



Peter John Withers
29-06-1947 to 07-09-2022

Peter was born on 29th June 1947 in Birmingham and was adopted by Lillian and Frank Withers. They had met in Greece at the end of the war and had married within six weeks of meeting.

Lillian had been born in India and her family scattered across the world after the war. She moved to Whitehouse Common Road, Sutton Coldfield where Frank returned to running the family business HW Withers Tools that had been set-up by his father.

In the early 1950's the family moved to a self-designed bungalow on a large plot in Rectory Road with room for an all-important garage and workshop where Frank could indulge his passion for engineering and cars.

Before serving as a Captain during the war, he had taken part in an early RAC Rally and had driven a three wheeled Morgan. This enthusiasm was inevitably transferred to Peter and his brother Michael, who went on to compete on his Yamahas on the Isle of Man for 25 years.

Peter's only foray on two wheels was on his 13th Birthday when he persuaded his father to buy a Royal Enfield 2 stroke which he raced around the garden. As soon as he reached his 17th birthday, he quickly passed his test, sold the bike and bought a late 1930's Fiat Topolino.

He joined Castle Bromwich Car Club, and with his father spent most weekends doing trials, tests and rallies. He later went on to join various clubs, such as the Dunlop Motor Club, 432 Solihull Motor Club, Riley Motor Club of Western Australia, The Four-Wheel drive club of WA, and The Chrome Bumper Club here in Kalamunda. He has made many close friends in these clubs.

Peter attended the then newly opened Fairfax School in Sutton Coldfield where he met Susan Partlow and then attended a Business College in Wednesbury. It has been lovely to hear that Peter was recently reunited with his Fairfax school friend, Gina, who has now also emigrated to Perth. Gina has been a fantastic support to Meiling since Peter passed away.

Peter and Susan moved to a small house Lichfield, married and soon after David arrived in June 1967. In the late sixties the family went on a Spanish package holiday with Susan's best friend Avril, her husband Ainslie and daughter Joanne.

In those days there was a restriction on how much currency could be taken out of the UK and Peter and Ainslie were stopped by the police for racing down the wrong side of the road in their hired Seat 600s. No real surprise there! After a night in jail and subsequent fine, the holiday money was wiped out. They were not popular!

Peter now was working as the third generation in the family firm and was driving his new Mini Cooper company car. In April 1970 his world fell apart when a tired driver fell asleep at the wheel between Sutton and Lichfield, crashing head on, it killed Susan and put Peter in hospital.

Peter, David and Cindy the Cairn Terrier moved into Rectory Road where Lillian and Frank could support Peter to rebuild his life. He built a dormer bungalow next door on West View Road and immersed himself with motorsport and converted a tired Mini Cooper into a rallycross car using scaffolding poles to fabricate a roll cage.

Most weekends would involve packing a tent and hitching a trailer to the Moskvich works delivery van and driving to an event somewhere, usually a field somewhere up the M6. with our extended motorsport family which included his great friends Geoff & Sheila, Reg & Chris, Ron & June, Bob & Dot, Jerry & Lorna

Peter's everyday car at this stage was a yellow MGB GT called Rufus. He met Judith Williams, who was at a party with her cousin Diane, and they married on Valentine's Day 1972 before jetting off to the Bulgarian Black Sea. The MG was sold for a more practical Triumph Dolomite Sprint, however, this proved troublesome with so many British Leyland style faults and it was swapped for a BMW 2002 in which we went on a tour of the Republic of Ireland.

The trophy cabinet continued to fill up with silverware from Rally Cross, Auto Cross, Auto Sprint, Hill Climbs and Auto Tests and his claim to fame was making the front page of the Birmingham Evening Mail when he rolled end over end 7 times during a race.

Shaken and nursing a few bruises, and armed with a hammer and fibreglass filler he was racing again the following weekend. However, the sport was now becoming more expensive and less fun. This and a growing family, Adam was born in May 1974, ended his Rallycross career.

In 1976 the family moved Lower Bentley deep in the Worcestershire countryside where Peter immersed himself in village life. He swapped the BMW for one then another Lancia Beta. Lovely cars but built with rust, in fact, the only dealer that would take the Beta in part exchange was Bristol Street Ford. So, he took delivery of a Ford Escort RS 2000 which was quickly modified with a roll cage and ported cylinder head.

The garages contained a Mini Clubman 1275GT that he used for tests and sprints and a TVR Griffiths project that he swapped for double glazing. He would pick David up from the village hall youth club on a Tuesday evening and be encouraged to drop the clutch and draw No 11s down the road.

The village hall was also the venue for village cricket. However, his career was curtailed when he skidded on a fresh cow pat - Slippery Mid On. He tore ligaments in his left leg and was reduced to having to borrow an Automatic Rover P6. Apparently automatic gears are the work of the devil but the Rover's leather smelt lovely inside.

Around this time Gemma was born in Bromsgrove Hospital, the staff there were amused to see him being pushed around in a wheel chair by a pregnant Judith. Once his clutch leg had recovered, he bought a Saab 900 Turbo, and we had many family holidays in that car including regular trips to Woolacombe in Devon and one of his favourite places on earth, the English Lake District. Over the years he climbed virtually every peak.

Another memorable holiday was a RV tour of California where the RV broke down almost every day, and we remember being towed through Fresno sitting on the back of the massive tow truck. The following year we hired a narrowboat and joined his friends Geoff and Sheila around the Warwickshire Ring. He eventually bought his own narrowboat called Nutty Noah which, when he later emigrated, was sold to David who has owned boats ever since.

Peter left the family home in the mid 1980's and set-up home with Mary Keating in a large Victorian house in Edgbaston that had been owned by the Thomas Cook family. This was the venue for several memorable parties with his many friends and members of his masonic lodge. Most parties would always involve a visit from the local police following complaints so any issues were usually solved by pouring them a beer. It was at one of these parties that Mary and Peter announced that they had secretly married and surprised people with envelopes containing a copy of the marriage certificate.

Peter and Mary went on many road trips, taking his beloved Porsche 911 SC Targa around France and Italy, and also visited our cousins on a road trip in the USA.

The Porsche was kept for high days and holidays and he had a string of everyday work cars ranging from the mundane, MG Metro and VW Golf Diesel to the more exciting VW Golf GTI and a lovely Red Alfa Romeo 75 Twin Spark which he took for a test drive with Adam and

the dealer Mario Deliotto by all accounts Mario was a little shaken by the rev-limiter and opposite lock action - a tactic Peter used to get a heavy discount off the price, we think.

It was during this period that Peter rescued a poor lurcher dog that had been locked in a ladies toilet opposite Withers Tools, so we had to think of a name, David had suggested LuLu after the Scottish singer, however, he was over-ruled and Doglet she was, embarrassing when calling for her in Smethwick Lightwoods Park. She became a wonderful family pet and would only growl at the bank manager from under Peter's office desk - and she could smell out a policeman from 100 yards.

She was also good at crime prevention when she bit a man trying to steal the Porsche when he put his hand through the Targa roof. He hadn't seen her as her coat matched the tan leather upholstery.

Alice was born on Christmas day 1989, Peter would have loved to have a closer relationship with Alice, however the relationship with Mary unfortunately broke down soon after her birth. Later in life it was Alice who encouraged him to find out about his birth mother and family. His mother had given birth to him late in life and had sadly passed away in the 1970's, however he did find an elder sister living in Cheshire called Sheila and I am very pleased to say that they became very close visiting each-other in their respective countries.

In the early 1990s Peter sold his business and emigrated to Perth to be with Bronwyn Bennett, who he had met whilst trekking in Nepal. After a number of DIY tasks including tiling the Swimming Pool for Bronwyn's parents, who incidentally owned the Last Drop Tavern here in Kalamunda., he got a job working for Dunlop. This was the first time he had ever worked for someone else and the job came with a Ford Falcon V6 as a company car, which was known as Henry.

Peter soon approached Iscar, an Israeli carbide tip manufacturer, that he used to deal with back in the UK. He negotiated taking on the WA Franchise which he grew massively over the next 15 years and really thrived on the back to basics and direct no nonsense Australia style customer contact. He later also added a WA franchise for Dimac a Leicester based company in the UK.

His narrow boating fix was replaced by packing the spinnaker on a neighbour's ocean racer.

Adam moved in with Bronwyn and Peter in Daglish for a year in 1992 to work with alongside Peter who lent him a now classic BMW 2002 to run around in.

Bronwyn bought Peter a Riley RME 55 from Stephen Sneesby and they joined the Riley Club of Western Australia. The Riley has been driven here today by Stephen and is looking for its fourth owner in 60 years. He had been a very active and respected member of the Riley Club ever since and many members attended the memorial service for him before the cremation.

There were some amazing trips in that Riley, such as with Adam in the year 2000 on the Riley Rally to Alice Springs, which was great fun, along with Greg Morris who had become Peter's best friend. David and Adam would like to thank Greg since Dad's passing.

Bronwyn and Peter spent some lovely years together in Subiaco and Daglish, doing a lot of travelling including the USA and UK. Lillian and Frank thought the world of Bronwyn and visited WA where Lillian could also visit her relatives in Albany whilst Frank and Peter could play with cars and visit Peter's customers.

Peter was exceptionally lucky to survive a heart attack when he was 50. If he hadn't lived so close to Perth General Hospital the outcome could have been very different. Soon after we were saddened to hear that Bronwyn and Peter had separated.

He then lived in a house in Guildford, with skid marks on the roof due to being on Perth Airport final approach, so seeking a quieter life, he moved up the hill to Kalamunda and bought a massive shed with an outside house, ideal to increase his fleet of classics. These included his Riley RME, Triumph TR6, Scimitar GTE (all outside), Morgan, Riley Monaco, Riley Elf and probably many others.

Whilst walking his beloved West Highland Terrier, Taggart, he got chatting to Meiling, as he would say "to cut a long story short" they became inseparable and married in 2012. Peter has told everyone that these have been the happiest times of his life despite many early difficulties, especially with Australian immigration.

Meiling and Peter have travelled to China to meet her family, to the UK to see Peter's family and most recently to Thailand in 2019 for David's wedding in Thailand. Then Peter helped Meiling set-up a thriving Chinese Massage Business here in Kalamunda.

In 2018 he ticked off a major bucket list item when he, together with Adam, David and David's wife Nam visited Tamil Nadu in India – the birthplace of his mother. We travelled on the Nilgiris Mountain Rack and pinion railway where his Maternal grandfather had been the chief engineer.

He also loved off road bush Trips, firstly in a Landrover Discovery with an off-road camper trailer when he took David to the Helena and Aurora Ranges and Adam to some sparsely populated "Gafa". He was less impressed with his Suzuki Vitara and swapped it for his Mitsubishi Pajero which has never been raced or rallied!

One of Peter's favourite songs was Spandau Ballet's Through the Barricades. So tonight, when you get home, download that song, pour a single malt, which was his favourite tipple and toast Peter.

Thank you, David and Adam Withers.