

Some Abiding Memories of Alfred

*Spoken at the Celebration of Life Service for Charles Alfred Gallagher (1912-2011)
by Christina Golden, 7 October 2011*

I have some memories of Alfred that I would like to share with you.

I first met Alfred 44 years ago when I was a teenager, and I've always been impressed with how incredibly kind, generous and loyal Alfred was towards his family and friends.

One example of his kindness was in 1970 when he rescued a Damsel in distress. I had taken a bus to Aust Services on the M4 to meet a friend of Dave's who was supposed to be giving me a lift to Dave's University. Unfortunately, the bus dropped me on a pitch-black road and I had to walk a mile through the pouring rain and darkness to find the meeting place. I waited for an hour and my lift had still not arrived and I was drenched and frozen. The only telephone number I could remember was for Dave's parents, so I rang them to get a message to Dave. Alfred answered and without hesitation he said, "Wait there and I'll come and get you".

Another example of Alfred's kindness and generosity was in 1969 when he was in St Mary's hospital for surgery. The hospital was close to where I used to work, so I would call in to visit him during my lunch-hours. Just before he was discharged Alfred asked me to type envelopes addressed to each of the nurses and Doctors that attended him. Then he put a one-pound note in the envelopes as a thank you present to each of them (and one-pound was worth a lot of money in those days).

Also, I recall Alfred's incredible tolerance and patience. 51 Belmont Road was always open house for his children, and all their friends, and various relatives. Occasionally, Hazel would get overwhelmed with the crowd of us and throw us all out, but in a good-natured way of course. On the other hand, Alfred never ever complained or said a word but would just go about his chores, carefully weaving his way through the crowd of kids there, carrying his tools and pieces of wood.

Finally, I remember an amusing incident when Dave was home from University where he was studying chemistry. We were all having lunch in the Breakfast room at Belmont Road. Dave had put the Sauce bottle down without screwing the top back on. Alfred picked it up to put some on his lunch and gave it a hearty shake - brown sauce all over the wall! Dave laughed and said "Dad, you should always check the top before shaking", but Alfred quickly replied "and a Chemist should always screw the top back on".

I'll finish there and leave the last word with Alfred.