

The Afternoon Northchapel Stood Still

Losing a loved one is never easy but when that loved one dies in a care home during the COVID-19 lockdown and you've not been able to see them regularly let alone say goodbye is a pain I cannot explain.

Many of you will have known my dad Patrick Currell, he had lived in the parish all his life, firstly in Cylinders Lane, Fisher Street before moving into the village itself. He had been a Parish Councillor, a trustee for the village hall and was still a trustee of The Working Mens Club to the day he passed away.

So a funeral we had to organise but not a funeral as we know it. No church service in the church that dad held so dear, only a few mourners and at a safe distance.

So we pulled together what we could and we were lucky to have friends who rallied round to help us with a 'very unique funeral for a very unique man'.

We were determined he wouldn't leave the village alone so we followed the hearse with the coffin inside from his house led by Ben Bryder. So many neighbours stood at their garden gates to see him off. We were then met at the end of Valentines Lea by 'Surprise' a traction engine who proceeded to follow Ben. Dad then followed with his family and his very dear friend and neighbour of 50 years Brenda bringing up the rear.

We slowed the traffic down to a crawl as many of dad's friends lined the pavement at the top of the green, this is when it hit home that he wasn't just special to us he was special to many others within our village and community.

The grave side service conducted by Father Mark from Petworth was again unique to us. Surprise blew her whistle as dad was lowered into his final resting place just as Marmaduke had done for his son Tony 38 years before. Father & son reunited again.

We raised a glass of whiskey to the great man he was and as far as we as a family are concerned still is.

Our huge thanks go to everyone who sent their love and best wishes to us but especially to:

Peter Mellersh & his fireman Nick for bringing Surprise out of winter hibernation

W Bryder & Sons for all the caring phone calls and huge support at such a difficult time

Father Mark for a lovely service considering he had only ever met us before by facetime

Marie Armstrong for the beautiful flowers

We will definitely be holding a memorial service in the church as soon as restrictions allow.

The heartbroken Currell/Holden family.

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