

IN·THANKSGIVING FOR·JOHN

A gathering of his friends and family to
celebrate the life of John Murphy

1935-2017



12 noon · Thursday 29 June 2017
St James's Church · 197 Piccadilly · London W1



Born on this day in 1935 to Bernard and Ness in Perth, Western Australia. Sisters, Suzanne and Carol. Attended St Mary's Mount primary school. Worked on Bamboo Springs sheep station in the North West between ages 13 and 18, and then managed shearing teams. Was told to get an education before he went mad, so read Traditional Formal Logic and Classical History at the University of Western Australia, 1959-62. Married Pandora; sons Paul, Adam, Domenic and Ben. Started a business treating houses for white ant infestation, and then managed a home for disturbed adolescents. Came to England *in extremis* in 1977. Never left. Samaritan volunteer 1978-2015. Met Lesley in 1981. They married four months later. Joined by two daughters: Alexandra and Libby. Developed a practice as a therapist and workshop leader. Taught assertiveness to the Bank of England (really). Cultivated a misanthropic air which fooled some but not all - at least not those who mattered to him. Prized real communication and so was adept at avoiding groups ('*Sorry, I have a subsequent engagement*'). Exemplary human being. Terrific friend. An inspired, original, husband, father, counsellor and healer of bruised hearts. A fount of real enthusiasms. A treasurer and sharer of insights and simple joys. A teacher. A disciplined swimmer. A walker. A wearer of exotic headgear. Occasional professional grump. A magician in turning his own experiences of adversity into help for others. A "*great disappointment to myself*" and a great, great gift to so many of us.

“He was a true one-off, and showed me great love and support on many occasions.”



“I consider my introduction to John to be one of the most valuable of my life, and take deep comfort in knowing that as time passed I was able to consider him my friend. I hope you can take solace in the wisdom and kindness he shared with me and others...”



“It was always a pleasure to sit with him and share his latest find – a book – often a Greek or Roman classic – or a quirky postcard. I still have a battered book of Zen Masters sayings he gave me.”



“Your dad was the most wonderful and kind man who knew so much of what being human is and was gently able to share that. He enlightened me and so many others through listening, through poetry, through an enjoyment of all around him.”



Welcome and introduction

Hugh Valentine

Lake Isle of Innisfree, W B Yeats

Read by Lesley and Alex Murphy

Tribute

Lesley Murphy

Tribute

Alex Murphy

Ode to a Nightingale, John Keats

Read by Libby Nightingale

John the Samaritan

A colleague from the Central London Branch of Samaritans

Ave verum corpus, W A Mozart

Performed by the St John of Jerusalem Festival Chorus

Remembrances

Many here will have memories of John. There is opportunity now for brief contributions from your seat. Please indicate and a microphone will be brought to you.

Donde Pongo lo Hallado?" *"Where shall I put what I have found?"*

Performed by Joan Shenton and Corina Poore

Tribute

David Moore

Jerusalem, words by William Blake *Please stand*

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

John's perennial wisdom, on the duty to care for oneself

A brief recording of the voice we so much miss

Amazing Grace

Played by Finn Hagan

A Blessing (of which John may have approved, at least in part)

Please stand

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of Her hand.

Blow the wind Southerly, sung by Kathleen Ferrier *We remain standing*

This piece marks the end of our formal gathering. Please stay for refreshments and food and the opportunity to share memories of John, to renew acquaintances, and to make new ones

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Organist/pianist Ben Socrates · Piper Finn Hagan

“John was a wonderful person, full of life, and I will never forget how he taught me to enjoy the little things in life. He helped me through difficult times and I will always be thankful.”

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“He has been such a loyal and kind friend for many decades and his departure will leave a hole in many lives, all touched by his generosity and humour. I shall miss his calls, always ending with, “I will get out of your hair now.” I wish he were still in it.”

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“He would always give me a cheerful hello or tell me a joke whenever we met. He was a true gentleman. On rainy days I’ll wear my sou’wester, think of John wearing his, and it’ll make me smile.”

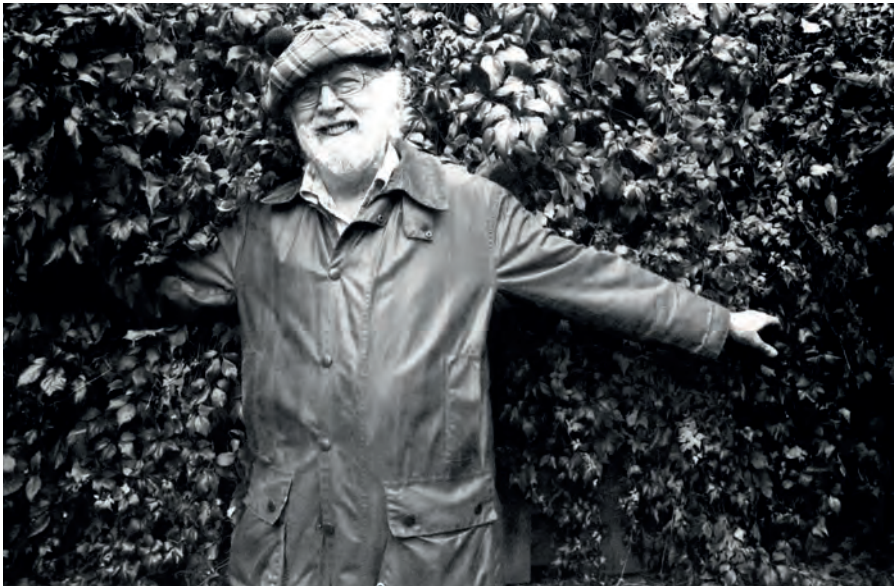


John’s sisters Sue and Carol remember: *“John washing the dishes. The saucepans had long hollow handles. His favourite prank as the “washer-upper” was to fill the handles with water. We were the drier-uppers and would pick up the saucepan to commence drying and get doused with the water that cascaded from the saucepan handle! John derived a lot of humour from that oft repeated prank...”*

“John fixed me. He fixed me with herbal tea and spongy sofa; with battered books lent and returned - cherry-picked off packed shelves for special purpose, always with me in mind. He fixed me with easy listening and wry smiles and sage advice lightly put. With wacky waistcoats, crooked staircase, and with a veritable rainforest of potted plants. His answerphone messages fixed me. His ozzy sunshine down the line. His time. “We homosapiens are a mixed-up, hotch-potch, everything and anything old species” he told me. “We’re all murderers and lovers, sinners and saints; we’re madder than snakes”.



“He has been a precious mentor to me through good times and bad.”



Memorable John-isms

*“Its a bleeding outrage!” | “Pre-cisely” | “Bless my soul!”
“Have you been out yet? It’s the most magical day you ever saw...”
“Bah humbug!” | “That’s magic” | “I say, old thing” | “What a heck
of a good idea” | “Well, I’d better get out of your hair...”*



*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto —
“I am human, and nothing of that which is
human is alien to me.”*

Terence, Roman playwright, 195-159 BC