

A Celebration of Life For Joe XXXX

1947 - 2023

Cue Entrance Music – Take It Easy by The Eagles - 3:31

Welcome - Intro

Please be seated. My name is Neal Thomas, and, on behalf of Joe's wife XXX and his children XXX, XXX & XXX, and the rest of Joe's family, I'd like to thank you all for coming and welcome you to a celebration of Joe's life.

PAUSE

Words on Grief

Joe has died at the age of seventy-six and today we come together for you to share this time with each other, to honour him, share memories, recall your time with him, pay your last respects to this remarkable man and, most importantly – and at Joe's request, celebrate his life.

It is times like this we also remember those who cannot be here today. In particular, Joe's parents XXX and XXX and his siblings XXX and XXX.

PAUSE

Summary

Joe was born on 7th September, 1947 to XXX and XXX XXX at Birmingham General Hospital, the youngest of three children – a brother Tom, five years older and sister Margaret two years his senior. The family lived in The Kingstanding area of Birmingham, and, by all accounts, it was a happy childhood. But as soon as he reached fifteen, Joe joined the Royal Navy and his passion for travel – and beer I am told - was born.

After a tour of Africa, and on shore leave, Joe met XXX at The Crown Pub in Station Street, Birmingham where the couple cemented their love of what the pub was famous for – live music - whilst watching one of Status Quo's first gigs!

The couple married in 1970 and soon after came baby XXX, followed in short succession by XXX and then XXX. Joe then left the Royal Navy and became an engineer at the then new firm B&D Engineers in Tamworth founded by Joe's now great friend, XXX XXX. XXX has told me Joe utterly loved working with XXX but loved travelling even more and so, in 2012 when XXX retired from her career as a Headteacher, Joe also retired so the couple could spend more time in 'Desperado', their motorhome, touring the UK and searching out more pubs with live music, a good beer and hopefully a decent river or stream nearby for a spot of fishing.

Joe died peacefully at home after a typically brave and stoical two-year battle with cancer, surrounded by his family. XXX and the family would like to express huge gratitude to Birmingham Hospice who cared for Joe so well and helped prepare him for coming home and for which there is a box just outside for donations when you leave.

He was a son, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a colleague and a friend.

PAUSE

Let's welcome Joe's daughter XXX who is going to read a poem for us –

XXX TO LECTERN

Gone Fishin'

by Delmar Pepper

*I've finished life's chores assigned to me,
So put me on a boat headed out to sea.
Please send along my fishing pole
For I've been invited to the fishin' hole.*

*Where every day is a day to fish,
To fill your heart with every wish.
Don't worry, or feel sad for me,
I'm fishin' with the Master of the sea.*

*We will miss each other for awhile,
But you will come and bring your smile.
That won't be long you will see,
Till we're together you and me.*

*To all of those that think of me,
Be happy as I go out to sea.
If others wonder why I'm missin'
Just tell 'em I've gone fishin'.*

PAUSE

Thank you, XXX, that was beautiful.

We are now going to have a musical and photo tribute for Joe, so sit back and watch some snippets of Joe's life.

**Music & Photo Tribute – Let It Be, by The Beatles –
4:03**

PAUSE

Joe's son, XXX has asked me to read the following-

Eulogy:

I can take things apart because of my Dad. From an early age my sisters and I were encouraged to do just that. Of course, the challenge was then to put them back together again which, when we were young, we didn't always manage without help – which Dad duly gave. He taught us to be inquisitive about how things worked, and it stayed with all of us. I now work at the same firm he did, and I am fairly certain both of my sisters could rewire a house – they can certainly service a car, understand cantilever bridges and fix a broken lawnmower. There were always bits of things in the house – or rather things in bits, often on the kitchen table – to the horror of Mum.

Mum AND Dad gave us our love of music, and it was Dad who took me to my first gig in the pub he and Mum met at – The Crown – to see UB40. From then on it was music all the way. Oasis, Blur, Pulp and Nirvana are just some of the bands we saw either in Birmingham or somewhere else in the UK. If not in Birmingham, then we would be packed up in 'Desperado' and drive to wherever the gig was and stay as close as possible – mostly legally but not always. I will never forget the time we were woken by the Police knocking on the motorhome door at five in the morning as we were illegally parked in a Waitrose car park very close to Wembley Stadium – they were

very kind though and we ended up chatting about the concert the previous night, before getting on our way!

We went places in that motorhome, I think every national park, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall and everywhere in between. School holidays were road trips, with us in the back counting the other motorhomes we could see on the road in a constant competition of who could find the most, before pulling into a service station where Dad would make tea in the van kitchen while we kids ran around the car park making friends. It was a happy childhood for sure.

In case you didn't know, Desperado, the motorhome is still going and between us, my sisters and I still regularly use it with my wife and I taking Poppy and William our own children, Dad's Grandchildren. We are giving them a slice of our upbringing and Dad - for that I thank you. You have instilled in me and my sisters the same sense of travel and love of music that you had and we are all eternally grateful to you, those passions live on in us and will do so in your grandchildren.

Not all passions have been inherited though. One thing none of us children share, along with Mum, is Dad's passion for fishing. Sorry Dad, we just can't see the point, but we know you loved it and we were happy to carry on playing at whichever campsite we were at while you ventured off with your rod and reel to the local river, lake or stream. It was your thing, and we all

need that but I am sorry Dad, that tradition goes with you. XXX has already told me he will miss those fishing trips the two of you made many times together over the years. You two were the best of friends and I know XXX, like the rest of us, is devastated today.

So, we grew up and moved away and made families of our own and you and Mum continued to travel, watch gigs and stay the wonderfully happy couple that you always were.

I know Mum would like to say a huge thank you to all of you for reaching out and the support you have shown her these past weeks and before when Dad was ill. The love that you have shown is matched only by the love that Mum and Dad had for one another. For they were the happiest of couples, not the constantly rowing type, but the totally in love type. When friends came round, they were always shocked at how loving the two of you were, holding hands and kissing when so many of our friends' parents seemed so distant with each other and their children.

We knew we were loved, and we knew how much you loved each other.

PAUSE

*I'd like to pay tribute to my Mum, who has been so amazing through all of this, who looked after Dad at home, who stayed at the hospice all those weeks and who today is heartbroken but still here for all of us kids. Mum you are amazing, we all love you so much and promise - along with everyone else here - to help **you** through this, to be here for you and not just today but always.*

*I am proud to say he was my Dad, proud to have been **his** son. He was often the cleverest man in the room, the one people would ask about anything in terms of how things worked – or didn't work as was more often the case.*

So, he was inquisitive, practical, clever, brave, and humble. He came from a poor area of Birmingham, joined the Navy and travelled the world. He fell in love and built a family, made a career and had some wonderful friends.

He lived a good life.

While his death has left a huge hole in our family, we are so very thankful to have had him. He was immensely happy and truly content. We all miss him dearly.

PAUSE

Thank you for those words, XXX.

Now we will hear from Joe's other daughter, XXX who is going to read the lyrics to one of Joe's favourite songs for us –

XXX TO LECTERN

In My Life

Lennon-McCartney

*There are places I'll remember
All my life, though some have changed.
Some forever, not for better;
Some have gone and some remain.*

*All these places had their moments
With lovers and friends I still can recall.
Some are dead and some are living,
In my life I've loved them all.*

*But of all these friends and lovers
There is no one compares with you.
And these memories lose their meaning
When I think of love as something new.*

*Though I know I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before,
I know I'll often stop and think about them,
In my life I love you more.
In my life I love you more.*

PAUSE

Thank you, XXX that was lovely.

Introduce Committal

Would you please stand for the committal.

PAUSE

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose on earth, a time to be born and a time to die. Here in this last act, in sorrow but without fear, in love and appreciation, we commit the body of Joseph XXX XXX to its natural end.

PAUSE

I am going to leave you with the words of *Helen Steiner Rice*:

There is no night without a dawning
No winter without a spring
And beyond the dark horizon
Our hearts will once more sing
For those who leave us for a while
Have only gone away
Out of a restless, care worn world
Into a brighter day.

PAUSE

Let us go in peace, upholding one another in love.

PAUSE

Scene Out

Joe, it is because of the life you led, the love you showed and were given, the kindness and selflessness, and your happiness that those gathered here today in your honour, to say goodbye, are able to let you go to your rest in peace.

PAUSE

PLEASE BE SEATED

Close

We have now reached the end of our ceremony for Joe. The family would like to thank all the carers at *The Birmingham Hospice* for all the wonderful care and support for Joe over the past few months and for enabling him to return home to die with his family around him.

On their behalf again, I would like to thank you all for being here today to celebrate Joe's life. In a few moments the funeral director and the chapel attendant will lead you out to the gardens where you can see the

floral tributes as we listen to one of Joe's favourite Beatles tracks. The family would very much like you to join them at the recently reopened Crown Pub, Station Street for a pint and some live music – exactly what Joe wanted.

Cue Exit Music

Here Comes The Sun, by The Beatles