

Mr Philip DENIS Banks RIP - DAD

Born in Tadcaster, Denis was the much-loved youngest son of John and Martha Banks and lived at Rockliffe House; Dad had a happy childhood but times were a lot tougher then. Denis recalled going on the train to Scarborough once a year for his holidays.

Denis attended St Joseph's Roman Catholic School and was an Altar boy for a few years in this Church.

He left School at 14 and immediately started work; he could not get a job at the brewery - his first job was at the local dairy – Denis delivered milk – it was a job that no one wanted because it was 7 days a week. Denis started work at 5.30 am and worked until 3.00 pm; he even worked on Christmas Day. He had a push bike and delivered milk to Auster Bank, Westfield and Garnet Lane. His pay was 10 shillings and 6d.

A vacancy then came up for an errand boy at Todd's Shop at the top of Oxton Lane. Dad worked a 6-day week – 8.00 am to 7.00 pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays, 8.00 am – 1.00 pm on Wednesdays, 8.00 am to 8.00 pm on Fridays and Saturday 8.00 am – 9.00 pm. Denis made orders up and made local deliveries on a push bike; part of his duties was weighing up bags of flour.

Not long after War was declared and the Brewery was then short of people. Denis was offered a job at John Smith's Brewery and the manager at Todd's pleaded for him not to leave; however, the money was better at the Brewery. Denis then started work in the Racking Room; his job was to mark up the side of casks with chalk. A job then came up in the Racking Room office for someone to take samples of the beer and Denis took on this job until he volunteered for the Army at 18.

Denis took one afternoon off to join up - he went to the Army Recruitment office which was based in Blossom Street York: Frank Hook and Fred Harland said that Mr Gall, Head Brewer, wanted to know where Denis was; he thought he was in trouble as they were strict about taking time off. However, when Denis was asked by Mr Gall where he had been and he replied that he had volunteered for the Army, Mr Gall didn't say anything. Denis said that Mr Gall was sympathetic as he had volunteered for the Black Watch. Denis passed his assessment test and medical and a few days later he received a letter saying he was being 'called up'. He went to Beverley 8 PTC (Primary Training Corps – he spent 8 weeks there and was the only Englishman of 30; bar one Irish man, the rest were Scottish. Denis learnt to drive here; there was also plenty of classroom learning and he thrived on this. Denis then went to Catterick where he recalled doing many a 7 /8-mile route march from Catterick to Richmond. Dad then went to Charing, Near Ashford, Kent for more training and to Orford Ness in Norfolk.

He undertook a gunnery course and was very good at this.

Denis was posted to a Unit in Poona, Bombay and got split up from the lads he had trained with and then went to a Unit in Burma and pulled out when the monsoon started. Denis said he was lucky as he was assigned as Driver to Major Dow. Dad was seconded away from the Unit for 3 months then re-joined the Unit at Madras. He then went to a place near Rangoon, India. Talking about his life in the army was bittersweet for Denis and often he would fight back tears when re-telling his stories so the family did not hear all the horror of the war that Dad faced.

The War then finished – Denis had been told by Major Dow that he could offer him a job in the Midlands where he had a family firm but Dad declined. Due for demob Denis returned to Tadcaster – he did not go back to the Brewery for 3 months and although his job was open for him when he did

return understandably he felt very unsettled. After an unsettling time for Denis he was offered a role as Chauffeur – his probationary period was 3 months – he started chauffeuring in 1949 and left John Smiths after 47 years' service as Head Chauffeur. Dad was always smartly turned out, his wife Dorothy always making sure she had a clean, ironed shirt ready for him as he was very often called upon to drive here, there and everywhere at very short notice.

Denis was introduced to his wife, Dorothy, by Albert and Ted Cockerill who Denis knew; Dorothy was Albert and Ted's younger sister– their first date was a dance at Mary Macks in York. They had dancing lessons and went to other places including De Grey Rooms, York. They married and had 3 daughters – Karen, Glenda and Joanne.

The Brewery was a huge part of Denis' life and he had many fond memories of his time there. Denis used to go to Scotland and his wife Dorothy and his 3 girls always loved it when Denis came home not only because they had Denis back but because in his neatly packed little brown case he would always bring back a box of Maltesers for them.

Attributes

A wonderful Husband, Dad, Father-in-Law, Grandad and Great-Grandad, friend, an absolute gentleman. Intelligent, caring, always smartly dressed and very handsome. In one of the many letters that Dad received from his Mother whilst in the army, she wrote: "Mr X came to our house and he was charmed with your photo hung on the kitchen wall – I think he thought you were a film star – he stared when I told him you were my son".

He was very proud of his children and dearly loved his grand-children and great-grandchildren – they visited him at the Care home and he always enjoyed their company as did the other residents.

Memories – in no particular order

The sadness felt when his wife Dorothy died and then his eldest daughter, Karen but they would be so very proud of him.

His resilience – he never ever complained. Until his later years, he very rarely attended the Doctor's much preferring to put up with any pain. Denis was not taking any medication – quite rare for a man of his age. Latterly he had several falls but he never once complained.

Denis always took care of his appearance and was always smartly dressed and this was commented on by many.

Denis has always been extremely meticulous and always maintained a clean and tidy house – he would immediately pick up any crumbs from the floor which when the great-grandchildren were around was a constant job for him.

Denis' amazing knowledge of the road – if you said you were going somewhere where he had visited he would immediately tell you which road to go on and where to turn off, etc. If it was somewhere new, Denis would immediately get out the roadmap and tell you which was the best route – Denis was their SATNAV.

Denis could turn his hand to anything be it in the home or outside and did become frustrated when he could not do the things he used to do but he could still advise and offer his expertise – he was a perfectionist.

When Dorothy was alive, at weekends Denis and Dorothy enjoyed spending time with family, friends and relations. - they were always good company.

Weekends with Denis – be it at Cedar Barn Café, Pickering or at the Café in Skipton – he was great company and would strike up a conversation with anyone.

Denis' smile - it was amazing and one that will never be forgotten.

Denis enjoyed listening to music – he had tapes in the car – The first record he bought was one by Doris Day. Denis enjoyed listening to Mantovani, Andy Williams, Gene Pitney, Jim Reeves to name a few artists.

Denis and Dorothy loved Scotland and often used to go on coach holidays there. In later years, they went to Kenmore in Scotland with Glenda and Andy; they loved it and it was also an opportunity to spend time with Andy's Mum and Dad as they too on occasions holidayed with Glenda and Andy. When they did, Denis would drive them all over and one time ventured on a road in weather that a much younger person would never have attempted – Denis was always confident of his driving ability and just laughed when this was brought up in conversation.

When there was just Denis left, annual holidays continued at Kenmore. Denis, Glenda and Andy used to go on a jeep safari each time they visited – one route was taxing as it involved getting out of the jeep and walking quite a distance to capture the views – despite Denis being 90 he kept up with the party – the driver could not believe Denis was 90. Denis also loved the stop in the Bothy for a coffee with a wee drop of whisky in it and a round or two of shortbread.

Another time Denis went with Glenda and Andy they all signed up for a cycle ride along Glen Lyon – Denis would have been the oldest person to do this but the weather turned against them and they were unable to do this; Denis never forgot this missed adventure and opportunity and always mentioned it.

Denis' last holiday in Kenmore was in 2016 and Glenda and Andy have many memories of that time – it was evident that Denis' memory was failing but they made sure that Denis had a holiday to remember – visiting some new eating places as well as the ones he loved. If Denis had food, he said he was OK; they always had to factor food stops in wherever they went.

Joanne has many happy memories of time spent with her Dad and Mum – she says, “they were the best parents anyone could have”. She recalls family days out, holidays to Primrose Valley, Sundays going to Hanbys for sweets and taking a bowl to the Ice cream van for scoops of ice cream for her Dad and family.

Joanne also recalls going to the Brewery to watch her Dad clean and polish his pride and joy – Tad1 (a car for those that don't know).

She too recalls her Dad going to Scotland at the drop of a hat or anywhere else Denis was asked to go for that matter. She also remembers the little brown suitcase Denis used to use as she borrowed it once to ‘supposedly leave home’ – she had filled it with 2 toilet rolls. Joanne recalls going back

home within 5 minutes to see her Dad, Mum, Karen and Glenda at the window laughing at and with her.

Denis and Dorothy used to enjoy spending time with Joanne and Kevin at the caravan park in Scarborough; indeed, during one visit they ended up taking over the caravan from Joanne and Kevin for a whole week; they loved it there.

Joanne and Kevin have happy memories of going to Skipton for lunch and a walk – Denis loved walking.

Kevin used to help Denis with odd jobs and Denis was always appreciative of this.

Gemma adored her Grandad. Gemma and Denis were like an old married couple – Gemma used to call at her Grandad's every day and Denis always used to put the bread in the toaster for her in the morning and make sure the kettle had boiled for a cup of tea; In later years, Gemma would sometimes find the toast was burnt and they would blame each other for this – however, Denis always said that burnt toast was good for you!

Sleepovers with Denis at his home– Gemma's 2nd home..... Gemma regularly stopped at her Grandad's – they both used to fight for the mirror. Dad always joked he would leave the mirror for her when he was gone. Since the death of her Grandma, Gemma bossed her grandad about (in a nice way) but he loved it.

Like Gemma, Kerry absolutely adored her Grandad and to give him a break from driving – Denis drove until he was 90 – Kerry would take her Grandad to the Hopgrove and other places along with her young family for a spot of lunch and he was so proud of them all. Before the decision was made for Denis to go in a Care Home, Kerry helped care for her Grandad at home and she has many happy memories of that precious time with her Grandad but some sad ones too.

Kerry has memories – as does Alfie and the rest of the family – of someone else being part of the Banks family – 'the little fella' – an imaginary little person who they would have a lot of fun with – the threat of 'the little fella' could certainly make Alfie 'do as he was told'.

The family know that everyone says this but they simply had the BEST DAD, GRANDAD and GREAT-GRANDAD in the world.

Finally, the family would like to thank

Relations, neighbours old and new for their friendships over the years, particularly during the last 6-9 months before Denis went in to a Care home when Alzheimers, the cruel disease, started to affect his behaviour.

Dr Ingles for caring for Denis whilst he was resident in Tadcaster; Denis would always listen to him.

Richard Sweeting and the staff at Scarthingwell Care Home for making the difficult decision for Denis to go in to a home so much easier for the family. To everyone who cared for Denis during the past year at Boroughbridge Manor Care Home; he was loved by many and when Denis was placed on 'end of life' care, words cannot truly convey their thanks for the way that Denis was cared for; with dignity, compassion and love and those thanks also go to the Nurses and Dr Holmes who also supported the family during the last days of Denis' life.

The manager, staff and friends made at the Hopgrove – the staff always looked after Denis when he visited them on his regular twice-weekly visits plus the staff at the Anchor, Whixley. Everyone at the Cedarbarn Farm Shop Pickering – Denis loved his Sundays there with Glenda where they made friends with Barbara, Jerry and Walter, Helen and Brian and not forgetting Mandy, Karl and Chloe and their wonderful staff who always had time for Denis and they also served excellent food.

The family's workplaces and colleagues – Molson-Coors, Sodexo, Kier and Heineken, for their compassion and understanding at this time – they have all been absolutely wonderful.

Father John Newman for the service and finally Nick Barker of Tony Barker & Sons, Funeral Directors, for 'holding the family's hands' at a time when they needed this more than ever. Thank you, Nick.

The End.