

Mike Frampton - The Eulogy

Dad was born on September 13th 1938. A war time baby and the only child of Jack and Mary Frampton. Les Bagwell says he was a big bull calf and that was why Gran only had one. He went to Broadwindsor school in his early years before progressing onto St Martin's in Crewkerne where he cycled in and back every day returning in time to help do the milking. It was here he met his life long friend Ken Edwards and they would share a friendship for some 71 years.

Ken and Dad became best of pals and despite Ken almost strangling him in a kids play flight Ken would later save his life but I'll come onto that in a bit. They had strict teachers at St Martin's and Dad narrowly escaped the cane as a little boy when he picked a pear off the school pear tree and hid it in his satchel. As he was lining up to leave school at the gates his satchel buckle undid and the pear rolled out but he dived down and hid it before the teacher saw. On Friday afternoons they would always buy a choc ice from Mrs Tuck's shop at the top of Hermitage Street before beginning their customary bike race through Clapton to the bridge.

Their main passion however was birds nesting. They would travel for miles in search of crows and magpie nests and this continued well into their late teens. Brian Hedditch even reckoned they would even put off a nights courting to go looking for nests. They were both brilliant climbers and would take a rope to return to a nest the following day if the branches were too spaced out. One day however on their way back from looking for nests at Pilsdon, they crept into the garden of Lower Newnham Farm where a bamboo bush was growing. They helped themselves to a couple of canes and headed back to Burstock Grange. Here, in the field in front of the farm house, the new electricity lines had been installed and Dad decided it would be fun to throw the canes up onto the live parallel double wires to see what happened. Well what happened was the wrath of Grandfather as after several tries father managed to land a cane on top of the wires arching the current causing a massive cracking sound which spooked Grandfathers horse causing it to bolt off through the hedge..So that's where I get it from.

When Ken was 16 he got a motorbike and he and Dad went down to Lyme Regis one summers evening. They decided to go into the sea up to their necks which given that neither of them could swim was an interesting decision. Dad waded into a trench and

disappeared underwater and Ken managed somehow to grab him and pull him back to shore. They were both fit as fiddles and ran the Shaves Cross marathon several times even both finishing in the top 5.

For dad's 21st Grandfather bought him an Austin A30 car. This meant he could go to the Crewkerne young farmers dances and it's there in his words "he met a bit of stuff from Wayford" a little village about 4 miles away. They married a year later in 1960 and then Gillian soon arrived followed by and Tim a couple of years later.

Now this will come as a huge surprise to all of you but just after Tim was born, Dad appeared on a Westward TV game show called Treasure Hunt with Keith Fordyce filmed in Plymouth in 1965. He got knocked out in the first round however but mum was in the audience watching. Fancy wanting to go on a TV game show!.

Now Dad loved his sport especially football. He played for Merriott, Broadwindsor, Beaminster and Drimpton throughout the late 50's, 60's and into the early 70's. In 1963 while playing for Broadwindsor, he and Eddie Case both scored 6 goals each in a game as they won 12-0. He even went in goal for Drimpton in the

1970 Dorset Junior Cup final when the regular keeper was injured and they famously won it 4-1.

His greatest achievement came as a 21 year old for Merriott where he scored two hat tricks while playing in Belgium on a tour. The first against Lokeren and in the second game he received a standing ovation as he left the field as they beat Ostende. The President of the Belgian club said afterwards “I wish your centre forward would stay here and play for us. I would soon find him a job and house”. Father chuckled at this and replied “I’d like to but who would milk my cows?!” Bristol Rovers had him for a trial in the mid 60’s but he told them that farming was his life and so it was. Of course he never told anyone of this or his family about his amazing football record but that was him. Modest, humble and always understated.

One of his most interesting football stories was however in May 1979. Tony Francis and Ben Jones, two very good friends, were doing some building work at the Farm and Mum had a phone call from Tony’s wife saying that Tony had won two tickets to the FA Cup final at Wembley the following day. Tony managed to get them a lift up with a one armed man from Coombe St Nicholas he knew but couldn’t organise a lift back again, so they would have

to take their chances getting home. When they got there they quite by chance bumped into some people from Perry Street who could give them a lift home if they paid for their petrol. Well Arsenal beat Manchester United 3-2 but they had terrible seats so couldn't see the goals but managed to get home before 10pm to watch it on match of the day that night.

He played Cricket for Broadwindsor playing at all three of their grounds, spanning 40 years and he told me of a game they played against Beaminster 2nds when he was a teenager in the 50's.

Broadwindsor batted first and were all out for 47. Then Beaminster batted second and were all out for 12 with him and Reg Wakely both taking five wickets each. He laboured the point it was Beaminster 2nds as didn't want to embellish his achievement. That was Dad.

He was so happy to donate some money towards the cricket club being able to buy the ground last month and it was his donation which took them over the line to reach their target.

He also loved his golf and despite being a left hander he would put his left hand below his right rather than than buy a set of left handed golf clubs. He played regularly with Rod Bracher, Pete

Strawbridge and Bruce Dennis all of who's company he enjoyed on the course and in the club house.

He was a member of the ROGUES, the Royal Oak Drimpton's golfing society and enjoyed playing with other members and the dinner afterwards and because he never had a proper handicap always burgled a few prizes at the end of days presentation. Once when moving an electric fence for the cows he saw a crow flying over his head with something white in its mouth. He shouted up at it and it dropped a golf ball!.He was certain it was his which he never found the day before on a 'nearest the pin' competition on a blind par 3 green!

For decades he would go for a Sunday lunchtime couple of halves at the Royal Oak playing pool and escaping the farm. He would invite people to come and play snooker on the full size snooker table in the farm house but it was squeezed into an upstairs galley shaped room and any shots off the side cushions had to be played with a short cue which he nicknamed Bob after Bob Eveleigh. He also insisted on playing Daniel O' Donnell cd's while you were playing. We also used to play three games of chess at breakfast lunch and dinner every day but it was drafts he was a master at and none of us ever beat him.

His favourite sport was without doubt skittles. Dad regularly played in three teams from three different leagues up until it was all halted due to Corona Virus. The Outsiders in the Bridport League, Mike Fooks's Cattistock Hunt team and his own team in the Crewkerne Farmers league of which he played in for over 60 years. He also played a bit in Doug Studley's team in the Seavington Hunt league when he was young at the White Lion ,and who ever was picking him up would have to wait for George and Mildred to finish on TV before he would come out of the house.

He formed a long and lasting friendship with so many of his team mates and opposition and would always make a point of speaking to every member of the opposition without fail. He and Les Bagwell would quite often help coach the opposition by advising them where not to throw the ball with well timed nuggets of advise just before they threw. We would get a match report from the previous nights skittles action in the milking parlour the following morning on who was playing, what they hit and who had won. The games against Tim's team always produced a good report with added relish if he'd won. I do remember one report he gave one morning when he'd played for Mike Fook's team. His

eyes were getting wider and the smile broader as he came to describe the final moments “We were down all night and I was the last man on and with three balls left I needed 10 to win.....We lost by 10!. The cheeky smile burst across his face. He would freely volunteer self deprecating stories about himself when things hadn't gone to plan.

He won the Crewkerne League several times as well as the captain's cup a few times and in his final ever game at Wynards Gap this spring he finished with a 13 spare.

The skittles however became a side event for the main fun of spoofing which they did after most games. They were almost professional, with mind games and tactics employed that would of made Alex Ferguson and Jose Morhino look like kittens compared with the physiological genius of Richard, Ben, George, Mike, John and Les. The prize was not to be left in and thereby buy the chocolate. Dad's fridge looked like a confectionery store by Friday mornings and he would always put the malteasers in his car before coming to the farm. The grandchildren and the great grandchildren as a result would flock to it every time they saw him coming down the drive like the kids in Chitty Chitty bang bang around the child catchers horse and trap.

He was also very fortunate with the times he went to watch live sport. His very good friend and cousin David Wakely took him to Twickenham to watch England Vrs the New Zealand All Blacks for his first ever live rugby game in 1997. They finished 26 all. Another friend and cousin Paul Frampton took him to see Manchester United against Blackburn Rovers for his first ever Premiership game and United won 7-1. He actually supported Wolves but liked watching Arsenal's style of play.

On the farm he loved to do things properly. He loved the haymaking season and would often wander around the drying hayfield with a two prong pick, flicking out any green hay or pulling back any that blown into the hedgerow. He would spend hours with a knap sack sprayer, treating docks, thistles and nettles even on the hottest of days. This however didn't always go to plan. One day he spent two hours after lunch spraying docks and noticed there was a bit of a shine to the leaves. When he went back to the farm to fill up he bumped in to Tim who was looking for his chainsaw oil which he had de cantered into an old spray bottle. Father had spent two hours oiling dock leaves!

Another time he was mixing up spray to kill some stinging nettles and he called me over."What you doing Dad?" I said.

“Oh just mixing some spray up for some nettles.

I give them the minimum dose cause I like to make the bastards struggle”.

He became an expert at catching moles and magpies and would often keep his own magpie all season with it getting through several tins of dog food a week but the song birds it saved was more than worth it. He became a magpie dealer letting fellow farming friends have fresh birds he'd caught for their traps. He loved animals, his cows, his sheep and all the wildlife he'd helped build up their habitats through making ponds and hedge laying over the years. He was a strong but gentle man and always waking up in the middle of the night to check a cow that was calving or a sheep that was lambing. I have a memory of him trudging into the snow in the field by the farm house before we had a lambing shed with two sheep hurdles under his arm and a bale of hay in the other. He was going to make a shelter for a young ewe and two lambs and the wind and snow was horizontal and blowing into his face. He was brought up working so very hard with horses and manual labour, digging ditches and drains by hand, milking by hand, haymaking and loading bales with pitch forks. Its fair to say he had trouble keeping the sheep in the fields they were meant to be in as our wonderful understanding farming neighbours will

testify. If he wasn't blocking off gaps with sheep hurdles he would be towing branches of Holly or Blackthorn from the hedges he'd laid and put aside ,behind his car to plug a gap where they had escaped. It looked like he was covering his tracks as the bushes dragged behind the car so no one could track him!.

Dad wasn't the best at looking after machinery. The last new car he bought in 2005 was a Honda CRV. It was 2009 and 40,000 miles later that it saw its first service. It wasn't long before it was carrying a sheep in the boot, a sheep dog in the back seat and wouldn't of looked out of place in a stock car event. The sheep dog chewed all the seatbelts off,the back door was kept shut with baler twine and cattle had knocked the wing mirrors off. He couldn't understand why his skittler friends always offered to drive and turned him down for lifts.lkjhrew.

Mum and Dad have had some fantastic holidays around the world visiting Australia, the USA, The Pyramids & Nile Cruise, Canada, Malta and even a safari in Tanzania watching the migration of the wildebeest across the Serengeti with Connie and Norman Case. Before they left for Tanzania, Dad went into Dixon's and bought a very expensive video camera which took large VHS cassettes to record this trip of a life time. As he was filming thousands of wildebeest charging across the plains he muttered to Norman "Ere

Norm,.....that'd make ee cuss if they got in your corn". However, what was a memory captured on film for life, turned out to be a memory captured on film for two weeks, as Mum somehow managed to tape EastEnders over the top of it!. When they got back to Heathrow from this holiday they put the parking ticket in the ticket machine to pay and to his shock had a bill for £750. He had parked in a short stay car park and told the attendant he just as well keep the bloody car. Dad and Norman scraped what cash they had together and they were allowed to leave. Dad pleaded ignorance in a letter to the management company a few days later and got all the fees dropped.

They had some wonderful other adventures with Robert and Adele Hounsell, Betty and John Jefferies and Bob and Jean Norton on equally memorable trips to Jersey and a Malaysian cruise. They also enjoyed some wonderful trips with the Chideock discussion group making many new friends and creating some happy memories with farmers from across the Southwest on trips all around the UK.

Each New Years Eve they would meet up with Barb and Brian Hedditch and Pearl Curtis taking it in turns to host. In 1998

Broadwindsor and Burstock were both badly flooded and mum had made the puddings for the New Years Eve party to be held in Drimpton at the Hedditch's. Dad unhitched the dung spreader from the tractor then sat mum on his knee and she balanced the puddings on her lap as the drove through the floods. When Harrold Curtis had a heart bypass operation in the 80's Dad and Mum secretly went up to see him in hospital in London and nearly gave him another heart attack. If anyone was ill he would always make a point of going to see them and unbeknown to Mum would quite often call in for coffee with all sorts of friends in the village or people who happened to live near somewhere he was going. He was renowned in the village for his impromptu piano playing at the Comrades Hall at various village events. Several times, unprompted he would pull up the piano stool and rattle off some old favourites in a Les Dawsonesque style with all the right notes...just not necessarily in the right order. The song he came into today The Story of my life by Michael Holliday was his and mum's song and he learned to play it by ear for her.

Dad had a wonderful sense of humour, dry and remarkably quick. He loved watching Only Fools and Horses, Allo Allo, Faulty Towers and George and Mildred. He'd seen Jethro live over 10 times and would always reproduce funny lines from these shows.

Once he played a prank on Betty Wakely his auntie when she said she never had any mushrooms growing on her lawn. He went out early one morning to a field we had hundreds growing in and cut fifty or sixty and pushed the stalks in Betty's front lawn before she woke up!.

Once when I had a friend come to stay, during Sunday lunch the bull was braying over the farmyard gate. My friend asked him why he was braying and Dad said "Ee can smell some heifer bulling across the fields". My friend asked how far the scent travelled and father looked up in front of mother and said, "About ere to Wayford".

He was such a kind, generous, honest, unassuming, gentle man and overcame many great challenges which came his way. He was no stranger to the surgeons table having two new knees, two new hips, gall bladder removed, appendicitis and prostate cancer. Four days after having a hip replacement he was riding the quad bike side saddle and I had to lift a ewe onto a straw bale and hold her while he helped her lamb.

He was the fussiest eater known to man as many skittle pub landlords and friends who had them to dinner would testify. Cheese, Pasta, the white of an egg were all off the menu and he always liked to butter the bread on the loaf and carve it off afterwards. His glint in his eye and friendly smile was on show every day and his love for his animals and family was never wavering.

On the last day I saw him in Dorchester Hospital, it was two days before his 60th diamond wedding anniversary. I told him to be strong and get through to the day. It was an effort for him to talk but he beckoned me in closer and whispered “get a calf”. He of course meant ‘get a card’ but that was him thinking of mum right to the end. He never forgot her birthday or anniversary and was a secret romantic arranging flowers spontaneously on several occasions. He adored her and although he always had command of the TV remote making her sit through Darts, Golf, Cricket and countless Football games he loved her so much and although he would rarely say so by God he showed it.

He gained respect from all he met without ever seeking it, unassuming, unique, cheeky and kind.

Fair well to our amazing Dad, Grandad, Grampsy, husband and friend.