

## **Roy Breaker-Rolfe**

**19th April 1957 - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021**

### **Commemorative Account of Lynne Breaker-Rolfe**

**Dated 8 August 2024**

Roy, my husband was born at Fanners Green near Chelmsford. Then when he was about 4 moved to Broads Green near Chelmsford.

Roy had a great childhood, being outside most of the time with his friends, roaming the fields, looking for wildlife, scrumming apples, getting up to mischief, but all good fun. Roy had a few pets, guinea pigs and once bought home a puppy which he was allowed to keep. Roy used to love to go to Suffolk to see his grandparents who lived on a farm, again a lot of wildlife and going out with his uncles across the fields. Roy's other grandparents had a smallholding where he and his friend used to cycle over to help and see to the animals.

School was not a very happy time, being undiagnosed dyslexic made some lessons difficult, however when Roy left school he went to Writtle Agriculture College where he gained qualifications in animal husbandry and general farming, considering his dyslexia this was something he was very proud of. This was something he was interested in and went to work on a local farm which he really did enjoy.

I met Roy one Sunday when I was out driving around with my friend and we stopped in a café for a drink, Roy was there and we immediately liked the look of each other and found we had a lot in common. Roy was a good looking boy, he had a great big lovely smile, quiet and drove his beloved American Pontiac Firebird car with an amazing hooter. One of my most memorable moments was when I first met Roy, we really did fall in love with each other that day and we never looked back. A few days after we met he told his sister he was going to marry me and he did.

We soon became girlfriend and boyfriend spending all our evenings and spare time together, we then decided we would get married after about a year. We then went on to have two children a daughter Lynette and son Byron.

Roy was a lovely father to his children, we used to have a lot of caravan holidays as we had a touring caravan so had many good times away in various places in the UK. We always had dogs that were very special to Roy, they always came on holiday with us. Christmas was a special time, us four together, playing board games which Roy and Byron always used to cheat at, much to Lynette's dismay.

We used to go to country fairs a lot showing our dogs and just enjoying the different events of the day. It was a happy time.

We used to visit Roy's parents most Saturdays, always having the same lunch which the kids thought was just great. We might then play cards or games early evening, leaving with the kids in their pajamas ready for bed at home. Roy was a loving and generous son, he would always drop everything to help his father with anything he needed doing, which he carried on after his father passed away, always helping his mother with the garden and bits on the house. Roy loved his parents very much.

Roy was a landscape gardener when the children were young, Byron used to go with his dad to work a lot, which they both enjoyed, but when the children were older his real passion was renovating property. We would buy a derelict property, live in our caravan while we got it ready to live in and sell on. Roy renovated around 15 properties over the years. He was self-taught and gained so much knowledge over the years it was truly amazing. We worked on the properties together and these times are now very special memories of us being together all the time.

Roy's main hobby was Formula 1 racing, he always watched the races with Byron, there was always conflict over who was the best and should win, but all good fun. His other interest was his pets, particularly the dogs who he was amazing with and they all loved him. We also have a parrot, Jasper, we had many a laugh listening to what Roy & Byron had taught Jasper to say, some not so repeatable. Jasper still speaks in Roy's voice now telling the dogs to stop barking and so on, on occasions it catches me out as it's like he is in the room.

Roy was always the first one along with <sup>(personal/sensitiv</sup> our grandson, in the sea, even in winter they paddled, Roy loved to be beside the sea at any time of the year, we always went somewhere every weekend, country or coast, all over the country so there are not many places we have not been too and again I have those great memories of those times spent together.

One of our most memorable Christmas's was spent in Goathland, North Yorkshire, we arrived on Christmas eve, went to church for a candle light carol service when we came out it had been snowing, it snowed all night, there was about 4 foot of snow, the ploughs were out, Roy was in his element playing in the snow with the dogs and kids, helping people who needed a tow out, that time will always remain one of the happiest in my memory.

Roy had a happy personality, he was loyal, kind and generous. Family meant a lot to him, spending as much time as he could with the family. It was very rare to see Roy down in the dumps, it would be something major to make him feel like that, always pleased to see our friends, parents and his sisters. He was the sort of person you cannot stay mad at for long, things are soon forgotten and back to normal, no grudges held.

As Roy got a bit older his anxiety became more apparent so we adjusted our life to make him feel more secure. I believe this began after his father passed away, he then had a very good friend pass away and his brother in law, all in a short space of time. This all took some time to

come to terms with which resulted in poor sleep and depression. Roy's condition deteriorated hugely over the last year of his life, trying to take his own life several times. The last few years we, I, asked for help many times from various hospitals, no one listened to what I had to tell them they just took what Roy said as truth, they could not even recognize a mental health crisis and just bumped Roy in A&E on his own, at no time did anyone LISTEN!, in the end he was sent to hospital in Norfolk that now works just for the NHS taking mental health patients, they had no information on him or what had happened when Roy arrived there about 10.30pm, no one bothered to listen to what I had to say, instead taking the word of a paranoid, psychotic person who only a few hours ago could not even speak. There was no help out there for him this was particularly distressing to our family as we were the ones trying to look after him which is not easy task never knowing where Roy was or what he was doing. The NHS failed Roy, failed our family in the worst way possible.

Roy passed away 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021 he was 63, this was unexpected and has had a massive impact on all of his family. Our future plans for retirement have now all disappeared and my life completely changed in a heartbeat, I am a different person and cannot still believe what has happened. Lynette and Byron are equaled distraught at losing their dad. They both find it so hard to talk about what happened as the terrible last 18 months of his life have over clouded all the good memories. In the very odd conversations we have about their dad it always ends in tears so sometimes the subject is changed as it is too painful to remember he is not still here. Byron still cannot get used to it only being me when I visit as he is used to us always going everywhere together and still expects to be both of us.

Roy and I lived and worked together, we were always with each other enjoying each other's company nearly 24 hours day and that was how we liked to live, we had many plans for the future, Roy loved life and his family.

Roy's elderly mother has found his passing very difficult to come to terms with and understand and of course it was a terrible shock to her, his sisters and extended family and our friends who miss his also.

I know Roy would like to be remembered to be the kind, loyal, generous person he was. Roy would not want to be remembered for his illness but what he was like before he became ill, fun, loving, kind, loyal, he is the love of my life, my best friend, he always will be and never will be forgotten.

I also wanted to share some memories and thoughts of Roy from friends and family, so I have included these below.

#### **From Barbara & Ron – Friends:**

We have known Lynne and Roy a very long time. Way back to when we had our sons within 6 months of each other 40 years ago. I remember when Byron their son was born and how

excited Roy was as he gave us the news when Lynne had given birth. Their family was complete, Lynette and Byron were truly loved and cherished and had a great childhood with Lynne and Roy. Roy had the kindest soul. Would help anyone out. And he absolutely adored Lynne. She encouraged him to have the confidence to do anything he wanted to succeed in life. Which is how they came to start buying and renovating properties. He was good at it and it helped his mental health to have something manual to get stuck into.

We had noticed a few years ago that Roy seemed more nervous and anxious for some reason. Of course now we know he had got quite bad but at the time he tried to hide it from everyone except his close family as he was worried about admitting it, somehow feeling ashamed of it as other people would not understand the nature of the illness.

However we would get together every few weeks for lunch or barbecues in the summer and had some really good times. He was a great joker and liked to tell us funny stories. When Lynne had broken her ankle badly and was very immobile for a year he really looked after her. And they had just started to renovate another house but he managed that and was doing all of Lynne's care at the same time. He was just a lovely man who lived for his family. He loved his grandchildren and spending time with them. And he was a great animal lover. They were never without a dog and used to walk the dogs for miles across fields where they lived. Roy and Lynne loved to travel around the country seeing different places and just loved to be together.

Accepting that Roy was driven to suicide has been so hard for all his family and friends and of course his wife Lynne. She says she constantly feels guilt that she could not help him enough but she had tried every avenue she could to get him some help. And of course she could not confide in us about what was going on with Roy's mental health as he did not want anyone to know that he was not coping. He was the love of her life. They were soulmates. The impact on her has been enormous. The life they had planned and saved for in retirement has been ripped away and I know that she feels she has no proper purpose in life now herself. If it was not for her son, his wife and her daughter I really believe that she might take the same path as Roy. But she would not want her family and friends to go through what she has had to experience. So she tries to be brave and carry on. But I know that every day is a struggle without Roy. I hope that in the future she will manage to find some peace and know that everyone around her is so proud of how she is still actually managing to function even though what happened with Roy is constantly playing like a video on repeat in her head. And I know that at last Roy's pain is gone and that one day he will meet Lynne again and they will be together again at last. RIP Roy xxxx

**From Dena – Friend:**

Roy & Lynne had a very special connection and love, I often said I have never seen another couple who were so truly devoted to each other. Not many people are lucky enough to experience this true connection and have such an amazing bond and love with someone as they did.

I feel so very lucky and honored that I have the great pleasure of having both you Lynne, and Roy in my life. You both became my friends, after Lynne came to work for me with my children's nurseries, they became friends first and foremost above all else, please know the huge admiration I have for Roy in so many ways. Not only a friend but Roy used to tend my garden and keep it nice and neat it took me a long time to let another person tend the garden, he loved my coffee bean machine, I always had a cup waiting for him the machine starts on its own sometimes now I am sure it is him nudging me for a coffee! Roy became a very valued friend and someone who came to help me out when it was needed, an instance is one year when we had snow I was struggling to get salt to take to my children's nursery to put down in the car park as it was iced over, Roy immediately came to my rescue, telling me to stay at home he would get the salt and go and lay it, which he did.

My dog Peanut absolutely adored Roy, Peanut got very excited when he saw Roy as he knew it was play time and a walk, Roy was without doubt one of Peanuts favorite people of all time, he was kind and understanding to both my pets, Peanut and Belle the cat.

Roy would at a drop of a hat take Peanut home for the weekend if I needed to be somewhere which was so much enjoyment for him as Lynne & Roy always went out on a journey at the weekends taking Peanut with him, stopping at the pub for lunch and then they all enjoyed a nice walk.

I can only imagine the hell that Lynne is going through trying to deal with the loss of someone who was her whole world. Words cannot come close to helping or supporting Lynne through this difficult time.

Roy was a very special person who will always be in his families hearts, his light will always continue to shine to all those who knew him through treasured memories, these will live on and never fade.

With much love to Roy, Lynne & family xx

**From Lynette – Roy's Daughter:**

My dad was a happy person who loved to joke around, he told me many tricks he used to play on my poor nan growing up.

I could not have asked for anything more as you gave me your time, love and support growing up, you were the best Dad.

We would play a lot of games when we were children which he always had to win and he always did as he would cheat which used to cause an argument.

Dad used to take us all out on days out. He always made sure it was a fun and a full day of

exploring. The earliest one I can remember he took us to London for the day, dad drove and he took us to all the sights it was a great day I still have the photos.

Also we went on lots of holidays, we all liked going to Cornwall exploring the beaches and caves and castle trips. In the boat on the boating lake, dad rocking the boat so I was scared I would fall in, he always played tricks on us.

Dad was really proud of my three sons, his grandsons, Josh, Callum & Owen, he used to call in on his way home from work when the boys were young to see us and we spent hours in McDonald's in the play area. We used to meet at my nan's then walk up to the woods so the boys could make a den, we then had a picnic, my dad loved to do this with my boys. The boys were always excited on going on these trips.

I have lots and lots of good memories of holidays, days out, we used to visit my nan and granddads every Saturday, there was a lot of nice memories made on those days playing games, helping my nan with the dinner.

I cannot find the words to say how much my dad is missed, there is nothing that can fill that hole. My dad passing away has left us all devastated, we will always love and miss him, he will never be forgotten he was such a big part of my life. I miss you dad, with lots of love, Lynette xx

**This is my statement to tell you just how lovely Roy Breaker-Rolfe was, by Marie Findlay - His daughter in law.**

I honestly don't know where to begin or how to put in words how much of a hole in our hearts there is.

I have been with Roy's son for nearly 21 years and we have 2 wonderful children aged 13 and 15.

So I knew Roy for 18 years and heard lots of wonderful stories of Byron and his dad. Byron isn't able to write this statement because he can't even say the words that his dad has died.

It's raw since the day, nothing will heal him.

When growing up Byron told me he spent so much time with his dad, Byron struggled and school was a big issue for him and social anxiety, so his dad supported him and took him to work with him some days. He was taught so many life skills and had his dogs by his side. He tells me he had the best childhood and being with his dad got him through it all. Roy was such a hands on person and had so many skills when it came to gardening, building skills and working on cars. All of these were taught to Byron and now he can take his hand to most things. They bonded so much, spending all that extra time together and working on projects together.

There were so many stories of him messing around and playing jokes, so laid back and a family man.

Since I have known him I can say the same.

Every time we went round to their house Byron would be warned 'not to start' or mess around and wind us up. Lynne would say the same to Roy because we knew what they were like when they got together. This never ever lasted and within minutes they'll be messing around and making jokes. Roy would always find the sweets and chocolates before dinner and keep asking when dinners ready. Both pretending they're starving. Then when my boys grew up our youngest <sup>(personal/sensi)</sup> would join in too. We joked that you could tell they were Breaker-Rolfe's! They were just like peas in a pod.

We used to laugh so much and Christmas times were fun, playing games and Roy always cheated at games, he didn't like to lose even against the kids. So competitive but in a fun way, he was like a little child around his grandchildren and loved playing with them.

I remember one Christmas we played beer pong with we didn't have beer so I think it was vodka or gin, because of their competitiveness Byron and Roy both wanted to win but all they won were headaches :)

On days out he was first to offer treats to his grandkids and always pulled out a handful of change. No matter what he had cash all the time. The boys always knew to go to grandad because he was such a softy with them and loved spoiling them.

One holiday we went to Norfolk and hired a boat for the day, I remember Roy was the first to drive it all excited. All 4 boys loved it and they were in their element together while me and Lynne sat at the back watching. Such an amazing day.

When we were at the beach, it was Roy who took the kids in the sea for the first time. [Our son] was in his element with his boogie board and grandad taking him so far out. He thought it was amazing.

Roy had this huge love of all animals, he would take in any wild animals that were injured and nurse them back to health, this has passed on through the generations. I've been told so many stories of how they helped ducks, partridges, birds and anything that needed help.

They also had dogs their whole life and he was so committed to them. They lived the best life going to work with him every day. Byron had pet rats, finches, ferrets etc. and since we got together this has all passed to me and we have our own little zoo now too.

About 5 years ago I was messaged and asked to take on some abandoned chickens and it was Roy who convinced us. He loved coming to see our pets too and we have their African grey parrot living with us Jasper. So we still hear Roy's voice everyday through him. He was taught to burp and make funny noises, as well as so much more. When Lynne leaves our house he always says 'see you later' in Roy's voice. It's lovely to still hear him and the humour that was always there.

Heaven gained an angel in Roy.

A much loved and missed Dad and Grandad xxxx