

Becky asked me if I wanted to write a few words about Roger, her dad, which has proved difficult because so many people knew him personally or by reading his very comprehensive 'lifetime' blog, so it is difficult to write something new. Here goes, being the same age, we coincidentally started life in a similar fashion, Roger being bombed in Birmingham and me in Bristol. It appears that Rogers first job was in the Work Study office at Clarks shoe factory in Street Somerset, which is where I also first started work, but we never met that I remember.

As keen cavers our paths did finally cross at the Hunters Lodge, which in the caving world is probably the most famous pub in the world. In the 50's and 60's Roger played the piano in what is now the lounge of the pub and cavers from near and far sang songs with 'They Words' as the then landlord described them. I think it is fair to say that during those times a lot of beer was drunk at the Hunters and most of the caving huts on Mendip with Roger in the thick of it. Later of course Roger joined the Grampian Speleological Group in Edinburgh where he took his musical ability and knowledge of caving songs, which later became a feature at a lot of club dinners.

We were also keen hill walkers, adventurers and keen to explore new places. We planned several trips to the Dolomites in Italy where we successfully walked the Alta Via Uno (AV1) staying in mountain huts at night. Some years later we unsuccessfully attempted the AV2, a similar mountain walk but it snowed in the middle of June and walking became impossible. Staying at Lake Garda there was compensation for not completing the walk, indulging in another of Rogers passions, Italian food and wine.

I think it is fair to say that Roger could be difficult at times but we developed a long-standing friendship which has stood the test of time. We visited and stayed with Roger and Sue many times in Edinburgh quite often at the time of the Grampian club dinners and other events. We also spent weekends in South Petherton, taking bike rides to Dinnington Docks pub for various Fetes and famously for Burns Night celebration. Roger also organised a short break holiday for us all in Palma Mallorca, which he aptly named, 'Palmer's Piss-up in Palma', and of course it was.

Roger and Sue were generous hosts for everyone, good company and without which those here today might not have met each other. They will always be remembered.

Michael Palmer

18th of July 2024