

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF DENIS' LIFE.**

**Denis was a highland man, born in Helmsdale, a very small fishing village on the north east coast of Scotland on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1931. He was one of four children, having two brothers, David and Roy and a sister, Isobel. His parents had four children under the age of five – quite a challenge! He said he had a wonderfully happy childhood, not a lot of frills, but he often talked about the picnics on the beach which was just a stone's throw away from his home. During the war there were hardships, but his parents overcame these, as did lots of parents throughout the country.**

**Denis left Helmsdale when he was sixteen to find fame and fortune, and possibly a wife! More accurately, his reason was to get himself an apprenticeship and he was given an opportunity to go to Glasgow where he could train to be an armature winder. It was not easy for him because he lived in digs and a youth hostel for five years, with very little money to do anything. He told me that he often had to walk a couple of miles to work because he couldn't afford the bus fare. However, he duly qualified as an electrician and worked in John Brown's shipyard for two years before crossing the border and coming to England in 1955. He was appointed junior commercial assistant for Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board and during the following few years he went to night school to gain his degree in electrical engineering and subsequently became a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers. He had several different management positions in Manweb and gradually worked his way up the ladder to become a Board Member and Director of Engineering in 1986. Not bad for a little boy from a fishing village in the far north of Scotland.**

**Denis and I met at the Rialto ballroom in Liverpool in 1958 when I was at Liverpool Royal Infirmary training to become a state registered nurse. In those days we had to live in the nursing home for four years, so the Rialto was our local dance hall. I remember it well because he was wearing a suit with a waistcoat and brogues!!! He said, “May I have this dance please” and then promptly stamped all over my feet and apologised, saying “I’m sorry, I’m afraid I can’t dance”. An understatement to say the least! He did redeem himself by taking me back to the nurse’s home in a taxi whilst my fellow nurses had to walk! The rest is history for we became engaged a year later and married in October 1961.**

**We lived in a flat in Widnes for two years whilst Denis was working in that area and subsequently moved to a house in Huyton, which at that time was a lovely country village. Our two boys, Robin and David, were born there in 1964 and 1966. We moved to Kingsley in 1969 when Manweb head office was moved to Chester and Denis was working there. We just loved Kingsley and made some wonderful friends whilst the boys were growing up. A lot of you will be here today and have shared with us all the fun times we had, especially at Carnival time. Kingsley is still a very special place for me and full of wonderful friends who have been so supportive over the past few years whilst Denis’ health had been failing.**

**However, because we wanted a bit more space for Denis’ workshop, and more garden for me and the boys, we moved to Frodsham forty years ago and have really enjoyed living in our lovely house, although it was certainly not in good condition when we came here! Over many years Denis made it a very special place with all his superb DIY skills and together we made it the home it is today. This was not without many a mishap though, because he sustained lots of injuries whilst doing so, and I had to keep the first aid box ready at all times, as many of you will know.**

**Denis was quite a strict father, especially when it came to doing homework, and you'll hear more about that in Robin and David's reminiscences shortly. He was, however, a very good father and excellent at teaching the boys how to do things and never pushed them away in order to get the job done more quickly. They both helped a great deal with all kinds of building projects when we moved to Frodsham. Hence, I now have two wonderful sons who can turn their hands to anything.**

**Denis and I have been so fortunate. He retired 26 years ago and during that time he was able to spend lots of time in his workshop, doing goodness knows what but also doing some woodturning, and yet more DIY. We had some wonderful holidays together and he very much enjoyed his sailing holidays around the UK and much farther afield with his friends at least twice a year.**

**And so, we now come here today to say our final goodbye to Denis. His last few years were challenging for him and the boys and myself, but we did our best and he knew that we did. Latterly we needed a bit of help and this was provided by some wonderful carers who not only treated him with dignity but even managed to share a joke or two or get him to sing on the odd occasion! There will be a big gap in our lives now, but we will have lots of memories to share with family and friends. Since he became ill this last time, just a few weeks ago, we have two new little Farquhars in our family, our great grandchildren. Fletcher, born to Adam and Jade, and Alice, born to Matthew and Allana. We also have a great nephew Zachary, born to Keren and Graham.**

**How lovely is that.**