

A Service of Thanksgiving to Celebrate the Life of

Geoffrey Roger Bailey

‘Geoff’

22nd May 1939 - 8th August 2025

*Tuesday 2nd September at 11.15am
St Stephen’s Parish Church, Hightown*

Service by Revd. Keith Thornborough

Followed by the immediate family to Burscough Crematorium



Processional Music

Nimrod

Edward Elgar

Passages of Scripture

Welcome & Introduction

Rev. Keith Thornborough

We have come here today to remember before God our brother Geoff, cherished husband of the late Val, beloved Dad of Julia and Claire, Dad-in-law to Greg and Paul, dear Gag of Georgia, Annabel, Emily and Luke, good friend to many, to give thanks for his life; to commend him to God our merciful redeemer and judge; to commit his body to be cremated and to comfort one another in our grief.



Prayer

God our refuge and strength, close at hand in our distress; meet us in our sorrow and lift our eyes to the peace and light of your constant care. Help us so to hear your word of grace that our fear will be dispelled by your love, our loneliness eased by your presence and our hope renewed by your promises in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

As children of a loving heavenly Father, let us ask his forgiveness for he is gentle and full of compassion.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May God our Father forgive us our sins and bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom, where dust and ashes have no dominion. **Amen.**

The Collect

Merciful Father, hear our prayers and comfort us; renew our trust in your Son, whom you raised from the dead; strengthen our faith that all who have died in the love of Christ will share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to Earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver;
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy host above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Reading

By Diane Aldis & Jane Bessant

Psalm 23 - A Psalm of David

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever. Amen.

+John 14:1-6 - Jesus Comforts His Disciples

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Our Dad

By Claire

When I was small, I was always amazed at my Dad's ability to do so many things that he obviously took for granted. For example, one day in the summer, I was outside with some of my friends and we were practising doing handstands, (like you do when you're a little girl). Dad was planting some of his hundreds of bedding plants and he looked up and said, "can you do one of these?" and proceeded to run and perform a perfect handspring, land on his feet and walk back to his planting. My friends and I stared open mouthed in admiration.

Dad came to our school's Sport's Day one year and he entered the "Dad's 100 Metres Race" Of course he won and I was so proud when I went up to collect his 1st prize certificate in our End of Year Assembly.

Dad played Squash in the Hightown Club and I was so proud when I'd see his name at the top of the Squash Ladder. One weekend when we went to Center Parcs with the Verinders, we were all in the Sport's Hall. Dad was nowhere to be seen until one of our party said, "Look at Geoff!" and there he was, whizzing around the in-door track skating on the roller blades. Nobody knew that he could do that, not even my Dad apparently! He just thought that he'd have a go as he used to have a pair of old type roller skates when he was a kid! After a while there were quite a few people watching Dad from the balcony and pointing at this middle-aged man obviously having the time of his life.

Dad saved the lives of two men on two occasions. One when he was playing frisbee in the sea with Julia and I in Abersoch. He suddenly ran passed us in the surf and flipped an upside down canoe and saved the man in it, who was drowning, as

he couldn't get himself to turn the canoe over. The second time he was jogging down one of the little roads near Hightown and saw a man unconscious. Dad managed to get this man out of his car by smashing a window. He then ran to get Bill Rutherford who lived in the nearby farm and together they gave this man CPR and saved his life. Dad and Bill were each given a Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society Award for that, but Dad never made a fuss about these incidents, our Dad was a real Hero.

Dad loved the sunshine and he couldn't wait to see the Spring appear so that he could wear his shorts and get into the garden. The garden in Elmcroft Lane was large, but Dad never employed a gardener, he was happy sprinkling seeds into trays in his greenhouse and growing them on until he'd plant them in the beds, hundreds and hundreds of them. We loved him growing sweet peas which we'd cut and fill with vases all around the house. The smell of these beautiful flowers will always remind me of Dad and his beautiful garden.

Another crop that Dad grew was tomatoes that he planted in his greenhouse. He used to have about 6 Gro-bags with 4 plants per bag, so that was 24 plants per crop. Imagine how many tomatoes he's grown over the years. Again, the smell of newly grown fresh tomatoes will always remind me of Dad pottering in his garden. Coming home from school, smelling the cut grass and seeing the perfectly striped lawn was a comforting thing to experience. Even 3 weeks before Dad passed away, he was planting hydrangeas, these were one of Mum's favourite plants and my wedding flowers. One of the last things that Dad had said to us was to keep the garden watered, water the hanging basket and cut the grass.

Dad and Mum loved their holidays, even as children, Julia and I were always taken away on holiday every year which we loved too. We'd always spend a lot of time on the beach.

Dad taught us how to swim and snorkel. I was always amazed when Dad wanted to go for a swim and he'd run into the sea and dive right under the waves, no hesitation, even if it was sometimes too cold to go over mine and Julia's ankles.

Sitting down to write this piece about Dad was so hard. Julia and I loved him so much. He was a good man, honourable, honest and very hard working. As a Dad, he was fun, loving, caring and generous. Julia and I were very lucky to have had such wonderful parents. They both had ambitions and both of them worked so hard to achieve them. We always had a safe, warm and comfortable home to live in and it was often filled with the laughter of relatives and friends.

Losing Mum last year so quickly after her diagnosis was devastating and likewise, losing Dad again in the same manner was shattering. However, in my mind, I see them both together now, enjoying each other's company somewhere in the sunshine, neither of them broken hearted now.



Our Superhero Dad

By Julia

"Aren't we lucky?!" One of our nan's favourite phrases and she was right. Lucky to have had the love and support of Mum, Dad and grandparents.

It's incredible to read and browse at Mum and Dad's life in photos, paperwork, receipts and memories that've been stored and held in boxes in their various lofts in their lives. Everything, still in pristine condition like they're only recent but many over 75 years old. We've been looking through it all and this is a fragment of Dad's full and happy life...

Born to our nan and gag - Vera and Alf Bailey in Newhall Lane Liverpool 11 on 22.5.1939 during the war. He had a tussle of blonde curly hair and blue eyes, a kind and gentle nature and in later years a very unique, neat left hand writer.

A few years later his sister Hilary was born.

Dad attended Roscoe Secondary Modern School and we've found all his school reports, here's two summaries from the head:

"1949 Geoffrey's verbal work is still infinitely better than his written work. Must keep his exuberant spirits in check and approach all his work more seriously."

"1954 Geoffrey has continued to make very good progress. His work in class is always neat, thorough and well thought out. His happy disposition makes him a popular member of the school. An efficient school and house Captain. Useful soccer player and cricketer."

Amongst his treasures and until recently, we didn't realise Dad was a Philatelist which is a Greek word, philo "love of" and atelia "postage" when we found his World stamp album gifted to him in 1949 by his Mum and Dad. Many pages full including half penny stamps from King George in 1934, Victoria and

George 1840-1940, the Coronation collectable stamps 12th May 1937 and many more.

In his junior years, he was in the Boys Brigade and the church choir and we have all the paperwork and his little pocket bible too.

Dellagana and Denby Limited at 52 Duke Street Liverpool was the firm that Dad began his career. It was his birthday, 22nd May 1955 and he signed very official paper work to be an apprentice alongside the Federation of Master Process Engravers. During his time, he concentrated on printing on metal and that became the start of his lifelong connection with printing.

Dad joined the RAF as a new recruit November 1960 with a trade, training as a Tracer which included the plotting of aerial photographs on to maps, filing and recording of photographs. His time finished there in 1966 ranked as a highly skilled Senior Aircraftman. It probably explains his extensive knowledge of geography and his accurate sense of direction whenever we went on a journey. Even in the years of sat navs, Dad never trusted them and would always follow a paper map.

We found photos of Dad in a skiffle band around 1957, apparently skiffle means inexpensive and homemade instruments and as Dad was very handy, we imagine they made some very interesting instruments. This was around the time of the Beatles, the Quarrymen and the Rattlesnakes! Sadly no No.1s for Dad or girls screaming at the airport like they did with the Beatles.

Another favourite hobby was football and he played in a local team and years later taking up other sport interests like running for miles and squash, playing for a local team. His love of golf became a main hobby from early 2000 and Dad was a member of Formby Hall Golf Club and West Lincs where they enjoyed social events with friends. Rugby was

another favourite sport Dad loved to watch either at Waterloo home ground or on TV especially anything with New Zealand.

Trains, planes and automobiles, that's Dad and his photo collection! Everyone that knows him, will appreciate the interest he had in photography and like me, would always be ready to take a photo. He would always have his camera around his neck, various lens and angles to perfect the best shot. So there's no surprise when I tell you that there's many 35mm slides, albums and digital photos of family and friends and holidays to Tuscany, Madeira, Sarasota, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Turkey, Germany, Spain and the Kyle of Lochalsh. We've put a montage photo board together which you can all look at later.

Later on, bowls here at Hightown on Saturdays and Wednesdays finishing off with some great company with friends.

One day when Dad was out on his daily run down a quiet country road, he found a guy unconscious in a car this led to Dad being awarded for saving the guy's life. *A true superhero.*

Dad was a true blue footy supporter which was sometimes interesting when the derby was on as most of the family are reds, unfortunately he didn't get to a match in the new stadium but would watch the games on TV with a glass of red.

Dad and Mum met at a music night in a club and on the way home, in true Cinderella style Mum lost the heel of her shoe in a tram line, Dad walked her home and their love blossomed.

They were married in Liverpool and remained soulmates and madly in love for over 70 years.

In 1960 they got engaged and rented their first home together which was a flat on Alton Road, Oxton, Birkenhead where Mum made all the curtains, we can imagine it was very tidy and coordinated but they did tell us about how cold it was with icicles in the bathroom.

1963 Vineside Road, West Derby became their first house and Claire and I were born in '65 and '66 This is where Dad's love of gardening began. They sold Vineside for £2913 and in 1971 they found a house that Mum fell in love with at Elmcroft Lane and they purchased it for £7900 with our Gag telling them they'll be in debt for the rest of their lives but both Mum and Dad knew this was their next adventure. We can remember Dad crawling under the floorboards to lay new electricity cables and every room having a "Mum" makeover. Even the slate fireplace was lovingly created from many walks up the welsh mountains bringing back ruck sacks full of slates. We remember the blisters well and we were only young! His talent to repair or restore was obvious and he had such an eye for detail and his neatness.

The year Mum opened the Brownies in Hightown, Dad made her a Toadstool which is used in the center of the Brownie Ring. He constructed it out of wire, paper mache and painted it in a bright green, red and brown. It was used for all the years Mum ran the brownies with Auntie Hilary, along with a pottery wise owl, made by one of Mum's friends.

Dad was working nights at The Daily Post & Echo where he met another great circle of friends, some of them are here today, thank you. They continued to meet on the first Tuesday of every month for a pint or two at a few favourite haunts around Liverpool and Dad would wobble home on the last train and zigzag walk home.

Their circle of friends grew in Hightown and it means alot to our family to see so many of you here. Summers in the Hightown Tennis Club, sunsets at the Hightown Sailing Club and lots of parties, late nights and "never again" mornings. His hint for everyone to go was he'd disappear upstairs put on his PJs and say I like your company but I don't like your hours.

In 1982, Dad took redundancy and after much consideration invested in a franchise printing business in 1983 in Chorley

where Dad and I worked together. This was to become a successful family business with a strong team and Mum and Claire joined some years later. Over the decades, three printing sites and 48 staff later, Dad couldn't help popping in with his superhero cape on and getting stuck into jobs still so neat and effortless - even at the age of 86. He'd ring the office and say "How is it today, do you need me?" Of course, we would say yes because we all loved him being in the thick of it with us meeting crazy tight deadlines. It means a lot to our family, that many of the staff are here today that have been guided, taught, mentored and worked with Geoff and I, he would be delighted to see you all and know you came here to say your goodbyes.

We reminisce over many happy holidays, especially in the family cottage at Betws-y-Coed. No mod cons there, literally no running water, no indoor flushing toilet, no heating or TV but Dad gallantly emptied the chemical toilet every day, we walked to a spring to get water to boil for drinks and baths in front of the fire and in the evening we would have a large hotpot cooked in a little gas oven and play games all night, such wonderful, treasured times.

From 1994, their life was so full of love for their grandchildren Georgia, Annabel, Emily and Luke and without doubt they poured their time and love into their new role and it had a profound and positive effect on our family.

Dad loved the summer and over the years they've had a villa in Mojacar Spain and later on a caravan in Anglesey, such wonderful happy memories for the family. One particularly stormy weekend, Dad and Uncle Allen were determined to cook a BBQ and although the sky was going darker and darker with a very good chance of rain, the thunder and lightning started and all we can remember is watching Dad light up like a beacon whilst holding the BBQ fork and being struck by lightning. He was fine and the burgers were amazing!

2003 they sold their much loved Elmcroft Lane and as they were always looking ahead, they wanted more time to travel and to downsize and so they moved into Riverside. Holidays to New Zealand, India, cruises around the world with friends and many family holidays.

They transformed their new home and garden and in May 2018 their home and five other properties in Hightown were opened to the public as part of the National Garden scheme.

Over the years in Hightown, both Mum and Dad became involved with groups in the community and church where they had another circle of friends and would often attend weekly service and also enjoy trips organised to other interesting places. Dad was a church warden for a time here at St. Stephen's where his faith guided and helped him through the loss of our beautiful Mum. He was involved with many duties including one of the most important decisions he contributed to the church for Revd Keith to become the vicar here. When he left his role as warden he supported and continued to help Judith in her new role as warden and that was Dad, always there to help.

In the past 12 months, it was the love and support of our close family, the company of very good friends and the church that helped Dad, he was heart broken and never came to terms with losing the love of his life, we hope they're sitting together in the garden of paradise.





Reflections from Erik

Special life-friend

I met Geoff in about 1956-57 and he and Val were already 'a couple'. They were always together, apart from when we would be playing football, so we never had the usual boys binging nights out and all the tales that go with that sort of lifestyle. It was always Val first. That of course means that I can't regale you with riotous events that we would have got up to, just lots and lots of happy times that we all spent together.

Then we both got married and produced families, me in North Wales and Geoff in Hightown, so we didn't see each other for some years.

When we did reconnect, it was as if no time had passed at all and we continued as we left off. Distance was the only thing that kept us from seeing each other more often.

My affection for Geoff was simply that he was a kind , loyal friend who stood by me in good and bad times, and could always be relied upon to be there if needed, the ultimate friend.

From when I first met Geoff his exuberance for life and happy disposition were infectious. He had loyalty and concern for others in abundance, and was devoted to his family.

I can't recall him ever being critical of others, particularly me, whose views were often diametrically opposed to his, and I was never afraid of expressing them. Yet he never corrected me or told me I was wrong. Which I knew he would have thought. He was my friend for almost 70 years, and certainly the best friend anyone could have.

I fear he was never able to come to terms with the loss of 'the love of his life' Val.

I will be eternally grateful that Geoff was part of, and so influential, in my life. I will miss him very much.

Erik



Precious Memories of Gag ♥

Granddaughter Annabel

Today, we come together to celebrate the life of an extraordinary man - our beloved Gag and Dad, Geoff.

To us, Gag was so much more than a grandad. He was our comedian, our storyteller, our teacher, and above all, a constant source of love. He had a rare gift - the ability to make each of us feel truly special. Whether he was teaching us a new card game, sharing stories from growing up in the war, taking us on lots of holidays, or simply wrapping us in his unconditional love, Gag's presence always made the world feel brighter.

And of course, there was his cheeky sense of humor. Every year, we would gather at Gag's for Christmas dinner. One year, though, there were no pigs in blankets - which seemed very odd. Nan and Gag searched everywhere, but they were nowhere to be found. I asked them both, "Are you even sure you bought them?" - and of course, they insisted they had. To this day, those pigs in blankets remain one of life's great mysteries and were talked about every year. That was Gag - even a missing tray of sausages wrapped in bacon could turn into a story we'll laugh about forever.

When people reflect on a life well-lived, they often talk about both the quantity and the quality of years. Looking at Gag and Nan's love story, I can proudly say they had the best of both - a partnership built on true teamwork, devotion, and deep affection. Their love is an example to us all... even if it sometimes meant Nan having to put up with the same joke ten times over.

Though Gag has now left us, his legacy remains in the values he passed down - kindness, resilience, loyalty, and love. We will miss his smile, his laugh, his hugs, his encouraging words, and his unwavering support.

Gag, you were, and you will always be, our hero. Your love will continue to guide and inspire us for generations to come.

And to everyone here today: let us honour him not just with our memories, but by living out the qualities he showed us - to be kind, to laugh often, and to love without condition. In that way, Gag's spirit will live on through each of us

If love alone could have saved you, you would have lived forever.

Sleep peacefully, Gag - we love you very much

Babs xxx



Hymn

Lord Of All Hopefulness, Lord Of All Joy

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
At the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,
At the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, Your arms to embrace.
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord,
At the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,
At the end of the day.



Words of Comfort and Hope

Poem

Read by Julia

That Man Is A Success

Robert Louis Stevenson

That man is a success
who has lived well,
laughed often and loved much;
who has gained the respect
of intelligent men
and the love of children;
who has filled his niche
and accomplished his task;
who leaves the world better than he found it,
whether by an improved poppy
or a perfect poem or a rescued soul;
who never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty
or failed to express it;
who looked for the best in others
and gave the best he had.



Snowdon

Prayers & Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

God of mercy, Lord of life,

You have made us in your image to reflect your truth and light:

We give you thanks for Geoff, for the grace and mercy he received from you, for all that was good in his life, for the memories we treasure today.

You promised eternal life to those who believe. Remember for good this your servant Geoff, as we also remember him.

Bring all who rest in Christ into the fullness of your kingdom where sins have been forgiven and death is no more.

Your mighty power brings joy out of grief and life out of death. Look with mercy on, Julia, Claire, his family, his friends, and all who mourn. Give them patient faith in times of darkness. Strengthen them with the knowledge of your love.

You are tender towards your children and your mercy is over all your works.

Give us the grace to use aright the time that is left to us here on earth, to turn to Christ and follow in his steps in the way that leads to everlasting life.

God of mercy, entrusting into your hands all that you have made and rejoicing in our communion with all your faithful people, we make our prayers through Jesus Christ our Saviour
Amen.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn

One More Step Along The World I Go

One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.

Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn;
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.

As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way, I know.
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.

Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough;
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.

You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me;
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.

Commendation and Farewell

Let us commend Geoff to the mercy of God.

Let us draw to mind all that Geoff was in our lives.

-Silence-

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and entered into glory. Confident of his victory and claiming his promises, we entrust Geoff to your mercy in the name of Jesus our Lord, who died and is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Song of Farewell

May the choirs of angels come to greet you, may they speed you to paradise. May the Lord enfold you in his mercy. May you find eternal life.

The Blessing

May God give you his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy, in this world and the next; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Recessional Music

Mr. Blue Sky

Electric Light Orchestra

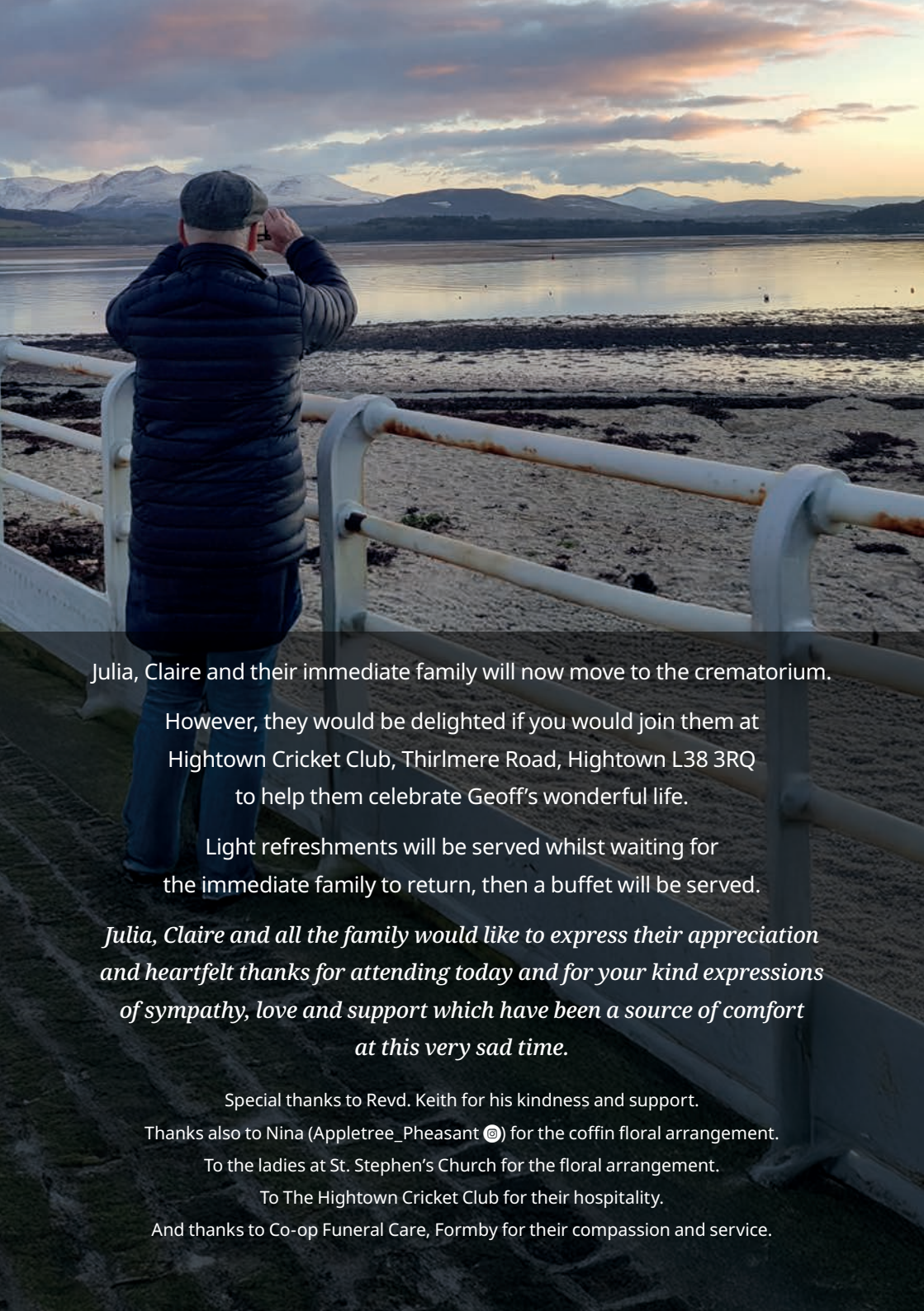
A special tribute page for Geoff is available on **muchloved** to share memories, thoughts and stories with family and friends as well as light candles, add music, photos and videos.

Register for access at **geoffbailey.muchloved.com**

Donations are for Queenscourt Hospice at Home and St Stephen's Church, thank you.







Julia, Claire and their immediate family will now move to the crematorium.

However, they would be delighted if you would join them at Hightown Cricket Club, Thirlmere Road, Hightown L38 3RQ to help them celebrate Geoff's wonderful life.

Light refreshments will be served whilst waiting for the immediate family to return, then a buffet will be served.

Julia, Claire and all the family would like to express their appreciation and heartfelt thanks for attending today and for your kind expressions of sympathy, love and support which have been a source of comfort at this very sad time.

Special thanks to Revd. Keith for his kindness and support.

Thanks also to Nina (Appletree_Pheasant 🍷) for the coffin floral arrangement.

To the ladies at St. Stephen's Church for the floral arrangement.

To The Hightown Cricket Club for their hospitality.

And thanks to Co-op Funeral Care, Formby for their compassion and service.