

FRANK BROWN, RIP

Frank is already hugely missed because he was a larger than life character. We all miss his huge smile, his sonorous voice whether that's reading or singing lustily, in this chapel he loved. And of course, after so many years living here at Seckford Care, you could say that he was part of the fixtures and fittings! But I wouldn't say that – he very much brought his life and love and energy to everything.

I remember him at last year's Christmas meal showing off his paper crown and as well as being jovial he then started grilling me about my theological college in Cambridge, where he too studied nearby. He could be meticulous (something Jennifer inherited), quick and serious of mind, mischievous, fatherly, wonderfully generous of spirit. Yes, he had failings as we all do, he had favourites (like Mandy), as we all do...but most of all we remember him as someone of integrity who gave a lot of his time and friendship to us. Those huge hands of his could tell his love for the land as much as his love for the sea, without even needing any words!

I remember his moving recollections at our last Remembrance service here, and the genuine sense of surprise and thankfulness he felt that he survived a long and terrible war – when many of his friends were lost and still very much missed. He understood the cost of it all and the sacrifice.

Like me he was a softy when it comes to Labradors, and the various children and grandchildren would understand why.

And then there's the word, 'dog' spelt backwards. Frank really did get the whole 'God thing'. I don't mean like one of those noisy, right-wing Evangelical campaigners. No, he valued, understood, and was inspired by the God of all creation, the One in whom we all live, and move, and have our being. His Christian faith wasn't showy at all but you know how much it mattered to him. His prayers had some substance to them and, as you know, he was a very humble soul – whose 'passing' is a great loss.

But as Jennifer said he wouldn't want today to be sad but rather, a celebration of a very happy life, and with Suffolk and his family very much at its heart. He would want us all to believe in the Gospel of hope and the promise of the new life to come with the One who made us and shaped us like the people we are, as well the people we may yet become. I am sure God has welcomed this big-hearted man, Frank, into His heavenly arms already and there, instead of another cup of tea, he discovers something more wonderful: salvation and joy, peace and light – where there is no more pain or sorrow, but life everlasting!