***Remembering Dave***

A tribute to a man we all knew as 'Dave'

When asked to give some words to describe Dave, many said 'stubborn' others said 'single-minded', 'worldly wise', but overall the sentiment when recalling Dave was that he was fair, kind, devoted and most of all a very decent man

David Alan Sully was born on 18 September 1936 in Hastings to Norman and Eva, the second of what was to become a family of four boys

His early years living in Hastings coincided with the second world war and Dave clearly remembered the impact the war had upon his family and town. He recalled one instance from 1942 when he was physically dragged into the safety of Marriots camera shop to avoid German air fire which was peppering Hastings and Bexhill at the time

Following the war his father remained in service with the RAF which meant the family had to travel to wherever Norman was posted. In 1948, Eva and the four boys set sail from Southampton for their passage to Singapore on the ex troopship 'Dilwara' which in Dave's words was an aged 'rust bucket' of a vessel.

The journey took five weeks and did not start too well for Dave, the passage across the Bay of Biscay was so stormy, the swell made him severely seasick to the point of him first thinking he was going to die and then fearing that he wouldn't. Sometime later his mother would laugh at the memory of this event particularly when Dave became a keen sailor whilst also developing a habit of stumbling on dry land.

In spite of the post war deprivation and poor quality living quarters the family were given Dave remembered his time in Singapore as a happy experience. During this period, he became a scout, learnt life skills and forged friendships that endured for years afterwards.

The posting came to an end in 1950 and the family returned to Hastings where Dave attended Hastings Grammar School until the age of 15 when he took an apprenticeship to become an engineer at a local motorcycle company.

In 1954, a major new chapter was about to begin in Dave's life when he signed up for a career in the RAF, after six weeks of 'square bashing' he was ready to serve Queen and country

At this time, his love life was also blossoming and in 1956 he married Doreen and made her a serviceman's wife. With each new posting, the family grew as along came Linda, Alan and Adrian and although Dave did not see any active war service, his deployments took him and his young family to locations of conflict including Cyprus and Aden.

But, these were nothing to compare with the one deployment that was probably more hostile than any place he had ever been. He was posted to **Wales** !!! RAF St Athan to be precise

To his credit, he immersed himself into the Welsh way of life and even took the plunge to purchase a family home in Pencoed and create a fixed base for the family

It was while living in Pencoed he developed his love of rugby and would often be seen traipsing the touchlines of clubs and playing fields of the area supporting his boys and many others who had tagged along for the ride (*some of them are here today*)

Dave's last overseas deployment in 1973 was to the remote Indian Ocean island of 'Gan' now popular as a Maldive holiday destination

1976 was a pivotal year for Dave, his 22 years of service with the RAF had finally come to an end, there was now a transformation about to take place. Gone were the shackles of regiment and orders, in came a bold new Dave, sporting an earring and beard he was ready to face the next chapter of his life.

First on his 'bucket list' was to buy a camper van and travel across Europe to Turkey and back, this he did with Doreen, Linda and Adrian. While visiting the 'Grand Bazaar' in Istanbul he received many offers from traders wanting to buy his daughter. Obviously, the offers weren't high enough

On returning from their travels, the family took the decision to return to Sussex and by the end of the year they had moved into a large family home in St Leonards-on-Sea where they hosted foreign students who had come to study English in the many language schools in the town

Now in need of gainful employment, Dave took on the role of manager at Beauport Squash Club, a bit of a busman's holiday as he was quite a mean player to say the least as many can admit to being run ragged while Dave stood serenely on the 'T' sending the ball into unplayable places around the court

During this time, Dave and Doreen had decided to part and go their separate ways but Dave remained very close to his brother-in-law Roger who had taken on a project to resurrect a wreck of a sailing vessel named 'Boleh'.

Of course, sailing was another of Dave's passions and at Rye Harbour he moored a small yacht 'The Mary Fifi' which on most weekends, tides and weather permitting, would be crewed out into the English Channel suitably stocked with cans of beer for sustenance, on occasion he and Adrian would cross the channel to Etaples in northern France in an attempt to pillage and plunder, only to be sent home reeking of garlic.

The Boleh project became all consuming, family and friends were all involved until finally it was time to relaunch the vessel. After some tests in the Channel, Boleh was ready for its next adventure, and so in 1984, Dave, Roger, Adrian and crew set sail from Rye across the Bay of Biscay, through the Straights of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean finally mooring in Palma, Mallorca. Dave even wrote a book BOLEH: ARISING FROM THE ASHES to document the rebirth of Boleh and the momentous voyage to Mallorca

While there, Dave found a job as a marine engineer working for ex-pats Dick and Jean Flower who owned Palma Yachts. Working early mornings to avoid the heat of the day, his shift would end with a visit to the local bar for a ***'Spanish Breakfast'*** consisting of coffee laced with brandy. Until his last, Dave maintained this breakfast tradition trying to convince anyone who would listen that it was the only way to prepare himself for the day ahead

Dave's love life was also on the up, despite the distance between them, he was courting Helena and after returning from Mallorca just days after the 'Great Storm' in October 1987, he settled with Helena and her children Christopher and Karen in Park View, Hastings

Dave and Helena married in May 1988 and together enjoyed their love of gardening, they were also keen members of the National Trust and regularly visited homes and gardens around Kent and Sussex. A much loved National Trust property of Dave's was Bateman's in Burwash, East Sussex, the English home and sanctuary of Rudyard Kipling, by far Dave's favourite author and poet

After Christopher and Karen had left home, Dave and Helena moved to Bexhill where they remained until Helena sadly passed away in 2017

In 1984, Adrian had emigrated to New Zealand and over the years, Dave made numerous visits to see Adrian, these were mainly solo but on one occasion he even cajoled Helena to go with him which became a trip of a lifetime, his final trip to NZ was in 2020 at the grand age of 83 and if he hadn't come back when he did, he might still be there now as within days all journeys out of NZ were stopped due to the Covid pandemic.

The final chapter for Dave at the age of eighty was for him to return to live in Wales so he could teach the Welsh the errors of their bilingual ways.

And if his life wasn't complete enough, in November last year at Gosport, he was presented to Anne, HRH The Princess Royal to honour his involvement with the charitable trust who now manage and operate Boleh.