

# Al's pub crawl in aid of veterans

COMEDIAN Al Murray is leading a campaign to help struggling military veterans – by encouraging people to take a sponsored walk to their local.

Al, best known for his Pub Landlord character, will be joined by historian James Holland for Walking With The Wounded's 'Walking Home For Christmas' campaign.

They want people to join in from December 10 to December 20.

Participants can also submit military jokes to be read out on the duo's podcast, which is called We Have Ways Of Making You Talk.

Al said: "A sponsored walk will help in raising money for ex-military and their families dealing with mental health issues that have been even more challenging, with the strange Covid-19 times we find ourselves in."

More than 1,800 ex-servicemen and women were supported by Walking With The Wounded in 2019.

Visit walkinghomeforchristmas.com to register for your fundraising pack.



STEPPING UP Al Murray

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Game 42 Day 7

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# JACK CHARLTON'S SON ON STAR'S FINAL YEARS



CHEERY Jack was larger than life

## EXCLUSIVE BY EMMA PEARSON

**ARM raised, Jules Rimet Trophy in hand and a smile as wide as the Wembley arch... it is the iconic picture which encapsulated a nation's pride and joy.**

At the heart of the scene is Jack Charlton – legendary centre half, hero on the pitch and a firm but fair character off the field.

And for Big Jack, the image and TV footage of that momentous day in 1966 came to be all the more special as he battled dementia.

Speaking for the first time since Jack's death at the age of 85 in July, son John reveals how the gritty defender would recover memories after watching old England games.

And he would recount tales of his 1966 pal Nobby Stiles, who died just 10 days ago, aged 78.

John, 61, said: "Dad would struggle with parts of his long-term memory as the dementia worsened."

"But he always lit up when he talked about lifting the World Cup – a memory that would never fade."

## YELLING

"Dad remembered Nobby fondly and used to laugh every time he spoke about him, especially at pictures of him without any teeth in."

Jack lined up in 1966 alongside brother Bobby, 83 – whose family last week revealed he, sadly, is also facing a battle with dementia.

It has brought added pain to the Charlton clan, just months after Jack passed away.

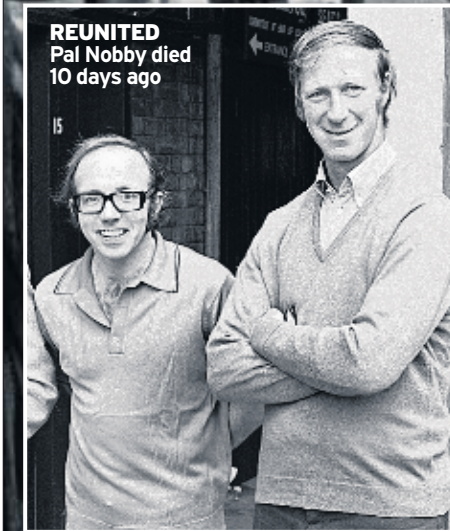
He had a glorious 21-year playing career with Leeds United, before huge success as manager of the Republic of Ireland made him an honorary islander across the water.

John says Jack was often found yelling instructions when footie was on TV – but it was clips of his time as a player that really saw him come to life in his final months.

Proud John, who owns Charlton's Bar in Northumberland, said: "If he watched the World Cup or other big games he'd remember things he'd never mentioned before."

"We were watching England and he came out with this story about Leeds. He said he and Billy Bremner snuck out of the hotel, got drunk and no one found out. That was news to us!"

"My dad used to tell a story about Nobby



REUNITED Pal Nobby died 10 days ago



DAD Jack with his son John



PROUD John Charlton pays tribute to his dad

in '66. They tried to get him banned for kicking a Frenchman and my dad used to say: 'Well what's wrong with kicking a Frenchman?'

Nobby was a character, just like my dad. It's sad to see another one go but I imagine they'll be up there now having a kickabout – just having a laugh more than anything."

Finding Jack Charlton, a documentary which opened in cinemas on Friday, shows Jack and his wife Pat as



JACK THE GLAD Holding cup in 1966, with Bobby Moore

“He recalled time he and Bremner got drunk... that was news to us!”

JOHN CHARLTON ON HIS DAD'S SOCCER MEMORIES

they navigate his battle with dementia. One tear-jerking scene shows Pat reflecting on Jack's time as a manager, remarking: "They think a lot of you don't they, in Ireland?"

Tragically, he responds: "No idea." Jack was diagnosed with lymphoma a year ago but his dementia meant he was unaware of his illness.

The family made the difficult decision not to treat the cancer, given Jack's age and other health problems.

Dad-of-three John said: "When the doctor told us he wasn't going to get better, Dad just sat there looking at him as if to say 'OK, fine', because it didn't register with him."

"The dementia meant he had no fear of what was happening to him because he didn't know. We told him,

but his mind wouldn't allow it to sink in, so we let him live as normal."

"He had an amazing life and even in dying he had the best of it. He wasn't scared or in pain and we looked after him at his home in Ashington until the end."

One of John's earliest memories is of journalists waiting outside the family home as England's historic 4-2 win over West Germany was on the TV.

He remembers Jack as a down-to-earth and no-nonsense Northern dad, adding: "He was straight-talking in football and was the same at home, to the point where if I was at school and my teacher said, 'I'm going to speak to

your dad', I'd be s\*\*\*ing myself. But as well as being strict to a point, he was kind and generous. For years he worked with people with a disability and children with disabilities who lived in care would come to spend weekends at our home. He didn't tell anyone and it wasn't for the limelight. He did it because he cared."

In his final days, Jack liked a pint and a game of pool at John's pub, pottering in the garden and spending time with his eight grandchildren.

And he loved football... right up until his own final whistle.

"He'd always ask if I'd watched the

match and wouldn't hold back on his opinions on the players," laughed John.

He also spoke of the loss felt by mum Pat – who he says was the real boss at home. He said: "She found it hard, as you'd expect, and we haven't been able to see her as much as we'd like because of Covid-19, but she's very strong and she's doing extremely well."

Lockdown also made a big funeral impossible, but the family was moved by the thousands of well-wishers who turned out to pay their respects.

John added: "He was a very special man and he was well loved in the North East and around the world."

"We got condolences from as far as New Zealand and China. It's a real testament to the kind of man he was."

Speaking of the family's decision to

open their home to cameras, John said: "Dad lived a life people can only dream of – 10 lifetimes crammed into one. Everyone knows him as a legend but it's the other bits of him that you don't see that were so special."

"We're not making him out to be an angel and he was known for being larger than life. But we want people to realise what he was really like."

"There were times when he lost his temper and times when he sparked controversy, but above all he was a family man – and he always had a knack of getting it right."

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■ Finding Jack Charlton is in UK and Irish cinemas now, on Blu-ray, DVD and digital download on November 23. It will be on BBC Two next year.