

## Edward Joseph O'Hara 3.12.1923 - 24.10.2006

Born in Larkhall, Lanarkshire in 1923 to Francis O'Hara and Frances Rynn, Edward (Ted) was one of 8 children. It was a fairly stark childhood as a member of a large family whose breadwinner was a miner in harsh times. Whilst the majority of housing in Glasgow was still based upon the tenements, Raploch Road in Larkhall appears to at least be based on single floor terraced properties which, whilst not spacious, at least did not have the slum conditions of the capital's alternative.

Ted spent his early years education at St Mary's Primary School directly opposite the family house.



Return to Raploch Road  
early 2000s



By the turn of the decade a much greater financial opportunity presented itself to Francis O'Hara and he moved south to Sheffield to work in the coalfields of Orgreave and Beighton. The family followed on in the early 1930's and Ted completed his education at St Joseph's Catholic Primary school in Handsworth, a walk of up to 4 miles each way every day !

It was at St Joseph's that Ted first set eyes on Iris Pridmore, later to be his wife, but his initial interests were well and truly rebuffed! Even to the deliberate marking of his school work wrong when work was exchanged within the class for marking.

On leaving school at age 14, he joined his father down the pit, (probably at Beighton but not confirmed) but family anecdotes say that this did not last for a great number of years as he had a problem with a shift manager and quit (without telling his father). His father did back him when the shift manager confronted him.

Edward managed to avoid call up for the army during the war years and served only his national service two year period from 1947 to 1949 as a Physical Training Instructor (PTI) in the Highland Light Infantry (HLI) being stationed in Aberdeen, Aldershot, Fort George and Edinburgh. Whilst serving as a Sergeant, he excelled at many sports including football and made appearances for Inverness Caledonian Thistle, Elgin and Nairn.

Married in 1947, his first son was born as he came out of the army in 1949. With standards of Career Advice sadly well below modern times, Ted was left to find his own employment and managed to get work with selling ice cream for Molinaris Ice Cream company in Beighton. Renting his own ice cream van and buying the ice cream, he spent long hours to be able to make a living.

The Northern Strip Mining Company began in the early 1960s and Edward obtained a job with them as a bulldozer driver.



Nothing much else is known from that point onwards until he moved on to take a position as Foreman with Thorn and Son (Garages) Ltd based in Darnall, Sheffield. He became a trusted and respected worker as the below reference states.

Known for mentoring new workers, in particular two gentleman who came to the UK from Pakistan, he endured the hard work that creating concrete and forming gargaes entailed, even having been buried under a load of sand on one occasion weakening his back for future years.

When the company closed in the early 1970s, the manager, Mr Fred Unwin wrote the reference for him which helped him to obtain employment at Swift Levick and Sons as a magnet making operative.

68, NURSERY AVE.,  
BEXLEYHEATH,  
KENT.  
Tel. 6412.

To whom it may concern:

For the past 6/7 years Mr. O'Hara has been in the employ of my company and in that time has shewn himself to be a thoroughly trustworthy, enthusiastic and capable worker. He is a good driver and fork lift operator, with a very good knowledge of concrete mixers and vibrating tables, and an ability to maintain same in good working order. He has always been prepared to accept responsibility and take charge when necessary.

The reason for his redundancy is the complete closure of the Sheffield Branch and centralisation at our Erith Branch.

I am sure that who, or whatever, his future employer, or employment, may be, he will always give complete loyalty and satisfaction.

Yours faithfully,

*W. G. Linnin*

manage. *J. Thom & Sons Ltd*  
*Bexleyheath. (Now retired)*

"Swift Levick was founded in 1883 by Thomas Swift Levick and a Mr M'Gillivray. The company produced high quality crucible steel and, after the initial partnership was dissolved, Thomas Levick was joined by his three sons. In 1912, one of the sons, Henry, decided to start manufacturing permanent magnets, which had nearly all been manufactured in Germany until then. Swift Levick was acquired by the Duport Group in 1978, who sold the firm on to the Magnetic Materials Group three years later. The company was acquired by Outokumpu, the Finnish group best known for producing stainless steel, in 1989."

Edward completed his working life here until his retirement around 1985. This was manual labour as he had already experienced at Thorns and in later years he fulfilled continuous 12 hour shift rotas.

Throughout his life, he never lost his love of Scotland, even though his physical departure had been at such an early age. As funds were not in abundance throughout his working life, holidays were limited to camping trips, invariably north of the border. Many trips were undertaken as extended family holidays, firstly with the cars that he owned and later with a series of Bedford Dormobiles, one of which was later adapted to replace seats with coffin like bunks that doubled as storage and beds.

As time went on, the tents were replaced with a small 4-berth caravan until in the late 1980s, both Ted and Iris were introduced to coach travel, firstly with a pilgrimage to Lourdes as a Ruby wedding present and after that trips both in the UK and Europe.

In 2001, he suffered a heart attack while a fulltime carer for Iris. He recovered well from this, but it triggered a series of events that changed his life. Iris was forced to move out of the family home and into care. Ted insisted on staying at home to look after himself, something he did successfully with a little help in shopping and transport from his children and grandchildren.



In 2003 he celebrated his 80th birthday and although enjoying the family meal at The Moorlands pub, Oowler Bar, as with all other events he missed having Iris with him to share the fun.

Edward suffered another heart attack on October 24th, 2006 which took his life and was buried at St Joseph's RC church on November 3rd. He had been an integral part, along with Iris, in maintaining the church via the choir, pastoral organisations, Mill Hill Missionaries and many more and so it was only fitting that his burial should also take place there.