

Retirement for my father was not a time to slow down. My husband likened him to a spinning top (and said if I said that, you would know exactly what I meant).

A familiar feature of his behaviour as we were growing up, was the rattling of keys and coins in his pocket, when he felt it was time to move on to the next thing.

On a rare occasion we went to the cinema as a family, we saw Man of All Seasons (not exactly light entertainment) he walked out after the first five minutes, he said the credits went on too long! To make it worse, after having to walk in front of a whole row of people to get out, he came back for his hat!

We grew up with the feeling that time was not to be wasted, and he certainly got things done, even or despite sometimes traumatic events at home. This continued up to the very last day of his active life,

On that day he not only finalised and sent off the letter re Greoge Bell that Victoria mentioned, which involved some long phone calls.. but later in the day he was to go to tea with a great friend; but before going he made and baked a loaf of bread to take with him. He came back, practised the organ in the church for the following day...and that probably wasn't all. ...and there that large volume of Dante, in Italian, by the chair he sat on in the evening

But in the last couple of years of his life we all saw a real change. Not a slowing down necessarily, but a mellowing, in its most beautiful sense.

Prior to this, a lot of his day to day activities felt they were performed out of duty, gardening was a necessary chore, even, somedays when I called in at 3 Little Cloister, I would feel he came down to see me ...because he "should spend a little time with Helen"

But in this mellowing we witnessed experiences become deeply felt.

He took us to see a production of King Lear. Joy was sitting next to him. When she turned to him at the end, tears were pouring down his face.

The garden became a place of wonder, he would email us photographs of flowers and was deeply interested and genuinely excited if he found a plant he didn't recognise.

He would listen to music with hands clasped round his knees, head slightly forward with wrapt attention on his face, sometimes not able to get a grip on his voice after.

He was happy to sit in discussion long after a meal was finished.

When we visited he would pull us to him in a strong hug,

He wanted to spend time with close friends and revisit places that had meant a great deal to him, and travelled long journeys across Europe and up to Scotland to do so.

I went with him to Munich (a city where he had spent a year re cataloguing Greek Poetry after the war) and a little episode on the journey made me aware how different he was. At Brussels we left the station to find somewhere to eat lunch, (he had studied the violin in Brussels before university) it was a Monday, everything was closed, the streets were empty but piled with uncollected rubbish. But Papa seemed unaffected and didn't seem to share my misgivings, his attention was on a few tufts of pink blossom on a spindly single tree growing out of the pavement, he turned to me with a beatific smile and said " isn't the blossom beautiful"!

The sense of service, servanthood, shown to us in the acts of Jesus' Last Supper, the washing of the feet, the preparation of the table, the sharing of bread and wine, acts that Anthony had performed in one way or another over the years seemed to have become embedded in his psyche.

A year before he died I had a solo exhibition at Oxford. He insisted on taking responsibility for the refreshments and catering at the opening. On the day of the Preview he came up to me with a glint of excitement in his eye and said could he come dressed as the waiter.

I was horrified, and told him severely I wanted him to come as my father..

But when he died, there was no doubt in my and Victoria's mind that he had slipped on ahead, to prepare the place for us.