

## **EULOGY – John Patrick Kane**

First I want to say what an honour it is to give the Eulogy for John Patrick Kane, a great man, a hardworking man, a religious man, a generous man but a humble man. A Loyal husband and an inspiration of a father, and I hope to cover all these points with this Eulogy.

Let's start with his childhood:

Dad was born in Ireland into a poor rural family; Dad was one of 6. Although times were hard, he never complained, on the contrary often talked fondly about those times, I remember some of his recollections – he talked about walking to school with no shoes, how their mother would rap a bit of food in some paper for their school lunch, but they would have it ate by the time they reached the end of the lane. If they were lucky they would get a real egg for Easter never mind a chocolate one. But also good times, when a pig would be slaughtered and after much of the meat had been salted there would be a great feast and party, and the neighbours would be invited around. And in turn when the neighbours slaughtered their pig, Dad's family would be invited around.

Dad always said he was no good at school and that is why the teacher would always send him out to get the teacher's daily booze!!, I think it was poor teaching because later on in life dad went to night school to learn several trades including brick laying and carpentry.

But such was schooling in 1930s Ireland, one story that I like was that in the winter each child would bring a turf to heat the class room, try telling that to the young ones today.

When dad was 16 he left his home to work on a farm in the north, this was fairly common, money could be made and sent back home, but again the work and conditions were hard, there was no spare room in the farmhouse, so dad had to sleep in a drafty barn! Can you imagine that in the middle of a Northern Ireland Winter? But such was Dad's charm that one of the farmer sons, Phil Stewart, decided to share this sumptuous accommodation. Despite all the hardships dad only spoke of happy times, playing in a band, and going to dances, cycling around the local towns, he made some lifelong friends there.

One of them was Frank Collins, who went to England first and then enticed dad over with tales of great money to be earned. It reminds me of that wonderful song "the mountains of Moher".

So it was that Dad came to England where he soon found work, and that work took him around the country until one day in 1957, in the lovely city of Norwich he met our beautiful mum and was swept of his feet.

Two days before his 30 birthday they got married in March 1959.

It was a typical marriage of those days, the man went out to work to bring home the money and mum stayed at home, raised the kids, cleaned the house, did the shopping, did the cooking, washed the clothes and many other jobs besides, no wonder he stayed away! But Dad was always grateful for the work mum done and always reminded us kids of it.

One thing that dad liked was nicknames; it may be because he sometimes forgot our real names!

His nickname for mum was Main Stay – and this was so true, she was the lynch pin the corner stone, somehow kept the whole thing going. I was never sure mum liked her nickname but I think it was, and still is appropriate.

It is 1960 and JFK comes to the White House and in June 1960 Kevin comes into the world, his nicknames were Mulligan – never knew why, but one didn't question, and Heavy Metal, which made more sense as he worked as a steel fabricator.

I have asked each of my brothers and sisters to give me a quick story, memory or anecdote about dad.

Kevin's thoughts - Well the mighty punter has gone to meet his maker. When I was young my father always told me I was the favourite, it wasn't until I was a lot older I found out he said that all his children. Let's hope that he finds that crock of gold at the end of the rainbow lots of love.

It is now 1960 and Yuri Gagarin is the first man in space and in May 1961 Carolyn is the first girl in the family – Her nickname was Big Penelope, again don't ask me why.

We were recently watching a video of dad's retirement from the East London Housing Association, and there is wonderful speech from Carolyn that I would like to repeat here

*Dad is such a wonderful guy, he always thinks of other people before himself, he helps everyone nothing too much trouble for him, he is very proud of his family love you dad.*

It is now 1962 and the Beatles enter the charts for the first time, and mum and dad enter 21 Gordon Road for the first time and in December 1962 baby David joins them— AKA the Patriot snake of Blackfen – I think this was down to our difference of opinions during our many ecclesiastical conversation.

A memory I would like to share: I said at the start that dad was generous, but not just in money but also in praise. Dad always thought the best of people. He would always say he's good mad, he's a great person be it someone on TV, a friend of his, or friend of ours always positive stuff, and to be honest I was getting a bit fed up with this. So one day after he pronounce yet another person to be a great man I said, "dad is there no one in the world you don't like", he thought for a while, and then said no, I can't think of anyone, its a shame more people aren't like me.

It is now 1964 and the Great Train Robbers get 30 years and in September 1964 a little package named Debbie arrived, which mum and dad got for life. She was nicknamed small Penelope, that one I get, Big Penelope then small Penelope.

Debbie's story: when dad use to give pocket money he use to put money in both hands behind his back and asked you to choose, but he always gave the one with more money in it.

It is now 1966, West Ham were about to win the world cup, and in May Mum and Dad scored another great achievement with the birth of John. His nickname was the Croke Park Kiddy, as a child he played a match of Gaelic Football at that stadium before an All-Ireland Final, Dad was very proud.

John's memory - When I was young and fit, I was relatively good at most sports. Dad would come along and watch, when he could. However, when my

mother suggested that I play Gaelic Football, this obviously meant a great deal more to Dad. Dad would never miss a game; I could see the sense of pride in his face when we played across the UK and Ireland. I feel blessed that I was able to give back just a small something to Dad as he made so many sacrifices to make my life and that of all our family, comfortable and fulfilling.

It is now 1968 and Apollo 8, is the first mission to leave earth and return, and in September 1968 Mum and Dad have their final splash down with Andy. His Nickname was Pan Am, don't ask me why.

Andy's memory is to do with Matchbox toy cars in the paper shop at Avery Hill:

"I'd try and get Dad in the shop to buy me one. When he said no I'd grab him by the hand and say 'Lets just go in a have a look', we won't buy today, we will just look. Once inside the shop Dad couldn't resist and always bought me one.

Dad did of course have another son, no scandal here; it is of course Deepak, the 5<sup>th</sup> son. These guys had a special bond; I think it is because they both came to the UK as immigrants leaving their family and friends behind. Dad made Deepak feel so welcome into the family and helped him find his feet in the UK – towards the end, Dad always had an extra big smile when Deepak visited.

Mum and Dad have 10 grandchildren, and you will be please to know I am not going to go through individual stories here, suffice to say he was a great Granddad, and a good babysitter, accept perhaps the "Sneaky sneakies", this is where the children would be allowed back down after going to bed to have some biscuits – "Sneaky sneakies" were very popular.

He always tried to make them laugh and Debbie told me a story that when he looked after Kane he would often pretend to put his shoes on the wrong feet to make Kane laugh.

What were Dad's hobbies?

I would say Working, Working, and if there was no work then horse racing followed again by working.

You can imagine that there was plenty of hard work on the farm during his childhood, one story I remember him telling me was how he would walk up to the local village of Drumlish, sit at the cross road and sell turf to the passers-by,

fine in good weather but not so good in the lashing rain, and he wouldn't be expected to return until he had sold it all.

I mentioned earlier that dad worked in the North, and the time came when he thought he would try his hand across the water, so he gave his notice. The farmer determined to keep dad, made him an offer, if he would stay one more year, he would give dad a field of flax to work on, and all the profits from that field would be dad's in addition to his salary. You would only offer this to good workers.

So it was that Dad ventured over to England to help that country get back on its feet after the war. As ever the work was hard, but the pay was fair. He talked of days when guys on the night shift would come back to the digs, and get into the same bed that the day shift boys had just vacated! Dad did a lot of what they called "tunnel work", this involved concreting the sewer tunnels. Hard bloody work, but plenty of it and well paid. Apart from the hard graft the other downside was that the work would be all over the country, we kids didn't know any better and look forward to seeing him on a Friday evening when he would come with sweets and pocket money.

I never knew Dad to be out of work, in those days you simply went to the pub to find a job, at least that what he told mum.

In 1974 they began work on the Thames Barrier and dad was one of the 4000 men and women who spent the next 8 years building it, Again, as a testament to Dad's hard work and affectedness, he was one of the last 20 men to go when the barrier was handed over to operations.

His next job was as a handyman for the East London Housing Association, a job which he kept up to his retirement at the age of 65. Again as a testament to his professionalism and hard work, they gave him a great send off at his retirement do, where many a complement was paid.

Now you would think it would be time to put his feet up, but no, Brother Kevin now had his own steel fabrication company, and dad would often help out when there was extra work to be done.

He had great imagination, there is a big machine there that can punch holes through thick metal, and you operated it with foot pedals, dad used to call it the sewing machine!

In addition to all this hard work he found time to put two extensions on 21 Gordon Road, and to top it off a loft conversion. Still not content he added a conservatory, he build an extension and a conservatory for Carolyn, a conservatory for Debbie, he helped Kevin with his extension, he helped me with my houses. Not bad for a man that supposedly did not do well at school.

I said one of his hobbies was horse racing and there is a lovely story of a time 30 years ago when he was in Dublin, and picked out 4 horses – and for a change they all came in and he won 1200 Punts. Such was his generosity that he gave the bookmaker a 20 Punt tip, he was with Pat Murphy at the time who almost had a heart attack at the sight of this. Later that evening he took all the Kane's and Murphy's out for a slap up meal at the yellow House and by the time he had given some to mum and Mary Murphy there was very little left for himself.

I said at the start that dad was a humble man, and it is true, but he was always very proud of his 4 tall sons, I think particularly so because he was only 5 foot 3. I remember a time we were at cousin Carmel wedding in Edgers Town, we were there standing around a table as a family group. Dad suddenly sees an old friend – Pat, come over here and say hello to these big sons of mine, this is Kevin, David, John and Andy – then follows the usual comments – will you look at the size of them, who is your milkman etc.etc. Next thing there is a tugging at his sleeve, and it is Carolyn saying what about us! Dad of course roars with laughter "oh yes and a couple of Galas". 10 minutes goes by, and other old friend passes by - Michael, come over here and say hello to these big sons of mine, this is Kevin, you know the rest .... And of course no mentions of the girls, until this time Carolyn yanks his sleeve,

So in conclusion:

Dad always thought when he died that he would see his family again, especially his mother, and it was a firm belief and I always envied him for that and for anyone who has that kind of belief, because it is a great comfort, and I truly hope that is where he is now.

However, I believe that Dad will never truly be dead while he is alive in our hearts and while we still tell the stories of his long and great life.

So I invite each of you to keep dad alive in your hearts. We were each touched by his life and we are better because of that.

I would like to finish by Thanking Father Robert Ellis for that lovely Mass, and all of you who made the effort to attend via Zoom.

We miss you John Patrick Kane, Rest in Peace.