

Harry Robinson, May 1952 – February 2013

One Monday in March St Nicholas Church was packed with Harry Robinson's family and friends. People had come from across the world: his daughter, Millie, from Mexico with her husband and Harry's grand daughter, his brother from Australia; and others were there who no doubt had travelled far to be with Harry's wife, Caroline, his son, Alexander, and his daughter-in-law, at the funeral service. And what a great thanksgiving it was for the friend whom so many very evidently miss; a service highlighting Harry's generosity of spirit, his patriotism, his passion for cricket, music, jokes and fashion, and his love of his family.

Fr Simon's homily was full of appreciation of the Harry whom he has known over the past five years, enjoying his wit and humour, and deeply aware of his courage in dealing with Parkinson's. A friend who read 'When an old cricketer leaves the crease' told us of the team Harry used to run, warning those who joined to expect to be among eccentrics. And at the end of the service came the eulogy by Ian Duncan, which gave us glimpses of Harry's life from his school days through to the present.

We heard of cold baths at school in Scotland, of Harry's determination on the fives court and hockey field, where his stick, weighted with carefully taped pennies could sweep the ball from one end of the pitch to the other, and of the start of his life-long love affair with cricket. Then came his gap year spent working his way round the world on Blue Star and Port Line ships, followed by years at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, reading English and being known as a 'dedicated follower of fashion' complete with 'the most exceptional pair of bright yellow loon pants' in the town (1970s' extreme flairs !).

On graduating, after writing for music papers, the peak of his journalistic career was editing the Paul Mc Cartney fan club magazine for some years, but as this didn't pay the bills, Harry, deciding 'to deploy his considerable charm in the sales world', joined first Chubb Security and later a sales and hire firm for audio-visual equipment. Ian Duncan told us that Harry 'with his tremendous selling skills managed to sell a projector to the minister at my father's church, even though the elders were unanimously opposed to the idea'.

Those who met Harry at St Nics will remember his modesty, directness, self-deprecation when offering his opinion, his disarming smile, the quiet focus with which he served at 8am Mass on Sundays, and the sense of how important his faith was to him, though never trumpeted abroad. I have happy memories of Harry taking in PCC meetings at the old St Nicholas Hall as part of his evening run. No one else turned up in jogging gear ! And didn't Harry get us a safe for the sacristy at St Nics while he was at Chubb's ?

During his years of battling stoically with Parkinson's, Harry continued with charity work, including providing readings for the blind and partially sighted, he maintained his friendships, his enthusiasm for cricket, music and jokes, and he kept his sense of humour. He was most lovingly and devotedly supported by Caroline and his children during his last months in hospital.

Harry enhanced our fellowship at St Nics. It was very hard say goodbye to him so soon. We are the poorer for his going and miss him.

Christabel Ames-Lewis

