Trevor's Song

When I was 17, I took up Long Distance Swimming and travelled around a lot with friends to various competitions in England, Ireland and Wales. At that time, this sport was more for older folk and consequently, I travelled with friends who were generally twice my age. In a way, this was great, as I could often stay at their houses when I subsequently travelled to swim meets alone on my motor cycle. In fact, I would often turn-up at their houses unannounced for a weekend visit !

Many of these friends were in Yorkshire and they also had children of my age, so I made many real friendships with these folk.

One of these families was Norah and Trevor Smith from Huddersfield. We sang "Three Wheels on My Wagon" as a comedy group at their 25th Wedding anniversary on 10th August 1966, and it was fun in 1991 to send them a cartoon picture of this event for their 50th anniversary - my how time flies !

Apart from being the Morecambe Bay champion in 1948, Trevor was an excellent all-round distance swimmer and was still swimming major competitions when I first met him in the early 1960's. Trevor was one of the seven founding members of the British Long Distance Swimming Association (BLDSA) and remained their Treasurer for 26 years. While he helped on a couple of swims on the English Channel, his own aspirations were thwarted by lack of money after the death of his potential sponsor.

He served in the RAF in the war and travelled on a merchant ship, the Windsor Castle, that was torpedoed. He was successful in rescuing one of his colleagues; however, he later jokingly reported that he lost his ukelee during the episode !

Trevor was a folk singer and musician of no mean abilities and both he and his family would lead those who were interested in singing after the annual dinners of the BLDSA. These celebrations are held in the off-season for swimming and always went on to the wee hours of the morning - breaking-up in time to give all participants just enough time to grab a couple of hours sleep before the Annual General Meeting was held! The photographs of Trevor, his son Anton and daughter Veronica, were taken in 1991 at one of these sessions in Doncaster, England.

Trevor was a great friend and family-man. He and his wife, Norah, were so friendly to me. So it was a great shock to hear of his death at age 79 on New Year's Eve in December of 1996; however, the situation of his death did make me think "Way to go, Trevor !".

As a Fitness Nut, I've often contemplated *croaking* in Old Age after a long swim or a training session - while others have their own fantasy for such a *way to go !*

Anyway, as it turns out, Trevor was with his family on New Year's Eve - singing as a family and enjoying themselves. Apparently, after he finished a song, he carefully laid down his guitar and then died. A man can not be at greater peace with the world - happily retired with your wife, a good life, a zillion real friends, New Year's Eve, and singing with your family around you . . .

I've been trying to get material together for nine months now to write to Norah. Oddly enough, it took a really stressful time in my own life to cause me to look for something from which I could gain support. ***Trevor's Song*** helped me channel my own personal problems, at least for a while, into something positive and good.

I struggled with some words of poetry - but his life seemed to call for a song - and so I struggled with various tunes in my head; however, not being able to write music, I decided that I would have to use an existing tune if I was ever to remember how it went ! I suddenly realized that the closest thing to what I was trying to sing was *"We'll rant and we'll roar like true Newfoundlanders"* and so, during a sore and lonely car ride from Toronto, the words were crafted to fit the tune.

Thanks Trevor for everything:

The Music

The Friendship, and

A Family of Love.

Trevor's Song

Sung to the tune of *The Ryans and Pittmans* which is, perhaps,
better known as *We'll rant and we'll roar like true Newfoundlanders*

Chorus:
We'll sing about England and counties of Ireland,
From Scotland and Wales to Calais and France.
There's songs of the land and there's more about fishing,
From Mingolay boatmen to the Lord of the Dance.

Give me a pint and my uke' and my Family,
My sons and my daughters, my wife and my friends.
We'll sing you a song of the days that are long gone,
We'll sing them together and sing them alone.

We'll sing about laughter and stories of Freedom,
Of bonds that are built among family and friends.
We'll sing of our wives and the hardships we've weathered,
Of the birth of the world and the day that it ends.

We'll sing about war and our days in the army,
Of gypsies and goblins and Princes and Queens.
We'll sing of the unions with the passion of Seeger,
Weaving stories of Peace with the world's Strangest Dream.

My tunes and my songs will take on different voices.
My body is tired and is leaving this scene,
But I will live on with the men who were Fishers
We'll be singing along there on Fiddler's Green.

The room now is quiet, the glasses are empty,
No strings are vibrating, no voices are raised,
For my body's laid out with my uke' and my guitar,
We're each put to rest in a casket or case.

I've played my last tune, and I've sung my last song.
There'll be no more encores, the concert is done.
But my music and voices will echo in memories,
For the Lord is a calling me, calling me Home.

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