

## **Alan Humphries 1944–2002**

Alan was the eldest child of Percy and Edith, born on 19 April 1944 in Deddington High Street in what became the home of Dr Hugh and Viv O'Donnell. He was followed by the arrival of Albert and his twin, Dorothy, who sadly died in infancy, Bryan, Marilyn and Christine. The family moved to 5 The Paddocks and lived there for many years. He used to catch rabbits, waiting at the edge of the field as the crop was cut and diving on the rabbits. Alan attended the village primary school and the Windmill secondary school. He excelled at mathematics. He started work at the council offices in the village and then worked at Twyford Seeds, Adderbury. He started bar duties at the Royal British Legion just before his 18th birthday before joining West Midlands Police and training at Ryton Police College. He was always keen to do overtime so that he could go to Coventry City home games and watch the match. However, pay was poor and he soon returned to the Legion where he honed his skills of serving what many will say was the best pint of Hooky ever.

Alan was a keen sportsman, playing football and cricket for the village. He was an outstanding goalkeeper, possibly from his practice of diving on rabbits in his formative years. He also played snooker, darts and Aunt Sally at the Legion and at the pubs where he was landlord.

He met Avril in the hospital when he was having his appendix removed and they married in 1968. Jackie arrived first followed by twins, Linda and David. Holidays were usually spent at the family-owned caravan in Kilgetty, near Tenby, Pembrokeshire.

Whilst at the Legion Club, Alan spent many years as the treasurer of the Oxford and District Club Stewards and enjoyed the associated annual banquets, trips abroad and social events. He was proud of getting the Legion into the *Good Beer Guide*. It was a local social hotspot with live music, annual dinners, children's Christmas party, bingo and Remembrance Sunday all being well attended. Alan ensured the success of the club with his commitment and hard work.

He moved to become landlord at the Railway pub in Hook Norton in 1983. Here he ran a bed and breakfast business and a group of guests who returned many times worked for BBC filming a veterinary series, 'One by One'. The drinking sessions were legendary.

Alan took three other Hook Norton pubs: the Inn at Greatworth, the Coach and Horses in Banbury, and the Crown and Tuns in the village. Every pub he ran appeared in the *Good Beer Guide*. Many sought his advice when taking on their own pubs. If he did call time with the bell, it was always accompanied with his phrase, 'Come on, you lucky people!'

Alan loved all his grandchildren and took them in turn to one of his favourite destinations, Kissimmee in Florida. He was a thrill-seeker, never frightened to get on any of the rollercoaster rides. His good friends, Bob and Jean, introduced him to the delights of Orlando when they bought a villa there and took him with them. He was like a child rushing to the rides, one of his favourite being the Skycoaster, standing at 300 feet in Old Town.

He also lived in Summertown, Oxford, for many years following his retirement, living close to Bob and Jean. Alan was an integral part of the social days at the housing scheme run by Jean, going for trips to the coast, days on the river and to the Christmas dinner. He helped with lawn mowing, planting and general jobs.

He continued to enjoy holidays with Jackie and his grandchildren and great grandchildren in Solva in 2021 and Westward Ho in 2022, regardless of receiving treatment for cancer of the oesophagus.

In spite of being offered a bungalow at the Holly Tree he was unable to take this up as a result of other life-limiting illnesses and was finally cared for at Chacombe Care Home. He had wanted to end his days in Deddington.

***The Humphries Family***