

**Tribute - George Harry John Oakes**  
30<sup>th</sup> November 1944 – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2016

It is important that as we come together to give thanks to God for the life of a loved one, that we spend time remembering.

Today we are here together to remember George with fondness and with thanksgiving.

To help us in our remembering, Jane, together with Sharon, Alan and Darren, have been telling me something of George's life story and I will now share with all of you these words of tribute that we have prepared for today.

George was born in Metcalfe Avenue, South Lynn on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1944 and was brought up with his parents and his two sisters Ann and Fluff. He went to school at All Saints and then at St Margaret's, leaving school at the age of fourteen and starting work for *George Butchers*, where he would be seen riding the trade bike as he made his customer deliveries.

A year or so later, his Father got him work on the Docks where he worked for some 40 years, a physically demanding job unloading cargo and working on the cranes and in the warehouses.

He said that working on the docks is one of the best jobs there is.

When he retired from the docks he took some work with *Patrick and Thompson* wood yard. Working **there** gave George a new lease of life in some ways, as it was there that he found himself working once more amongst a younger workforce. He enjoyed the energy of the place and the social side of life there. He enjoyed being the father figure amongst the people he worked with. George was there not because he needed to work, but because he really enjoyed it.

George was always a hard worker and a good provider.

He married Janet and they had two lovely children, Sharon and Alan. They first lived at Clenchwarton and then moved to Burney Road in South Lynn. After only eleven years of marriage sadly Janet died, leaving George to bring the children up on his own.

As a single dad, George worked really hard to make everything good for his children who were only eleven and six when their mother died.

He would be known to do the food shopping in his lunch hour, having to multi-task in a way that was out of the ordinary for a man of that time. The extended family were really important to them as a family, vital to their well-being, George's sisters Ann and Fluff together, were a rock for their brother.

The other person who would help out was Jane. Being a neighbour, Jane would help out baby sitting with son Darren who would enjoy playing with Alan. After a while, romance blossomed between George and Jane and she moved in. Together they very much became a new strong family unit over the years.

When George was working at the docks and there was a day with no work to do, the management would call up a Bumping Day, and it was then that George would gather up the children and go to Hunstanton, or take them down to The Walks to play cricket. Not just his own children but children from down the street as well.

Later on, as the children left home, George and Jane moved to the Grange estate to build their new home together. They had been there together for some twelve or thirteen years and they have some really lovely neighbours.

As we remember George, we might think of how he loved his sport, it all started with his table tennis and with cricket, as well as dominoes and crib but football was always a great love too. He was a goal keeper, always up there with the best teams in the Kings Lynn area.

Bowls also became a favourite pastime, he was known at bowls for **firing**, playing with a heavy throw and clearing the decks as he did so.

He represented Norfolk in his time.

George was good at everything he did, but then he had such a strong will to win. He was a very competitive man. You might say that he was not the best of company when he didn't win!!

With regards to travelling and holidays, George was a bit of a stick in the mud, going to the same places for holidays time after time, Benidorm was his destination of choice, looking for England in the sun perhaps and not wanting to explore much further.

George loved live music. eating out and having a good knees up with Pam and Ray, *simply the best*. Ray was an ex-docker friend and together as a foursome they would go out every Sunday night. To St Margaret's Club and then later to the British Legion.

George liked popular music, his favourite band was "Maureen and the 3 piece suite" who used to sing "the power of love", that we heard as we entered the chapel today.

George also loved his dogs, would faithfully walk them up until his recent illness. And he would enjoy time with his grandchildren, the times when they went down to the beach together.

#### **So how will you remember George?**

Perhaps you will remember the man who was so strong, both mentally and physically... A force of nature even.

A man who was old fashioned, who had few words, but was always full of wisdom.

A man to look up to who would lead by example. Perhaps you will think of how punctual he was, knowing his routine and wanting things to be just right.

Or perhaps you simply remember the man who did so much for his family and for those he loved.

As we remember George today and as we commend him to God's eternal keeping we want to find words of assurance that he rests in peace, that he has an eternal home.

If we can trust in the words of our Bible reading today as we hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who goes before us to that ultimate resting place; to the Fathers house, we will find that assurance. Jesus goes to prepare a place for **us**, for each one of us, that we might be where he is. To trust in God

is to trust in the everlasting arms of love and the God who knows each one of us with an intimacy that surpasses any knowledge we might possess.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

#### **Revd Julie Boyd**

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