

Robert David Pugh 1950 – 2014

Robert, that's me – I was born January 1950 at Ipswich Hospital, son of Denwood Robert Charles and Gwendolyn. The first three years of my life were spent living in a pre-fab house on Humber Doucy Lane, and then to Renfrew Road on the Rushmere Estate where I lived with my parents and older sister Gina, until I left for 'the big smoke' (that's London, not Ipswich!) to go to collage at the age of 21. I attended Rushmere Hall Infant School, where the Headmistresses report read 'We've had a few worse boys than Robert...but not many!'

Then junior school started, it was much the same as infant school except I had to walk 30 yards to the next gate, as the schools were joined. I thoroughly enjoyed junior school, I learnt to swim with Miss Weston, and I had my first crew cut. I went to school with a cap on, on a boiling hot day, of course the boys soon had that off and held me up to ridicule (but then, that's sort of happened all my life – taking the mick), but that was good, once the cap was off the 'crew cut' was out. Ah, that was brilliant, the best hair cut ever.

I never got into the school football team, which really hurt. That was the real down side of junior school. Especially when the teacher had two younger boys from year 3 playing and I knew I was better than one of them. But there you are, he didn't like me. I remember waiting to go swimming one day, and my Auntie in America sent me across cowboy boots ('real leather' cowboy boots) with orange and yellow tear drops tooled into the leather, and with high-heals (alright you one or two wits out there, I know I needed the high-heals!). And then I

couldn't wear short trousers, as they looked hideous with cowboy boots, so of course I put my jeans on and toddled up to school. I was in the wrong straight away wasn't I, short trousers being the order of the day? Anyway Rossie caught me talking at the back, dragged me out the front. I remember bending over studying the stitching on these cowboy boots, which was quite exquisite. Then two strokes of the slipper and I was back to my seat. Then off we went swimming and all the lads wanted to look at my bum to see the damage that had been done!

Anyway, the two downers, apart from a wonderful time in Junior School, was not being picked for the school football team, EVER, I never did play. And, the end of year medical...a big bombshell at 11 years of age – I needed glasses, I was blind as a bat. Well my world fell-apart as I wanted to be a professional footballer – the bottom dropped out of my world.

Oh, there was one other disappointment, I didn't pass my 11+ and I really really wanted to, it wasn't an academic thing as I was only 11. It didn't matter to me at the time, it was that Northgate Grammar School was just at the top of the road, and Copleston was about three miles away – I had to bike... sheer laziness. But there's a trait that followed me all through my life. Then that was Junior School done. Summer holidays that seemed to stretch forever, and ever and ever. Never-ending bountiful blue skies...wonderful.

Then the day arrived...Copleston. The bars, which were a medieval torture, they put your arms through bars and twisted them up so you were in agony. We'd heard all the stories, head down the pan, with

your cap on, flush the chain, ah; we'd heard them all. So a certain amount of trepidation, but excited. So excited. That's an excitement that never left me. I always always enjoyed school.

And then football trials. God there were hundreds of us out there, all boys' schools. And so many more to pick from than there had been at Rushmere.

"Pugh, left wing", straight in, straight in the school football team – maroon and amber. I was so proud putting that shirt on, so proud. I believe we lost 1-0 to Royal Hospital School. But what a thrill to walk out of Maths and say, "Excuse me sir, got to go and play for the school." "Yes Pugh, well done lad." Ah those words, never to be forgotten. Mr. Rossier, I think that proved a point, that you didn't like me and you kept me down. You evil bastard..Sorry, language in church – never mind.

Rugby trials – Pugh...flanker (wing forward in those days), straight into the school rugby team. I loved rugby – you could knock people about legally. You could knock them about and get away with it, no recrimination. None of that "Go to the head boy you'll be caned."

Oh, one more thing, Gymnastics in front of the Queen Mother at the Suffolk Show. The only 11 year old, I'm very proud of that. Then onto third year and straight into the badminton team, the basketball team and sport was just a way of life. Back to school afterwards, lunchtimes. Maths and English seemed to get in the way, but there we are, sport is why I went to school.

Sixteen, well fifteen really - O level GCE, or GSE's, (they'd just come out). Well no question, I was working and achieving good results. Working was a *'euphemism'*, I was courting like a maniac, all I was interested in was girls and sport. Anyway I was in the GCE class, miraculously got my O levels, god knows how, didn't really work for them.

Then a Northgate boy, Sixth Form, I had my chance, unlike the wonderful 'pleb' that I was, I was a 'Mod' on a scooter, Rod Stewart was my hero by then, along with Denis Law, Manchester United. Then I decided to leave school – what a 'pleb'. Anyway, left school and went to Central Electricity Generating Board, which is why I'm in this 'box', that's what put me here. So, thank you CEGB, thank you very much. Five years of purgatory, I only stayed there because mum and dad wanted me to finish my apprenticeship.

Then two choices at age 20 – did I become a Game Keeper, or did I teach? Auntie Audrey knew a keeper at Nacton she was going to get me in as his Under Keeper, and Uncle Ted had just become a teacher so he convinced me to look into teaching, and PE teaching sounded heaven. That was the start of my ride to 29 years of teaching PE at Farlingaye, and 3 years in the Sixth Form. I won't go into all those years, but what a crack!

I'll tell you one story, Japanese visitors. They came over, and were guests of the school - they were seeing how our education system worked. One morning one of their colleagues said he would give a Jujitsu demonstration. Well, we had a judo man on the staff, so he was

his 'patsy'. So it was all arranged. "Mr. Pugh, you don't mind if we get changed in your changing room?", "No, not at all". Anyway, after registration I walked down to the room, couple of other teachers in there. I walked in..."Where's the fucking Jap?" (Excuse the language!). Their eyes were like big saucers, they were pointing to the shower, which was fully curtained off. I disappeared, very quickly disappeared, anyway I don't think he was too pleased as he knocked hell out of our Judo man, which was ok - I watched with glee. We had many a laugh over that.

Thirty-two years of teaching, how privileged was I to touch all those young minds. I've really rushed school, but I think most of you will know of my exploits there, they either loved me or hated me and one or two in between. But mostly love or hate. And I like to think it was mostly the former, because when I see the kids now, or the adults as they are, there's still respect, and they're still always there with a chat and a word. No doubt you'll hear more about that later today.

In 1976 I joined the Territorial Army Special Forces N.G.S (Naval Gunfire Support) PARA and Royal Marine Commando Trained. P Company for my Red Beret. I was invalided out in 1977 due to a wrecked knee playing local football. I never did get to parachute, that's why I joined in the first place!

Though I did many other sporting activities; Cricket, spear fishing, under water hockey (a training game for spear fishing with the Universal Divers Ipswich), squash, canoeing, hockey, volleyball (playing for college), golf, windsurfing, hand-gliding (3 times on my

own), pilot gliding (thanks to Tom), dog training (gun dogs – picking up and beating, thanks to all involved), skiing (in charge of the school trips for 15 years), snowboarding (taking adult trips – trips that Lennie and big John will never forget!).

Shooting ran right through these years (picking up with two great friends Ray and Keith, and brushing various estates with Stevey Hoyle), right up to the present, enjoying my time at Grundisburgh Hall, Hasketon Hall and two lovely partridge days in early 2014.

I couldn't cook or rather I wouldn't cook, though I had been known to make a mean spicy sausage casserole! In fact I was hopeless at any jobs around the house, and that in itself took me a lifetime to prove!

Latterly, the love of my life was riding my Fireblade motorbike, which Luke Billsberry tried hard to teach me to ride, and Ollie tried to put me off. Benny tried – and failed – to stay with me round Silverstone racetrack. I told you Benny I'd get the last word in!!

Finally, I'd just like to say huge heartfelt thanks to Wendy's wonderful family. I have two wonderful stepdaughters and a wonderful stepson; I couldn't love anymore or be more proud of if they were my own. And of course my own darling Daniel, whom I love so very very much – I embrace you with loving arms now and forever. My late daughter Kate whom I lost so tragically at the age of 35 and four lovely granddaughters and a grandson.

To my wonderful wife Wendy, I can only say she has always been my true love, my friend, and latterly my nurse, and for this I remain ever grateful. I am holding you my darling, as I will do everyday. Look back on the happy days, but make sure you look forward my love, go and enjoy the rest of your life - all my love Bob.

Now I'm going to stop, as I can't handle this any longer, as you bastards are going over the road and you're going to drink my money, and it's going to really hurt.

I'm going to be sitting in the corner, in my 'regular' chair, watching you, don't make pigs of yourselves, you've got all day and night, just enjoy. And remember, I AM tight, it's the Welsh in me! I've put a tenner behind the bar for you! Goodbye everybody x