

For those of you who don't know me. I'm Jane. I'm one of Bills nieces on the Moston side, so if the occasional 'Uncle Bill' creeps in, you know where it's come from.

Bill was born on the 22nd of June, 1945, at Old Hall Farm, Lower Withington. The family was a tight knit one; mother and father Ted and Evelyn and two brothers; John who was three years older and Phil who was 8 years younger. They also had a strong extended family of cousins and second cousins.

He was always a quiet thinker and after attending the village school in Lower Withington, he passed his 11+ and went on to the King's School in Macclesfield.

Bill started his working life by serving an apprenticeship at the Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green, and then he went to work at engineering firm, Cowlshaw Walker at Biddulph. During his time at Cowlshaw Walker he formed a lasting friendship with fellow draughtsman John Grieveson.

John and Bill had some great holidays in the Lake District, North Wales and on the Llangollen Canal, camping, walking and climbing and taking Bill's border collie Meg with them. I can remember his pleasure and sense of achievement when he and Meg climbed Ben Nevis together.

Bill always had a great affinity with animals, in particular, Tess, an adopted border collie cross. Evenings were spent walking Tess 'around the triangle' as Bill use to say; they were a perfect pair and on the same wavelength for 17 years.

It was John Grieveson's girlfriend who introduced Bill to his future wife Ruth. The relationship flourished and they married in 1980, coming to live in their home in Osborne Grove in Shavington.

After Cowlshaw Walker, Bill went to E.R.F. at Sandbach, then Foden Trucks, as a design engineer, and for some years he was heavily involved in the design of a military vehicle. In 1980, Foden's became a subsidiary of the American firm, Paccar and he travelled to Leyland each day in a car share of pals.

Always having an enquiring mind, Bill embraced new technology with a passion, keeping pace with change and chatting with the younger generation about the merits of different technologies. It was always good fun at Christmas because Uncle Bill would be sharing his new electronic toys with us and sitting with the kids helping them to work out how to use theirs.

Bill had always been an incredibly patient teacher, very happy to share knowledge but in a quiet and unpushy way. Phil talks about his older brother coaching him on electrical circuits

and teaching him how to drive. The last time I saw him, Bill was reminiscing about when Phil was a toddler and he and Grandad had been teaching him new words. Phil hadn't learned traditional baby words such as cat and ball. Instead he has been taught axle, engine, oil, etc. Apparently he had had a bit of a struggle with carburettor!

And his patient teaching went far and wide. Countless of us have had his help with our computers. Sheila, our florist, said Bill was the person who showed her how to use a camera. One couple in Shavington used to refer to him as 'Superman' .

In 2007, Bill had a heart attack, which eventually led to his retirement from Paccar.

Then he got what I suspect was his favourite of all his jobs. For almost 8 years, he worked for the Shavington Co-Op. He used to say he was the world's oldest paper boy; unfailingly reliable, wonderfully organised and enjoying working with colleagues young and old.

His technical ability, organisation, and interest in family history led Bill to establish websites; one on Cheshire churches and another on the history of the Moston, Wood, Slater and Warrington families.

But perhaps the lasting testimony to his life was the recordings he made with his cine camera. He made films to record family life on the farm, in Lower Withington and in the surrounding Cheshire countryside. Almost 20 years of Rose Days were recorded. Bill loved sharing his work and many of his films were transferred onto DVD, shared on the internet via YouTube, or put in display such as the one here in Church this summer. In Shavington, the word got around that Bill was an excellent film maker and he was asked to film shows in the Village Hall or to help friends.

Many of you will know this book on Chelford and I'd like to read you part of a poem written in by Julie Slater in 1995. It's about Lower Withington.

'This wonderful Village is captured for all

By a remarkable young man with camera so small

The invention of cine fascinated young Bill

And our thanks go out to him and always will

He developed a history unique and so clear

Of the way we were year after year...'

It's been difficult putting together a eulogy on such a private and unassuming man. He was so quiet yet he had a wonderful sense of humour. As I was writing I could hear his voice in my head saying 'stop it now Jane, you're embarrassing me'.

I remember his pleasure at the leaving gift his friends gave him when he left Paccar. It was a bread machine and he found it hard to believe they had been so thoughtful and generous. And that was his way; generous and kind to others, without expectation or agenda.

Bill will be remembered by Ruth as a husband who cared for and cherished her for all their wedded days. And those of us lucky enough to have been touched by his life, will remember him as a selfless, patient, funny, kind, intelligent, gentle, man.