

Warwick Charles Rowbottom

1927-2022

Eulogy



Warwick Charles Rowbottom was born on October 13th 1927 in Rotherham. His parents were John Henry Rowbottom, himself a Yorkshireman, and his wife Beatrice Young from Redditch.

John Henry worked for the Railways. His job had taken him to Redditch for a few years where he met Beatrice and when he moved back to Rotherham Beatrice followed and they married there in July 1920. They lived in a terraced house on the banks of the River Rother, just ½ a mile from Warwick's beloved Rotherham Football Club.

They had all their five children in Rotherham:

- The first, born in 1921 was Irene. She was a typical "oldest child" – sometimes a little sombre and stern until you got to know her.
- Next was Winnie - she was the opposite – full of fun and giggles. She loved the cinema and would often take her little brother Warwick along with her.
- After Winnie came John Henry, Warwick's big brother. Warwick always looked up to John. They would always refer to each other as "Our Kid"! Whilst still in Rotherham although only 15 John worked down the pits looking after the pit ponies.
- Next came Warwick and
- Finally, in 1930, was Barbara. She became a professional dancer and toured the world.



School in the 20's and 30's for all the Rowbottom children was at Alma Road Primary School in Rotherham where Warwick did well; his brother always called him the clever one!

In the summer of 39, when Warwick was 12, they left Rotherham and moved south to Redditch, his mother's home town, to Marston Road. Beatrice was one of 18 children so there were many aunts and uncles and cousins in Redditch as well as grandparents George and Agnes Young – Warwick always referred to Agnes as "The Old Battle Axe"! Quite a formidable lady evidently but granddad George was very meek and mild!

Even though Warwick lived just 12 years in Yorkshire and 82 in Redditch he kept his Yorkshire accent all his life. You can take the boy out of Yorkshire but you cannot take the Yorkshire out of the boy!

War was starting and Warwick was in his early teens so he went to school in Redditch for a couple of years before joining the Batteries, following his brother John who also worked there before joining the army and going to Burma.

Whilst at the Batteries, Warwick went to night school and passed his engineering exams. Over the years he progressed at the Batteries from apprentice, to being in charge of the tool room, to works engineer and finally site safety manager. In total he worked at the Batteries for over 45 years.

But life in Redditch wasn't all work and in the late 40's Warwick met a young lady at the Youth Club by the name of Barbara Browning. Warwick was immediately smitten, which was no surprise as Barbara was a real stunner. She was also a county level swimmer which was ironic as Warwick never swam a stroke in his life!



Nonetheless their courtship progressed and on June 14th 1952 they were married right here in St Stephens.

Home for Warwick and Barbara after the wedding was at 12 Oakley Road where they lived for some 15 years. It was a typical Victorian terraced house that must have been a real challenge to live in. It's no longer there – it's now the bus station!

But, Barbara Browning wasn't the only love of Warwick's life! Barbara's own father, the lovely Harold Browning, had introduced Warwick to another lifelong passion – The Bridley Moor and Batchley Social Club! Harold was a committee member and Warwick would go on to follow him onto the committee and was Treasurer for some 50 years or more.

The Club was a huge part of his life. Most evenings would see him working in his club office followed by a drink in the bar with his friends. Even when no longer a committee member, he enjoyed playing on the club's Crib team right into his 90's. Many of his best friends were from the club and the club will always be grateful to Warwick.



Back home in Oakley Road Warwick and Barbara became parents when Lynette was born in 1954 and then again when Stephen arrived in 1958. Warwick was hugely proud of both of them. Both did well at school, Stephen studied accountancy and Lynette went on to University to study medicine and became a doctor.

Lynette married me, Steve in 1979 here at St Stephens and Stephen married Linda in 1982 at St Lukes. Warwick became a grandfather in 1989 when Jamie was born followed quickly by Seb and two years later Helena and Tom.

Barbara and Warwick spent a lot of time with all of their grandchildren who all think the world of them. Jamie and Tom lived nearby so were often round but Barbara and Warwick also came down to Berkshire on a regular basis to look after our children Seb and Helena so they saw lots of them too. He was so interested in everything they all four of them did!



But apart from Barbara, his family, the Batteries and the Social Club, what else did Warwick love?

Warwick loved Rotherham. For his 93rd birthday he got a wonderful illustrated book about Rotherham which he loved. His memory was perfect - he recognised all the places in it and took

great joy in telling us all about them. The Minster – The River Don – his house and the shop next door.

Warwick loved sport. Cricket was his first love. He played for the Alkomatic Cricket team alongside brother John - representing the Batteries and Hymatic. But he also loved football and excelled at table tennis winning many competitions.



After his playing days were over he loved watching sport and supporting Man U or even Birmingham and Reading but for sure his first love, Rotherham FC. He was thrilled when Seb took him to Wembley for Rotherham's play-off finals in 2014 and 2018. The place was packed with Rotherham supporters – as Seb said later, “Dad, it was amazing. The whole of Wembley sounded like Granddad!”.

Warwick loved music, dancing, reading and films – his love of movies came from those trips with Winnie but he also loved classical music and opera and you'd always hear him singing in the bathroom! He liked poetry – the Charge of the Light Brigade was a favourite. He loved detective stories - Vera and Hercule Poirot especially.

Warwick loved his food. He had an excellent appetite and without doubt his favourite was Fish and Chips or maybe Vanilla ice cream and most definitely chocolate! When we took him out we never needed to ask what he wanted!

Warwick loved having his picture taken and would always have a huge smile on his face. When Lynette and I got our wedding photos back, Warwick was on all of them – the Rowbottom family, the Browning family, the Powers family and the Haycock family! All of them! He was even with our friends from Uni!

Warwick and Barbara bought their own house 50 years ago in Woodend Close and were blessed with amazing neighbours. Alex and Reg up the road with Alex's wonderful cakes, Linda opposite and especially June and Tim next door who popped round most days. Like Warwick, June came from Rotherham and Warwick always said it was amazing she spoke to him at all as he came from the rough end of Rotherham whilst June, as we all can tell, came from the posh side!

I know Warwick would want to thank all of them, but also he was so grateful to Stephen for calling in every day, often with Linda, to Lynette for the medical advice, even though he ignored it, to all his and Barbara's friends and families for being there for them both and to Wendy who they loved seeing. But most of all, of course, to the real love of his life, to Barbara. Who sadly can't be here today but who we know will be thinking of Warwick.

As we said, Warwick always had a smile on his face. Even in hospital as he lay fast asleep towards the end, every now and then the famous Warwick Rowbottom smile would appear. We can only guess what he was dreaming about:

- Had he just scored the winning goal for Rotherham or hit a six for England?
- Was he back at Wembley with Seb or in Cardiff seeing Lynette become a doctor?
- Or maybe with Jamie and Tom on one of those many Wednesday nature walks?
- Was it when Stephen brought Linda home for the first time?
- Or remembering that sneaky preview Lynette gave him of Helena in her wedding dress?
- Or stood right here, on this very spot, some 70 years ago with Barbara at his side?

Or are we being too sentimental? With a smile that big it could only mean one thing! Warwick was tucking into his favourite dish – fish and chips followed by Vanilla Ice Cream.

Whatever it was – like always, he had that smile on his face!

Warwick. You've played a long and a brilliant innings, but eventually even you felt the time was right to declare.

God bless you and thank you from us all. As John Henry, both Warwick's dad and his big brother, would have said, "Well played our kid

