

Richard Lumley - Eulogy

This eulogy is in the form of a letter to my young children. Over the years they will no doubt ask questions about daddy, as they got so little time with him and all they can do, is get to know him a little through the memories of others.

When my children ask: tell us a little about Daddy's life?

Well, Daddy was born in Newcastle Upon Tyne. He was a surprise baby to a 45 year old mum and 65 year old dad. He had a 15 year old sister and a 17 year old brother. He had an idyllic childhood:

Holidaying with his parents around the country in the family caravan.

Playing with his beloved dog Whiskey.

Playing football and swimming with his dad.

Ice skating and cycling with friends.

Surrounded by his loving extended family.

Adored by his older siblings.

Daddy became an uncle at the age of 3. He lived with his nephew Peter for about 5 years and was thrilled to have a playmate in the house, as his siblings were older and had left home. Eventually Peter moved away, and Daddy often became tearful when he talked about losing him. Daddy and Peter were so close, that he never stopped grieving the loss.

Daddy went to a **primary school** where his dad was the headmaster. Then got a scholarship to a grammar school. He did sociology at the **university** of Sheffield for one year, but didn't like it, so decided to study geography instead. After university, he then worked as a quantity surveyor for most of his life. During the last 8 years or so, he worked as an IT manager.

Daddy got himself not one, but 2 wives. Not both at the same time, of course. He met his first wife at a university ball. It seemed love at first sight, resulting in living together and marriage. However, after about 10 years together, they began to drift apart and eventually divorced, but remained friends – until mummy came on the scene in 1992.

Mummy and Daddy spent 30 years together. Mummy had only been in the country for a couple of months when she met Daddy. It's largely thanks to him that mummy quickly learned English and plucked up the courage to apply to university. Daddy was a very supportive husband – taking Donny to Legoland, playground etc. when mummy was studying or working; teaching mummy to use a computer or to drive, and often helping her family as well – such as sending money to her dad to get a book published after the war in Kosova. Daddy took great care of you and mummy – cooking, fixing things, playing...

Daddy worked as a surveyor for 6 companies, including Debenhams for 11 years and Levolut 16 years. In both these companies, colleagues quickly found out that Daddy loved IT and was very good at it. His friend, Keith Wood told me that Debenhams had spent a lot of money on a software tool to manage dozens of new-build and refurbishment projects. Over a few months, Daddy completely re-wrote the whole programme to make the reports much more relevant and helpful. Daddy was not officially asked to do this and he did it alongside his day job.

About 8 years ago, in Levolut, Daddy again spent 2 years developing various IT tools to manage the business – again in addition to his day-to-day workload. This was an enormous undertaking, and involved working until midnight or later on countless occasions. It was not until 6 years later that he got some sort of recognition for this work, when most of his colleagues were made redundant, but Daddy was not, because – in his manager’s words: the company would not be viable without Richard.

Countless of Daddy’s colleagues say that everywhere he worked, he was a key member of the team, the go-to person on lots of things, a great problem-solver – and always going out of his way to help others.

When my children ask: What was Daddy like? What did he love doing?

Daddy loved DIY. His dream was to build his own house from scratch. He kind of part -built several houses. He built 2 kitchens, a log cabin, a tree house – and lots and lots of furniture. He usually did all the plumbing, much of the electrical work, plastering, wallpapering, gardening. He had a lot of tools and was happy to have a go at anything.

Daddy loved IT. Without any IT training, he developed advanced IT skills and became an IT manager, developing sophisticated bespoke programmes for work.

Daddy loved maths. He was able to do complex maths with ease and enjoyed applying maths to everyday life and to solve puzzles for fun. His love of maths was infectious and inspired Donny to do 2 A levels in maths.

Daddy loved history. Daddy’s daddy flew a plane in the first world war, and drove an ambulance during the second world war – so history was important to the family. When Daddy was not watching comedy or sport, he was usually watching the history channel.

Daddy loved sport. He played rugby for a long time, sustaining many injuries, some of which never healed fully. He was a member of the five a side football team at Debenhams, and as a goalkeeper, he was instantly given the name “The Cat”. Daddy loved golf and was so good at it that he might have become a professional golfer, had his mum not insisted that he did a degree first, to fall back on.

Daddy loved running. Mummy decided to go running with him once, but despite being a lot younger than him, she was not able to keep up with him, so did not join him again.

Daddy loved volunteering. He chaired the Parents Association at Dr Challoner’s High School for 4 years. He successfully led a large number of activities and put in so much effort and his own money, that it felt like another full time job, on top of his day job. Daddy also was a business adviser for the Young Enterprise at Dr Challoner’s. He loved helping students learn new skills and build confidence and beamed with pride when they did well, as though they were his own children.

Daddy was itching to volunteer regularly at guides and beavers, but mummy was needing help at home – juggling a full time job and young children. Daddy always went out of his way to help family members, friends, neighbours.

Daddy loved languages. His French was good. And as soon as he met mummy, he started learning Albanian. Mummy's family already adored Daddy for various reasons: they liked the way he took such good care of his family, had amazing DIY skills and was happy to do housework or change nappies. They liked him even more because he made the effort to communicate with them in their own language. They were always on his side when mummy tried to trick him into saying something rude or mean in Albanian.

Daddy loved justice and fairness. He organised a massive petition requesting NATO intervention in Kosova, when mummy's house and her entire country were being systematically bombed by the Serbs.

Daddy valued everyone, regardless of their background. Daddy respected rules and seemed to be physically incapable of ever breaking them. On one occasion, at a parent race at Donny's school, every parent cheated by firmly holding the bean bag on their head with both hands. Daddy kept his hands well out of the way. Needless to say the bean bag fell off his head many times and Daddy came last. At Pick Your Own farms, he could not be persuaded to eat a single strawberry, until after he had paid for them.

When my children ask: What will we miss most about Daddy?

Among many, many things, Mummy will miss talking to Daddy about you: all the fun and amazing things you do. She will miss his reassuring voice when she worries about things.

We will all miss those frequent days out - up and down the country when we were all together - **all five of us** - in the car, listening to music and singing along, travelling somewhere fun, chatting, joking – blissful family time!

Donny will miss the banter, chats about anything and everything - having a drink, a laugh, a beer together late at night – precious father and daughter time. Her heart will ache for him on her wedding day, and she will be sad that he will never hold her babies.

Lumi will miss playing football and hockey with Daddy every day in the garden. He will miss long Daddy cuddles with marathon bed-time stories; Daddy taking him to school and to ice hockey. He will miss chatting to Daddy about many random things that he always seemed to know so much about.

Diell will miss Daddy cuddles, climbing on Daddy, playing bowling, cars, bath time, football... And all those incredibly sophisticated train tracks and car tracks that Daddy was so good at constructing.

And if my children ever ask: did Daddy love us?

I will say: let's get the photos out and see. Look at these photos of each of you with Daddy. Look at his face beaming with pride. Look at his eyes – glinting and smiling with pure happiness – as he holds your hand, swims with you, plays football with you, reads you stories, teaches you to ride a bike, carries you around zoos, theatres, playgrounds, airports...Daddy adored you all!

No matter how tired he was, often working 15 hours a day, he always said yes, if you asked to play football, hockey, Lego, trains, marbles.

Look at Daddy's arms around you – squeezing you tight and planting kisses on your hair, on your cheeks, on your feet....

Daddy loved you more than anything in the entire world!