

To our immediate family Graham was a husband, a father, a grandfather, or Pop as he insisted on being called as he thought it sounded much younger! Anita and Danny will speak about him as a family man. I am going to give you an insight about Dad from those who knew him in other ways. Thanks to the wonder of social media and technology - and more traditional ways such as sympathy cards and actually talking to people(!) - we have been inundated with tributes and fond memories from so many who kindly responded to the news shared about Dad's passing.

Dad's time at Ottershaw, firstly as a pupil and then as a member of staff, was obviously memorable to him as it shaped him into the wonderful person he became. It seemed his time there was also memorable to so many others, in many different ways. Quotes such as:

"You were always included and he made sure you enjoyed it and benefited from his guidance."

"To me he was one of the great teachers at Ottershaw in the 1960s and one who was universally admired and respected."

"He was an amazing encourager to me and built my confidence as a boy who could succeed. I know without doubt that your Dad shaped my early life in a major way."

"He stood in that great tradition of school masters who influenced a generation of young men to be the best they could be."

Words and phrases used countless times include: boundless energy, confidence booster, encouragement, good counsel, universally admired and respected, infectious enthusiasm, personal kindness, cheerful.....

His advice and encouragement led many of the pupils into teaching themselves. His ways of teaching also inspired others to enter the profession. One friend said: "He had a technique in teaching skills – that I as a teacher emulated in later years". This, along with Mum's teaching ability, obviously encouraged Anita into the vocation – although I'm not so sure she would thank them for it now!

As well as being respected for his teaching abilities it is obvious that he was equally renowned for his toned physique and suntanned skin. He had various nicknames over the years – Pea-Brain, Rainbow, The Body Beautiful, Chunky, Muscles – there was obviously a reason for this – no wonder Mum married him! Pupils remember him as:

"A fine, athletic and good looking young man – just the sort of person you need as a sports master"

"He was so approachable and had such a positive attitude to fitness – as his muscular body displayed"

"He was young – in good shape and had wonderful dark skin!"

"In the summer it amused us to often find him lying out in the fresh air – working on his tan!"

I only wish he could have really enjoyed the wonderful summer we have had this year, as his love of the sun never waned.

In his time as PE master at Ottershaw he certainly left his mark – these days some of it may well have scarred people for life! One of the memories shared was how he insisted on the pupils running cross country in the snow in the same gear they wore when the

weather was warm – that is vest, shorts and plimsolls – no socks allowed! There is a wonderful photo from 1960 of a touch rugby lesson in the snow with the pupils in bare feet wearing only shorts, apparently culminating in Dad and another Master being pelted with snowballs after which the whole group plunged into the swimming pool – this was indoors, luckily!

So popular was this winter pastime, he also emulated this in his time at Newland Park – one student recalls Chunky gathering a group of students to run barefoot through the snow around the playing fields. This may be because the gymnasium where he was based was not the most high spec – apparently “he ran the most dilapidated gym in memory, but with the greatest atmosphere”.

Chunky certainly wasn't forgotten by the students at Newland Park, either. However, I am of the belief that this had more to do with the social side of things than lecturing! I am assured that he did do some work there, occasionally, but the memories are of his Outdoor Pursuits trips, sports coaching, ski trips and keep-fit classes. Tributes came in as follows:

“We speak highly of him, even 40 years on.....he had a great impact on us as sports people and teachers...never forgotten.”

“He managed that mix of being your Tutor and your friend – a tough combination to achieve”

“I remember him so well and fondly. He was just such a great, caring and genuine man – who went out of his way to look after others and especially ensured we had an amazing time away on the outdoor pursuits trips which were incredible because of him. He was a legend at Newland Park and much loved by everyone.”

Always positive, fun and considerate, the ‘legend’ word was paramount throughout these tributes and memories.

Dad had many friends – playing the sports he did over so many years he was bound to meet many people. However, he did have a handful of very close friends whose friendship anyone would have been envious of. I have been lucky enough to share so many conversations with some of these friends over the years and these are the people he admired, respected, loved and relied upon in so many ways. Thank you for being with him all the way for so very long. He and you were blessed.

My daughter, Emily, sadly can't be here today. She loved her Pop, as did all his grandchildren. She wrote a card to Pop after he passed away, which he has with him now, and wrote in it “I hope I have made you proud.” I really hope he knew how proud we all were of him and how people felt about him.

There is one tribute which I think Dad would like me to finish on, and which will ring true with all of you I am sure. It came from a student at Newland Park, but if we just replace the name ‘Chunky’ with how we all addressed Dad, or Graham, I think we could all agree with it:

“Sometimes we just meet people who we want to meet....and then a Chunky comes along....and then you think ‘Flippin’ heck – never seen one of those’...”