

# A celebration of the life of Ronald (Ron) Fred Herbert Muggridge

25<sup>th</sup> January 1928 – 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024, Surrey and Sussex Crematorium, St Richard's Chapel  
Celebrant: Felicity Harvest



*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

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Ron was born in Edenbridge on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1928, to Bill and Fanny Muggridge. He was the younger of 2 brothers. Sadly his elder brother, Dennis, died in a swimming accident while serving in the RAF during the war. Ron left school at 14, in 1942, and went to work in a local factory where they were making machines and aircraft parts till the war ended.

In January 1946 he was called up, going into the RAF in March, and serving till August 1948. He met Bett while he was at home on leave in 1947, at a dance, of course, and their courtship was spent cycling to dances all around the local area, whenever he could get home. They married on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1949 at Four Elms church near Edenbridge. Ron told me this story about the wedding:

*“The church there is opposite the cricket ground and Betty’s Dad was a very good cricketer, who played there regularly. However, that Saturday, as he was busy giving his daughter away, he asked for a replacement. And the replacement was – the parson who was conducting the wedding! He did the ceremony in his whites, and as the wedding photos were taken outside the church, he hot-footed it across to the cricket ground.”*

On leaving the RAF, Ron went to work for Southern Builders, where he learned his inimitable wallpapering skills, which he continued to use for most of his life in the various family homes. But in 1951 he joined what was then the GPO as a telephone engineer. In time, the GPO became Post Office Telecommunications and then British Telecom. Being a telephone engineer was a profession to be proud of, as witnessed by the fact that Ron stayed in that role for 40 years and 4 months.

This anonymous poem is called *Lines to a Lineman*. It was written for the Bell Telephone System in the US in the 1950’s and could stand as an elegy for any telephone engineer.

*No word of pen or stroke of artist’s hand  
No flowered phrase or oratory’s boast  
Need tell the story of the world you’ve made,  
‘Tis writ upon the pages of the land  
From north to south – from coast to coast*

*Those poles you mount – those lengthened strands you string  
Are not just sturdy uprights in the sky  
That march across the miles in proud parade.  
You’ve made them into words that help and sing:  
A doctor’s call, good news, a lover’s sigh.*

*Deep etched in time the record of your skill  
The work you’ve done – your willingness to do,  
The heights and storms you’ve tackled unafraid.  
Your signature is carved on every hill  
Yours too, the creed – “The message must go through”*

After they were first married, Ron and Betty lived with Ron’s parents, until they could get a house to rent in Mead Road, where Dennis was born in 1957, and Linda in 1959. Dennis remembers Ron as a strict but loving Dad, who was always busy, but who found time to introduce his children to two of his great passions - football and playing in the Brass Band. He played football well, and, according to Dennis, taught them how to kick a ball properly. And they both played with him in Edenbridge Brass Band for a while – alongside seven other Post Office Telephone workers. This turned out to be an enduring passion for Dennis, who still plays the euphonium in Oxted Brass Band.

Though daughter Lin did not keep up the brass band playing, she did pick up another important life-long interest from her Dad. Ron taught her to dance at a very young age, while standing on his feet to learn the steps (foxtrot, waltz & Cha Cha to name a few). In her teenage years she had to fight with Bett to dance with Ron (not literally, of course). She still goes dancing twice a week, though it is Country Line Dancing now.

In addition to the paperhanging, Ron had a real talent for wood work which he loved. He made a number of beautiful items including a maple leaf bowl and 2 cribbage boards.

Family holidays were usually in Weymouth, staying in a hotel by the bridge. Originally they would go in the motorbike and sidecar. But then one day Ron and Bett left the kids with their grandad and appeared back in a Mini Countryman. Dennis can still remember the registration: 363 8KO. One year they took both sets of grandparents with them to Weymouth in a dormobile.

For a while Ron & Bett took a break from dancing, but in 1978 they took up sequence dancing. They travelled around to various halls – by now in a car, of course - and helped to organise the dances at Jarvis Brook, at the Four Elms Club, and at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge. Betty stopped dancing in her early 80s, Ron continued till he was 88.

Ron and Bett celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2019, just a month before she died. There were twenty-two family members there. Their card from the Queen remained proudly displayed in the living room at Croft Lane.

Betty's health had been poor for years, but her final illness only lasted a month, with just a week in the Hospice. She had been desperate to stay at home, with Ron at her side, but such was the care at the Hospice that he could remain with her all the time, having his meals provided and sleeping on a pull-down bed. So after 70 years, they could remain together to the end.

Ron continued to live at Croft Lane till his final illness, supported by Dennis and Lynn.