

My Mate.

I first met Derek many years ago at 11.30p.m on a Saturday night at Southminster as he helped to load all the equipment and scenery back into the caravan after a Belles & Beaux show for Charity, although he had only come along to chauffeur Peggy..

The Group were formed some short time before and included Peggy Stark with her interpretations of Marie Lloyd .

This was to be the start of a longstanding friendship, not only with Peggy & Derek but also with our respective Families.

From that first night we met it was inevitable that Derek would get bitten by the Thespian bug and sure enough he became a Member of the Old Tyme Musichall as he was never one to resist a challenge of something new or daunting.

At that time I was a Music man but always spent a lot of time with Derek especially as he pulled his Magic Medicine Bottle from his pocket during the interval, for a sip of the golden courage.

As a friend he asked me to carry out many tasks at his house in order to please his darling Peggy, and I think the Patio and rose arbour were the deepest in their affection of any work I carried out, that was until his latest favourite automated Garage Door which he held in great esteem.

We often talked of his times as a foot ball referee and how, at the height of his career, he had actually worked in a game as linesman to Bill Rush, who I had known during the forties as my Mum's milkman and took me to my only Professional football match. We accompanied each other to the man's funeral some years later and Derek introduced me to Ken Aston who blew the last whistle.

Back to entertainment Derek liked nothing better than a new challenge and after being co-opted into the Group themes he was hooked on a Duet with June , Me and My Gal, and no doubt every time he sang that song Peggy was his inspiration.

He often spoke to me about his work with the Church and sometimes asked for advice but I think last Xmas when he told me he was to be the Dame in the Pantomime, that took the biscuit.

I know that it took a lot of effort and time for him to carry the role with success but once again his aim was the enjoyment shown on the faces of his audience.

Always the one to make life easier for someone less fortunate, even though he himself had seen lifes ups and downs.

In conclusion I would say this is my memory of Derek

**A**micable

**F**ulfilling

**R**eliable

**I**nstinctive

**E**ffervescent

**N**atural

**D**evoted and dedicated

***Rest in Peace***