

Mary's tribute to her father

I have something to show you... Dad's Spade.

It's not a well-known make or handed down through generations - not an expensive spade - in fact it was a bargain. Dad brought it from a local sale for £2! but I feel this spade represents my Dad.

Let's look at the handle. The shape of the handle is like a circle - a circle of love. It represents the love he had for his family, especially his wife, Ruth. They would have been married 69 years in June this year.

I think you would agree that Dad had a handle on all our hearts.

The wooden shaft of the spade represents the love dad had for nature - the different seasons, the weather, working with the land.

As most of you are aware he was a keen gardener - a very good gardener. His vegetables were second to none but he was most well-known for his Dahlias. Some were as tall as Dad. They were brightly coloured and it was always exciting when around May time they started peeking through the earth to start another display of colour.

We mustn't forget all the variety of animals we have had over the years - cattle, sheep, ponies, goats, chickens, cats, geese, ducks, Dad's faithful terrier Pat - and we mustn't forget Lucy the ferret!

Dad was at his happiest digging in his garden in the fresh air surrounded by nature

The metal blade of the spade represents Dad's values in life. He knew what was right and he knew what was wrong and instilled it in all his family. He was strong in mind and body and so nearly got to his 90th birthday which would have been 2nd March this year.

Some days when the sun hits the blade of the spade it shines and sparkles. This represents Dad's faith, faith in the Lord, faith in his family and everyone here today.

Dad - your light will continue to shine in all of us and show us the way to live good healthy lives - just as you have done.