

Patrick Frederick Frank Ettie

Our father, Patrick Frederick Frank Ettie was born on St Patrick's Day in 1917 and named Patrick at the insistence of an Irish neighbour who thought that doing so would bring him good luck.

Without doubt the greatest tragedy of his life was the death our grandfather forcing his placement, at the age of 4, into care and separation from a mother, with whom he will now be laid to rest, and whom he loved until his dying day.

Politically he was an old fashioned socialist who struggled to reconcile himself with the politics of New Labour.

As a national officer of his union he was always prepared to champion the cause of the underdog, most of this activity being addressed to the needs of others and rarely, if ever, benefiting him.

Apart from the loss that we his family will feel, dad's passing will impact the world in many ways.

The whisky industry from whose product he took great enjoyment will suffer loss of business (although I will do my best to compensate) whilst the world's forests will doubtless benefit from the absence of his almost endless letter writing with the shareholders of Camelot seeing their weekly funds diminish considerably.

Recipients of dad's missives included the Prime Ministers of both the UK and Ireland, Gordon Brown and Gosport's local MP with subjects ranging from the resolution of the Middle East and Irish problems, the fate of Saddam Hussein and his pension entitlement (dad's that is not Saddam's).

During the 2nd World War father's naval career saw him involved in the sinking of the Bismarck.

He was, I believe, motivated more by his sense of duty during the course of that action, than hatred of the enemy.

He always regretted that so many of the crew of the Bismarck were left, through force of circumstance, to die in the cold waters of the Atlantic.

In 2001 he travelled to Hamburg to meet his former foes in friendship and gratitude for the lives they had jointly been spared to enjoy.

In his mind father was fluent in French, Italian and Arabic, a talent that he enjoyed sharing randomly with the family, we should put "J'attendrai" on his headstone.

Throughout his life a keen Horticulturist, in his later years, his ability to maintain his allotment declined, but despite it more closely resembling a nature reserve he still took pleasure from the limited harvest it produced.

With dads passing our family nears the end of a generation which, whatever their failings, found the courage and fortitude to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today, we should be forever grateful for that.

In light of fathers late found enthusiasm for Karaoke I hope that if angels truly raise their voices in heaven that the words are displayed on a video screen with ear protectors available on request.

Grazie mille papa, thank you for our lives, God bless you