

## Funeral Service

Norman Maggs

Howe Bridge Crematorium  
Monday 22/06/15  
9.30am

Music: Feather Theme

When you come to any cemetery or crematorium; if you take a look around, you can quickly become aware of thousands upon thousands of grave stones, monuments and plaques all bearing the names of individual men, women and children. And for every one of those individuals is a unique story: Some are very long stories with a vast range of life experiences or chapters, some are sadly very short stories and their short life didn't have chance to make any substantial content. There are stories of saintly people and there are stories of sinners, rich people, poor people, people who made a big impact on our society and those who chose to conceal themselves. It's like we are in the middle of an enormous library.

And here we are this morning to acknowledge another of life's stories. Yet with Norman's story; many of the pages of his life have been lost, but that should never mean that they didn't exist, because they obviously did. It means however, that what we are doing here today is, in its simplest terms, one of the most amazing acts of love ever asked of us as people: On behalf of everybody who has been part of Norman's life story, untarnished by any complications that may have been part of his history, in respect of the unique way he chose to live his life, and out of respect of Norman himself; we hold in our hearts everything about him, we embrace it all and ensure he receives a dignified commemoration of his life because he deserves that and through our thoughts, words and gestures we ensure Norman can leave this world in the presence of our admiration for him and in the spirit of the friendship that meant a lot to him.

## Poem:

Think of me as one at rest,  
for me you should not weep  
I have no pain no troubled thoughts  
for I am just asleep  
The living thinking me that was,  
is now forever still  
And life goes on without me now,  
as time forever will.

If your heart is heavy now  
because I've gone away  
Dwell not long upon it friend  
For none of us can stay  
Those of you who liked me,  
I sincerely thank you all  
And those of you who loved me,  
I thank you most of all.

And through my entire lifespan,  
as time went rushing by  
I found some time to hesitate,  
to laugh, to love, to cry  
Matters it now if time began  
If time will ever cease?  
I was here, I used it all,  
and now I am at peace.

## Eulogy:

As a young lad; Norman would have witnessed the excitement yet uncertainty of a world at war and the impact it had on society and its people. He grew up in a world that was tough in many different ways yet it was an era which produced a generation of people with qualities the likes of which we may never see again.

And although we may never know what Norman got up to as a youngster, we may not have an accurate understanding of his family or working life other than his time as a basket maker and time spent working as a nurse and up until his retirement; working at the Heinz Factory. But we can be certain that somewhere in the vaults of his past he sat on a saddle and peddled his way into something that went beyond an interest and hobby and became a passion, a vocation and a way of life.

Norman's relationship with cycles goes back a long way; it spans the majority of the chapters of his story and is perhaps a theme which is very much a story in its own right and a part of his life that most of you here have been privileged to share with him.

In 1957, Norman joined the Mersey Road Club and through his lifelong commitment he developed his skills at riding both bikes and trikes and enjoyed being part of the Cyclists Touring Club. He was a founder member of the internationally recognised long distance cycling association; Audax UK and rode in a team of 3 trikes in the 1975 Paris Brest Paris long distance endurance event. He raced bikes and trikes and broke the Mersey Road Club Tricycle 25 hour record in 1965 by clocking up an awesome 378.54 miles.

He was a member of the Trike Association for many years and his role as a committee member enhanced the organisation in lots of ways. There are not many roads in Great Britain that haven't had the marks of Norman's tyres and a lot of places he visited were shared with his fellow enthusiasts including those from Wigan Wheelers. He also toured abroad and when he once rode in India he was bitten by a dog that made him very ill. It was a very concerning time but Norman pulled through and made a full recovery (unlike the dog!). His love of touring triggered an interest in lightweight camping and a life membership of the Youth Hostel Association.

In his time with the Rough Stuff Fellowship; Norman's impressive energy took him off-roading but no challenging environment nor severe weather conditions or climates could ever faze Norman.

Witnessing cyclists reach for drink bottles, sunglasses and other items to help make the ride or race more comfortable is nothing strange to spectators but watching Norman retrieve his faithful pipe and start smoking was something else! The Tricycle Association's Website has a great photo of Norman in the Paris Brest Paris Competition and comments how his smoke had some French believe his trike was steam powered!

Any club activities could rely on Norman's support. He has helped to marshal many road races, time trials and tourist promotions. He was also a private member and checker of the Road Records Association and Northern Road Records Association and he witnessed most End to End attempts through Wigan.

Through his thorough involvement with the world of cycling; Norman achieved many great friendships and such was his inspiration that he will be greatly missed by everyone within the cycling fraternity.

Norman was a gentleman in every true sense of the word. He liked to keep himself to himself but his friendly nature radiated kindness and consideration to everyone who shared his life especially his good neighbour Mick and those who shared Norman's life never had a bad word to say about him and always enjoyed his company.

Although saddened by loss; we are offered some comfort knowing that Norman is no longer troubled but is at peace, he achieved a fulfilled life and lived his life exactly how he wanted to.

And of all the journeys Norman has embarked on; let us hope and pray that this, his final one, proves to be his finest and most rewarding one. There was an ancient Gaelic blessing which was expressed to people setting off on long journeys and although we are not sure how religious Norman was; I'm sure he wouldn't be offended by the sincere gesture that is intended.

Deep peace of the running wave to you  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you  
Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you  
Deep peace of Christ to you

*As we listen to that blessing in music form we take a moment to reflect and celebrate our personal memories of Norman and express to him in the silence of our hearts any words which we were unable to share with him.*

Music: Deep Peace - Libera

### Committal

As we prepare ourselves to say farewell to Norman, remember that this is only his body which we are committing here today. His spirit, his personality will remain forever alive in our hearts and in our minds. To live in the heart of another person is not to die...love lives forever!

Norman; may the light of love shine upon you and on those for whom you care. May you find everlasting peace, rest and freedom from anything that has ever caused you harm or concern.

Accept and approve of our actions today. Recognise the faithful loyalty of your friends who through respect and admiration of you; hold you tenderly and bring a peaceful conclusion to your earthly life.

May what we are doing here show reverence to you and enable you to find real peace which is rightfully yours.

May you know and feel the thoughts of our hearts. May you know the depth of our appreciation of you and may the light of our love shine forever upon your name.

We respect the way you lived your life, we respect your unique personality and the many memorable moments you made with the people you knew.

In sorrowful grief but in gratitude for your amazing life and for the pleasure of sharing it with you; we commit your body with the loving respect and dignity it truly deserves.

### Curtain Closes

Hear our farewells Norman and be assured and comforted by the love that embraces and cherishes you in this moment and forever.

### Final Words

The influence of Norman in our lives will continue to accompany us in our own life journeys. Norman will never be just part of the past – each one of us carries forward an important part of him with us into the future.

On behalf of Norman; thank you for being here. Your presence has made the service more meaningful and precious. A special thanks to Harold and Steve who shared details about Norman's love of cycling.

I found a short poem and although I couldn't find the author; I wouldn't be surprised if it was written by Norman himself.

Poem     Biking is my therapy.

The bike is a doctor -  
treating me of worldly wounds.

Fellow cyclists are nurses -  
who greet with a smile  
even if I don't know them.

Bike shops are pharmacies.  
Bike parts, sedatives.

Roads and Trails are rehab wards -  
that improves my control  
until I get better.

Biking is my therapy.  
And if one day I die doing it,  
Hell, I've lived because of it.

Music: Dances With Wolves - John Dunbar Theme