

Good morning, we would like to welcome you to St Mary's Church Long Sutton to join us at my Father's service of remembrance and celebration of his life, spanning 87 years. The church looks wonderful bedecked with flowers for the annual Long Sutton flower show. The theme for this years flower show is inns and tavern signs which is very topical for Dad because he spent time on both sides of the bar; as a publican running the Cherry Tree at Yaxley and as an aficionado of real ale. I am sure Dad is smiling down on us. At the end of the service do stay awhile and enjoy the superb flower displays before setting off to the Jolly Crispin in Lutton where we will join you for a buffet lunch after we have been to Mintlyn Crematorium for the committal.

Jonathan, thank you for allowing us to use the church at this extremely busy time in the church's calendar. I would like to offer a special thank you for the support and spiritual guidance given to our family, and in particular, to Dad and Mum. God bless you.

When Dad talked to me about this service he was clear that he wanted it to be uplifting and not dour. Hence, the entrance music was from South Pacific and the retiring music is from Oklahoma. These were the musicals Mum and Dad saw while they were courting and in their early years of marriage.

Writing a eulogy requires research, trawling your own memory banks, those of the immediate family and of my Dad's friends, and going through old photo albums. It has been great fun doing this because so many of you have shared stories and vignettes about Dad forming a more detailed picture of the man we knew. What has become apparent is that there are three bright golden seams running through the rock of Dad's life; his love of sport, in all forms, participation, supporting and watching, then there was his innate sense of duty to country, community, freemasonry, religion and to his fellow man and finally the brightest seam of all; his unfailing love and devotion to his family. Now let us embark on the story of Geoffrey Gyford Peck

On Tuesday 13th September 1927 a second son was born to Joe and Elsie Peck and a brother to Harry Gyford Peck. This was the family unit in which Dad grew and developed. His early years, up to the time of his National Service, were spent on the farm and in and around Framlingham with his brother and friends. I think today we would call them scallywags because they were always having adventures that were risky but never bad enough to catch the eye of the local Bobby. Dad and Uncle Harry were educated at

Framlingham College, which is where Dad took to sport like a duck to water. Academically his passion was classics learning Latin and the stories contained therein and this passion stayed all his life. My Dad played every sport the College offered excelling in tennis, hockey and cricket, representing the College in his youth and at County level for many years afterwards.

Dad and Uncle Harry had a passion for playing tennis and they decided that one summer, during the war, they would take the summer term off and play tennis on the airbase at Parham, beating unsuspecting American's at tennis for cash and cigarettes. Uncle Harry was a fine artist and calligrapher and a plan was hatched; Harry wrote a note to the Headmaster from their Dad excusing the boys from school for some obscure medical reason. For a number of weeks the scam worked until one fateful evening when my Grandad was at a lodge meeting. At that same lodge meeting was the Headmaster who enquired about the health of Harry and Geoff hoping they would soon be able to attend school. My Grandad was furious and Dad became a boarder and Harry remained a dayboy. Dad loved being a boarder so in a way he achieved an unexpected victory.

During the war years Dad and Uncle Harry became runners for their Father's Home Guard Company. At that time there were no handheld radios so the only way to achieve some level of command and control with the platoons was using runners. This gave the boys free reign, day and night, to roam Framlingham and outlying areas. They soon got to know the nocturnal behaviours of certain folk who were conducting their own clandestine extra-matrimonial affairs. They in fact unearthed a group of Nazi sympathisers but were at first dismissed by all as story telling. This did not deter them and they gathered more evidence of strange comings and goings at a particular house and unbeknown to them the authorities swung into operation and the strange movements ceased.

By the end of the war Dad was rising 18 and had successful cricket trials with Sussex, Surrey and England only for the hand of fate to step-in in the form of National Service. Dad served in the 1st Bn The Suffolk Regiment. He did his basic training and was deployed to Malaya where the Bn took on operations to patrol the jungle and take the fight to the insurgents. Dad was involved in many of the Bn's actions in particular the destruction of the notorious bandit Loo Kim Bok and his insurgent cell. While in Malaya, Dad wrote a letter that was to change his life. One of his buddies told him about a good-looking girl in St Albans and gave Dad her address, and her name was Jean Hale. On the 26th June

1954 they married in St Albans at St Stephens Church, a marriage that lasted 61 years. They set up their first home at Laburnham Cottage, Cransford and on the 24th October 1956 I was born and that completed our family unit.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1959 Dad became a Freemason joining the Lodge of Fidelity, Framlingham. Later on he joined the Old Framlinghamian's Lodge, and St Mary's Lodge, here in Long Sutton. He was Master of each of these Lodges serving in numerous other posts within Freemasonry holding three Grand Provincial Offices. When Dad's health deteriorated he had to retire from Freemasonry having served for 55 years.

Wherever we lived Dad took part in local community activities serving as a Parish Councillor and school governor at Stradbroke, Roydon, Yaxley, Redgrave and Lutton. Throughout his life he got tremendous pleasure from serving the local community because he saw it as his duty to do so.

As Dad got older he started playing golf to replace hockey and cricket, taking to the game with ease. His last golf club membership was at Tydd St Giles winning the seniors competition on a regular basis. We played many games together which were highly enjoyable though frustrating because Dad was such a canny player who's course management put my young buck playing to shame. Even as he aged his competitiveness did not.

Mum and Dad ran a number of successful businesses during their married life finally retiring when they moved to Lutton 28 years ago. That did not mean life stopped for them, quite the contrary, after having cared for my Grandparents in their later lives, they were then to embark on many travels and adventures too many to describe now. One of the highlights of their travels was the trip they made to Singapore and Malaysia where Dad was able to relive his earlier time there and show Mum the sights. They also visited Australia on many occasions to see Uncle Harry and his family, who emigrated there in 1965, and my Grandparents who lived there between 1972 and 1982. In 2005 Uncle Harry, with my cousins Gillian and David, visited the UK for the last time; it was a marvellous few weeks because the brothers were able to catch-up and reminisce about the old times. They had lived life to the full.

Dad's health started to seriously decline about 3 years ago. Being unable to drive and a steady decline in his mobility was a significant blow to a man who valued his independence because he did not want to become a burden to others. At this stage of his life, and through to the end, three very special organisations entered his, and our lives; Doctor Hossany and the district nurses, St Barnabas nurses and Marie Curie nurses. I cannot find enough adjectives to praise or thank you enough for bringing comfort and relief to Dad and support to Mum when she was at her lowest. The donations in lieu of flowers and the retiring collection made today are going to St Barnabas and Marie Curie so their valuable work continues.

Dad died peacefully on Good Friday evening at home with his family at his bedside.

It is time to pull together the strands of Dad's life and tie them in a Gordian Knot and bid him adieu and salute the sportsman, community leader, Freemason, devoted and loving husband to Mum, Father to me and Grandfather to Richard, Alexander and Jonquil. We wish you safe passage and peaceful rest.

As a tribute to Dad's Freemasonry life Dudley Holland will now lay an evergreen sprig of Acacia that symbolises within Freemasonry the immortality of the soul.