

Eulogy in loving memory of: Geoff Oultram 9-12-1926 to 12-7-2019. By his daughter Christine Newton

It's not easy to sum up 92 and a half years - dad was very proud of the half - in a few minutes

I thought of a few adjectives to describe dad, Aeroplane mad is the first that springs to mind but also intelligent, curious, inventive, interested and interesting, well informed, technically creative, patient, industrious, active, knowledgeable are just a few. He was very much self-taught and keen to share his knowledge. He was a talented engineer equally at home with woodwork, metalwork, electrics and electronics. He had a lifelong interest in the latest technology from model aircraft to computers. He loved gliding as it fulfilled his boy hood dream of taking to the sky himself.

He was of course a devoted husband, he missed mum so much, they were married for almost 58 years, and he found life difficult without her, since she died in March 2018

To us his family he was a loving, patient and proud dad and grandad. I think his patience wore a bit thin with my inability to grasp the laws of physics for my o level, he loved trying to explain the workings of a four-stroke engine to me. He was still teaching me things in the last few weeks.....cleaning battery deposits with vinegar and instructing me in the art of cutting metal are just a couple of examples!

I think he used my brother, Andy as an excuse to spend time building model cars, boats, aeroplanes and playing with trains. He had an unrivalled knowledge of the best engines, receivers, sources of supplies and anything else anyone needed to know. He used to spend many weekends at Parkway Model Flying Club, launching and crashing his model planes then painstakingly rebuilding them.

He was of course delighted when Andy joined ATC & learnt to glide.

Whilst he was thrilled when Andy followed in his footsteps working at the Co-operative Wholesale Society, he was bursting with pride when he eventually became a pilot.

He was so proud of his grandchildren and famed for his attentive childminding! Alice, my sister-in-law remembers finding the boys wandering dangerously close to the tow ropes at the gliding club – dad's attention drawn to some technical problem elsewhere on the field.

When the boys were young, he & mum enjoyed taking them on holiday as well as child minding duties every week. He was always so interested in the activities of his three grandsons, Rob, Mike and Dave.

Dad came to watch Rob as captain of Whaley Bridge when they won the cup final at Trafford FC. Even though it was bitterly cold, he was determined to stay until the end for the cup presentation. He passed on his DIY skills to Mike, encouraging him to use the multitude of tools in his infamous garage and he indoctrinated Dave into his James Bond obsession - Dave still has the full collection of DVDs.

To then have two gorgeous granddaughters in later life made him so happy. He became familiar with new TV programmes such as 'Say yes to the dress', and watched the girls playing shoe shops with Nana's high heels. He had so much fun in Conway - tinkering with Andy's boat, he particularly enjoyed watching the changing tides on the estuary & spending time with his lovely granddaughters Izzy & Jenny in Llandudno & on our trips to Blackpool.

His love of motor racing is well known and he found a fellow enthusiast in Izzy. They spent many rather noisy hours watching the F1 races & discussing controversial decisions.

Dad has also been supervising Jenny with her nimble fingers build an Airfix model aeroplane, which must have taken him back to his own childhood when this was his passion. Dad's cousin Auntie Joan

recently told me that whenever she & Kath visited my grandma & grandpa they used to ask if they could look at Geoff's aeroplanes; suspended from his bedroom ceiling. They were strictly forbidden to touch them.

Dad has also been so interested in Alice's business, fascinated by the embroidery machines sometimes just sitting & watching them, in order to understand how they work.

Dad was born in Hale in December 1926, the third child to Joseph & Mary Oultram. His sister Barbara was three years older with his brother Roy in between. The family soon moved to Chorlton-cum-Hardy where Dad had a happy childhood and made lifelong friends nearby. Dad's formal education ended when he was 13, due to the War. He was called to manufacture furniture for the war effort due to his outstanding wood & metal work skills.....dad grew up quickly. At 15 he started an apprenticeship at Fairey Aviation and then moved to become an apprentice contracting electrician the next year travelling around the country. We were most surprised when he told us a few weeks ago that he was a pub singer in the Old White Bear at Tingley crossroads.....I think it only paid for his beer as none of us have ever heard him sing!

Dad was conscripted in early 1945 and became a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. After training he was posted to the Middle East and Cyprus, it must have been exciting for an 18 year old from war torn Britain with food shortages & rationing to arrive in the Eastern Mediterranean rich with figs, oranges, dates, sunshine and warm seas.....the day job entailed building electricity pylons, installing bridges, as well as blowing things up. Dad visited many places including Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, he went swimming in the Dead Sea and bathing from the beach at Famagusta.

Dad was in Palestine for almost three years. It was a defining time as his service to his country was incredibly important to him.

It also broadened his horizons. After his service, he completed his apprenticeship and then went to work in the Gulf of Aden with a friend from the Royal Engineers. Essentially it was rather like being back in uniform, working together to bring in power supplies and improve infrastructure.

When Dad came back from Aden in 1955, he started work for CWS and progressed to design & drawing work in the Engineers Office. It was here that he finally plucked up the courage to ask out the Engineering section telephonist Olive. They had such happy times – Dad had a car and they had trips to the seaside, countryside and holidays with friends. Mum & Dad announced their engagement in 1959 in London on a church organised trip and were married at St Paul's in 1960.

Dad was offered a job by a former army colleague at the North West Regional Health Authority where he stayed for many years until his retirement. He was part of a happy team & was still in touch with his close colleagues.

Our retirement present to dad was a supersonic trip on Concorde which he enjoyed so much - Mum was probably keener on the champagne and canapes, but they both had great fun.

For dad retirement brought many opportunities, he certainly wasn't bored.

He spent a lot more time gliding, a hobby he had taken up aged 60 at North Staffordshire Gliding Club, his proudest achievement being his five-hour flight at Morridge. As Chairman he helped oversee the successful move down to Seighford to secure more flying hours. He made many great friends there.

Mum and Dad also travelled extensively to Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the US - Dad usually managed to visit at least one gliding club wherever he went.

Dad spent many hours delving into the history of our family and those of friends. At family get togethers, he produced massive print outs of various branches of the family, with the most amazing recall of all the intricate details. He was also very involved with the computer group at Cheshire Family History Society and gave talks at local events

He volunteered at Sale Register office for an impressive 18 years transferring paper records to digital format and consuming copious amounts of tea & cake. I think he enjoyed the cake as much as the computer work.....he only retired from this career about two and half years ago!

Old age did finally catch up with dad especially after mum died. The family are grateful to all those involved in dad's recent care at MRI, Trafford General, Ascot House, Chapel Rd Clinic, GP's at Firsway & Washway Rd and, of course, Home Instead; without whom he would never have been able to return to Merlyn Avenue last year. Even though he became frustrated by his lack of mobility, he loved meeting the members of his team, learning about their lives and families and finding common interests, it really brightened his days and made it easier for him to accept the help he needed. Thanks to all of you.

Whilst we are all sad at his passing, we know he was ready to go and be with mum again. His was truly a life well lived.