

A Celebration of the Life of

# Hayden Keith Jones

29 July 1943 – 10 December 2024

10 January 2025, Grenoside Crematorium

Celebrant: Hannah McKerchar



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Born on 29 July 1943, Hayden was the only child of HESSIE and Bob Jones. He grew up in Barnsley, but on leaving school moved to Coventry to work at Dunlop in the avionics department. It may not have been the job for him long term, but it did give him the opportunity to test drive one of the first E-Type Jags, taking it on the M1 before there was a speed limit – by all accounts he revved the socks off it!

Hayden returned to Yorkshire to join his father at R.C. Jones Motor Bodies, starting out as stores manager before becoming an estimator. He was proud to continue the family business, becoming Managing Director when his father stepped down, through to his own retirement aged 58. The job brought him success, and enjoyment for most of his career; but more importantly, it brought him together with Gwyn. Gwyn's father had the Austin Rover dealership in Hoyland, and it was Gwyn's job to deliver cars in to R.C. Jones. Either Hayden or his father would then give her a lift back, and she said she always prayed it would be Hayden, mainly because the way Bob drove scared her to death!

Before long, of course, she had other reasons for hoping Hayden would be her chauffeur; they got to know each other chatting on those car journeys, until Gwyn took the plunge and invited Hayden home for supper...and that was it! They were engaged the next Christmas, and married the following summer, on Gwyn's birthday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1966.

They took their honeymoon in Majorca, and it was so scorching hot, guests were laid out on the marble floors in the hotel to try and get cool, this being the days before air-conditioning.

Hayden moved in with Gwyn to the flat above her fashion business in Sheffield, before they came back to Barnsley, having welcomed their first son, Nick, to the world. He was joined by Neilson, and Hayden was delighted to share his hobbies and interests with his two boys. His early experience with the Jag obviously gave him a taste for motor sports, from Formula 1 to the Lombard RAC rallies; Nick and Neilson remember sleeping in the back of the car while their dad darted between all the viewing points in each rally stage to catch the best of the action. Having tried his hand at go-karting himself when he was young, Hayden was glad to support Neilson when he took up the sport. The three of them worked together to build their own kit car in the garage – a Marlin Roadster. And, once each of his boys was old enough to pass their driving test, Hayden had them straight down to Donington to train on the skid pan.

Hayden also liked target shooting with Gwyn's brother George in Sheffield, and he enjoyed a regular game of snooker with friends; Philip would pick up him and Chris, and they would go to meet Ray and Nigel and sink a few balls at the Conservative Club in Barnsley.

Hayden had quieter pursuits as well; he was a keen photographer, with his own dark room at home, which Neilson was fascinated by, said it was just like a chemistry lab. Nick and his dad went to photography classes at night school together, as well as

learning computing. Hayden was always happy to get in the latest technology for the boys, and Nick and Neilson remember spending hours laboriously typing in code to their Spectrum ZX81, then their dad painstakingly going over it line by line when it failed to work! (I commented that Hayden must have been a very patient man, and everyone laughed, and said, '...to a point!')

Work took up a lot of Hayden's time; luckily, he got to work alongside Gwyn for many years. She said she agreed to help out part-time and ended up as in six days a week as Finance Director. It took Hayden a little while to adjust to having someone else willing and able to take decisions in his absence, but he got the hang of it, and they made a very good team together. Holidays were important, though, for all the family, and were usually spent over in Scarborough, where Gwyn's parents had a flat, which she, and George, and their sister Glenda also all took turns staying in. So many weekends and summers were spent there, walking for miles, exploring Peasholme Park, visiting Scalby Mills and enjoying the open air theatre.

Towards the end of his working life Hayden was faced with poor health, and his enjoyment in work had dwindled, but it took the advice of a doctor for him to make the decision to retire and hand the reins to Neilson. He and Gwyn then took a medicinal holiday to Cyprus, and promptly announced they were moving there! It was the best move they could have made, though it didn't solve every ill instantly; Hayden had a major heart attack over there, but received the very best of care and expert treatment, and emerged from it all a new man.

He and Gwyn made up for the years they hadn't had chance to relax and travel; when I asked where they had visited I was told, 'We never made it to Australia or New Zealand...but pretty much everywhere else!' They both loved cruising, their longest trip lasting three whole months, and especially loved visiting Hong Kong and Singapore. Hayden also greatly enjoyed going to India, and disembarking on Komodo Island to see the dragons. Not all their trips were over the water; Austria was also a great favourite, and they loved it in Kitzbühel, taking the chair lift up the mountain, walking across the tops to stop somewhere for lunch, then taking a lift back down a different slope. But the best thing was that home felt like a holiday too; Hayden thrived in the warm weather of Cyprus, and he and Gwyn settled in very happily in Timi, a little village near Paphos. They found themselves a whole circle of friends there, many from the UK including their very dear friends Liz and Bill, but they also made sure to get to know useful locals like the owner of the local winery!

They had a constant round of get togethers, dinner parties and barbecues (the only time Hayden would venture to lend a hand with the cooking!) and he loved hosting and visiting, and just being around people. They also joined upwards of twenty to thirty others for a weekly flower walk and lunch (the real reason for the outings!), and would play pétanque twice a week, while Hayden loved to swim in the sea, and enjoyed better health than he had in a long time. He also enjoyed his weekly offloading on a Wednesday, when the ladies went for their own lunch, and the men, aka The Grumpies, got together to put the world to rights.

Hayden and Gwyn had already become proud grandparents before they left for Cyprus; they would look after Neilson's boys, Lewis, Sam and Matt, two days a week when they were little, and had a whole host of toys for them to ride up and down the cul de sac at Crowden Road; Sam remembers his grandad teaching him to ride a bike. And they all enjoyed visiting in Cyprus, snorkelling off the beach with the turtles, Grandad taking them go-karting (and obviously itching to have a go himself!), or going on off-road 4x4 adventures (one incline Hayden was about to attempt saw Matt climbing out of the car saying, 'You're off your head Grandad, I'm walking!') Nick and Adele's son Tom was born later, so his earliest memories of his grandad are in Cyprus, especially of meals at Fat Mama's restaurant, with the lovely food and fantastic cabaret show. When Hayden and Gwyn came back to the UK at Easter or in the summer they would take their grandchildren to Lytham St Annes, Blackpool, Scarborough or London; Lewis recalls them just appearing at the school gate as a wonderful surprise.

After thirteen very happy years in Cyprus, the political and economic situation pushed Hayden and Gwyn to move back to Yorkshire, settling in Royston. And actually they ended up being very glad to be back; they were lucky in having lovely neighbours, and it meant they could spend so much more time with all their family. They continued to travel; it was only last year that Hayden surprised everyone on a family holiday by launching a perfect dive off the back of a boat in a bay in Dubai. And he still loved socialising, and would be up till the very end at all of Neilson and Tom's New Year's Eve parties; he thoroughly enjoyed his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party at the Dunkirk 18 months ago, and equally Gwyn's 80<sup>th</sup> parties in June.

All in all, Hayden was very proud of all of his family. And he delighted in getting to know Sam's partner Rachel and Matt's partner Stacey, and especially in becoming a great-grandad to Bobby and Stanley; he was still trying to keep up with the two of them at football just months ago, though he did end up on the deck!

That was Hayden, though; he always remained young in outlook and mindset, up to date with the goings on of the world, still interested and curious. Tom described his father-in-law as a man of wise words; Hayden was not only intelligent, but very thoughtful in what he chose to say. And you'd to watch out for that glint in his eye, as he had a wicked sense of humour. In fact he was still laughing right to the very end.