

## **Bill Smith, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1913- 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

Bill, my Dad, was born in Bolton in 1913 and lived there for 91 years.

He was a loving husband to Anne and father to Connie and me as well as being grandfather to six grandchildren and great grandfather of seven.

He had a rich and varied business life in the textile trade, starting off as office boy, becoming production controller and then manager director. Although he had left school at 14 he was encouraged by his half sister Bertha and his Vicar, Mr. Bridgeman, to continue studying at night school. He qualified as a Certified Accountant and as a Chartered Secretary.

As well as working hard he also liked to travel and visited Rhodes, Benidorm and Yugoslavia before the high rise developments of today. In later years he also joined Ralph and me on many of our travels on walking holidays in Europe. He even enjoyed a wet canal boating holiday in France with us and Connie and Gary— although he could no longer drive he enjoyed steering the boat.

Bill was very keen on football and was a supporter of Bolton Wanderers, in fact he seemed to imagine he was actually on the pitch himself whilst watching the matches or when playing with the grandchildren and even great grandchildren.

He was someone who didn't like to be beaten and was very disappointed when he no longer won his games of tennis, table tennis or snooker with the grandchildren as they got older.

He also loved walking in the moors around Bolton and did so regularly with his friends in the Age Concern walking group up until just a month ago. They are not able to be here but describe him as a gentleman, a good example, always willing to listen and a good friend; and they were to him.

He spent many days out with his family and he must have walked to the top of Rivington Pike or around Moss Bank Park, local beauty spots near Bolton, hundreds of times with different grandchildren over the years.

Gardening was a joy to him, he had an allotment with his brother when he retired and his garden at home was an ongoing project that he was very proud of.

But as well as outdoor pursuits he also spent time at home on a new 'hobby'; at the age of 82 he acquired his own personal computer. He wasn't afraid to try out new skills, amongst other things learning how to send emails and, at Age Concern, learning to use Microsoft Publisher.

He also liked to listen to music; he was a choirboy when young and retained a love of classical music which he enjoyed to the end. He knew the words of hymns and prayers and would usually wake up with a hymn in his mind and on his lips. Although he didn't play a musical instrument he could pick out a tune on a mouth organ or penny whistle.

All of his grandchildren will remember entertaining him and our Mother, Anne, with their attempts at amateur dramatics and song compositions and they were always met with a rapturous response which only resulted in yet more 'performances' for him to sit through.

Bill was always interested in and remembered the goings on of everybody in his family and he always had a positive outlook on life, trying to see difficulties more as challenges to overcome. He was a constant source of advice and encouragement for his children and grandchildren in their careers and other aspects of their lives. He told a Bolton friend only a month before he died that he was still enjoying life. Before leaving Bolton on May 29<sup>th</sup>, he phoned or visited to say 'Goodbye' to friends, tutors at the Community College where he was learning Braille and others. He did not expect his health to fail so quickly but when death seemed near he summoned Connie. She joined me and Ralph to care for him, supported by the nursing teams and the meals from the ladies of St Michaels and the prayers of many. So he had a peaceful and dignified passing.