

A Ceremony of Thanksgiving
for the life of

Anthony John
Casey

Died 21st November 2016

Aged 78 Years

Cottingley Hall Crematorium

Thursday 1st December 2016

11.40 a.m.

Conducted By Richard J.W.Binks M.I.C.F.

Entrance music: Nimrod by The Band of the Coldstream Guards

Good morning and welcome to this funeral ceremony for Tony or, as some of you may have known him better Tigger or Grumpy or Old Goat. As you know we are gathered here to honour and to celebrate the life of Anthony John Casey and, by doing so, to bring consolation to his family and friends and I would particularly like to thank Sue and Craig for the assistance they have given me in the preparation of this ceremony.

My name is Richard and I am a member of the Institute of Civil Funerals, the family explained that Tony wouldn't have wanted a traditional religious service and I feel very privileged that they have entrusted this ceremony to me.

I would now like to read a poem chosen especially for today. It's called One At Rest

Poem

Think of me as one at rest
For me you should not weep.
I have no pain no troubled thoughts
For I am just asleep.
The living thinking me that was
Is now forever still
And life goes on without me now
As time forever will.

If your heart is heavy now
Because I've gone away
Dwell not upon it friend
For none of us can stay
Those of you who liked me
I sincerely thank you all
And those of you who loved me
I thank you most of all.

Tribute

I don't know if it's true that on a clear day with the wind in just the right direction and if you're sticking your head out of just the right window you can hear Bow Bells from the maternity ward at Chelsea and Kensington Hospital but Tony always claimed that it was possible and he was therefore a cockney.

This wasn't the only tall tale which Tony was capable of and his family say that he was actually a "posh fake cockney".

It was on the 16th March 1938 that Tony was born. The reason that his mother Clara was at that hospital was because his father John was a fireman and had been stationed in London. The Casey family were still there a year later when Tony's younger brother Kevin was born but had moved back to Leeds before his younger sister Beverly was born thirteen years later.

The family home was in Armley and Tony went to Holy Family Catholic School before attending Green Lane Secondary School.

After leaving school Tony's first job was with a printing firm called Arthur Rosburn. Tony didn't find the work very satisfying and started an apprenticeship as a pattern maker with Blakeys Engineering.

His apprenticeship was interrupted by his call up for National Service but Tony was delighted to be admitted to the prestigious Coldstream Guards. He was posted to Kenya and could still remember all four words of Swahili which he learned. He also adopted a pet in Kenya and it was only at the last moment that he was prevented from bringing his bush baby home!

It was also in Kenya that Tony passed his driving test. It wasn't too hard, he had to drive 60 yards in a straight line on a dirt road! The Inspector was a friend of his and said "It's OK, I've seen you drive in England and you've passed".

Tony also served in Aden and when his two year tour of duty was up he signed on for another year.

He had the honour of doing sentry duty at Buckingham Palace and The Bank of England as well as taking part in the Trooping of The Colour.

This part of his life made a huge impression on Tony and he made lifelong friends in The Guards. Any donations given in his memory are to go to The Coldstream Guards Association.

When he left the army Tony finished his apprenticeship and worked as a skilled pattern maker for Fairburn Lawson and then, for many years, for West Yorkshire Foundries. One of Tony's claims to fame was that he made the original pattern for one of the doors for the original Mini car.

Tony stayed at West Yorkshire until he was 42 in 1980 and fancied a change into the licensed trade.

By now Tony was married to his first wife Emmy and lived at 34a Bradford Road, Drighlington because Drigh was about half way between Wibsey, where she came from, and Armley. Their eldest son Craig was born in 1969 and Wayne three years later in 1972.

Boddingtons Brewery from Manchester had just bought half a dozen pubs in West Yorkshire including the Painters Arms directly opposite Tony's house so he was lucky, in 1981 to get a pub so close to where he lived.

One of the clients of the Painters was Sue Felton, she started coming in more regularly and if Tony wasn't behind the bar when she came in he appeared within the first minute. It was, he said, love at first sight and Tony and Sue were married on the second of December 1989 which meant the Tony now had three stepsons in Dean, Wayne and Dave.

Tony's family is completed by his beloved grandchildren Megan, Tyler & Charlie. Reece, Isabella & Daisy, James & Holly and Joe, Matty & Andy.

Tony and Sue came out of the pub in 1996. It wasn't a difficult move, all they had to do was stop the traffic and push the sofa across the road. Tony spent a while working at Tetley's brewery before going to work for his son Craig in his screen printing business C. C. Print.

Tony and Sue had long been regulars at The Tempest Constitutional Club next door and he occasionally acted as relief Steward before spending three years as the full time Steward.

Tony finally retired in 2006 but still did the odd shift behind the bar as well as having been a long standing member of the committee and eventually having the honour of becoming President of the Club.

Outside of work and family Tony had an eclectic mix of interests. He was a dedicated stamp and coin collector as well as being heavily into late eighties and early nineties disco music.

When we came into the Chapel a few minutes ago we were listening to the Band of the Coldstream Guards but it was very nearly Pump Up The Jam by Technotronic!

Tony was also a big Leeds Rhinos fan. Over the years he has taken most members of the family to Headingley but he always watched every match either at home or in the Club. He also liked to watch Formula One and had been quite a keen gardener although Sue says he always had difficulty actually finishing a job.

As well as the Painters and the T&C Club Tony and Sue were frequent visitors to Drighlington Cricket Club and when Tony wasn't working they would visit friends of his from the Coldstream Guards who had pubs in West Yorkshire often followed by a meal at Kings Cantonese where they were so well known that Tony was on the Christmas card list.

Holidays were important to Tony. When he was younger he used to spend a lot of time in Chester with his extended family.

Later in life he and Sue usually had two weeks away together in September and a week in March with friends of Sue's from her days in Rodley.

Over the years they have been to The Canaries, Spain, Majorca, Portugal, Madeira, Malta, Cyprus, Turkey and Bulgaria. Sue can still picture happily dancing the night away in any number of disco bars on holiday.

Tony was first diagnosed with lung cancer in 2006. The surgery was declared successful but over the years he has suffered from a number of small but significant heart attacks and mini strokes.

Five weeks ago he suffered a suspected major stroke and was admitted to St James's Hospital. Tony seemed to be progressing well and was actually on the discharge ward when he suffered a relapse. Two weeks ago the family were told to prepare for the worst and on November 21st Tony died peacefully in his sleep.

Tony was a bit of legend in Drighlington. He served many of Craig and Wayne's friends with their first pints and there are many tributes to him on social media with comments such as "Top Bloke" and "Super Guy" but to his family Tony will always be the easy going, generous, caring and loving man who they will all miss very much.

Time for Reflection

We are now going listen to one of Tony's favourite songs from the eighties, Give Me Hope Joanna by Eddy Grant whilst we reflect on his life and what he has brought to our lives. Some of you may like to use this as a time for silent prayer.

Although this is a largely non-religious ceremony the family have asked that we say together the traditional version of The Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them that trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for Thine is the Kingdom,
the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Committal

We have now come to the most solemn part of the ceremony. Would you please stand for the committal.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose on earth....a time to be born, and a time to die.

In love and respect we have been remembering the life of Tony Casey, and recalled the person he has been.

Here, in this last act, in sorrow but without fear, his character and his personality we commit to our memories;

His love and his friendship we commit to our hearts; his mortal remains, we commit to their natural end.

Closing Words

“The separateness, the uniqueness of each human life is the basis of grief in bereavement. Look through the whole world and there is no one like the one you have lost but still lives on in your memories. And, though no longer a visible part of your lives, Tony will always remain a member of your circle through the influence he has had on you, and the special part he has played in your lives”

As we leave the Chapel we will be listening to another of Tony’s favourite songs which Sue & Craig thought had a suitable sentiment for today, The Only Way Is Up by Yaz & The Plastic Population. There is a collection box here at the front for donations in Tony’s memory to The Coldstream Guards Association. The family would like you to know that you are welcome to join them for refreshments at Drighlinton Tempest Constitutional Club.

Exit music: The Only Way Is Up by Yaz and the Plastic Population.