

On behalf of all the Heathcote family, thank you so much for being here today to both remember and celebrate Martin's life. Martin always looked on the bright side of life, loved company – be it family, friends or colleagues, enjoyed life, was driven by a strong work ethic and maintained a deep faith.

His sense of responsibility started early. As a result of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, his Father - John - joined the army and was posted to Scotland. Martin remained in Stockport where he was brought up by his mother until John returned from the war. Martin's education mattered enormously to John. He credited John for instilling a strong work ethic and the desire and motivation to succeed in life. He got an exhibition to Sheffield University where he read Electrical Engineering. It was at a university dance in 1956 that he met a 16 year old Penny Geoghegan who had been dragged along by her friend Carol to her first dance.

There are many lovely courting stories, across the Pennines in the snow on an Aerial motor cycle, baby sitting Penny's three younger brothers and sister . . . and so it was on September 14th 1963 at Mother of God Catholic Church in Sheffield that Martin married Penny. Their honeymoon was spent in Coverack, Cornwall. Whilst the rest of the country basked in unseasonable warm weather, it rained for an entire week in Cornwall . . . Perhaps an early glimpse of future holiday life for the Heathcote family!

Following university Martin began working for Ferranti as a graduate apprentice where he started far more than his career – meeting friends who would guide, support and shape his values for the rest of his life. He was pleased to secure a new job at the Central Electricity Generating Board, the CEGB, moving to a house in Much Wenlock, Shropshire, where their first child Catherine was born. Stephen arrived three years later following a move to Anglesey – where Catherine for a short time became quite fluent in Welsh. The journey to work provided an illicit race track for the green Ford Capri (yes –

really!) although Martin was somewhat rankled to be squarely beaten by a Reliant Robin on one occasion. A very short spell in Morecombe then followed. Martin and Penny lived in a lovely house backing onto the canal. Friends and colleagues bought boats, Penny and Martin also splashed out – on a canoe! The canoe took to the canal on occasions and even went round Lake Windermere once. Stephen still has a vivid memory of his Father rolling the canoe and getting stuck – of course he did eventually pop back up with a huge smile on his face - leaving Stephen with a lifelong fear of boats!

The family lived in Cheltenham until 1990 when the privatisation of the CEGB sent Martin to Solihull, only to be made redundant almost immediately. Penny, Catherine and Stephen have many fond family memories of their time in Cheltenham.

So it was at the age of 53 when anyone else might have pulled on the carpet slippers and slipped comfortably into premature retirement that Martin launched his own company with Penny as Company Secretary. Martin Heathcote Associates Limited was born. (The redundancy package also facilitated a trip to Australia and the purchase of a primrose yellow, series 3 V12 jaguar E-Type). Yes, he was passionate about the comforts of life but also passionate that every job and every report would be completed to the highest standard. Not surprisingly word-of-mouth alone soon led to a rapid expansion of his new business venture.

Martin's passport bears witness to the remarkable success of Martin Heathcote Associates. He and his Associates travelled widely in Europe, to Indonesia, the United States, Australia, China, New Zealand, India. . . overseeing the construction, testing and installation of transformers. He acted as an expert witness in transformer disputes and became a published author. He was asked at a conference by a Chinese delegate clutching a copy of J&P Transformers (translated into Chinese!) whether he was *the* Martin Heathcote and he had to admit, somewhat bashfully, that he was indeed.

He always said he never wanted to retire – he viewed it as a great privilege to be working, meeting people and delivering real value. He never stopped – and he never wanted to.

This then the professional Martin, but what of the out-of-hours Martin, what of his leisure time, what else did he enjoy? For many years a large model aircraft hung in various Heathcote garages – which Catherine and Stephen used to gaze at in awe. There is a beautifully made and strung tennis racket barely five inches tall on an upstairs window sill. And then there's the red, wooden number two train made for a second birthday many years ago that Jessica now asks to play with when she comes to visit. Martin was very good with his hands. Catherine and Stephen's practical school projects were always top prize winners (of course! Because of Martin's helping hand . . .) His mother taught him to knit and sew. He has made many pairs of curtains over the years and re-covered several suites. Penny's wedding dress enjoyed a number of resurrections, variously as a fairy costume (which Martin wore, he was quite a thespian in his younger days) and as a dress for Queen Elizabeth II on her silver jubilee, and later even as a costume for King Charles II and the long black curls were Martin's own too. The beard was a later addition, the result of chicken pox caught from his children one Christmas.

Martin was clearly a confident and bold man – Catherine and Stephen both remember their Father proudly walking around the house in his classic string vest and even mowing the lawn with it on! Idiosyncratic or a trend setter, was Martin the only person still drinking loose leaf tea?

Martin took every opportunity to take on new challenges – he spent many hours in the air above the surrounding Cotswold countryside as a qualified glider pilot. He was passionate about maintaining his fitness and was very competitive on the squash court for many years. Fair weather would see him cycling the ten or so miles to work between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Christmases always brought the tradition of Handel's Messiah. Martin was dedicated music lover and Martin and Penny made regular visits to Symphony Hall. They would always go to a Messiah every year. When the CD was playing at home Martin would always be singing along, he knew it completely by heart, along with Carmina Burana, Eugene Onegin, the Carnival of the Animals, Beethoven's Choral

Symphony to name but a few. Catherine and Stephen weren't just treated to nursery rhymes as they grew up but Flanders and Swan, Gilbert and Sullivan and a rendition of 'Blow the Wind Southerly' that would rival any by Kathleen Ferrier or Joan Sutherland. Stephen has kept these songs alive with his children who are often treated to a verse of – "Mud, mud, glorious mud / Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood."

Martin and Penny enjoyed visiting Scotland particularly for Christmas celebrations with their daughter-in-laws family.

Martin loved to talk to all the family and was in his element with over 30 family members attending Christmas dinner each year. He loved chatting to everyone in the family – sharing stories and advice. Martin would take to the stage once more – this time as Father Christmas in full disguise handing out presents to all the children in the family. He stuck to the part even with Jessica shouting - its granddad, its granddad everybody! – at the top of her voice.

Martin was also always a keen and prolific amateur photographer. His subjects were many and various, as were his lenses. The family slide shows were eagerly anticipated by all the Heathcote family – including the cats! His ability behind the lens was confirmed with a 'best in show' trophy for one of his photographs, entered in the Barnwood CEGB Annual Photographic Competition.

Which brings us to his greatest passion of late - cars, classic cars and most particularly - Jaguars. The house in Cheltenham had a three-car garage (which Martin built) complete with welding kit and inspection pit (home to the odd toad and hedgehog from time to time). At one point there were two Jaguars (a Mark II requiring a new clutch and a red XK 150) three Morris Minors in various states of (dis)repair and two Cortinas. Both Catherine and Stephen benefited from the kudos generated from their Father picking them up in a Jaguar Mark II – although Stephen did tell all his friends it was a Rolls Royce!

Sadly with the move to Solihull the fleet had to be temporarily disbanded. But with the clutch restored on the Mark II, the addition of the E-Type, an S-type (which was later replaced by an XF) and an XK there followed rallies and trips to Geneva, Le Mans, Silverstone, Goodwood, (he and Penny

dressed appropriately for the Revival) Prescott, Weekends Of The Year (WOTYs) all over England and Ireland. Isabelle now seems to have caught the Jaguar bug after a few trips in Granddad's XF – so let's hope the Heathcote passion continues for another few generations to come!

Following a discussion with Father Louis along the lines of 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a man with three jaguars to enter the gates of Heaven . . .'

Martin was reassured that 'anything is possible for God.'

Which brings us to Martin's remarkable faith, a faith shared with Penny. Together Martin and Penny went on many pilgrimages including visits to: the Holy Land, Lourdes, Fatima, Assisi, Oberammergau, Santiago de Compostela, Venice and Padua. Martin and Penny were/are active members of Our Lady of the Wayside Church and Martin was Chairman of Governors at the school for some years. Both were extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and took communion to the sick and housebound regularly.

To each of us Martin was special in one or many particular ways. A respected counsellor, a loyal and engaging friend, a passionate, professional work colleague, a very dear inspiring father and a delighted, fun and extremely proud grandfather and of course - and most importantly - a husband and companion for life to Penny. For each of us, he leaves a legacy; perhaps some advice or memory that will live on in our lives. Martin always looked on the bright side of life, always positive, even when faced with the worst, and that is what he would want us to do today. Looking ahead – being the best we can be. What a fantastic legacy! Martin, we will miss you enormously and remember you always!