



Celebrating the Life of

Daniel Joseph Loftus

'Danny'

12th January 1947 – 18th February 2017

The Vale Crematorium
Tuesday, 14th March 2017 at 10.30 am

Conducted by
Steve Stacey - Civil Celebrant

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Celebrating the Life of

Danny

Entrance Music

Cavatina – John Williams

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome here today as we meet to honour and celebrate Danny's life, pay our respects to him and to comfort and support each other in our loss. We share our memories and stories... we share our love and we share our grief.

Grief is painful. It does hurt, but it only happens when we lose someone we love and is is the price that we pay for that love.

Danny was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

He was kind and caring, generous to a fault and ready to help anyone when he could. He was selfless and a good neighbour to those around him.

He was a positive man, someone whose glass was always $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

He was a jovial, warm hearted and smiley man with a good sense of humour. He was gregarious and enjoyed being around people, he would talk to anyone and was very much the life and soul of the party.

There were times when he could be strong willed and stubborn. In his mind, there were two ways of doing things – Danny's way or the wrong way!

Our hearts go out to Hazel, who has lost her best friend and a rock. The pair were a team for so many years.

Each one of you has also lost a very special part of your life.

There is never a good time to die or a good way to die. We want the people that we love to be with us always happy and healthy. Danny's passing will have come as a great shock to you all. It reminds us of our own mortality. You may feel that you were unable to say your thank you or your farewell to him in the way that you wished.

I hope that you feel that the service today reflects, respects and honours the man that you knew and loved and that it does give you the opportunity to do that.

Our service has been created by those closest to him to celebrate his life and all that he leaves behind, rather than focussing on our loss. We celebrate his character, his personality, his achievements and that his life touched the lives of so many others.

Hymn - Morning Has Broken– Cat Stevens

Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dew-fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness, where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning;
Born of the one light, Eden saw play.
Praise with elation! Praise ev'ry morning!
God's re-creation of the new day!

Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Danny's Story

Daniel Joseph, Danny was born on the 12th January 1947 in beautiful Meenderry, County Donegal to Bridget and Vincent Loftus. He joined his brother, Vincent.

The family came to England when Danny was just six months old. His Grandmother was already living in Breachwood Road in Luton and to start with they moved in with her. As a boy, he was polite and respectful. His parents were firm and had strong views on how children should behave.

Danny grew up in Luton. He went to Farley Hill JMI and then onto Rotherham Senior School. When he wasn't at school, he would play in Stockwood Park – he'd be there with his friends from dawn till dusk. Outside their house was a big green where the children would play cricket and football.

He was good at school, but wanted to leave and earn some money. He left as soon as he could.

He went into retail when he left school. His first job was at Burtons – it was the days of made to measure suits – that was where he got his love of clothes. He also did some window dressing.

He went on to work in the big Co-op store on the corner of Bridge Street and George Street in Luton Town Centre. He sold carpets and furniture.

He met Hazel in the early 60's. At the time she was in the Sea Rangers – he was in the Air Cadets. There was a shooting range at Wendover – the Sea Rangers made the teas, the Air Cadets set the targets.

The 60's were a special time for him. He embraced the fashions of the time. He was always well presented with smart suits, always well pressed with sharp creases. Hazel remembers that he wore blue suede Chelsea boots. He liked the big stars too, especially the Beatles and Rolling Stones.

Hazel and he started courting. They used to go to pop concerts that were held in cinemas and in Bedford – at that time the Number One bands would tour the country to promote their music. They saw acts like Gerry and the Pacemakers and Roy Orbison.

Despite going to so many dances, Danny was never a dancer.

The couple married on the 15th June 1968 at St Margaret's Church in Farley Hall. They had a reception above a Chinese restaurant in Bute Street, followed by a honeymoon in Dorset. At the time Gary Puckett and the Union Gap were at Number One with Young Girl.

By then he had changed the direction of his career considerably and became an industrial radiographer through a friend of his brother – his company x-rayed bridges and other structures including aeroplanes and boilers. He spent some time in the Middle East checking oil pipelines.

The couple set up home in a bungalow in the village of Irchester in Northamptonshire. He didn't want to be travelling the world and became a ground controller for Monarch Airlines. He looked after ground crew.

After a few years he returned to retail. He became a sales trainer at Times Furnishings then a quality controller for Hardy's. Finally, he joined HMSO as a sales rep where he stayed until he retired in 2011.

Hazel and Danny loved their holidays Generally they went on two holidays a year, sometimes there were three. They went to so many different parts of the world – they visited most continents, missing out on Australia and Antarctica.

He loved Italy and had wonderful memories of feeding the fish in Lake Coma. He was fascinated by the Far East and enjoyed visiting Korea and Japan.

Danny enjoyed reading. He was keen on books by Bill Bryson. He liked to read biographies about people in the Great War – he enjoyed watching documentaries about the period. He watched Discovery type programmes on TV including shows like Ice Pilots and Car SOS.

He enjoyed flying and gliding. His good friend Mitch, Malcolm Barry in the USA remembers...

When Danny was at Monarch there was a go-kart team, which they raced. When it was his turn to drive it, he gave his slot to me.

At the London Gliding Club, it was his turn to fly, but he gave his flight to me.

He came with me to Heathrow when I went for an interview for a job flying the Granada TV jet. We parked outside the office where the interview was to take place and I remember him, brushing my uniform down in the car park before I went in. I got the job! Some of the wonderful things I remember about Danny.

Mitch.

As a Freemason, he was a conscientious and dedicated member of Chiltern Lodge. He joined in March 2001 and worked hard, moving through the various offices until he was in the chair in 2013. Hazel remembers that when he became Worshipful Master the Lodge held a wonderful Ladies Night in Winchester.

He enjoyed his snooker a member of the 'Standers and Sitters' snooker team at the Conservative Club in Dunstable for a number of years until approx 2010.

We're going to share some recollections of Danny from Bernard, Maureen, Helen, Claire and Laura.

Danny

It is hard to imagine life without Danny and we all have had many happy times in his company.

We have laughed, heard all about the latest gadgets he had acquired, listened to his many accounts of his travels to far off places and had in depth discussions on life.

He enjoyed his life, and was loved and so well looked after by Hazel. He has left us all with many happy memories. We must all continue to enjoy our lives with the enthusiasm that Danny had, and carry on enjoying a G and T and raising our glass to Danny, Uncle Buck.

Uncle Buck

When younger, Helen, Claire and Laura, three of his nieces, watched a film called 'Uncle Buck', starring John Candy as Uncle Buck. In the film, during a weekend looking after his nieces and nephews, Uncle Buck got them into all sorts of scrapes and fed them all the wrong food but gave them the best weekend of their lives. Helen, Claire and Laura regarded Danny as their 'Uncle Buck'. He would enthusiastically join in with their games and would often let them get away with things that perhaps Maureen and Bernard would frown upon. The girls loved him to bits and would never say 'no' to an opportunity to have a weekend away at Danny and Hazel's. They fondly remember being introduced by Uncle Danny to yoghurt ice cream from Frosts Garden Centre.

Red Cross Parcels

On one weekend when Hazel and Danny came to stay, we decided to go across to Sheffield to see Helen, who was there at University.

We thought that we should take a few 'provisions' to Helen, to help the 'starving' student, and Danny said that he would contribute.

As we left the supermarket Danny revealed his contribution to be 200 cigarettes and a bottle of vodka. We understand that similar Red Cross parcels were provided on other occasions during Helen's University career.

Strong Gin and Tonics

Whenever we arrived at Hazel and Danny's for a weekend, or perhaps before dinner, Danny would offer a gin and tonic and, generous as usual, it would comprise about 90% gin and 10% tonic; one was usually enough!

Gadget Man

Danny seemed unable to resist new gadgets from the latest powered garden tools to new developments in coffee making. We seem to remember that he bought about three espresso/coffee making machines over a short period. Some of these items became a bit redundant after the novelty wore off, but not all.

For example, he would frequently refer to his remote weather station and his iPad was constantly in use to find information, add photographs or listen to music.

Garden/Birds

Although not particularly 'active' as a gardener, Danny loved the garden that he and Hazel had developed over the 40 years or so that they had lived in Dunstable. Planned mainly by Hazel, the garden was a colourful oasis, which, with all the bird feeders, attracted birds in large numbers, much to Danny's enjoyment.

Travel

Danny was a great traveller, no matter whether by car, train, ship or plane. He enjoyed driving, but also drew pleasure from his many cruises with Hazel and friends, covering the Mediterranean, the Canaries, the Far East, Norway and the Baltics, together with a river cruise on the Nile in 2014. We were lucky enough to accompany Hazel and Danny on this cruise, which turned out to be one of our best holidays.

Generosity

Danny was always generous of heart, with his time and with his money. He never hesitated to provide assistance with all manner of things. Danny's was always happy to provide a taxi service for the girls. Whenever we went out to a restaurant, if we were not on the ball, we found, on going to pay the bill, that Danny had already taken care of it. Danny was always there if help was needed.

Danny was able to enjoy travelling to the end of his life. In January, Hazel and he were in Poland in Germany. He was still planning for future trips.

Danny passed away on the 18th February. I hope that you can take comfort that he had a good life and one that he enjoyed to the full doing the things that he wanted to do.

In a moment we are going to listen to a song from Enya – a reminder of the Irish heritage that he was so proud of. While you listen to it think about the things that you've heard today; think about your own memories of him - they will be every bit as special and unique as he was; think about the mark that he made on your life and why it was so good to have had him as part of it.

Music for Reflection

A Day Without Rain - Enya



Quiet Reflection

We are going to spend the next few minutes in silence. Try to remember something that will always remind you of him, always trigger your memory of him. - Think of something that will make you smile. It may be the sound of his voice, or his smile.

And if you do have faith you could use this time to say a private prayer for him

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen

The Committal

Sadly, Danny has reached the end of his journey here. He is at total peace.

He has left behind all of the cares of the world. He is now free of all the troubles of the world - of pain, of illness, of fear and of sorrow. It is time to say a final farewell to his physical presence.

Danny...

To everything there is a season

A time to be born and a time to die.

We have remembered your life with respect and gratitude.

We are glad that we shared our lives with you.

We will cherish all of the good things that you brought into our lives.

We will remember your character and your personality,

The inspiration that you gave to us, your love of fun.

We will recall the things that you did with us,

And the happy times we shared together.

We commit the memory of you and of your love to our hearts and minds.

With respect, love and tenderness we leave you in peace.

Closing Words

Some of you may believe that death is the end. Others of you may believe we go on to another existence or that we may be reborn. Some of you may not know what you believe.

But death is never the end whilst there are those who remember.

Whenever you get the chance, enjoy sharing your memories of Danny with each other. We never lose the people we love.

After the service you're all invited to the Lilley Arms. Enjoy sharing your memories of him. Enjoy talking about him and smiling at stories of him.

His life touched each of yours - he was a part of your life and will always be a part of it. Think about him often, talk about him fondly. If you feel like laughing feel free - Danny would expect nothing less.

The Dash

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend,
He referred to the dates on his tombstone
From beginning to the end.

He noted that first came his date of birth
And spoke the following with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
That he spent alive on earth. . .
And now only those who loved him
Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own;
The cars. . . The house. . . The cash.
What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard. . .
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left.
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger,
And show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect,
And more often wear a smile. . .
Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a while.

So, when your eulogy's being read
With your life's actions to rehash. . .
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?

Linda Ellis

We finish with some words that he would know very well. A toast that Freemasons make at the end of their Festive Boards.

Our work is done, our feast is o'er,
This toast must be the last.
Good night to all, once more, good night,
Again, that farewell strain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Exit Music

Always Look On The Bright Side – Eric Idle