

## **EULOGY – 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017**

“Ike”, Ikey, to give him his birth title, HARRY VICTOR WARREN was born on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1924, middle son of Len and Eva Warren at Bond’s Corner, Grundisburgh. Brother Ivor was 2 when he was born and after moving to Gull Corner, his younger brother Pat arrived two years later in 1926. This completed the Warren family.

Ike was very small when born and he loved to tell us how his grandmother Patience, said on his arrival “put him out of his misery! In an effort to build him up and make him grow, he was given a daily teaspoon of malt extract and also was given “extra” treats (which were often at a premium in those days). Times were very hard for the family and Ike remembers having holes in his shoes and having only jam sandwiches packed up for school. There was no well serving Gull Corner and their only source of water both drinking and washing, came from a pond nearby. This would have to be skimmed for algae and in the winter the ice would have to be broken first. The boys would wash out in the garden under the tree and they would do this whatever the season or weather.

Ike attended Grundisburgh School until 1938, leaving at the age of 14 and starting his working life at Nobby Clark’s farm. He always told us that his first job was as a bird scarer. He would also tell of a time when he was asked to ride a cart horse back from London to Grundisburgh, all without a saddle!! He must have been very sore when he arrived home!!

At the age of 18, during the war years, in 1942 he signed up to do his National Service with the RAF, training as an aircraft mechanic, in Dundee and Lincolnshire working on the Lancaster bombers. He then joined the Fleet Air Arm and was due to go out to Japan on an aircraft carrier from Portsmouth, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, hence ending the war. Shortly after this he was demobbed.

On returning home, he had a variety of jobs, starting with hod carrying for Phil Harris who was his next-door neighbour. He then went on to work at Debach for the Army/Navy Surplus store. It was at this time whilst delivering near the canning factory where Barbara was working, that she tells me she first noticed Ike and began to chat to him but they properly met at a dance in 1948. They were married at Pettistree Church on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1951 and spent their honeymoon in London with Ike’s Uncle Albert and family. After their marriage they lived with Barbara’s family for a short while until in 1952 they moved into their first house together at Dallinghoo Corner in Charsfield. They rented a cottage from an Eddie Driver and soon after Ike’s brother Pat rented the

adjoining cottage. Eddie used to take the families out in his car and would lend it to Pat to enable him to take the families out to the beach and other places.

In 1953 Wendy was born and Richard followed in 1956.

Whilst living at Charsfield, Ike and Pat went to Letheringham Woods to get a tree for Christmas. Their intention was to cut the top out of a very high fir tree. However, as you might expect, things didn't go quite to plan and they managed to succeed in bringing the overhead cables down. I think it is fair to say they made a very fast exit from the scene. However, the family remember the tree arriving home, being dragged through the house and reaching the ceiling.

Life was hard and money was short and Barbara often worked on the fields as well as bringing up the children and running the home, to bring in extra cash. Ike also worked on the fields in the evenings, weekends and holidays to make sure his family were well cared for. Although working many hours he always found time to take his family out at weekends. His favourite places were Iken River and Sizewell. They would enjoy many days out on the beach and heathlands swimming, playing games and picnicking. Gradually other Grundisburgh families would tag on and it became quite a gathering of families and a good time was had by all.

Ike had various jobs for Cubitts and then went to work for the Council as a roadman where he went on to have his own gang working out of Melton depot. He did two stints as a temporary Clerk of Works on the Woodbridge and Capel by-passes and it was during these years on the Council in 1960 that Ike and his family moved to the Roadman's cottage in Stoney Road, Grundisburgh where he and Barbara lived happily for 53 years.

In 1966 Ike had his claim to fame, winning £100 as the first winner of the Evening Star's Spot the Ball competition. His face was all over the newspapers and Barbara remembers her sister-in-law Anne saying "Harry, I'm sick of seeing your face everywhere. I am even standing on it when I have washed the floor".

In 1972 Ike got a job as a soil drilling operator for the Suffolk County Laboratory. He did many jobs all over Suffolk operating the rig, with his colleagues Jimmy Stebbings, Colin Chambers and Wally Turner.

He retired from this job in 1985 but took on some part-time work as a Clerk of Works again when the building began on Grange Farm, Kesgrave.

Family has always been the most important thing in Ike's life and he was never happier than when he was surrounded by his expanding family. His first grandchild Emma was born in 1971, followed by Becci, Adam, Katie and Sam. In 1999 Ike's first great-grandchild Jack was born. Bethany, George, Evie, Lily, Freja, Cooper, Martha, Poppy and Chloe completed the great-grandchildren bringing the total to 10. Ike loved all his grandchildren and great grandchildren, and they in turn loved him back, although sadly the younger ones will not remember him so well.

Ike and Barbara enjoyed some lovely foreign holidays. One particular memory is of a holiday to Italy with his brother and wife Pat and Anne, and friends Maggie and Len Harris. They were all walking between fishermen on either side of a pontoon where the days catch was laid out in the middle. Everybody stepped over the fish but Ike (being Ike), flicked his foot and the fish (which happened to be the only large fish there), fell into the sea resulting in a very angry fisherman. Another memory of this holiday was when either Pat or Ike found a large wad of Italian lira notes at the end of an alleyway. They shared the money out and were hoping to spend it during their holiday. However, whilst trying to spend it they soon found out it was not real money but Monopoly money. No doubt there was some Italian person watching all this and having a jolly good laugh at their expense!

Ike was always the same, always happy, always smiling and a ready wave for anybody he passed in the street. It was a common sight to see him hanging out of his car window shouting to anyone he knew.

He and Barbara spent many happy days with their various grandchildren in Tangham Forest and also on various holidays at home and abroad.

Ike also loved his greyhounds and would enjoy going to watch them in Ipswich at the old greyhound stadium. I don't think he ever made much money but he certainly enjoyed watching and going there with Luke Churchyard, Peter Paternoster and Pimp Birch. Another of his other past times was darts where he was Captain of the team at The Dog in Grundisburgh. During his time as captain he led them to become Tolly Cobbold League Champions. His biggest disappointment after winning this title at Crane's Social Club was that Barbara Windsor was due to present the trophy to the winners but she got delayed in traffic so was unable to attend.

A familiar site in Grundisburgh would be Ike on his bike. He loved his bike rides, biking many miles and sometimes stopping at a pub for his lunch. It was with great sadness that he finally had to give up on his bike riding when the dementia started to set in. Ike also enjoyed line dancing

with Barbara but we always used to laugh as he would say that he often was facing the wrong way to everybody else! He also swam with Barbara twice a week at Woodbridge swimming pool and made a large group of very good friends who enjoyed social events together outside of the swimming pool.

At around the age of 80 we started to notice the first signs of what we thought was dementia and it was at this stage Ike was forced to give up driving. Things started to deteriorate slowly and eventually he had to give up his bike riding, line dancing and swimming, sadly all the things he and Barbara enjoyed so much. Unfortunately, around 2013 it was decided that Stoney Road was no longer suitable for their needs and Ike and Barbara moved to Stowmarket where they bought a bungalow and were nearer to Wendy and her family. Ike's dementia was diagnosed as Alzheimers and in March 2016, the heart-breaking decision was made by the family to place Ike in a home. This was undoubtedly the hardest decision to make but for Barbara in particular it was extremely difficult. She had looked after him through some very hard and testing times coping with his dementia and keeping him safe and in the end putting her own health in serious jeopardy. The family visited him regularly but it was very difficult in the beginning as he would always ask "whether we had come to take him home" which would break our hearts. Ike finished his days at the home in Hillcroft House in Stowmarket, where the care he was given was second to none. The staff were always very caring and friendly and some of them are here today and the family would like to say a big "thank you".

Ike was a fighter until the end and he finally passed away peacefully on August 24<sup>th</sup>, just one-day shy of his and Barbara's 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. He will leave a big hole in our family which no one else can fill but we are all the better for having known and loved him.

Finally, I would like to finish with a very short poem which I feel sums up how the family feel about him.

**We little knew that day,  
God was going to call your name.  
In life we loved you dearly,  
In death, we do the same.**

**It broke our hearts to lose you.  
You did not go alone.  
For part of us went with you,  
The day God called you home.**

**You left us beautiful memories,  
Your love is still our guide.  
And although we cannot see you,  
You are always at our side.**

**Our family chain is broken,  
And nothing seems the same,  
But as God calls us one by one,  
The chain will link again.**