

## FUNERAL.

Bill was born on the 1st October 1940 at East Parade, Skelton. His Dad Sgt William Danby, Green Howards, had been killed at Dunkirk 4 months before.

The War changed everything as the Danbys had been a family of early Garage owners.

Bill's paternal Grandfather had been one of Sir Malcolm Campbell's engineers when he broke the 300mph speed barrier in the USA.

So Bill's mother, Ethel, spent the rest of her life working for the United Bus Company to raise him and his older sister, while his Gran looked after them.

When he was ten his sister married and left home and his Gran died, so he spent the rest of his schooldays often coming home to an empty house, which long loneliness, he always said, changed his character.

Times were different then, with coal fires, a wooden board for a toilet and washing facilities were a cold water tap in an outdoor shed and a kettle.

He attended the old Skelton primary schools and passed the exam to attend Guisborough Grammar School.

He was always mad on football and his best memories there are scoring 5 goals on a House match and another 5 against Whitby Grammar School.

The Sports Master wrote on his final report - the stalwart of the 1st Eleven.

He obtained 8 good GCE O Levels and then A Levels in History and English.

His first job was as a Temporary Teacher at Grangetown, but he was never the greatest speaker and decided it was not for him.

He spent 2 to 3 years working in Middlesbrough Public Libraries and then decided to see a wider world and joined the Army.

After training at Catterick Cipher School he was posted to a divided Berlin, when the Russians were active in the Cold War.

He worked in Hitler's Olympic Games Headquarters for two years, with plenty of football, cricket and boozing thrown in, including a medal for the Berlin Infantry Brigade Cup Final.

It was there he met his dear wife, Linda, who was in the Womens Royal Army Corps. They married on New Years Day 1966. It lasted 54 years, till Death did them part.

Life changed completely, as they were posted to Paris with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers of Europe and lived in a tiny flat in the middle of the city.

It was small alright. When you got out of the shower in the tiny kitchenette you often electrocuted your bare bum on the fridge.

He bought a cheap car off an Army colleague and learnt to drive in the city with a French instructor, which was, he said, a bit hair raising at times. Paris with its free Museums and car travel round about opened up a whole new world for a country lad.

Two years later France came out of NATO and Shape Headquarters moved up to Belgium. Bill and Linda lived above a little pub in Mons for the next 2 years and continued their local travels.

In 1969 Bill had a go at becoming a pilot with the Army Air Corps. You had 12 hours to go solo and he managed it at the last attempt, but could not keep it up.

So the next posting was to HQ 1st Division in Verden, Northern Germany. After 4 years living as a virtual civilian, and now older and wiser, playing proper soldiers, regimental parades and going on exercises had lost its appeal.

Their first child, also William, came along and when Bill's 9 years service were up, he was pleased to wave the Military goodbye.

Having done so many years in coding and security he was offered a job by GCHQ at Cheltenham, but at the same time a local job as a Prudential Insurance man came up.

Probably wrongly he chose the latter, as it offered cheap house purchase and car and he now had a family to think about.

Coming from times when people had very little, he had always been a saver and had enough put by for a house deposit.

Having spent much of his early years on his own looking out on an old back yard, having a family, his own home and garden was like heaven and he became devoted to it all.

He was never the flash salesman type but always got on well with the local folk and was top of the District for production a couple of years.

In 1974 son number two, Richard, arrived.

He spent over 20 years working as the Man from the Pru, but the job changed for the worst in the late 1980s, when Insurance was opened to Banks etc and the old Wartime generation was replaced by people with flashier ideas of life's entitlements.

As soon as he thought he had enough to live comfortably on his savings and an early pension he told the bosses where to stick it.

Linda by this time had become an Area Manager for the local Council and she did the same.

There followed a long enjoyable 28 year retirement of 6 week camping and caravanning holidays in Europe, which was like going back home after 7 years living there. Package holidays, cruises, ballroom dancing and not a little boozing.

During this time he taught himself HTML off the internet and created two websites on his home village of Skelton and our local Yorks Battalion in the First World War.

His maternal Grandad had died of wounds in 1917 and was the only man out of 100 on the Skelton memorial to have been awarded a gallantry medal, being the inspiration for that.

Both websites are now archived by the British Library and the Regimental Museum at Richmond uses a paper version to help visitors. They are both being continued on the web by another local historian.

Being diagnoseed with Lung Cancer having reached the age of 80 without ever being on medication for anything else was a bit of a shock.

It was probably due to heavy smoking between the ages of 17 to 27, although he probably had his first fag when he was about 9.

Finally he would like to thank his darling wife, Linda, for sharing her life with him and giving him so many years of devotion and happiness and to remind his wife, sons and grandchildren how much he really loved them.

He was always immensely proud of his two upright lads. William, who is a senior *manager in the* HQ of a National Bank and Richard, who like Bill served with the Royal Signals. For 17 years around the world with medals for Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

He asks them not to be too sad, as life is only worthwhile as long as the quality of it is worthwhile.

And remember - do not ask for whom the bell tolls - it tolls for thee.

We all have just a certain number of years on this Earth.

So take care and make the most of the time that you have left. It is precious.