

Tributes to
**ANTHONY RICHARD
DAWSON**



Tribute by Jon Harris – Friend

Seeing you all here is a great testimony to Richard and how many lives he touched.

Richard had a great many friends and he had a special form of relationship with his friends – he formed very deep friendships. Several of his friends have traveled a long way to be here today – including Fletch from Canada and Nick and Bea from Holland. Not all of his friends could be here and I know that Nick and Victoria are instead attending a memorial service for Richard taking place right now in San Diego.

Richard's friends could ask anything of him and he could (and quite often would) ask anything of his friends. I'm going to read you an e-mail that Stuart (a friend of Richard's from University) wrote a few weeks ago;

“Richard was the star around which we all seemed to orbit. No matter what our particular trajectory we all seemed to end up back at Chez Dawson at some time or another. I will certainly miss him and his amazing ability to get me doing his housework whenever I set foot in the place.

I still remember one of his BBQ's when I went and bought beer, food, toilet roll, a barbecue, assembled the barbie with Roj (without instructions as instructions are for wimps according to Mr Dawson.), washed the crockery, made salad, cooked the food and cleaned up afterwards.

Some might call me a mug, but personally I like to think of myself as his friend, and he mine. I'd do it all again given the chance.”

Richard and I met at Southampton University in 1988. We were on the same course – electronics. From soon after we met I was impressed by him. He had a computer program published while he was still at school, which made me somewhat in awe of him at the time. We have been friends since then, and have souped up cars together, helped each other with University work and shared a house together for three years.

I remember one very hot summers afternoon after my car had failed its MOT rather badly. We spent the whole afternoon at the scrap yard, boiling hot and filthy trying to extract an axle from an elderly Fiesta so that we could get my car repaired. I'll never forget that afternoon.

Richard introduced me and Jacks. – Jonnieee and Jackieee. During the first year at University we lived in a sixteen storey tower block. Richard and myself, Roy, Wendy and Jacks. I lived on the sixth floor and Richard on the first. A school friend of mine lived on the first floor next door to Richard and so that was how I was first introduced to Richard. Within a couple of weeks Richard had befriended some girls on the fifth floor including Jacks, and he introduced me to them.

Richard was the best man at our wedding and my best friend.

When Jacks and I got married, I introduced Richard just before he stood up to give his best man's speech, by saying that according to my 'complete wedding organiser' traditionally the best mans speech is the **highlight** of the reception. I made him sweat, and recently, at the wedding of a mutual friend he said that he would make me sweat when I was his best man. Instead he's making me sweat now.

We will all have our own lists of things that remind us of Richard. I've made a short list of things that remind me of him.

Music; The Petshop Boys. Erasure. Oasis – Champagne Supernova. Top Gun – I lent him my Top Gun CD more than ten years ago and haven't had it back since! Kate Bush. Abba – who can forget Richard bopping to Dancing Queen! Robbie Williams.

Knee operations – several - and Richard insisting that we watch the video! Demands for 'strokes' – from anyone – including me! Cars – from Marigold the bright orange Viva to VOG the talking BMW. Gadgets – his Palm Pilot, phone, sunglasses, sunglasses case, 2 sets of keys and I'm sure at one stage he even had a purse! He carted them all around with him and inevitably left half of them behind when he got up to go.

Now, for his catchphrases – apologies that I can't get the voice right, but no doubt you will recognise them; 'No Mr Bond, I expect you to die.' 'Do you ski?' 'Note to self' 'It's a deal, it's a steal' His 'small green friends' – little bottles of Stella. 'Speedbird zero zero one – cleared for take off' – and other Concorde rantings.

'Single-handedly keeping the wheels of the economy turning' – is something that he was fond of saying – and as it turns out he was. The economy has taken a serious downturn without him.

Richard really lived life to the full. In his 32 years he earned a distinction in his degree – something that I doubt he told many people - only 2 or 3 distinctions are handed out every year and so it was a real achievement. He spent a year in Australia in Sydney. He delayed his trip to Australia to be best man at our wedding, leaving for the airport less than 12 hours after our reception finished. I have always been grateful for that. He spent time learning to fly. He had an extremely successful career and many friends. He was just about to start on the next chapter of his life with Lara.

When Richard wasn't living life to the full he was sleeping! Sleeping, snoring and drooling! He could fall asleep at a moments notice – while talking – while drinking. He once fell asleep with a cup of tea balanced on his belly, and was woken up by it spreading over his stomach.

Without Richard the world is not as loud or as bright as it used to be and there is definitely less love in it.

Before Lara comes up, I'd like to leave you with a short passage from Ecclesiastes that makes me think of him;

“Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life God has given him--for this is his lot.

Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work--this is a gift of God.

He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.’



Tribute by Lara Perkins – Girlfriend

There are so many memories that I could share with you about Richard and my life with him, the difficulty has truly been in being selective. One thing for sure however is that each one would bring a smile or a chuckle to the faces of all of you.

What I do hope is that I have chosen well and that all of you will see how the wonderful person you all knew and loved reflected in Richard as a boyfriend.

Richard always said that he loved that I understood and loved everything about him. From his outgoing social self to his need for quiet time. But for me, loving everything about him came easy. For not only did I find him extremely sexy, Richard's unique abundance of qualities hooked me from the moment I got to know him.

Richard also loved to love and understand the whole of me. For Richard never ceased in telling me that I made him the happiest of men. It was as if I was a heaven sent princess that Richard was lucky enough to have found and to have for his girlfriend. However, in true Richard fashion, one phrase was simply not enough when expressing his love.

His favourite was saying that his heart beat loudly "La, ra", La, ra" for everyone to hear. For me, however, each one was as special. From him running down the stairs of his home into the kitchen after work with his arms outstretched demanding loudly "hug, hug" to him singing "I love you, I love you" proudly down the telephone. To him stating that he loved me "this much and more".

In fact, between us, Richard and I developed our own little dictionary of words and phrases. His eyes were "blue sparklies" mine were "plates". He was a "stropky pants" if moody, I was a "madame head". Either of us were "mush heads" if cried at a film for example. I was his "bird" or "pink fluffy bird" at work, he was my "coneboy". At times we didn't even have to speak. A look, a sound or an action spoke volumes and Richard had developed to a tee his "stroke me" squeak!!

One thing we did develop was how to say "I love you" at work. This was communicated by blinking furiously at each other when ever we saw one other.

Ordinarily we were discreet, however on one particular occasion we weren't so. Richard walked out of a meeting to see me ahead of him. At which point his eyes started to flutter furiously. Unbeknown to him however, two of his colleagues were waiting to speak with him. When they spotted Richard's violent eye fluttering, they asked with concern whether he was OK. To which a surprised Richard quickly responded "Yes, it's just my contact lenses, Thank you!" An excuse which seemed to satisfy his colleagues yet put a smile on the faces of both me and Richard.

This was not the only time Richard would put his "blue sparklies" into action. Using them, Richard seldom failed to charm his way to an upgrade when flying.

One particular time, Richard and a colleague, John Rennie who is here today, were lucky enough to gain an upgrade. Between them, after successfully drinking club class and World Traveller plus out of their entire stock of champagne, I received a call from Richard using the credit card telephone, from 1,000's of feet up. Richard of course knew the exact height the plane was flying at. Richard gave me a detailed description of how the telephone was using

satellites to transmit our call and how champagne stocks should really be increased on flights. Also how he wished I was with him to experience it.

On a separate occasion, Richard charmed his way to Club class. Again, I received a call with exact details of all gadgets on the lie down bed chair, from the movable seat back and footstool to the pop out TV and bed options.

It was a true joy to watch Richard with anything to do with flying. From packing his luggage, to travelling to the airport, to the actual flight itself. I will not be able to read the "In flight" magazine again, without first turning to find out the "plane of the month".

He would aim to leave home 30 minutes earlier than needed, so that he could travel around Heathrow's perimeter before parking to see the planes landing and taking off. Shopping was done at Sainsbury's, credit cards were used, and mobile network chosen all so that Air miles could be earned.

Each time Richard took a trip it was as if it was his very first. Never once in the time I knew him did he take the opportunity to fly for granted. He valued each and every time and realised how lucky he was to be in a position which allowed him to realise his passion.

As Richard gave to everything in his life, his work received 100% commitment. Richard at work was a delight to have known. His reward was his unassuming confidence in his ability and genuine dedication to deliver what he was tasked to do, without the need to seek praise for his achievements.

A lateral mind, Richard always seemed to be able to pose the question which made everyone think. And although riddled with nerves at public speeches, Richard always seemed to deliver faultless presentations. There was no place at work for his sensitive side and Richard always said that at work "no one must know" it existed.

Being told by a colleague in America, that he had achieved what very few engineers did, in coupling his engineering background with a sound commercial understanding, pleased Richard. Yet, at heart, he was always a true "cone". A fond memory is watching how his eyes would light up when presented with the prospect of exploring how something worked or should be designed.

A flashing, bouncy ball I bought Richard proves testimony to this. When bouncing this ball against a wall, it would make a sound and light up. After 2 days of giving the ball to Richard, it vanished from the lounge. Asking Richard where it had gone, he sheepishly presented the remains of the ball which he had taken apart to explore what made it flash and make a sound.

The cheek buffing machine proves another example. Richard had a particular love for my cheeks. He once even rang me from South Africa to say that he was missing them and he couldn't wait to come home and buff them.

The cheek buffing machine was to take the form of glasses with buffing pads built on. When worn by me, moisturising cream would squirt onto my cheeks and the buffing pads would rotate, at varying speeds, and rub the cream into my cheeks to maintain their shininess. I would answer the telephone to the sound of "reeeeee" which was the sound of the buffing machine greeting me.

Such a full and lived life sprouted a passion for the odd drink and for sleep. Although Richard often accused me for turning him into a "light weight shandy" as his daily alcohol intake declined, Richard still stunned people at a pool side drinking competition in Mexico where he drank 2 glasses of beer to everyone else's one and still was victorious.

And I'm sure all of you here have a special memory of Richard at sleep. Mine is a day coach trip to the Highlands while on holiday in Scotland. Unfortunately the only time Richard or I saw the Highlands was when the coach stopped for lunch. The rest of the time was spent fast asleep.

I consider myself lucky to have known the whole of Richard; the family Richard, the friend Richard, the work Richard and the Richard at home with me. All in all, I was the proudest of women to be his girlfriend.

Richard bought me a necklace on Valentine's Day with 3 diamonds; one to show me how he fell in love; one to tell me he was in love and the third to say he would always be in love. This is my most treasured memory, as this sees me through each and every day with a smile and eases my aching heart.

I would like to thank Richard for making my life so happy during the precious year I was his girlfriend, And his family and friends for giving him the experiences which shaped and grew him into the wonderful person that he was.

I leave you with the song "Thank you" by Dido, as I often played this song to Richard to show him what it meant to have him as part of my life and how very special he was to me.

Tribute by Malcolm Simpson – Step-father

Malcolm's words were from the heart on the day.

His words are committed to memory.



Tribute by Martin Roberts – Colleague

I've worked with Richard for nearly 10 years and am pleased to be able to share some of the high – and more amusing - points of his professional career. Many thanks to his close friends and colleagues at Telsis and Thales on whom I have relied for much of this.

I first met Richard when he started at Telsis in 1992, where he was employed as a young "Cone" – a lowly software engineer! I worked in Marketing where we viewed these Cones with some amusement... but also occasionally some respect. After all, these were the guys that you had to go and grovel to when your PC didn't work!

To start with, Richard seemed to be just another Cone... except that he did make a spectacular impression on his first day. Generally, on one's first day in a new job, one tries to arrive on time – even early – to impress everyone with how keen you are. Not Richard. His car broke down. He arrived late. Very late. In making his excuses to the Research Manager, discovering that this chap had a car he was trying to dispose of, he switched the situation to his advantage. In an instant, Richard summoned up all his latent commercial skills and bought the car... for 5p! As the bidding started at 10p, he'd managed to knock the price down by 50% - a portent of his future career in sales & marketing!

Early on, Richard discovered that one's Boss is an important person to cultivate. He holds the power of salary reviews in his hands. His boss at the time, Kevin McDaniel, recalls one company party at which he discovered Richard deep in conversation with his wife. All very innocent. Until the next morning, when Kevin found himself on the receiving end, over the breakfast table, of an appeal from his wife for a pay rise for poor Richard! An early example of Richard's innate sales skills – always make sure you work on the key influencer in a tricky negotiation!

Richard continued to impress as a Cone, soon catching the attention of senior management and was selected to work on a large, important project. Richard put a huge amount of time and effort into this and spent many happy months down in Australia installing and supporting the system. He made loads of friends and forever after had a bit of a yen for the life Down Under. Nothing to do with the great food, and wine, and beer, of course!

Well, now that I've mentioned alcohol, I can't help but remember how Richard's taste and discernment came on in leaps and bounds as his career developed. Goodbye student lagers, hello fine wines! Many's the business meal I remember where Richard managed to intercept

the wine list and ensure that only the best vintages were ordered. In later years, Richard worked on many sales campaigns in the City of London and New York - success was usually toasted in pink Laurent Perrier champagne and Pouilly Fume! He had style, and stamina!

Returning to his career at Telsis, Richard was starting to burst out of his Cone... he had tasted travel, customers, selling.....and he liked it. He also continued to be a thorn in the side of the nearby Technical Director who definitely didn't appreciate being Richard's social secretary as the Friday phone calls came in to arrange that week's pub session. Oh, and possibly the occasional female admirer calling...

It was time for Richard to move across to the Dark Side... to sales and marketing!

This was when I was fortunate to have Richard on my team and it was here that I first realised what a really great guy Richard was. He had technical skills, could work well with customers, and also had a keen commercial sense. (Strangely this financial brain seemed incapable of filling in expense claims on time - nobody submitted larger and more overdue expenses than Richard!).

He quickly developed his commercial and marketing skills and, as one of 4 Product Managers, also honed his competitive instincts. No way was Richard going to be outdone or outshone by his 3 colleagues. Didn't matter whether it was working, driving, drinking, or... well, enough said! This was when he became the proud owner of a Lotus Elan - you'd never seen anyone with a bigger grin on his face! Mind you, it didn't seem to get him into work any earlier...!

In 1998 we parted company when I left to join Thales, but I was incredibly fortunate when Richard decided to follow me a year later. At Thales, Richard's career continued to blossom. It was also where he picked up his most notorious nickname - TQM, short for The Queen Mother - bequeathed by his colleagues in the London sales team when time after time Richard was first to buy a round of drinks at the bar only to discover that he had come out without any cash!

He forged strong links with the sales teams - particularly in the City and in New York - and it was through this that Richard came to love New York - his favourite city in the world.

Richard became a very frequent flyer on the London-New York route and was renowned for his ability to blag an upgrade by using his charm on the British Airways check-in ladies! On one trip, he had to carry a very large piece of equipment in a crate with a set of wheels and a sort of dog lead to drag it along with. No problem at the UK end - crate safely despatched into the bowels of Heathrow. But at JFK, no way would it fit into a yellow cab. So, undaunted, he and the crate caught a bus... Richard, in a bus!! Imagine!! The final part of the journey saw Richard pulling said crate along 42nd Street for several blocks. However, being New York, no-one paid him the slightest attention.

This incident sums up Richard rather well... New York, tight deadlines, an absolute commitment to get the job done no matter what obstacles were put in his way... and, having a good laugh whilst he went about it.

So, what do I remember most about Richard?

Firstly, he was that most exceptional of colleagues - he told you what he thought and he argued his corner with passion, when most others would give way to 'the Pointy Haired

Boss'. Many were the evenings when Richard dropped by my desk for a 5 minute chat... 2 hours later we'd finally wrestled the issue to the ground and both went home, tired but content. I'll miss those sessions.

The other memory that bubbles up is an email that he wrote to me on his way back from Australia. It started out: "Martin, I'm writing this 35,000 feet above Alice Springs, sipping my second Gin & Tonic, in Business Class. Life's a bitch!" And then he went on to berate me for not having done something or other. I'll miss those emails.

And that's how I'd like to imagine him now... sitting up there on his Business Class cloud... sipping a double Ambrosia and Tonic... arguing with St Peter about the best soul-recognition software... and looking down on us, willing us to fight hard for what we believe in, but always to make time for a bit of a party... and always with lashings of Pouilly Fume and Laurent Perrier!

Rich - we all miss you madly, but we'll always remember you with admiration and affection for what you achieved, what you inspired in others, and for all the great times we shared together.



Poem by Jay Brown – Cousin

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned;
Only remember me; you understand
It will be too late to counsel then or pray,
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.



Tribute by Roy Mussell – Friend

Rich has been one of my best friends for 13 years ever since we met at Southampton University. Our paths had crossed earlier at Bournemouth School, but we didn't speak to each other then as we were in different years. I do remember him being a computer nerd but I may have been misled by his thick specs.

It's fair to say our mutual emotion was Loving Exasperation. I'm convinced he worked too hard, even if the country's economy was at stake, while my stubborn refusal to conform any more than necessary, frequently made him despair. However these minor differences had no effect on our friendship, as I discovered upon looking through my photos for some inspiration for today. He seems to appear in every other one, which was no help. He'd obviously spread himself far too thin, and that gave me a brainwave, I should talk about Richard's special relationship... **With LARD!!!**

I guess it all began in an innocent, seemingly harmless way with just a supercan of Coke and a kingsize Mars bar everyday after school. Unfortunately, as so often happens, his capacity for lard increased throughout university. I remember once in the 2nd year, when, obviously aware of his problem, he only ate tuna for a whole week. This could never last and he soon reverted to eating spoonfuls of mayonnaise straight from the jar. Actually, come to think of it, I seem to recall that he just couldn't be arsed to go to the shops and buy anything else.

Soon Rich would regularly be able to, in one evening, quaff copious quantities of strong continental lager – always a crowd-pleaser, he would regularly down at least one pint in under 3 seconds – and then follow all that up with a large chicken dansak. Upon waking the next morning, the cravings for lard would be so powerful that only a huge, greasy fry-up could quench them.

Eventually, following years of excessive consumption, both of his knees had to be surgically reinforced to take the strain.

I don't know how far this obsession would have gone, but is it just a coincidence that his girlfriend's name begins with the same 3 letters?

However, it was not all bad. On one of our skiing holidays, we were following a narrow trail weaving through some trees in single file. The trail culminated in a series of 3 ridges, each one higher than the last. So, getting progressively more out of control, each person in turn crested the last ridge to be greeted with the sight of a young sapling dead ahead. Everyone managed to fling themselves to one side in a graceless heap and then scramble to their feet in order to watch the next victim. Rich was last and majestically rose to meet the sapling challenges, literally with open arms. As they collided, we collectively held our breath. After an agonising few seconds, Rich stirred and managed to clamber to his feet: the sapling had been vanquished by the power of lard.

In homage to his prowess over the years, a group of his friends are known as the Lards and we even have a website to prove it. (www.lards.net) I'm proud to be one of these acolytes and grateful to him for being the focal point that brought us all together. I still can't believe that he's gone and I miss him a great deal.

