

A Celebration of the Life of

David Lindores Renwick

20 March 1937 – 4 December 2024

2 January 2025, Cemetery Chapel

Celebrant: Heather Raine



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Tribute

David Lindores Renwick was born in Cambridge on the 20th March 1937 to parents Joy and John Renwick. David was followed by his younger brother, Stuart, born nearly two years later. David's parents had moved to Cambridge from the Scottish border town of Peebles where David's grandparents lived. David and his family would visit his grandparents by train for holidays. That would have been quite a journey during his childhood and seeing the different urban and rural landscapes from the train window must have felt exciting to the young David.

Home life in Cambridge during and after the second world war would have been difficult and frightening for the Renwick family. Although Cambridge was not badly damaged the city had frequent air raid alerts which would have raised the family's anxiety. David's father was a Police Sergeant in the city and when David was around 9 years old his father left home. David and his brother were left in the care of their very loving mother, Joy. The family had very little spare money and David took on a paper round to fund the guitar lessons he was keen to complete. David's parents had both been musicians with Joy playing piano and John playing double bass. The family often played music together in the same operatic society in Cambridge.

David attended the Milton Road junior school followed by the Chesterton Boys school where he became Head Boy. David did not know at that time that the girl who would become his wife attended the separate Chesterton Girls school at the same time.

When he finished school David started two years National Service with the RAF. David earned many qualifications during his time with the RAF including short-hand and typing and learning to drive. David drove an RAF Fire Truck which, if you can imagine, would have been an adventure in itself.

David then began work with Local Government on Hobson Street in Cambridge. That building included the County Planning and County Record offices which were located on different floors. David initially worked on the lower floor as a draughtsman and later moved to the upper floor Planning Department working on maps. David might have become aware that the routes he used, to go to and from his office, had to change due to a door suddenly becoming locked. That change meant David needed to walk through the general office and pass by one particular young lady typist. That young lady knew from the first time she saw him that she really liked David. She managed to persuade her father, who also worked in the building, to lock the already mentioned door so that David would need to walk by her as he came and went. That allowed the young lady and David to see each other often. That young lady was Ann who would become David's wife.

David had always been keen on doing things properly and in the right way. Before mentioning it to Ann he first asked her father if he could ask Ann to go out with him. Ann's father had agreed and so David then asked Ann. Ann recalled their first date as being a trip to the cinema to watch the horror film 'House of Horrors'. Ann suspects

David might have chosen that film so he could hold her hand if she became frightened. Ann also recalled David telling her that there had been two other young men, including one of his friends, vying for Ann's attention when she and David began their relationship. The family have a photograph of David and Ann in a field with Ann wearing a daisy chain crown David had made for her. Happy times captured to remember and share with their future family.

David and Ann were courting for five years before they married in Cambridge on July 18th, 1959 when Ann was 21.

Ann explained that David:

" always looked a handsome young man and he was very tall."

Ann later learned that David's mum had said it would all have been much quicker if he had simply picked Ann up and put her in his pocket.

After they married David and Ann moved to Taunton in Somerset where David began a Social Work course. David's belief in wanting everything in place before he and Ann started their family meant they waited nine years before Tracey, then Brendon, were born.

Throughout his life David's interests included many energetic hobbies. On the River Cam he rowed in an "eight", complete with coxswain. David would tell people he rowed on the River Cam and while he did not attend Cambridge University he allowed people to reach their own conclusions. As a form of exercise David kept a rowing machine in one of the family's greenhouses in Carlisle and continued to row well into his late 70s.

In his youth David had been a Scout and a keen swimmer. He won cups for his swimming and while at Chesterton Boys school won the Dale Cup. In scouting he developed a life-long skill in tying knots. He always knew the right knot for the challenge whether tying guy ropes, securing the canoe on top of the car or securing a blind. David used his knot work to create an escape rope under the bedroom window with the intention of jumping out in an emergency. Thankfully it was never needed.

David had hobbies and ways of doing things that Ann recalls were:

"a bit challenging".

There were trips out in the car, in the snow, with David successfully managing descents down steep roads before wondering aloud whether he should have done that. Ann always went along with David; She knew he would keep her safe.

David learned sub aqua diving in Cambridge where the club practised in a disused quarry. David later joined another sub aqua club in Taunton.

Then there was David's interest in pot-holing around Taunton. Ann recalled one time of becoming worried and contacting the police when David was late coming home after one pot-holing session. When David took the family to Cheddar Gorge he and the children had to explore without Ann who felt unable to stay in the enclosed space of the cave.

David's Social Work career took Ann and himself from Taunton to Weston-Super-Mare, then Newark and finally Carlisle. It was in Newark that David, learning that Ann would like a cat, came home one day with a Siamese cat. That talkative cat was special and would sit and watch the children playing as though keeping them safe. David and Ann went on to breed Siamese cats and thereafter always kept them at home.

When the family moved to Carlisle in 1972 the Lowry Hill estate, which was to become their home, was still being built. With their new home came a blank canvas garden which David developed into a lovely and productive garden. David was both creative and very handy. He planned, prepared and got on with it. When the family moved to Carlisle David was a Social Worker in Penrith and later, during 1980, moved to a position in the Civic Centre in Carlisle. David eventually left Social Work and retrained to become a driving instructor and taught driving for ten years. He was also a humanist funeral celebrant for a while during the early 2000s.

When Tracey and Brendon were little David would take them to play music at the local Stroke club. David would record their music and parties onto cassettes and could be heard, in the family home, playing his guitar at night.

David also joined a dance band based in Bassenthwaite. While other members of the band wore multi-coloured 70s style ponchos David insisted on wearing a white jacket. Tracey explained:

"he was always independently minded".

Family holidays involved trips to Scotland with the caravan for 2 or 3 weeks at a time. There would be canoeing, swimming, diving, with David bringing freshly caught crabs and other sea-fare for the family to enjoy. He once found a very big sea urchin which he subsequently made into an interesting and unusual lamp for the family home.

During their holiday in 1983 the whole family walked up Ben Nevis. It had been a boiling hot day and there had been lots of snow at the top which Ann remembers lying in to cool down. It took nine hours for the family to climb and descend Scotland's, indeed the British Isles', highest mountain. The family also had monopoly and scrabble for those days when it was wet. Which was often. David really encouraged his children's love of nature including fell walking and bird watching.

And then there were the cosy feelings at night, in the caravan, with the little gas lamps burning and feelings of being secure.

If you are able, I now invite you to stand and join in the singing of Auld Lang Syne if you are comfortable doing so. David's family would love it if you link arms. For those watching the live stream I will be silent to make sure you hear the voices of David's family and friends. Now, over to the piano to start us off.

Auld Lang Syne (Rabbie Burns / William Shield) – see Order of Ceremony for words

As mentioned earlier David was 9 when his father left the family and difficult feelings persisted for some time.

When Tracey and Brendon were aged 12 and 11 David became determined that they, and their grandfather, should get to know each other. The introduction had been difficult to initiate and arrange, however, David, Ann, Tracey and Brendon were eventually able to meet grandfather John and his separate family.

David was very proud of his Scottish roots and had items of clothing made from Renwick tartan which he wore on special occasions. David's interest in genealogy began with his mother's family name, Bonong, as well as his father's family name of Renwick. David's initial work traced his heritage to France which led him to learning French then travelling to France to continue his research. David had been able to trace the family's ancestors back to the 1700s.

While the family always had holidays once he retired David arranged a three month long world cruise with Ann. Their destinations included Australia, where David, ever the adventurer, went on one of the organised, harnessed-up, climbs over Sydney Harbour bridge.

In later years when Ann's health began to worsen David took over the role of caring for her. Then, more recently, David's own health began to change and, thinking of how he could further contribute to humanity, he donated his brain to Newcastle University's dementia research programme.

David and Ann celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary almost 6 months ago. Their marriage was long, happy and caring and family life was secure. David was patient, understanding, wouldn't criticise, would let Tracey and Brendon make their own mistakes, was always there, 100% dependable, loyal and always did the right thing.

As a dad and a husband David was very special. He always knew when Ann was upset and would never try to brush over it. Ann explained:

“he'd calm me down, would hold my hand, stroke my arm or my hand and help me feel better.”

Ae Fond Kiss, 4 verses, by Rabbie Burns. Performed by Brian – see Order of Ceremony for words

Tracey's eulogy

I am so proud of my dear Dad.

He has helped me through my life every step of the way, teaching me the values of kindness, integrity, sincerity and love.

Not to mention how to swim, fix a bike puncture and change a car wheel.

Whilst not an overtly emotional man on the outside, his love for his family was absolute.

To Mum, he was her rock; particularly in the last few years, when he stepped up to look after her.

To me and Brendon, the totally dependable father, giving us all the opportunities we needed to grow and thrive.

Music lessons were not cheap, but he was determined we would have the chances he himself had unfortunately missed out on in his own childhood, due to unavoidable financial restraints. As we heard from Heather, he had to fund his own guitar lessons.

Dad made us a piano keyboard out of card and added the names of the notes for us to learn. When we acquired Grannie's piano, he would sit with us and help us practice. He enjoyed doing this, as he found he would be learning things himself along the way.

Little recitals we gave for the local stroke club were a fun way for us to play together, whilst also teaching us the value of community spirit and thinking of others.

Dad would be on guitar, Brendon on the cornet and piano, and me on violin and piano.

We played pieces such as "Georgy Girl" and "My favourite things".

I fondly remember Dad practising the guitar downstairs in the evenings.

Tunes like "Hello Dolly", "Sunny", "Mairzy Doats" and "Morningtown Ride" would filter upstairs and be learnt subconsciously by me as I was drifting off to sleep.

I remember him playing in the band for a production of "The Sound of Music" and being really inspired to want to follow in his footsteps.

And so, as I told him many times, my career as a musician is completely down to him, and I cannot imagine what I would have been without music in my life.

Dad was a very creative man.

For the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, he made me the most amazing copy of the Imperial State crown. He found a colour photo of it in the paper and recreated it

using purple velvet, cardboard and bubble wrap for the fur trim. Much to my annoyance, my fellow brownie friends took delight in trying to pop the bubbles!!

On a much larger scale, he planned and built a large roofed patio behind our house in Kelvin Close, Cambridge, as well as a garage, complete with a pit area so he could get under the car and tinker with the engine.

He went on to build a very similar patio on to the back of our Teasdale Road home in Carlisle.

His meticulous attention to detail and research was a theme throughout his life. In the early days of video recorders, he shunned the VHS and Betamax models in favour of the V2000, because only that one allowed recording on both sides of the tape. It seemed the best choice at the time!

My Dad's support through teenage years and beyond, although not appreciated by me at the time, was nonetheless given freely.

He would become DJ on the music centre for my birthday parties at home, and be there to pick up the pieces after boyfriend troubles.

He would wait patiently outside a party for me when the agreed pick up time had been well exceeded!

His patience teaching me to drive led on to him retraining to become a driving instructor.

When my University finals dissertation was overdue, he even drove all the way down to London for the day to finish typing it up for me. All at a time when he had a lot of stress to deal with in his own work, though he said nothing about that.

An amazing kindness I will never forget.

When my son Camron was born, Mum and Dad would phone me regularly for long chats, which I very much enjoyed. I knew they were always only a phone call away, even though they lived at the other end of the country.

They would come down and support Camron in his acting roles and karate gradings, and be there for his birthday parties, usually making the sandwiches and tidying the garden.

After Dad had a nasty fall in the summer, I stayed with them both for 3 weeks to help look after them. Precious time I will remember.

I know Dad was grateful that Brendon and I spent more time with them of late, and we were both very happy to be able to give back that love that we always had from him.

To conclude, I came across this short poem on the internet which I felt was an apt tribute....

My Father's Garden (author unknown) – see Order of Ceremony for words

Thank you Dad. We love you.

Brendon's eulogy

Hello, I'm Brendon – David's son. There are so many things I could tell you about my Dad. Here are just a few...

'My Dad' let me hammer big nails into blocks of wood in the garage when I was little. Although 9 out of 10 of them went in wonky, the other one went in beautifully straight and made me feel very capable. Today I'm a confident DIY-er. Thank you Dad!

'My Dad' built me a portable puppet theatre for all my Pelham Puppets (marionettes). It was 6 feet high and 6 feet wide. He labelled all the pieces up alphabetically for me so I could put it up myself. It had electric lights, scenery and a huge curtain to hide behind. He encouraged me to advertise a puppet show service for local children's parties. He used to drop me off with all the stuff in the car, then pick me up when the party was over. I charged the parents big money – and they paid it! Today I work for myself and I STILL mess around with puppets. Thank you Dad!

'My Dad' took me and my sister swimming every Saturday morning. Dad was a very keen swimmer and he patiently encouraged Tracey and I to ditch the armbands, to put our heads under the water, to achieve our 5 metres, then 10 metres, then 20 meters, and so on, to hold our breath and sink down to touch the bottom of the scary deep end. He taught us to be brave and made it fun to be keeping fit and active. Thank you Dad!

When it came to swimming, David was in a league of his own. In his 60s he set about achieving 1000 miles over many visits to Carlisle Swimming Baths. There's a certificate to prove it and he was very proud of that.

'My Dad' loved the great outdoors. Being close enough to get to the Lake District and back in a day, he took us on some really significant walks – all the big peaks. It was often tough going for Mum, Tracey and me, but the promise of a hefty packed lunch kept us focussed. Early into those walking days, Dad shaped some carefully selected branches into hiking sticks for us and showed us how to whittle a notch into the stick with a penknife to celebrate each walk we had completed. He taught us perseverance and a love for nature and the outdoors. Thank you Dad!

'My Dad' was an expedition leader. In the summer holidays, when Tracey and I were kids, he would cart us all off on an epic two or three week caravan holiday. Over those years we toured pretty much all of the UK, although Scotland was Dad's favourite place. Dad would bundle the awning and the tents into the caravan, then

haul the canoe onto the car roof, he attached the bikes onto the rear window, he squeezed my pet mice into the boot, along with all the diving equipment (wetsuits and aqualungs), the outdoor sports equipment, the indoor games and every other piece of equipment he knew for certain would be needed or come in useful. And ... off we'd go! He taught me preparedness, planning ahead and leadership. Thank you Dad!

'My Dad' was a detective. He solved an ancestral mystery resulting in 'a breakthrough' which is the name he gave to a very long document explaining it all. On the front of our order of service is David in 2011. He was so proud of that 'breakthrough' he engaged a professional photographer to take that photo. Out of shot he is holding a significant book that contained enough clues to lead him to that family discovery. David was long intrigued by his mother's maiden name – BONONG – and had been told by his uncle that they were descended from French aristocracy. So he spent many years learning French in order to study vital source materials. To cut a very long story short, David tracked down his ancestor John Louis Bonong in the family tree. John Louis was head butler at Gosford House, near Longniddry in East Lothian, which is now owned by the current Earl of Wemyss, James Charteris. David and James then had many a detailed correspondence between them, discussing intricate family details. James's warmth, kindness and openness towards David was a wonderful episode in David's life. The story of Jean Louis Bonong was indeed one of love, intrigue, loyalty and service and yes, there was a likeliness, whilst unproven, of a link to the aristocracy. My Dad's detective work was truly worthy of a PhD. Well done Dad!

On the back of our order of service is the last photo ever taken of Dad. Sally, my wife, and I had visited Ann & David on the Sunday - the day before he was taken into hospital, and just three days before he passed away. It was a lovely cheerful visit that day and Dad was in really good form. He expressed his appreciation to us of all the things we had done, and were still doing, to help him and Mum. Thank you Dad!

'My Dad' was an amateur musician. As Tracey has mentioned, he would sing and play guitar to us at home and also in public to help entertain and engage elderly residents in care homes and at daytime stroke club events in Carlisle. His interest in music drove his passion for Tracey and I to be properly trained in music, and as many of you here know - that has shaped both Tracey's and my careers. Thank you Dad!

Here I am holding a special cassette tape and I'm now going to put it in this cassette player and press the play button. You are going to have the wonderful opportunity hearing David performing at his own funeral. And I think he would find this very funny indeed.

*However, you might need to have a tissue at the ready...
Here's David - 'my Dad' - performing Cavatina. Take it away Dad!*

Cavatina (Stanley Myers) recorded and performed by David Renwick.

Camron's eulogy

I am very fond of my Grandad, and I am privileged to have had the chance to share many moments with him in my adolescence.

He was a loving, peaceful and generous man, a true gentleman in my eyes, always putting others first and resolving arguments between me and my dad!

I remember going to visit Grandad at the Old Bury Hill camp site, where me and Grandad went for a walk in the woods area. I remember thinking we wouldn't be able to find our way back, so I made small wooden arrows with twigs and placed them as we walked further so we could find our way back. Grandad reassured me that we would find our way back nevertheless, and indeed we did, completely overlooking my arrows! This links in with my current life, in which I need to find my direction and I know Grandad will be helping guide me until I find my path.

As a small kid, Grandad would take me for rides on his scooter/moped, these were some of the most fun moments for me as a young kid, moments I will forever cherish, and never forget.

I know that all of us have treasured memories of my grandad, I hope today will prompt these memories back into our minds, so we can celebrate his life and give him the dignified send off he truly deserves.

Thank you for listening.