from the time she spent in her garden, sewing seeds and nurturing the plants she grew there.*

*Most of her comfort and strength, though, was drawn from her family, and she showed exceptional determination in her efforts to spend time with them. It was a hugely important milestone when Emma got to celebrate her fortieth birthday with all her nearest and dearest and Lightcliffe Club. While some of Benjamin and Richard's most treasured memories are from their two holidays as a family to Center Parcs, which were accompanied, on repeat, by George Ezra's Shotgun, sung at the tops of their voices. You may not feel much like singing today, but you're going to have to try now, and do Emma proud.*

*Music: Shotgun by George Ezra*

*Those trips to Center Parcs gave Emma, Richard and Benjamin the chance to make some incredible memories together; she was still flying down zip-wires just three months before she died! This year's trip, in May, also gave her a precious few days with her brother Phil, her sister-in-law Justine and her niece Florence, days filled with pancakes and laser tag and boat trips in masks.*



*Emma was determined, as ever, to get everything she could out of her time, despite the personal cost to her, just as she was determined to attend her much-loved aunt's funeral and spend some time with Sheila's extended family. And to proceed with the planned holiday with Richard's side of the family in Norfolk just this August; she wanted to see and do it all, from exploring Blickling Hall to watching delightedly as Benjamin, Jack and Rose crabbed off Cromer Pier.*

*It was typical of Emma's approach throughout that she never made any concession to her illness; she just made her mind up what she wanted to do, and got on and did it. And she never stopped making plans for the future and thinking about those she loved.*



*Sheila and David wanted to say today that:*

*As a family we feel immensely proud of everything Emma achieved in every part of her short life.*

*And Sheila found a short verse that brought her a little comfort:*

*A special smile, a special face  
In our hearts a special place  
Memories are a gift to treasure  
Ours of you will last forever.*

*All of you have your own memories of Emma, treasures you can bring out whenever you want to feel close to her.*